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Re-storying dairying: deliberating on the impressions being left by 'the elephant in the paddock'

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Abstract

Dairy Farming is Big Business in New Zealand. The New Zealand Dairy Industry contributes significantly to the manufacture, trade, and consumption of dairy products the world over. This industry is deeply implicated in the intensifying trajectory of globalization, a form of order euphemistically referred to as 'global development'. Critics attribute significant social and environmental degradation to this trajectory. Stories about corporate responsibility are attractive to those business students willing to include ethical standpoints in their considerations. Through a [re]telling of the influence of dairy-farming on the wellbeing of New Zealanders we suggest that such stories may be better read as channels of influence that perpetuate elite interests. Our analysis is generated from our schooling in Critical Management Studies. From this orientation, dominant stories are often presented as almost totally closed and hegemonic. But they can never be fully so. Paradox and contradictions can always be located within and across such stories. Our essay is a story about dairying that illuminates such paradox and contradiction. It is written to draw our gaze to the dangerous degradations of systemic outcomes on the quality of life for diverse stakeholders. We call for change. Our professional realms of influence include the spheres of management education. It is here we are placing our focus. We invite the telling of more diverse stories that may engender more generative futures than the seemingly entrenched trajectory that intensifies systemic benefits to an elite at the expense to others and exacerbates environmental degradation to the detriment of all. We invite engagement with stories that might place a different bet on the future (Boje, 2014).

Introduction

Beyond the tidy logic of theme taxonomy
is the messy plenitude of storytelling.
This is a narrating space where
the economy runs on stories
not analysis (Boje, 2001)

There is growing agreement that the prevailing form of economic development intensifying globally is exacerbating social disparities and environmental degradation the world over. Prominent among such critics are Branson (2011), Kelsey (2002), Klein (2014), Korten (2009), Picketty (2014), Shiva (2008), and Stiglitz (2010) to name but some. The most self-serving justifications of the inequalities and disparities of outcomes of this form of economic order(ing) are generated from narrow readings of free market stories about the self-actualising individuals who compete on a supposedly open and level market. The unequal outcomes of this competition are deemed to demonstrate merit - the just rewards of investments made and efforts committed. Where levels of disparities are deemed a matter for concern, the dominant remedy is to encourage those with less to apply themselves more fully to the disciplines of the market – a market that critics suggest is driven and controlled by corporate interests intrinsically woven into the generation of exacerbating social disparities and intensifying environmental degradation. This perpetuation of a doctrine of self-interest serving the common good is also to be found in the stories of corporate mandates for the expansion of their social and environmental responsibilities. To critics of this form of ordering our human endeavours, the prevailing form of global development based on stories of collective wellbeing to be achieved through individual investments and efforts applied through markets generates a paradox. More moderate advocates for the corporate form of this ordering suggest that it is through the incorporation of stakeholder interests (including those of workers, investors, and consumers) who act freely through their engagement with open markets, that the most efficient methods of production will emerge and thus just and environmentally restorative outcomes will be determined. Critics of this position respond to such market endorsing stories by arguing that, regardless of the assimilation of the interests of a select group of favoured stakeholders, large corporations continue to serve an elite (Fleming & Jones, 2013). Concerns about and responsibilities for the condition of humanity and the state of the planet are increasingly driven by the recognition of our common dependence on each other and on Earth who sustains all life (Williams, Roberts, & McIntosh, 2012). We suggest the values and interests of a privileged elite override this interdependence and are hiding in plain sight. This hidden privilege can be exposed by telling different stories. Boje (2001) urges us to tell the stories that are often erased from dominant narratives.

If a contribution to justice is to reach beyond the banality of market generated evil, ‘The Corporation’ may be better characterised as the personal chariot of corporate interests increasingly named as ‘the greedy’ (Al Jazeera, 2011). That is our story anyhow! But our story does not stop there. We feel unsettled by the injustices our own stories expose. Our attention to our discomfort draws us to the work of Bauman and Donskis (2013). They urge us to hold our gaze on our very discomfort for longer - an ethical gaze that may illuminate a place to act for justice. Building on Boje (2014) we wish to contribute to a different bet on the future.

A quest to justice

Our quest into justice is generated from our perceptions of the intensification of inequality that we articulate as an unfair systemic distribution of resources among and within nations, communities, families and individuals. It seems to us that in the face of much suffering caused by irresponsible shaping and management of trade and exchange, there is much morally amiss with the system of global development. Striking for us is the example that “criminal and regulatory probes cost JP Morgan more than [US]\$23 billion in settlements during 2013” (Moore & Son, 2014, p. para 3). Despite this significant evidence of less than desirable corporate practice, the CEO received a 74% pay raise resulting in a total compensation package of over US\$20 million (op cit, para 1). The JP Morgan debacle is an extreme case. There were more

such (Gibney, 2005). These extreme cases are attracting public attention, widespread disapproval and in some cases, significant penalties where illegal activity can be proven. But the proof of (il)legality of the actions of particular corporate executives seems a shallow guide for ethical consideration of this system of wealth creation and distribution considered as a whole. These executives cannot act alone. They have many servants. The servants have many helpers. Some may serve their masters in sincere dedication - blind to evil of the system that they serve. Others may see evil but remain silent. Most of us are dependent to some degree on the prevailing system of production and consumption and thus we are all implicated in its direction, maintenance or change.

Voices of discontent about the dominating form of global development and its associated regional, local and personal impacts are amplifying. The call of the Occupy Movement that gathered global pace and visibility with its audacious Occupy Wall Street occupation of Zuccotti Park in New York struck a chord among many communities and helped generate wider interest in the discussions among technical specialists across the globe. Their claims about gross disparities were given substance by Credit Suisse for example. They reported that 68% of the world's population controls just 3% of the world's wealth and conversely, less than 1% of the world's adult population control roughly 41% of the world's wealth (Weisenthal, 2013). That a small proportion of the population should be able to attract and retain for their discretionary use the volume of recorded wealth seems to us to be a travesty of justice. This tolerance of such vast disparities invites us to look more critically at what passes for justice in the mode of development intensifying globally. We find different stories about what it is to be considered good, ethical or just. These diverse stories generate various criteria for justice such as fairness (Rawls, 1999), need, equity and/or efficiency (Konow, 2001), political and social equilibrium, equality, and a common humanity (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999). In the search for explanations, justifications or remedies for the disparities and degradations we are concerned with, there are stories of heroes and dragons (Boje, 2014). How, and when, we are cast as heroes, or dragons, by whom, and with what consequences are stories worthy of reflection – as all kinds of criminalized protestors of the Occupy Movement, the Wiki Leaders and whistle blowers well know.

For a contribution to a more critical engagement with the day-to-day functional enabling of a system of global development that damages, alienates and sometimes kills, we reflect on who are to be seen as heroes and as dragons in a given story. Who are the various support staff? How are we ourselves implicated in this story? As teachers and researchers of management, as mothers and daughters with all the opportunities and limitations of such vantage points, as citizens, as consumers and employees, as complex entities named human beings, we hear and resist the stories of triumphant capitalism that reduce our worth to that of market widgets.

Laying out our storytelling

Our interest in this paper is on the kinds of tales we tell students in business schools. Despite the prevalence of stories in which they are encouraged to see themselves as executives with seemingly unchecked justification to direct the lives of others (within the confines of the law), they are more likely to fill rather mundane instrumental jobs. For many of us, these jobs are necessary for our survival. They are also part of the conscious or unconscious ways of being human that sustain the systems that support, tolerate, or challenge the social disparities and environmental degradation we are concerned with in this paper. Our analysis is generated from our schooling in Critical Management Studies (CMS). Our attention is less on the extreme examples such as the JPMorgan case with which we opened our essay. These examples are rightfully attracting robust attention from legal and politically influential experts, sometimes culminating in punishment or requirements to provide restitution or restoration. As more humbly located individuals in the ordinary course of life however, we are attentive to the generation and tolerance of inequality or its redress in the more humdrum examples of daily life. In this regard, we attempt to draw the focus of our students to unjust but normalised outcomes in which we are all implicated.

To explain our pedagogical interests we review the growing critique of the prevailing form of global development and those system preserving dynamics in part perpetuated by the functionalist training that passes for education in many business schools. Here, the cumulative impact of the particular stories of success and failure as told by organization researchers and management teachers may have hegemonic or transformational effect. By focussing their stories on the technical means of maximizing profit, of achieving outputs of various types, or even on a showcase example of radical innovation in systemic adjustment to crises of various kinds, an instrumental ethic is often implied but not necessarily explored in terms of their contribution to the grandest of hegemonic narratives. To tell our unsettling story, we are drawn

to the stories of others. We begin this essay with some narratives by storytellers who make visible their choice of theories that inform their stories and our's. We explain why we are drawn for example to the work of Fleming and Jones (2013). They caution us against blind enchantment with emerging claims about the transformative potential of corporately led ideas about responsibility. We call on Seo and Creed (2002) for their analysis of the opportunities for systemic transformation to be found in the prevailing institutional(ized) logics of globalization, logics that are largely but never wholly hegemonic. We review Bauman and Donskis (2013) for their call to humanity to enhance our capacities as ethical beings by holding our gaze for longer on that which is unsettling. And the storytelling of Boje (2014) has us enthralled. He draws on stories that show how Dragons may be hailed as Heroes and then, when they are of no further use, turned into villains. How apt an insight into so many salvation stories come and gone!

Our theoretical orientations and our pedagogical concerns form Part One of this essay. In Part Two we weave aspects of these orientations and concerns into an example of corporate story-telling that dominates in our geographic region. We also recount stories that bring a different hue to this dominating tale. With these elements we weave a story of our own in the form of this essay. We resist providing a definitive ending to our story. Our focus is on the possibilities of other stories opening within any story told as examples of what Boje (2014) names as ante-narratives. Our mindfulness is on the petrification of any one story in ways that fix a seemingly inevitable future. We conclude the paper with an invitation to continued reflection on what kinds of alternative futures might be talked into being through our collective storytelling. In Boje-fashion therefore, we leave the space open for alternative ethical and pragmatic living stories to emerge.

PART ONE: THEORY STORIES

Unsettling the Grand Narratives of Globalization and Corporate Responsibility in Management Education

Critics from across the political spectrum, social and environmental activists, specialists from many academic disciplines, and technical experts of many types are increasingly concerning themselves with the impact of the prevailing form of global development on the wellbeing of people and planet. Many point to disproportional and at times life-threatening contributions to social and environmental degradation by giant corporations. These corporations are seen by some as exerting more power than many nation states. This insight contradicts a parallel promotion of the espoused aspirations of the democratic state – states from which such corporations derive their legal status and their mandate to operate. While the fluidity of capital, the enactment of corporate interests, and the nigh imperceptible currents of ideological direction deserve our critical attention, we are interested to explore personal entangled interests and activities that impact the quality of the waters that flow from the mountains to the sea, the land we occupy in urban and rural communities, and the food we have or do not have in our pantries. Isolating the corporations as the primary culprits of social and environmental degradation could be seen as a deflection from the complex currents that empower them – including our personal habits. But how is it that personal responsibility is so hard to conceptualize in the face of so much concern?

We are of the view that human beings have been largely recast as resources to be harnessed to the profit making agenda or institutional output criteria of The Market. As such, they can and must be disposed of if their cost outweighs their benefit. For those who do attract incomes, they must be encouraged to save, invest, or spend as the market system requires. One's fortunes are ultimately seen as the fair outcome of wise, diligent and nimble responses to market demands. Here in the story of market-led justice, there is a paradox to be considered - where the means to life is to be accessed through uneven, unreliable and perhaps exploitative market participation. Where stories of justice entailing ideals of equal opportunities for participation in the wherewithal to life, and the principles of democracy are told in equal measure to the stories of market as the channel for emancipation, we have an 'alert'! The logic that sustains corporations and the corporate claims to leadership in sustainability agendas amplify such alerts in our minds. We have long been of the view that this form of global development disproportionately serves the interests of the few, harnesses the efforts of many, and tolerates the degradation of life. Of late, we are in good company. Seemingly such diverse characters as Richard Branson (Branson, 2011) and Pope Francis (Catholic News Service, 2014) concern themselves with the dangerous trajectory of this form of global development – often named and normalised as 'globalization' - a world in which it is difficult to tell the Heroes from the Dragons.

More analysts are willing to name the prevailing system of organization and the human relationship with the planet as destructive and see the dominant form of corporate activity as deeply implicated. For some, The Corporation *is* The

Dragon. Not all among them agree that this is a necessary trajectory for the corporate form of global development. Among politically, economically and socially influential corporate leaders, some are taking upon themselves a mandate to project business as a force for good in the world. Corporate capitalism they argue is not or does not need to be a destructive force. Well known among the corporate leaders of this persuasion are personalities such as Richard Branson and Tim Cook. Branson (2011) advocates for a more responsible form of capitalism. CEO of Apple Inc, Cook made headlines when he advised shareholders that if “you want me to do things only for ROI reasons, you should get out of this stock” (Dormehl, 2014). In these stories, Branson and Cook are depicted as Heroes. Some women too are given such heroic space. Angela Ahrendts (2013), Anita Roddick (2014) and Ariana Huffington (2014) are just some examples. Corporate entities such as Shell, Unilever, and more than 8,000 businesses in 145 countries around the world are making specific commitment to moral leadership through their affiliation with The United Nations led Global Compact (United Nations Global Compact, 2014). Each entity has convincing stories to tell about how they will make the market, the jungle and the factory less dangerous; how they will clean up the bogs, how they will restore and respect life where it has been trampled. Programs of action/activist research are emanating also from universities often in partnerships with corporate leaders. The Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western University’s extensive *Business as an Agent for World Benefit* and its affiliation with The Academy of Management is but one example (Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University, 2014). Corporate responsibility for human and planetary degradation and the duty to change this has been mainstreamed. In this regard, there are many stories told to reassure us – stories of remedial capitalism – from the leadership at the top of corporations to the consumers at the bottom of the global pyramid, benefit is to be found everywhere.

Among the favored responses to the corporate contribution to exacerbating social and environmental degradation associated with the prevailing form of global development is a greater uptake of Corporate Socials Responsibility (CSR) increasingly articulated as Corporate Responsibility (CR). This subtle change in lexicon appears to signal the necessary inclusion of environmental concerns. This orientation to CR is finding advocates and followers among scholars, policy makers, investors, producers, and consumers alike. There is a burgeoning of publications discussing the merits and risks of the CR response to issues of universal importance. We wish to contribute to ensuring that the amplifying sustainability agenda does not drown the necessarily entangled social justice issues; a more sustainable yet less just world is not what we are working for. Urgent action is required with regard to matters of climate and the human impact on the environment (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2014). We seek to also join the conversation progressed by Fleming and Jones (2013) as they “link CR to neo-capitalism in a manner that positions it as a political project of ruling elite interests” (p. 7). They note the complexity of “underlying structural linkages that may exist between various stakeholders” (op cit, p. 54) and, citing Korten 2009, consider the oppositional nature of the moral assertions large firms make about themselves via the discourse of CR and the prevailing form of economic development intensifying globally. The story told by these large firms is one that invites pause for thought as corporations and their partners consider their CR agendas are leading humanity on a safer more just trajectory.

Critical theorist Schüssler Fiorenza (2001) shows how prioritising of certain interests is a part of the working of systems of domination. She describes kyriarchal dominance as a form of authority where position holders at the top of the kyriarchy work to maintain their power over those below. As scholars with a research orientation generated from our reading of critical organisational studies we are continually struck by what we consider to be an uncritical uptake of positivist assumptions that do not bear up under scrutiny. We [re]tell the story of dairying as an exploratory exercise from which to develop the critique of our own attraction to invest in the hopeful aspirations and potential influence of such global leaders as the United Nations and like-minded global and local organisations that intend to tackle issues of poverty, the exacerbation of inequalities, and the dangerous trajectory of environmental degradation. Bearing in mind both the stories of corporate leadership in the need to create more sustainable and just processes of production and distribution and the call by Fleming and Jones (2013) to be alert to their neo-colonial effects, we have our eye on the global reach and impact of the United Nations. Its leadership in the field of business transformation is explicitly expressed in the aspirations of the Global Compact. These aspirations are to be progressed through their Post 2015 Development Agenda (United Nations Development Policy and Analysis Division, 2014); the associated Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) invite business schools and academic institutions to commit to these ideas and integrate them into the teaching and certification of management students. At the time of writing this essay, signatories to the PRME stand at over 500 and are increasing in number (United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education, 2014). Many more business schools claim some commitment to a more general notion of ‘sustainability’. Implied in these orientations are

important intentions to address degrading social and environmental dynamics about which managers are to be educated. Also implied is an education for a mode of responsibility for institutional development that reaches well beyond the technical activities and exploitative demands of the markets in which they will be employed. The doctrine of meritocracy holds much sway. The embedded promise of just rewards for effort and loyalty invested is compelling. Stories of corporate success – and with it individual benefits are endemic. Evidence of the downward trend of middle-class lives, and of exacerbating poverty is unsettling in such a grand narrative. Stories of diminishing opportunities, suspect food chains, and despoiled habitats however, are now irrepressible. We posit that many corporations are increasingly adept at self-preserving assimilation of any critique that connects their actions to such outcomes. Our experience as management educators is that CR is attractive to those of our students who are concerned about social injustice and environmental degradation and the attribution of corporate or business responsibility to the things they care about. Many want to believe that they, as potential managers of businesses, can help turn the tide. In general we encourage their ideals. It would seem to us that students well educated on both the social and environmental responsibilities and well trained to recognize a duty to serve the corporate focus on wealth maximization will find themselves in much conflict. It is to the opportunities such unsettling present that we now turn.

Contradiction as opportunity

Our aspirations are to contribute to wide reaching changes in the run-of-the-mill ways of thinking about management education, our humanity and the planet. We posit that where largely instrumental orientations underpin a functionalist instruction to uncritically service market demands such education may be more accurately called training. Where training is naturalized, domestication is achieved and obedience is more stable. When viewed from functional compliance with a system that destroys, the conditions of hegemony are established. Such conditions of domestication run contrary to the emancipatory stories of Democracy and The Market. To explore such contradictions, we are drawn to the work of Seo and Creed (2002). They suggest that opportunities for systemic transformation may be found in the paradoxes and contradictions always present in hegemonic institutional(ized) logics. In their framework “institutional change is understood as an outcome of the dynamic interactions between two institutional by-products: institutional contradictions and human praxis” (ibid, p. 222). They depict praxis as “agency embedded in a totality of multiple levels of interpenetrating, incompatible institutional arrangements (contradictions) as an essential driving force of institutional change” (ibid). We take from their work that no institutionalized system is without contradiction and no person is every wholly domesticated in its service. The possibility of an awakening to one’s unwitting subjugation is always present. Given the paradox and contradictions that arise when radical, systemically reproduced disparities are tolerated in a society that espouses values of equality (of opportunity), universal inclusion, and individual emancipation, the hegemonic effects of institutional(ized) logics can be brought under close critical scrutiny. Such scrutiny of much we have taken for granted about ourselves and our civilization, and about the forms of ‘development’ we concede to for ourselves and we impose on others, is unsettling. It can be disturbing. Disturbances can be uncomfortable and tend to generate denial and deflections of many kinds. Certainly this is our experience of bringing uncomfortable ideas into a management classroom. With our minds on the implications of this, we believe we must grow the capacity of our students to hold their gaze for longer on that which is disturbing and needs our collective critical attention. In this, we are in harmony with the many calls for a more reflective management education as proposed by Muff et al (2013) in their support of the PRME, and the endorsement of the PRME by the global certifying bodies associated with management education. Bauman and Donskis (2013) see this willingness to hold our gaze on that which is disturbing. Such is an ethical gaze.

Holding an unsettling gaze for longer

Blaming ‘the system’ for unjust outcomes and environmental degradation may deflect our energies from our own responsibilities in the direction or maintenance of such a system. To do otherwise however, calls for a measure of self-awareness and reflexivity regarding our own implication in systems that promise universal opportunities (purportedly based on merit) to participate in the competition for the means to life. We love the mantra of Gandhi to ‘be the change we want to see in this world’. We know that this change in ourselves must start with a deep and continuous reflection on the entanglement of own way of life in the ways of the world. Our own habits and practices must come under scrutiny. Our personal lives should be unsettled because we are all - always - active in the world we create. As authors of this essay, as

women, as mothers and citizens, we recognize our own place in the world as a fluid dynamic of privilege and peripheralisation. In the scheme of things we and our families are among the ‘best fed’ in the world. In the hierarchies of power and status in our nation however, we dwell on the margins. There are responsibilities that can be enacted from our very privilege and our marginalisation. It is here that we find confluence between our analysis as management educators and the increasing influence of the PRME. Our pedagogical concerns are concentrated on western business schools. Our graduates will fill the more mundane jobs that enable the sustainability of the system that supports and tolerates dangerous outcomes even as it tells stories of atonement and re-imagined leadership. By endorsing the pedagogical call in support of the PRME by Muff et al (2013), shaped in significant measure by the input of critical theorists we invite a more reflective way of being so that when ethical issues arise, individual managers are already *primed* to do the right thing and to expect their decisions to be institutionally endorsed. Such reshaping of managers - from instrumental channels of elite interests to responsible global citizens - is encouraged so that future managers may grasp the complexities of the world and to understand the possible consequences of their every-day working decisions on their own lives, on the lives of the communities at home and abroad, and in particular, on the lives of vulnerable people affected by yet not directly affiliated to their organisation. The purpose is to increase the space in management education for imagining and practicing managerial activities that transcend the logic of the system-preserving instrumental ethics. A *transformative pedagogical turn* is thus suggested. This turn invites greater reflexivity regarding one's own position towards the social, political and economic interests driving managerial practice. It is about transcending the focus on technical activities and including the commitment to the notion of responsibility. It implies – and must teach - an attitude of care, compassion, and yes, love.

There are many situations through which larger social and historical processes contribute to a world that does not suit us all. There are many ways in which people are disadvantaged, oppressed, excluded, marginalized, and not seen or heard. There are many ways in which justice is not experienced in the same way by all. We are interested in spaces and places for voices from the periphery to be heard; those ordinary everyday people whose ordinary everyday lives may be affected in devastating ways by decisions made in distant places or in places close to home. Among these decisions are those made for, by, and about the ordinary every day managers going about their ordinary everyday tasks. Is this a world worth working for? With Muff et al (2013) we invite use of the human imagination “to create a world worth living in”. With our mind on the wellbeing of many generations and on the condition of Earth (on who all must rely) we turn our attention here to the various vulnerabilities of families.

Family vulnerability, sometimes expressed as child poverty, is seen as a reliable indicator of how well any society is doing. Such an indicator may come closer to depicting more accurately the wellbeing of real people than do the gross indicators of national wealth or economic growth that still dominate policy considerations. GNP or GDP indicators are made up of the prevailing confluences of narrowly defined economic factors. They tell us very little about the actual distribution of income or wellbeing of particular human beings. The nation's accounts may be on a trajectory of growth and may have won the admiration and confidence of central policy makers in national and global institutions and think tanks. The reverberations of their decisions and the actions of corporations to invest or divest in particular products, production techniques, geographic locations, or specific population groups however, may be playing havoc in the lives of many people directly or indirectly affected by these decisions. We see the vulnerability of many people as the outcomes of systems of production and distribution justified by a narrowly framed system-preserving instrumental ethic. Our sphere of engagement happens to be with the stories and storytellers that constitute management education – so it is here that we place our attention.

Why a [re]story[ing] of dairying?

Stakeholder theory is an attractive theory for business students. They are often unaware of the inconsistencies in its foundational principles as identified by Weiss (1995). Their faith in or hope for this theory appears to ignore or deny the inevitable power differentials between diverse stakeholders. Through an appeal to seemingly common interests The Corporation's self-aggrandisement is disguised by an apparent respect for the necessary existence of plural interests endemic in a competitive system and that these interests are being ‘managed’ ethically in the interests of all. Our puzzle is *how* to look constructively but critically at the projection of the State and The Corporation being in the interests of all. As a contribution to “a more candid political engagement with the realities of the corporation” as called for by Fleming & Jones (2013, p. 8), we offer a [re]story[ing] of the prevailing depiction of a dominant industry in a modern democratic state. We deliberate on the impacts of giant corporate footprints that can be followed well beyond the farm gate. Our aim in reshaping the dominant version of this story is to illustrate how through the lens of critical stakeholder theory, a

different telling of the story of dairying can highlight that “powerful institutions like the corporation dominate/exploit other groups for their own gain” (op cit, p. 65). In this example, we demonstrate how our critical stakeholder focus brings to our attention the “class, group and institutional fractions bearing different interests and resources ...to the fore of an analysis rather than [assuming the actions of business are] the isolated activities of free and consensual parties” (op cit, p. 55). Our candid [re]storations brings forward varied narratives.

Storying the past, the present and the future

Our interests lie in the diverse stories about the benefits or otherwise of globalization, about the restorative opportunities or hegemonic risks of corporate responsibility and about the importance of inviting a more self-reflective and responsible leadership through a reimagined management education. We draw on the work of Boje (2014) to focus on the possibilities of other stories that may open within any story as told. With our schooling in the stories of CMS in mind we are well attuned to the impositions of grand narratives. Our intention is to practice a discipline demonstrated through what Boje (2014) suggests are the telling of more ante-narratives as a way to resist the petrification of any one story that fixes a seemingly inevitable future. According to Boje (2001), people experience narratives as well as telling them. He suggests that any narrative analysis can be a limiting exercise when the relationships between what is experienced and what is told are left unconnected. He invites an examination of the etic (outsider) fabrication and the emic (insider) experience of stories to resituate the binary dynamic of etic/emic, instead showing how “one bleeds into the other” (ibid, p. 14). Etic frames predominate in schools and root etic interpretations in this context. Emic frames, influenced by the person making the observation, are often written out of stories and “all the emic insight in a fuller narrative [is erased]” (ibid). This exploration of ‘the written out’ or ‘the erased’ takes place for Boje with disinterest in or ignorance of diverse ante-narratives (ibid). A focus on ante-narratives allows for “the excess and in-between of theme analysis to move out of the margins. Beyond the tidy logic of theme taxonomy is the messy plenitude of storytelling. This is a narrating space where the economy runs on stories not analysis” (p. 17). Our attention now turns to the Dairy Stories that prevail in New Zealand.

PART TWO: DAIRY STORIES

Unsettling the Grand Narratives of Economic Development Feeding Hungry Children

Our institutions are generated from stories. We attempt an example of an open ended story (in the form of this essay). We do so in order to invite scrutiny among ourselves as scholars retained by business schools to meet our stated mandate to educate students for a sustainable future for all. We focus in particular on the education of tertiary students in the organization and management disciplines. We bring to the discussions what we are tentatively calling a *transformative pedagogical turn*. Our imagination is stimulated by life on the farm - or perhaps more accurately - vitality that is constrained by the elephant in the paddocks – The (dairy) Corporation(s). The image of ‘an elephant in the room’ is frequently used to alert a community to an obvious situation or issue that is being avoided as a topic for discussion. In New Zealand we have a large elephant in our dairy paddocks. The naming of this elephant and its impact on the farm, the community and the nation is a part purpose of our (re)story(ing) of the dominant story of dairying in Aotearoa. This is an apt story for us to tell. We live in New Zealand. Dairying is the backbone of our nation – or so we are told in the predominant stories about the prosperity of our country. New Zealand has also been in the vanguard of the intensification of the neo-liberal model for development – at home and globally. It is with our minds on the dairy industry that we craft our story. We lay out below some tales that are being told by and about Fonterra Co-operative Group Limited (Fonterra), one of the world’s biggest dairy industries. We also recount narratives from ‘down on the farm’. We develop the plot of the story we tell by tracing impressions left by ‘the elephant in the paddock’. These impressions are depicted as footprints of this giant corporation. These are footprints that lead us to consider heightened levels of nitrogen in the water tables. They also lead us to examine programs for providing milk to poor children as a remedy for their hunger. There are more footprints. Some of these may lead to other examples of stories about environmental degradation in the pursuit of productivity and stories about responses to concerns about social exclusions that are pertinent to an examination of the stories of CR. We have room in this essay only for these two.

Stories of the productivist success of dairying are well embedded in New Zealand folk lore and in contemporary policy speak. We parody one such story:

Dairy farmers work long hours; they have been and continue to be innovators of dairy related processes and products; our farming techniques and our production processes are world class;

when dairy farmers do well in this country all Zealanders do well because the farmers' savings and their spending will trickle down through the whole economy. Where poverty exists, Fonterra will bring succour. In New Zealand, this means all school children will receive a portion of milk every day at no cost to them.

Our parody represents the prevailing story of market lead productivity and trickle down distribution. Where children are found to be hungry, philanthropy is the means to provide them with sustenance. It is a story that, to our minds, successfully deflects attention from systemic injustice. Our wish is to contribute to the voices calling for a fuller narrative of deeply rooted change with Earth as the central character; a narrative that must be written in as a necessary voice in the assurance of wellbeing of all. We cannot speak directly for the children or parents who are impoverished in this land of plenty. Some of these hungry children are likely to be the children of inadequately paid farm workers or outplaced factory employees. The ubiquitous but opaque hand of The Market makes this a link hard to finger definitively. We give voice to our version of this story with an implied adaptation of a subaltern voice (Humphries & McNicholas, 2009; Spivak, 1988). Ours is a story of the dairy industry presented with heroes and villains, with messages for public consumption about those in need, about those who are deemed deserving, of what and at whose expense. We propose a story about dairying as morality tale – an opportunity that invites reflection in what Marshall (2001) would call the inner and outer arcs of our attention. She advocates both an inner focus and an outer focus of attention in critical reflexivity to help us understand ourselves, how we are in the world, and how the world comes to be with and through us. The open-ended story we craft below is ready for future additions. It is left open for the writing in of what might have been left out. It is intentionally left fluid for alternate crafting given different moral considerations. It is our attempt to resist the petrification of stories about CR that contribute to the risks of hegemonic intensification when corporations are encouraged to lead social change and trusted to address environmental concerns

Dairying in New Zealand: A different story

Rather than taking the focus of the firm or placing the organisation in the middle of a wider network as would be so often the case in management education, we have centred our story on 'milk in schools'. To do so we

- i) introduce the narratives and the characters of our story,
- ii) centre an open-ended story,
- iii) reconsider hunger in the land of milk and money,
- iv) develop self and systemic reflection.

i) Introduce the narratives and the characters of our story

There are several characters to introduce before we can get on with our story: The Elephant in the Paddock (Fonterra), the Bartons (dairy farmers), and an assortment of environmental advocates, hungry children, and us (the authors of this essay, and advantaged mothers and management educators) as storytellers.

- The Elephant in the Paddock (Fonterra)

A significant contributor to the NZ economy, Fonterra Co-operative Group Limited (Fonterra) is a generator of jobs, a creator of export earnings, a significant tax payer, and a driver of rural and urban economies; in our story, Fonterra is the elephant. The world's largest diversified milk processing company and one of the top producers of dairy nutrition for export; Fonterra is New Zealand's largest company (ranked by revenue). It came into existence under special legislation which enabled the merger of the two largest dairy co-operatives and a Government established Producer Board and was "given special rights to operate largely outside the Commerce Act to maximise our nation's wealth" (Shearer, 2013, n.p). The co-operative is owned by 10,500 New Zealand farmers. In 2013, it was responsible for approximately 30% of the world's dairy exports. Revenues of over NZ\$18.6 billion accounting for 25 percent of New Zealand's exports, in the year ended 2012 (Fonterra, 2013), and over 9 percent of New Zealand's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (New Zealand Immigration, 2014). Outside investors are now able to purchase economic rights securities in the Fonterra Shareholders' Fund, a unit trust listed on the New Zealand Stock Exchange.

- The Bartons (Farmers)

The Barton's dairy farm drains into New Zealand's premier lake, Lake Taupo. The Barton's realize stock numbers directly affect the water quality in waterways; the "grass fed livestock system has been our strength, but it is becoming our Achilles heel" (Barton & Barton, 2013). As stock numbers around New Zealand increase, nitrogen problems in water are

increasing. Referring to nitrogen as “the elephant in the paddock” of dairy farming systems (Barton & Barton, 2013), these farmers are faced with emerging scientific evidence that suggests their dairy farming processes contributed 90% of the manageable nitrogen entering local waterways (ibid).

- Greenpeace, Fish & Game NZ, New Zealand Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment and such like (Social and Environment Advocates)

Farming in New Zealand, and dairy farming in particular, has many critics. These include Greenpeace who highlight the use of palm kernel meal as a feed source within the dairy industry; water advocates Fish and Game highlight the impact of the dairy industry on New Zealand water systems; and New Zealand Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment calls for consideration of the impacts of the dairy industry on the environment (Campbell, et al., 2009). Acres (2011) cites international food security academic Tim Lang as suggesting New Zealand’s current focus on dairying has led to the situation where “New Zealand is efficiently overproducing the ‘wrong foods’, in that we are aiming to produce dollar unit values, rather than strategically evaluating nutritional return per unit of energy, water and other environmental capital invested” (p. 66). There are child advocates too, like Janice. Janice and like-minded people and some university researchers think that giving dairy milk to all children in needy school communities, particularly to Pacific Island children, will exacerbate food intolerance, allergies and susceptibility to future health issues.

- Hungry Children

New Zealand has long been known as the land of plenty; the land of milk and honey; a great little country to raise children. This folk-tale is increasingly criticised as an inaccurate depiction of reality. The tale is exposed as a lie when used to deflect attention from a critique of ideological imposition. In the view of advocates for children, 25% of children in this country live in poverty (Children's Commissioner's Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty, 2012). Malnutrition is one outcome of this poverty. Such nutritional poverty will exacerbate related debilitating illnesses (Asher, 2010) and sustain inter-generational poverty. Support for the 1 in 4 hungry children through the introduction of universal food in schools programs is patchy. It is hindered by ideological conceptualisations based on notions of parental responsibility to feed their children – assumed possible through life sustaining incomes. There are quantification dilemmas (Anscombe, 2009). Which children are to be considered poor? Political interest in the relationship between food and educational outcomes are also rehearsed (Jacobsen et al, 2002 as cited in Wynd, 2009). The Office of the Children’s Commissioner (2012) reporting on solutions to child poverty suggest mixed and inconsistent results from school food program research. Government funding for the resolution of child poverty becomes tied up with a myriad of other issues, for example, the meal most likely to be skipped, the age of children most likely to eat a free meal, the potential of meals to make a positive contribution to attendance, the savings to the public health system, and the health and nutrition benefits for all children (Wynd, 2009). Narratives of fairness, justice and equity for those deprived of a sustainable livelihood are written out while stories of kindness, charity, and benefits for those already included become embedded.

- The Authors (Advantaged Mothers and Management Educators)

Despite our personal institutional marginalisation as minor actors on the stage of management education, we acknowledge ourselves as among the privileged people of the world. Our position is very privileged in the light those who struggle to find food, shelter, health care, and clean water and air for themselves and their families. Where, in our privileged professional life in this land of plenty, can we enact a responsibility to contribute to a change in mal-distribution of the means to life and the destruction of life itself? We are mothers - primed to care for those who depend on us. We have tertiary education. We have healthy children - in schools and in jobs that reflect our privileged intergenerational benefit from much earlier ingrained advantage. Not all members of our wider families however are equally privileged - some much more - some much less. Their relative position seems not always to be a just outcome of their input. And so it is in the family of humanity in the home we call Earth. It is so in the fields we have divided into entitlements, rights and responsibilities. It is so metaphorically and actually in the paddocks where farmers graze their cows and the corporations harness the benefits. It is so in the lives of the students we teach and the circumstances of the employees they anticipate managing. Their part in the sustainability of the system may be mundane; without their compliance, the system would not function.

ii) *Centre an open-ended story*

The New Zealand voting public is becoming increasingly alarmed and politically activated by growing evidence that all is not well in nations so often depicted as the land of milk and honey.

There are many hungry children who daily, through no fault of their own, attend school without having eaten and without food for the day. “Working poor” parents are seeking assistance from food banks to put food on the table. Educators are spending time, money and other resources concerning themselves with the issues of food, health and nutrition in this land of plenty. Third sector and charitable food supply continues to grow.

Despite several decades of schooling in market-framed ethics based on a flawed rhetoric of meritocracy, not all suffering of families now evidenced in the media can be laid at the feet of irresponsible parents, incompetent teachers, or delinquent children. There is a rumour afoot the system of global development supported by our political representatives may be implicated! The relationship between The Corporation and The State may not be serving individual citizens well. To reassure the public, a system-preserving story is called for. The Hero of this story is Fonterra – working in collaboration with the Government and a number of NGOs to feed the hungry children of New Zealand. Should we not be pleased? While the public is regaled with the benevolence of Fonterra’s leadership in the matter of child hunger, down on the farm the Bartons are concerned about the pressures to increase their milk outputs. They are concerned about the levels of nitrogen coming from their farm and seeping into the water table. The Bartons are familiar with the prevailing story – greater productivity on the farm will contribute to an increase in industry wealth and generate a trickle-down effect into wages and the households of the poor – they sense the paradox.

iii) Reconsider hunger in the land of milk and money

Public concern in New Zealand about matters of access to food, and media attention to this concern has surged again since the mid-2000s (Anscombe, 2009; Brodie, 2007; McNeill, 2011; Smith, 2011; Stevenson, 2012; Walters, 2012; Woodham, 2011). In part this concern and interest may be due to a call by many food bank operators that they, in the first two decades of the 21st century, are struggling to meet the growing need for emergency food assistance (Brodie, 2007; Wynd, 2005). The Government is responding to increasing concern of the voting public that many children are going to school hungry. There is emerging recognition that child poverty is a significant indicator of wider social need and a future problem in the making as large numbers of children are unable to learn because they are hungry (Children's Commissioner's Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty, 2012; New Zealand Government, 2013; St John, 2013). One highly visible response to this concern is what brings our story-telling to be relevant to business and society. This is why we have crafted the direction of our story to one about the feeding of hungry children in a land of plenty and the impacts of this form of corporate response to an altogether unacceptable situation.

New Zealand is a country without a history of formal programs to provide food in schools. Of late, advocacy and corporate social responsibility have moved policy and pennies to effect breakfasts in many schools. In May 2013, the New Zealand Government announced significant public funding (up to \$9.5million over 5 years), matching private funding from Fonterra and Sanitarium (a charitable company wholly owned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church), to support a KickStart breakfast program currently being offered by the two organisations. Fonterra also expanded their own separate Milk in Schools project to make a 300ml carton of UHT milk available free to every primary school child, every school day, in New Zealand from the middle of 2013. In a context of hungry children in a land flowing with white gold, KickStart breakfast and Milk in Schools are offered by system-preserving redeemers Fonterra, Sanitarium and the Government as a contribution to growing healthy kids and providing essential nutrients in increasingly nutrient deficient diets. They are widely seen as socially responsible actions of corporates and State. It is a story hailed among those concerned about the wellbeing of New Zealand’s children.

Why drive this story any further? We have added some extra characters to this telling to consider the situation as one of counter-productivity and paradox (Winne, 2008). Some think milk is not good for kids, some think the increase in efficiency, scale and competitiveness in growing systems adds to the transporting, bottling, and recycling issues. These arrangements of paradoxical counter-productivity do not make milk more affordable or accessible to families, rather they add to mor[e]-on systems (Bentley, 2013) where much industry and effort goes into propping up these arrangements – yet the situation of increasing numbers of hungry children and food insecure families seems only to become more severe.

New Zealand dairy farming, conducted from a small and isolated country in the Pacific, is noted as an industry leading the world in milk production methods and profitability. Historically, New Zealand dairy producers have been seen as significant contributors to what has come to be understood as the 'Nation's Wellbeing'. Over generations, farmers in this land have adjusted from 'feeding the nation' and 'the mother land' in the last century to 'feeding the world' and "meeting the growing global demand for proteins" (Rosin, 2013, p. 57) in this century. Unfavourable environmental and ecological impacts are downplayed. Where there is undeniable concern, as in the case of the cost to Earth of these polluting production processes, room for assimilating accommodation will be made. Here we see the uncomfortable recognition of the rising concerns about disparities of access to water for pasture irrigation and the rights of other water users, and the call to restore pastures without the use of corporately produced chemicals. But to question the integrity of the intensive agriculture and dairy industries would mean challenging the doctrines of established ideals of competitiveness, profit maximisation and New Zealand Inc – and the Good Corporate Citizenship of an industry making such a visible difference to the alleviation of child hunger in this land of plenty.

iv) *Develop self and systemic reflection*

Fleming and Jones (2013) offer a critical approach to stakeholder theories in order to re-situate the orientation or re-focus the lens of inquiry. We apply to their view the principle that while all is not well with the Planet and its life forms, all narratives which perpetuate the status quo should be constantly contested by others narratives emerging from the different positions of the social realm. The assumption is that it is our civic duty to take responsibility for the impact on our actions in the immediate time and space, for historical legacies that have amplified pain and distress, and for a future that is more just, more sustainable and respectful of Earth. We have crafted two stories within the story we have framed as our essay. One story is about the success of the dairy industry and its significance to the New Zealand economy. The second story is about hungry children in this land of plenty. The stories are entangled but are intentionally kept separate. We think it is important that these networked stories are not woven together into the prevailing grand-narrative. We think there is much merit for further critical consideration among people who may think of this story as a story of success for New Zealand.

Historic patterns of putting farmers first while disregarding and overlooking others (Winne, 2008), through prioritising the focus on the global marketplace and articulating the mandate to meet global demand for food, continue in this story about dairying. Assured corporates attract preferred status and their programs are promoted because they are economically and socially favourable for certain interests. Meeting the needs of food insecure families seems always to be "joined at the hip with attempts to help farmers, promote national security, or serve another interest or constituency" (ibid, p. 175). Government funding for social spending becomes connected with preferred organisations that benefit financially, through brand association and commercial stability, and through growing new generations of loyal customers. This story as one of corporate philanthropy and company welfare could be retold as a story of Fonterra's kyriarchal dominance (Schüssler Fiorenza, 2001) where the structures of differential positioning are maintained and reinforced. In this rendition, the primacy of productive land use and the significance of the farmer is secured while other stories are left untold. Boje (2001) might say that their significance is erased completely - from history, from culture, from memory. This privileging of the farmers' stories and the rehearsals of the significance of their contribution to the industry, to the nation's economy, to the food security of the country and even the world continues in food policies and approaches to food-for-all.

As the concerns expressed by critics of the industry reach an undeniable pitch, more attention is devoted to redressing the ecological consequences of dairying, particularly in places where grazing conditions may not be ideal. The responses include the diversion of water (at the distress of other water users), increasing supplements for bovine health and the long term view of breeding cows that can withstand the anticipated rise in temperature associated with climate change. The diverse implications of climate change as well as land and water use to support dairy (and beef) production is under increasing scrutiny. Not all innovations to sustain this industry need to rely on water diversion, chemical application, or genetic engineering of cattle. There has been some room to innovate. Bentley (2013) has been recording the stories of those farmers who by looking after the soil have reduced the use of chemicals and supplements and enabled a reduction in stock numbers for the same profitability. While it may be unrealistic to see an immediate reduction on dependency of New Zealand on the dairy industry, as an interim consideration we build in part on Bentley's work as a productive metaphor in rhetoric for intentional change; not only for dairying, but for the very organising of our humanity. Such interim considerations are explored in the fields of transitional justice as a perhaps temporary place to set our footing. Transitional justice is "informed by a society's desire to rebuild social trust, repair a fractured justice system, and build a

democratic system of governance” (Transitional Justice, 2014). We link the prioritizing of dairying as a means to the nation’s economic and physiological wellbeing to a relatively narrow set of political and industry interests, sold to the public as a necessity for the survival of all. The first step in the [re]story[ing] of dairying in New Zealand thus must be to unsettle the faith in the prevailing story of the necessity of the dairy industry to the nation’s (financial) health and wellbeing. This story is told by a handful of elite people and organisations who govern and guide much of the decision making with regards to food production nationally and internationally – and with it all the corporate interests from chemical and genetic engineering to water governance, town planning and political nuance.

We bring to view differing stories about the claims for the social and nutritional benefits of providing free milk to all children in all schools in NZ, and of the very need to provide food in schools at all. Our [re]telling invites a closer examination of the fashionable idea of partnership programs while at the same time recognising corporate actions can still often be seen as largely serving the interests of The Corporation(s). We endorse Fleming and Jones’ (2013) invitation to consider more critically the intentions of the partners for collaboration as we work our way through the paradoxes our story uncovers given the various prioritizing that goes on because of The Elephants in our Paddocks – seen by the Barton’s as nitrogen, and by us as the perceived respite from hunger for the children of poor parents and the corporations and the State in our [re]telling as the dairy industry they each serve. Ideas around the position of farmers within New Zealand society, their entrenched position of privilege first due to their national economic significance in feeding the motherland, and now as they contribute further to the economic wealth of the nation in producing dairy proteins for the world illustrate Fleming and Jones’ (2013) ideas about underlying structural complexity. The underlying structures in the instance of New Zealand dairy farmers and dairy organisations are deeply embedded in notions of national identity, and economic wellbeing. Their interests, in our view, generate tensions in the meeting of the needs of other stakeholders. We are interested in the space opened by Deetz (2010) for the constructive engagement with conflict and encouraged by Seo and Creed (2002) to see this conflict as a point for engagement. We attempt to be simultaneously mindful of the needs of people to trade and exchange (i.e. to ‘do business’), the needs of vulnerable children, of poor families, and of Earth. We are imagining a world worth living in (Muff et al 2013).

We suggest this open yet critical approach is necessary to unsettle the 'prevailing depiction' of the stories and history of successful dairying in Aotearoa. Our intention is to make explicit that the great rendition that most New Zealanders understand and accept as a factual New Zealand history is but one version – i.e. dairying as a solution for the ills of poverty – even as its intensification exacerbates the pollution of the land and water and intensifies the style of political economy that is at the heart of the matter. To tell the stories in these ways is to regale the 'success' of the food system from this position at 'the top'. Drawing on voices we find compelling we have written in the narratives of different characters in this version of the story. Each story calls for our self and systemic reflection. But our time is up, those are stories for another day, our word allocation is spent.

STORYING: A HEURISTIC DEVICE

We have suggested a story may serve as a heuristic for reflection. There is much room for delusion in the shading of our interpretation of our own activities and responsibilities in the fabrication of our social world. Our story, right as it may feel to us, is but one of many possible versions of the stories to be told about the elite and about ourselves. Our work is underpinned by the mantra - ‘non modo sed etiam’ (‘not only but also’). Not only must we continue to critique the stories we tell about ourselves and about others. We must also tell and encourage the telling stories for better futures than the current status quo seems to indicate. In our professional life, this critique must be amplified in management education among teachers and students alike.

The public response to child poverty brings our storytelling to be relevant to business and society by making it a story inviting reflection on the general attractiveness of C[S]R solutions and the potentially hopeful or harmful consequences. It invites consideration of the perhaps counterproductive effects on the society and environment of corporate led remedies or corporately orientated ways of being human. Building on Fleming and Jones (2013), we have resituated the orientation from the organization as central and vital to the web of our communities reframed as The Global Economy, to the story of considering the issue of child poverty at home. These narratives are not woven together into the dominant narrative. They are to be held intentionally separate. The danger of their assimilation for adaptive self-preservation of The Corporation and the State are a risk of the telling. We invite an invigoration of a more critical look at the intentions of the powerful stakeholders as we work our way through the paradoxes our story uncovers. This way, the underlying structural linkages that may exist between various stakeholders are being revealed, in case of the dairy farming in New Zealand: the link between farmers’ wellbeing and national identity and national economic wellbeing, constructive engagement with conflict

is made possible. We have thus left our story open-ended. It is just one story of many that may be retold many times. Our aspiration is to make room for many voices, to use story-telling to enhance the respect for a diversity of voices in the management classroom and beyond. It is to encourage storying and reflection, and a fruitful pedagogical process (Boje, 2014).

How any different endings might be considered in these stories of trading milk justly – for people and for Earth – is not for us to say. With Dyer, Humphries, Fitzgibbons and Hurd, (2014) we are not against ‘good’ trade and exchange – even as we acknowledge the diversity in what such ‘goodness’ might entail. We count ourselves among those who seek to amplify narratives that challenge and destabilize existing hegemonic corporate expression. Our aspiration is to use story-telling to enhance the respect for a diversity of voices that serve many interests in the setting and achieving of social and environmental objectives. A greater respect for diverse stories is needed now to understand and change the dangerous trajectory of our human influence on this planet. A critical understanding of the dominant story-telling that serves as a gilding of the lily by the elite in the interests of the elite is necessary - but so is the telling of our ordinary everyday participation in the creation and maintenance of the story that serves the interests of not only the elite – but which appears to secure our more humble place in the service of the realms they have taken as their own.

Fleming and Jones (2013) call us to a more critical alertness. We respond to this invitation by integrating their insights, our own concerns, and the appeals for a more critically orientated management education emanating from a range of sources – but in particular through the potential of the United Nations led PRME. We see the call for a greater corporate contribution to a just world and a restored environment as a necessary but not sufficient condition for the urgent changes called for if the worst case scenario of the 2014 IPCC Report is not to manifest in stories of pain and grief for large swathes of humanity. We notice the more articulate, more diverse, and more wide-reaching laying of blame and responsibility for social and environmental degradation at the feet of the corporations that are flexing their muscles the world over. We see the persuasive stories being generated by these corporations about their leadership on matters of responsibility for what might be considered more just and safe outcomes. Their remedies however are framed by the perpetuation of the very system that is generating these dangerous outcomes. We urge the amplification of a mandate to legitimate a more reflective, a more critical, a more responsible education of managers as global citizens, not mere functionaries of The Corporation.

So how?

Our critical attention to attractive stakeholder analyses is intentional. Fonterra we suggest provide just one story of many that laud corporately driven stories of CR. We find it inadequate. We tell a different story. We invite the engagement of our peers in much more diverse story telling. We live our lives not only in management classrooms. There is wisdom to be found in many places. There are many diverse stories to be found close to home. Drawing the mundane into the ‘big picture’, we raise the question of how to educate critical and responsible business managers to look constructively but critically at the projection of The State and The Corporation as mandated and disciplined to serve the interests of all. We advocate for a greater engagement with postcolonial theory in such management education. We are researchers, parents, consultants, grandparents, mentor, sports people, crafters, environmentalists, luddites, futurists, religious, secular people. We are all, always implicated in this entangled world. Such an orientation opens space to examine narratives of justice that are dominated by the prevailing system-preserving instrumental ethics. We call for deeply rooted change to the entangled relationships of the prevailing system of production and exclusion. We call for Earth to be made the central character to a new story. We welcome further study into work in this open space. Can this diversity in thinking assist ordinary everyday managers? We have made a start and invite others to this space in which our living stories unfold. Who gets to tell their story? Where? To whom? To what effect? Who can invent a narrative to live by, that will manifest as universal access to food, to justice and to life’s potential? If not us, then who?

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