K. F. Waldie

Organisation and Emotion

The issue of emotional alienation within the "industrial work culture" environ-
ment is not new, but a preoccupation with the symptoms, and the elimination
of the causes of those symptoms is becoming of vital importance. The high
level of importance I attach to such a study is based on the assumption that
the days are gone when an individual has to suffer distress of mind and body
because his view of the world around him is such that he can visualise no
alterantive existence, let alone contemplate that he has both the right and
the power to obtain this alternative. Suffering has been the norm, in order
that man could improve the future for himself and his children. Life has
been a continuing, self-perpetuating dream that has kept generations of
individuals frozen into a lifetrack that has become as predictable as the
waxing and waning of the moon.

Higgins (1973), in his consideration of the psychological situation faced by
the individual in western society, suggests that our society has been engaged
in a struggle with material scarcity. The consequence of this struggle is
that the individual has had to subordinate certain aspects of his personality
development. He suggests too, that the development of certain aspects
of personality at the expense of others has created a severe imbalance rather
than a "whole" development of society's members. This concept of "whole
development", can be explored through the models of interpersonal behaviour
of Schutz (1966), McPherson and Walton (1970), McGarth (1964), Carson
(1970) and Leary (1957). They attempted to define personality within the
context of interpersonal relationships. All their models had distinct similar-
ities with regard to the identification of an emotional element; "Affection"
(Schutz) "Attraction" (McGrath), "Emotionally Sensitive to others – Emotionally
Insensitive to Others" (McPherson and Walton) and "Love and Hostility"
(Leary). They also showed similarities with regard to an intellectual element
that was symbolic of power: "Control" (Schutz), "Influence" (McGrath),
"Dominance – Submissiveness" (McPherson and Walton and "Dominance –
Submission (Leary). So emotional alienation within the context of the above
conception would have a particular meaning, namely the situation of an
individual, out of contact with the emotional nature of himself in an inter-
personal relationship, compared with, for example, the intellectual nature
of the relationship. Hence, the effect of the industrial culture on the individual
is a partial loss of self. His emotional identity is lost under the weight of
historical socialisation; he has become a prisoner of the past. Writers like
Illich (1971), (1974) and Higgins (1973) have explored how industrial society
has as its bedrock, the continuing inculcation of such factors as achievement
and ambition.

The present behaviour norms of our industrial work culture display character-
istics that will continue to move us further into the world of emotional alienation.

The call that echoes through the industrial work is for increased effectiveness and increased productivity, while sophisticated, man-made systems utilising technology are introduced which consider man in a very mechanistic way by failing to take into account his emotional needs. Systems like this are built around people, but the design information is very scarce in terms of human data. In fact, I often get the impression that the mental attitude of the designers (be they management or technology system designers), is based on the premise that if you require human intervention in the system being designed, minimise the effect of "them" as much as possible – out of existence if possible! Yet my experience of living in the industrial work culture tells me that this road is fatal, because the "them" (and the term embodies all of us in the ultimate) have some pretty fancy spanners to throw into the sophisticated work systems when they tire of their existence. The present alliances of so called common interest groups, whether they are unions, employers or government, also seem to be continuing the emphasis on power interaction on a large scale; the result appears to be the heightening of the uniformity and greyness of those who belong, and does nothing to focus upon or value the individual's uniqueness and identity.

What I intend to talk about now are the specific issues of an individual's emotional needs, and the effect of our industrial culture in blocking the fulfilment of such needs. In other words, let us look at the sources of pressure which produce an imbalance in an individual, giving him the feeling of emotional alienation.

One of the prime sources is related to a concept that man devised in order to simplify industrial life, namely, "role". The role concept can be described as a set of behavioural expectations, applied to the human being occupying the role which are a combination of the role occupant's idea of what these expectations are, and what is explicitly demanded externally; this results in some form of role behaviour. The industrial work culture has become very skilled at the designing and implementation of role descriptions which tend to aim at improving the effectiveness of an organisation in the achievement of its commercial aims. Meanwhile, any consideration of the individual's emotional needs is minimal and in consequence, a significant imbalance exists. In fact, the formalised process for role definition can reduce the individual to a gameplaying life where a high value is placed on those with an ability in the field of drama – the ability to act a part. The impact of role has become such a "normal" part of our industrial work culture, that often the individual comes to see it as the reality of life, tending to forget that it is in fact only an idea of the mind and that beneath it there is an emotional content of self. In addition, the level at which we usually relate to each other is at the role level, hence we see a matrix of role relationships existing, with no account taken of the "emotional" person in a parallel role which has a whole range of emotional states governing behaviour. Yet. . . .

Yet the impression one gets of the industrial work culture is of a dream world in which the totality of human beings existing within it is not recognised.

Even more amazing are the horrified reactions of many role occupants when they observe a bit of "emotional self" slip through the net. In actual fact, there are a lot of poor actors about, but the inability to "play the part" allocated, places the individual in a dilemma having potentially disastrous consequences. For, if he perceives the acting role as the reality, and finds himself deviating from it, he begins to see himself as abnormal, as if something is wrong, and a high degree of personal anxiety may result. Looking at such a situation from the present 'normal organisational position', the result is an 'ineffective individual'. To clarify by example, our individual could be a shop-steward who likes and respects a manager, or a manager who does not have a primary belief in the profit motive.

It is worth considering the issue of the "effective individual" at the level of personality. There are a number of conceptual models which are rooted in the family situation. The work of Bales and Slator (1956) defined the separate existence of the Task Specialist and the Socio-Emotional Specialist as two primary behavioural or personality types that emerge in social groups. Slater (1955) wondered about these within the context of the integration of these separate behavioural abilities within the one individual. Blake and Moulton (1969) attempt to avoid the dichotomy of "scientific management" and "human relations" by presenting a view of management styles or behaviour which combines both the task/intellectual nature of "scientific management" and the process/emotional nature of "human relations". What I am suggesting is, that when those values which define an ineffective individual are made from either end of this dichotomy. They both devalue, and increase the movement towards loss of human potential and consequent organizational inefficiency. For the achievement of human potential and greater effeciency within organisations, the industrial world norms of task, achievement and control must be combined with alternative extremes of love, feelings and spontaneity.

I would like to further explore the issue of role (as defined by "Scientific Management"), and the effect of its intensive application within a work culture. From my integrationist view this could present an "imbalance". Being detrimental to the individual emotional nature and "total" development. For example, one consequence of role is the dilemma into which it can put a person as a result of his membership of an identifiable common interest group. This is particularly relevant if part of the task of the group is the formulation of manipulative tactics for dealing with another common interest group. In a role, a set of values and attitudes are built up which one uses to predict the behaviour of another individual or role group. The classic industrial work culture situation is the confrontation between the management and trade union groups. So a member of a management group evolves tactics based on role assumptions; generally these are highly mechanistic simplifications that revolve around the panacea of money and its power with respect to reward or treat. Yet. . . .

Yet, it tends to be a very assumptive-based interaction with the minimum of dialogue. These role tactics often conflict with a person's experience

of reality, and if, in addition, he likes the people he is suppose to manipulate, we can expect him not to be a very committed member of his group - another ineffective individual! A further example of this 'role effect' is in the area of inter-personal relationships. In our industrial work culture we have had bits of humanity poking through the role 'curtain' for quite a while. A technique was devised to deal with it and was given the label "personnel problems" - a useful box in which to deposit things which deviated from the highly controlled, predictable game that was being acted out. But because the controlled, clinical world of role denies the existence of emotion, the creation of yet another role to deal with these human emotions is inevitably fraught with inadequacies from the start - one of these being simply lack of practice. Now, the individuals who let those personal problems become exposed, run the risk of dying in a desert of pure, controlled intellect. One of the best known tactics is to deny the existence of personal problems; this is an under-standable response from those who are disturbed by the appearance of issues that should not exist if the role as a reality is to be believed.

It can be seen therefore that we have an industrial work culture which suppresses the emotional self aspects of the individual. So it is, that a large part of man's life experience, he is denied the opportunity of verbalising or expressing his inner or emotional self, and of exploring the effects of contact between his own emotional self and the emotions of others. Thus the opportunities for building growing relationships of quality and depth with his work neighbours are denied by the system and this denial also develops inadequacies in his ability to embark on such a course if the opportunity presents itself; he has become de-skilled, so a vicious circle prevails. This theme of emotional alienation is also evident when one looks at work from the standpoint of enjoyment of work in a fun-loving, emotionally stimulating way. The rabbit warren of 'prison cells' which heighten the separateness of individual roles, has a suffocating effect on the spontaneity of individuals and between groups. One observes this in the corridors of buildings, where people with dream-like quality pass each other with their work roles fully extended. It is to be seen too, in the individual who sits and squirms during a meeting because the expression of his true self does not befit his role (perhaps he does not like the way his boss is verbally violating someone else across the table). It is my experience that the spontaneous, the sudden inspiration, is a vital ingredient of creativity. If the emotional needs of an individual are in reality existing within him, crying out to be met, but being suppressed by the work culture, there must be some powerful forces at work to keep them hidden. I consider the issue of fear to be prevalent . The causes of this fear are concerned with the imagined loss of certain important factors in our lives. Economic . . . .

Economic needs in relation to loss of earning power is a clear example of such fears and this, incidentally, can be seen to be closely linked to the material consumption rate in our twentieth century culture. Man has become committed to the maintenance of high material needs to ever increasing levels, and as individuals, our psychological stability/happiness, depends

very much on the meeting of these needs. In addition, ambition is very much
linked to the above with respect to climbing the organisational ladder in
order to increase earning power, and to achieve the trappings of status which
accompany such climbs. Size of office, quality of office furniture, role
status superiority all give a sense of success; a feeling of getting somewhere
in life. In fact this movement can be towards greater emotional alienation
because the organisational barometer of success is often linked with high
levels of skill in control and role-playing ability.

The picture painted so far, is of an industrial work culture that is hostile
in the main, to the promotion and development of an individual's emotional
nature. This one-sided development of people within the culture result in
inefficiencies in organisation; hence, the issue is not that one aspect of
human behaviour is right and another wrong, but rather a question of balance.
I maintain that at present, the balance swings considerably in favour of
the non-recognition of the existence of human emotional needs.

If such perceptions are accepted, the issue becomes one of redressing the
balance in favour of the individual's emotional development. The consequence
of this, with regard to the changes in organizational structures and systems
could be significant. Personally I do not have inhibitions in this area, though
I suspect for some, it represents a confrontation with ultimate truth; for
me it is not a "chicken and egg" problem of which comes first, people or
organisations, simply because organisations with all their sub systems and
techniques are still only ideas of man. Organisations are created to serve
man in order that he can communally achieve certain objectives. When
however, the basic essence and qualities of man are given second place to
man-made structures, and when these structures begin to get blessed with
all sorts of characteristics of "rightness" and permanence", it is time for
questions to be asked and re-assessments to be made of these long accepted
values. Since the issues here are the accumulated effects of value systems
and attitudes, the process of moving towards greater effectiveness by redressing
the balance is bound to be an evolving process within the life span of our
present total culture. Too often though, we see in our cultural history major
social changes being brought about by violence and revolution. What we
need is a method which is in the hands of the culture's members rather than
its rulers. A suggestion that the rulers might attempt to answer the problem
by passing a law making it compulsory to examine your "self" for half an
hour each day is too realistic to be amusing. In my view, we must keep
our personal attitudes and values within the domain of our own experience
or we will be back in the Role game again, behaving as we are told we should
behave, rather than according to the dictates of direct experience.

So how do we facilitate? Let us consider the individual first. It is we human
beings who perpetuate the present values and attitudes either through a
lack of awareness of the alternatives, or through a fear of expressing those
alternatives that are part of us but suppressed. Thus we ourselves support
and develop the framework of the organization which causes our emotional
alienation. Hence, the break out from this vicious circle has to be made

via the individual. One way is to attempt to talk and express one's discomfort within the organisation, but the "personal problem box" (as already mentioned) can be useful protective device operated by the guardians of the present organisational culture. Also, the individual must have a high level of inter-personal trust enabling him to comfortably verbalise his emotions dilemma.

It is my experience that such levels of trust are present very rarely in our work culture, although I have experienced small pockets of it, which is encourag-ing. The only direct experience I have of a method by which people can explore their emotional selves and the causal impact of organisations on the loss of awareness of that "self", is in the field of experiential learning as applied to the understanding of the nature of human relationships. In considering this learning process at the level of the individual, it is instructive to consider Harrison's (1965) survey of group composition models. He proposes that the ideal training group involves "a confrontation with opposed but meaningful values and orientations". The primary ethics of the small training group (T-Group, sensitivity group, encounter group) are its focus upon "process" as opposed to "end states", and its encouragement of "feeling and expression" rather than "intellectual expression". This tends to establish the group as a "mother environment". This perception of the group as maternal in nature has been used by Bion (1959), Slator (1966) Scheidlinger (1968) and Ruiz (1972). Seen in this light, the experiential learning group is an ideal environment for individuals who have strong paternalistic traits to their personality i.e. those who are end or task orientated; people with highly developed intellectual modes of such expression and relating to others. This view is of course conditio-nal upon a belief in the integrationist theory of human development, that is, the integration and elaboration of all possible modes of behaviour.

Some examples of the use of the experiential learning process as an aid to the emotional development of people, (and hence organizations) may help to answer the question; "So how do we facilitate?" Possibly the most simplistic situation is the experiential learning group which has its focus upon the personal growth of the individual. In general, the group membership has had either very little or no historical contact or relationship experience with each other. My experience indicates certain trends in the motivation which brings people to the point of participating in a small training group. In a group of eight people for example, six might be classified as normal by cultural standards - their motivation to share in the group experience is often centred around an awareness of dissatisfaction with either their present life style or ways of relating to other people. The remaining two (or similar proportion) are often individuals with some psychiatric history whose motivation for joining the group is a dissatisfaction engendered by the psychiatric treatment previously received. There. . . .

There is often too, an individual who participates for the gratification of the experience; he appears "in good shape" and is often hedonistic in outlook. Bearing in mind that all this is a generalisation of an overall trend, the point I want to make is that, in the primary proportion of the group, the so called

"normals", I keep encountering the successful professional person who is
there because, according to him, he is "friendless", "cannot express his feelings",
is alienated from his work, alienated from his children, alienated from his
work colleagues. It is his past which become existentially expressed in the
group in the form of his immediate relationships with the other group members.
So this form of group experience – a group initially composed of strangers –
can be a process of becoming aware, and of experimenting with emotional
expression. The learning process can be taken nearer to the work environment.
One particular application of this type of learning experience was in the
situation where there was a change in management leadership; a work team
made up a three day, experience based group. The new leadership was committed
to the exploration of the emotional nature of their relationships within the
context of the tasks that they had to achieve. The object of this was to
increase the work group's awareness of its emotional nature, and to establish
the "normality" of exploring this dimension in their day to day work relationships.

A further sophistication of the above examples is the establishment of group
learning situations which reflect the organisation i.e. a cross-section of
role types, status levels and common interest groups. One such example
focusses upon the issue of industrial relations and was comprised of managers,
shop stewards, foremen, and union members. The learning attention was
on the nature and quality of the relationships that are brought into the group
experience. This particular type of event had the added dimension of including
the simultaneous operating of several separate groups, and so, inter-group
relationships could also be explored.

The effect of these examples can be to remove the role curtain of public
image, and make moves towards genuineness of expression of feelings between
individuals. This can be both a frightening and a joyous experience with
respect to becoming more aware of self, yet at the same time can present
problems in coming to terms with some aspects of this newly discovered
self. So it is, that the tough, hard nosed supervisor can discover that he
is quite a "softy", or the manager who has highly valued his gentleness and
understanding finds some latent violence and frustration within himself;
both must deal with these new dilemmas. Yet what do we really want?
The experience of experiential learning group work highlights the difference
between the inner self (with all the complications of varying emotional states),
and the public image or role that is so prominently displayed by us. Another
aspect of this type of experience is related to a great sensitivity vis-a-vis
the impact of one's behaviour, on others. The impact of personal behaviour,
when seen to be on a 'role' rather than on a person, reduces the concern
level with respect to our effect on others – the get out clause of the conscience –
its only a role! Yet this does not hold true when one starts to perceive 'selves'
within these roles. This is especially true when the impact of behaviour
has been hurtful.

The above examples are just a few of the alternative forms that experiential
learning can take. What I wish to indicate is, that one of its values is to
help people recognise the effect of the organisational, structured environment

on the individual. This is expecially true if the nature of the participating group reflects the organisation. The other value of this type of learning, is that it provides an environment where individuals can develop, experientially, their emotional nature.

Let us assume, that we now have an organisation made up of people with a range of perceptions, pre-occupied with the fact that they feel emotional alienation from the present organisational system. These people find the organisational values (as represented by the various procedures, rules and regulations established within it) producing human alienation and consequent ineffectiveness. What do they do now? Change it? Into what? This is where uncertainty enters, for does anyone really know what the alternatives are? It could be, that we may have to get away from the norm which says that particular organisational systems applicable to a specific group are automatically transferable to another totally different group. The mind recoils at the thought of an infinite range of formal organisational systems being allowed to freely evolve to suit the emotional needs of particular work groups. I can imagine the horror of a Personnel Director on realising the impact of this on his National Pay Structure! I certainly feel uncomfortable with respect to the present move towards conformity in the work situation. Maybe in our rush towards equality of fringe benefits we risk losing sight of the reality of our individuality as people in groups.

It is because of the uncertainity that the need to experiment and evolve alternative work culture systems is with us. We can intellectualise indefinitely with respect to how it could be. This is indeed an essential part of the whole process, but in the ultimate, the evolutionary process of experiential learning can aid the evolution of organisational structure which maximise the totality of human development.

References

Bales, R. F. and **Slator, P. E.** : *Role differentiation in small decision-making groups*; in **Parson** and **Bales** :- *Family socialization and interaction process* Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1956).

Bion, W. R. : *Experience in groups* (Basic Books, New York, 1959).

Blake. R. R. and **Mouton, J. S.** : *The managerial grid* (Culf Publishing Co. Houston 1964).

Carson, R. C. : *Interaction concepts of personality* (George Allan & Unwin Ltd., London 1970).

Higgin, G. : *Symptoms of tomorrow* (Plum Press & Wardlock, London 1973).

Illich, I. D. : *Deschooling Society* (Calder & Boyars, London 1973).

Illich, I. D. : *Tools for conviviality* Calder & Boyars, London 1974).

Leary, T. F. : *Interpersonal diagnosis of personality* (Ronald Press, New York 1957).

McGrath, J. E. : *A descriptive model for the study of interpersonal relations in small groups.* (Journal of psychological studies. Vol. 14, No. 3, P.89-116, 1964).

McPherson, F. M. and **Walton, H. J.** : *The dimensions of psychotherapy group interactions: An analysis of clinicians constructs.* British Journal of medical psychology. 43. P. 281-290, 1970).

Ruiz, P. : *On the perception of the "mother-group" in T-Groups* (International Journal of group psychotherapy, 18. p.3-20, 1968).

Scheidlinger, S. : *The concept of regression in group psychotherapy.* (International Journal of Group Psychotherapy. 18. p.3-20, 1968).

Schutz, W. C. : *The Interpersonal underworld* (Science and Behaviour Books, Palo Alto, California 1966).

Slator, P. E. : *Role differentiation in small groups.* (American Sociological Review, 30 p.300-310, 1955).

Slator, P. E. : *Microcosm* : Structural, Psychological and Religious evolution in groups. (Wiley, New York, 1966).

Ron Clements

TA at work

Manager: "Where have you been; you're an hour late?"
Subordinate: "I've been getting my hair cut".
Manager: "But you can't get your hair cut in the firm's time".
Subordinate: "Why not? It grows in the firm's time".

This manager seems to have applied the universally-held belief that things of a purely personal nature are outside the company's area of responsibility.

That may be so. But the point to consider here is, if the man lets his hair grow and doesn't get it cut, then sooner or later it could impinge upon the company's sphere of influence. And hair is not the only thing that grows in the firm's time.

For me an analagous situation is found in the area of personal behaviour, and mainly that caused as a result of difficulty in inter-personal relationships.