

FOUNDERS UTOPIAS AND DYSTOPIAS: The Paradox of Complicity

Christina Schwabenland
London Metropolitan University
Department of Management and Professional Development
cschwabenland@hotmail.com
c.schwabenland@londonmet.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

The stories about the founding of voluntary organisations tell how the founders took action to change a situation they regarded as undesirable, unjust or oppressive. The stories both construct and problematise the meaning of suffering and propose a vision of a world in which that suffering has been alleviated. They also promote responses to injustice; individual in the form of voluntary action and communal in the form of organisation. The stories can therefore be seen as setting out a theoretical position about the nature and circumstances of injustice and, by extension, what might constitute a more just society. These theoretical positions may not necessarily be consistent or well developed. However, they are revelatory of the underlying assumptions the founders have made about the nature of the social world and of their utopian ideal. In their telling the stories not only recount the way in which the social world is created but also contribute to the remaking and re-imagining of that world. This article explores the underlying assumptions that are proposed by these theories in use.

Key words: utopia, story, injustice, founders, ethics

INTRODUCTION

Storytelling in organisations has become an area that generates great interest (see Gabriel, 2000, Boje, 2001) but there is very little such research that focuses on voluntary organisations. This paper is based on interviews with 30 chief executives of voluntary organisations in the UK and in India carried out between 1998-2000. Each chief executive was asked to say what they knew about how and why the organisation had come into being. The research sought to explore the role the stories might play in the creation of meaning within the organisation and furthermore, what the stories might reveal about the social construction of the voluntary sector.

But what constitutes a story in an organisational setting? And by what criteria do the accounts of the founding of the organisation qualify as stories? Gabriel requires organisational stories to possess 'poetic imagination and narrative complexity' (Gabriel 2000, p60). While the founding stories varied considerably

in length, use of poetic device and complexity of plot I would argue that they all satisfy Gabriel's criteria. For example,

I know the cartoon version, which is that it was established as a result of a public protest at the numbers of young people that were on the streets, and that at the same time a chap called Harry Hyams was involved in keeping Centrepont Tower [an office block in central London] empty in order to reap maximum tax profits, which people thought was outrageous...

... some posh, upper class, well educated women who lived up in Highgate and were pally with Crossley and Bertrand Russell, were worried about the high infant mortality down the hill in Holloway, and they wanted to do some stuff around education.

This is the federation of primary fish marketing societies of fishermen, in this district. The primary societies were organised throughout the 70's and early 80's by another voluntary organisation, a genuine voluntary organisation of a group of social workers who were working with fishermen. So they had organised these fish marketing societies to help fishermen get out of the clutches of middlemen and money lenders, to control their own marketing and credit.

In all of these examples, (the three shortest founding stories) there is poetic imagery, symbolic meaning (consider the metaphors of Centrepont Tower, of the phrase 'were pally with Crossley and Bertrand Russell', the implied sub-plot of 'help[ing] fishermen to get out of the clutches of middlemen'). The stories also evoke an immediate emotional response in the listener and they are well crafted. While Gabriel suggests that we must learn to distinguish 'real' stories from other narratives (such as opinion, reports and 'proto-stories') these founding stories are epic tales of complexity and symbolism.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF INJUSTICE

The stories all contain information not only about how, but also why, the organisation was formed. The stories demonstrate that most voluntary organisations come into being because an individual, or a group of individuals have identified a social injustice or an unmet need that they feel strongly enough to devote time, energy, money, sometimes even at great personal risk.

Nandy (1987) points out that there can be no utopia without a theory of suffering and that oppression is ultimately a matter of definition.

'...oppression to be known as oppression must be felt to be so, if not by the oppressors and the oppressed, at least by some social analyst somewhere.'
(Nandy, 1987 p25)

The stories set out a range of different interpretations of injustice. This example shows the strength of feeling that led to the founding of the organisation.

... Well it was a group of people who were very incensed about the conditions of people with learning difficulties who had to live in mental handicap hospitals, especially during the 1960's where there were a whole series of enquiries into malpractice, abuse in some of the biggest hospitals...

Only one chief executive overtly identified the importance of developing an understanding about the causes of injustice. In the other interviews the assumptions of the storytellers had to be discerned from the ways they problematised a particular situation.

... let's say, if a university has about 30,000 on the roles, I'm sure ...30 comes out every year and says, 'well we were very seriously disturbed what we see as the structural causes of poverty and we want to do something meaningful'... And we felt that, you know, that 30 number should also be critically sensitised to the critical aspects of what is operating in the society today. So again, that understanding is not available in the academic environment. So, even for me, it took about 15 years to understand what are the causes of poverty in Orissa, now. And so I can't expect a student who is coming out of graduation class, and say that 'the causes of poverty is this in Orissa.' That understanding takes time.

The construction of injustice as the oppression of the poor is a significant theme in these examples:

...Most of them were landless people and most of them were oppressed by caste, you know, hierarchy.

When we started work it was a totally backward area with illiteracy, poverty and various miserable problems dominating... this area was in a very bad condition. Illicit distilling and bonded labours, all the more exploitation by privileged group. This pathetic condition aroused feeling towards the hapless beings in me.

Whereas in the following example evil is discerned not only in the cruelty to children but also in society's indifference:

And he was, basically, appalled by the way some children were treated and was particularly concerned that there wasn't any effective legislation protecting children from cruelty at the hands of their parents or carers.

RESPONSES TO INJUSTICE: THE CONSTRUCTION OF REDEMPTION

Campbell (1988a) suggests that all of the great mythological or religious traditions have sought to make sense of suffering and evil and to offer some path

for redemption. The founding stories propose that voluntary action offers the possibility of individual or societal redemption. Specific examples promote individual responses of heroism, risk, sacrifice, philanthropy and social responsibility. The collective response the stories promote is the transformation of the existing social order by the creation of alternative visions.

Redemption through heroism and sacrifice

Several of the stories evoked warlike imagery to paint a backdrop in which the organisation was located in the fight for good against evil. Against this backdrop the figure of founder as hero / heroine can emerge.

Well, you see there is a belief that that battle has been won, and it is true to say that many of the battles around that issue have been won, but the war itself is not won. And there are many other battles to be fought because there are still, in England alone, about 3,000 people with learning difficulties living in long stay hospitals, 4,000 in Scotland....

In traditional mythology the person who fights the dragon, is depicted as a heroic figure who undergoes great trials and endures hardship before emerging victorious (see Campbell, 1988b). The following story contains all of these themes and is an archetypal heroic tale in the Campbell mode.

We discussed matters regarding education, the condition of the village, the problem of illicit distilling, the problem of bonded labour and exploitation, the lack of transportation facility, road, electricity.... Then I asked them what we can do to change the situation. I suggested to start some action programme as the first step. So the next day itself all of them brought some equipments and baskets and we started construction work. First... was the construction of a road. Starting was from the ground. We worked in groups both the sides and we connected the place to the main road by making five kilometres of road... Problems also started with our work. The land where we started constructing road belonged to some individuals who were the main exploiters in the area. They started troubling us saying that we have encroached on their land. Their ultimate aim was to kill us and especially me, because I was the leader. They gave a petition to the police to stop us from this work. They had enough money with them and they were successful in influencing the police and political leaders. But we were determined to continue the work, whatever problems may happen in between. We were moved by the pathetic condition of the people and we decided to construct a road first. We did not want to go back. The police accepted the petition and kept the place under close scrutiny. They gave protection to the area... But when they are not there we will work and the construction was completed very easily.

He goes on to say that as a result of the successful completion of the road his life was threatened by the local vested interests. The speaker's fears for his own life

may not have been exaggerated. In 1997 a voluntary activist in Assam was kidnapped and murdered. In two other interviews the chief executives talked about being threatened with violence and imprisonment. (The Delhi based NGO Voluntary Action Network India has established a fund for the families of murdered voluntary sector activists.)

Evil in this story is exteriorised and embodied in the landlords who are counterposed to the heroic character of the storyteller. Moral justice and legal justice are counter-imposed. The land on which the villagers built their road did not legally belong to them but to the landlords. The speaker implies that the landlords set the heavies against him not because he had trespassed on their land but because he had assumed the role of the leader of the oppressed and challenged the landlords' hegemony. The 'moral' of this story would seem to be that unjust laws carry no moral legitimacy.

The following examples are less dramatic but they also suggest that heroism often calls for risk and sacrifice.

... many of them had served prison sentences for being pacifists. So they had some empathy with being an outcast. They knew what it felt like, being an outcast. I mean, you can imagine in 1942, 43 it was very, very tough being a pacifist.

...He was fairly convinced that people were making things worse in the poorest parts of London by doing the Lady-Bountiful-doling-out act and wanted to do something much more radical than that, and challenge students...to come and live in the area rather than visit the area.

Redemption through social responsibility

Not all of the stories were archetypal heroic tales. The following stories offer two contrasting interpretations of social responsibility.

...it was kind of, you know, active women and then it was an issue around philanthropy....so it was just kind of women coming together and worried about, you know, poverty and things like that.

We have come from Bangladesh. You know? At Partition....And our neighbours and villagers, they are all came to us. You know what is zamindar? We were zamindars [landlords under an essentially feudal system] there. So all the people came to us. That time I tried to do something for them.

The first of these stories offers an interpretation of social responsibility that can be freely chosen while the second seems subtly different. In this the act of 'doing good' is presented as inescapable within a complex pattern of historical and cultural identity.

Transforming the social world: conscientisation versus imagination

All of the examples above propose action as a remedy for the alleviation of suffering whether undertaken by individuals or collectivities, albeit motivated by differing world views. In stark contrast were stories in which the remedy proposed was the recreation of the social world. What links these stories is that there is no clear, direct causal relationship between action and remedy. Transformation is to be achieved through various means; through the acquisition of knowledge, through the imagination and by creating the circumstances in which change can occur. The stories that propose the acquisition of knowledge as a way of overcoming suffering imply that evil thrives on ignorance. The search for knowledge gives social issues visibility. It highlights the importance of bringing consciousness to bear on the problem of evil and injustice. Other stories invoke the imagination. They imply that we are chained by our perceptions and to remove the chains we must change the way we see ourselves and others.

...we first study the social practices of the people, the experiences of the people. Quite a number of them have been very, very, shall we say, defeatable, in the sense that they never succeeded, though their social practices would mean that they would work together and they would suffer together. Such stories were very few because they were poor, oppressed and they were living in a very bad situationSo as a result, although they had good experiences of sharing their own stories of struggle, and so on, yet they were all stories of defeats, stories of failures. So we thought we should certainly help them to see life with a different perspective.

...and what happened was that these women began to be treated as assets in their community because they now knew more about how to handle systems, how to go around difficult issues, so it's like the domestic help who comes to your house tells you how to go and handle the police - you can't look at her as a stupid woman any more who is very poor and silly. So it transformed the way that thought of themselves, it transformed their position on their environment, and gave them the confidence to say, 'this isn't right,' and to do something about it.

In these examples the suggestion is that the first step in challenging oppression is to create new, and more powerful identities for ourselves, to create new stories.

But in the following examples the locus of the transformation is neither in the organisation nor in its members, nor exclusively in the external environment, but rather in a fusion of all of these.

We will create a centre which creates social mobilisers,... a kind of change agent creating organisation, a social mobiliser organisation.

The objectives of the organisation were very, very broad indeed, but basically to act as help to the provider organisations, to act as a way of bringing together.

These statements are short on content and long on process, but perhaps for these organisations the content is the process. One respondent said about her organisation:

It's a vehicle that explores it [oppression] but it's not an end in itself.

These stories contain little detail about precisely what these changes might be. They do not offer an alternative vision but rather a way in which such a vision might be found. The organisation, in these stories becomes a crucible in which the conditions are set for the transformation of injustice into justice.

The remedy of voluntary action is an individual one albeit mediated through the organisation. In all these examples the stories suggest that evil is exteriorised, that it belongs 'out there'. The individual has a responsibility to act on the awareness of injustice but whether the individual (or the organisation) is complicit in the creation and maintenance of the structures that lead to injustice and oppression was less clear.

FOUNDING STORIES AND UTOPIA(S)

In constituting certain situations or circumstances as unjust the founders are, by extension, and whether implicitly or explicitly, proposing an idea about what would be a more just society. In this sense these stories can be seen as representing utopian thinking. Describing visions about a better world as constituents of utopian thinking has a strong tradition: for example, Ricoeur (1986) says that 'utopia introduces imaginative variations on the topics of society, power, government, family and religion' and Nandy (1987) points out that utopian thinking is a 'comment on the existent, another means of making peace with, or challenging man-made suffering in the present'.

The founders' utopian visions are not always clearly worked through (in many examples they are very partial) and they are not always present in the stories more than obliquely. However, all of the stories evoke some particular vision of a better world.

If we regard the founding stories as utopian tales what kind of utopias do the founders desire? Although the stories represented a wide range of concerns there were some similarities in their underlying utopias. All of the stories concerned power and most were tales about how the disempowered could become more powerful. The decentralisation of power, the prefiguring of the experiences, skills and knowledge of 'ordinary', non-professional people, 'putting the last first' (Chambers, 1997), the dignity and importance of the individual were similar themes.

Underpinning these stories was the belief that everyone can participate in the creation of an alternative society, that individual and collective endeavour can prevail and act as a force for good whether or not the ways of achieving that good are incremental or radical.

Utopian thinking as subversive activity

Reedy might regard these utopias as anarchistic.

‘Anarchistic utopias are also distinctive in their defence of the priority of diversity, difference and voluntarism over collective norms and orthodoxies.’
(Reedy, 2001 p3)

When the founders take action against a situation that they see as undesirable, they are offering a critique of the status quo, of affairs in society as they currently are. In this sense utopian thinking is inherently subversive and the founding stories are tales of subversive activity. Ricoeur suggests that all utopian thinking contains this element of subversion:

‘This development of new, alternative perspectives defines utopia’s most basic function. May we not say then that imagination itself – through its utopian function - has a constitutive role in helping us to *rethink* the nature of our social life?....Does not the fantasy of an alternative society and its exteriorisation “nowhere” work as one of the most formidable contestations of what is?’
(Ricoeur, 1986 p16)

Reedy points out:

‘The Left has found utopian narratives of immense importance in that articulation of the good life involves both implicit and explicit critique of prevailing social arrangements.’ (Reedy, 2001 p2)

All the founding stories tell of people acting on their social (and sometimes physical and imaginative) environment because they want to change it.

Exposing paradoxes

However, while the founding stories can be understood as tales of subversive activity the stories contain a number of paradoxes.

Firstly, while the stories all function as an implicit (and sometimes very explicit) critique of the status quo, they propose as a remedy not only individual and collective action but also the creation of institutions – the organisation which is the object of the tale. The founding stories move beyond utopian thinking to describe the creation of the organisational structures that are designed to

achieve the desired vision. Traditional utopian thinking, as a literary genre, rarely moves beyond the depiction, in word pictures, of alternatives. But the founders don't merely dream, they set about developing institutional structures to realise, or 'concretise' their visions. And while the actions of the individual founders may be radical, the tendency for organisations to become conservative is well researched (see, for example Morgan, 1993 and Clegg and Dunkerly, 1984 on the ways in which the need for survival can distort all other organisational priorities). Organisations have an in built tendency to act to maintain the status quo rather than to subvert it.

Moreover, organisations, however well intentioned their inhabitants, are systems in which power is wielded and manipulated and while in the founding stories the object of wielding power is the alleviation of oppression and suffering, organisations usually do end up oppressing someone. By subverting the individual good to the shared purpose, someone, or something usually loses out.

'...the idea of revolution...has become associated with professionalism and managerialism, leaving no scope for spontaneity, ambiguities, intuitions, innovations or poetry.' (Nandy, 1987 p140)

Secondly, the founding stories expose another paradox in relation to the issues of power and authority. While the founding events can be seen as inherently subversive activities in their implicit challenge to existing power structures, in many of the interviews chief executives gave examples of using these stories to legitimate their own authority. The act of the telling of these stories contains this tension between the questioning and legitimising of authority.

I am the founder of this organisation but I have no problem for managing because I am giving power to the people. I am just the driver, guiding them from the back.

Thirdly, while each chief executive spoke convincingly about the successes of their individual organisations, in the larger context they did not always see improvement in the social problems they were aiming to ameliorate. They perceived many of the issues that voluntary organisations hold dear such as better access to justice, homes for homeless people, improved healthcare, improved literacy, more, and wider community participation to be getting worse. The 'gap' in income between rich and poor is growing in many countries and relative poverty is also increasing. Euan Ferguson, writing in *The Observer* (30th September, 2001) says '25% of households are benefit dependentthe wage gap between the richest and the poorest is greater now than at any time since the industrial revolution'.

Engaging in social action is a way for people to give expression to the anger and frustration they feel in the face of cruelty and injustice and the stories are rich with examples of personal courage and sacrifice. But perhaps the 'shadow' side

of these stories was best expressed by one chief executive who said, 'how do we live with the fact that we have been in existence for 113 years and yet there seems to be more child abuse occurring now than ever before?'. Eliot (1943 p4) said that 'humankind cannot bear too much reality'. If these stories are stories of hope they also contain intimations of despair. Ambiguity may serve to manage that despair. Tandon (in a discussion in Delhi in March, 2001) suggested that the prevalence of discourse about values and vision in the sector may be a way of mediating our suspicions that we are not achieving the goals we set ourselves.

'If human action always achieved the results it intended, there would be no space for stories. Nor would there be space for stories if we lived in a perfectly ordered world, like Plato's *Republic*. But the world (both outer and inner) is irrational, puzzling, and threatening, our actions often lead to unanticipated results....So, we turn to narrative forms of explanation, interpretation and sensemaking. By attributing motive, agency or purpose to our human predicaments we may not always make them enjoyable or tolerable, but at least we make them sensible, capable of being understood. When motive, agency or purpose cannot be found we lapse into meaninglessness and despair.' (Gabriel, 2000, p239-240)

Fourthly, while the stories express the desires of the change agents, the founders, to pre-figure the experiences of the oppressed they are not, in the main, the voices of the oppressed themselves. Spivak, (1988) in an essay entitled *Can the Subaltern Speak?* suggests that attempts by elites to find, or construct the consciousness of the oppressed are doomed to fail in the very act of constituting one group as the 'other' (she is critiquing the efforts of the Subaltern Studies group of historiographers who are engaged in the enterprise of discovering the radical in the consciousness of those people who resisted the hegemony of colonialism).

The founding stories construct a particular situation as unjust and in so doing they ascribe the role of oppressed to the group that are the objects of that injustice. This group, as so constructed, is held captive in the story.

Das comments:

'Once we acknowledge that the traces of rebellion are embodied in the form of a record produced in the context of the exercise of bureaucratic and legal domination, we also have to accept that the speech of the subaltern, as it becomes available for study, has already been appropriated by the superior forms of authority.' (Das, 1989 p315)

The 'moral' of the stories is that the concerned individual should take action against injustice to achieve a more desired state. This exposes one of the great problematics of the sector; the subject of the story is not the subject of the action. These are stories about people expressing their concern for others but it is not

possible to do so without capturing the 'other' within their constructs. We are located in a continuum in which oppressor and oppressed are invented and reinvented by each other.

'Theories of salvation are always soiled by the spatial and temporal roots of the theorists. Since the solutions are products of the same social experiences that produce the problems they cannot but be informed by the same consciousness...' (Nandy, 1987 p222)

The founding stories, therefore, are a rich source of material for developing our understanding of the social construction of the voluntary sector. They reveal the founders' theories in use about the nature of injustice and its remedy and propose the taking of action against injustice. They expose a number of tensions; between those who take action and those for whom action is intended and between radical change and stability. They also reveal a deeply imbedded paradox whereby those who seek to remedy injustice are, to some extent, complicit in the maintaining of that injustice through the structures of meaning they inhabit.

Do the founding stories suggest a way out of this dilemma?

Abravanel (1983) says that one function of storytelling is to mediate between the ideal and the actual and the founding stories contain elements of both. Ricoeur (1987) suggests that it is in this mediation that space emerges for the creation, or imagining of new possibilities. He proposes that ideologies (by which he means that platform of actions required to achieve a desired state – the 'technology' of the ideal) and utopias are dialectically linked.

'...the very conjunction of these two, opposite sides, or complementary functions [of ideology and utopia] typifies what could be called a social and cultural imagination.' (Ricoeur, 1986 p1)

In both we are presented with images that are incongruous with our notion of lived experience (the tension between the ideal and the actual that Abravanel (1983) suggests is mediated by myth) and it is this incongruity that opens up the potential for a new way of seeing. The founding stories are examples of this constitutive use of the imagination; they are subversive in their challenge to the existing social order; they are integrative in that they legitimate the alternative power and authority structures they symbolise. But within this tension there is creative possibility.

The founding stories also propose different utopias, a plurality of visions. Nandy suggests that to bring utopias into dialogue with each other represents a powerful challenge to the hegemony of the 'grand narrative' 'the One World which nineteenth century Europe visualised' (Nandy, 1987 p4). A dialogue between differing world views admits the possibility of transcending any individual one.

This dialogue, he cautions, should not attempt their integration – this would be the creation of a new grand narrative with all its inherent oppressive capabilities - but rather their interrogation. This prescription offers the possibility of creating a technology of diversity, a way of working within different imaginations and world views without seeking to create a synthesis which would do violence to that which could not be absorbed. Within the tension that is created between differing visions, as between the actual and the ideal there is the space for new possibilities to emerge.

One of the areas in which the founding stories seek to explore new possibilities is in the construction of ethics. The subject of all the stories is the taking of ethical action. Perhaps the voluntary sector may be a space where people concretise, and thereby construct their contingent conceptions of ethical behaviour. The idea that organisations create ‘space’ for the construction of ideas was a theme in many of the interviews.

That the voluntary sector represents ethical space is also suggested in this strongly worded critique of the middle class (Indian in this case, but surely generalisable).

‘...unless the social virtues of care and concern inform the process of economic growth the dangerous divide between unsustainable lifestyles and unacceptable poverty will remain....Can the Indian middle class take the right fork in this historic crossroads before it?....What can be done to resurrect the citizen who cares?....The answer appears to be a conscious and quantum increase in voluntary activities outside the government, particularly in the areas of education, poverty eradication and health.’ (Varma, 1999 pp193, 202, 204)

Let us put aside for a moment the question of whether or not the voluntary sector is capable of shouldering the burden of rescuing the world from the negative consequences of globalisation. The significance of Varma’s locating the ‘citizen who cares’ squarely in the voluntary sector is the expectations this implies. This proposal may shed some light on why issues such as the definition of the sector; its ‘boundary patrol’ (Perri 6, 1995) and the perceived dangers of the sector ‘morphing’ (Rosenman, 2000) into other sectors cause such anxiety.¹ If we ‘need’ the voluntary sector as a space where we construct our conception of ethical behaviour then perhaps we also need it to remain quite distinct from other sectors. Other indicators of this anxiety are the increasing decline in trust in institutions in the UK and elsewhere (often highlighted by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations who have commissioned several research projects on this subject), the increased emphasis on transparency and accountability and perhaps also the flurry of letters to the editor that tend to greet articles about

¹ Evidence for this comes from such examples as the furore that greeted the publication of the Centris report (Knight, 1993) and the relatively high proportion of papers that dominate academic conferences about the independence of the sector, its increasing adoption of corporate culture, and in India, articles about the ‘purity’ of the sector.

administrative and fundraising costs of charities. These indicators suggest that the expectations of ethical behaviour are far higher on voluntary organisations than they are of the corporate sector. In India the voluntary sector attracts much negative publicity (often focussed on perceived, and contested, allegations of corruption). For example:

‘One senior trade diplomat in Geneva quite rightly points out that NGOs often display none of the transparency they seek in others, hide the sources of their funding and represent only narrow special interests, not the wider public. Some of the more aggressive NGOs are more interested in confrontation than consensus and are out to kill rational debate through biased, if not erroneous scare-mongering. Their holier-than thou tactics are often clearly undemocratic. But they are not going to go away.’ (*Indian Express*, 6 March, 1999)

This was from an article about the influence of NGOs on an economic summit. It might be suggested that the corporate interests that are also represented at such summits are not noticeably more ethical in their operations (Enron comes to mind) but this display of righteous indignation is reserved for voluntary organisations from whom, presumably much higher standards of behaviour are expected.

CONCLUSION

This paper has sought to demonstrate that the founding stories of voluntary organisations present an enormous repository of information about the way in which founders construct their social world. The stories expose a number of familiar tensions, in particular the tension between challenge and complicity in the maintenance of injustice. However, considered not merely as the stories of individual organisations but as representing a plurality of visions, in the tension between these world views, as in the tension between the ideal states they propose and the fallible organisations established to fulfil those ideals, there exists the possibility of the emergence of a technology of diversity, a means of interrogating and transcending the limitations of any one world view.

There is clearly a role for the sector to lead, and to be seen to be leading the debate about the nature of ethics within our current environment. Failing to engage in this task runs the risk of an increase in distrust, of cynicism and dislocation. I am not suggesting that the voluntary sector can act as a moral exemplar. That would be an impossible expectation (and I have already pointed out the paradox that all voluntary organisations create utopian dreams, and in that sense already promise more than they can deliver). However, speaking out, raising issues, challenging the ethics of the corporate and public sectors is a responsibility which perhaps is critical. The sector can give voice and form to beliefs, it cannot be their resolution.

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