

*The critical implications of Ubuntu for contemporary
management theory*

By

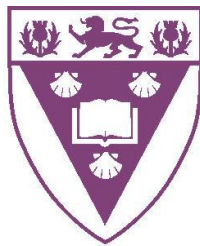
Tamsanqa Munyaradzi Mashasha

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

Master of Arts

in the department of Political and International Studies

Rhodes University



RHODES UNIVERSITY

Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

Supervisors: Professor Leonhard Praeg and Doctor Simon Howell and

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family for its unwavering support and motivation throughout this trying, yet fulfilling, endeavour. Special mention must be made of my uncle, Advocate Samson Joseph Swartbooi, who went the extra mile in providing me with sound academic and social guidance, as well as much needed financial assistance. I would also like to thank Doctor Simon Howell and Professor Leonhard Praeg who went beyond the call of duty time and time again to help me. Without all of you, none of this would have been possible.

Abstract

Since the dissolution of apartheid, corporate governance in South Africa has evolved from being a *soft* mainly ethical issue to a *hard* knowledge-based technological issue, recognised as pivotal to the success and revitalisation of the country's capital markets and, ultimately, the prospects of the corporate economy. These high stakes have produced a succession of measures aimed at transforming corporate governance in the economy. As such, South Africa's corporate managers are consistently faced with the seemingly unassailable obstacle of discerning and implementing technologically progressive and culturally/racially unbiased management strategies/systems. The focus of this thesis is the latter of these two obstacles. Ubuntu acts as the scope via which the issues embedded within the incumbent management strategies/systems are viewed. Ubuntu philosophy embodies a socio-cultural framework that applies to all individuals and institutions throughout the continent. It embodies collectivism and teamwork, creation of synergies and competitive advantages, humanist leadership styles and maturity, consensus in decision-making systems, effective communication, and community-based corporate social responsibility. Ubuntu is pervasive in almost all parts of Southern African continent – it is integrated into all aspects of day-to-day life throughout the region. This thesis reviews and analyses some of the lessons that can be learned through the inception of African management, more specifically Ubuntu management, within South Africa's corporate sphere. This thesis aims to prove that there exists a need for a new South African corporate management system, one which is able to harmoniously integrate the incumbent, western-orientated management strategies and systems with one of African origins.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION:	1
<hr/>	
CHAPTER 1: PHILOSOPHY, MANAGEMENT, AND THE NEED FOR THEORY	7
<hr/>	
INTRODUCTION	7
MANAGEMENT THEORY, MANAGEMENT PRAXIS AND THE SUSPECTED GAP	7
CRITICAL MANAGEMENT THEORY	9
CRITICAL THEORY AS A TOOL FOR MANAGEMENT	10
CONCLUSION	10
CHAPTER 2: HEGEMONY AND THE IMPOSITION OF THE WESTERN ORDER OF THINGS	12
<hr/>	
INTRODUCTION	12
UNDERSTANDING HEGEMONY AND HISTORY	12
THE <i>ARTICULATION</i> OF HEGEMONIC MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	12
THE <i>STRUGGLE</i> TO GO BEYOND HEGEMONY	15
HEGEMONY AND THE LOGIC OF WESTERN MODERNITY	17
‘DECONSTRUCTION AND THE POSSIBILITY OF JUSTICE’	20
THE DECISION	21
CONCLUSION	25
CHAPTER 3: UBUNTU	27
<hr/>	
INTRODUCTION	27
UBUNTU FORGOTTEN – THE IMPACT OF CAPITALISM	28
REMEMBERING UBUNTU: AFRICAN CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN UBUNTU AND UBUNTU	29
UBUNTU: THEORY (UBUNTU) AND PRAXIS (UBUNTU)	31
FLESHING OUT UBUNTU: AFRICAN VERSUS WESTERN HUMANISM	32
UBUNTU: RE-INVENTING UBUNTU TO SUIT CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICA	36
UBUNTU: AN UNCHARTED PLACE	37
<hr/>	
UBUNTU: POLITICAL FAD VS. ECONOMIC CATALYST	37
CONCLUSION	39

CHAPTER 4: UBUNTU IN THE WORKPLACE: A DISCUSSION OF TWO INTERVENTION STRATEGIES	40
INTRODUCTION	40
CASHBUILD SA: A BRIEF COMPANY HISTORY	42
THE CREATION OF A SPACE BEYOND HISTORY	45
THE DECISION AS <i>APORIA</i>: CASHBUILD AS A FUTURE MODEL	47
CASHBUILD AND THE CARE GROUP	49
CASHBUILD AND THE VENTURECOMM MANAGEMENT SYSTEM	51
CASHBUILD SA TODAY: INSERTING HISTORY INTO THE PRESENT	52
ESKOM AND THE NEED FOR REVISION	53
ESKOM AND TRANSFORMATION	54
DECIDING THE UNDECIDABLE: ESKOM MANAGERIAL NEEDS	55
ESKOM INNOVATION: THE PEBBLE BED MODULAR REACTOR (PBMR) PROJECT:	57
ESKOM TODAY	60
THESIS CONCLUSION:	63
REFERENCE LIST:	67
BOOKS AND JOURNALS	67
INTERNET	74

Introduction:

According to Mike Bendixen and Bruce Burger (1998: 107-108), South Africa has one of the most developed economic infrastructures on the African continent, illustrated by the rapid economic development changes implemented by the democratic government of 1994. Upon its inception the newly elected government sought economic growth with the intention of expanding social service funds and increasing employment (Bendixen and Burger, 1998: 107-108). According to Stephan Malherbe and Nick Segal (2001: 2) it was proposed that in order to attain the desired levels of economic growth, the state would need to increase mobilisation of both domestic and foreign capital, as well as promote the efficient use of that capital. This then resulted in the central role of the corporate sphere and its governance or rather management, within the government's development plans (Malherbe and Segal, 2001: 2-3). However, as argued by Malherbe and Segal (2001: 2-3), the newly elected government was unable to achieve many of its economic aspirations – such as the expansion of social services funds as well as the creation of more employment – due to most of the state's developed industries and corporations being firmly rooted in Anglo-American (western) oriented traditions and practices, which are notoriously reluctant to change. Thus, one could suggest that while proficient, the South African economy finds itself in stagnation or, what Stan Du Plessis and Ben Smit (2005: 1-4) describe as a state of inertia. This argument is backed by Adele Thomas and Bendixen (2000: 507-508) who suggest that there exist a great number of reasons as to why the economy is currently depressed, such as the decline of foreign interest in South Africa's mining sector and the instability of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE), which has led to the weakening of the Rand. Malherbe and Segal (2001: 2) concur, suggesting that by the late 1980s, many of South Africa's corporations were bloated, unfocused and run by entrenched and complacent managers. These firms were sustained and tolerated by a very different environment in comparison to those of residence within 1st world economies and capital markets (Malherbe and Segal, 2001: 2). They continue, arguing that:

...the mainstay of the South African environment was isolation. Tariffs and political isolation shielded firms from foreign product competition, while financial sanctions kept international institutions out of the domestic capital market, and South African firms out of international capital markets. Corporate practices fell behind international norms, as did laws and regulations (Malherbe and Segal, 2001: 2).

Du Plessis and Smit (2005: 1-4) refute these claims, arguing instead that the crux of the economic depression is, in fact, the orientation of the corporate sphere, more specifically the managerial sector. They continue, suggesting that the dismissal, or rather negation, of African thought regarding management discourse(s) has constrained the effectiveness of corporate management in South Africa (Du Plessis and Smit, 2005: 1-4). This view is given credence by Nick Binedell (1992: 11) who suggests that due to a variety of factors, such as the historical narratives of colonialism and apartheid, the dominant management practices in South Africa were, and remain, western in character and orientation.

Whilst in agreement with the views presented above, Wayne Visser (1997: 1) goes further in suggesting that the negation of African thought in the corporate sphere has resulted in a tension in the South African context, 'for the [value] inculcation that has accompanied the Northern Hemisphere's footprint on Southern Africa has left many of its [South Africa's] peoples culturally schizophrenic' (Visser, 1997: 1). Visser's statement is neatly clarified by Binedell (1992: 11) who suggests that Anglo-American management discourses place emphasis on the individual instead of on the group – the individual is viewed as *a priori*, especially in relation to the constitutive logic of capitalism. Problematically, this differs from the African context which, according to David Lutz (2008: 3-4), Lovemore Mbigi and Jenny Maree (1995: 7), views the group as constitutively *prior* to the individual. Grzeda and Assogbavi, (cited in Terence Jackson, 2004: 116), further clarify what is being inferred above, when they state that:

Conflicts between African and Western values are evident in numerous aspects of managerial work. The African managerial style places greater emphasis on moral rather than on material incentives. Moral incentives are considered to be more meaningful and long-lasting. Indeed, wages are the property of the family not the individual; consequently, monetary incentives have little effect in performance, unless they are paid to the collectively... Western management approaches presume the desirability of taking risks, and value work motivation. In most African countries, the quality of life, and the value attached to personal time exceed any desire to accumulate wealth. Positive interpersonal relationships are valued above money.

Simplified, the differences between western individual and African communal prioritization raise the problem of effective management in the context of a developing society. Bendixen and Burger (1998: 112-113) support and promote this viewpoint, suggesting that it is a fallacy for any company/corporation to believe that it can impose its traditional business culture on a society and expect that society to respond productively without first having taken into account the cultural traditions and values of the society in question. This has led to numerous managerial conundrums of both the theoretical and practical kind – such as the reorganization of

traditional business and management structures that would successfully bridge the historically entrenched gap that exists between employers and employees within post-apartheid corporate South Africa – that have been avidly engaged with by many scholars and have produced a substantial body of work (for an outline of this literature, see Hofstede, Mbigi and Lessem (1989; 1990). Beyond the academic literature corporate South Africa is, however, still sorely affected by historical and contemporary problems (see for instance Thomas and Bendixen, Trompenaars and, Du Plessis and Smit (2005)).

In this thesis I provide a critical analysis of a selection of some of the problems corporate South Africa is faced with. I endeavour to discern applicable solutions to the selected problems through an analysis of Cashbuild SA and Eskom, two South African based corporate entities that have managed to successfully overhaul their Eurocentric, traditional organizational structures. This was achieved via the implementation of an African, Ubuntu-orientated management discourse. Cashbuild SA, a South African Multinational Corporation (MNC) has managed, for the most part, to integrate its standard business patterns with the customs and norms of what it calls its ‘host society’ (Barbara Nussbaum, 2003: 2-3). According to Nussbaum (2003: 2-3) the company’s transformation was initiated by its founder and former CEO Albert Koopman who realized that in order to foster a harmonious work environment the segregated and disgruntled workforce first needed to be unified. Koopman realized that an Ubuntu-based strategy developed by a team representative of the company’s complete workforce was urgently required (Nussbaum, 2003: 2-3). This resulted in the formulation and implementation of the ‘VENTURECOMM system, a communication and participation structure that [for the most part] removed the power imbalance in management [and] labour relations through Shop Steward Councils and other representative Councils’ (Visser, 1997: 3). Nussbaum has written extensively on the need for management theorists in South Africa to follow this example. She is supported in her convictions by Augustine Shutte (1993: 46) who also suggests that the Ubuntu concept of individuality (‘I participate, therefore I am’, which stands in contrast to the Cartesian dictum of ‘I think, therefore I am’ (Shutte, 1993: 46) could play a critical role in the racial and cultural consolidation of the general workplace/force, ultimately leading to a more proficient and stable economic sector in South Africa.

As such, one of the aims of this thesis is to investigate the theoretical and philosophical assumptions that enable such corporate management strategies. Were, in other words, the

number of Ubuntu-related change management strategies of the 90s a viable managerial option or merely a passing fad, a function of a euphoric national discourse on African Renaissance brought about by the collapse of apartheid and the rise of democracy in the country? This thesis investigates the possibility that the latter was not the case. I propose that via the incorporation of the ethics found within what is generally referred to as African Humanism or Ubuntu into South Africa's corporate sphere, many of the difficulties – or what Lewis. R. Gordon (2007: 123) refers to as 'standard oppositions' – such as African humanism adopting a far stronger communitarian outlook than its western counterpart, encapsulating the disjointed management of companies could be dispelled, ultimately resulting in a more amicable and hospitable work environment.

According to Barry Hallen (1995: 384-387) given the political nature of African humanisms, there is good reason for preferring the *language*, or rather the 'Dialogue' of Ubuntu over that of intellectual traditions that have been complicit in the colonial perpetuation of the idea that Africans are not human or have nothing to contribute to history or philosophy (Hallen, 1995: 386). One could suggest Ubuntu to be the dialogue through which African humanism is communicated. The dialogue of Ubuntu would thus appear as the most logical means of assimilating Ubuntu into traditional South African corporate management discourses. Here, the work of Bruce Janz (2009) will be drawn upon as motivation as to why South African companies/organizations should attempt to assimilate Ubuntu into their traditional managerial discourses. This will be done conscious of the fact that it is conceptually difficult to construct an argument for Ubuntu's philosophical uniqueness vis-à-vis other western philosophies like communitarianism or political models like participatory democratic processes. Janz (2009: 14) introduces the notion of a philosophy of *Place*, defining Place(s) as 'aggregates of meaningful [philosophical] experiences encoded into material or legible [traditional] structures' (Janz, 2009: 14). Places are able to retain their integrity by remaining true to the debts of the past (e.g. western management discourse) as well as by respecting the duties of the present and near future (e.g. western management discourse assimilated with Ubuntu) (Janz, 2009: 13-15). The concept of Place is neatly illustrated by the South African enterprise Durban Metrorail, which was able to revitalise business, promote and establish a more harmonious work environment and improve the transfer of ideas and information within the workforce via the introduction and incorporation of Ubuntu into the company's traditional organizational framework, specifically management praxis (Luchien Karsten and Honorine Illa, 2005).

In order to argue for the validity of Ubuntu as an applicable – and possibly profitable – management discourse, I propose a self-reflexive deconstruction of the binary logic by virtue of which western managerial discourses have received priority within the African context. With this in place, I aim to reveal how modern managerial discourses can be formulated within a framework that has as its methodological basis *critical humanism*. Importantly, this is not an attempt to simply supplant one form or logic of management with another – a deconstructive strategy is at once both interpretive and generative, and moreover self-reflexive of the discursive power of the act of supplanting one critical stance with another. Following from this, I will analyse the management styles of one Multinational Corporation (Cashbuild SA) and a state-owned enterprise that operates in over 33 African states (Eskom), with the aim of revealing how critical humanism has been incorporated into their managerial styles and practices. Upon both this theoretical and practical basis, I will finally advance the beginnings of a normative framework with the purpose, on the one hand, of reconciling modern managerial discourses on the African continent with a truly African philosophy, while, on the other, providing a practical perspective by which this process can begin – the Place of Ubuntu. This, ultimately, is done in the spirit of Gordon’s analysis, in which the politicization of the difference between the western and the African world view can be used as a stepping stone for a new and legitimate, albeit synthesized, African corporate identity. In order to continue, however, it is of the utmost importance that one takes heed of the following point: the result of the analysis to follow is ambivalent – the concept of Ubuntu can never be truly African. It is, as Wim Van Binsbergen (2001: 53-55) has argued, a global philosophy articulated at the interface between local traditions and global discourses (e.g. Christianity and Human rights) but, at the same time, can be used as a useful conceptual framework within which to both investigate and implement African managerial practices.

As such, in the first chapter of this thesis, I investigate theory, placing emphasis on contemporary critical theory. I begin by outlining management theory and then illustrate how management theory serves as management praxes’ foundation. Following which I investigate how businesses can, and do, utilize critical theory in attempts aimed towards the re-engineering of their traditional philosophical strictures and incumbent managerial structures. In the second chapter I investigate the concept of hegemony and western modernity, highlighting the logical structure within which western managerial practices claim sovereignty or hegemony over other

understandings of managerial theory. This is followed by a critique of the logic by which this hegemony operates. I conclude by presenting an alternative Ubuntu-led understanding of managerial theory as a viable alternative to incumbent, traditional managerial discourses.

The third chapter is wholly focused upon the concept of Ubuntu. This is followed by a brief investigation into how globalization has had a negative impact on African societies causing African elders to gradually forget Ubuntu and, as such, their African Consciousness. I then propose that Ubuntu be re-invented or rather re-structured so as to represent all societies. In an attempt to accomplish this proposition, I sub-divide the concept of Ubuntu into its theoretical and practical facets respectively, illustrating the differences between the two. This is followed by an analysis of the *uniqueness* of Ubuntu as an African humanism. I conclude by arguing the advantages and benefits of situating a re-invented or re-remembered Ubuntu in South Africa's management discourses. Finally, in the fourth chapter I examine how two selected companies (Cashbuild SA and Eskom) both attempted and managed to assimilate Ubuntu (African-orientated) into their traditional managerial discourses. I illustrate how Ubuntu acted as the prism through which each company performed its self-reflexive examinations. Following which I outline how each company deconstructed their traditional managerial schematics and re-engineered them in a manner accommodating of Ubuntu. I conclude by presenting evidence of Ubuntu's positive and prosperous influence in both companies.

Chapter 1: Philosophy, Management, and the Need for Theory

Introduction

As argued, critical theory, and its employment within the managerial sphere of the South African corporate sector, serves as the basis of this thesis. In order to gain a holistic understanding of critical theory's impact within the contemporary South African corporate sphere – more specifically the managerial realm – one has to familiarise oneself with the dynamics of management theory and how it can, and does, act as a foundation upon which managerial discourses are formulated and implemented. Before continuing it must, however, be explicitly stated that in order to best facilitate this thesis' progress, only the most extreme, or rather the most *Eurocentric*, western stream of management theory shall be investigated. This particular examination route has been selected due to the mentioned managerial stream offering the most holistic outline of the managerial philosophies and strategies imported to Africa by former western colonial masters and forcibly implemented into African societies.

Management theory, management praxis and the suspected *gap*

To achieve the above mentioned goals it is necessary that the terms *management theory* and *management praxis* be clarified. Horkheimer, (cited in Adrian Carr, 2000: 208-209) and Douglas Brownlie *et al.* (2008: 461-463) supplement this view, suggesting that in order to gain any sort of analytical clarity for use in critical theory, a clear difference between the terms must be established and defined. Management theory, as stipulated by Benjamin Inyang (2008: 6), 'serves as a means of classifying pertinent management knowledge'. It concerns itself with the facts and principles that best advise the most efficient, reliable and most importantly cost effective courses of action that facilitate the most productive and profitable outcomes (Inyang, 2008: 6-7). Simplified, management theories are the guidelines via which managers resolve problems and mishaps, while also aiming to increase the efficiency of the workforce. A management theory thus denotes a specific epistemological theory concerned with the management of an established group of people or workforce (Inyang, 2008: 6-7). Thus, one could suggest that management theory acts as an aid in the training of managers, enabling them to swiftly analyse situations in a more astute manner, the consequence of which would be

improving the performance of workers. This according to Inyang (2008) and Celestine Nwachukwu (1992: 6) could lead to an increase in production/output thereby generating greater fiscal profits, with Inyang (2008: 7) suggesting that ‘management theories emphasize the importance of an organization’s ability to acquire and leverage knowledge that produces meaningful change and innovation’.

Inyang (2008) and Nwachukwu (1992) continue, suggesting that management theory provides the foundational architecture upon which management praxis can be engineered. Management praxis provides managers with the opportunity to both reevaluate older and contemporary management principles and theories and develop new ones. One could suggest that management praxis act as a device which enables managers to convert contemporary management theory into applicable actions oriented towards the proficient and efficient achievement of business and organizational goals. Carr (2008: 465) reinforces this view, suggesting that management praxis enable managers to

[address] contemporary [management] problems and [convert] knowledge into practical solutions, while at the same time encouraging a grounded approach to [management] theory building.

Rearticulated, when necessary, management praxis enable managers to discard those principles and theories acknowledged to be no longer applicable in the contemporary corporate sphere, thus facilitating more harmonious transactions, be they of the social or professional kind. One could suggest that management praxis cannot be viewed as an isolated, independent phenomenon. Geert Hofstede (1993: 89) agrees, suggesting that in order for one to gain a holistic understanding of management praxis, one has to recognize it as both a central social and professional phenomenon dependent upon both the cultural and professional aspects of a given society or state (Hofstede, 1993: 89). He continues, suggesting that management theory and management praxis are in a continuous process of interaction and are therefore interdependent. One could then suggest that the two entities reinforce one another and are closely – if not the most closely – related entities of management philosophy.

This is done in full consciousness of the *gap* that many authors (see, for instance, John Dixon and Rhys Dogan (2002) and Andrew Dorward *et al.* (2005)) argue to exist between the two entities. As defined by Brownlie *et al.* (2008: 463) the gap ascribed can be understood to be

symptomatic of tensions residing within the contemporary academic management discourse, wherein different interests struggle to assert themselves through competing assertions about accountability.

Simplified, one could suggest the gap to be a belief that management theory and management praxis are somehow *different*, resulting in a break between them. Brownlie *et al.* (2008: 463) suggest that some scholars maintain the view that these differences are only understood within their various academic management disciplines and their related occupational groups. Brownie *et al.* (2008: 463) dispute this view, arguing that management theory and management praxis are indeed in a constant state of interaction and are interdependent on one another, proof of this being the scholarly shift towards the utilization of praxis as an analytical tool in management studies due to its ability to bring the ‘communities of scholarship and praxis [closer] together’ (Brownie *et al.* 2008: 463). The interaction and interdependence (relatedness) of management theory and management praxis is what this thesis advocates.

Critical management theory

At this point a brief excursion into the history of *critical* theory is necessary the better to facilitate the examination of critical management theory. According to Ben Agger (1991: 107) in order to gain a patently clear understanding of critical theory, one must contrast it to what those of the original Frankfurt School – which included the likes of Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, Friedrich Pollock, Leo Lowenthal and Walter Benjamin – deemed *traditional* theory. According to Adorno and Horkheimer (in Agger, 1991: 109-110), traditional theory is the type of theory one would typically encounter when examining the natural sciences, but, with the passage of time, has come to permeate other academic fields as well. Horkheimer (1972: 194-196), continues, arguing that, as a theory, traditional theory’s primary criterion is harmony, stating that:

...all of the [theory’s] constituent parts form a coherent whole, free of contradiction. Traditional theory is typically expressed through abstractions and is designed to accomplish the specific tasks set up for it – for example, how to make a certain [management system] run more efficiently using abstract mathematical concepts.

Rearticulated, one can suggest traditional theory as being a theory of the status quo – it is designed to increase the productivity and functioning of the world as it presently exists. In contrast, critical theory is ‘dominated at every turn by a concern for reasonable conditions of life’ (Horkheimer, 1972: 199). He continues, arguing that, critical theory rejects these notions of solely focusing upon what is ‘better, useful, appropriate, productive, and valuable’ (Horkheimer,

1972: 199) due to these ideals only functioning within the present order. This is what Horkheimer (cited in Carr, 2000: 210) refers to as critical theory's devotion to acquiring 'insight leading to praxis and emancipation'. Horkheimer continues, suggesting that each of the provided meanings, or rather definitions, are correct when applied to the relevant philosophical discourse (Carr, 2000: 208-209). As Horkheimer states:

The term "critical theory" has a two fold meaning. It is used to refer to a "school of thought". At one and the same time it also refers to self-conscious critique that is aimed at change and emancipation through enlightenment and does not cling dogmatically to its own doctrinal assumptions...The second meaning of the terminology "critical theory"... is one which resonates with a particular process of critique, the origins of which owe multiple allegiances. Critical theory aims to produce a particular form of knowledge that seeks to realize an emancipatory interest, specifically through a critique of consciousness and ideology. It separates itself from both functionalist/objective and interpretive/ practical sciences through a critical epistemology that rejects the self-evident nature of reality and acknowledges the various ways in which reality is distorted (Carr, 2000: 209).

While both correct, the second definition will be employed throughout the remainder of this thesis regarding any reference to critical theory. This is due to critical theory's acknowledgement of the different ways in which reality (e.g. the corporate sphere) can be distorted (e.g. the different ways in which business can be conducted and people managed). One could suggest that critical theory is self-reflexive of the necessity of that difference. Brownlie *et al.* (2008: 463) concur, suggesting that the employment of critical theory in a given corporate sphere is essential for both the realization and dismantling of incumbent, traditional, organizational structures (management theories) and management praxis.

Critical theory as a tool for management

While agreeing with Horkheimer for the most part, Raymie McKerrow (1991: 75-76) suggests an amendment to Horkheimer's definition – in order to streamline the topic that is critical theory, the works of Carr and Mckerrow will be those employed and focused upon throughout the remainder of this thesis as they best articulate what I aim to illustrate – arguing that Horkheimer is incorrect in asserting that critical theory is critical of the *absolute truth* – critical theory criticizes *truth claims*. According to McKerrow (1991: 75-76) critical theory engages with the strategies by and through which the truth of a subject is defined and known. McKerrow (1991: 75-76) makes this argument on the basis that if critical theory were critical of the absolute truth it would in essence be positing itself as another form of absolute truth. As above posited by

Horkheimer (cited in Carr, 2000: 210), critical theory attempts to place itself *outside* of philosophical strictures and incumbent management structures. What Horkheimer fails to mention is that the existence of the critical argument is in fact, paradoxically, also dependent on the mentioned strictures and structures. McKerrow (1991: 76-77) asserts critical theory as being conscious or rather *self-reflexive* of this dependence, resulting in the orientation of all its analytical endeavours. Differently articulated, critical theory is aware of the inextricable link between itself and the strictures and structures used in its formulation.

Brownlie *et al.* (2008: 463) clarify this view when they argue that critical theory is fully cognisant of both the academic strictures and practical structures that serve as its foundational pillars. This self-consciousness enables the criticism of given discourses. McKerrow (1991: 75) supports this view, supplementing it with the suggestion that ‘there will always be tension between maintenance and change – the task of critical theory is not to privilege one over the other, but to constantly challenge the status quo to be other than it is’ (McKerrow, 1991: 75). One could therefore suggest the relationship between management theory and praxis to be that of the former serving as the foundation upon which the latter is implemented. One could also suggest that critical theory enables one to engage with various questions of meaning and identity in *original* theoretical and practical manners – Ubuntu could be viewed as an original approach to traditional management praxis that enables the analysis of incumbent management theories via a different route.

Conclusion

In conclusion, one can suggest, as do Horkheimer (cited in Carr 2000: 210) and Brownlie *et al.* (2008: 463), that critical theory is a self-reflexive mode of thought that recognizes the strategies by which truth claims are arrived at and the power structures they contain and perpetuate. However, it rarely concerns itself with metaphysical truth; there is no need. It is more concerned with the development of progressive insight that will lead to the improvement of management praxis, workforce congruency and workplace solidarity (Carr, 2000: 210). One could also suggest that critical theory acts as a guide to change – and possible salvation/emancipation – for it is through the absence of critical rhetoric that the danger of *permanence* is conceived and nurtured.

Chapter 2: Hegemony and the imposition of the Western Order of Things

Introduction

Undecidability is always a determinate oscillation between possibilities...These possibilities are themselves highly determined in strictly defined situations...They are pragmatically determined...I say ‘undecidability’ rather than ‘indeterminacy’ because I am interested in relations of force, in differences of force, in everything that allows, precisely, determinations in given situations to be stabilised through a decision of writing (in the broad sense I give to this word, which also includes political action and speech) (Jacques Derrida cited in Aletta Norval, 2004: 146).

As previously mentioned, the aim of this thesis is to present an Ubuntu-inspired managerial framework as a substantive and viable alternative epistemological framework to the present condition of what might be typically thought of as western managerial practice(s). However, this requires that one first understands the structure of the latter and, importantly, the manner in which it has retained hegemony over current business models and epistemologies. It must be noted from the beginning that the alternative, that of Ubuntu, cannot simply be different to what might be regarded as *western*, but must be critical of both its own origination and of that which it attempts to supersede. It is for this reason that this chapter focuses on the interplay between a hegemonic system of understanding (understood as western managerial practices in this example) and an alternative, Ubuntu, which shall be further analyzed in Chapter 3.

There have been many analyses of exactly what constitutes western style managerial practices, whether explicitly or implicitly, such as those provided by Rees and Porter (2008) and Welsh (1980). What has not come under analysis is *the manner in which* these practices claim sovereignty over other understandings of managerial practices and which, consequently, make such practices hegemonic. It is at this nexus – between understanding western-type managerial practices as historical construct and the need to offer an alternative – that this chapter stands.

Understanding hegemony and history

In order to gain a holistic understanding of hegemony’s theoretical underpinnings, it is necessary to begin with a brief, yet concise, exploration of its history. According to Thomas Bates (1975: 351) the term ‘hegemony’ owes its existence to Antonio Gramsci, a 20th century theorist whose theories and ideas were viewed so dangerous and extraordinary by the fascist Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, that they earned him 9 years imprisonment. Bates continues, suggesting that one of Gramsci's most profound ideas was that of the concept of *hegemony* or rather, *ideological*

domination. He continues, arguing that when one ideology, or world view, dominates, it suppresses or stamps out, often cruelly, any other ways of explaining reality (1975: 351-353). Furthering his argument, Bates suggests that one must be aware of the ideological variations of hegemony, some being what Gramsci labelled *artificial*, in that they are theoretical explanations fashioned by academics or political activists or philosophers, whilst others are *organic*, in that they originate via the general populace's lived experiences (1975: 352-353). He persists, arguing that, as dictated by Gramsci, hegemony has the ready ability to imprison a given society within a vice-like grip due to the manner via which ideas are transmitted, that being *language*. Re-phrased, a society's linguistic dialect(s), both written and spoken, is constructed through its populace's social interactions and shaped by the dominant ideologies of that era. Thus, it is loaded with cultural meanings that entrap citizens within a particular manner of thought, disabling any and all other forms of thought.

The views forwarded above are supplemented by Andre Spicer and Steffen Bohm (2007: 1668-1671) who argue that hegemony has historically been depicted as an indirect form of rule or governance whereby the dominating leader state, or *hegemon*, rules geopolitically subordinate states by an implied means of power rather than by direct military force. Contemporary times have seen hegemony come to mean the geopolitical and cultural predominance of one state or, importantly, discourse upon others, allowing for the derivation of the term *hegemonism* (Spicer and Bohm, 2007: 1671). The concept of hegemony is no longer limited to analyses of statehood but has come to be used as a key analytical tool in our understanding of the power/knowledge nexus by which discourses – whether they focus on managerial practices or game theory for instance – claim power over other competing discourses. Norval (2004: 139) further justifies this position when he argues that hegemonic decisions institute and shape the ideological terrain in which politics occurs; different forms of decisions will structure the terrain in different ways. The colonial era serves as the most apt example of contemporary hegemonism: colonial administrative states, such as Britain and France, were able to establish and implement European hegemony in both the African and Asian continents via the use of their technologically advanced militaries, fiscal means and material resources (Norval, 2004: 139-145). This argument is solidified by Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1988: 63) stating that:

...the [colonial] west's hegemonic position [was] a struggle for control over the orientation, regulation and decision of the process of world development on the basis of [its] advanced...scientific knowledge, [militaries] and ideal creativity.

She continues, arguing that colonial hegemony was, in essence, an attempt to gain control of the hearts and minds of colonial citizens. Simplified, colonial rule was not simply limited to the state but encompassed the very lives of those over whom it ruled. This is what is meant by hegemony; the total and perhaps often unquestionable rule of one entity or discourse over another.

According to Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985: 5-7) hegemony dictates that a person's social class can manipulate the values and morals of a prescribed society to suit that person's needs and desires. Those in possession of greater resources are usually able to manipulate a given society's values and morals thereby creating and establishing a dominant or ruling-class with its own particular '*Weltanschauung*' (a worldview that justifies the *status quo* of bourgeois domination over other social classes of the society) (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 7). They proceed, suggesting that the cultural institutions of the hegemon establish and maintain the political annexation of the subordinate peoples (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 7). Hegemony can thus be viewed as a form of forced unity that finds its realization in concrete social formations. As stated by Laclau and Mouffe (2001: x) 'hegemony is achieved when a particular social force assumes the representation of a totality that is radically incommensurable with it'. Detlev Vagts (2001: 843) agrees with the views presented above, his chosen example of hegemony being America's overbearing influence in post-colonial or rather contemporary international law. According to Vagts (2001) America is the dominant power of and in contemporary international law due to America now being:

...the dominant power in the world, more dominant than any since Rome. Accordingly, America is in a position to reshape norms, alter expectations and create new realities. How? By unapologetic and implacable demonstration of will (Vagts, 2001: 843).

He continues, suggesting that the idea of America as the hegemon of contemporary international law is further illustrated by a session of the annual meeting of the American Society of International Law in 2000 being dedicated to 'the single superpower' (Vagts, 2001: 843). This is what is meant by hegemony; the total and perhaps often unquestionable rule of one entity or discourse over another. Martin Parker (2002: 184) suggests that contemporary management discourse can be understood as a generalized technology of control that functions exactly in these

hegemonic terms. According to Spicer and Bohm (2007: 1668-1671) there are two crucial moments involved in the creation of hegemonic dominance, *articulation* and *struggle*. Considering their importance, each needs to be treated separately.

The *articulation* of hegemonic management practices

With regards to hegemony's articulation, 'hegemony is established when a singular discourse stands in for the whole' (Spicer and Bohm, 2007: 1668-1671). In this understanding a discourse – whether it be singular, such as a specific trend in managerial theory, or total, such as in colonial rule – can claim sovereignty over other discourses or at their total exclusion. In respect to managerial theory directly, Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 130) supplement this, stating that:

management hegemony is achieved when the exhortations of management are thought to represent the concerns of all different actors in an organization. This can only come to pass when 'chains of equivalence' are formed between a variety of different, sometimes competing, discourses.

As a result, the political, social and economic discourses of the *hegemon* are implemented into or rather imposed upon all the subordinate entities whose traditional discourses are forcefully dispelled. In the South African context these transformations have been regulated both historically and economically. As a number of authors now assume – see Lutz *et al.* (2009), Mbigi *et al.* (1995), Shutte (1993), Wiredu (1996) and Jackson (2002) – managerial theory in South Africa has become, in many cases, a forced imposition upon the beliefs and morals of those who fall under its mandate.

The *struggle* to go beyond hegemony

However, hegemony also implies the notion of struggle. It is not the case, simply put, that all hegemonic discourses can supersede others without generating questioning and resistance. Returning to the definition provided by Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 130), after careful scrutiny it is noticeable that a hegemonic discourse will always remain 'radically incommensurable with the whole'. This implies that a hegemonic discourse or practice will always be questioned and will always guard itself against this questioning. This is primarily due to the fact that hegemonic discourses will never be able to fully and completely dispel those discourses traditionally revered by the dominated society; they will never be able to 'perfectly map onto and describe the [dominated society in] totality' (Spicer and Bohm, 2007: 1671). There is then always the possibility for resistance and critique. Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 111) further this point,

suggesting that ‘any dominant discourse will remain necessarily incomplete’. Attention is drawn to another highly pertinent point, namely because a dominant discourse is incomplete, it is in fact a momentary discourse, contingent on the maintained dominance of the *hegemon*. Therefore one could suggest an incumbent management discourse to be that tool or technology of control, modelled around the dominant (hegemonic) discourse. A discourse is as much a *strategy of power* as it is a *means of articulating knowledge*. Thus, this gives credence to the notion suggested by Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 65) that an element of resistance and revolt exists within any hegemonic empire or regime.

As stated before, contemporary management discourse is understood to be the generalized technology of control, which functions as a hegemonic model of organization. What this means, as argued by Spicer and Bohm (2007: 1672), is that western discourses of economic management have been amalgamated with almost all other discourses, ranging from medicine to public administration and social development and construction. This has resulted in western economic management discourses having assumed a hegemonic supremacy or *sovereignty*; western economic management discourse has become the only credible language through which anything related to the dynamics of the workforce and question of productivity is routinely explained. However, as pointed out by both Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 65) and Spicer and Bohm (2007: 1672), the hegemony of management is fragile and open to contestation and resistance inherent in the notion of the hegemony itself. The notion that any hegemonic construction contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction, expansion or the potential to revolutionize it is the first basic assumption of this study. The second is that this notion suggests a strong link between, on the one hand, the failure of both the former and contemporary South African governments’ attempts to attain their set economic goals and, on the other hand, the fact that management practices do not adequately represent the interests of all in a given contemporary organization. In order to understand how one might overcome the borders of a (permeable) hegemonising totality one must first understand its borders. Understanding its borders requires us to recognise western management theory as a particularly modern phenomenon, that is, as a function of western modernity. Any resistance to such management theory will then logically also imply a critique of western modernity

Hegemony and the logic of western modernity

According to TJ Jackson Lears (1985: 590), Mouzelis (1999: 141) and Charles Taylor (1999:156-157), the subject of modernity is a vast one with a plethora of definitions from which to choose. Chris Barker (2005: 444), John Harriss (2000: 325) and Stephen Toulmin (1992: 3-5) insist that before undertaking an investigation into the logic of modernity, one must be conscious of the fact that there exists a distinct difference between modernity and modernization. According to Nicos Mouzelis (1999: 141) the defining characteristics of both modernity and modernization are intrinsically viewed as a hegemonic function of eurocentrism. He continues, suggesting that western societies are hegemonic entities resident at the forefront of the development continuum, far more advanced than their third-world counterparts who can only make any credible improvements via the diffusion and extension of western values, western technology, and western fiscal management systems (Mouzelis, 1999: 141). Barker (2005: 444) insists that the defining characteristic of modernity is the emphasis placed upon economics (and, by extension, the productive individual). Diana Kendall (2007: 11) furthers this view by suggesting that modernization refers to a model of an evolutionary transition from a pre-modern or traditional society to that of one urbanized via the rise and spread of industrialization and education. Continuing, she states that ‘the teleology of modernization is described in social evolutionism theories, existing as a template that has been generally followed by societies that have achieved modernity’ (Kendall, 2007: 11).

According to Taylor (1999: 153) when attempting to analyse the concept of modernity, specifically that of a western architecture, one must first distinguish that which is meant by the word *culture* which reoccurs throughout modernity literature. Taylor (1999: 153) suggests that when one employs the word culture one evokes a picture of a plurality of various human cultures

each in possession of a particular language and set of practices that define specific understandings of personhood, social relations, states of mind/soul, goods and bads, virtues and vices, and the like. These languages are often mutually untranslatable.

He continues, suggesting that a cultural theory of modernity can be said to characterize the transformations that have occurred in the contemporary west in both social and economic spheres (Taylor, 1999: 153). One could suggest that these transformations have occurred mainly in terms of the rise of a new cultural configuration. This view is furthered by Taylor (1999: 153-154) when he states that this new culture can ‘be contrasted to all others, including its own predecessor civilization (with which it obviously has a lot in common)’. Barker (2005: 444) and

Toulmin (1992: 3-5) suggest that, from a western perspective, this new culture can be said to be a *capitalistic* culture, which typically refers to ‘tendencies in intellectual culture, particularly the movements intertwined with secularisation and post-industrial life, such as Marxism, existentialism, and the formal establishment of social science’. This view is solidified by Harriss (2000: 325) when he states that ‘the emergence of modern society above all [is associated] with the development of [industrial] capitalism’ One could suggest that the contemporary relationship between neo-liberal western culture and industrial capitalism is one of an oppressive and disciplinary nature. This is primarily due to capitalism having become a more prominent, if not the dominant, feature of western culture (Barker, 2005: 444). Thus one is able to propose that capitalism acts as the representative of contemporary western modernity. Mouzelis (1999: 141) and Anthony Giddens (1985) supplement this proposal, arguing that fiscal capitalism, coupled with social industrialism and centralized means of violence and surveillance, are the most fundamental dimensions of western modernity. This view is leant weight by Kwasi Wiredu (1996) and Jackson (2002) who both argue that western modernity was forcibly implemented in South Africa *viz-a-viz* the history of colonial interest and the consequences of apartheid.

Taylor (1999: 154) goes on to suggest that, in contrast, an *acultural* theory describes these transformations in terms of some *culture-neutral* operation. To clarify, by this what is meant is the transformation of civilizations achieved via the use of activities not confined to or defined by any specific culture – transformation ‘is defined not in terms of its specific point of arrival but as a general function that can take any specific culture as its input’ (Taylor, 1999: 154). He goes on to suggest that the dominant theories regarding modernity over the last two centuries have been of the acultural sort, hence why, above all, explanations and definitions of modernity in terms of *reason* appear the most popular (Taylor, 1999: 154-155). The implicit argument is of course that the narrative that western modernity has written for itself has been constituted by a defacement; western modernity has, historically, constructed itself as ahistorical. An example of an acultural theory would be one that conceives of modernity as the growth of reason defined in various ways; e.g. the rise of instrumental rationality or the development of a secular outlook (Taylor, 1999: 154). Reason has been positioned so that any critique must itself be reasonable, thus never really questioning the ontological status of the discourse of rationality itself.

Kendall (2007: 11) concurs, suggesting that in sociological critical theory modernization is linked to an overarching process of *rationalisation*. Rationalization, as viewed by Jürgen Habermas (1985: 1-2), refers to ‘the replacement of traditions, values, and emotions as motivators for behaviour in society with rational, calculated ones’. Put differently, a community is emancipated from (according, at least, to the prescriptions of an objective rationality) the shackles of false superstitious and religious beliefs and the stultifying modes of life that accompany them. In other words, what was previously sanctified as the truth dissipates into a form of myth at the same time as the new myth (such as rationality) is claimed sovereign; as a consequence, for instance, the empirical-scientific approach becomes the only valid route available to the community to follow in its endeavours to acquire and ratify any and all forms of knowledge (Taylor, 1999: 156-157). This becomes apparent immediately after the community is freed ‘from the thralldom of a false metaphysics’ (Taylor, 1999: 156-157). This then leads to a marked increase in peoples’ recourse to instrumental rationality, which then provides them with greater rational leeway in the pursuit of more than what is required (Taylor, 1999: 157). Differently put, it allows for the rational accumulation of material possessions, for as Taylor (1999: 157) states, ‘[i]ndividualism [becomes] the normal fruit of human self-regard absent the illusory claims of God, the Chain of Being, or the sacred order of society’.

Second, western modernity is able to reinforce its own legitimacy as sovereign by continually defining the border of what is considered legitimate and that which is not (Taylor, 1999:157). Thus it follows that the behaviour and beliefs of contemporary communities are the result of having been made aware of the fact that certain past beliefs were false. This then gives rise to the philosophical idea of foundationalism, as critiqued by numerous philosophers including Gayatri Spivak (1988: 24) and Taylor (1999: 157). They suggest foundationalism to be the western philosophy that champions the epistemological theory that some beliefs are justifiable purely on the basis that they are founded on indisputable, foundational, or natural, beliefs; Descartes method of doubt standing as paradigmatic here.

It must be noted, as it is by Taylor (1999: 157-160), that whilst certain historical evolutions and developments are credited with having impacted on certain aspects of the phenomenon of modernity, they do not offer complete insight into the entire intricate mechanical workings of modernity. Thus, for the purposes of this culturally dependant/management-oriented thesis, the definition best befitting modernity is one that defines it as the growth of reason that

stems from social and intellectual changes. Taylor (1999: 154) defines western modernity as being a distinct form of transformational discourse resulting from increased mobility, the concentration of populations and the promotion of industrialization, insisting that it is a phenomenon which every culture will most probably be forced to undergo. However, one must bear in mind that at its utmost logical peripheries western modernity's *cracks* and/or *flaws* begin to show; i.e. that its destruction is a function of its own logic. To understand just how these cracks may be exploited for the purposes of a study such as this, it is necessary to briefly turn to the strategy of deconstruction.

'Deconstruction and the possibility of justice'¹

According to Jacques Derrida (cited in Julia Kristeva, 1981: 21), deconstruction is a form of semiotic analysis. However, as noted by Derrida, deconstruction does not conform to the traditional modes of analysis (Kristeva, 1981: 21). The traditional mode of analysis dictates that the form of analysis is predicated on the possibility of dismantling the text (the text here standing for the analytics of meaning) being analyzed into elemental, independent component parts (Kristeva, 1981: 21). Derrida argues that there are no self-sufficient units of meaning in a text due to individual words or sentences in a text only gaining legitimacy in their amalgamation in terms of how they coincide within the larger structure of the text and language itself (Kristeva, 1981: 21). Jean-Louis Houdebine and Guy Scarpetta (1981: 41-42) argue that Derrida proposed the deconstruction of all texts where binary oppositions are used in the construction of meaning and values, insisting that deconstruction should traverse a phase of *overturning* these oppositions. Indeed, deconstruction is a two-step strategy in which the prioritisation of one system of understanding is, firstly, revealed and then critiqued substantively as having already made use of that which it critiques. To do justice to this necessity deconstruction begins from the recognition that, in a classical philosophical opposition, readers are not dealing with peaceful coexistence or textual collusions, but rather, with violent hierarchies, which both give context to and undermine any text (Kristeva, 1981: 28-30).

Derrida goes on, arguing that '[d]econstruction is not a method, and cannot be transformed into one' (Houdebine and Scarpetta, 1981: 41-43). This is because deconstruction

¹ Cornell, D, Rosenfeild, M and Carlson, D. 1992.

does not conform to the regularities of a typical mechanical operation or method. According to Derrida, for one to talk of a method in relation to deconstruction, especially regarding its ethical and political implications, would appear to go directly against the current of deconstruction's philosophical impetus (Richard Beardsworth, 1996: 4). Put differently, deconstruction does not represent a specific set of rules that can be applied to any text in the same way. Therefore, deconstruction is not neatly *transcendental*, because it cannot be considered separate from the contingent empirical facticity of the particular texts that any deconstructive venture must carefully negotiate. Each deconstruction is necessarily different otherwise it would not achieve any *real* work (it would not make visible the possibilities ruled out or not taken up). Hence, Derrida's description of deconstruction as an activity that takes place, as an event (Beardsworth, 1996: 4-6). However, it must be noted, as does Norval (2007: 140-147), that deconstruction cannot be completely *untranscendental*, for this would render it meaningless to speak of two different examples of deconstruction as both being examples of deconstruction. This is backed by John Caputo (1997: 32) who suggests that in order to gain a more simple understanding of the technically complex issue of deconstruction, the analogy of academic literature being entrapped within the confines of a nutshell be employed as it proves highly useful. Caputo (1997: 32) suggests that:

Whenever deconstruction finds a nutshell – a secure axiom or a pithy maxim – the very idea is to crack it open and disturb this tranquility. Indeed, that is a good rule of thumb in deconstruction. That is what deconstruction is all about, its very meaning and mission, if it has any. One might even say that cracking nutshells is what deconstruction is. In a nutshell... Have we not run up against a paradox and an aporia... the paralysis and impossibility of an aporia is just what impels deconstruction, what rouses it out of bed in the morning...

Richard Rorty (1995) simplifies this definition, suggesting that deconstruction not be viewed as an analytical method in the traditional sense but what Derrida terms an 'unclosed, unenclosable, not wholly formalizable ensemble of rules for reading, interpretation and writing'; deconstruction enables a form of analysis that does not depend on fully constituted identities.

The decision

We have in place then the subject of critique – the hegemony of western modernity – and the analytical tools – deconstruction – by which to begin our interrogation of hegemony. However, one cannot simply overrule, overrun, or replace one discursive construct with another. If we recognize that both western managerial practices (and the modernity that informs them) and

Ubuntu (as a critical humanism) are both of themselves, and importantly, *political myths*, then there must be a real reason or a *need* to replace the one with the other. As will be illustrated in the following two chapters, that reason can be summarized as an ethical decision that is an attempt to minimize the dissonance between managerial practices in South Africa and local cultural, religious, and social beliefs. The following two chapters will show that there is indeed a need for a new understanding and praxis within South African managerial theory. There is, however, also an ethical *demand* that this superseding of the one mythology by the other does not itself commit the same mistakes of the previous (western) myth; one cannot simply impose a managerial theory upon others without committing the same dictatorial mistakes of the previous one.

It must be recognized that this thesis therefore makes a conscious decision to both critique the ontology of western managerial practices and offer Ubuntu-led managerial practices as an alternative, but at the same time takes into account that this interaction is something that *can never, nor should never, be complete*. One does not want to simply replace one system of rules with another. This due to two main reasons, namely: some aspects of western managerial practices remain useful, and there some aspects of Ubuntu (as a critical humanism) that are simply not applicable or even desirable in the contemporary work place. The synthesis of these two practices however, *consciously* made as a critique of the monolithic hegemony of western managerial practices (*qua* South Africa's history of colonialism and apartheid), can itself not become monolithic, or self-consciously hegemonic. What follows then is an explanation as to what this replacement should look like, and just how this thesis will attempt to 'replace' (or perhaps more accurately synthesize) the one discourse/praxis with the other. The beginning of this synthesis, critique, and replacement (if only of the name which embodies the hegemony of western managerial practices) begins with a decision; a decision articulated as the recognition that the present managerial practices are not maximally useful, relevant, or ethical, and that a decision needs to be made, not simply to replace the one mythology with another, but to actively engage, in the singular instance, with management practice and theory. This is the only way that what this thesis proposes can be just.

According to Simon Howell (2012: 50), the Decision, *as a concept*, can be usefully thought of through a number of paradigms: as a political act, as a founding moment, and as the beginning of the juridical narrative. For the purposes of this thesis the political paradigm shall be

focused upon. Derrida (cited in Howell, 2012: 50), insists that ‘a decision reveals the active prioritization over one or more distinctions. The decision, then, should also be seen as an exercise in power, the sovereign prioritizing of one option over that of another’. It is implicitly important that this particular point be holistically understood for the locus of this thesis is the conscious decision taken to prioritize Ubuntu management discourse over its western counterpart and that such a prioritization is *just*. Thus, to gain a more substantial understanding of how the decision gains power, I examine the three instances of what Derrida has termed ‘the *aporia* of the rule’, namely the *aporia* of ‘the *epokhe*’ and the rule’, ‘the ghost of the undecidable’ and, ‘the urgency that obstructs the horizon of knowledge’ respectively (Howell, 2012: 285-287). Derrida offers us a framework within which the act of prioritizing one discourse over another can be considered just: it is only when one is fully aware of the consequences of the decision, the need for its singular instance, and the need for the decision to be made from a position of *nowhere* that one can truly be just. As such, it is fruitful to quote him at length:

Our common axiom is that to be just or unjust and to exercise justice, I must be free and responsible for my actions, my behaviour, my thought, my decisions. We would not say of a being without freedom, or at least of one without freedom in a given act, that its decision is just or unjust. But this freedom or this decision of the just, if it is one, must follow a law or prescription, a rule. In this sense, in its very autonomy, in its freedom to follow or to give itself laws, it must have the power to be of the calculable or programmable order, for example as an act of fairness. But if the act simply consists of applying a rule, of enacting a program or effecting a calculation, we might say that it is legal, that it conforms to law, and perhaps, *by metaphor*, that it is just, *but would be wrong to say that the decision was just*.

When one applies this *aporia*, ‘the *epokhe*’ and the rule’, to the crux of this thesis – management discourses – what is made apparent is that the practice of western management discourse in South Africa was – and remains – fundamentally unjust, for it is the practice of a discourse born from the suppressive/oppressive colonial narrative that, in itself, was at the moment of that Decision simply forceful (Howell, 2012: 286). What determined the colonial narratives’ sovereignty was an entire raft of *other* decisions and possibilities – superior firepower, religious indoctrination, etc. The prioritization of one discourse over another must then be made in the singular. I argue, then, for prioritising Ubuntu not in general, as the new hegemony, but only in those singular instances where its practices and core philosophy resonate with the individual situations in which reform is needed.

Progressing onto the second *aporia*, that of ‘the ghost of the undecidable’, whose logical narrative, according to Van Den Heuval (2008: 50-51), runs concurrent to that of the former.

What distinguishes the second *aporia* from the first is that it highlights the difficulty of the act of a just judgment itself. As stated by Derrida (cited in Howell, 2012: 286):

Justice, as law, is never exercised without a decision that *cuts*, that divides. This decision does not simply consist in its final form, for example a penal sanction, equitable or not, in the order of proportional or distributive justice. It begins, it ought to be, by right or in principle, within initiative of learning, reading, understanding, interpreting the rule, and even calculating. For if the calculation is calculation, the decision to calculate is not of the order of the calculable and must not be.

Put differently, in order for a decision to be just it must necessarily be fraught with danger; it must necessarily *be undecidable* and yet also have to *be decided*. This is the feeling of *aporia* that justice must necessarily invoke in any decisions taken for those decisions to be just; one must be *torn* between the two poles minimally constitutive of the decision. In simply asserting the hegemony of Ubuntu one would never experience this feeling of undecidability. One must therefore constantly be aware of one's own prioritizations, of the prioritization of Ubuntu over that of western practices as a political *choice*, open to future interrogation and critical scrutiny. As argued by Derrida, it is at this moment that a given discourse itself gains power (Howell, 2012: 286-287). This is supplemented by Laclau (cited in Norval, 2004: 143), stating that:

[A] decision taken in a terrain of structural undecidables means that the decision is self-grounding [and powerful]: that it consists of repressing possible alternatives that are carried not carried out and that it is internally split. The terrain of the decision, on this account, is the terrain of the political proper...

Finally, the third *aporia*, suggests what Derrida has termed an '*urgency that obstructs the horizon of knowledge*'. One could argue that this *aporia* is perhaps the most poignant, considering the political instability and economic deficiency currently being suffered by the state. As posited by Derrida (cited in Howell, 2012: 287):

a just decision is always required immediately, "right away." It cannot furnish itself with infinite information and the unlimited knowledge of conditions, rules or hypothetical imperatives that could justify it. And even if it did have all that at its disposal, even if it did give itself the time, all the time and all the necessary facts about the matter, the moment of *decision, as such*, always remains a finite moment of urgency and precipitation, since it must not be the consequence or the effect of this theoretical knowledge, of this reflection or this deliberation, since it always marks the interruption of the juridico- or ethico- or politico-cognitive deliberation that precedes it, that must precede it.

These three *aporia* thus provide the structure and ethical mandate for the rest of this thesis. This chapter has explained the logic by which hegemony operates, and the idea that western modernity (especially in the field of managerial practices) has claimed for itself hegemony. In order to prepare the way for asserting the case for Ubuntu I have made the decision to critique

and question this hegemony from within modernity's borders. One cannot simply replace the one myth with the other, but must be attentive to one's own assertions of power and hegemony in all their aporetic complexity.

Conclusion

As summarized by Howell (2012: 288) what Derrida is arguing is that the need for justice is one of urgency, of the present. However, the decision taken cannot come from the present, for that would render it nothing more than a decision. Yet, at the same time, the decision taken cannot come from the past, for then it would be a rule. In this quest for justice (as in just management practices) the analogy with law, the making and application of the law, is useful. According to Howell (2012: 288) the just decision must, simultaneously, occur *beyond* the law whilst also being a function of that law or, as Howell (2012: 288) articulates, 'the performative moment of justice, just like violence, always transcends its own history'. When applied to the South African corporate sphere what this implies is that western management (past) discourse cannot be eradicated and replaced by the Ubuntu management (present) discourse for the latter is a mythical creation, in part a function of the archive of the former. As such, the discourses are inextricably intertwined; Ubuntu can never in itself *be* just or offer justice. However, by identifying the cracks of western management discourse, Ubuntu can act as a guide – a guide for a new management discourse that amalgamates the differing discourses in an *ethical, proficient* manner beneficial to all people, not just a particular group.

To summarise the argument so far, I have outlined the dynamics of management theory, particularly those dynamics of the western managerial discourses employed within the South African corporate sphere. After demonstrating the west's imposition of its traditions and cultures, both social and economic, upon South Africa and its native inhabitants, this thesis has shown western managerial discourses to be hegemonic entities in need of urgent re-evaluation and restructuring. I have argued that deconstruction as an instance of critical theory is perhaps the most suitable tool of choice in the achievement of such a task. Definitions of both deconstruction and critical theory best suited to the need of the thesis have been provided, coupled with a brief, yet concise outline as to how critical theory can be utilized by South African businesses and firms aiming to reorganize their various work functions in more congruent, productive manners. As mentioned above, this thesis does not suggest the replacement of western managerial discourses

with Ubuntu managerial discourses. Rather, it argues for the formation of a new, accommodative, encompassing and ethical managerial discourse guided by the principles that act as the foundational pillars that uphold the African philosophy of Ubuntu. The remainder of this thesis will be devoted to the justification of such a suggestion. This will be done by, firstly, investigating the concept of Ubuntu and, secondly, by investigating two South African companies that employed Ubuntu in the successful re-formulation of their traditional, western-orientated managerial discourses.

Chapter 3: Ubuntu

Introduction

At this stage it is necessary that a more concentrated examination of the Ubuntu concept be made. This will enable me to define and answer some of the more complex questions associated with this study, such as whether Ubuntu is specific to Africa or similar to other forms of humanism and communitarianism. According to Christian Gade (2011: 1) the term Ubuntu has evolved with time, gaining various meanings at different stages during the latter half of the 20th and early 21st century. He goes on to suggest that ‘some authors...define [*Ubuntu*] more broadly: definitions included [*Ubuntu*] as African humanism, a philosophy, an ethic, and as a worldview’ (Gade, 2011: 1). Richard Bell (2002), Reuel Khoza (2006) and Kwasi Wiredu (2002) concur with this view, suggesting that Ubuntu is the African philosophical interpretation of humanism. Clifford Christians (2004: 242) agrees with this view for the most part, arguing in favour of the notion that Ubuntu is a separate, African world-view and belief system that has been in existence for millennia and represents the collective consciousness of the African people. Khoza (2006: xxii) differs, however, by arguing that whilst Ubuntu is an African world-view it is a humanism much like that of the west, only with a stronger communitarian dimension. Nelson Mandela (cited in Khoza, 2006: xxv), lends weight to this view, suggesting that:

Ubuntu is a simple, big idea. It asserts that the common ground of our humanity is greater and more enduring than the differences that divide us. It is so, and must be so, because we share the same fatal human condition... Though we differ across cultures and faiths, and though history has divided rich from poor, free from unfree, powerful from powerless and race from race, we are still all branches of the same tree of humanity.

Khoza (2006: xxii) argues the concept of Ubuntu to be a vast one with scholars engaged in a constant debate centred upon its meaning and supposed *simplicity*. He continues, insisting that many scholars argue that Ubuntu is, in fact, a highly *complex* concept (Khoza, 2006: xxii). This view is contested by Christians (2004) and Sonal Panse (2006) who staunchly advocate the simplicity of Ubuntu. They suggest that it is indistinguishable from any number of western and Asian communitarianisms, particularly those of the Feminist or Ethics of Care variety. According to Christians (2004) and Panse (2006) this then renders it problematic for one to claim that within Ubuntu resides something very peculiar or specific to Africa. One could suggest that Christians and Panse are correct in their view(s) to a certain degree for, as previously stated, Ubuntu is a mythical creation placed in relation to the western academic archive – each of the

mentioned definitions present Ubuntu as a *unique* and *specific* entity. However, as noted by Bruce Edmonds (1996), this is an incorrect assumption due to the *complexity* of ubuntu as an entity: each of the individual components, such as humility, dignity, compassion and generosity to name but a few, which feature in the schematic design of Ubuntu, relies on some aspect(s) of all the other components in order to lend itself and the other components meaning. Differently articulated, Ubuntu's components are interdependent; they are inextricably intertwined. Edmonds (1996) goes on to suggest that the definitions of Ubuntu are interdependent and thus all legitimate. This is in keeping with Derrida's (1990) point that no theory can exist in isolation because every theory, by using language, makes reference to another – the trace. However, that reference making activity is never complete, so there are always slippages of meaning.

Ubuntu forgotten – the impact of Capitalism

According to Christians (2004), Yvonne Mokgoro (1997) and Van Binsbergen (2001), one must keep in mind that the world is in the midst of the process of globalization; contemporary African people have been exposed to a largely western oriented mode of thought and of being. Mokgoro (1997: 363-364) expands upon this view, suggesting that due to globalization, coupled with urbanization and a lack of an ubuntu praxis, the traditional, African cultural values of Ubuntu have been replaced at an astonishing rate and are constantly being forgotten by the older African generation. She goes so far as to suggest that via the loss of their traditional cultural values those of the older generation have in essence lost touch with themselves and, more importantly, one another (Mokgoro, 1997: 363-364). One could suggest that the crux of Mokgoro's (1997: 363-364) argument is that when attempting to re-establish a connection with their traditional values and belief systems, the older generation has to almost re-learn all that it has let slip away or *forgotten*.

In the case of those of the younger African generation, when approaching the subject of Ubuntu, they do so from a heavily disadvantaged position. This view is supported by Van Binsbergen (2001: 62), who furthers it by suggesting that this disadvantage is mainly due to the lack of subject-related guidance and education from the older generation. He goes on to argue that the mentioned disadvantage has resulted in those of the younger generation having to learn their traditional values and belief systems from an unmarked, unclear beginning; as though complete strangers to the philosophical discourse encapsulated by their varying traditions and

cultures (Van Binsbergen, 2001: 62-63). Mokgoro (1997: 363-364) suggests western modernity to be the catalytic agent responsible for the ignition of the perpetually accelerating culture-corrosive process within African societies. As mentioned in the previous chapter, western modernity can be viewed as the sense or the idea that the present is discontinuous with the past: that through a process of social and cultural change (either through improvement, that is, progress, or through decline) life in the present is fundamentally different from life in the past. Mokgoro (1997: 363-364) suggests western modernity as having altered the orientation of African philosophical discourse, suggesting that the thinking, values and belief systems of African societies have been re-structured by modernity. In keeping with the provided definition of modernity, mainly focused upon capitalism, one could suggest that management praxes have had a telling impact on African societies due to the western-oriented schematics of South Africa's corporate sector. South African corporate management positions are primarily occupied by westerners who continue to apply western management practices that subjugate African employees and their value systems.

Remembering Ubuntu: African Consciousness and the difference between Ubuntu and ubuntu

According to Fanon (cited in Diana Fuss, 1994: 20), westerners are privy to what he refers to as *white privilege* due to a process of *racial othering*, stating that, 'not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man' (Fuss, 1994: 20). Fanon (cited in Fuss, 1994: 20), suggests this to be an unconscious psychical and somatic state constituted by mental and physical patterns of engagement with the world that operate without conscious attention or reflection. He continues, suggesting that Africans—for the purposes of this thesis, this term will refer to black people²—find themselves rendered 'objects amongst other objects' and their freedom to choose from a range of options available to them limited by the colour of their skin (Fuss, 1994: 21-22).

Fanon's beliefs and views are asserted by some of this century's most insightful and celebrated philosophers, such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Steve Biko, Lewis R. Gordon and Achille Mbembe. The combined literature of these and other philosophers resulted in the construction of

² There is some debate around the ontological pairing of 'black' and 'African' that is beyond the scope of this thesis. For further analyses, see Ardent, H. 1958; Asante, M. K. 1987, 1988, 1994; Eze, E. C. 1997; Gordon, L. 2007 and Houtondji, P. 1996.

the philosophical discourse referred to as *Black Consciousness*. According to Paul Taylor (2004: 227-242) the majority of the world's populace are guided by the faulty notion that since the western view of the world is the most commonly employed, it must be the only rational, and thus correct view. This notion is what Fanon and Biko take greatest issue with. They view those who have been duped (Africans) into believing such and those who dupe (westerners and self-loathing Africans) with a sympathetic, yet contemptuous gaze with Biko (1987: 66) stating that:

It is not as if [westerners] are allowed to enjoy privilege only when they declare their solidarity with the ruling party. They are born into privilege and are nourished by and nurtured in the system of ruthless exploitation of [African] energy.

This is affirmed by Fanon (cited in Fuss, 1994: 28-29) and Gordon (2007:126-130), who argue that in order for the Colonized Individuals to gain true freedom from all that bound them, Africans are obliged to assume responsibility for their own freedom and not rely upon that and those who imprison them to grant them liberation. Differently worded, Africans are faced with the daunting yet mandatory task of 'transcending the dialectics of seeking white recognition' (Gordon, 2007: 126-130). This view is supported by Du Bois (cited in Gordon, 2007: 126-130), who argues that African studies are severely flawed for they often regard Africans *as* the problem people of the world, instead of people *with* problems in this world.

Gordon (2007: 121) goes on to suggest that the west has constructed a world from which the African has been denied access and, thus, left 'without a place [upon] which to stand'. This endless tenure of segregation and degradation has resulted in Africans having become alienated from themselves, an act which Mbembe (2002: 239-273) refers to as 'self-division'. Having lost their sense of self-familiarity, to a point where they have lost all bearing of themselves, Africans have been relegated to a lifeless form of identity or *objecthood*. Put differently, Colonized Individuals have become less in tune with their consciousness or, as Mbembe (2002: 239-273) suggests, Africans have lost *recognition* of themselves. According to Fanon (cited in Fuss, 1994: 22-26), Africans have to release themselves from the shackles binding them to a form of false consciousness that westerners deserve better service/treatment simply because of the colour of their skin. Khoza (2006: 33) agrees completely with these views, suggesting that Africans must start to believe in an 'authentic African self, not blackness as a negative reflection of whiteness' (Khoza, 2006: 33).

In summary, the hegemonic construction of Africans as uniquely conscious presupposes that this conscious group of people can subscribe to a *reinvention*, which itself is only

meaningful when positioned in contrast to that which is conceptualized as western. Neither is ontologically stable or persistent, contrary to the mythology they construct for themselves. It is at this juncture that this thesis stands. Having taken the above stated into account one could suggest that by re-inventing the praxis of ubuntu as Ubuntu, Africans would be performing crucial, interlinked functions, these being, for instance, the consolidation of African self-consciousness, which could promote personal and communal confidence throughout the nation, enabling the utilization of a greater amount of labour, which may have real world consequences such as increased productivity and an increase in the nation's GDP. Simultaneously, western individuals are under an obligation to cease believing and demanding differential treatment due to their being western. Hence the term, *African Consciousness*, derived from the amalgamation of the Black Consciousness philosophy with Ubuntu discourse and praxis.

Ubuntu: Theory (Ubuntu) and Praxis (ubuntu)

As touched upon in chapter 1, and supported by Praeg (2008) and Jason Van Niekerk (2007), one could suggest that when examining Ubuntu one must be conscious of the recurring error of identifying it as a single entity when, in fact, it can be split into two distinct entities or facets. The analogy of the Hydra, a mythological Greek beast comprised of a single body but multiple heads, provides a fitting image of what is being suggested: One could suggest the archive of Ubuntu-literature as being the *body*, whilst the different interpretations of that literature represent the united, yet particular *heads* of the *beast* articulated in African philosophy. Continuing with the Hydra analogy, the contemporary image of Ubuntu is, in a manner, its own particular head (Head 3), for it represents an amalgamation of Ubuntu as academic, theorized entity (Head 1) and ubuntu praxis as lived experience informed by culture and tradition (Head 2). This view is supported by Praeg (2008:368-369) and Van Niekerk (2007), who argue that, with the passage of time, Ubuntu's multiple facets have lost their particularity and it is now a common fallacy to uncritically assume that the academically portrayed picture of Ubuntu is a *verbatim* account or representation of ubuntu in *praxis*.

Thus, for the analytical purpose of this thesis, the entity Ubuntu will be divided into two facets, Ubuntu and ubuntu: the latter referring to the practical facet and the former referring to the theoretical facet. I employ lists in my quest to identify certain differences between the facets as the architecture of lists is simple to design, maintain and alter.

1. Ubuntu, which is founded upon and, relies on, western linguistics and philosophies to express and define itself. Thaddeus Metz (2007a: 331) states this is ‘probably the dominant interpretation of African ethics in [western] literature’. In order to study a complex discourse such as Ubuntu one first has to take its complexity as *a priori*. Second, one has to be highly sensitive to the historical conditions of the discourse’s original bearings. One can work towards an understanding of its positivistic definition by the negation of its founding discourse/archive. According to Van Binsbergen (2001: 62-64) the systematization of ubuntu as Ubuntu, the praxis as allegedly indigenous philosophy, is an *etic* (culture-common/from the outside looking in) practice that remotely, analytically and transformingly represents *emic* (culture-specific/from the inside looking out) practices that take place in peripheral contexts in present day South Africa.
2. Contrary to Ubuntu, then, ubuntu, according to Praeg (2008), can be said to encapsulate all African traditions and customs that will never be fully recognized and understood by those not of African descent. It represents shared experiences embedded in culture and traditions, an underlying affinity only recognized and felt by Africans.

Fleshing out Ubuntu: African versus western humanism

Due to the boundaries of this thesis, I am unable to compare Ubuntu with all other similar communitarian, ethical and humanist traditions, which each have their own definitions and, in so much, their own connotations. Thus, one example will have to suffice. I will differentiate Ubuntu from western humanism. As stipulated by Khoza (2006: xix), what guided/regulated all human transaction in pre-colonial, traditional African states was a form of African *humanism* commonly referred to as Ubuntu. This view is supported by both Bell (2002) and Wiredu (2002), who suggest Ubuntu to be the African philosophical interpretation of humanism. Khoza’s views are supported and furthered by Johann Broodryk (2006: 52) who argues that ‘[Ubuntu] is derived from a world view in which the basic values of humanness like caring, sharing, respect and compassion are of cardinal importance in order to practically “live”’ (Broodryk, 2006: 52). This notion is leant considerable weight by the concurring views of the Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who defines Ubuntu as:

[T]he essence of being human. It speaks of the fact that my humanity is caught up and is inextricably bound up in yours. I am human because I belong. It speaks about wholeness, it speaks about compassion. A person with *ubuntu* is welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, willing to share. Such people are open and available to others, willing to be vulnerable, affirming of others, do not feel threatened that others are able and good, for they have a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that they belong in a greater whole. They know that they are diminished when others are humiliated, diminished when others are oppressed, diminished when others are treated as if they were less than who they are. The quality of *ubuntu* gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanize them (Tutu cited in Dalene Swanson, 2007: 55).

Khoza (2006: xix) and Broodryk (2006: 52) suggest that the origins of Ubuntu lie within the African concept of *being*, which dictates that all of humanity has a common origin and *ipso facto* belongs together, thereby creating a common bond and destiny for humanity. Rearticulated, the individual, whilst having been absorbed into the interdependent collective, retains an independent identity as an empirical being; ‘I am because you are, and you are, because we are’ (Khoza, 2006: xx) a derivative of the African proverb ‘*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*’. Khoza (2006: xix-xxiii) continues, suggesting Ubuntu to be an African belief system that emphasizes the belief that the collective supersedes the individual and that interdependence is a superior value to independence. Karsten and Illa (2001: 607) support this view, suggesting Ubuntu to be a form of humanness, ‘a pervasive spirit of caring and community, harmony and hospitality, respect and responsiveness, that individuals and groups display for one another’. According to Khoza (2006: xxi) Ubuntu can be said to be ‘a philosophy or worldview that constitutes the spiritual cradle of African religion and culture [and] finds expression in virtually all walks of life – social, political and economic’. This definition of Ubuntu is given further credence by Wiredu (1996) who defines Ubuntu as an African philosophy that views society as a combined entity and does not allow for opposition between the populace. This, according to Khoza (2006: xxii), is what spared African societies from the class struggles characterized by Western and Eastern history, for ‘social organization made alignments along class lines impossible’ (Khoza, 2006: xxii). All members of the post-colonial African community were able to speak on an equal level regarding political affairs.

Khoza (2006: xxii) does however acknowledge that although there existed political equality in traditional communities, there were those individuals who were able to accumulate greater wealth than others. For example, there were those individuals who reaped greater crop harvests and owned more heads of cattle than others. What differentiates Ubuntu economics from its western counterpart is that the latter only promoted the accumulation of wealth and did

not recognize, or rather ignored, those who were struggling (Khoza, 2006: xxii). He goes on to suggest that Ubuntu economics was founded upon the ideology of *ukusisa*, an Nguni term literally translated to mean ‘lending with the view of enabling’ (Khoza, 2006: xxii) – those of greater means would aid those in need. For example, a wealthier family would lend a poorer family a heifer cow, instructing the deprived family to look after the cow as if it were their own, to milk it and use it to till their lands. Furthermore, the wealthier family would give the poorer family the cow’s every second or third offspring, thus simultaneously enriching both families, economically and spiritually (Khoza, 2006: xxii).

Whilst economically oriented, it is of considerable importance for this thesis to note the political view of Ubuntu. One could suggest that Ubuntu advocates a policy of political consensus, rather than one of majority rule. Wiredu (1996: 183-190) lends weight to this view, suggesting that in Ubuntu-oriented communities one did not choose to participate in the politics of the community. This was due to one’s participation automatically assumed due to him/her belonging to the community. He furthers his view by suggesting that there existed a concrete hierarchy within post-colonial African society concisely portrayed by the manner one addressed elders and youths: one would not address an elder as one would a child and the opinion of an adolescent did not carry as much weight as that of a village elder (Wiredu, 1996: 183-190). Khoza (2006) and Wiredu (1996) suggest that the post-colonial African hierarchal system was founded upon the concept of *acquired wisdom*: the elderly, through their longer inhabitation within the community, possessed a greater knowledge of society and its workings. This lent significant weight to their opinions and views. It must, however, be noted that an elder was not considered as being *better* than the adolescent – both were regarded as human beings but the *humanity* (knowledge, communal and individual experience) of the elder was more substantial, thus resulting in the elder’s opinion carrying greater weight (Wiredu, 1996: 183-190).

This is where the issue of consensus in Ubuntu politics becomes most prominent: whilst it is an accepted fact that consensus may not always be achieved in a community, the community could always persevere in the quest for its achievement. Wiredu (1996: 183-190) gives credence to this argument referring to the example of western minority group neglect. As argued by Wiredu (1996: 183-190) and Khoza (2006: xix-xxiii) African minority groups were not simply overlooked, as is the case in western majoritarian systems; the views and constructive input(s) of African minorities were fully acknowledged and recognized in communal decision forums.

Khoza (2006: xix-xxiii) and Wiredu (1996: 183-190) argue that this was the founding notion upon which the African consensual democratic system of politics (Ubuntu) was based, rendering it institutionally different from the western participatory democratic system of which the master trope has always been consent, however hedged around with ‘checks and balances’ that majority system may be.

Having examined Ubuntu as a humanism of the African sort, it is now possible to explore some of the differences that exist between African and western humanism. According to Jeanne Woods (2003), broadly conceived, African and western humanism differ in two respects: Firstly, as posited by Bell (2002) and Wiredu (2002), African humanism views the rights of the collective as more fundamental to those of the individual. This is in contrast with some – if not all – forms of western humanism which are, as argued by Mzamo Mangaliso (2001) and Broodryk (2006), often, but not always, founded upon the notion that individuals are constitutively prior to the social. Although this is not true of all non-African humanisms, an argument can be made for a stronger communitarian dimension in African humanisms that in its western counterpart. In other words, although both ‘philosophical anthropologies’ (Gordon, 2007: 123) – and by this I mean anthropological conditions derived from philosophical thought – emphasize the harmonizing of interests amongst members of society as paramount, African humanism adopts a far stronger communitarian outlook than western humanism, which is relatively more restricted in its view of the communitarian principle.

The second respect with regard to which African humanism differs from its western counterpart, according to Mangaliso (2001) and Broodryk (2006), is the importance attributed by African humanism to those power relations that determine who counts as human in the first place; African humanism will always start with an interrogation of these power relations. Shutte (1993: 46) suggests that the praxis of Ubuntu advocates the notion that the self and the world are inextricably united within the parameters of a complex matrix regulated by a principle of reciprocal relations in which subject and object become indistinguishable, thus resulting in the substitution of ‘I think, therefore I am’ with ‘I participate, therefore I am’ (Shutte, 1993: 46). As argued by Shutte (1993: 47), the western Cartesian conception of individuality suggests that:

the individual exists prior to, or separately and independently from the rest of the community or society and chooses to move from solitary to solidarity, from independence to interdependence, from individuality *vis-a-vis* community to individuality *a la* community.

Simplified, a western individual's existence is conceptualised as independent from that of community and an individual chooses whether or not to assimilate him/herself into community. In contrast, an African individual's existence is interdependent with that of his/her society. This is due to the Ubuntu-related notion that African individuals born into African communities are automatically part of the community and will want to remain within the community due to the community completing their state of being and their state of being bettering the community.

Ubuntu: re-inventing Ubuntu to suit contemporary South Africa

Karsten and Illa (2001: 93) insist that one has to recognize that there exists a sharp distinction between management concepts and their implementation as praxes within varying societies. Rearticulated, the same management concepts are differently constituted by varying social groups that perpetrate, use and, apply them. This then implies that management concepts are not single, uniform or relatively unchanging entities. Rather, they are like prisms: entities of numerous refractory surfaces, or rather languages, with each language ratified by the environment within which it is comprehensible. As stated by Karsten and Illa (2001: 101):

in Africa, mutual legitimation, reconciliation, and harmonious convergence between formal and informal institutions are essential to institutional relevance, enforceability, sustainability and performance.

Thus, African managers are faced with two tasks, firstly acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills required for competent and sound management practice and, secondly, they also have to convert this acquired knowledge into an applicable, practical linguistic discourse that will prove useful in their managerial endeavours. Mbigi (1997: 38) and Karsten and Illa (2001: 93) suggest this linguistic discourse to be Ubuntu. Mbigi (1997: 38) furthers this view, suggesting that the acceptance of Ubuntu as a management theory might aid the African business community in its bid to move beyond the situation where mimetic and coercive knowledge transfer mechanisms dominate when attempting to incorporate contemporary management discourses.

As stipulated by Karsten and Illa (2001: 93), Ubuntu, viewed and accepted as a management theory, could play a crucial role in the improvement of knowledge transferred between western and African states. This may then foresee the development of a system of *partnership* between all of the involved states, some gaining greater economic and management knowledge and expertise, whilst the trading position of others is strengthened or solidified

(Karsten and Illa, 2001: 93). This is mainly due to the characteristics of management theory as mentioned in Chapter 2. One could propose that the possible development and improvement that could be achieved via the implantation and utilization of an Ubuntu management discourse is evident in contemporary corporate South Africa. This proposition is asserted by Karsten and Kees Van Veen (cited in Karsten and Illa, 2001: 94), who cite a number of well-known South Africa business firms – such as Eskom SA, South African Airways (SAA), Cashbuild SA, CS Holdings and Durban Metrorail – which employed Ubuntu as a guide in the criticism of their traditional management discourses and praxes, and then utilized Ubuntu as their new management discourse creating more amicable and prosperous work environments.

Ubuntu: an uncharted Place

Whilst in agreement with these views, Janz (2009: 14) argues that one has to be mindful of the fact that it is conceptually difficult to construct an argument for Ubuntu's philosophical uniqueness as a critique of incumbent managerial discourses vis-à-vis other western philosophies like communitarianism or political models like participatory democratic processes. He then introduces the notion of a philosophy of *Place* and *Space*, insisting that one be conscious to the fact that there exists a distinct difference between the two: Space is often viewed as being allied with a function of modernity, whilst Place is viewed as more traditional (Janz, 2009: 12-14). He continues, stating that Place is 'the conglomeration of many different elements within [a] locale [...] Places are the aggregates of meaningful experiences encoded into material or legible structures' (Janz, 2009: 14). The analogy of Place as being a non-reductionist dialogue is often used in the description of Place. According to Janz (2009:13-15) whilst there exist topemes – what he refers to as the smallest intelligible unit of Place – there are assemblies/ aggregations (the search for differing and dignified cultural experiences) which allow philosophical traditions to respond to both the promises and threats of new Places, whilst retaining their integrity by remaining true to the debts of the past and present, as well as the duties of the present and near future. Simplified, Place(s) can be defined as 'aggregates of meaningful [philosophical] experiences encoded into material or legible [traditional] structures' (Janz, 2009: 14). Places are able to retain their integrity by remaining true to the debts of the past (e.g. western management discourse) as well as by respecting the duties of the present and near future (e.g. western management discourse assimilated with Ubuntu) (Janz, 2009: 13-15).

According to Janz (2009: 246-248) philosophy – in this case managerial philosophy – is encapsulated within questions that make particular concepts/systems viable, not in its dogmas, proponents or history. It is because of this that the philosophical scholar is able to regard philosophy as an active, serious entity. He persists, arguing that for there to be any progress made in the answering of African managerial related questions and all that they entail, one needs to reflect upon and review the questions being asked and, if necessary, re-ask them (Janz, 2009: 246-248). He continues, arguing that if this reflection were achieved the conversations that African managerial philosophy has with other managerial philosophies, pursuits, disciplines, and other sets of commitments, could possibly yield positive results (Janz, 2009: 249).

Ubuntu: political fad vs. economic catalyst

As stipulated above, the broad dissemination of a theory is what accredits it with viable credibility or notoriety. However, as suggested by Karsten and Illa (2001: 99) once a theory begins to spread, it may acquire different definitions from the varying groups of people who interpret it and, thus, use it according to their interpretation to accomplish different things. Worded differently, management theories are appropriated and reconfigured selectively by various groups, each orientated by their own particular set of interests. This re-iterates the notion made above of theories having to be flexible entities so as to accommodate different interpretations. Karsten and Illa (2001: 99), supplemented by Mokong Mapadimeng (2007: 90-91), advocate the notion that with the passage of time, this could lead to a great deal of confusion and cause a degeneration of a theory into a buzzword or *fad*. Karsten and Illa (2001: 99) continue, suggesting that the ultimate result of this degenerative process could be the replacement of the discredited theory with a new, acceptable theory. For example, there was a time when the notion of Ubuntu being implemented into the South African work place was fashionable, but this time has passed and, in retrospect, it now seems to have been no more than a fad, a moment of cultural nationalism that followed the country's transition to democracy (Christoph Marx, 2002: 49). This is illustrated by the incorporation of Ubuntu into the new Constitution of South Africa as well Ubuntu's appliance in the Truth and Reconciliation Court (TRC) hearings (Marx, 2002: 49). Secondly, much of what was postulated as Ubuntu or African humanism back then was in essence an ethno-philosophy of the worst kind – that is, the belief

that one can capture the essence of what 'being African' means and represent that in easy, binary oppositional terms to what 'being western' means (Marx, 2002: 49).

One must, however, note that the critique offered above is biased towards the political and not the managerial aspect of Ubuntu. Most South African companies and economic organizations were, and still are, western in orientation, indicative of the notion that the idea of Ubuntu as a management theory never gained popularity; its popularity was solely political. Whilst the mentioned political issues surrounding Ubuntu aid in the unhindered progress of this thesis they will not be further engaged; focus shall be maintained on the commercial issue. This thesis does not in any way propose that the replacement of incumbent managerial discourses and praxes with Ubuntu is all that is required for the revitalization of the inert South African economy.

Conclusion

In conclusion, one could suggest Ubuntu to represent a wider worldview or belief system rather than just a set of discernible characteristics. Ubuntu's schematic design renders it more malleable to change than other discourses, allowing it to adjust to the contemporary needs/demands of the corporate sector in a manner more proficient and efficient than that of its traditional counterpart (western management discourse). This amalgamation could be referred to as what John Hailey (2008: 16) deems a 'vision', or in this case a *united vision*, which is developed through individuals' combined compassion and caring. When related to the South African corporate sphere one could suggest that by instilling the value of compassion and caring in all work environments one might create a climate of collegiality, which might generate a more trustful and accepting attitude throughout the workforce. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the discourses are inextricably intertwined and, as such, Ubuntu can never in itself *be* just or offer justice. This thesis proposes the use of Ubuntu management discourse in the process of western management deconstruction and proposes Ubuntu as a legitimate, viable and ethical guide in the creation of a new management discourse or Place that amalgamates the differing discourses in a manner beneficial to all.

Chapter 4: Ubuntu in the workplace: a discussion of two intervention strategies

Introduction

According to Henk Van Den Heuval (2008: 51), there was a time when the South African corporate sphere was captivated by the philosophy of Ubuntu, illustrated by various companies' attempts – the majority of which failed – to incorporate it into their traditional modes of operation and management practices. This failure was primarily due to Ubuntu having been transformed by colonialism, apartheid and globalization. As such, one could suggest, as does Van Den Heuval (2008: 50-51), that the Ubuntu postulated at that particular time was no longer *purely* African; that Ubuntu was viewed more as a 'western construct' (Van Den Heuval, 2008: 51). According to Van Den Heuval (2008: 50-51) this is illustrated by the South African corporate sphere having remained, for the most part, western in both structure and practice after a decade of democratic rule.

According to Van Den Heuval (2008: 50-51) the challenge facing the South African corporate sphere is a direct yet daunting one, that being the challenge of assimilating traditional, incumbent western managerial discourses with a more accommodating African managerial discourse (Ubuntu). He continues, suggesting that many authors assert Ubuntu as being accommodating and accepting of all ethnicities and cultures and that it attempts to unify different discourses in a viable manner under the ethical banner of humanity (Van Den Heuval, 2008: 51-53). Nussbaum (2003) and Visser (1997) agree with this view, arguing that in order to contribute to revitalizing and re-igniting the inert economy, the corporate sphere must deconstruct its managerial dimension and then re-invent it. They suggest that Ubuntu could act as the facilitating tool throughout both of these processes for Ubuntu teaches that everyone and everything has an intrinsic *higher* value that never depreciates. This value is noted, respected and guarded by one and all. Khoza (2006) and Van Den Heuval (2008) argue that Ubuntu teaches that all within a community are *actors*, in that they live *through* rather than *by* Ubuntu. Khoza (2006) and Van Den Heuval (2008) continue, insisting that Ubuntu also teaches that all are *observers*, in that all are responsible for the correction and assistance of others in the community. One could suggest, with the support of Khoza (2006) and Van Den Heuval (2008), that when applied to the workplace, Ubuntu could foster an environment wherein all are viewed as one and

encouraged to work together: if one person were to fail or achieve major success in his/her individual contributions to the organization, the consequences/rewards would be felt/shared by all – the Ubuntu concept of individuality (I participate, therefore I am) could play a critical role in the consolidation of the general work place, ultimately leading to a more proficient and stable economic sector. Employees would, in effect, be managing themselves. The role of the manager would then be to act as an authority who *maintains* the positive and profitable sentiment, as well as *promoting* greater social interaction and cultural understanding amongst all. Van Den Heuval (2008: 47) reiterates this view, stating that:

[Ubuntu] implies a more dynamic attitude, distancing from pristine notions of a supposedly unchanged nature of what constitutes ‘Africanness’ throughout times. Instead, African identity formation [achieved via the employment of Ubuntu discourse] is seen as a more or less open-ended process, without *a priori* images of what Africans should feel like, should be like, or would have been like in pre-colonial times. African identity formation thus defined also implies an increased awareness of processes of cultural diffusion within Africa and on a global level.

He goes on to suggest that Ubuntu does in no manner whatsoever oppose capitalistic development and that African management flourishes more than it flounders in the capitalist business environment (Van Den Heuval, 2008: 51).

According to Aloysius Newenham-Kahindi (2009: 88-90), after the abolishment of apartheid and the introduction of democracy to South Africa, many fiscal organizations and companies attempted to re-vamp their prolifically white infrastructures and operational methods by assimilating Ubuntu into their traditional, western managerial discourses. As suggested by Nussbaum (2003), Visser (1997) and Khoza (2006), a number of businesses, such as ABSA, Standard Bank (Stanbic), Vodacom South Africa and Sanlam African Life Assurance achieved this in two stages. First, through the recognition and acceptance of the fact that there existed a racially motivated managerial disparity in the corporate sphere, which was negatively affecting business performance on the whole and, thus, severely impairing the growth of the South African economy. Second, that in order to simultaneously restrain and dispel growing work tensions, the incumbent managerial discourses had to be re-engineered and synchronized with an Ubuntu managerial discourse (Khoza, 2006: 158-160). According to Visser (1997: 1-2) the mentioned businesses revised their performance appraisal systems so that they became:

geared to rewarding team achievements whilst also rewarding individual contributions to the improvement of the functioning of the team as a whole. In this way, the poor and mediocre performers [were] encouraged to raise their standards, in contrast to the situation where higher performers lower[ed] their standards to maintain their identification with the group

The result of this was the development and implementation of effective and efficient human resource management (HRM) practices that diffused stressful high-performance work practices or HPWP's (Newenham-Kahindi, 2009: 88-90). In essence, these companies criticized themselves using Ubuntu as the tool of criticism. According to Van Den Heuval (2008: 51), it is possible for Ubuntu to serve as an ethical criticism of western management practices as it is:

opposed to 'Eurocentric management' while simultaneously seeking a 'mixed marriage' into a multicultural family: the reconciliatory African wants to marry a mean yet attractive European or American bride, to live happily ever after in a peaceful and prosperous South Africa.

One could suggest that the mentioned companies assimilated Place theory – more specifically the Place of Ubuntu – into the managerial schematics, the result of which was magnanimously positive. To validate this argument, Nussbaum (2003) and Visser (1997), supported by Khoza (2006), cite Cashbuild SA, a South African Multinational Corporation (MNC) and Eskom, a state-owned enterprise that operates in over 33 African states, which have both successfully managed, for the most part, this self-criticism. According to Visser (1997) and Nussbaum (2003) these companies managed to integrate their standard business patterns with one more culturally relative at a time when such a scheme was viewed precariously by all.

The focus of this chapter will be the analysis of a variety of specific, topic-related problems – analysis of the companies as a whole exceeds the scope of this thesis – identified within the management styles of Cashbuild SA as well as Eskom. The aim of which being the revelation of how Ubuntu, as a form of self-critical humanism (as discussed in Chapter 3), was successfully incorporated into their managerial discourses, resulting in an increase in fiscal revenue, social harmony and group solidarity in both companies. In order to gain a more holistic perspective as to how this was achieved, it is necessary that a brief analysis of each of the cited businesses histories be conducted, beginning with that of Cashbuild SA.

Cashbuild SA: A brief company history

According to Nussbaum (2003) and Visser (1997) contemporary Cashbuild SA owes its existence to Albert Koopman – a white Afrikaans entrepreneur who described himself as a 'White African' – entirely opening himself up to the company employees, and to their cultural orientations in the hopes of learning more about what he described as 'African culture' (Koopman, 1991: 60). This was done mainly to increase his personal understanding of the company's majority, African workforce, stating that:

After spending extended periods of time amongst our black employees, living amongst them, experiencing life within their communities, and consulting them directly, [he] found that [he] had to review [his] whole understanding of the people [he] employed (Koopman, 1991: 10).

Koopman (ibid) believed that a better understanding of the African workforce would provide him with a more holistic idea as to how they saw their relationship with the company and its incumbent philosophies. After reviewing his understanding of the African workforce, he realized that he had to, firstly, formulate and, secondly, implement more culturally objective company interests so as to mend existent company tensions, stating that:

[he] was forced to seek a way in which [they] could spell out and determine [their] objective common interest in the production of commodities (customer service) to replace capital's pure interest in increasing profits (ibid).

Koopman (ibid) also came to realize that he was dealing with a *spiritual* people; he came to realize that African people's spirituality governed every aspect of their lives. By spirituality, Koopman (ibid) was specifically referring 'to those elements of the person which give him/her a sense of worth in their life: dignity, pride, aspects of their indigenous culture, creative abilities, mind, intellect, and wit' (ibid). Visser (1997: 2) solidifies this view, suggesting that '[African] achievement is carefully managed through [a] strict [spirituality] so as to enhance the common good and maintain cohesion of the unit'. As such, Koopman (1991: 10-11) realized that African spirituality – the force governing the majority of the company's workforce – was a critical, yet unappreciated, or rather *unrecognized*, aspect of the company's vitality and congruency. He also realized that the atmosphere in which the African operated was an essential aspect of business prosperity, stating that:

The degree to which these elements will become spiritualized at work will depend largely on the type of organization imposed over the individual, and on the degree to which such an organization allows the expression of these basic human elements (Koopman, 1991: 10).

This view is supported by Van Den Heuvel (2008: 45-46) who suggests Ubuntu to be 'more of a spiritual process concerned with what is fair and unfair, rather than with what is right and wrong', advocating more humane, trans-cultural business operation systems be implemented into the company's traditional operational infrastructure'. Koopman (1991: 88) insists that a trans-cultural business infrastructure would promote what he describes as *freedom of enterprising*, which he defines as 'a spiritual human value manifested in the nature of work within communities' (Koopman, 1991: 88). With the hope of achieving this in mind, he instilled participative management principles that radically changed the company's traditional management discourse, with Koopman (1991: 10-11) stating that '[he] had to design an

organization which was truly free so that the cooperation between all individuals in fact became its own sustainable social form'. In order to gain a more thorough and precise perspective of Cashbuild SA's core tenets – one of the most critical of these being Ubuntu – it is necessary that one begin with a brief exploration of the company's history.

As posited by Koopman (1991: 5-7) the company was originally a wholesaler registered as Cashbuild Cash and Carry Building Materials Merchants in 1978. Highly successful in its early years, by 1982 the company had managed to expand its bases to over 12 outlets scattered across South Africa with outlets being situated mainly in the rural landscapes due to the company's focus on the rapidly expanding black housing market. The first listings of company shares appeared on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) Securities Exchange in 1986 (Koopman, 1991: 5-7). Today Cashbuild SA is the largest retailer of building materials and associated products, selling directly to cash-paying customers through its 191 stores situated in South Africa as well as other African states, namely Namibia, Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland and Malawi (Koopman, 1991: 5-7). Currently, the company, comprised of Cashbuild Limited as well as the operating subsidiaries registered in the abovementioned countries, is estimated to employ in excess of 4000 people (Koopman, 1991: 5-7). According to Visser (1997) Cashbuild SA is generally regarded as the first choice retailer in its chosen field in all the regions within which it operates due to its wide product range of quality goods sold at competitive prices. This, according to Koopman (1991: 5-7), is structured towards the fulfilment of the needs of those of the local market desiring to purchase building materials for cash.

By the late 80s, the company was, however, in a state of disharmony; profit margins were consistently declining, exacerbated by political unrest and increasing work environment tensions (Koopman, 1991: 5-7). Whilst there were plenty of well-trained black employees befitting every tier of the company's hierarchal scheme, there existed a lack of commitment by black employees to the company and its prerogatives. This was mainly due to white employers having simply assumed the explicit commitment of black employees, with Koopman (1991: 6) stating that:

[He] sense that somehow [they] were not pulling together as a team; [that] maybe [he] had simply assumed that [they] were all working together towards common goals without explicitly gaining commitment from [his] staff. [He] recognized that relying on implicit beliefs and values would lead to [an] organizational dilemma...whereas sharing them explicitly with everyone in the company would re-align people's efforts and result in organizational congruency.

The analogy of a disillusioned army, in which there exist many trained men but very few committed soldiers, can be used to illustrate the situation the company found itself in. A number of corporate analyses supplemented these sentiments, illustrating that whilst the company initially experienced positive profit returns, pro-company sentiment of 89% in 1980, had been swiftly declining, slipping to 74% by 1982 (Koopman, 1991: 6-7). Visser (1997: 3) suggests that Koopman realized that the assumption of implicit beliefs and values by the predominantly white managerial staff had in fact lead to the detriment of the company, something he referred to as the *organization dilemma*, with Koopman (1991: 7) stating that:

At [that] point in time it was quite clear that whatever [company] purpose did exist, existed only in [his] own head and in [his] director's heads – not in one employee's head. In other words, management was pulling one way and the people the other. There was no unifying superordinate goal.

This was a situation in which implicit beliefs/values lead to the stratification of management, organizational and individual goals and philosophies, with this disequilibrium ultimately resulting in the decrease of company profit. According to Visser (1997: 3), Koopman realized that in order to stabilize and then stimulate the company's floundering profit margins, the company's managerial sector had to be overhauled and the concept of Affirmative Action promoted and implemented by all, particularly those in positions of authority. However, Koopman realized that in order for affirmative action to be accepted and sustained within the company, a communal, unifying agent, or rather strategy, suitable to and representative of all was required. After much investigation in both the social and corporate spheres he came to the conclusion that in South Africa's case, an Ubuntu-based strategy was that which was required (Koopman, 1991: 10-21).

The creation of a Place beyond history

In the quest to solicit an answer as to what could be done to alleviate work environment tensions, Koopman (1991: 6-8) realized that what he and his advisors (whom were all white) believed the concept of company solidarity and equilibrium to be and mean, as opposed to the beliefs and views of black employees, were completely asymmetrical. Thus, a number of *key questions* as to what the workplace is/means to the black employee were devised, with consultation from all race groups being taken into account, in the hope of discerning viable and applicable answers. It was

hoped that the answers to the questions would act as an elixir, healing the sickness of discontent which the company was suffering.

According to Koopman (1991: 6-7) a year long self-criticizing brainstorming session revealed to the company's executive board that the company's business discourse/praxis as a whole was in need of immediate amendment: the capitalistic/exploitative manner with which the company operated was unbecoming to its African host environment and the majority black-employee workforce were still regarded as subaltern by their western counterparts, the result of which was growing tensions between the different employee groups. As relayed by Koopman (1991: 6-9) and Visser (1997: 2-5), the executive board deemed it appropriate and necessary that the company's traditional, western-orientated infrastructure (hierarchy and design) be re-engineered as a whole, and replaced with one more culturally objective so as to emancipate black employees from the draconian, autocratic western style of company rule. As stipulated by Koopman (1991: 6):

it was clear that [the company's] organizational structure was autocratic, as was [his] own personal management style. [They] had to change, but how?...What about the chaos that might occur during the period of transition?

Koopman realized that he had been ignorant in assuming that the company was operating in a harmonious, smooth manner. Visser (1997: 1-3) suggests that in order to remedy the identified dis-functionality, Koopman realized that the company had to overhaul its business methodology and review its managerial discourse, suggesting that a new approach was definitely needed. This is solidified by Koopman (1991: 8-9) when he states that:

[he] decided to look at the Cashbuild organism in a more holistic manner and endeavored to give [his] employees a more holistic organizational structure within which to operate for their own growth and expression, and to formulate integrative structures to involve all staff in the functioning of the business through participation...this participative exercise was in fact so fruitful that eventually it became our way of life at Cashbuild through our CARE and VENTURECOMM structures.

Simplified, Koopman and the board realized that the company's structural and operational schematics had to be completely re-vamped and replaced with an architecture moulded upon the concepts of peer and culture recognition, understanding, humility and, most importantly, 'togetherness through teamwork' (*Simunye*: we all stand together/we are one). Furthermore, the executive board believed that through the implementation of a revised business discourse/praxis, which granted the employee more freedom, the epidemically spreading poor employee work ethic could be curtailed, and ultimately dissolved (Koopman, 1991: 6-9).

Koopman's decisions resulted in the formation and implementation of a new Ubuntu-oriented Place, namely the company's 'CARE' groups and 'VENTURECOM' structures (Koopman, 1991: 6-9).

The decision as *aporia*: Cashbuild as a future model

As suggested in Chapter 2, an *aporia* can be described as a state of puzzlement. According to John Simmons and Elaine Eades (2004: 153) this state of puzzlement is the result of 'philosophical objection to proposed courses of action while simultaneously lacking any alternative solution to these'. One could suggest that during the late 80s/early 90s it was the norm, or rather the *rule*, that all businesses operate according to a hegemonic western business discourse. Thus, it follows that all business expectations and codes of conduct were formulated according to a western understanding of ethics and philosophy. Koopman realized that this definition of business was both made visible and placed out of the context within which he was operating, meaning, in a sense, that the application of the rule was unjust. According to Nussbaum (2003) and Visser (1997) in order to dissolve tensions and foster a sense of worker solidarity, Koopman then made an unprecedented decision in the history of corporate South Africa; he instilled management ideas drawn from the African philosophy of Ubuntu. At that particular time such a decision was fraught with danger due to the undecidable tension between the need to conduct business in a western form with other businesses, and the need to be just to the context within which that decision was framed. Simplified, the instillation of Ubuntu-oriented management ideas at that particular time was a risky endeavour due to, first, the western orientation of the corporate sphere and, second, Ubuntu being questioned as a legitimate philosophy.

As previously mentioned, the logical narrative of the second *aporia* (that of 'the ghost of the undecidable') runs concurrent to that of the former, the distinguishing factor between the two *aporias* being that the latter highlights the difficulty of the act of a just judgment in itself. This view is backed by Mollie Painter-Morland (2010: 268-269) who suggests that:

any decision is haunted by the ghost of undecidability. This 'ghost' resides in our decision, and unsettles any kind of self-assurance that we might have regarding the fairness, honesty, or beneficence of that decision. If that were to disappear, the decision would cease to have been a decision and the fairness or honesty that we may have striven for in making the decision would be lost.

Koopman (1991: 6) recognized the need for a new and more just managerial discourse, stating that ‘it was clear that our organizational structure was autocratic, as was my own personal management style. We had to change.’ However, Koopman realized that this new system, however formulated, had to fulfil the most basic requirement of any business discourse: profit maximization for all company stakeholders, stating ‘we had to change, but how? ...What about the chaos that might occur during the period of transition?’ (Koopman, 1991: 6). As suggested by Painter-Morland (2010: 267), Koopman found himself in a catch-22 situation in that whilst he was aware of the urgent need of a new managerial system, there existed no rules or regulations regarding African management which he could simply “apply.” Secondly, due to the lack of rules and guidelines, his efforts had no assured guarantee of success (Painter-Morland, 2010: 267). This view is validated by Koopman (1991: 6) when he states that:

there was no other way of doing it at the time but to MBFA – Manage By Fumbling Around. There was no other way but to plunge in at the deep end and to risk my neck and possibly be forced to say “I’m sorry” for my original way of doing things. It’s very hard to move into the dark when you do not know what it is you are looking for!

One could suggest this to be the point where the first and second *aporia* discussed, those focused on ‘the *epokhe*’ and the rule’ and ‘the ghost of the undecidable’ respectively, become apparent – Koopman was faced with the challenge of devising an answer to the question of how one does away with the rule while at the same time continuing the logic of the rule in the process of articulating a new rule. This leads us back to the point made by Derrida (1990: 961) when he states that ‘each decision is different and requires an absolutely unique interpretation, which no existing, coded rule can or ought to guarantee absolutely’. In an attempt to gain a valid answer to this perplexing question, one must again refer to Derrida (1990: 961) stating that:

for a decision to be just and responsible, it must, at its proper moment if there is one, be both regulated and without regulation: it must conserve the law and also destroy it or suspend it enough to have to reinvent it in each case, rejustify it, at least reinvent it in the reaffirmation and the new and free confirmation of its principle.

This, according to Derrida (1990: 963-965), is the conundrum – that something like justice always eludes our grasp, and if it would cease to do so, it would no longer be justice; ‘It must always arrive anew...as absolute and unpredictable singularity’ (Derrida, 1990: 965). One can then suggest, as does Painter-Morland (2010: 269), that the proposed managerial system would be subject to the same metaphysics as the previous one. However, what would differentiate the new system from its predecessor is that the new system would be *self-reflexive* of being a rule that is imposed on business. Thus, one could suggest that Koopman realized that

somewhere within its architectural framework the new system had to justify the need for profit maximization. One could suggest that Koopman's decision was not more just than that of his predecessors', but that through his decision he was able to encounter, and to a large extent dissolve, the tension(s) existent between the past and the present. He made a new rule that, by recognising itself not as the 'natural' – and therefore hegemonic – way of doing things but self-critically *as a rule*, created the conditions or the possibility for a future interrogation of and change to that same rule.

Cashbuild and the CARE group

The discussed *aporia* become more visible after one analyzes what Koopman (1991: 11) refers to as the company's 'CARE groups'. Koopman (1991:11) supplemented by Nussbaum (2003) and Visser (1997), insists that the main focus of the CARE groups was, in essence, aimed at a distribution of both power and authority – or at least what seemed like a fair distribution of power and authority, which later proved to be a charade – across the entire company matrix in an amicable and practical manner. Koopman (1991:11) suggests that up until 1982 managers were vested with almost all of the company's *authority*, but almost none of its *power*; power lay within the midst of the employee union. The exact opposite applied to the employee union, which held dominion over most of the company's power, but little of its authority. Thus, this subsequently rendered the employee union powerless (Koopman, 1991:11).

In conjunction with the development of the CARE groups, a CARE philosophy, which stipulated company rules, standards and visions, as well as removing all privileges in terms of race and class in the conduction of business, was designed and implemented. The CARE philosophy proved positive at first, boosting employee commitment and lessening incumbent tensions. This euphoria was, however, short-lived and the company again found itself regressing into a disparaging situation; vast differences existed between employee and employer sentiments, which lead to a decrease in company solidarity, an increase in workplace tensions and a significant decrease in company profit margins (Koopman, 1991:12-13). Nussbaum (2003) and Visser (1997) suggest that after the inclusion of black advisors to his advisory team, Koopman and his white advisors realized that African culture possesses a great many business-beneficial social technologies, the roots of being deeply entrenched in the African philosophical discourse of Ubuntu. Koopman and his team of advisors were faced with two tasks, first, determining why

the positive feelings that had initially encompassed the CARE philosophy had simmered down in such a rapid time period and, second, formulating a new managerial discourse. This new discourse had to simultaneously act as the catalytic agent utilized in the rekindling of the workforces' ethos, whilst creating a work environment that was more culturally empathic and encompassing. This, it was believed, could ultimately lead to greater company production and output. As stated by Koopman (1991: 10-11), it was up to him and his advisory team to:

design an organization which was truly free so that the cooperation between all individuals in fact became its own sustainable social form. [The company] needed a social form which could accommodate the freedom to be enterprising, as well as harnessing the spiritual consciousness of all [the] employees.

In attempting to determine why the positivity encompassing the CARE philosophy had faded so quickly, a common theme became apparent throughout all proffered ideas; a negative feeling of alienation amongst employees. According to Koopman (1991: 7), 'Three Regional Workshops were set up...to investigate whether there was actually a need for a change...was there just! ...Definitely a new approach was needed'. This was due to employers attempting to coordinate company affairs according to western philosophies, completely disregarding the philosophies and cultures of the host society (Koopman, 1991: 12-14). Employees were viewed simply as commodities, their labour being viewed as nothing more than part of the industrial capitalist process. He identified this as the crux of the company's problems; employees did not view themselves as simple cogs in the machinery process of capitalism, but, rather, as social beings whose labour contributions were intimately associated with them as human beings (Koopman, 1991:14). Put differently, employees were vying for a system of management that integrated the *social/professional* with the *human*.

According to Inyang (2008: 1) Cashbuild SA – like the hegemonic colonial administration that had introduced western management theories and practices, considered as the drivers and panacea for the continent's socio-politico-economic development – was failing in the achievement of its endeavours, due to 'the discountenance of African cultural inertia and social milieu' (Inyang, 2008: 1). Simplified, the company was struggling to achieve due to its lack of interest and understanding in the traditions, cultures and spirituality of its majority African workforce. Nwagbo Eze (1995: 137) supports this view, suggesting that even though many black workers were schooled in and understood western management practices and beliefs, this often had the opposite effect of that desired. Inyang (2008: 1) solidifies this, suggesting that black

workers considered '[their] colonial training [as] psychologically emasculating in terms of self- and national identity'. Koopman (1991) and Inyang (2008) suggest the main issue with the CARE concept to be that the company's *ultimate power* and *influence* had remained in the hands of company executives and benefactors. Put differently, whilst seemingly empowering workers the CARE concept had, in fact, acted more as a worker *rallying point*. Koopman (1991: 14) realized that in order to meet the demands of employees whilst easing the employee/employer tensions that had almost entirely destroyed the company's work ethic, a system of *participative democracy* would need to be instilled within the company. This resulted in the formation and instalment of the VENTURECOMM Management System (A New Way of Communicating).

Cashbuild and the VENTURECOMM Management System

Koopman (1991: 14) realized that in order to foster a more congruent work environment, a system of *participative democracy* was urgently required within the company, stating that:

[He] decided to look at the Cashbuild organism in a more holistic manner and endeavored to give [all] employees a more holistic organizational structure within which to operate for their own growth and expression, and to formulate integrative structures to involve all staff in the functioning of the business through participation (Koopman, 1991: 8-9).

Koopman (1991), Visser (1997) and Nussbaum (2003) insist that the nexus of the VENTURECOMM Management System lay embedded within the African, Ubuntu-oriented ideal that all people should be viewed and treated as holistic human beings. The system was an amalgamation of western and African social and capitalist beliefs. Koopman (1991: 14-15) believed that the system acted for the empowerment of all workers through the integration of social forces, as well as the dismissal of the labour-as-commodity western-style management theory. Koopman (1991), Visser (1997) and Nussbaum (2003) suggest that the system was completely revolutionary in its aesthetics, for its focus was placed upon the creation of a worker-biased environment; focus had been re-directed towards the creation of a holistic work environment that demanded *productivity of the worker*, and not the historic norm of direct *worker productivity* demand.

Through the introduction of this management discourse/praxis, the company was able to address a number of constricting issues, sub-dividing the company into a number of variables, such as capital and land, which Koopman (1991: 15) labelled 'Hard Variables'. Worker enterprise and labour he labelled 'Soft Variables' (Koopman, 1991: 15). Five separate yet

interdependent portfolios were created, these being the: Operations, Safety, Labour, Merchandise and Quality of Work-life portfolios. Each portfolio was to be headed by a democratically elected representative, save the Operations portfolio, which was reserved for managers (Koopman, 1991: 15). This, as suggested by Koopman (1991: 15) and Visser (1997: 2-5), was due to only managers possessing the necessary skills required for sufficient execution of the tasks that accompanied the Operations portfolio. Visser (1997: 2-5) continues, describing how, in order to grant workers a power-base within company operations, the handling of all Soft variable issues was left to the portfolio heads, save the Operations portfolio head. This was done in accordance with Koopman's belief that workers would be more efficient and proficient in the handling of worker issues and aid in the creation and establishment of an incorporative and productive work environment, if the abovementioned managerial discourses/praxes were implemented. As stated by Koopman (1991: 8-9), 'this participative exercise was in fact so fruitful that eventually it became our way of life at Cashbuild.'

Cashbuild SA today: Inserting history into the present

As mentioned before, today the company is the largest retailer of building materials and associated products, selling directly to cash-paying customers through its 191 (and growing) stores in South Africa as well as neighbouring countries. According to Visser (1997) and Nussbaum (2003), via operating in accordance with the VENTURECOMM management system, the company was able to cultivate a sound sense of unity (*Simunye*) amongst employers and employees in a number of ways, or rather, methods. The most pertinent of these methods, as suggested by Mark Sutherland³ (2012), were and remain regional outlets being made to employ from only within their local communities. The annual outlet, regional and national *Indabas* (meetings), which ensure the equal distribution of company dividends, remains a favoured method in the promotion and solidification of workplace congruency and unity. Moreover, the company is able to promote its re-engineered principles via annual donations (cash and building material) to rural schools known as the *Art of Heart* program (Sutherland, 2012).

³ Personal communication with Mark A. Sutherland, Divisional Manger (Eastern Cape). Email conversation: June 2012.

Visser (1997) and Nussbaum (2003) advocate the view that Cashbuild SA employees operate in a friendly and efficient manner, offering assistance and advice to all customers, communicating in a language more suitable to the customer. When unable to do so, employees readily request the aid of a colleague, which goes towards illustrating that the environment within which company operations are conducted is both hospitable and amicable. Sutherland (2012) validates this view, suggesting that whilst recognizing their ranks and as such the specific duties attached, employees no longer feel as though their dignity is in danger of being infringed upon by a colleague of higher rank or different race/ethnicity.

In conclusion, after having conducted an analysis of Cashbuild SA what becomes clear is that over the years the company successfully criticized itself, thus allowing it to reconstruct its infrastructure in a more culturally objective manner. This cultural objectivity has resulted in a significant increase in employer/employee congruency, the result of which is a telling increase in output. Simplified, the company successfully managed to incorporate critical humanism (Ubuntu) into its managerial discourse, which has led to a telling increase in social harmony, group solidarity and fiscal revenue.

Eskom and the need for revision

This thesis will now briefly examine specific problems drawn from Eskom, a South African public enterprise, which, according to Van Den Heuvel (2008), Khoza (2006), Petra Pelkman and Marcel Veenswijk (2008), has also managed to amalgamate Ubuntu management discourse with its capitalist outlook. As with the previous case study, it is necessary to begin with a brief exploration of Eskom's history in order to gain a holistic image of the company's original infrastructure.

According to Leonard Gentle (2009: 50-52), South Africa's first electric power plants were developed to support the turn-of-the-century mining industry that until 1909, when the Victoria Falls Power Company was established, employed on-site electrical generators. In 1923 the Electricity Supply Commission (ESCOM) – an electricity public utility (parastatal) also known by its Afrikaans name Elektrisiteitsvoorsieningskommissie (EVKOM) – began providing electricity to the state's railroads and non-mining industries in terms of the Electricity Act of 1922 (Gentle, 2009: 50-52). In 1948 ESCOM bought out the Victoria Falls Power Company and established itself as the state's major power producer (2009: 53-57). As suggested by Gentle

(2009: 53-57), backed by Stephen Greenberg (2009: 76-77), the utility currently functioning under the name Eskom – a combination of the two acronyms ESCOM and EVKOM, which occurred in 1986 – has remained the state’s major power producer ever since, representing South Africa in the Southern African Power Pool. According to Greenberg (2009: 76-77), Eskom was converted from a public utility into a state-owned company (Eskom Holdings) in 2001. This conversion enabled the state – the company’s sole shareholder – to tax the company, forcing it to pay all dividends and taxes directly into the state coffers. As stated by Greenburg (2009: 76-77):

Control of the corporatized entity would be managed through the negotiation of ‘shareholder compacts’ between the utility’s management and the government as the shareholder. These compacts would be reassessed when outside bodies acquire[d] equity.

It must, however, be noted that whilst the state was the sole *shareholder* it was not the only *stakeholder*; all those professionally affiliated with the company (employers and employees) possessed a stake. According to Greenberg (2009: 76-77), the conversion of the public utility into a state-owned company foresaw the introduction of a new executive board. This board, chaired by Reuel Khoza, was comprised almost entirely of big business representatives; including the chief operating officer of the UK energy trader, electricity generator and retailer Innogy, and the president of telecommunications group Ericsson, along with a handful of academics and a sole representative of the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) (Greenberg, 2009: 76-77).

Eskom and transformation

As previously mentioned, the South Africa managerial discourse/praxis was, and remains, fundamentally unjust, for it is the practice of a discourse born from the suppressive/ oppressive colonial narrative. The colonial narrative foresaw the construction of a world from which the African was denied access and, thus, left ‘without a place [upon] which to stand’ (Gordon, 2007: 121). Mbembe (2002: 239-273) suggests that the implementation of the colonial narrative resulted in African societies becoming alienated from each other and the inhabitants of the societies becoming more divided from each other. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Africans have become less in tune with their consciousness or, as suggested by Mbembe (2002: 239-273), Africans have lost *recognition* of themselves.

According to Van Den Heuvel (2008: 45), Khoza and his racially integrated team of advisors realized all of the above mentioned. However, after a great deal of research and

consultation, they noted the fact that Africans were highly conscious of their status as *others* (Van Den Heuvel, 2008: 45-46). This was found to be the case no matter what level of education Africans possessed or the position they occupied within a given business's employment hierarchy. This had an extremely adverse effect on the self-confidence of the African employee, which forced them into seeking what he labelled 'corporate citizenship' (Khoza, 2006: 32-33). This lack of self-confidence forced African employees to seek what Gordon (2007: 126-130) refers to as *recognition*, more specifically, '[western] recognition'. In order to combat this dire lack of self-belief, Khoza (2006: 32-33) highlighted the necessity for all Africans to stop blaming others for their statuses and start becoming, as well as seeing themselves as, world-class and high performing people, with him stating that:

The ideal of corporate community – communocracy – was, if not heresy, a highly disruptive innovation that many companies would struggle to implement [which] would remain the case so long as South African companies continued to view the world through Eurocentric rather than African lenses (Khoza, 2006: 164).

Deciding the undecidable: Eskom managerial needs

As previously stated, during the apartheid era the South African corporate sphere operated by the *rule* that all business affairs – transaction, expectations, management and codes of conduct – be of a western orientation. One could suggest that, like Koopman, Khoza realized all of the above-mentioned corporate hindrances, including the fact that Africans sought western recognition, with him stating that 'there was indeed a need for a new understanding and praxis within South African managerial theory' (Khoza, 2006: 170-172).

One could suggest that this is where the *aporia* focused upon 'the *epokhe*' and the rule' becomes apparent: Khoza (2006: 32-33; 163-165) realized that the company's schematics had to be re-engineered in such a manner so as to enable him to instil in this one particular instance a new leadership model that would aid in the solidification of employee/employer relations. However, he was fully aware of the fact that any new model instilled had to act as a catalytic agent in the promotion of science and technology, two of the company's core entities (Khoza, 2006: 32-33; 163-165). After spending prolonged periods of time amongst the company's employees, the majority of which being African, who occupied various positions within the company's hierarchy and much deliberation with his advisory team, Khoza came to the conclusion that what the company required to set it on a congruent, productive path was a *self-*

reflexive management discourse/praxis, which was conscious of its imposition as a rule, on business. According to Khoza (2006: 32-33; 163-165), an African, Ubuntu-oriented leadership model would best benefit the prescribed task due to ‘African leadership model(s) [being] ideally suited to [the promotion of] creativity in science and technology’ (Khoza, 2006: 165).

According to Khoza (2006: 165), this promotion is primarily due to *innovation* – which he considers to be the key to business renewal – being an embedded principle of the African world-view. He continues, arguing that humanism (Ubuntu) promotes teamwork, and that teamwork promotes innovation (2006: 165). Khoza (2006: 165-166) and Van Den Heuvel (2008: 45-46) suggest that by utilizing their indigenous skills and insights – combined with the best contemporary sciences and technologies – Africans could be, and are, as capable as anyone else in the construction of modern, more generative businesses. Khoza (2006: 165-166) and Van Den Heuvel (2008: 45-46) go on to suggest that this utilization of skills and insights could foresee more stable, profitable economies throughout the African continent.

However, Khoza (2006: 170-172) also realized that there existed an ethical demand that the superseding of one mythology by another (Ubuntu) did not itself commit the same mistakes of the previous (western) myth. He realized that one cannot simply impose the rule of one managerial theory upon others without committing the same dictatorial mistakes of the previous rule(r). One could suggest that in order to successfully transform the company, Khoza made a conscious decision to both critique the ontology of western managerial practices and offer Ubuntu led managerial practices as an alternative. But this was not going to be the substitution of one rule with another, one ethnophilosophy with another. Rather, he acknowledged that this interaction could never, nor should never, be complete. This view is solidified by Khoza (2006:173) when he states that:

tradition and the past [are] closely connected...we occupy a position that spans two worlds – the past, with all that is good and bad in it, and the future, with all the promise and the [unknown] challenges it holds. We can play a pivotal role in ensuring that the best of the past is not lost but carried forward and developed into a structure of lasting pride, a structure of leadership that would underpin the Century of Africa.

Thus, one could suggest that Khoza did not wish to simply replace one managerial system with another due to two main reasons, namely: some aspects of western managerial practices remain useful and there are some aspects of Ubuntu which are simply not applicable in the contemporary work place (Khoza, 2006: 172-173). This view is consolidated by Khoza (2006: 173) and Thomas and Bendixen (2000: 509), when they suggest that it is imperative that

those in the South African corporate sphere have a historical vision of African continuity upon which to expand Africa's potential as a coming force.

Eskom innovation: the Pebble Bed Modular Reactor (PBMR) project:

In order to dissolve workplace tensions and align employee/employer sentiments in a more congruent fashion, Khoza (2006: 166) decided that the company was in need of a 'reconciliatory, unifying project', which would require the galvanized cooperation of all – government officials, the company's executive board, managers and employees. One could suggest that this is where the *aporias* focused upon 'the ghost of the undecidable' and 'the horizon of knowledge' become most apparent: Khoza's decision to attempt a reconciliatory, unifying project under the guidance of an African managerial discourse/praxis (Ubuntu) at that particular moment in time was a highly precarious one, doomed to fail by westerners and viewed with great suspicion by Africans (Khoza, 2006: 166-167). There existed no rules or guidelines to follow whilst conducting the project, which meant that there was no guarantee of the project's success. However, it was essential that the project be attempted so as to provide Khoza with physical results, or rather *knowledge*, relating to the effect that an Ubuntu managerial discourse/praxis would have within and on all spheres and aspects of the company. According to Khoza (2006: 166-167), the proposed project was that of running a nuclear power plant on a small scale better known as the Pebble Bed Modular Reactor (PBMR). The successful completion of the PBMR project represented what Khoza (2006: 167) referred to as a 'paradigm shift in energy production'. As suggested by Khoza (2006: 167), it must be noted that although the PBMR was derived from a German process, the power conversion technology was wholly developed in South Africa by an integrated team of Eskom engineers under the leadership of Dr Steve Lennon. When the Eskom engineers were successful in their endeavours, they proved that through teamwork 'we in South Africa could take a discarded concept and turn it into a world-beater' (Khoza, 2006: 166-167). According to Khoza (2006: 166-167), the PBMR project proved to be an excellent demonstration of the solidarity possible between westerners and Africans, as the project forced them to overcome divides, it forced them to encounter – and to a large extent successfully dissolve – the tension(s) existent between the past and the present.

As noted in Chapter 2, the third *aporia* suggests what Derrida has termed an 'urgency that obstructs the horizon of knowledge'. One could suggest that in relation to this thesis this *aporia*

is perhaps the most poignant considering the political instability and economic deficiency currently being suffered by the state. This view is lent weight by Chief Executive Officer of Eskom Holdings Limited, Thulani S. Gcabashe (cited in Van Den Heuval, 2008: 47), who, whilst proclaiming his confidence in African business leadership, does, however, acknowledge that African leadership in both the political and corporate spheres is often criticized. As suggested by Gcabashe, the main vein of this criticism is focused upon whether black leadership will have positive outcomes for the state (Van Den Heuval, 2008: 47). According to Pelkman and Veenswijk (2008: 41-42) it was this criticism that solidified Khoza's convictions that there was an urgent need to reform Eskom's schematics, suggesting that Khoza realized that the company needed to be reformed in an equitable manner. However, Khoza (2006: 171) also realized that he was operating within a context, or rather society, which because of its asymmetrical architecture may necessarily reject any and all reformatory efforts made, stating that he was 'being carefully watched for any signs of racial bias or incompetence' (Khoza, 2006: 171). According to Khoza (2006: 171), he was continually tested and put through what he refers to as 'the school of emotional intelligence', which tested his capacity to lead in an effective, positive manner, constantly testing his ability to 'see, sense and show understanding of the reactions of others' (Khoza, 2006: 171). As posited by Pelkman and Veenswijk (2008: 42), Khoza realized that, in order to successfully transform the company, an immediate, *introspective* critique was required, with him stating that:

The term transformational leadership, though stimulating and useful, could not be imported from Western management literature and passed onto Eskom like a new label. We had to [immediately] transform the company from within – in structure and substance, in behaviour and attitude, and in values and relationships (Khoza, 2006: 172).

In order to initiate and conduct a company transformation, Khoza (2006: 172) determined that each and every employee/employer had to, first, understand and, second, accept the fact that the transformative process had to be an introspective one. As suggested by Khoza (2006: 172), all had to realize that the transformative process had to begin from within themselves – all had to conduct an introspective examination, searching within themselves for the ethically just and fair meaning that would give direction to their actions, with Khoza (2006: 172) suggesting that all 'needed new sources of vision, and new dimensions of mind and feeling'. Such a mind-set foresaw the formulation and implantation of the 2002 African Leadership Programme (ALP) and the Eskom Equity Programme (EEP). According to Khoza (2006: 172), the vision of the ALP

was coalesced around key ideas which ‘paradoxically contrasted with, and complimented, each other: tradition and modernity, Afrocentrism and eurocentrism, leading and serving, technology and humanism, and community and individuality’ (Khoza, 2006: 172). As suggested by Khoza (2006: 172-173), ‘these ideas, which at first glance appear as obvious polar opposites, were in reality, founded along the same continua’. According to Khoza (2006: 173), leaders wishing to transform their businesses had to make note of this, thereby acknowledging and accepting diversity and searching for those ethical motives and interests that would encourage solidarity amongst all, rather than divide peoples further.

According to Pelkman and Veenswijk (2008: 42), the EEP was designed to work in the following manner: White senior executives were to be managed out of their jobs with packages that they would voluntarily accept; nobody was to be forced out – space creation was aimed at people leaving happily and willing to help *manage in* their successors. The drive for employment and equal opportunities was to be translated and embedded in equity performance targets. A broader sustainability index was created that would function as a measurement and rewarding instrument for overall performance of all middle and top managers, at team and individual levels. On a national level, employment equity targets were set. After which, they were translated to regional offices, teams and individuals. The targets were to be made up by previously disadvantaged groups, including white females, given that the organization was dominated by white males. In addition, the company started large bursary schemes aimed mainly at the training of engineers from disadvantaged communities and all women. Pelkman and Veenswijk (2008), supplemented by Khoza (2006) continue, suggesting that through its employment equity program, Eskom has managed to reform its schematics holistically and in a symmetrical manner, managing to reach all of its racial equity targets for managerial, professional and supervisory levels: 8.9% blacks in 1994, 35% in 1997, 54.6% in 2002 and 56.3% in 2004. Simplified, Eskom, according to Pelkman and Veenswijk (2008: 42), managed to transform into a new, more equitable organization by:

first, making their services available to all South Africans. Second, introducing bursary schemes. Third, stimulating black companies with their procurement policy. Fourth, with corporate social investment, and last but not least, by dramatically changing the demographics of the workforce into a more representative one.

Eskom today

According to Pelkman and Veenswijk (2008: 41-44), today the company operates a number of notable power stations, including the Kendal Power Station in Mpumalanga and the Koeberg nuclear power station in the Cape Province (the only nuclear power plant in Africa). The company – split into three divisions, namely the Generation, Transmission and Distribution divisions respectively – is the country's major power producer, generating approximately 95% of the electricity used in South Africa, and since the late 90's inception of the "electricity for all" programme, the company has electrified over 300 000 additional homes annually (Pelkman and Veenswijk, 2008: 41-44). As suggested by Pelkman and Veenswijk (2008: 41-44), whilst this electrification rate does lag behind those of other emerging economies, such as India and China, one cannot overlook the fact that 66% of the nation's population now has electricity, compared to only 33% a decade ago. Both go on to suggest that besides being the state's major power producer, Eskom is also the largest power producer in Africa, among the top seven electricity utilities in the world in terms of generation capacity and among the top nine in terms of sales (2008: 41-44). This is reinforced by Gcabashe (cited in Van Den Heuval, 2008: 47), who emphasises:

the scale and magnitude of Eskom's enterprises, with its approximately 32,000 employees, operating in 30 countries on the African continent, contributing about 50% of the total energy production in Africa.

In conclusion, one could suggest that by highlighting the mentioned necessities, Khoza helped foster an emerging sense of Africanness that revealed itself particularly in the practice of consultation and in the promotion of cultural relativity, but – not in the least – tangible business achievements (Van den Heuval, 2008: 48). Moreover, such actions aided in Khoza advocating an African business identity, which he deemed to be a lived praxis in the constant state of positive evolution, while repeatedly referring to the inheritance of past heroic kings and presidents that should inspire contemporary African leadership (Van den Heuval, 2008: 47). Such an approach, according to Appiah and Nyamnjoh (cited in Van Den Heuval, 2008: 47), 'runs parallel with a more critical, anthropological perspective on identity formation in an African context that underline the processual character of Africanness'. This perspective, according to Khoza (2006: 162-164) and Van Den Heuval (2008: 47), implies a more dynamic, culturally relative business attitude, well removed from the traditional notions of what constitutes Africanness. As stated by Van Den Heuval (2008: 47):

Instead, African identity formation is seen as a more or less open-ended process, without *a priori* images of what Africans should feel like, should be like, or would have been like in pre-colonial times. African identity formation thus defined also implies an increased awareness of processes of cultural diffusion within Africa and on a global level.

This is excellently illustrated by Eskom's recent initiative to further empower women of all ethnicities by granting them positions within the company's higher tiers. Zimkitha Mjali⁴ (2013) – the first black female Eskom human resource (HR) in the Eastern Cape – concurs, arguing that the company was experiencing an influx of young executives, amicably accepted and tutored by incumbent older, predominantly white male, executives. She continues, stating that '80 % of the Eastern Cape's HR management team is female, with 60 % being women of colour' (Mjali, 2013). According to Mjali (2013) in order to motivate executive solidarity and managerial synchrony, the company has introduced a new management evaluation or rather scoring system, dividing scores along 4 interlinked tiers, namely:

1. The nation: the evaluation of South Africa's management performance as a whole compared that of Mozambique.
2. The division: the evaluation of regional HR divisions compared to their Accounting counterparts.
3. The team: the evaluation of teams within the various divisions.
4. The individual: every individual is evaluated regarding self performance.

According to Mjali (2013) knowing that their individual performance is both reviewed and pivotal to the better performance of the team as a whole, individuals endeavour to work harder to attain good performance evaluation scores. This acts as the catalytic agent required for improved team work which then translates into better divisional and, ultimately, national management (Mjali, 2013). Mjali (2013) further argues the positive aspects that Ubuntu has had on Eskom, using the Eastern Cape's HR division as her example: All Eskom employees receive an annual salary bonus. The Eastern Cape HR employees decided to donate half of their bonus salaries to a few selected orphanages and hospitals. This was done so as to better the festivities of those resident within the selected orphanages and hospitals. According to Mjali (2013) whilst one may assume that it would be black employees that first took to such a project due to their

⁴ Personal communication with Zimkitha Mjali, Eskom HR Divisional Manger (Eastern Cape). Email conversation: June 2013.

Ubuntu-based traditions and the project replicating Ubuntu's *ukusisa* concept, the project was unanimously accepted and implemented by all throughout the HR division, particularly older white males (Mjali, 2013). She continues, stating that:

the older white generation has, contrary to popular beliefs, been extremely receptive and supportive to and of Ubuntu – along with the positive changes that it has brought in tow – illustrated by quite a few older HR executives relinquishing their positions to younger personal but remaining in the division so as to offer their years of experience as a much needed source of help.

Simplified, after having analysed the above presented information one can suggest that Ubuntu can be, and has been, employed as a practical, if not alternative then supplementary in the full sense of the word, managerial discourse, which has brought prosperity to those companies adventurous enough to incorporate it into their traditional operational schematics and managerial tactics.

Thesis conclusion:

As this thesis has shown, the world as we know it now is primarily driven by economics – economic interactions between people and nation states. If one is to advance the argument that there is something particularly useful about Ubuntu in contemporary times where better to test the validity of such a statement than the African, particularly the South African, economic sphere. Under the advice of neo-liberal economic scholarship, it has long been argued that the freedom to pursue one's self interest provides the platform upon which economic growth can be realised. However, Ntibatirwa Symphorien (2009: 298) argues that:

when one looks at the way the economic perspectives based on the principle of self-interest is failing in Africa, particularly with the Structural Adjustment Program of the 1980s on the one hand, and the economic success the South East Asia on the other, one cannot but wonder whether self interest really leads to economic efficiency as neo-liberal economists and policymakers would make us to believe.

Thus, one is able to suggest other avenues of attaining economic growth and, more importantly, socio-economic empowerment of people and communities alike that go beyond the western individualistic neo-liberalism suggested above. As Symphorien (2009: 300) eloquently puts it, 'the traditional values of African communitarian society [Ubuntu] should be explored to see whether they may not be pregnant with economic potentials'.

This thesis has illustrated that within a neo-liberal episteme, one that has become hegemonic within the managerial discourse, there is an essentialising assumption that the *a priori* of neo-liberalism – self-interest and individuality – are considered fundamental to the ontology and economic praxis of what it means to be human. However, both the theory and the praxis of Ubuntu contest these assumptions historically and ontologically. Therefore, the dictum 'I am because I am productive' – itself a product of the Cartesian worldview – can be contested from its foundations upwards. In order to contest the mentioned worldview, this thesis has proposed that a self-reflexive deconstruction of the binary logic by which western managerial discourses have received priority within the African context be employed, as this could aid in the creation/formulation of a managerial discourse that has as its methodological basis critical humanism.

Rearticulated, this thesis has illustrated that since South Africa's transition from a racially oppressed nation to one supposedly democratically emancipated, the corporate sphere has increasingly incorporated the African populace into its peripheral bounds, mostly as a

consequence of the state's affirmative action policies. Whilst the contemporary workforce is more diverse than that of before, the corporate sphere has, for the most part, remained western-oriented and, as such, has retained its traditional managerial discourses – African managerial thought remains overlooked. Now armed with the constitutional right to freely express their emotions and thoughts, the South African workforce of African origin has taken greater issue with traditional managerial discourses, rendering it difficult for businesses and organizations to be managed in proficient, harmonious manners. This thesis has aimed to illustrate that the critical tasks faced by the South African corporate sphere are those of, first, the formulation and, second, the implementation of a managerial discourse inclusive and accommodative of the various traditions and cultures practiced and maintained by the South African populace. In this thesis, I have proposed Ubuntu as being such a managerial discourse.

This thesis has illustrated that the term Ubuntu has come to be associated with a variety of meanings as outlined in Chapter 3. These multiple definitions are the result of certain historical occurrences – mainly colonialism, apartheid and industrial urbanization – that disrupted the ontology of this geographically defined praxis and led to the creation of imagined communities. Moreover, this thesis has illustrated that from the moment point of disruption onwards, Ubuntu would never manifest itself in exactly the same way again. This view is supported by John Hailey (2008: 2-3), who suggests that the *loss* of Ubuntu is particularly seen in the emergence of abstract ideals and philosophies that reach for certain characteristics of Ubuntu, while discarding others, so as to serve contemporary agendas. Ubuntu is commonly referred to as an African humanism. In this thesis, I have illustrated how and why Ubuntu should be considered an indigenous, African process related to African humanity and the way African humanness is attained through an individuals' engagement with him/herself and others. In the traditional African context, Ubuntu performs the task of fine-tuning individuals in such a way that they come to intrinsically regard themselves and the community as inextricably connected, or, rather, as one. Reworded, Ubuntu invokes technologies of discipline or more overt forms of coercion to ensure the sanctity of an interdependent society. This view is supplemented by Nyathu (cited in Hailey, 2008: 3) when he suggests Ubuntu to be a value system that has acted as the backbone of many an African society and as the fountain from which individual and communal actions and attitudes flow. Hailey (2008: 3) furthers this view, stating that it is clear that Ubuntu as a concept is not one easily distilled for 'it permeates the life and thinking of many

in Africa. It seeks to honour our humanity and the key role of relationships in all forms of social, communal or corporate activity' (Hailey, 2008: 3).

Having briefly, yet concisely, analysed both Cashbuild SA and Eskom, this thesis has illustrated how these companies utilized Ubuntu as the tool of choice whilst self-reflecting and criticising the architecture of their traditional operative manners; specifically the schematics of their incumbent managerial discourses. How these companies successfully managed to assimilate their incumbent managerial discourses with that of an Ubuntu-oriented managerial discourse is also illustrated. As mentioned in Chapter 4, it was a gamble for either of these companies to attempt to assimilate Ubuntu with their traditional managerial discourses as the validity – much less the existence – of African philosophy, and thus Ubuntu managerial discourse, was a topic of great debate. As outlined in Chapter 3, Africans learnt to survive through collective, consensual action, mutual care and support, not merely via individual self-reliance. In order for this degree of mutuality to thrive, Africans developed a collective psyche that allowed them to pool resources and enabled communities to work collectively in proficient and efficient manners – the spirit of solidarity is one that permeated throughout every aspect of African life. After having performed their self-reflexive examinations, Ubuntu acting as the conduit through which these examinations were channelled, the managers of both Cashbuild SA and Eskom – whose workforces are African in majority – realized that there existed an urgent need to reformat their operational and managerial discourses to be more inclusive and accommodative of the workforce as a whole. Through the assimilation of an Ubuntu-oriented managerial discourse with those of tradition, both companies were able to achieve this, fostering and promoting a spirit of workforce solidarity and workplace harmony. James Kamwachale Khoba and Ella Cindy Kangaude-Ulaya (2013: 677) lend weight to this argument, stating that:

It is perhaps telling that Eskom registered an after-tax profit of R5.2 billion over a period of 15 months up to the end of March 2005 after the corporation had adopted the Ubuntu management philosophy.

According to Mark Allix (2013) Ubuntu's impact in Cashbuild is illustrated by the yearly positive returns, stating that the:

...selling price inflation steadily increasing, being 2% higher at the year-end in June, compared with the same period in 2012. Revenue had increased 8% in the quarter from the period in 2012...In addition, two stores were relocated and seven stores were refurbished during the quarter. A total of nine new stores were opened during this financial year, while 21 refurbishments and six relocations were completed.

In this thesis, I have illustrated how Ubuntu *re-invented* could act as an ethical, culturally-appropriate humanist management discourse in which employees, particularly those of African origin, are not simply viewed as strategic company assets but as valued contributors/stakeholders in their own right. Moreover, I have illustrated how Ubuntu has the potential to shape the relationship(s) of a workforce and promote a shared vision. I have also shown that Ubuntu has an ethical dimension and strong moral overtones. This is neatly portrayed by Cashbuild SA and Eskom, two companies that are revered for their ubuntu-based principles. These principles have helped promote effective team work, the swifter transfer of information and the easier adoption of new ideas and, as outlined in Chapter 4, they have given the mentioned companies a competitive advantage in the South African corporate sphere.

In conclusion, whilst I could further attempt to validate the worth of my propositions, the peripheral boundaries of this thesis make this impossible. Hence, it is at this point that this thesis must culminate, suggesting that it has illustrated how an African, Ubuntu-oriented management discourse as a strategy could be locally acceptable to the critical economic landscape of South Africa, and, at the same time, meet global expectations. I am able to make such a proposal on the basis that, as indicated throughout the thesis, Ubuntu's approach to corporate strategies is inclusive, incorporating the participation of all constitutive elements of all stakeholders – these being the employees, employers, customers and the community within which a company operates. Thus, Ubuntu – viewed as an African-orientated ethical humanism – could be employed as an applicable and profitable management discourse and could provide the guiding principles for an economic, particularly managerial, re-structural project.

Reference list:

Books and journals

1. ABRAHAMSON, E., 1991. Managerial Fads and Fashions: The Diffusion and Rejection of Innovations. *The Academy of Management Review*, **16**(3), pp. 586-612.
2. AGGER, B., 1991. Critical Theory, Poststructuralism, Postmodernism: Their Sociological Relevance. *Annual Review of Sociology*, **17**(1991), pp. 105-131.
3. ARDENT, H., 1958. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
4. ASANTE, M. K., 1994. 'Racism, consciousness, and Afrocentricity', Early, G. (ed.), *Lure and loathing*, New York: Penguin Books.
5. ASANTE, M. K., 1987. *The Afrocentric idea*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
6. ASANTE, M. K., 1988. *Afrocentricity*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press.
7. BARKER, C., 2005. *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. London: Sage.
8. BATES, T., 1975. Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, **36**(2), pp. 351-366.
9. BEARDSWORTH, R., 1996. *Derrida and the Political*. London: Routledge.
10. BELL, R., 2002. *Understanding African Philosophy*. New York: Routledge.
11. BENDIXEN, M. and BURGER, B., 1998. Cross-Cultural Management Philosophies. *Journal of Business Research*, **42**(2), pp. 107-114.
12. BIKO, S., 1987. 'White Racism and Black Consciousness', in *I Write What I Like*. Oxford: Heinemann Publishers.
13. BINEDELL, N., 1992. New Approaches. *People Dynamics*, **10**(3), pp. 1-11.
14. BINEDELL, N., 1993. 'Visions and reality-business in the new South African environment', in CHRISTIE, P., LESSEM, R. and MBIGI, L. (eds.), *African Management: Philosophies, Concepts and Applications*. Randburg, South Africa: Knowledge Resources.
15. BROODRYK, J., 2006. The Philosophy of ubuntu: some management guidelines. *Management Today*, **22**(7), pp. 52-55.
16. BROWNLIE, D., HEWER, P., WAGNER, B. and SVENSSON, G., 2008. Management theory and practice: bridging the gap through multidisciplinary lenses. *European Business Review*, **20**(6), pp. 461-470.

17. CAPUTO, J, D., 1997. *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
18. CARR, A., 2000. Critical theory and the management of changes in organizations. *Journal of Organizational Change*, **13**(3), pp. 208-220.
19. CHRISTIANS, C.G., 2004. Ubuntu and communitarianism in media ethics. *Ecquid Novi*, **25**(2), pp. 235-256.
20. CORNELL, D., ROSENFEILD, M. and CARLSON, D, G., 1992. *Deconstruction and the possibility of justice*. Routledge.
21. CZARIAWSKA, B. and SEVON, G., 1996. *Translating Organizational Change*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
22. DELANTY, G., 2007. 'Modernity', in RITZER, G. (ed.), *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Sociology*, vol. 11, Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing.
23. DERRIDA, J., 1976. *Of Grammatology*, transl. G, SPIVAK, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.
24. DERRIDA, J., 1990. Force Of Law: The Mystical Foundation Of Authority. *Cardozo Law Review*, **11**(1990), pp. 920-1045.
25. DIMAGGIO, P.J. and POWELL, W.W., 1983. The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields. *American Sociological Review*, **48**(2), pp. 147-160.
26. DIXON, J. and DOGAN, R., 2002. A philosophical analysis of management: improving praxis. *Journal of Management Development*, **22**(6), pp. 454-482.
27. Du PLESSIS, S. and SMIT, B., 2005. *Economic Growth In South Africa Since 1994*. Department of Economics, Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch.
28. EDMONDS, B., 1996. 'What is Complexity? - The Philosophy of Complexity per se with Application to Some Examples in Evolution', in HEYLIGHEN, F. and AERTS, D. (eds.), *The Evolution of Complexity*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
29. EZE, E. C., 1997. *African philosophy: An anthology*. Maiden, MA: Blackwell.
30. EZE, N., 1995. *Human resource management in Africa: problems and solutions*. Lagos: Zomex Press.
31. FANON, F., 1967. *Black Skin White Masks*, transl. C, MARKMAN. New York: Grove Press.

32. FUSS, D., 1994. Interior Colonies: Frantz Fanon and the Politics of Identification. *Diacritics*, **24**(2/3), pp. 19-42.
33. GADE, C., 2011. *The Historical Development of the Written Discourses on Ubuntu*. Denmark: Aarhus University.
34. GIDDENS, A., 1985. *The Nation-State and Violence*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
35. HABERMAS, J., 1985. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve lectures*, transl. F, G, LAWRENCE. Cambridge: Polity Press.
36. HAILEY, J., 2008. *Ubuntu: A Literature Review. A paper prepared for the Tutu foundation*. Cass Business School, London: City University.
37. HARRISS, J., 2000. 'The second 'great transformation? Capitalism at the end of the twentieth century', in ALLEN, T. and THOMAS, A. (eds.), *Poverty and development into the Twenty First Century*, pp. 325-342. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
38. HOFSTEDE, G., 1980. *Culture's Consequences—International Differences in Work-Related Values*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
39. HOFSTEDE, G., 1991. *Cultures and organizations: software of the mind*. London: McGraw-Hill.
40. HOFSTEDE, G., 1993. Cultural Constraints in Management Theories. *The Executive*, **7**(1), pp. 81-94.
41. HOFSTEDE, G., 2001. *Cultures consequences, comparing values, behaviours, institutions and organizations across nations*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
42. HOUDEBINE, J. and SCARPETTA, G., 1981. 'Interview with Jean-Louis Houdebine and Guy Scarpetta', in DERRIDA, J. and RONSE, H. (eds.), *Positions*, pp. 40-43, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
43. HOUNTONDJI, P., 1996. *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
44. HORKHEIMER, M., 1972. *Traditional and Critical Theory*. New York: Herder and Herder.
45. HOWELL, S., 2012. *Force of Habit: the Mystical Foundations of the Narcotic*. PhD thesis, Dept. of Political and International Studies, Grahamstown: Rhodes University.

46. INYANG, B., 2008. The Challenges of Evolving and Developing Management Indigenous Theories and Practices in Africa. *International Journal of Business Management*, **3**(12), pp. 122-132.
47. JACKSON, T., 2002. Reframing human resource management in Africa: a cross-cultural perspective. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, **13**(7), pp. 998-1018.
48. JACKSON, T., 2004. *Management and Change in Africa. A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. London: Routledge.
49. JANZ, B., 2009. *Philosophy in an African Place*. Plymouth: Lexington Books.
50. KARSTEN, L. and ILLA, H., 2001. Ubuntu As A Management Concept. *Quest*, **1**(2), pp. 91-112.
51. KARSTEN, L. and ILLA, H., 2005. Ubuntu as a key African management concept: contextual background and practical insights for knowledge application. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, **20**(7), pp. 607-620.
52. KENDALL, D., 2007. *Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials*. 7th edn., Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.
53. KHOBA, J, K. and KANGAUDE-ULAYA, C, E., 2013. Indigenisation of Corporate Strategies in Africa: Lessons From the African Ubuntu Philosophy. *China-USA Business Review*, **12**(7), pp. 672-689.
54. KHOZA, R., 2006. *Let Africa Lead: African Transformational Leadership for 21st Century Business*. Johannesburg: Vezubuntu Publishing.
55. KOOPMAN, A., 1991. *Transcultural Management: How to Unlock Global Resources*. London: Blackwell Publishers.
56. KRISTEVA, J., 1981. 'Interview with Julia Kristeva', in DERRIDA, J. and RONSE, H. (eds.), *Positions*, pp. 40-43, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
57. LACLAU, E. and MOUFFE, C., 1985. *Hegemony and socialist strategy*. London: Verso.
58. LACLAU, E. and MOUFFE, C., 2001 'Preface to the second edition', in *Hegemony and socialist strategy*, 2nd edn. London: Verso.
59. LEARS, T, J., 1985. The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities. *The American Historical Review*, **90**(3), pp. 567-593.
60. LESSEM, R., 1989. *Global Management Principles*. Prentice Hall: New York.

61. LESSEM, R., 1990a. *Developmental Management: Principles of Holistic Business*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
62. LESSEM, R., 1990b. *Managing Corporate Culture*, Gower: Aldershot.
63. LUTZ, D, W., 2009. African Ubuntu Philosophy and Philosophy of Global Management. *Journal of Business Ethics*, **84**(3), pp. 313-328.
64. MANGALISO, M., 2001. Building competitive advantage from Ubuntu: management lessons from South Africa. *Academy of Management Executive*, **15**(3), pp. 23-34.
65. MAPADIMENG, M, S., 2007. *Ubuntu/Botho Culture - A Path to Improved Performance and Socio-Economic Development in Postapartheid SA: Beyond Rhetoric*. PhD thesis, Dept. of Development and Social Sciences, Durban: University of Kwazulu-Natal.
66. MARX, C., 2002. Ubu and Ubuntu: on the dialectics of apartheid and nation building. *South African Journal of Political Studies*, **29**(1), pp. 49-69.
67. MBEMBE, A., 2002. African Modes of Self-Writing. *Public Culture*, **14**(1), pp. 239-273.
68. MBJIGI, L. and MAREE, J., 1995. *Ubuntu: The Spirit of African Transformation Management*. Randburg: Knowledge Resources.
69. MBJIGI, L. 1997. *Ubuntu: The African Dream in Management*. Randburg: Knowledge Resources.
70. McKERROW, R, E., 1991. Critical Rhetoric in a PostModern World. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, **77**, pp. 75-78.
71. METZ, T., 2007a. The motivation for “Toward an African moral Theory. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, **26**(4), pp. 331-335.
72. METZ, T., 2007b. Ubuntu as a Moral Theory: Reply to Four Critics. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, **26**(4), pp. 369-387.
73. MOHANTY, C, T., 1988. Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. *Feminist Review*, **30**(1988), pp. 61-88.
74. MOUZELIS, N., 1999. Modernity: A Non-European Conceptualization. *British Journal of Sociology*, **50**(1), pp.141-159.
75. NEWENHAM-KAHINDI, A., 2009. The Transfer of Ubuntu and indaba business modules Abroad: A Case of South African Multinational Banks and Telecommunication

- Services in Tanzania. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, **9**(1), pp.87-108.
76. NOHRIA, N. and ECCLES, R. G., 1998. 'Where Does Management Knowledge Come From' in ALVAREZ, J. L., *The Diffusion and Consumption of Business Knowledge*. London: Macmillan Press.
77. NORVAL, A, J., 2004. Hegemony after deconstruction: the consequences of undecidability. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, **9**(2), pp.139-157.
78. NWACHUKWU, C., 1992. *Management theory and practice*. Onitsha, Nigeria: Africana FEP Publishers Limited.
79. PAINTER-MORLAND, M., 2010. Questioning corporate codes of ethics. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, **19**(3), pp. 265-279.
80. PARKER, M., 2002. *Against management: Organization in the age of managerialism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
81. PELKMAN, P. and VEENSWIJK, M., 2008. Redefining organizational practice through narratives: Unraveling the Eskom backstage. *African Journal of Business Management*, **2** (2), pp. 041-052.
82. POOVAN, N., DU TOIT, M.K., and ENGELBRECHT, A.S., 2006. The Impact of social value of Ubuntu on team effectiveness. *South African Journal of Business Management*, **37**(3), pp. 219-233.
83. PRAEG, L., 2008. An answer to the question: What is [ubuntu]? *South African Journal of Philosophy*, **27**(4), pp. 368-385.
84. REES. W. D. and Porter. C., 2008. *Skills of management*. Cengage Learning.
85. RORTY, R., 1995. 'Deconstruction', in SELDEN, R. (ed.), *From Formalism to Poststructuralism, The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
86. SIMMONS, S. and EADES, E., 2004. Challenging aporia in the performance appraisal of consultants: a stakeholder systems response. *Clinician in Management*, **12**, pp. 153-163.
87. SHUTTE, A., 1993. *Philosophy for Africa*. Rondebosch, South Africa: UCT Press.
88. SPICER, A. and BOHM, S., 2007. Moving Management: Theorizing Struggles against the Hegemony of Management. *Organization Studies*, **28**(11), pp. 1667-1698.

89. SPIVAK, G., 1988. Can the Subaltern Speak? , in NELSON, C. and GROSSBERG, L. (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. London: Macmillan.
90. SWANSON, D., 2007. Ubuntu: An African contribution to (re)search for/with a ‘humble togetherness’. *Journal of Contemporary issues in Education*, **2**(2), pp. 53-67.
91. SYMPHORIEN, N., 2009. Cultural Values, Economic Growth and Development. *Journal of business ethics*, **84**. pp. 297 -311.
92. TAYLOR, C., 1999. Two Theories of Modernity. *Public Culture*, **11**(1), pp. 153-174.
93. TAYLOR, P., 2004. ‘Silence and Sympathy: Dewey’s Whiteness’, in YANCY, G. (ed.), *What White Looks Like*. New York: Routledge.
94. THOMAS, A. and BENDIXEN, M., 2000. The Management Implications of Ethnicity in South Africa. *Journal of International Business Studies*, **31**(3), pp. 507-519.
95. TOULMIN, S, E., 1990. *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity*. New York: Free Press.
96. TROMPERNAARS, A., 1993. *Riding the Waves of Culture*. London: The Economist Books.
97. WELSH. A. N., 1980. *The Skills of Management*. Gower Press.
98. WIREDU, K., 1996. *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
99. WIREDU, K., 2002. The moral foundations of an African culture, in COETZEE, P.H. and ROUX, A.P.J. (eds.), *Philosophy from Africa*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
100. WOODS, J., 2003. Rights as Slogans: A theory of Human Rights Based On African Humanism. *National Black Law Journal*, **17**(1), pp. 52-66.
101. VAGTS, D., 2001. Hegemonic International Law. *The American Journal of International Law*, **95**(4), pp. 843-848.
102. VAN BINSBERGEN, W., 2001. ‘Ubuntu and the Globalisation of Southern African thought and Society’ in Boele Van Hensbroek, P. (ed.), *African Renaissance and Ubuntu Philosophy, Special Issue of Quest: An African Journal of Philosophy*, **15**(1/2), pp. 53-89.
103. VAN DEN HEUVEL, H., 2008. ‘Hidden Messages’ Emerging from Afrocentric Management Perspectives. *Acta Commercii*, **8**(1), pp.41-54.

104. VAN NIEKERK, J., 2007. In defence of an Auto centric Account of Ubuntu. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 26(4), pp. 364-368.

Internet

1. ALLIX, M., 2013. Cashbuild's margins under pressure. Available:
<http://www.bdlive.co.za/business/retail/2013/08/06/cashbuilds-margins-under-pressure>.
Accessed [December 2013].
2. DORWARD, A., KYDD, J., MORRISON, J. and POULTON, C., 2005. Institutions, Markets and Economic Co-ordination: linking Development policy to Theory and Praxis. Available:
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1170428243464/3408356-1170428261889/3408359-1170428299570/Institutions-markets%26economic-coordination.pdf>. Accessed [July 2012].
3. GENTLE, L., 2009. 'Escom to Eskom: From Racial Keynesian capitalism to neo-liberalism', in McDONALD, D. (ed.) *Electric capitalism: Recolonising Africa On The Power Grid*. Available:
http://www.hsrapress.ac.za/downloadpdf.php?pdffile=files/PDF/2243/electric_capitalism.pdf&downloadfilename=Electric%20Capitalism#page=74. Accessed [April 2013].
4. GREENBURG, S., 2009. 'Market liberalism and continental expansion: The repositioning of Eskom in post-apartheid South Africa', in McDONALD, D. (ed.), *Electric capitalism: Recolonising Africa On The Power Grid*. Available:
http://www.hsrapress.ac.za/downloadpdf.php?pdffile=files/PDF/2243/electric_capitalism.pdf&downloadfilename=Electric%20Capitalism#page=74. Accessed [April 2013].
5. GORDON, L, R., 2007. Problematic People and Epistemic Decolonization: Towards the Postcolonial in African political Thought. Available: <http://abahlali.org/files/Gordon-problematic%20people-1%20%282%29.pdf>. Accessed [April 2012].

6. MALHERBE, S. and SEGAL, S., 2001. Corporate Governance in South Africa. Available: http://www.tips.org.za/files/Corporate_Governance_in_South_Africa.pdf. Accessed [December 2013].
7. MJALI, Z., 2013. Personal communication with Zimkitha Mjali, HR Divisional Manger (Eastern Cape). Email conversation: June 2013.
8. MOKGORO, Y., 1997. 'Ubuntu and the Law in South Africa', in CORNELL, D. and MUVANGUA, N., *Law in the uBuntu of South Africa*, pp. 363-369 [Online]. Available: http://isthisseattaken.co.za/pdf/Papers_Cornell_Muvangua.pdf. Accessed [May 2010].
9. NUSSBAUM, B., 2003. *Ubuntu and Business . . . Reflections and Questions*. Available: <http://www.barbaranussbaum.com/downloads/perspectives2.pdf>. Accessed [May 2012].
10. PANSE, S., 2006. *Ubuntu - African Philosophy*. Available: <http://www.tsabcc.org/ubuntu/philosophy.htm>. Accessed [March 2010].
11. SUTHERLAND, M., 2012. Personal communication with Mark A. Sutherland, Divisional Manger (Eastern Cape). Email conversation: June 2012.
12. VISSER, W., 1997. *Afrocentric Business in South Africa*. Available: http://www.waynevisser.com/wpcontent/uploads/2012/07/article_afrocentric_business_wvisser.pdf. Accessed [July 2012].