Pop-Management Literature: Popular Business Press and Management Culture in Brazil

Thomaz Wood Jr.*
FGV-EAESP

Ana Paula Paes de Paula
CEPEAD-UFMG

Abstract

As in other emerging countries, the 1990s in Brazil were characterized by profound economic changes. The business press reflected and influenced this process. Newspapers and magazines grew and assumed an important role, disseminating values associated with neo-liberalism and managerialism. In this paper, we aim to contribute to the understanding of the content produced by this media and how the readership reacts to this content. To accomplish these objectives, we used the method of fantasy theme analysis (Bormann, 1972) to analyze four business magazines, and we discuss how Brazilian culture mediates the assimilation of foreign ideas and managerial expertise. Our study also helps to understand how the pop-management literature, disseminated by the business press, echoes and reinforces managerialism and management culture. Copyright © 2008 ASAC. Published by John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

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Resumé

Comme dans l'autres pays émergents, les années 1990 ont été caractérisées au Brésil par de profonds changements économiques que la presse d'affaires a reflétés et influencés. Les journaux et les revues d'affaires ont augmenté en nombre et ont assumé un rôle crucial, disséminant des valeurs associées au néo-libéralisme et au managerialisme. Cet article se propose de contribuer à la compréhension du contenu de cette presse d'une part et des reactions des lecteurs à ce contenu d'autre part. Pour atteindre ces objectifs, nous utilisons la méthode de l'analyse du thème de la fantaisie (Bormann, 1972) pour analyser quatre revues d'affaires. Nous examinons également la manière dont la culture bresilienne médiatise l'assimilation des idées étrangères et de l'expertise managériale. Notre étude permet aussi de comprendre comment la littérature portant sur le pop-management, disséminée par la presse d'affaires, reflète et renforce managerialisme et la culture du management. Copyright © 2008 ASAC. Published by John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Mot clés : la presse d'affaires, la culture du management, *managerialisme*, néo-libéralisme, Brésil

Our role as editors is similar to a surfer on the break line: you have to keep an eye on the horizon and be good at what you do to assess a good wave that can carry you all the way to the beach. Except that, here, it's like we both ride the wave and help make it. It's different because we can help the wave swell. We are part of the wave. (Sidnei Basile, Editor of *Exame*)

Globalization and the Emergence of Business Press

During the 1980s and 1990s, publishing management books and magazines became a prosperous business. The context—whether real or imagined—of turbulence and fierce competition contributed to the birth

*Please address correspondence to: Thomaz Wood Jr., FGV-EAESP, Avenida Nove de Julho, 2029, São Paulo–SP, 01313-902, Brazil. Email: thomaz.wood@fgv.br

of a branch of literature concerned with the issues, anxieties, and dilemmas experienced by managers: the pop-management literature.

The emergence of the pop-management literature occurred along with the drastic economic and business changes spurred by globalization (see Bagguley, 1991; Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999; Harvey, 1996). The proliferation of pop-management literature relates to the dissemination of values and ideas associated with management culture occurring from the 1980s onwards. It includes newspapers and magazines produced for rapid consumption.

Pop-management literature follows recurring patterns: heroic feats by executives (e.g., Gerstner, 2003; Ghosn, 2006; Welch, Byrne, & Barnicle, 2005), the acclamation of new managerial ideas (e.g., Corbett, 2004; Deming, 2000; Hammer & Champy, 2003), and advice for professional success (e.g., Covey, 1989; Peters, 1999).

As noted by Ainamo, Tienari, and Vaara (2006, p. 611): "the media both reflect more general societal debates and act as an agency promoting specific kinds of ideas and ideologies." In observing, interpreting, and reporting on life events, the media contributes to the social construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The media determines what issues are worthy of coverage (thereby indicating what is important), influences our thinking, reinforces certain beliefs, and cultivates certain perceptions of social reality (Chen & Meindl, 1991, p. 521). Similarly, because of its scope and wide appeal, the popular business press plays an important role in the corporate world, promoting and disseminating certain ideas and values.

Although ubiquitous in organizational life, until recently, the business press and pop-management literature were infrequent subjects of academic study. However, a number of notable texts have been published. Some scholars investigated industry dynamics as reflected in changes in the business press (Ainamo et al., 2006; Mazza & Pedersen, 2004) and its products (Kjaer & Langer, 2005). Others focused on how the popular business press deals with subjects such as leadership (Chen & Meindl, 1991), mergers and acquisitions (Schneider & Dunbar, 1992; Vaara & Tienari, 2002), stereotypes and gender (Kostera, 2003), and work and organization more generally (Hassard & Holliday, 1998). Johnson, Ellstrand, Dalton, and Dalton (2005) investigated how the press influences perceptions of organizational reality and daily life, examining, for example, the impact that a well-known business magazine's rating of a board of directors has on stockholder wealth. Frenkel (2005) studied the role of the general media in the institutionalization of professional management and productivity discourse, and Hancock and Tyler (2004) examined the influence of management books in everyday life.

Researchers have also investigated the relationship between popular management books and management practices (Furusten, 1999) and the relationship between the popular press and management ideas (Mazza & Alvarez, 2000). Furusten argued that popular management books are developed according to concepts, models, and work methods marketed by consulting firms. Mazza and Alvarez (p. 567) investigated the "role of the popular press in the production and legitimization of management ideas and practices." Rüling (2005), by his turn, related the working logic of nonscholarly and scholarly media to the presence and frequency patterns of the diffusion of management ideas.

Our work was particularly inspired by Jackson (1999; 2000; 2001), who investigated management gurus and management fashions. Jackson applied the method of fantasy theme analysis (Bormann, 1972; 1983) to study Michael Hammer, James Champy and the reengineering movement (Hammer & Champy, 2003), Stephen Covey and the effectiveness movement (Covey, 1989), and Peter Senge and the learning organization (Senge, 1990). He aimed to explain what it was about those visions that enabled them to catch on and be assimilated into business discourse.

Although these studies represent substantive scholarly contributions, the field is still a work in progress, with many questions still awaiting proper answers. For instance, do the contents disseminated by the pop-management literature present patterns, and if so, what kind of patterns? How do these contents—and eventually, patterns—relate to managerialism as an ideology (Pollitt, 1990)? How are these contents produced? Does the audience have an influence in this production system? On the other hand, how are these contents absorbed by the readership? How does the pop management literature influence management practices? Finally, how do local cultures mediate this process—that is, the process of transmitting managerial ideas and expertise from the United States to host countries and their assimilation and use—in institutional and cultural environments that are different from that of the origin?

Objectives and Structure

In the society of the spectacle, the mass media became an important agent for the social construction of reality (see Debord, 1967). Similarly, we assume that the popular business press has an important role in the social construction of corporate reality.

Therefore, our study has two objectives: the first refers to the supply side, that is, the business press, and the second to the demand side, that is, the readership. Firstly, we seek to identify patterns in the contents

disseminated by pop-management literature. We therefore conducted a survey of four very influential magazines in Brazil, three of which are published domestically and one of which, although published in the United States, is very popular among top-managers in Brazil. As far as we know, such content analysis has not been done before. We believe this is important because of the influence of pop-management literature over management practices (Furusten, 1999; Mazza & Alvarez, 2000). Secondly, we aim to analyze (more speculatively) how the Brazilian culture mediates the assimilation by local managers of managerial ideas and expertise disseminated by business magazines. For this second purpose, we relied upon previous studies (Caldas & Wood, 1997; Wood & Caldas, 1998; 2002) and our own personal experiences. We believe this is important because it helps to understand how managers react to the contents disseminated by the business media.

This study is structured as follows: In the next section, we discuss managerialism, entrepreneurship, and management culture. We aim to provide an historical and theoretical background for the understanding of the pop-management literature. Following that, we summarize economic changes in Brazil, and how they brought a shift in the media in general and the business press in particular. We aim to contextualize pop-management literature within the Brazilian environment. Next, we explain the method used and present and interpret our survey results. Following that, we return to our objectives and discuss our findings. In the final section, we discuss contributions for scholarship, implications for practices, and present limitations of the study and directions for future research.

Management Culture

In this section, we briefly discuss managerialism, entrepreneurship, and management culture. We argue that the managerialism movement (Grant & Mills, 2006; Hancock & Tyler, 2004; Pollitt, 1990), the phenomenon of the cult of excellence, and the entrepreneurial culture (Du Gay, 1991; Harvey, 1996; Hjorth, 2003) provide the backdrop from which we can come to understand the dissemination of management values and practices. We suggest that the managerialism movement created a management culture that nurtured the contents of business books and magazines.

The Rise of Managerialism

Managerialism resides in the assumption that organizations have more similarities than differences. It follows, then, that organizational performance can be maximized by applying standard management theory, concepts, and tools. According to Pollitt (1990), managerialism is premised on a set of assumptions: (a) social progress results from continuous economic productivity gains; (b) productivity grows mainly through applying increasingly sophisticated technologies, which are used by a disciplined workforce; (c) management plays a crucial role in planning and implementing the strategies required to attain productivity; and (d) managers have the right to manage. Also according to Pollitt, managerialism is an ideology—that is, a set of beliefs and practices—at the core of which lies the assumption that applying more and better management approaches will solve social and economic problems.

Throughout the twentieth century, the corporate world gradually molded our social and cultural experience, trespassing progressively on the domains of science and technology, and education and arts (Hancock & Tyler, 2004). According to Deeks (1993), our society is becoming a business culture, as business institutions and organizations wield great influence over social life. The highest social status and most prestigious positions are occupied by businesspersons. Businesses are playing a dominant role in the process of individual socialization with respect to education and the acquisition of skills and experiences. The media, by its turn, have been transmitting and reinforcing business values, and symbols, language, beliefs, and ideologies of the business world are invading culture materially, intellectually, and spiritually (Hancock & Tyler).

Viewing the phenomenon from an historic perspective, the values of the business world were renewed and consolidated during the "managerialist movement" that flourished in the 1980s, particularly in England and the United States (see Du Gay, 1991; Morris, 1991). In England, the government sought to transform collective culture and psychology in order to enhance productivity gains and raise achievements in economics, politics, government, arts, and sciences. This was likely intended as a reaction against the advances in international markets enjoyed by Americans, Germans, and the Japanese. Thus, during the Thatcher administration, Victorian values—like effort and hard work, motivation, creative ambition, innovation, excellence, independence, flexibility, and personal responsibility—were promoted (Morris).

Managerialism has its origins in early management theories formulated by Frederick Winslow Taylor (1911), Abraham Maslow (1943), Douglas McGregor (1960), and Frederick Herzberg (1959), and was transformed by major global events of the twentieth century such as the Second World War and the Cold War. Grant and Mills (2006), for instance, provided evidence that the Academy of Management "allied itself with dominant Cold War

themes that translated into a philosophy of management, which influenced the character of the organization for decades" (p. 202). The institution was concerned with developing a philosophy of management, which, the authors argued, was influenced by the experience of soldiers returning from the Second World War. This managerial philosophy was uncritically reproduced as the dominant power order of American society. These soldiers "had experienced success in a hierarchical, planning- and management-oriented environment and they attributed much of that success to rational and scientific operational management, leadership, and organization" (p. 206). The Academy of Management, in turn, had a major influence in propagating this philosophy through its journals and books (see also Spector, 2006; 2008). Grant and Mills highlighted the transforming role managers (and thus management) play in society, and highlighted their beliefs and worldviews, which dominate not only organizational studies and practices, but also spread through other societal domains and carry the bureaucratic ethic with them (see Hjorth, 2005).

In the 1980s and 1990s, managerialism was seen as a forward way to deal with the challenges of globalization and to reverse (or avoid) economic decline. Given the close relationship between managerial values and actions and the postFordist restructuring of the globalized economy (Bagguley, 1991), managerialism became the preferred answer to the needs of firms and governments, thereby transcending original historic and cultural roots. After having developed in the English and American social and cultural context, managerialism spread throughout continental Europe and Latin America.

Cult of Excellence and Entrepreneurship

At the same time and during the Reagan Era, the "cult of excellence" developed in the United States (Du Gay, 1991). It promoted an image of self-determination and self management and spread the idea that growth opportunities are founded in individual initiative. The cult of excellence is related to the "entrepreneurial culture" (see Du Gay; Harvey, 1996), which gives rise to its own code of values and conducts and seeks to ensure maximum control, efficiency, and competitiveness for organizational systems. We refer here to what Hjorth (2003, p. 148) describes as corporate or individual entrepreneurship, which is influenced by discourse on "excellence" prevalent among such management gurus as Tom Peters and Robert Waterman (1982), Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1984), and Gifford Pinchot III (1985).

Individual entrepreneurship arises from a confluence of individual motivation and psychological characteris-

tics. Hjorth (2003) noted that in the 1980s, both management and entrepreneurship were reborn. He argued that managers should manage "organizational cultures" and thereby encompass "entrepreneurial values, attitudes and action rationales" (p. 157). Corporate entrepreneurship arose as a means (or substrategy, according to Hjorth) for business renewal and development. Managers were expected to implement corporate entrepreneurship by changing bureaucratic structures to bring forth innovation. On a large scale, this approach subordinates entrepreneurship to management, redefining employees as entrepreneurs doing business for themselves while doing business for the company. The merger of these concepts—management and entrepreneurship—is, of course, paradoxical and ambiguous. Nevertheless, the business media and the corporate establishment enthusiastically embraced such an amalgamation. The hero-manager entrepreneur became a popular archetype for executives in the 1980s and 1990s.

The Concept of Management Culture

Management culture can be defined as a set of assumptions shared by firms and society to include: (a) a belief in a free market society; (b) a view of individuals as entrepreneurs; (c) excellence as a means to individual and collective improvement; (d) the massive use of symbols, key-words (e.g., innovation, success, and excellence), and figures (e.g., hero-managers); and (e) a belief that management expertise enables the optimization of organized activities.

In line with the cultural dissemination process, management has, in the past 20 years, organized itself into an emerging and successful field made up of four interrelated, mutually reinforcing pillars: business schools, consulting firms, management gurus, and the business media (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 1997). These four pillars have undergone remarkable development in Brazil, commensurate with the pace in which management ideals and practices have become internationalized.

Brazil: Economic Changes and a New Mood in the Media and Business Press

After discussing managerialism, entrepreneurship, and management culture, we now move to focus on changes that have occurred in Brazil in the last two decades. These changes were associated with the growing popularity of neo-liberalism and managerialism disseminated by the media in general and the business press in particular.

Economic Reforms and Neo-liberalism

Since the early twentieth century, the Brazilian economy has been marked by unorthodox economic policies with high duties intended to establish and sustain local production (Fishlow, 2000). It was only in the late 1980s and early 1990s that Brazil started to liberalize imports and begin an economic deregulation. The duties protecting local firms dropped, a broad privatization program was implemented, and the State's role in the economy decreased.

In Brazil, the 1990s became the reform decade because of the deep changes implemented in economic and public policies. These changes included several measures based in the principles of neo-liberalism, that is: fiscal discipline; redirection of public funds from broadly applied subsidies to financing key pro-growth sectors and social services such as primary education, primary health care, and infrastructure investment; adoption of competitive exchange rates guaranteeing property rights, deregulation, and trade liberalization; privatization; elimination of barriers to foreign investment; and financial liberalization (Baumann, 2002).

Neo-liberal policies became dominant, as they were extensively adopted in Latin America and other developing countries. Nonetheless, they were firmly criticized and confronted by trade unions, left-wing politicians and intellectuals. Harvey (2005), for instance, described neo-liberalism as a global capitalist class power restoration project that, through coercion, becomes hegemonic worldwide. Besides being a source for public policies and economic reform, neo-liberalism is also an ideology—a structured collection of ideas—incorporating a broad vision and way of looking at the world. As such, neo-liberalism was appropriated by industrialists, financial moguls, entrepreneurs, and "right-wing" politicians to generate and sustain economic change.

The Rise (and Almost Fall) of Managerialism in the Media and Business Press

For companies, the 1990s were a period of severe realignment with the new competitive context, of frantic cost-cutting programs, radical business portfolio revisions, urgent technology adoption efforts, and frenzied management modernization attempts (Caldas, 2000; Wood & Caldas, 2002). Exposed to competition, many domestic firms did not survive, while others were acquired by multinational companies, which in turn started a broad consolidation movement. As an ancillary effect, there was a massive importation of foreign managerial expertise. This resulted from new companies entering the market and from efforts by local companies to meet the new competitive reality.

Following economic changes, the media in general and the business press in particular grew and prospered around the new credo, defending globalization and the free-market and promoting new management ideas. *Veja*, an influential weekly magazine with a circulation of one million plus, changed its editorial line, gradually substituting political analysis with lifestyle and self-help texts. Several business magazines and newspapers were launched in the 1990s such as *CartaCapital, Forbes Brasil, AmericaEconomia, IstoÉ Dinheiro, Pequenas Empresas & Grandes Negócios, Valor Economico*, and many others. Television networks also focused on the business niche and launched programs that discussed business, management, and entrepreneurship. HSM, an events company, established itself as a reference for new management ideas, bringing the most famous gurus to Brazil. HSM held its own yearly conference, Expo-Management, which became a magnet for executives, business schools, and consultants, attracting more than 10,000 attendees.

Book publishers identified the new niche and created a prosperous business for themselves. Peter Drucker (1993), Michael Porter (1985), Stephen Covey (1989), and Tom Peters (1999) suddenly emerged from anonymity to best-sellers' lists. The movement also brought managers to public life. Several local top-executives, barely known beyond corporate walls in the 1980s, became celebrities in the 1990s. With the help of public relations experts, these men and women became popular public figures, both in the business press and the general media. At the same time, foreign corporate stars such as Jack Welch from GE and Lou Gerstner from IBM became icons, embodying the qualities necessary to win in the new brave world of global competition. Acclaimed, they were promoted by the media as role models for Brazilian managers. While economic reforms moved forward and companies looked for innovation and new management tools, a new mood became hegemonic, nourishing neo-liberalism and managerialism.

In this process, the business press had three interconnected roles: firstly, the business press disseminated and thus helped popularize the new mood, publishing texts about "the new business environment," "the company of the future," and the "new manager"; secondly, through these articles and essays, the business press helped legitimize neo-liberalism and managerialism making its concepts and practices part of a mandatory process and a natural evolution for the Brazilian economy; and thirdly, the business press provided icons for both individuals and companies. These icons purportedly embodied new values of Brazilian capitalism and served as role models.

Of course, the pop-management press was not alone in this process. Book publishers, business schools, and consulting firms had a similar and complementary role.

On the front line, a legion of entrepreneurs was created. Many were, in fact, "entrepreneurs by necessity,"—professionals who lost their jobs during the privatization process or due to the implementation of reengineering and downsizing projects in local companies. Being a franchisee of a world-class brand became a dream for many impoverished middle class professionals. They were later joined by an uprising working class that emerged from shantytowns in the outskirts of Brazil's big cities and established themselves in all sorts of small businesses. Meanwhile, pushed by competition, companies promoted corporate entrepreneurship as a solution for their ills. They invested heavily in training their personnel, hired individuals aligned with the new credo, implemented new management practices, and tried to change what they considered to be an old fashioned corporate culture.

The year 2000 might be considered the zenith of this movement. Externally, successive global financial crises adversely affected the Brazilian economy, making neo-liberal policies less popular. Internally, although adopting neo-liberal policies helped control inflation and stabilized prices, it also destabilized public finances and had social implications, increasing unemployment and worsening the already pitiable income distribution. Consequently, support for reforms diminished and the political left, commanded by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva from the Workers Party, became a dominant force in national politics.

In the business realm, the year 2000 was also a turning point. The successive scandals involving multinational companies and the Internet bubble diminished peoples' confidence in the private sector. Simultaneously, the deceleration of privatization and economic improvements of local companies reduced the quest for new management tools. At the same time, managers became more critical of fads and fashions. Consequently, consultants and gurus lost their shine.

Method

To this point, we have presented an historical context for the increasing influence of the pop management literature. Here, we briefly present the four magazines we studied: *Exame*, *Você S.A.*, *HSM Management*, and *Harvard Business Review*. In doing so, we hope to provide readers, especially non-Brazilian readers, with basic information about our subject of study. We also present symbolic convergence theory (Bormann, 1983), fantasy theme analysis (Bormann, 1972), as well as the associate concept of master analogue (see Cragan & Shields, 1992). This inquiry approach is at the core of our study.

The Four Magazines

We examined editorial lines and websites of the four magazines and conducted semistructured interviews with editors and staff journalists from *Exame* and *Você S.A. HSM Management* declined our invitation for interviews because of its internal confidentiality guidelines, and *Harvard Business Review* directed us to check its editorial guidelines and general information, available on its website.

Exame was the first business magazine created in Brazil (in 1968) and, at the time of this study, was still the most popular. In 2000, it had a circulation above 200,000 per issue (mainly subscribers), and had 40 employees. The two editors were economics graduates. There were also business and law graduates among the collaborators, but most were from journalism programs. *Exame* seeks to anticipate economic, social, and management trends. It also tries to provide an original view of relevant topics for its corporate audience, contributing to the debate on domestic economy, business strategies, and modern management methods.

According to interviewees, journalists had to adopt the "discipline of novelty," that is, to pursue that which no one had previously investigated. For one of the editors, the business media had a strong influence on the introduction, diffusion, and dissemination of emerging topics. According to another interviewee, journalists must mingle extensively and develop contacts. For him, stories arise not chiefly from interviews, but from within the business environment. Aside from managers, the magazine's main sources for their stories are consulting firms, management books, and foreign magazines (e.g., *Fortune*, *BusinessWeek*, and *FastCompany*).

Você S.A. appeared in 1998 as an extension of *Exame* magazine. It was observed that when *Exame* dealt with career management and professional qualifications, newsstand sales rose. Subsequently, three or four cover stories were released dealing with this topic. One of them was titled "Você S.A." (which translates as "You, Inc."). This issue sold out at newsstands, giving rise to a best selling magazine from its inception. *Você S.A.* rapidly became number one for career and human resources management, with a circulation just below 200,000 per issue in the year 2000, mostly in newsstands.

The *Você S.A.* team was made up of 11 journalists in 2000. According to the chief editor, since the team did not specialize in management, it made heavy use of reference manuals in addition to summarized easy-reading

texts. Interviews with experts filled knowledge gaps. The content of the magazine drew from several sources: foreign magazines, books, newspaper stories, TV, and talks with specialists, consultants, and researchers.

Você S.A. is written in a rather informal way as it presents mostly itemized lists and explanatory boxes along with humorous images and photos. As for its editorial line, *Você S.A.* is individual-oriented. According to its editors, the magazine's success relates to its profile as a self-help instrument within a context in which people search for standards of effective professional behaviour.

HSM Management was created in 1997 by an events promotion firm specializing in seminars with management gurus. The magazine has been quite successful in securing paid subscriptions, owing to the continuous flow of stories featuring the likes of Michael Porter, Stephen Covey, Philip Kotler, and Richard Whiteley. Its content is comprised of articles translated and adapted from publications such as *Harvard Business Review*, *Sloan Management Review*, *Fast Company*, and *The McKinsey Quarterly*, among others. Each issue carries a dossier on an emerging topic and a selection of articles that address different topics of management.

HSM Management is a niche player, heavily inspired by *Harvard Business Review*. In 2000, its circulation was estimated at 50,000 per issue and was distributed to subscribers and to participants in events promoted by HSM, its parent company. In the late 1990s, HSM and *HSM Management* became references for new management ideas.

Harvard Business Review was included in our survey even though it was not published locally at the time. Its inclusion in our survey was justified by its importance and its popularity in the Brazilian corporate world. In the 1990s, companies, consultants, and executives subscribed to Harvard Business Review, and the most popular articles of each issue were copied, disseminated, and discussed. It was released in 1922 and proposes to offer what is most significant in management thinking—best practices, case studies, and leader profiles—introducing readers to new ideas that may help them create, conduct, and change their business. The magazine is one of the leading publications by Harvard Business School Publishing, whose mission is "to improve the practice of management and its impact on a changing world" (Harvard Business Publications, 2008). From this starting point, the publishers proposed to create products and services targeting their customers. In this sense the magazine attempts to publish the ideas of notable experts that can positively impact businesses beyond the short-term.

The publishers count among their prominent authors members of the Harvard Business School, including Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1984), John P. Kotter (1988), and Michael Porter (1985). The magazine also publishes works by such "management thinkers" as Arie de Geus (1997), Charles Handy (1995), and Gary Hamel (2002).

The articles are prepared by the editors or by consultants, professors, executives, and management thinkers, all in close collaboration with the editors. The graphic design combines elements of academic publications and popular business magazines. The text offers highlights, illustrations, tables, charts, and text boxes of additional information.

Symbolic Convergence Theory

To assess publication content, we applied fantasy theme analysis (Bormann, 1972), which is based on symbolic convergence theory (Bormann, 1983). Symbolic convergence theory has three characteristics: firstly, it deals with the identification and arrangement of communicative practices into structured patterns that demonstrate the evolution of shared meanings; secondly, it describes the dynamic tendencies that explain why these communicative practices take place; and thirdly, it includes the factors that explain why people share their fantasies (Bormann, 1983, p. 101).

Fantasies, or fantasy themes, are stories that contain emotion, and may refer to events from a group member's past, or to events that may occur in the future. A fantasy theme, in this sense, is not something imaginary, but is rather a term that relates to the way groups or communities make sense of their experience and create social reality.

Convergence refers to "the way two or more private symbolic worlds incline toward each other, come close together, or even overlap during certain processes of communication" (Bormann, 1983, p. 102). When individuals or groups have their symbolic worlds overlapped, they share a common consciousness and meaning, thereby providing a basis for exchange of ideas, and mutual understanding. Thus, convergence is created through the dynamic sharing of fantasies. These fantasies can clarify and enhance the attractiveness of the future.

For example, suppose that a task-force in a Canadian company is having a stressful discussion about changes in the organizational structure. Then, one of the members of the team brings up the idea for the creation of a new department. She is not expressing a fantasy, but simply discussing the work in focus. Nevertheless, she mentions the concept of *e-business*, a fantasy theme, something futuristic, that may, or may not, occur in the future. Following that, a fantasy chain reaction takes place, in response to the initial fantasy, as other members of the team express their interpretations and feelings about the concept. Other fantasies emerge, common ground is progressively established, and convergence grows.

Fantasy Theme Analysis

Fantasy theme analysis, which is still used in a very limited way in organizational studies (e.g., Jackson, 1999; 2000; 2001), is a method of rhetorical criticism of social reality that was developed in the 1970s by Bormann (1972; 1983) and his associates. Rhetoric criticism investigates symbolic artifacts such as texts, phrases, images, performances, and discourse in general. Bormann and his group were dedicated to understanding "how and why certain types of messages excite widespread public attention on sporadic and cyclical bases" (Jackson, 2001, p. 44).

A fantasy theme is manifested within a group by a word, sentence, or statement according to which past facts, future events, or things dislocated in space and time are interpreted. Unlike human experience, which is naturally chaotic and fragmentary, a fantasy theme is organized, has its own logic and contains dramatic qualities (Jackson, 2001, p. 49). As a result, it can be very attractive to individuals and groups attempting to rationalize and explain the processes of the experience.

As a method, fantasy theme analysis is openly subjective and clearly depends on the researchers, what they may be pursuing, what they know, and how this knowledge is applied to the interpretative process. This analysis uses a systemic (not a systematic) approach, considering context, actors, and messages. The subject is not analyzed in any structured manner. In sum, fantasy theme analysis is a qualitative method and, as such, seeks to discern meanings through descriptions and interpretations. This is done by identifying a series of constructs that we define and exemplify below.

The key constructs of fantasy theme analysis used in this study were taken from the existing literature (Borman, 1972; 1983; Jackson, 1999; 2000; 2001). *Fantasy theme* is a dramatizing message in which characters enact an incident or a series of incidents other than the here and now of the people involved in the communication episode (e.g., e-business). *Symbolic cue* is a code word, phrase or slogan that triggers previously shared fantasies and emotions (e.g., dot-com firm). *Legitimacy actors* are the characters that promote and give authority to the fantasy themes and symbolic cues (e.g., Peter Drucker, the management guru). *Dramatic characters* are the characters depicted in messages that give life to a rhetorical vision (e.g., the change agent). *Sagas* are oft-repeated telling of the achievement in the life of a person, group, community, organization, or nation (e.g., the gospel according to Dell). *Rhetorical vision* is a composite drama that catches up large groups of people into a common symbolic reality (e.g., the new economy). *Rhetoric communities* are groups of individuals who share a common symbolic ground by participating in a rhetorical vision (e.g., consulting firms and their clients). *Scenes* are the location of the action within the rhetorical vision (e.g., the virtual world of the Internet).

Fantasy themes feed and reinforce these other constructs. If the resulting set is interconnected and cohesive, it can lead to a rhetorical vision. As individuals attempt to understand and give meaning to their reality and experiences, they connect with fantasies of other groups that are occasionally disseminated by means of communication (Jackson, 2001). Following our previous example, another task-force in a Brazilian company may also be attracted by the concept of *e-business*, as mentioned by a North American guru in an interview to an international business magazine in which he refers to a Canadian firm that implemented the concept. If a fantasy theme is attractive enough (i.e., it resonates with the group's emotions and feelings), it is adopted to help interpret reality, gaining the status of world vision. This consolidates a rhetorical vision, which has an established action site (scene) and is supported by a rhetoric community made up of groups of individuals who share fantasy themes and discourses. (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.
Fantasy theme analysis and its constructs
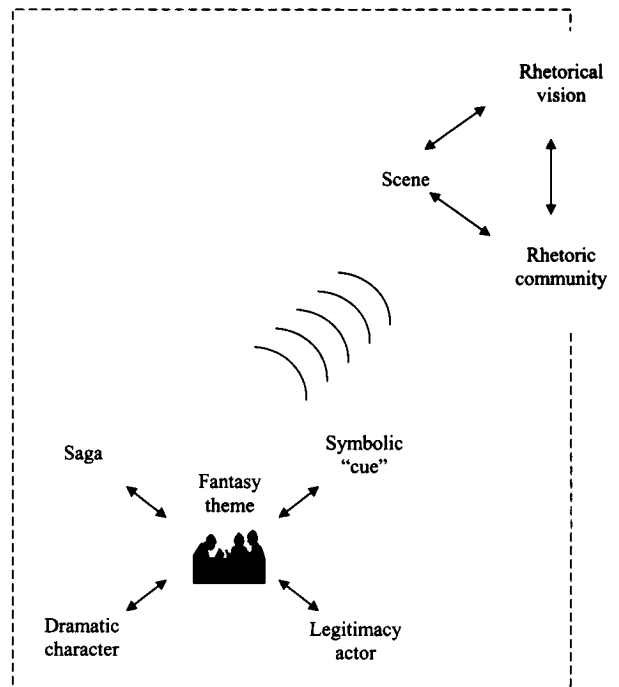
Underlying Master Analogues

Bormann (1972) noticed that the rhetorical visions "will generally reflect a deep structure that is embedded in one of three master analogues: the *righteous*, *social*, or *pragmatic*" (Jackson, 2000, p. 203). A rhetorical vision based on the *righteous master analogue* establishes the right way of doing things and deals with polarized notions of right and wrong, good and bad, superior and inferior. A rhetorical vision based on the *social master analogue* reflects human values such as friendship, caring, trust, and camaraderie. A rhetorical vision based on the *pragmatic master analogue* emphasizes utility, practicality, and effectiveness (Cragan & Shields, 1992, p. 202).

For instance, Jackson (2000) argued that Peter Senge's altruistic vision of the *learning organization* (Senge, 1990) relates to the social master analogue, since it resonates with individuals that believe that organizations have a social mission and that businesses need to contribute to a better world. On the other hand, Michael Hammer's vision of *reengineering* (Hammer & Champy,

2003) relates to the righteous master analogue, since it tells managers that they have no alternative to reengineering their companies. By the same token, Stephen Covey's vision—the "seven habits of highly effective people" (Covey, 1989)—relates to the pragmatic master analogue, since it prescribes the right thing to do.

Results

Fantasy Theme Analysis

The survey dealt with articles and stories published by the four selected magazines in 2000. In this analysis, we used the constructs and master analogues discussed in the previous section. Table 1 shows examples of the fantasy theme analysis constructs identified in the four magazines.

Fantasy themes. Considering the articles analyzed, there is a remarkable presence of topics dealing with organizational change, interorganizational cooperation, and transformation through the use of information

Table 1
Fantasy Theme Analysis: Examples

Fantasy themes	Symbolic cues	Legitimacy actors	Dramatic characters
• Corporate metamorphosis • Information revolution • Communities of practice • Syndication • CRM—Customer Relationship Management • ERP—Enterprise Resource Planning • Balance Scorecard • B-to-B • B-to-C • E-business	• Build to last • Corporate DNA • Dot-com firms • The Internet and the reinvention of business • Learning to learn • Managing the crisis • Entrepreneur of the year • The masters of the future • You were born to shine • Your job in the future • You are a brand	• Brazilian and foreign management gurus: Peter Senge, Tom Peters, Peter Drucker, Stephen Covey, C.K. Prahalad, Roberto Shinyashiki • Specialists (consultants, professors, businesspeople, and executives): Jorge Gerdau (Gerdau Steel), Duck Jager (Procter & Gamble), Nenê Constantino (Gol Airlines), Noel Tichy (Michigan University), Henry Mintzberg (McGill University)	• The consultant • The Brazilian businessperson who achieved success in the global economy • The headhunter • The hero executive • The visionary leader • The professional • The change agent • The corporate prophet • You, Inc.

Sagas	Rhetoric visions	Rhetoric communities	Scenes
• The gospel according to Dell • Jack Welch's practical handbook • Lou Gerstner and the rescue of IBM • Carlos Ghosn resuscitates Nissan • The Unilever trainee program	• The new economy • The age of knowledge • Flexible companies • Customer-driven companies • Professionals in charge of their careers	• Consulting firms and their clients • Business schools and their alumni • Professional associations and their members • Events' firms and their public	• The global economy • The global labour market • The global business • The virtual world of the Internet • The marketplace or the market-space

technologies. Three elements appear to be common to all of these topics: (a) novelty, (b) an imperative tone, and (c) a prescriptive character. The message is repeated with a sense of urgency that we could summarize in the following way: "The world is changing, you cannot stay behind, and here is the path to success."

Symbolic cues. The analysis uncovered an abundance of commonalities, clichés, and slogans. In the four magazines, symbolic cues were associated with rhetorical visions and carried messages concerning: (a) a new, changing, and challenging business reality; (b) the need for firms to respond by investing in information technology; and (c) the inevitability of individuals becoming brands. Sample expressions are *e-loyalty*, *built to last*, and *You, Inc.* The latter is a very successful symbolic cue that gathers a broad range of meanings such as autonomy, control over one's own fate, personal development, professionalism, excellence, and success.

Legitimacy actors. Two main groups were identified: (a) management gurus, with an increasing presence of Brazilian names; and (b) experts, such as businesspersons, executives, professors, and consultants, names of whom are almost always buttressed by institutional affiliations. Among foreigners, privileged space is given to renowned names such as Peter Drucker (1993), Tom Peters (1999), and Stephen Covey (1989).

Dramatic characters. Our analysis revealed, with few exceptions, successful professionals that have been able to overcome major challenges. Chief among these is the hero manager. Other noteworthy dramatic characters are specialized advisors such as consultants, professors and headhunters, who can shed light on a complex problem and offer simple solutions, and *You, Inc.*, an autonomous agent that runs him or herself as an enterprise. We also observed that some dramatic characters are directly connected to sagas, like Carlos Ghosn (see Magee, 2003; Vassalo, 2000) and Jorge Gerdau Johannpeter (see Caixeta, 2000).

Sagas. In the selected material, many articles dealt with new, successful business models, the victorious paths tread by great executives, and rebirth stories. It is worth mentioning the case of Jack Nasser, the hero during the transformation stage at Ford, who was later fired for failing to achieve goals (see Vassalo, 2001). The attention given to Brazilian heroes is also noteworthy: they are perceived as super managers who, much like sports celebrities, achieve international success.

Rhetorical vision. In 2000, the highlights were concepts concerning a new business environment with (supposedly) new rules to govern economics. In this new environment, successful companies had to adapt and professionals had to be masters of their own fates, operating as autonomous entities.

Rhetoric communities. We identified the following actors and categories that make up the management industry: consulting firms, business schools, professional associations, and event promotion firms. We noted that these are heterogeneous, permeable communities that interact among themselves, giving rise to intercommunity entities. This interaction influences the propagation, adoption, and legitimacy of fantasy themes and rhetorical visions.

Scenes. Our analysis revealed that the scenes are consistent with the above topics. Management is enacted on a global stage, with international companies that operate virtually and with *global professionals*. Often used examples are *the new economy* and *the virtual marketplace*. These scenes are rarely discussed. They appear as objective realities that constrain the action of economic actors, business actors, and individuals.

Comments. In analyzing Table 1, our attention was drawn to the many fantasy themes, rhetorical visions, sagas, and dramatic characters. We can hypothesize that the market opportunities created for new management expertise in consulting projects, books, education, and seminars draw a large number of symbolic producers (professors, consultants, executives, and journalists), with a broad array of management perspectives. We can also hypothesize that there is a competitive context in which these symbolic producers struggle for a share of the market for management ideas. This leads to a constant renovation (or recycling) of the constructs.

Our attention was also drawn to the homogeneity and consistency of the whole. All of the constructs are pervaded by a single ontological perspective, that is, a single discourse referential expressed by management culture as described in the beginning of this paper.

Prevalent Master Analogues

As for the three master analogues—righteous, social, and pragmatic—we concluded that the four magazines are homogeneous, privileging the first and third master analogues. As we have mentioned, the righteous master analogue prescribes the right way of doing things. This normative approach has a strong presence throughout the analyzed material. Both in publications with heavier academic influence such as *Harvard Business Review* and *HSM Management* as in journalistic ones such as *Exame* and *Você S.A.*, there is a remarkable presence of polarized conceptions of right and wrong, good and bad, superior and inferior. Very often, these ideas are accompanied by the adjective "old" (always with negative tones) and "new" (always with positive tones).

The social master analogue reflects human values like trust, kinship, camaraderie, and so on. This analogue has less of a presence than the other two. When it manifests itself, it usually does so instrumentally. For example, "Your MBA colleagues can help you find a new job," "cooperation with colleagues can help you advance your career," or "a good relationship with your boss helps open doors."

On the other hand, the pragmatic master analogue, which emphasizes utility, practicality, and effectiveness, serves as a backdrop for nearly all of the material we analyzed. In general, this analogue can be summarized as follows: "We exist in a free market system (a victorious, irreversible system), where firms need to pursue constant renovation to survive and remain competitive, and employees must think and behave like entrepreneurs."

Discussion

We defined two objectives for this study: the first was to identify patterns in the contents disseminated by pop-management literature and the second was to analyze how the Brazilian culture mediates the assimilation of managerial ideas and expertise disseminated by business magazines by local managers. In this section, we draw our conclusions about the results of the fantasy theme analysis and discuss the "production system" behind the contents of the four business magazines. After that we move to our second objective in order to discuss the "consumer side."

Conclusions from the Fantasy Theme Analysis

This paper reflects the growing interest of management scholars in understanding the business press and pop-management literature (e.g., Kjaer & Langer, 2005; Kostera, 2003; Mazza & Pedersen, 2004; Vaara & Tienari, 2002). The business press contributes to the dissemination of managerial discourse while at the same time consolidates its acceptance at the social level (see Bendix, 1956; Mazza & Alvarez, 2000; Pattison, 1997). As observed by Runté and Mills (2006, p. 697), "discourses frame and influence people's understandings of the world and thus guide their behaviors."

Our field research revealed that the content created and disseminated by the four magazines is characterized by a utilitarian view of the world with homogeneous points of view on the economy, on firms, and on individuals. This perspective assumes that we live and work in a global economy molded by new technologies in which firms must be flexible and customer-driven, and individuals must be like brands and in charge of their own careers. This perspective also takes for granted that the world is changing at an incredible pace. Fortunately, we can count on formidable experts—the management gurus, the consultants, and the hero-managers—who will teach us the best practices and help us to survive and prosper. This perspective is characterized by a prescriptive tone in which the right thing to do (the righteous master analogue) is always indicated. Utility, practicality, and effectiveness (the pragmatic master analogue) always come first. These conceptions are consistent with those that permeate managerialism and the management culture, as expressed in a previous section.

We may consequently hypothesize two impacts caused by the business press. Firstly, the business media contributes to the creation and constant modification of a socially constructed reality. It thus assists in building a world view and helps form the lexicon that supports it in addition to identifying problems and critical issues and pointing out solutions. The popular business media assume and disseminate, with low levels of reflection and criticism, values of right and wrong, good and bad, modern and outdated. In doing so, the popular business media act as a diffusion agent of neo-liberalism and managerialism.

Secondly, the business media play a relevant role in the appreciation and dissemination of new managerial ideas and practices with emphasis on those that are imported—in almost all cases from the United States. The popular business media support the legitimization of these practices, assigning them the status of "the right thing to do." The popular business media also play a relevant role in the "theatricalization" of business reality: it provides (limited) alternatives for scenes, roles, scripts, and characters, and also sets parameters for the assessment of the dramatized behaviours. This process takes place jointly with promotion by other legitimacy agents: professors, consultants, gurus, and executives. As we will show below, the popular business press' magazines have a participatory character. Readers, consultants, managers, as well as editors and staff writers constitute a community of discourse, which, one may argue, has an influence in the content of the magazines.

In sum, based on the four magazines we studied, we conclude that the business press disseminates homogeneous and standardized contents. They consequently introduce the elements that make up a cultural industry (e.g., Gritti, 1967; Horkheimer & Adorno, 1985; Rüdiger, 1999; Strinati, 1999).

The Participatory Nature of the Business Press

Exame and *Você S.A.* both have a participatory character. Staff reporters and editors are immersed in the

corporate world. They meet constantly with managers, consultants, headhunters, and faculty members. These magazines, as well as *HSM Management*, regularly promote seminars and events aimed at the business community, which facilitates these contacts. For instance, *Exame* organizes "Exame's Maiores e Melhores," an annual listing of the top companies operating in Brazil (comparable to the original Forbes 500). Once a year, the magazine promotes a night extravaganza in which top executives receive prizes for their companies' performance. *Você S.A.* annually publishes a "best place to work" list that draws the attention of hundreds of human resources managers, consultants, and other professionals. Brazilian companies frequently use the list to evaluate their own practices and to make improvements. All of this leads to the continuous development of a national community of staff reporters, editors, guest writers, and readers. Each magazine thus constitutes a *community of discourse* (Korinek, 2000, p. 8).

In fact, readers, to some degree, influence the magazines' content. They help define themes as they interact with the journalists. Readers may not be seen as passive consumers. They are active participants in the construction of meaning. For example, at *Exame* and *Você S.A.*, consultants, executives, and headhunters are frequently invited to collaborate. In fact, some of them become regular columnists. At *Você S.A.*, letters from readers are carefully analyzed and are used to help editors find themes to be addressed in the magazine. Of course, all content must be in-line with editorial guidelines, which include implicit principles related to neo-liberalism and managerialism.

On the other hand, it is fascinating to observe that, for many readers, reading is an act of rebellion, as these magazines offer ideas and practices that represent a challenge to the present status quo in their workplaces. For instance, for some scholars, the book "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" (Covey, 1989) may sound superficial and faddish, but its ideas may be considered nothing less than a revolution in several corporate settings. By the same token, popular concepts such as empowerment, coaching, and mentoring may be seen as truly innovative in some highly hierarchical, old-fashioned Brazilian state companies. One must also consider that participating in the *Você S.A.* community, for example, may represent an escape, as it creates a locus within which professionals can exchange ideas and concerns with their peers, therefore providing a release from pressures and problems of their jobs.

In sum, pop-management literature provides an environment and a community of discourse (Korinek, 2000, p. 8) that encourages readers to re-create themselves as new managers who are aligned with the general principles of neo-liberalism, managerialism, and management culture. All of this highlights the paradoxical nature of pop-management literature, its being at once a vehicle for disseminating conservative ideas and an agent for change.

Brazilian Culture and Management Culture

How does the Brazilian culture mediate the assimilation of managerial ideas and expertise disseminated by business magazines. Based on previous studies (Caldas & Wood, 1997; Wood & Caldas, 1998; 2002) and our own personal experiences, we seek to draw some conclusions. Firstly, we briefly comment on two traits of the Brazilian culture and following that we seek to use these traits to explain Brazilian managers' reactions to managerialism and the management culture.

Brazilian studies have attempted to portray local organizational culture through cultural traits (e.g., Aidar, Brizola, Motta, & Wood, 1995; Barros & Prates, 1996; Motta & Caldas, 1997), two of which are relevant for the present study: *plasticity* and *formalism*. Plasticity has its roots in the country's colonization process, and manifests itself in the easy assimilation of foreign practices and customs, including the uncritical assimilation of imported managerial expertise. In many cases, this led to lip-service behaviours where organizations apparently or partially adopted a new managerial technique, while operations continued to be managed as before. Formalism relates to attachment to laws and rules, albeit ambiguous, as such attachment is frequently shown in façade behaviours.

Taken together, plasticity and formalism help to understand how Brazilians react to economic and managerial ideas coming from abroad. For instance, based on a field survey, Wood and Caldas (2002) identified three typical reactions to imported managerial expertise: the first is *denial*, where the expertise is considered unfit for local conditions; the second is *ceremonial behaviour*, which consists of temporarily or partially adopting new ideas and methods without making substantive changes; and the third is *creative adaptation*, when the expertise is analyzed and adapted to local conditions.

In another empirical study, Ateliê de Pesquisa Organizacional (2006), a consulting and research firm, conducted a series of focus groups with middle managers to evaluate how these professionals related to popular management books. Participants declared that the books played an important role, providing answers to questions related to human resources management and professional development. The books also created new perspectives about organizational challenges and provided guidelines for actions. Based on their findings, the authors divided

participants into five categories: firstly, the *religious*, who read popular management books frequently, use them as handbooks, and try to convince colleagues and friends of the high value of their contents; secondly, the *selective*, who select readings according to themes and understand that only part of the material will be really useful; thirdly, the *unassuming*, who read popular management books but acknowledge the prejudices against this kind of literature and avoid exposing themselves to critique; fourthly, the *complacent*, who consider popular management books to be unconvincing and trivial, but who nevertheless accept them and defend their readers; and fifthly, the *skeptical*, who are very critical of popular management books and their readers, and believe that these books are useless. Many readers in the first and the second groups declared that their professional training and development were based solely on popular management books.

These findings are similar to those from Hancock and Tyler (2004, p. 637), who concluded that "readership responses to lifestyle magazines...can broadly be understood as *affirmative, ambivalent, critical* or *confessional*." Several respondents to their study acknowledged the influence of lifestyle magazines as cultural authorities in their lives. Similarly, several respondents to the Brazilian study (Ateliê de Pesquisa Organizacional, 2006) declared that they use popular management books as references for decisions. Both studies also found ambivalent responses and critical responses to lifestyle magazines and popular management books.

One can consequently conclude that the influence of management culture over organizational life and everyday life in Brazil is, at first sight, similar to other countries. Nevertheless, on a deeper level, this influence may be mediated by the cultural traits of plasticity and formalism, mentioned above. While plasticity and a certain fascination with foreign ideas facilitate the dissemination of management culture, formalism generates ceremonial behaviour and facilitates the use of impression management techniques (Giacalone & Rosenfeld, 1991). Brazilian managers listen with attention to North American gurus. They buy their books, read their articles, and even discuss their ideas. But when it comes to applying their models, Brazilian managers behave ceremonially. For instance, during the reengineering rage, many Brazilian firms declared to have adopted the "business revolution" proposed by Hammer and Champy (2003). However, many implementation projects had a very limited scope, dealing with minor business processes (see Caldas & Wood, 1997). Significantly, there is a popular saying that "Brazil is not for beginners." For casual foreign observers, the country may appear to have fully adopted management culture, but behind the façade lays a complex, ambiguous hybrid with an ever-changing set of values and behaviours.

Conclusion

Contributions to Scholarship

We believe our study contributes to scholarship in the following ways: firstly, we showed through the lens of fantasy theme analysis and symbolic convergence theory that the four magazines present a single discourse referential; secondly, we concluded that this discourse is directly linked to managerialism and the management culture; and thirdly, we showed how the Brazilian culture mediates the absorption of the management culture (i.e., the way ideas and expertise that originated in the United States are assimilated in Brazil).

This study extended the past literature in that it shows *how* the business media echoes economic trends and acts as an agency promoting certain ideas, reinforcing beliefs, and promoting perceptions of social reality (Ainamo et al., 2006; Chen & Meindl, 1991); it sums up the understanding of *how* the audience reacts to pop-management literature (Furusten, 1999; Hancock & Tyler, 2004; Mazza & Alvarez, 2000); and finally, in terms of method, it provides further evidence and demonstrates *how* fantasy theme analysis and symbolic convergence theory may constitute a valuable approach to study organizational phenomena (Jackson, 1999; 2000; 2001).

Applied Implications

From our findings, one could speculate that the popular business press may be fostering a world of make-believe characterized by reductionism and the tendency to reduce the complex to the simple. Promoting change as a fetish, urging for adherence to managerialism, and uncritically popularizing fads and fashions, the popular business press may be crafting a distorted lens through which organizations understand their environment, identify their problems, choose priorities, and establish courses of action. This may provide a disservice to organizations and a dangerous distraction for the improvement of management practices, in a sense that inhibits the use of more critical perspectives for diagnosis and better informed approaches to action.

For individuals, pop-media may represent a true threat. The growing presence of ideals and values from managerialism in the organizational and the everyday life that comes with the promotion of a "Brand Called You" (Peters, 1999) may affect the individuals' ability to search

for their sense of self through genuine intersubjective social relations (see Hancock & Tyler, 2004, p. 640).

In short, our findings suggest that consumers of pop-management media—managers, consultants, students, and other readers—should act more carefully in choosing their readings, or at least should be more critical in grasping their contents. Indeed, educators in business schools could provide a good service to future managers, organizations, and society in nurturing critical thinking skills and challenging more frequently the status quo (see Perriton & Reynolds, 2004).

Limitations and Future Research Directions

We regard this paper as an introductory piece with several limitations in terms of scope and subject that provide avenues for future research. A first possibility to expand upon the present research is to include other business magazines, books, and electronic publications. Such an extension of the work would create a richer portrait of pop-management literature. In fact, one may argue that other business outlets, such as *The Economist* and *The Wall Street Journal* carry articles that are frequently critical to business leaders and firms. On the other hand, *The Economist* regularly flirts with management gurus and both publications take economic liberalism and (less visibly) managerialism for granted. A second possibility is to make comparative studies among countries, focusing on how the local culture mediates contents. A third possibility is to more deeply investigate the demand side, listening to pop-management literature readers and examining the impact this literature has on individuals and organizations. Such a possibility would probably demand an ethnographic approach in order to investigate how managers and other professionals get in contact with pop-management literature, how they assimilate and interpret its contents, and how they apply specific concepts and methods in their work life.

We believe that the management industry is not only interesting for research purposes but that it stands as a symbol of the *l'esprit du temps*. It is also a relevant phenomenon, marked by paradox and ambiguity that significantly affects individuals, organizations, and society as a whole.

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