Activating the Spirit of Work: Business Advice Books and the Use of Pastoral Power to Manage Employees

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Business advice books (BABs) provide popular, organization-centered reading material and are widely used in corporate training programs. Studies suggest these books impact contemporary organizations through discursive constructions that reframe the meaning of organizing (Jackson 2001). Using Foucault's (1976, 1979, 1984, 1988) writings on pastoral power as a framework, this study analyzes how the rhetoric of BABs functions as discursive technology of the self to control employees. Critical rhetorical analysis indicates the spiritual rhetoric used by BABs invokes pastoral power to construct the self in ways consistent with organizational goals.

Workplace spirituality increasingly interests organizational communication scholars and researchers. Popular press (Billitteri, 1997; McGraw, 1995; Murray, 1995; Stewart, 1991) and other scholarly research suggest organizations increasingly incorporate spirituality into their organizational rhetoric and practices (Buzzanell, 2001; Davis, 2005; Krone, 2001; Nadesan, 1999; Wendt, 1998) just as formal organizational socialization practices incorporate secular sermonic narratives (Davis, 2005). Business advice books (BABs) exemplify these narrative forms and often help shape organizations' formal and informal socialization practices ("The three habits," 2009).

The popular press often characterizes these books as superficial (e.g. Grover, 1999; "The three habits," 2009); one scholarly study describes the gurus as merely "organizational witchdoctors" (Clark & Salaman, 1996). Yet, other scholars argue these books are pervasive and influential (May & Zorn, 2001) and that their symbolic quality influences management trends (Abrahamson, 1996; Huczynski, 1993; Jackson, 2001). Further, Jackson (1999) maintained they have tangible impacts on work-life. Considering the popularity of these books, their influence on

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organizing, their use in formal and informal socializing practices, and their systemic use of spiritual rhetoric, BABs not only warrant further scholarly attention, but they also permit us to explore the intersection of rhetorical framing that invokes spirituality upon organizing, socialization, and power.

Dixon (2007) urges the usefulness of Foucault in understanding power as a productive part of organizing. Answering this call and building on Davis (2005), this study aims to illustrate the secular sermonic form of BABs and, more importantly, analyze the rhetoric as a pastoral power technique. I analyze the text of three prototypical, popular business advice books using critical rhetoric (McKerrow, 1989) and Foucault's (1976, 1979, 1984, 1988) pastoral power construct as an interpretive lens to reveal how the BABs function as a discursive technology of the self (Foucault, 1980/1999). The following sections summarize pastoral power as a theoretical framework, current organizational literature to situate these texts, and the process of artifact selection and analysis. I then discuss critical rhetorical findings and rhetorical effects upon individuals as organizational members.

Pastoral Power as Discursive Technology of the Self

BABs offer globally popular, meaningful forms of organizational rhetoric that purport to reshape organizations and inspire workers. Covey's (1989) *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* sold over 15 million copies in 38 languages ("The three habits," 2009) while Johnson's (1998) *Who Moved my Cheese* sold over 25 million copies globally (Andriani, 2008). Lundin, Paul, and Christensen's (2000) *Fish! A Remarkable Way to Boost Moral and Improve Results* was translated into 34 languages and has sold five million copies ("Fish Philosophy," 2010). Because BABs are written, produced, distributed, and endorsed by corporations, they function as informal mouthpieces for many corporations. Furthermore, each book's author owns the corporation that produces that book, making these texts literally part of corporate discourses. Lastly, BABs are designed to formally and informally socialize organizational members ("The three habits," 2009).

Recent studies link contemporary organizational challenges with the emergence of workplace spirituality (Buzzanell, 2001; Davis, 2005; Krone, 2001). While definitions of spirituality vary, Underhill (1930), (recognized as a seminal work on spirituality) writes that spirituality, often equated with mysticism, is defined as

the pursuit of "a 'way out' or a 'way back' to some a desirable state" that satisfies a "craving for absolute truth" (p. 4). Thus a spiritual journey seeks to understand the nature of this truth with the goal of achieving a state of communion with absolute truth (Underhill, 1930). Although religious traditions vary in their understanding of absolute truth, Western traditions view "Truth" as something existing apart from the materially known world. Underhill referred to this state as "materialism inside-out" (p. 27); thus spirituality demands a journey seeking meaning beyond materialism in search of inside-out constructions of Truth.

Since spirituality may not be religious, it can be expressed through religious *and* secular discourse. Recent research indicates organizations increasingly incorporate rhetoric of spirituality into their discourse, their practices (Buzzanell, 2001; Krone, 2001; Nadesan, 1999; Wendt, 1998), and their socialization strategies (Davis, 2005). Other scholars find spiritual discourse and practice linked to employees' fulfillment (Neck & Milliman, 1994), sense of community (Mirvis, 1997), and enactment of "learning organizations" (Porth, McMall, & Bausch, 1999).

As instruments of socialization, BABs must construct a sense of identification that "is necessary to compensate for the 'mystery' or estrangement in the division of labor" (Cheney, 1983, p. 145). Using Burke's notion of consubstantiality, Cheney (1983) argued that identification is cultivated by highlighting areas of overlap between individuals and thereby motivating individuals to act in concert as a group. In this way organizations may use spirituality as a locus of identification. According to Burke (1961/1970), language representing the metaphysical can construct a metaphysical experience that fosters transcendence. Burke (1950/1969) argued that the possibility of transformation provides an attractive invitation for audience identification with the rhetor. The possibility of being transformed, especially in ways similar to the rhetor, replete with symbols of wealth and status, ignites the audience's desire for communion with the rhetor.

Further, BAB discourse employs spiritual rhetoric (Jackson, 1999; Jackson 2001; Mayer, 1983) that replicates secular sermonic narrative forms used in many employee orientation programs (Davis, 2005). In secular sermonic rhetorics: "(1) the rhetor takes the role of the prophet, (2) the rhetor exhorts the audience to act on shared beliefs, (3) the audience participates in message creation, and (4) the discourse uses monologic narratives to illustrate morals and values" (Davis, 2005, p. 122) that are designed to move the audience towards the rhetor's desired interpretations of the

narrative.

While Burke's notion of consubstantiality offers a framework for understanding how spirituality functions as a point of identification, Foucault (1979/1999) provides an elegant framework for understanding how spirituality functions as a disciplinary technique. The pastorate is a technology of the self (i.e. knowledge of self that produces a complex structuring of the self resulting in the government of self) intended to transform the individual. Pastoral power is thus uniquely individualistic and unifying in that it promises salvation for the flock as a whole (Foucault, 1978/1999).

Pastoral power invokes the authority to require individuals to "do everything necessary for their salvation" (Foucault, 1978/1999, p. 124) thus obligating each individual to seek one's own salvation through "the examination of conscience" (Foucault, 1980/1999b, p. 156). Absolute knowledge of individuals' interiors is required; thus, subjects are obligated to a state of complete and constant confession. Obligatory confession makes possible constant self examination and permanent vigilance towards oneself thus is central to the pastoral technique.

Confession is a "verbal manifestation of the truth that is hidden deep inside oneself" requiring "a permanent exteriorisation of the words of the 'mysteries' of consciousness" (Foucault, 1980/1999, p. 157). However confession may not necessarily require an interlocutor in that "One confesses in public and in private, . . . one admits to oneself, in pleasure and in pain, things it would be impossible to tell anyone else" (Foucault, 1978, p. 59). Constant examination of conscience constitutes an internal dialogue of confession.

Confession produces new interior truths not previously known by the subject. This production of interior "truth "enables pastors to preside over the conscience of individuals just as it constitutes the bond between pastor and his subjects (Foucault, 1978/1999). However, the truth of the self is not as much discovered as constituted by governmentality, i.e. the rationalities through which subjects are governed (Foucault, 1980/1999). Yet confession produces a structuring of the self (self-identity) that controls the individual's ethics. Foucault refers to this process as a technology of the self.

The process of interiorization, one of constant self-examination and confession, constructs a self-consciousness within individuals that makes persons perpetually aware of their

own weaknesses and temptations. Consequently, the pastor becomes "a mechanism of knowledge, a knowledge of individuals, a knowledge over individuals, but also a knowledge by individuals over themselves and with respect to themselves" (Foucault, 1978/1999, p. 126). By invoking pastoral power, BABs: 1) position authors as pastors and readers as their flocks, 2) create persistent states of self-examination and confession that turn readers inward on themselves, and 3) obligate readers to examine and change their interior selves to achieve salvation and transcend material conditions.

Within the pastorate, obedience becomes the desired outcome enabling the pastor to impose his will on the flock. Obedience requires internalized humility by subjects and permanent sacrifice of one's own will. "The techniques of examination, confession, guidance, obedience, have an aim: to get individuals to work at their own 'mortification' in this world" (Foucault, 1979/1999, p. 143). Mortification, in this sense, entails renunciation of this world and of the former self. In this way, members of the flock may gain salvation in another world. Foucault (1978/1999) writes, "Obedience must lead to a state of obedience. To remain obedient is the fundamental condition of all other virtues" (p. 124). Obedience thereby constitutes the primary virtue, and the sheep must permanently submit.

The objective of pastoral power, while individualist in technique, is not "a sovereign mastery of oneself by oneself; what is expected, on the contrary, is humility and mortification, detachment, with respect to oneself and establishing a relationship with oneself which tends towards a destruction of the form of the self" (Foucault, 1980/1999, p. 157). So while the pastor expresses devotion and individual attention to each member of the flock, he seeks to bind individual members' virtues and temperaments together as a unified flock (Foucault, 1979/1999). While pastoral power is individualizing power oriented toward individuals in technique, it seeks to rule in continuous and permanent ways by uniting individuals through basic virtues that sustain the flock (organization). In this hugely ironic way, pastoral power stems from a pastor/leader who gathers together, guides, and leads dispersed individuals towards their own salvation via persistent processes of self-examination, confession, guidance, and obedience.

To sum, business advice books comprise tools to deeply and continuously socialize organizational members. They use spiritual rhetoric to foster identification and provide a narrative structure to

influence members' interpretive choices. Foucault's pastoral power suggests spiritual rhetoric functions as a technology of the self where one controls the self in ways consistent with social norms. Given the magnitude of these processes and given the opportunity to explore the intersection of socialization, spirituality and power, the present inquiry is guided by the following question: How does the spiritual rhetoric within business advice books function as a disciplinary technology of the self?

Organizational Discourse and Critical Rhetorical Analysis

Zorn, Page, and Cheney (2000) asserted that managerial discourse reflects and influences management practices and that this discourse helps enable concertive organizations manage employees by invoking "the common understanding of values, objectives, and means of achievement, along with a deep appreciation of the organization's mission" (p. 547). Zorn, et al. conclude that: 1) managerial discourse is pervasive and persuasive, 2) the rhetorical appeals which employees enthusiastically buy into are embedded in authoritarian, top-down structures, 3) active participation constructs powerful tools to sustain concertive control, and 4) the discourse itself disguises control through the rhetoric of empowerment (choice) and thereby masks and diverts attention from its own mechanisms of power.

Because organizational socialization is the process of learning skills, values, expected behaviors, and social knowledge necessary to participate as a member of an organization (Jablin, 1987; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), the rhetoric of socialization practices plays an important role in shaping employees. Organizational rhetoric combines organizational communication research with rhetorical criticism (see Hoffman & Ford, 2010; Meisenback & McMillan, 2006) and therefore is useful for understanding the nuances of socialization messages. The present study envisions popular business advices books (BABs) as forms of organizational discourses since they are: 1) produced by organizations, 2) widely used within organizational socialization practices (formalized employee training programs), and 3) employ rhetorical concepts to achieve organizational (as opposed to personal) ends.

The present inquiry critically analyses business advice books (BABs) that were identified and selected according to their popularity, target audience, and use in formalized organizational socialization processes. Each book was first considered because it was included in *The New York Times* and *Business Week* best-

sellers lists throughout 2001 to 2009, markers of sustained popularity with mainstream and business readers; additional requirements were that the book be the original work by each author and each book be used within formalized organizational socialization practices. Of the books initially considered, three books self-identified themselves as fundamental components of corporate training/consulting programs, as verified by intensive Internet searches of corporate training and consulting companies. *Fish! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results* by Stephen Lundin, Harry Paul and John Christensen, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* by Stephen Covey, and *Who Moved my Cheese* by Spencer Johnson meet each of the criteria and were chosen as texts for rhetorical analysis.

Who Moved My Cheese? is a parable told through the narrative of four fictional characters, two mice and two littlepeople. A short book (seventy-three pages of text) with large font and cartoon-like illustrations, this BAB looks like a children's book. The content focuses almost exclusively on change advising readers to embrace and anticipate (inevitable) change. The "Cheese" parable advocates an attitude best summarized by the cheese illustration at the book's end, which states, "change happens, anticipate change, monitor change, adapt to change quickly, change, enjoy change, be ready to change quickly and enjoy it again" (Johnson, 1998, p. 74).

The second book, *Fish! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results* (Lundin et al., 2000) is also a narrative with a fairytale-like plot. A blend of first and third person story-telling, *Fish!* describes one manager's quest to save a decaying corporate department by motivating her employees to change their attitudes and consequently improve their performance. The manager accomplishes her goal by applying lessons learned from employees of the Seattle Fish Market. According to the narrative, adopting playful attitudes that stress service and gratitude transform her dying department into a productive, vital component of her organization.

The third book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (Covey, 1989) emphasizes developing personal efficiency and effectiveness. This second-person narrative speaks directly to readers and incorporates numerous personal and professional examples. Like the other books, *Seven Habits* deals with changing attitudes toward self-direction, motivation, personal/professional efficiency, and interdependence. The book urges the reader to live

a "principle centered life" by being proactive, actively (as opposed to passively) making choices, and taking personal responsibility for organizational outcomes. According to Covey, these objectives require setting priorities and embracing a state of mind in which decisions are based on mutual benefit. Covey also advocates empathic listening, improved work relationships, and maintaining interdependence and balance.

Critical rhetorical analysis is an effective means for revealing how these books function to indoctrinate and control employees. Critical rhetoric is a concept centered process where themes, rather than method, guide analysis to reveal how discursive practice enacts power (McKerrow, 1989). Initial coding revealed that spiritual language, e.g. faith, religion, soul, and God, occurred frequently throughout each text. Spirituality (defined as the materialism inside-out search for absolute truth) comprised a central feature of these texts. Therefore references to spirituality served as the unit of analysis. Subsequent analysis of identified themes was a continuous process of description, interpretation, and evaluation (McKerrow, 1989), which occurred during multiple readings. Spiritual themes were identified, physically grouped into like categories, interpreted, and evaluated. Coded data was physically sorted and regrouped into like categories then interpreted with Foucault's theory of pastoral power to explain how the spiritual rhetoric functioned as a discursive technology of the self.

BAB Discourse as Spiritual Obligation

Analysis of spiritual themes within BABs reveals spiritual discourse in two critical ways. First, each book attempts to guide readers through a search for an absolute truth that exists apart from, but connected to the material world (materialism inside-out). Second, these books suggest that absolute truth exists within the self. I explore each of these spiritual components in the following analysis.

The Self and Materialism Inside-Out

Spirituality stresses beliefs that metaphysical and physical realms are distinct, described by Underhill (1930) as materialism inside-out. According to Burke (1961/1970), language representing the metaphysical suffices to construct metaphysical experience, which then serves as a vehicle for transcendence. Analysis reveals that BABs frame their advice as spiritual pursuit

by consistently utilizing language that constructs a materialism inside-out reality. For example, Covey (1989) described the foundation of all seven habits as ethics principles, that he argued are "not esoteric, mysterious, or 'religious' ideas" but rather, "are a part of most every major enduring religion, as well as enduring social philosophies and ethical systems" (p. 34). Here, Covey asserted his principles are not religious, but rather, constitute absolute truths that undergird "enduring" religious systems.

Much of BABs' rhetoric employs language invoking the metaphysical by stressing the materialism inside-out part of our selves, often stated quite literally. Covey (1989) asserted there is a correct perception, or paradigm, of organizational problems that resides within the self, writing, "Inside-out means to start first with self; even more fundamentally, to start with the most inside part of self – with your paradigms, your character, and your motives" (p. 43). In another example, Covey included a quotation from Ezra Taft Benson that stated:

> The Lord works from the inside out. The world works from the outside in. The world would take people out of the slums. Christ takes the slums out of people, and then they take themselves out of the slums. (p. 309)

Johnson (1998) wrote, "fearful beliefs were immobilizing and killing him" (p. 47) and later added, "Haw didn't realize it yet, but he was discovering what nourished his soul. He was letting go and trusting what lay ahead for him, even though he did not know exactly what it was" (p. 55). These passages invoke the spiritual by references to the Lord, Christ, soul, and a materialism inside-out paradigm.

While these quotations invoke the spiritual, they also situate absolute truth within the self. In one instance Covey stated, "The proactive approach is to change from the inside-out: to *be* different, and by being different, to effect positive change in what's out there" (p. 89). Johnson wrote, "They tried to deny what was happening, but found it harder to get to sleep, had less energy the next day, and were becoming irritable" (p. 41). Later he added, "The littlepeople were growing weak from hunger and stress" (p. 43), and in another instance Johnson wrote, "Haw looked at his emaciated companion and tried to talk sense to him" (p. 45), and "fearful beliefs were immobilizing and killing him" (p. 47). These passages suggest that absolute truth resides within the self, and this inner self constitutes the material world. Thus, materialism inside-out (the inner self) constitutes materialism.

According to the pastorate, salvation requires constant self-examination, confession, guidance and obedience. Because the pastor "must know, certainly, everything the sheep do. . . . know what goes on inside the soul, the heart, the most profound secrets of the individual" (Foucault, 1978/1999, p. 125). To carry out his responsibility, individuals must first examine and tell the truth about oneself to oneself. This confession to one's self serves as a "verbal manifestation of the truth that is hidden deep inside oneself" (Foucault,1980/1999, p. 157), and thus appears to produce interior truths that were not previously known by the "flock."

Johnson (1998) incorporated this process of self-examination throughout. Early in the narrative he stated, "every day the mice and the littlepeople spent time in the maze looking for their own special cheese. . . . to search for a very different kind of Cheese – with a capital C – which they believed would make them feel happy and successful" (p. 26). However, what the littlepeople found in the maze, rather than Cheese, was the "secret that let them enjoy a better life" (p. 27). For example, the main character asked, "what would you do if you weren't afraid" (p. 48). As the littlepeople examine their internal selves, they also recover their physical health. Interpreting this parable through the spiritual lens suggests that transcending the material through the metaphysical produces both material and physical growth. Failure to examine the self produces fear, while honest self-examination reveals truths that enable one to transcend material conditions and thereby achieve spiritual salvation.

Covey (1989) also advocated discovery of the inner self when he described "identifying your center" (p. 118). He said "your center" is "the most inside part of self" (p. 43), and is the foundation of all seven habits. Covey asked readers to adopt an inside-out paradigm writing, "What I have seen result from the outside-in paradigm is unhappy people who feel victimized and immobilized" (p. 43). He further described your center as "deep, fundamental truths, classic truths, generic common denominators. . . tightly interwoven threads running with exactness, consistency, beauty, and strength through the fabric of life" (p. 122). Covey's inside-out paradigm proclaims itself to be an exploration of the self that empowers individuals to transcend the external.

Lundin et al. (2000) also described self-examination as able to shape material organizational conditions. For instance, they

wrote, "I don't believe that companies are necessarily prisons, but sometimes we make prisons of them by the way we choose to work there. I have created a prison and the walls are my own lack of faith in myself" (p. 46). Here, the nature of the self constitutes material reality. Material organizational conditions improve only when the manager turns inward to find her internal motivation. Likewise, readers are instructed to turn inward to the self to discover: 1) the source of their own oppressive conditions and 2) their own (internal) solutions to these conditions. Consequently, readers are told to explore and change the inner self as a way to transcend the seemingly oppressive material conditions of their external lives. Thus, the ability to transcend suffering is located somewhere within the self but can only be known through constant self-examination and confession.

While spiritual rhetoric within these books encourages self-examination, it also crucially urges readers to change the self. Covey (1989) claimed that becoming "effective" only *begins* with identifying your center, but requires adopting habits that build on these inner truths. Covey's first habit requires taking a proactive approach, and defines proactive approaches as "to change from the inside-out: to *be* different, and by being different, to effect positive change in what's out there" (p. 89). Here, Covey asked readers to identify their true inner self and also to change it. Again, the spiritual interpretation stresses that the essence of the external world depends upon the construction of one's inner self.

This process of interiorization, one that entails constant self-examination and confession, constructs a self consciousness within individuals that makes them perpetually aware of their weaknesses and temptations. According to Foucault (1978/1999), interiorization cultivates a power dynamic between the author and readers by reproducing the pastor/flock relationship. Foucault argued that the pastor's influence persists because he serves as "a mechanism of knowledge, a knowledge of individuals, a knowledge over individuals, but also a knowledge by individuals over themselves and with respect to themselves" (p. 126). Consequently, the process of self-examination reproduces a persistent state of self-examination and confession that turns readers inward upon themselves making them responsible for, *and* obligated to sorting-out and sometimes denying their own interior desires. Examination, confession, and mortification thus compel readers to renounce the self even as it is constantly being discovered by the self.

The Pastor Defines Truth

While individuals have obligations to explore and confess self truths, these "truths" merely reflects pastoral desires. Ironically, "self truth" is not so much discovered; rather, it is constituted by the pastoral rhetoric because the pastor's "seniority permits him to make distinctions between truth and illusion in the soul of the person he directs" (Foucault, 1980/1999, p. 177). Throughout all the BABs, interior truth and salvation reside in opposition to material conditions and possessions. For example, Covey's (1989) primary argument is that material conditions distract readers from identifying truth. He wrote, "when we are too focused on the golden egg, we fail" (p. 55) and "if our lives are a function of conditioning and conditions, it is because we have, by conscious decision or by default, chosen to empower those things to control us" (p. 71). According to Covey, focusing on things (golden eggs) enables the external environment to control us.

Similarly, Johnson maintained that "Cheese" differs for everyone. However, "the more important your cheese is to you, the more you want to hold onto it" (p.36) and thus, we are less inclined to adapt and change. Johnson minimizes the importance of things (Cheese) by focusing readers on the self. By constructing the material/physical realm as a threat to the inner self, pastoral rhetoric redirects readers' attention away from material/exterior rewards and conditions such as money, possessions, public/professional status, and organizational constraints. BAB authors marginalize external realities as false threats to salvation and sway readers to reject material rewards in favor of empowering the self through the self. BABs invoke spirituality to dismiss desires for the material as merely false consciousness. By obscuring readers' desires for material rewards, pastoral rhetors redefine their readers' inner self and thus prescribe self-change for their readers.

While BABs notably emphasize discovery of the internal self as a fundamental truth, they also paradoxically imply that the authors alone have unique insights into the nature of these truths. Thus, readers are constructed as dependent on the author/pastor for their own self-discovery. In turn, the rhetor, not the reader, defines the reality of the reader's self. And, because authors consistently define internal truths as metaphysical, "universal principles" (Covey, 1989), they suggest that they alone know what will make the reader happy, just as they suggest this knowledge is divinely

imparted through the author's unique spiritual connection to universal truth.

Obligated to Obedience

According to Foucault (1978/1999), the bond between pastor and individual reflects the pastor's divine knowledge *and* the pastoral authority. This bond obligates the individual/reader to obey the author/pastor. While the individual/reader must "do everything necessary for their salvation" (p. 124) obedience to the pastor becomes framed as the desired outcome. Foucault (1978/1999) wrote, "Obedience must lead to a state of obedience. To remain obedient is the fundamental condition of all other virtues" (p. 124). Likewise, the fundamental state of obedience becomes the reader's obligation.

Consistent with Foucault's description of pastoral obedience, obedience is positioned throughout BABs as the foundational basis for all other virtues. Each of the authors grants that readers' have choices, but the correct choices are articulated for readers as service, flexibility, and submission to change. In essence, submission and obedience are merely framed as choice. In *Fish!*, Lundin et al. (2000) claimed "There is always a choice about the way you do your work, even if there is not a choice about the work itself . . . . you always have a choice about the attitude you bring to the job" (p. 37). Later, they asked, "Who are our customers and how can we engage them in a way that will make their day? How could we make each other's days?" (p. 78) and concluded that, "Serving our customers well will give us the satisfaction that comes to those who serve others. It will focus our attention, away from our problems onto how we can make a positive difference to others" (p. 93). Here, the rhetoric defines truth as service that obligates readers to obedience, submission, and service to others.

As BABs repeatedly emphasize obedience and service, they also inevitably conjure flexibility and submission to change. In fact, each BAB emphasized embracing change throughout its text. Covey (1989) focused on changing the self: "We began to realize that if we wanted to change the situation, we first had to change ourselves. And to change ourselves effectively, we first had to change our perceptions" (p. 18). He later stated "Whether a problem is direct, indirect, or no control, we have in our hands the first step to the solution. Changing our habits, changing our methods of influence and changing the way we see our no control problems" (p. 86). For Covey, changing the self entails recognizing and submitting to our "no control problems."

Johnson (1998) claimed to provide "an amazing way to deal with change in your work and in your life" (front cover). While Johnson's title implies coping with organizational change, the text minimizes actual organizational change; rather, it exhorts readers to change at their individual level. Johnson wrote, "He had to admit that the biggest inhibitor to change lies within yourself, and that nothing gets better until *you* change" (p. 71), "When you move beyond your fear [of change] you feel free" (p. 56), "We all tried to talk to him about the many opportunities that existed in the company for those who wanted to be flexible" (p. 81) and,

> Some people never change and they pay a price for it. I see people like Hem in my medical practice. They feel entitled to their 'Cheese' [material rewards]. They feel like victims when it's taken away and blame others. They get sicker than people who let go and move on. (p. 85).

As the littlepeople become increasingly flexible and submissive to structurally imposed change, they transcend even physical suffering. Johnson stated, "Haw knew he would be in better shape now if he had embraced the change much sooner" (p. 67). Here Johnson suggests that literally submitting to change restores physical and mental strength.

Again, submission and obedience are merely framed as choice in that the rhetors/pastors guide readers' interpretations of correct choices as submission and obedience. In each of the previous examples, the rhetorical constructions of choice, change, and flexibility encourage readers to adopt constant states of obedience and submission. These states of obedience and submission enable transcendence over external conditions, just as they dispel "false consciousness" and enable readers to find peace and satisfaction as they discover their true inner selves. Crucially, pastoral submission and obedience, as described by Foucault, serves as the foundation for these necessary insights.

Technology of Self Governance

A final aspect of pastoral power, the individualizing technology of the self, not only obligates individuals to obedience, but trains them for self-governance. "The techniques of examination, confession, guidance, obedience, have an aim: to get individuals to work at their own 'mortification' in this world" (Foucault, 1979/1999, p. 143). Technologies of the self "permit individuals to effect, by their own means, a certain number of operations on their own bodies, on their own souls, on their own

thoughts, on their own conduct" (Foucault, 1980/101999, p. 162) but in ways that continue to strengthen the state. According to Foucault (1979/1999), constant obedience requires internalized humility in order to permanently sacrifice one's own will so that obedience creates a stunted form of self-governance.

Similarly, BABs encourage readers to alter and sacrifice their own wills by emphasizing blind faith and renouncing critical questioning that culminates in a form of mortification. This rhetoric claims that faith in self means trusting instincts, but the reader's interpretation of "instinct" is guided by the rhetor/pastor so that "instinct" is merely the rhetors' will. For example, Johnson (1998) stated, "The mice, Sniff and Scurry, possessing only simple rodent brains, but good instincts, searched for the hard nibbling cheese they liked" (p. 26)."The mice did not over-analyze things. And they were not burdened with many complex beliefs" (p. 32). Here good instincts are tantamount to submission to organizational change. In contrast to the mice, the littlepeople "analyzed the situation over and over and eventually his complicated brain with its huge belief system took hold" (p. 37). Eventually the littlepeople realize "maybe we should stop analyzing the situation so much and just get going and find some New Cheese" (p. 38). Here critically analyzing is tantamount to resistance to organizational change. In this way, complex beliefs and critical analyses are equivalent to resistance and thus impede faith. Johnson claims faith (submission) is pursued without critical thinking (resistance). By advocating faith and trust while guiding readers' interpretations of faith and trust and juxtaposing them to reason and logic, the rhetors/pastors encourage readers to permanently sacrifice their own judgments in favor of the rhetors' judgments. This creates a form of self-governance that accords with organizational goals.

Lundin et al. (2000) also emphasize faith as a virtue, grounded in obedience. Mary Jane (narrator) stated, "The poem had created a moment of insight, and Mary Jane finally saw what was holding her back . . . she had lost faith" (p. 45). Later Mary Jane wrote in her journal, "My first step is to choose my attitude. I choose confidence, trust, and faith" (p. 52). In the end, Mary Jane's faith improves her environment. By emphasizing faith, these authors discourage readers from questioning or "over-analyzing" external conditions imposed by external organizational structures. Faith in the inner self thereby plays a crucial role in a quest for absolute truth. Lundin et al. (2000) states, "I have created a prison and the walls are my own lack of faith in myself" (p. 46), and "The

compelling reason to move ahead comes from my inside. I need to renew my faith in myself" (p. 46). These quotations indicate faith nurtures the inner self and consequently creates more desirable material conditions. This quest for faith, coupled with a focus on inner self, encourages readers to look inward to cope with organizational problems and avoid seeking structural organizational solutions. Yet the nature of the inner self has already been informed by the rhetor/pastor so faith is merely a form of self sacrifice and internalized humility.

Faith in self serves to cultivate feelings of trust when the intentions of others or outcomes are unknown. Lundin et al. (2000) and Johnson (1998) each situate faith in self within the context of organizational discord and change. In each narrative, faith in self pacifies characters who lack control over external conditions. By advocating faith and rhetorically juxtaposing it to reason and logic, the discourse minimizes organizational resistance as exemplified by Covey (1989): "rebellion is a knot of the heart" (p. 199). In this way, BABs discourage critical thinking and consequently foil resistance to organizational structures while simultaneously cultivating faith in a leadership that reinforces perpetual obedience and submission. Ultimately, without resistance, the flock/reader must permanently submit.

While self-mastery may be emphasized, the underlying goal remains the creation of a unified collective with a singular identity such that individuals govern themselves according to the values, rules, and norms of the collective (Foucault, 1979/1999). BABs consistently attempt to unify the flock by constructing a shared sense of oneness among followers. The front matter of *Fish!* states, "imagine an environment in which people are truly connected to their work, to their colleagues, and to their customers." Covey (1989) dedicated an entire chapter to "interdependence" writing, "Self-mastery and self discipline are the foundation of good relationships with others" (p. 186) and "interdependence opens up worlds of possibilities for deep, rich, meaningful associations, for geometrically increased productivity, for serving, for contributing, for learning, for growing" (p. 187). He goes on to emphasize the roles of honesty and loyalty writing, "keeping promises and fulfilling expectations. This requires an integrated character, a oneness, primarily with self but also with life" (p. 196) and "one of the most important ways to manifest integrity is *to be loyal to those who are not present*" [emphasis in the original] (p. 196). In these examples, the authors explicitly

stress the importance of unity, connection, and loyalty to one another.

In sum, pastoral power is individualizing in technique but it employs universalizing power in an attempt to rule continuously and permanently by uniting individuals through basic virtues that sustain the organization. The pastoral objective is not "a sovereign mastery of oneself by oneself: what is expected, on the contrary, is humility and mortification, detachment, with respect to oneself and establishing a relationship with oneself which tends towards a destruction of the form of the self" (Foucault, 1980/1999, p. 157) embodied within rhetorical efforts to unify the flock. So, while the pastor expresses devotion and individual attention to each member of the flock, his role binds individual members' virtues and temperaments together as a unified flock (Foucault, 1979/1999). Although the pastor/leader merely appears to gather, guide, and lead dispersed individuals towards their own salvation through persistent examination, confession, guidance, and obedience; when successful, this process rhetorically constructs a unified flock, replete with shared sets of core values that fundamentally sustain the organization but are maintained through individual self-governance.

Pastoral Technology of the Self as Management Technique
Each BAB analyzed used spiritual language to symbolize the metaphysical world. Each book made numerous references to faith, religion, prayer, God, submission, service and soul. Using Foucault's pastoral power as an interpretive framework, clearly spiritual language constructs the relational dimensions of organizing by positioning the rhetor as spiritual leader/pastor and readers/organizational members as the flock. This rhetorical device facilitates members' unquestioning, loyal submission to the rhetor's' advice. The rhetoric transforms business practice into spiritual practice and organizational advice into a moral code that unites the flock in obedience and submission.

The pastor/rhetor's credibility devolves from his perceived experience, knowledge, and authority and by him appearing to anticipate confessions that enable him to know and guide the reader's conscience. Yet, when the pastoral rhetor invokes the existence of an inner, authentic self and calls readers to explore, discover, and know the inner self while simultaneously espousing the preferred value systems, pastoral advice actually *creates* interior truths rather than *guides* readers to self-discovery (Foucault, 1978/1999).

Further, spiritual discourse within BABs constructs distinctions between the material and the incorporeal that turns the readers' focus inward on the self through a state of constant confession that obscures relationships between material conditions and social structures, and pacifies readers into accepting potentially oppressive organizational conditions. These books persuade readers "to work at their own mortification" (Foucault, 1979/1999) thereby constituting a self-consciousness that makes them perpetually alert to their own weaknesses.

Another important pastoral rhetorical framing device, the technique of interiorization by alerting oneself to oneself, creates a system of power and control that functions as "a knowledge by individuals over themselves and with respect to themselves" (Foucault, 1978, 1999, p. 126). Power and control become constructed as internal conditions so readers are directed inward and asked to change the self rather than external social, political, or structural conditions. Because "success" is re-defined as internal satisfaction, pastoral discourse serves to pacify readers with the status quo of structural and material conditions. Thus, discovering interior truths, defined by quasi-pastoral rhetors pacifies organizational members and minimizes tensions that otherwise might threaten existing (asymmetrical) power dynamics.

At the same time, BABs shift responsibility for unsatisfactory working conditions onto employees by implying reader-workers can control their own sense of well-being through faith. Dissatisfied workers portrayed throughout these books have simply lost their faith and consequently create workplaces that feel like prisons. These rhetorical devices shift responsibilities for oppressive conditions from imposed organizational structures to the workers' false consciousness. Thus, a pastoral power technique displaces responsibility for suffering from social structures or external conditions onto individual workers. In essence, spiritual rhetoric within organizational discourse equates work with spiritual practices such that work becomes a path to transcendence, organizational purpose becomes the purpose of life, suffering becomes self-imposed, and work itself becomes the path towards fulfillment.

Finally, these books re-frame service, faith, and change as privileged organizational behaviors. By transforming service from a material value into a spiritual construct, BABs privilege service and loyalty. Within business advice books, the rhetoric of spiritual service translates into organizational service and encourages

readers to give selflessly, yet ask for little save self-actualization in return. By transforming spiritual faith into organizational allegiance, these books cultivate obedient employees who are more likely to become motivated, satisfied, loyal, and committed to their organizations.

Theoretical and Pragmatic Implications

Pastoral rhetoric that persuades workers to adopt, uncritically, organizational norms and goals as personal moral imperatives shares many of the underlying dynamics that characterize workplace processes that become pervasive "concertive control" (see Barker, 1993; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). Further research should leverage the intersection of these constructs, given that increasingly "high performance work-place teams" often depend upon concertive control which has demonstrably increased "voluntary" self-applied coercive stresses (Barker, 1993; Wright & Barker, 2000).

Given the widespread use of BAB's, created by corporations for use by corporations, replete with a self-serving rhetoric that leads workers to internalize corporate dysfunction—organizational educators within liberal arts institutions or business schools should address these prolific sources of organizational socialization and corporate training ("The three habits", 2009). These pragmatic considerations stem not just from moral imperatives, rather, they equally stem from the need to identify root causes of organizational dysfunction as a prelude to remedying these conditions in ways that "problems" get fixed rather than be displaced upon relatively powerless workers.

Lastly, traditional organizational socialization has been envisioned as an enduring process with stages through which organizational members transition (Haski-Leventhal, 2008; Jablin, 1987; Kramer, 1993; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The present study envisions traditional stages as themselves enduring processes. Because BABs are used to socialize newcomers *and* remain ongoing socialization tools for employees spanning a gamut of organizational tenures, their study offers scholars opportunities to extend our concepts of socialization as an enduring process, one that transcends stages. Further, if we are to fully understand the consequences of business advice books, scholars should explore how audiences receive and interpret business advice socialization messages.

Conclusion

Through the promise of individual salvation, spiritual rhetoric within organizational discourse serves to obscure structural tensions that always exist between individual and organizational goals. Because submission to the organization seems to convey individual salvation, externally directed work becomes internalized so that readers are distracted from ongoing, fundamental struggles to balance tensions between individual and organizational needs. The pastoral linguistic turn transforms perceptions of business practices into practices that undergird the human experience. When heeded, the spiritual rhetoric within BABs dispenses organizational advice that comes to symbolize indisputable, natural laws and elevates business advice into universal moral code.

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