Missing spirituality: Teaching Polish students how to manage human resources[1]

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HRM literature: what students get to read

Quite a few years ago, one of us wrote a book on Human Resources Management. The book tackled the issue from a fairly mainstream perspective (though this perspective was far from mainstream in Polish management literature and practice of the time), and it sold quite well. This author's research interests have long since shifted from this field, and the other has never had any extended contact with it. Nevertheless, both of us experienced a sense of discomfort in the coincidental contacts with the HRM literature available in Poland, stemming from the perceived soullessness of its treatment of human beings. This essay is an attempt to revisit these feelings, and to ground or dissipate them basing on a more detailed analysis of HRM books directed at and available to Polish students of management.

We have chosen to study books available at the HRM section of a library reading room at one of Poland's bigger private management schools. The library is considered to be one of the better stocked in Poland, as far as management literature is concerned. We decided to limit our research to the books available in the reading room, as those are the ones most widely used by students, or chosen because of their being used to teach HRM courses. All in all, we analyzed 18 books (one in two volumes); 12 of them were originally written in Polish, the other 6 were translated. We paid particular attention to how human beings were represented in these books, and we most avidly searched for any signs of spirituality. It might be important to stress here that we are not concerned here with any particular expression of spirituality, but only with acknowledgement, that it is (or can be) an important part of being human. Anthony de Mello (2000) equates humanity with awareness, and, elsewhere, contrasts it to religion. Religion as practiced today deals in punishments and rewards. In other words, it breeds fear and greed — the two things most destructive of spirituality (A. de Mello 2000).

Spirituality is perfect unity and nothing less. Spirituality is not possible if one excludes others from one's spiritual experience, for "in adoration you cannot fly higher than [all men's] hopes nor humble yourself lower than their despair" (K. Gibran 1923/1996: 49). If we want to gain spirituality, we have to be willing, and indeed open, to see the whole picture: ourselves as whole persons, our lives and other people. In the end, this brings true happiness, a by-product of true experience (or spiritual experience if one sees spirituality the way we do in this text) – a state quite different from superficial gratification, which is a temporary fulfillment arising from things outside of ourselves (J. Krishnamurti 2001). This, basically,

is the understanding of spirituality that we set out to find in Polish HRM books.

Interlude: Translation

Before we turn to the studied books, however, we need to tangle one more problem which we encounter in presenting our study — all the analyzed material is in Polish, yet we critique it in English. Ruth Behar (1993) argues quite convincingly that all languages are inccomensurable, and that translation is always an act of treason, of authorial interference into the original work. We are well aware of doing this, both in presenting our biased (of course, there is no such thing as unbiased reading) readings of the analyzed books, and in translating the terms they use into English. This last act is particularly important, as presentation of terminology forms a powerful tool in our rhetorics, and translated words always carry different connotations. Translation takes away the soul of the original, as Eva Hoffman (1989/1995) asserts, and this is a point particularly important to our discussion and to which we shall yet return. Still, we take our cue from Paul Feyerabend, who, having been an important figure in propagating the concept of incommensurability, warned against treating a mere inconvenience as an insurmountable obstacle (1991). In this spirit, we try to provide both the original forms of the words most important for our analysis, as well as a brief commentary on the range of meaning they carry in Polish.

The books we studied

The studied books are used for the education of students on the bachelor and master's levels. They are considered not only the main stream of the discipline but also seen as scientific publications. It is pertinent to point out that none of the books refer to any of the significant academic publications in the field of HRM, management or organization theory, with few exceptions such as Drucker and Crozier (K. Piotrkowski/M. Swiatkowski 2000)[3] and usually no references are made at all, or vague ones of the type "it is assumed," "science says that" and the like. Sometimes popular references (to popular

newspapers) are introduced as scientific or the author says that researchers opt for a certain viewpoint but in fact does not refer to any research at all (L. Zbiegien-Maciag 1997: 47-48). Airport literature and popular textbooks[4] (e.g. K. Piotrkowski/M. Swiatkowski 2000) are routinely invoked as scientific sources. Pseudo-scientific language is often used to legitimize author's claims; one book (A. Pocztowski/A. Mis 2000: 11) offers the following picture under the heading of "H
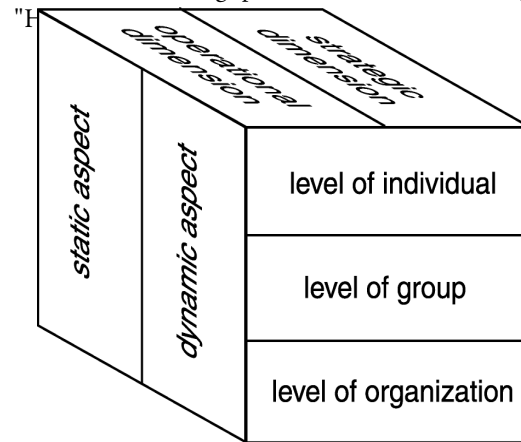

The authors' unorthodox understanding of the word paradigm is never explained, and the book confounds reader with further nonsensical (and/or unexplained) phrases such as the "past->present->future system" and its difference from the "present->future system." Another author (L. Zbiegien-Maciag 1996) quotes secondhand what she describes as one of the most popular books for students, consultants, and managers, and provides only initials for its author.

Many of the books analyzed by us have been rewarded with high academic awards and/or are doctoral theses successfully defended by the authors. Bowker and Star (1999), commenting on their study of International Classification of Diseases (a multi-volume reference work) claimed that it was like reading a phonebook, only more boring. Ours was perhaps more interesting, but unfortunately much more depressing.

HRM according to the books

Almost none of the books we have studied make any

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[3] These authors refer to other researchers as well, e.g. Schein and Mayo, who are, however, not to be found in the bibliography.

[4] French and Raven's (1968) well known model is quoted after a textbook popular in Poland but under the name of the textbook's author; French and Raven are not mentioned in the text (Piotrkowski and Swiatkowski, 2000).
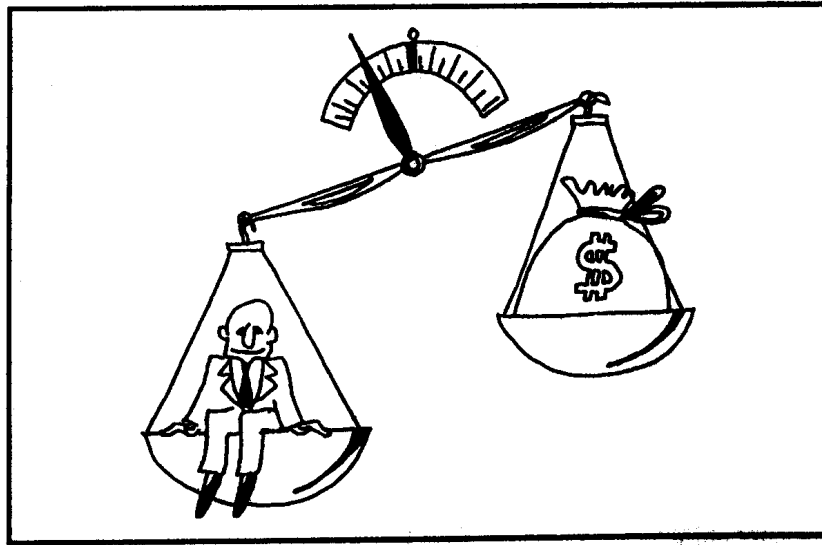
admission of a person's spirituality, or even humanity. People are resources, this metaphor is taken literally by the authors. In an edited book (K. Sedlak 1997: 7, reproduced above), there is a "funny" picture of a balance with a bald man in a suit on the one scale and a bag with a dollar sign on it on the other.

The man is smiling happily – he has outweighed the bag. The picture served as an illustration to the chapter entitled "People are the most precious resource of the firm" (A. Pocztowski 1998: 7). This is an important slogan, and one repeated ad nauseam in many of the analyzed books, and, like most slogans, pretty much devoid of meanings. Zbiegien-Maciag (1996: 3) asserts

that "people are a priceless resource for a company," yet on the same page she insists:

> We sell our qualifications, abilities on the labour market, but we also use it to buy people, various kinds of specialists.

In the aforementioned chapter, Pocztowski (1998) explains that effectiveness depends on productivity and that the latter can be attained only through people. With that in mind, the author explicates how the employees should be handled and dealt with. They are indeed a resource: their character can be planned in minute detail, they can be read (or their CV can, which amounts to the same thing), the employment interview has to be led in a way enabling the manager
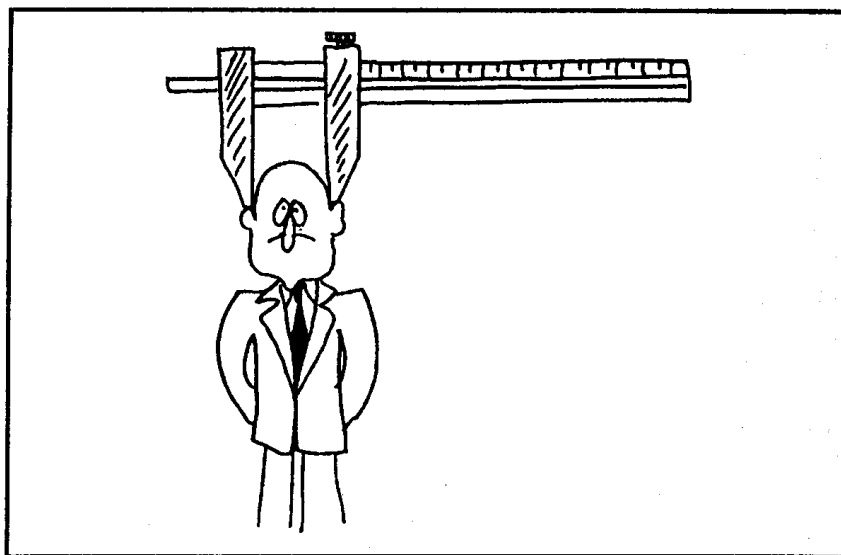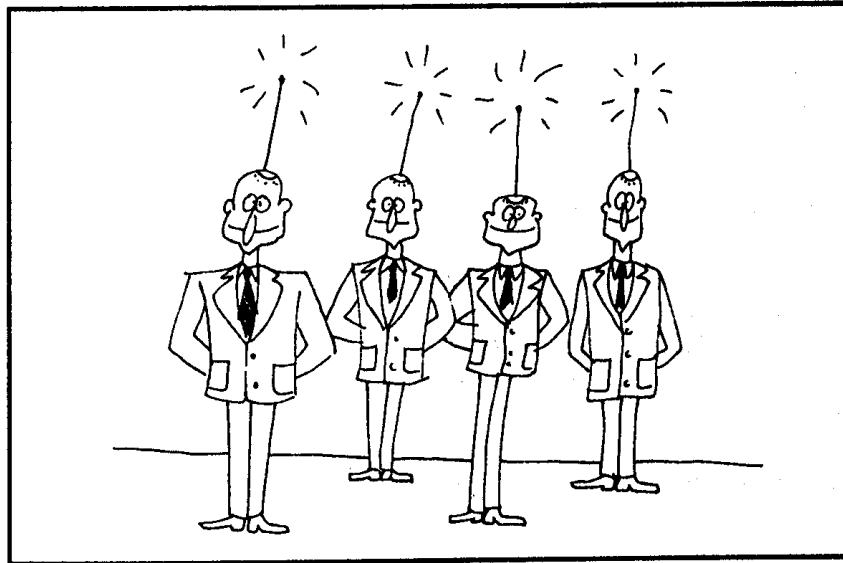
to find the right people for the job, and additional tests and exams help to accomplish this goal. The criteria are crucial and these belong to the company. People are to be fitted into the organization. They can also be measured, as another picture in the same book shows (p. 69, reproduced on the preceding page); it depicts the same bald man who in this instance has his head measured with a calliper rule.

Managers can be formed (T. Listwan 1995), and tools can be used in order to form employees (ibid.). However, "in comparison to other resources, human resources are more unpredictable and harder to submit to control," Listwan (ibid.: 36) laments.

The issue of control is indeed an important one, and it is taken up by yet another of the "funny" pictures (in K. Kälin/P. Müri 1996/1998: 109, reproduced above). It shows four bald employees in suits with aerials sticking out of their heads. They are all smiling, and they are obviously being controlled from the outside. The book asserts that management teams should reorganize themselves, while all the other teams need to be organized externally.

The pictures found in books published by Wydawnictwo Profesjonalnej Szkoly Biznesu (Professional Business School Press) merit particular attention. They are all drawn by the same person, Piotr Łopalewski. Drawn in a cartoonish style, they depict smiling people in suits subjected to the worst inhumanities of HRM ran amok. They could be taken as a highly critical commentary, but such tone is reflected nowhere in the texts of the books we have examined; at the same

time, the pictures are always closely associated with chapter titles, and we believe they must have been drawn for these particular books. In fact, they form a literal representation of the books' ideas, and are quite close to capturing the mood that these books try to confer. The ideal employee as presented in the analyzed texts is one devoid of free will and individual thought, shaped to the exact requirements and whims of the management. People are the most precious resource simply because they are worth more than other resources, not due to any incommensurability of determining worth of people and other resources. By this logic, humans should be and are compared to other resources, and become precious only if found out to be worth more using the same scale (or the same scales). They are however more important than other resources because they can be put to work:

> The perception of the human being as an important component of the organization, the willingness to win him over for its aims, especially the persuasion of the employees to effective work – all that resulted in the emergence of disciplines concerning themselves with the problematics of people in organizations (T. Listwan 1995: 25).[5]

The literature is written in a "tools for management" convention, i.e. all the books list typical HRM

[5] The highly formal, seemingly unedited, and bureaucratic style typical of Polish management literature can probably be traced to the long tradition of newspeak in the Polish official (political and economic) rhetoric (see Glowinski 1990). Polish management authors seem to assume that formal texts should be written that way and that there is no alternative.

activities and explain in more or less detail how they should be carried out. The implicit assumption, sometimes spelled out explicitly, is that human resources should be put into as productive use as possible, from the company's point of view. For example, Piotrowski (2000) is a practical guidebook for the personnel manager, containing ready-for-use forms and easily adapted documents. The book takes up such issues as: employment, exploitation[6] (sic!), development, integration and maintenance of personnel, and staff cutbacks. The terms are first defined and then instructions and guidelines for action are carefully spelled out. The main focus of the book is on legal documents and specific legal actions, such issues as morality and feelings are not given even a single mention, not even when the section title (such as "development") might suggest their particular relevance. Even though Piotrowski's book is perhaps rather extreme in its practical approach (ready-to-use forms, non-narrative writing convention), it serves as a good representation of what is generally considered relevant in the books we have studied. All the books take up "management tools" as their main theme, most of them do so unreflectively, and typically the writing style is focused on the normative (and not e.g. experiential) dimension. All terms, such as motivation, employment, reduction, are taken for granted and introduced as solid, known and given in their "technical" form (except for one instance when the term employee appraisal is problematized in the beginning and at the very end of the book, in M. Sidor-Rzadkowska 2000). The following lengthy quotation, taken from the introduction to one of the books, will serve as the illustration of the typical style of the studied books:

> A question (…) comes to mind: how to form the managerial cadre[7] in organizations so that it can be up to the emerging challenges? Or, in other words:
> - which characteristics and competencies of the managerial cadre should be considered necessary?
> - from which sources and in what way people for managerial positions should be won over?
> - how to develop the managerial cadre – how to

improve it (school it), promote it, appraise and how to create managerial teams from it?
> - who and with what rights should participate in these processes and control them?
> - with the help of what tools can the process of the formation of the cadres be assisted?
> - what can the managers themselves do in order to form their professional path and elevate the effecitivity of action?
> - what is the contemporary scene of the management of cadres in the Polish economic organizations and what steps should be taken in order to perfect it?"
> (T. Listwan 1995: 7-8).

In order to answer such questions, the HRM authors turn towards strict measurements and quantitative evaluation methods. Striving for definitions allowing measuring and ranking is regarded as beneficial and praiseworthy in itself, even when results serve only to show the absurdity of such an approach; one author (P. Sackett 1998) cites the development of 665 (sic!) different measures of honesty (as opposed to 45 measures available 10 years earlier) as an important achievement in the field of honesty assessment. The editor's introduction to the book containing this article (T. Witkowski 1998b) claims it does not offer ready solutions and easy answers but problematizes the field of employee recruitment and assessment. Still, it concentrates on tests and measures, implicitly assuming that employees and prospective employees should be tested using some standard tests and measures, and the scientists' tasks is only to discover the right method for quantification. In one chapter (T. Clark/J. Billsberry 1998) the reader learns that interviews tend to be undervalued and that "even unstructured interviews" provide relevant data, but the editor hastens to explain that the said chapter presents a highly controversial viewpoint (T. Witkowski 1998b). Another book (A. Pocztowski/A. Mis 2000) discusses available research methods, and concludes:

> Secondary sources relevant for a researcher of socio-economical phenomena comprise mostly of statistical data created by institutions and materials gathered in the form of institution's documents (p. 21).

Almost all the proposed methods are quantitative, and interview is described as a questionnaire method. Open questions are nevertheless mentioned, though their description is limited to listing their numerous drawbacks:

> much work in their analysis, large possible dispersion

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[6] The Polish word "eksploatacja" is also often used to mean the utilization of natural resources, particularly in relation to mining.

[7] "kadra" in Polish; the word has been extensively used in reference to employees in the Communist era, and sounds somewhat old-fashioned in today's parlance. Its origin can be easily traced to the military.

of answers and relatively common off-topic answers (p. 30).

In contrast, closed questions are presented only in terms of their advantages. There is also brief mention of observation, preferably non-participant, systematic, and with clearly predefined objectives, and of case study.

Employees are presented not as people to talk to but as objects of research. No creative input is expected from them, and indeed any creative, thoughtful, or unconventional answers are seen as undesirable and should be discouraged. If possible, the research should be precise, quantitative, and allowing for easy ranking of employees, and is often either equated with employee assessment, or seen as a preliminary phase thereof. Lidia Zbiegien-Maciag describes such person's role:

> In a large company, among many employees a single person seems to get lost in a crowd. When we observe, for example, a shift coming out from a factory, we see a mass of people, similar in their appearance and the degree of tiredness. An employee is treated as an individual when the time of evaluation comes (1996: 97).

It comes as a shock to us that this rather pessimistic description comes from a book encouraging employee assessment and offering simplified methods for organizing such ordeals.

Judging from the HRM literature, employees can be bought and easily put to hard work, if well paid (L. Zbiegien-Maciag 1997). They have other needs than the financial ones, but money is crucial, and everything happening within the company can be expressed in monetary terms (ibid.). Nonetheless, the same author points out that people actually do have other needs which means that the "motivational role of the money consists not of affecting people by the means of its amount but rather by the various components" (p. 32-33). Higher needs such as need for power, recognition, and codetermination were sometimes described (e.g. K. Piotrkowski/M. Swiatkowski 2000). Creativity was given a separate subchapter in one of the books (ibid.) but the description was limited to a few definitions, distinguishing between creativity and innovation. A 5 stage model of the creative process was sketched out,[8] but only to conclude that the manager has to be sensitive toward the unexpected and unplanned <u>features of creativity</u>. Kälin and Müri (1996/1998)

[8] Resembling the traditional formal decision making model (the rational model).

propose to rationalize the creative process through clear division of labour between one's dreamer, counselor, and doer sides.

Development typically means OD (Organizational Development) or career planning (e.g. T. Listwan 1995), and definitely nothing beyond MBO (Management By Objectives).

> By human resource development we understand all those activities taken up by the employer that aim at the creation for the employees of conditions for the development of their qualifications, the creation of perspectives for the realization of their personal and professional aims and the creative aptitudes of the employees"

states Piotrowski (2000: 8/1:1). However, he fails to take up the themes of creativity, aptitudes or personal and professional aims and concentrates instead on formal schooling of personnel in technical and practical areas related to the immediate task at hand.

No spiritual, aesthetic or emotional needs were mentioned in the studied literature, and in most cases the employees' needs were either ignored or dismissed as unimportant. Oleksyn (1998) cautions that

> Employees' and their representatives' expectations are another important factor, which needs to be closely inspected. Not necessarily in order to fulfill them. In most cases that would be impossible, in some — even undesirable (p. 54).

Eric Parsloe (1998) describes in detail the numerous advantages of coaching and mentoring. Throughout the whole book, however, he fails to mention a single benefit for the employees. Piotrowski (2000) explicitly uses the term "exploitation" in the phrase "exploitation of employees." He does so, judging from the context, completely unreflectively, defining it as "issues of the use of employees, within the frame of regulations included in the employment agreement and the employment law" (p. 7/1:1).

Quality of work life is mentioned (T. Listwan 1995; P. Louart 1995), but is depicted as a kind of managerial feedback regarding people's work (T. Listwan 1995), having nothing to do with feelings or spiritual development of people. The author explains that it is important to promote such quality of life as its lack tends to give the impulse to negative actions such as protests and strikes that lead to loss of effectiveness:

> The aforementioned actions go beyond strictly humanitarian aspects. It is namely assumed that their taking into consideration will favor the commitment of employees to the realization of the aims and tasks

of the firm, the decreasing of tensions, conflicts or the susceptibility for e.g. absenteeism, strikes and other undesired behaviors (ibid.: 26).

The one book where quality of work life is discussed in greater detail is by Louart (1995), who defines it as codetermination and influence on the work process. This stands in stark contrast to most of the literature we analyzed, where employees are presented as uninterested in taking any active part in shaping the work process or, for that matter, in anything not directly related to their wages/salaries.

Change as understood by HRM books is definitely something that is introduced, in a planned and rational way, by the employer (e.g. M. Egeman 1999). Employees may show an irrational or indeed egoistic (ibid.: 45) resistance to change. Piotrkowski and Swiatkowski (2000) address resistance to change as a pathology, something that can (and should) be avoided through rational management. Louart (1995) expresses a hope that resistance to change can be prevented by codetermination – which is a practical effort in the striving for harmony between conflicting forces that influence the employees.

However, some fundamental changes indeed are already in progress in Polish organizations. Many of the books refer to the shift of 1989 as a very important occurrence, however, one that somehow objectively happened and is now demanding adequate response from people – definitely not as something the people are bringing about themselves. The managers from before 1989 are either not mentioned at all, or shown as a negative typified collective character or rather background for the display of modern HRM techniques (e.g. T. Listwan 1995). Listwan also describes the pre-1989 manager as a passive, unambitious person (despite research pointing to the considerable managerial talents displayed by many Polish managers, e.g. M. Kostera 1995; M. Kostera/M. Wicha 1995). Similarly, there is a strong discourse casting the West as superior, and Eastern companies as inferior. Gick and Tarczynska (1999) offer an excellent example of such thinking, as they provide numerous short parables with clear morals, which they call "case studies[9]," to illustrate their points. All

positive examples in these stories come from Western enterprises, stories about change (for the better) are situated in Polish companies, while the one tale about organizational failure is set in Moscow.

Culture is absent as a theme, except for Piotrkowski and Swiatkowski (2000) who take up organizational culture as a effectivity tool, referring to Peters and Waterman, Schein, and Kostera [10].

The issue of gender is also largely ignored throughout the analyzed material — it appears in only three of the books. Two of them, translations of American handbooks (R. Half 1993/1995; L. Grensing 1991/1995) come from a purely legalistic perspective, advising against gender discrimination (among others) as punishable by law. A footnote added by a translator, however, offers a reassuring disclaimer: "this criterion [of equal opportunities] is not yet widely used in Poland." (in L. Grensing 1991/1995: 27). The only other discussion of gender comes from a Polish author, who stresses the differences between sexes: "to fail to include the gender factor in career planning is to completely distort its meaning (B. Jamka 1998: 110). The author elaborates further that women are expected to devote at least some part of their lives (10 to 20 years) to housekeeping and to start their career only afterwards. Men are obviously not supposed to do anything like that. Jamka stresses that this distinction is not discriminatory, as even educated women will not wish to explore career options until their forties.

Coming back to de Mello's distinction between spirituality and religion, it is easy to see that the authors often exhibit something akin to religious zeal. Indeed, the principles of greed and fear form legitimate motivational tools, although greed is by far the more preferred. If anything is as object of worship it is not God, nature, the Buddha nature or anything spiritual – it is money. Companies are represented as serving only economic interests of their owner, and the employees are expected to work due to purely economic motives. This stands in obvious opposition to the common thread of radical humanism as identified by

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[9] One "case study" in the book (p. 301-302) did not follow this trend. It described a computer program for HRM, its hardware requirements and a list of features. No problematization or analysis of any kind was attempted or hinted as. It was the only story without a clear moral

[10] The authors are not present in the bibliography. However, we gather from the context that the Kostera referred to is the book on personnel management, where culture is treated marginally and normatively, and not one of her numerous empirical works on culture, in Polish or English. Edgar Schein's work is treated in a sketchy fashion, the authors not taking into consideration his anthropological problematizations of the culture idea.
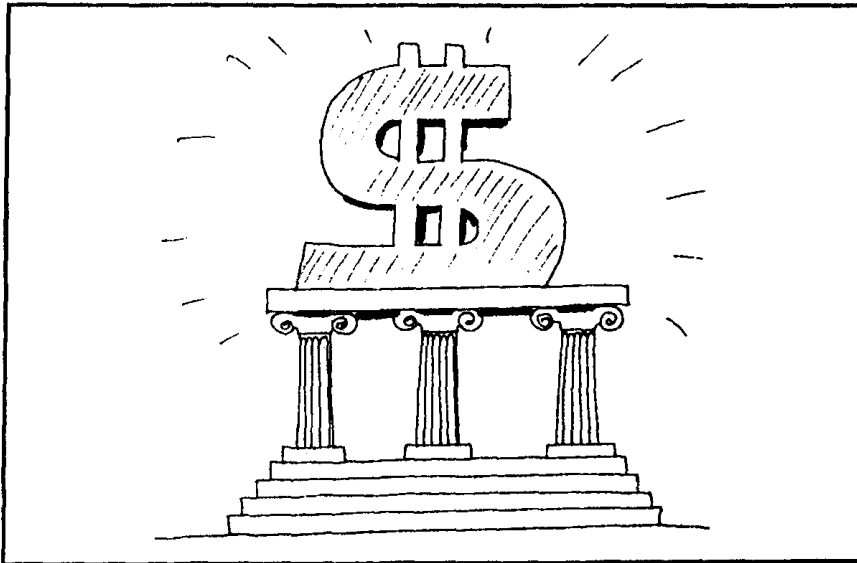
Erich Fromm (1969/2000: 171) - the condemnation of "all instances of idolatry in the prophetic meaning of worshipping the products of one's work." Indeed, yet another "funny drawing" (in K. Sedlak 1997, reproduced above) couldn't make it clearer:

It shows three columns on a flight of stairs, looking like an ancient place of worship. On top of the columns a huge dollar sign is placed, with beams of radiance streaming from it. The picture serves as an illustration accompanying a text on employee remuneration.

Some texts are slightly more subtle in their approach. Egeman (1999) mentions the necessity of some kind of uniform government policy on employment in connection to the restructuring of enterprises. Still, most of his book on Polish HRM in the European context is a typical consultancy handbook about how to restructure HRM in an enterprise.

The employment interview is usually called "admission conversation" in Polish. This conversation is depicted as multi-layered, containing both technical and emotional matters by Kossowska (1998). Even the values of the interviewee can be touched and the author speaks for a sensitive and respectful approach. She also advocates listening to the interlocutor. Sidor-Rzadkowska (2000) opens her book with a striking quotation from Deming, saying that personnel appraisal systems are a way to disgrace the employees. She explains in the introduction that appraisal systems provoke strong, "extreme" emotions. However, the author goes on to say that the question is not whether to appraise but how to do and the rest of the book is a typical handbook on how to implement a rational personnel appraisal system, using normative and technical rhetoric. By the end she discusses briefly ethical matters and she ends her book with a reflective note:

I would like to appeal to people on whom the implementation of the personnel appraisal system depends: if you have doubts, wait with the launching of the whole procedure. Take it up only when all the foreseeable details have been perfected (p. 196).

People in the books

The authors use the term human resources when talking about people, except Listwan (1995) and Jamka (1998) who use the old Polish term kadry explicitly advocating its use rather than resources, because of the dehumanizing sound of the word. However, they makes no allowance for the fact that the term kadry, cadres, are part of the military metaphor, that has dominated in Polish management language before 1989 (M. Kostera 1995).

The language reflects the thinking. People are at best treated as clearly treated as a mass (of soldiers?) in the textbooks, or straightforwardly as things. The only people with some authority are the managers, and even that is not so sure – if they were managers before 1989, they are probably lacking in ambition and not worth any approval at all. They should conform to a rigid personality template, and Zbiegien-Maciag (1996: 15) even provides such a template:

Leading Managers of the year 2000 should be:
- enthusiastic 97%
- inspiring 91%
- uplifting 89%
- open and creative 88%
- giving example of ethical conduct 87%

The meaning of percentage values is not explained in the text. Still, if the employees are contemporary human resource managers they are probably pretty commendable people, but need to learn how to do their job in all technical details and should not be interested in any moral or emotional issues, or independent of thought enough to be entrusted with empty spaces to be filled with own inventions or variations. Empowerment, touted in one of the books as a desirable development, is described in the same book (A. Gick/M. Tarczynska 1999) as consisting of (among others) clearly rewarding employees for reaching their objectives[11].

The HRM books mostly concentrate on providing solutions to the economic problems encountered by the company (as all problems can be and are reduced to economics in this approach). The solutions are invariably shown as the right ones, devoid of any flaws and drawbacks. Any practices differing from the given standard can be but wrong. This forms yet another trait contributing to the depersonalization of the Polish HRM books — people can never be reduced to single-sided, non-problematical matters. This holds especially true in regards to spirituality.

Spirituality

Barbara Townley (1994) maintains that HRM is about rendering of the psyche intelligible and predictable. This certainly hold true about the ambitions of the Polish HRM textbooks (intentio operis). They aspire to a depersonalization and streamlining of the people of the organization, forcing them into tight and highly predictable categories.

Spirituality means the opposite: it is about making a difference through perfecting one's difference (C. Jung 1989), and thus becoming unpredictable and unpredicted. We die to the extent that we do not make a difference – this is the meaning of the individuation principle. If we remain faithful to our

soul, that is, to our difference, we do not dissipate into Pleroma, or nothingness and entropy. Difference means uniqueness, the differentiation from common streams such as egoism, fear, pain – and thus feeling the moment to its full potential which is a glimpse of infinity (J. Krishnamurti 1996).

HRM books' predictability has two sides, and both of them clash heavily with spirituality. On the one hand, they aim to make employees predictable, to subjugate them to the company's HRM policy. On the other, they assume predictability on part of their readers, who are expected to be wholly driven by greed, and interested only in making their company more profitable.

Their central narrative is that of planned change, and this is yet another point of clash with spirituality. This is because spirituality is not change in itself, for "the future is what we are now " (J. Krishnamurti 1996: 55) It is not motivation, as motivation is a limitation; motivation is what encloses change and makes it but a completion of the present; meditation is possible when motivation is absent (ibid). It is not the striving for gratification, financial or otherwise, as the thinking in terms of reward and penalty makes us resemble trained dogs and thus is a product of a limited minds (ibid.). It is not appraisal – the mind "tries to subject its measures on the immeasurable" (ibid.: 97) and first when we free ourselves from the temptation to evaluate we can plunge into meditation. It is definitely not greed, incessant activity, desire of external achievement – leaving the person with a feeling of internal emptiness and loss (C. Jung 1989). It has nothing to do with winning, we need to escape the common trap that makes us "ignore our true character to accommodate to what society names as successful" (R. Rohr 1999: 137). These central assumptions and themes of the HRM literature: planned change, desire of gratification, desire for winning are the problems for the individual. The solutions can be found in spirituality (R. Rohr 1999; D. Benstead/S. Constantine 1998).

The HRM books we have analyzed took, on the whole, the opposite stand to the literature on spirituality. So, in HRM, clear definition of quantifiable goals (K. Kälin 1996/1998) is seen as crucial to success, both on organizational and personal level. Change in HRM is described as meeting predefined criteria, as fitting into an already existing scheme. Human beings are

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[11] The Polish word, "zadania" clearly implies that they are supposed to be set externally, by somebody else than the empowered employee.

expected to be molded to fit the needs of a company (B. Jamka 1998).

Not so in literature on spirituality. There, solving the problems of a living human being means change, though not change in itself, nor the planned change of HRM. Yet spirituality is change, though of an unpredictable, unpredicted and uncontained kind – that of transformation (R. Rohr 1999). This kind of change is sometimes called enlightenment (A. de Mello 2000; D. Suzuki 1950/1994) and it makes all the difference.

Enlightenment, satori, can be described through the following chief characteristics: irrationality, intuitive insight, authoritativeness, affirmation, sense of the beyond, impersonal tone, feeling of exaltation, and momentariness (D. Suzuki 1950/1994). Irrationality of satori means that cannot be reached by reasoning or explained logically. The intuitive insight derives from seeing, as it embraces the essence of nature. Satori "is concerned with something universal and at the same time with the individual aspect of existence" (ibid.: 26). The authoritativeness of satori means that the knowledge feels final and it is not negative – hence its affirmation. All kinds of enlightenment are concerned by a sense of the beyond. However, as Christian mystics tend to speak of the personal dimension in their experience (love of God), the Zen satori lacks this coloring. Nonetheless, the feeling of exaltation typical of Christian mystics are common for Zen adepts as well. The momentariness of satori is its trait devoid of time yet powerfully transformative: "satori comes upon one abruptly and is a momentary experience," it "opens up in one moment (…) an altogether new vista, and the whole existence is appraised from quite a new angle of observation" (ibid.: 30). Enlightenment can be found through and inquiring mind (ibid.), not by way of formal education or logical problem solving, development in the sense of training the logical mind, or adopting of rational techniques. The mind should be absolutely free. A Zen master give the following advice to his students:

> Have your minds thoroughly washed off of all cunning and crookedness, sever yourselves from greed and anger which rise from egotism, and let no dualistic thoughts disturb you any longer so that your consciousness is wiped perfectly clear. When this purgation is effected, hold up your koan before the mind: "All things are resolvable into the One, and when is this One resolved? Where is it really

resolved?

> Inquire into this problem from beginning to end, severally as so many queries, or undividedly as one piece of thought, or simply inquire into the whereabouts of the One. In any event, let the whole strong of questions be distinctly impressed upon your consciousness so as to make it the exclusive object of attention. If you allow any idle thought to enter into the one solid uninterruptible chain of inquiries, the outcome will ruin the whole exercise" (T'ien-ci'i Shui as quoted in D. Suzuki 1950/1994: 116-177).

It is hard even to look for corresponding concepts in HRM books, as the idea of profound personal experiences or transformative events seems completely alien to the world-view presented therein. The world in question is a very limited one, as the company's dealings with its outside take place only at very well regulated points, primarily during employee recruitment. In order to reduce perceived contamination, newly recruited employees are seen as formless, available for molding according to the company's needs (T. Listwan 1995). Such symbolic closing off of an enterprise allows the authors to present the company as pursuing its own autonomous goals (or, as noted in the previous sentence, needs), which are usually only implicitly equated with the goals of its owners or shareholders. The idea of employee participation in the forming of a company is mentioned in only one book (P. Louart 1995), where it is called codetermination, and presented as a desirable state. In other works, company goals appear as givens, immutable and (hopefully) determining conduct of all the employees. Obviously, all the methods for HRM managers, as well as values and points of views, presented in the books come to the companies from the outside world. However, as long as they are imagined to be the only proper solutions, the most logical options, or value-free descriptions, they are not seen as an instance of outside influence, and therefore they do not compromise the company's purity (see Z. Bauman 1994). Similarly, new employees can be expected to bring technical knowledge to the company, not their experiences and character traits (L. Grensing 1991/1995),. The utopia pursued here is one of order, of clearly defined goals and expectations, of value-free technical knowledge, and of rigid hierarchies.

The spiritual contrast to this vision is epitomized by the Zen koan — a riddle, irrational and illogical, or perhaps beyond rationality or logic, like the question

of One's resolution quoted above. Another famous koan is also a question: what is the sound of one hand clapping? The inquiring mind is like an intellectual obsession, like a state of creative fury, when all mingle and fuse. The outcome of this state is ecstasy, a transcendence of subjectivity and objectivity, a state which indeed cannot be described – and should not, because it is beyond categories and words.

Enlightenment is rooted in awareness, the very core of spirituality. "Spirituality is awareness, awareness, awareness, awareness, awareness, awareness." (A. de Mello 2000). Awareness and seeing are, of course, closely linked: one is impossible without the other.

> Spirituality is about seeing. It's not about earning or achieving. It's about relationship rather than results or requirements. Once you see, the rest follows (R. Rohr 1999: 31).

Awareness in HRM is sacrificed in the quest for information. Obtuse models (e.g. K. Kälin/P. Müri 1996/1998, on creativity) and obsessive quantification (e.g. 665 measures of honesty in P. Sackett 1998) prevents the authors (and managers) from noticing anything or anybody they are not expecting to see. Large variance in answers to interview questions is seen as a drawback of this method (A. Pocztowski/A. Mis 2000). Blindness is praised as a virtue.

The HRM literature focuses on gratifications: things done, rewards granted, people moved around to fit into the organizational task. This is a taken for granted mode of thinking in these books, similar to a common state of mind of the person unaware of their spiritual potential. The unspiritual people tend to move their self into the periphery of their personality – to the sensation part of it. They feel and think and through these acts they identify themselves as themselves. The center of such a human being's personality is left empty and void, like a black hole, feeding on energy that can only be obtained through the supply of more and more gratifying sensation. Through awareness the self can be moved back into the center, and thus filling the inner void and becoming Consciousness. The person does not need to identify themselves with the incidental and false personality anymore, he or she is free to feel present and whole (D. Benstead/S. Constantine 1998). Awareness thus helps us fill the inner void that is due to the dislocation of the self, with what really belongs there – our consciousness, a source of powerful spiritual, psychological, and corporal energy. It makes the person free to experience the world instead of

waste energy on building psychological fortresses serving to protect the vulnerable marginalized self, or to seek endless gratification. But what does it mean in practical terms? In one of de Mello's (2000) stories awareness is presented in the following way:

> When out on a picnic, the Master[12] said, "Do you want to know what the Enlightened is like? Look at those birds flying over the lake."
> While everyone watched, the Master exclaimed:
> "They cast a reflection on the water that they have no awareness of — and the lake has no attachment to."

Awareness excludes evaluation – when we evaluate, understanding ceases. Also, it comes to us only when we see that rewards are illusory. In awareness, we find ourselves, and we become free (A. de Mello 2000).

> Awareness is a floodlight. You're open to anything that comes within the scope of your consciousness. When awareness is turned on, there's never any distraction, because you're always aware of whatever happens to be (A. de Mello 2000).

Awareness is, however, not only a source of happiness and a potential blessing but a prerequisite, a necessity. In the words of de Mello's (2000) Master:

> These things
> will destroy the human race:
> politics without principle,
> progress without compassion,
> wealth without work,
> learning without silence,
> religion without fearlessness
> and worship without awareness.

Or, as Socrates said, "The unaware life is not worth living."

As we said above, awareness brings freedom. Freedom means an ability to get rid of fear, to feel the connection to a transcendent reality.

> When our life-force is flowing freely, we can bypass mere identification from the "me" [the false incidental personality] and experience a merging of potent essence, which is what real spirituality is all about (D. Benstead/S. Constantine 1998: 284).

Freedom is needed also if we wish to rise above the boundaries of our ego, to communicate with

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[12] The Master in de Mello's stories is "not a single person. He is a Hindu guru, a Zen roshi, a Taoist sage, a Jewish rabbi, a Christian monk, a Sufi mystic. He is Lao Tzu and Socrates, Buddha and Jesus, Zarathustra and Muhammad. His teaching is found in the seventh century B.C. and the twentieth century A.D. His wisdom belongs to East and West alike." (de Mello 1992/1998, p. V).

another person. In Krishnamurti's words: "to express compassion one has to be truly free" (1966: 94).

It comes as not surprise that freedom is not a favourite concept of the HRM authors, even though some attempts to introduce shreds of it can be seen in the analyzed books. As we have said before, empowerment was enthusiastically mentioned in one of the books (A. Gick/M. Tarczynska 1999), although it was taken to include setting very specific goals for the empowered employees. Analogically, "teams know better" (K. Kälin/P. Müri 1996/1998: 101), while at the same time they "ha[ve] to have clearly defined goals" (ibid.: 103). Freedom's opposite, control, is introduced in relation to both oneself and to subordinates. An example of the former is an invitation to write formal, signed contracts with oneself in regards to accomplishing "reasonable and quantifiable" (ibid..: 84) goals. The latter can be seen in a discussion of factors influencing high employee turnover (L. Grensing 1991/1995), where the employees' feelings towards the organization were not even mentioned; employees are seen simply as objects of management practices.

These practices spring from the knowledge presented in HRM books, which is once again completely different from the special kind of knowledge described in the traditions of spiritual thinking. The spiritual knowledge is born of freedom and the ability to communicate in compassion and understanding. Zen, called "the spirit of all religions and philosophies" by its advocate, Daisetz Suzuki (1964, p. 44), has its roots far from the rational model of knowledge. Suzuki explains that Zen is not a

> system founded upon logic and analysis. If anything, it is the antipode to logic, by which I mean the dualistic mode of thinking. (…) If I am asked, then, what Zen teaches, I would answer, Zen teaches nothing (D. Suzuki 1964: 38).

Zen followers may have their own principles, habits or ideas, but Zen as such is freedom from them all and from the idea of a doctrine itself as well. Suzuki notes: "anything that has a semblance of an external authority is rejected by Zen" (ibid.: 44). All authority comes from within. De Mello (2000) expresses a similar view through the following story:

> The Master was an advocate both of learning and of Wisdom.
> "Learning," he said when asked, "is gotten by reading books or listening to lectures."
> "And Wisdom?"
> "By reading the book that is you."

He added as an afterthought: "Not an easy task at all, for every minute of the day brings a new edition of the book!"

If there is anything to be taught or to learn, it is close to experience:

> No man can reveal to you aught but that which already lies half asleep in the dawning of your knowledge (K. Gibran 1923/1996: 34).

Wisdom is thus possible only if the knowledge is one with the lived experience. Often it means to subtract rather than add – in Anthony de Mello's words: "wisdom comes to those who learn nothing, unlearn everything" (2000). Or, in Lao Tzu's famous saying:

> To attain Knowledge, add things every day. To attain Wisdom, remove things every day (Lao Tzu 1999).

The wisdom of spirituality is not separate from, but identical with the person – you do not "have" wisdom, you are it. In the same mode, "when a Zen master was once asked what Zen was, he replied, 'Your everyday thought'" (D. Suzuki 1964: 45).

Introspection is not an activity that human resource managers are expected to participate in. Surveys, questionnaires, and interviews are conducted with other employees based on the already clear insights and goals of the manager. These goals and insights are never questioned, never open to discussion, and they are thought to be common to all managers — none of the books acknowledge that different human resource managers in different companies may set out to fulfill different aims. Though perhaps this is not the manager's fault, but the company's whose attributed obsession with greed controls the managers just as much as it does the other employees.

If knowledge is desired and perhaps even valued in HRM literature, it is the kind of information that can be obtained trough formal schooling, models and techniques to be trained in, "tools" to be acquired in the formal education process. This is not what de Mello would call wisdom, these instances of erudition are perhaps among the ones his Master suggested should become unlearned.

At this point we can quite confidently say that spirituality is something entirely different from what the HRM textbooks describe. But is it really a problem? Does the area of HRM's interest really touch on the subjects infused with spirituality? After all, De Mello speaks of the domain of the soul and the textbooks speak of work. Certainly, this is the kind of criticism that we imagine could be expressed as a reaction to our

text. However, we do not agree that work and spirit can be separated. Divisions are purely rhetorical, work and spirit truly are one:

> Your daily life is your temple and religion.
> Whenever you enter unto it take with you your all.
> Take the plough and the forge and the mallet and the lute,
> The things you have fashioned in necessity or for delight (K. Gibran 1923/1996: 48).

It is not possible to divide one's life into soulless work and soulful meditation and call it real spirituality (or for that sake, psychic wholesomeness and health, D. Benstead/S. Constantine 1998). Work is not separate from spiritual experience but an intimate part of it:

> [W]hen you work you fulfill a part of earth's furthest dream, assigned to you when that dream was born,
> And in keeping yourself with labour you are in truth loving life,
> And to love life through labour is to be intimate with life's inmost secrets (K. Gibran 1923/1996: 13).

If we cannot do our work with love, we should give up working, says Kahlil Gibran (1923/1996), as the bread baked without love is bitter and fills only half the hunger.

De Mello's (1992/1998) Master put it bluntly, making a division between getting things done and the ability to do them:

> When a guest volunteered to do the dishes after dinner, the Master said: "Are you sure you know how to do dishes?"

The man protested that he had done them all his life. Said the Master: "Ah, I have no doubt of your ability to make dishes clean. I only doubt your ability to wash them." (p. 5)

The enlightened life is a life that is whole, undivided. Suzuki quotes the following story:

> A distinguished teacher was once asked, "Do you ever make any effort to get disciplined in the truth?
> "Yes, I do."
> "How do you exercise yourself?"
> "When I am hungry I eat; when tired I sleep."
> "This is what everybody does; can they be said to be exercising themselves in the same way as you do?"
> "No."
> "Why not?"
> "Because when they eat they do not eat, but are thinking of various other things, thereby allowing themselves do be disturbed; when they sleep they do not sleep, but dream of a thousand and one things. This is why they are not like myself" (D. Suzuki 1964: 86).

And, by the way, it is quite meaningless to divide one's life in work and free time, hoping that when one earns enough money, it will finally be possible to enjoy exquisite idleness:

> No, the enjoyment of an idle life doesn't cost any money. The capacity for true enjoyment of idleness is lost in the moneyed class and can be found only among people who have a supreme contempt for wealth (Lin Yutang 1937/1998: 154).

Coda

It is quite clear that our search for the human beings in human resources has met with a rather disastrous failure. This is both an overstatement and an understatement. The former, because we only analyzed the HRM literature readily available to students in Poland, and our conclusions should not stray from this rather unfortunate (considering the books' content) group. The latter, because at the onset we began looking not just for human beings, but for spirituality — and found no inkling of that whatsoever.

Here the question arises as to why we expected to find spiritual themes in the HRM discourse in the first place. When we presented the draft version of this text, we were given a vivid analogy — HRM books are like anatomy textbooks, and why should one expect to find spirituality in an anatomy textbook? Let us begin tackling this issue by looking at this very analogy; Paul Feyerabend (1987) and many others (e.g. G. Burrell 1997; R. Davis-Floyd 1998) argue that anatomy (the Western science) succeeds as much in devaluing and debasing the subject of its inquiry as it does in providing valuable insights into the human condition. Similarly, as Michel Foucault (1963/1999, 1984/1995) has demonstrated, medicalization has long been a tool for excluding the different, such as lunatics or homosexuals, from the mainstream discourse. None of these authors criticize the study of the human body as such, but they are appalled by failing to take into account the human being embodied therein. We believe that an analogous shift is needed in HRM literature, the crucial discovery that there is more to human beings than their value as resources.

Majia Holmer Nadesan (1999) writes about a recent upsurge in spirituality-themed writing in the Western business literature. While this trend is not present in any of the books we have analyzed, we would like to take a brief look at the spirituality presented

in such works. Most of them, like William Guillory (1997), treat spirituality instrumentally, as a means for increasing profits or competitiveness of a company. William Thompson (2001: 502) stresses that "spirited workplaces produce dramatically higher gains in operating earnings," while Ashmos and Duchon (2000: 140) strive "to understand how spirituality can contribute to more productive work organizations" by constructing statistical measures for assessing the level of spirituality present in a given organization. Andre Delbecq's (2000) account of his "Spirituality for Business Leadership" course seems like a sincere attempt at bringing to light the issues of spirituality in a work environment (though his description of the event as a life-changing experience for all participants seems somewhat suspect), yet comments supplied by participants reflect the more usual instrumental mode of reasoning. One of them, Ricardo Levy (2000), uses the concept of spirituality as an excuse for consolidating even more power in the hands of managers, whose vocation "has equal dignity and equal critical societal impact to that of a priest or teacher," and whose spiritual work involves the pains of firing large number of people (an example actually used in the text). The feelings and spirituality of the employees being fired are, obviously, not even mentioned.

Yet spirituality can never be used as a means for achieving a goal, nor as a justification for the (ab) use of power, otherwise it becomes institutionalized, synonymous with religion. Spirituality is neither a technique nor an ideology. Anthony de Mello's Master (1992/1998: 305) explains

> When you fall into the water and don't know how to swim, you become frightened and say 'I must not drown, I must not drown,' and begin to thrash about with arms and legs and, in your anxiety, swallow more water and eventually drown. Whereas if you would let go of your thoughts and efforts and allow yourself to go down to the bottom, your body would come back to the surface on its own. That's spirituality!

The popular work on business spirituality do not tackle this issue, but rather place spirituality in the frame of reference of traditional profit-oriented business discourse, treating it as an independent variable rather than a root metaphor (cf. L. Smircich 1983), and thus denying the centrality of spiritual experience to the human existence. In this way, these texts are actually similar to the Polish books we have analyzed in their inability to perceive human beings in the world of organizaitons.

This is obviously a bleak picture. Yet fortunately it does not describe the entirety of our impressions of the HRM textbooks we have examined. True, reading these books has been a gruesome and depressing task, leaving both of us dejected and disgusted. Yet in a few places we found short snippets of texts bespeaking of the authors' sensitivity to the fate of humans in a soulless organization. They never formed a complete statement, but were always counteracted by a pronouncement of the organization's power and rightfulness. Nevertheless, something must have prompted Sidor-Rzadkowska (2000) to quote Deming on appraisal systems as tools for humiliation in a book recommending the use of such system. There had to be a reason for Zbiegien-Maciag's (1996) sympathetic description of an employee being singled out for evaluation in a text expounding the virtues of ranking people. And we have already discussed the apparent conflict between denunciatory pictures and the uplifting style of the texts advocating the very same inhuman approaches depicted on illustration. These compassionate statements are immediately countered — assessment's debasedness by its inevitability, the pictures' accusatory message by their happy tone, but their disturbing effect is not completely nullified. It seems as if there was a repressed voice struggling to be heard, and we believe this is indeed the case. As spirituality is being expelled from enterprises, it merges with the collective shadow of the organization. Carl Gustav Jung says the following about the Shadow:

> Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it is. If an inferiority is conscious, one always has a chance to correct it. Furthermore, it is constantly in contact with other interests, so that it is continually subjected to modifications. But if it is repressed and isolated from consciousness, it never gets corrected (1938/1969: 92).

Elsewhere, he elaborates:

> It is a frightening thought that man also has a shadow side to him, consisting not just of little weaknesses - and foibles, but of a positively demonic dynamism. The individual seldom knows anything of this; to him, as an individual, it is incredible that he should ever in any circumstances go beyond himself. But let these harmless creatures form a mass, and there emerges a raging monster; and each individual is only one tiny cell in the monster's body, so that for

better or worse he must accompany it on its bloody rampages and even assist it to the utmost. Having a dark suspicion of these grim possibilities, man turns a blind eye to the shadow-side of human nature. Blindly he strives against the salutary dogma of original sin, which is yet so prodigiously true. Yes, he even hesitates to admit the conflict of which he is so painfully aware (C. Jung 1966: 30).

The Shadow is an archetype holding everything in a person that is unconscious, repressed, and denied. These rejected aspects are usually dark, but there are rejected light aspects as well, often referred to as the Golden Shadow. Jung has pointed out that the Shadow may sometimes contain good qualities, normal ambitions, and creative impulses (more about the Golden Shadow in e.g. W. Miller 1989; R. Eigen 2000). Pettifor (1995) thus explains the emergence of golden aspects of the Shadow:

> A person who grew up in a family where level headedness prevailed and such things as art making were not given much value may discover some artistic aptitude hiding out in their shadow. There are treasures here, but they are buried in stinking muck.

It is crucial to perceive the Shadow, reintegrate it. Loadman-Copeland (2001) thus explains this necessity:

> Jung believed that a central task in life required integrating the shadow side into the self. While there are some things in the shadow that are less than desirable, Jung insisted that 90% of the shadow is golden. The 13th century Islamic mystic Rumi said, "Our greatest fears are like dragons guarding our greatest treasures." Some of our greatest treasures lie within that place called the shadow, guarded by dragons.

Carl Gustav Jung's often emphasized that people should explore their dark side in order to find light, or that the path to enlightenment leads through darkness. However, the forces of darkness can be summoned only with the help of enlightenment, otherwise the individual would put him or herself into too great a danger (e.g. 1951/1997).

Martin Bowles (1991) believes that organizations have a Shadow side to them, too. It consists of things that the organization rejects about itself, that would threaten its members self-image and self-understanding. Sometimes it erupts with a raw violence, and is the more dramatic, the more rational and technicist the organization presents itself as. In our opinion the Organization Shadow may well contain golden aspects as well as darkness, just as the Shadow of the individual. Furthermore, we believe that the contextualized HRM discourse itself can be said to have a Shadow. By contextualized discourse we mean that it is taking place in a concrete culture, involving concrete actors, who write HRM books or study management and read the books. Parts of the Discourse Shadow are dark and violent, as the individual person's Shadow they show that they exist through instant signs such as slips of the tongue, as in the case of the appearance of the word exploitation in a textbook. Parts of the Shadow are golden, as the impulses to insert a short note of empathy into some of the books show. We do not really know what this Shadow really contains, we just have a feeling that it has to be indeed mighty, considering the almost perfect repression of understanding and compassion in the HRM literature we have studied.

This repression of humane impulses is particularly strange in that numerous scholars have been writing about the recent revival of interest in spirituality. Margaret Wertheim (1999) described cyberspace as contemporary soul-space, as the domain of the spirit embodied in the twenty first century digital dream. Erik Davis (1998) traced the roots of current technological visions to gnostic mysticism. Both these examples come from the realm of technology, traditionally seen as the domain of soulless machines. If these are currently being infused with spirits and souls, how come that Human Resource Management (in its Polish version) fails to even acknowledge the existence of spirituality, nay, humanity? We are not able to answer this question, only to show the ways in which it is accomplished. Yet as we talk to our friends working in or looking for work in enterprises operating in Poland, we keep being reminded that the exclusion of spirituality is not just a question of misguided textbooks — it is largely instituted in actual organizations. Furthermore, no viable alternative is seen to exist, no discourse allows talking of enterprises in terms different than those of economics. We believe it is high time to account for human presence in these organizations, to actually talk (on HRM courses, in related publications) of the dimensions of human being irreducible to the pursuit of wealth.

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