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Co-operative Metatheatre: An old & Unappealing Script? Nathan's Account

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the Co-operative movement's relevance to contemporary society is evaluated through a metatheatre type of analysis. With the help of a two-voice device, the author debates whether co-ops are out of touch with commercial reality or if they hold promise for developing sustainable, socially responsible business in the long term. The purpose of this article is a metatheatre script analysis of Nathan's account

As we gaze upon the wounded Co-operative beast there are those who draw near, listening for its last breath as it quietly slips from this world to the next, another slain victim of the capitalist crusade. Yet there are those more optimistic souls offering their aid and a willing ear in an effort to stir life into the old beast, resurrecting its soul just as the phoenix may rise from the ashes.

Our attention is drawn by a small crowd gathered in the shadows; they remain solemn yet turn to leave the scene. 'What was your interest here?' hollows one of Samaritans now attending the wounded beast. 'We heard that the life of the Co-operative beast may be coming to an end and so came with one last question'. 'And what may that be squire? 'Was it worth it?' 'Worth what?' 'Well, of late we have seen the beast dancing with the devil of capitalism. We always thought he opposed the control and domination the capitalist spectre had over the people of the western world. It seems to us the beast wanted a share of the devil's glory and deserves everything he got for betraying his people.' 'But he talked lovingly of his past and his history, how can you say that he betrayed his people?' 'My dear sir, he valued not the past but the gains that he could make from his new companion. He may have talked lovingly of his upbringing but he was a conniving and manipulative beast who, in selling his soul to the devil, lost all credibility for his nostalgic reflections. As far as I am concerned, he is the only one responsible for

his downfall.'

As with any contested subject there are many stories to tell, all conflicting and all with differing perspectives. The notion of the Co-operative movement as an 'old and appealing script' is just one voice and one approach of what is a complex and fragmented 'Tamara' of Co-operative screenplays. Regardless of our depth of research or intensity of gaze, the task of seeking out truth and objectivity is one of epic proportion. The sheer multitude and depth of the Co-operative experience ensures that whatever angle we take and whatever route we follow we are led to a different conclusion and perception of the Co-operative movement. To suggest the Co-operative is old and unappealing is just one voice in a sea of disagreement and conflict.

That said, for the for the purpose of this study I wish to present two alternative voices. The first, voiced by me and in non-bold text, will represent the official and impassioned Co-operative narrative as found in the discourse of the corporate literature and in the words of the guest speaker from the Lincolnshire Co-operative Group.

After much deliberation, our second voice is born from Boje's argument that to translate story into narrative is to impose counterfeit coherence and order on otherwise fragmented and multilayered experiences of desire. Thus, to offer a contrasting 'plot' would fall into the clutches of modernity and

deny the polyvocal nature of the Co-operative tapestry, thus impeding our quest for the Co-operative's meta-theatre. As a result, we turn to the notion of ante-narratives or 'local stories' as Lyotard labels them. Essentially, the stories the second voice hopes to recreate are beyond the closure required of narrative theory. So, it is at this point that I would like to introduce you to the voice of this alternative story teller.

Hello to you all. You must be feeling weary having made your way through the wanton ramblings of the first few paragraphs. I feel I must apologise for my other self, I never realised he could write so fictitiously and with so little direction. I, Nathan's second voice, am here to represent the voice of all those pour souls who due to the hegemonic powers of the Co-operative organisation and the repressive nature of management, go frequently unheard. See me not as the voice of corporate rhetoric but instead as the deviant voice of the Co-operative employee, a disgruntled shopper or as an objective researcher attempting to cast a net of truth over the modern day 'Co-operative' format.

Wanton ramblings indeed! I simply felt that an assignment based around Boje's theory of meta-theatre should start with a story, besides, we are 'postmodernist' thinkers now you know!

Wait a minute, how can you argue that you're a postmodernist when you're on the side of the meta-narrative, a term synonymous with the modernist era?

While it pains me to admit it, yes you are right, anyway, remember a small matter of the Co-operative that we're supposed to be commenting on, well I think we should make some progress.

Agreed.

It is obvious for all to see that the Co-

operative movement of today is, amongst competitors, a shining light offering hope to all those who see modern business activity as ruthless and selfish with profit as its sole motivator.

Nonsense my good fellow, it is nothing more than a washed up mess of disparate business interest with nothing to unite them other than the hollow and decaying promises of the Co-operative movement.

I accept the challenge my good friend, where do you suggest we begin?

Why not with your competitors, they seem to get the blame for everything?

OK fire away.

It seems the official Co-operative discourse lays the blame for its troubles firmly at the doorstep of its competitors. Did the movement honestly think that its position as a social enterprise elevated it above the flames of competition? It certainly appears that the movement was unprepared and hesitant when new entrants made their stand.

Of course it was the fault of the competitors, they used slur tactics in a bid to steal our once loyal customers, and they spread false rumours and did their utmost to disrupt the movement's progress. We were the originators of the supermarket; they copied our ideas and then stole our customers.

Wait a minute; it seems to me that your nineteenth and early twentieth century competitors had a right to be concerned. Your aim, it would seem, was to operate as a cartel, where unless you were part of the Co-operative movement, you had little access to distribution channels and little chance of competing with the ever growing movement. Besides, you do realise in the real world, outside of the

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Co-operative's limited sight, there is a level of competitiveness that drives quality up and prices down for the average shopper? They merely set new standards and you were too complacent to follow their lead.

Of course we didn't operate as a cartel! The Rochdale Pioneers and what followed brought quality and honesty to the retail cause.

If you would stop romanticising the past we may learn where you went wrong. Factors such as impure and contaminated food, which led to the Co-operative movement's start up in the first place, are no longer of concern due to statute law and ease in which consumers can vote with their feet. They may have started out as innovators yet it seems that for the Co-operative, time has stood still. The official line of the Lincolnshire Co-op's website may be that 'the Society has constantly upgraded the total operations to keep pace with modern developments and to meet the needs of its members and customers', yet it would seem that such development has paled into insignificance next to that of its competitors.

But we have realised our inability to compete with the supermarkets, which is why we no longer see ourselves as supermarket competitors. We focus on town centre and convenience stores as we feel this is where our strengths lie.

Ah yes, I remember the speaker making this point. You may not perceive yourselves to be in competition with the supermarkets but I do. As one of your customers, I make the decision between walking into town to the newly refurbished central Co-operative branch and driving to the nearest competitor superstore. You may not think so, but many of your customers still see you as a supermarket.

That is why we are aiming to reposition ourselves as an operator of local stores and not out of town shopping centres. We want to resurrect that centralised community involvement and spirit that brought us so much success in the past.

But are you not aware of the stigmatisation surrounding the Co-operative brand?

Stigmatisation! What Stigmatisation, are you mad?

Calm down, this whole ante-narrative was your idea; don't blame me for going along with it. It's like this. At its peak the Co-operative offered a choice and a means to purchase never before known to the British working class. It was revolutionary and the figurehead of an industry that had previously been characterised by the inadequacies of its minimal competition. The Co-operative's role within the hearts and minds of the working class was clear. In glancing back upon the Co-operative's turbulent history we may acknowledge this explicit link with the working class was the original source of success, yet one could argue it is now the thorn in the movements side.

That's utter drivel, we've always been seen as a working class organisation and now you're trying to tell me that this is the reason for our dip in performance, the working class is still alive and well and needs our help.

The problem is your links are with the economically poor working class of the early to mid-twentieth century and not the new economically viable working class of today. As the blanket of post war depression lifted and the 'golden era' of Western Capitalism took flight, the previously impaired view of the working classes came into contact with the symbols of economic growth. The world changed in the 50's and 60's. Such seemingly trivial arrivals as the Austin Mini and the Beatles brought a social revolution that changed peoples'

attitudes towards life and to the Co-operative. For many the Co-operative movement symbolised the post war days of poverty and depression and as the new dawn of optimism broke, many wanted to distance themselves from symbols of this unpleasant past.

Ah yes, those young hippies and juveniles, chasing around in mini-skirts and causing havoc to the peace and serenity of this once great country. Shame on them.

But don't you see. As the world moved on you remained in your post-war past. There were changes in the family life, leisure time increased and people travelled abroad for the first time, enjoying the colour and excitement of far away countries. They brought back culinary revolutions and a broadened outlook on life which unfortunately the Co-operative didn't fit into. As multiculturalism in Britain spread, the Co-operative remained stead-fast in its white, working class heritage, yet you wonder why people disowned you in their droves?

But many support our traditional values, and besides we can't cater for everyone.

But the supermarkets do. It's like this; as the standard of living has gradually improved since the end of World War II, shoppers have increasingly rejected and distanced themselves from the Co-operative. You may have to accept that regardless of the business decisions you make, there's nothing that can be done to stem the flow of shoppers going elsewhere.

So you're effectively saying that we had no control of our destiny once we had established our past. You suggest that regardless of the actions we took following the fall in business in the 50's we were still doomed to failure because of the help and support that we had given the working class in their hour of need. That stinks.

That it might. But you can't blame people for wanting to rid themselves of all reminders of their poverty stricken past.

But what of those who look favourably upon us as a part of their childhood and still religiously shop with us?

Agreed, Co-operative shopping for some became part of habit and routine which has remained indispensable to their shopping habits even to this day. But surely this should concern you?

Why?

Well, if a significant percentage of your current customers are of this age then it won't be too long before the natural human cycle of life eventually strips the Co-operative of a great majority of its most loyal customers.

You are quite wrong if you think we should abandon them.

No I disagree! It seems to me that unless you attract a new and youthful customer base then the future is surely bleak? And I don't think you're going to attract new customers with places such as the Moorland Centre!

What do you mean? It's the jewel in the Lincolnshire Co-operatives crown.

The jewel, I would suggest you take another look. The Moorland centre resembles the ruined ghost town of the silver screen and is a striking example of the underlying problems within the retail element of the co-operative movement. The continuing retail trend is for product specialisation, niche marketing and product differentiation, and not the mass merchandising of the Moorland Centre. Upon entering you're immediately confronted by a vast open plan space with disparate consumer goods stretching from one corner of

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the store to another. You would have thought it would have been teeming with customers when we went last Saturday afternoon? But it wasn't!

Saturdays are always quiet.

Didn't look that way at Morrison's. The emptiness and void between shoppers and floor space sums up Co-ops problems. Their willingness and desire to compete in as many markets as possible may not, as they would suggest, signify their triumph but instead their doom. They attempt to compete in a grand variety of areas and expand continuously, such as with the recent move into nursing homes, yet they are masters of none. While James Brown's 'I feel good' may have been playing in the food section, this certainly was not how I felt.

What? That is nonsense; we offer free parking and the ability to satisfy a variety of retail needs within one location.

That may be true but there are specialised retailers for each of your departments offering a much wider choice of product. If I wished to spend £1,000 on a TV I would visit Curry's or Dixon's, not the Moorland Centre. I now see that your naivety has extended to the city centre store, which now also stocks electrical equipment. Oh, and what of the derelict shops and 'market' stalls in there? So much for your 'quality' image.

It's about choice. As for the town centre store, we have some exciting and dynamic shops just waiting to open up in there.

I thought you would have a convenient explanation. I think you'll find that the problems lies with the incompetence of your management team, it's about bad decision making.

What are you talking about?

Well, what about your 1961 decision to open 'instant dividend stores', known as 'Krazy Cuts'? This move alone effectively scrapped your one true competitive advantage, the 'Dividend'.

Ah the 'Dividend', the cornerstone of the Co-operative movement.

Don't go all dewy eyed on me again, we're going to come to the 'Dividend' later, but for the time being let me finish. Besides it is you and not me that usually gets to bathe in the spotlight of the public gaze.

I suppose.

These 'instant dividend stores' as they were known effectively traded on the 'pile 'em high, sell 'em cheap' philosophy.

But it proved to be a success with members.

That it might, but the impact on brand equity was savage and profound. Once you've repositioned the brand as a 'low cost leader', it is unlikely the consumer will see you as anything else. One of your biggest errors over the years, which I am glad that you are now starting to correct, is the lack of unity and even competition between the different regional co-operatives. This must surely have affected your buying and marketing power? Can I say something which I don't think you'll like?

Sure fire away, we're not beyond criticism.

Oh really? That wasn't the impression I got from the guest speaker. She didn't take well to criticism.

Rubbish, it was you and your university friends who were looking to upset the apple cart.

See what I mean? Anyway, my point is

that your 'self image' seems to be out of alignment with that of the public's perceived image. Just as Lay, the Enron protagonist, publicly denied problems existed for the energy giant, so too does the Co-operative fail to acknowledge the up-hill struggle it faces. Admit it, only in name alone are you are still a Co-operative movement.

How dare you, that is slander. We still abide by the same principles as the original Rochdale Founding Fathers and those of Robert Owen.

Oh come on, Owen was a failure. None of his experiments worked and it took his entire wealth for the light to come on and for him to realise that people don't want socialism if it robs them of the progress made by capitalism. Besides, Owen wanted to replace capitalism altogether, yet here you are happily basking in the fortune that capitalism has brought you.

What fortune?

Don't give me that, I know full well the chairman of the newly formed Co-operative Group received a wage in excess of £600,000 the previous year. It's like this; the minute that the Christian Socialists realised that the Co-op needed to be forged from within the capitalist system, the Co-operative movement was over. It became another struggling performer within the capitalist meta-theatre. Since that day it has been operated for profit alone, your ethical bleatings are nothing more than a smokescreen in which to cover the tracks of your blatant inadequacies. Realistically you do no more than the next business in terms of societal involvement.

We aren't a business, we are a Co-operative!

Whatever, it makes no difference.

What about our £927,000 contribution to

charity and our recent Fair Trade product line, they are truly representative of our intent.

Firstly I think you need to check out the websites of competitors as you'll find exactly the same level of social and community concern, but beware, you have to look hard for it. Unlike your beloved Co-operative they don't make a song and dance about it. They accept it as part of their business remit and get on with it quietly. Besides they have enough strengths and competencies without having to force the ethical issue. As for the Fair Trade campaign, I don't think muddling together a display on the end of an isle will offer much support to the people of the third world.

It's more than some are doing.

No, it's the same again. All your competitors offer such products but let the product sell itself. Talking of selling, how the hell do you expect to sell Fair Trade bananas at nearly 80% over and above what you would call 'unfair trade' bananas. I honestly cannot see commitment to the cause stretching that far. Come on admit it, you're in it for the money just like the rest of us, you're no less of a capitalist stooge than Tesco's. You have mergers, acquisitions, buyouts, competitive forces, financial statements and branding issues like any other retailer.

Well of course we are operating within a capitalist environment but that doesn't stop us maintaining our ethical principles and beliefs.

What, just like the Co-operative Bank?

What do you mean?

The bank gave up the Co-operative principles as soon as it became a municipal bank, yet as soon as it was staring death in the face they tried to fall back on their 'ethical' heritage. The strategy was not conceived as part of

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genuine concerns amongst the Co-operative management team but was instead a deliberate ploy to exploit a gap in the market. A classic marketing approach if ever I saw one.

But the banks ethical policy has been estimated to have cost the bank £1.7million in lost revenue. We lose money by operating it.

Yes, but isn't the custom it has generated now responsible for 15%-18%6 of your pre-tax profit, much more than £1.7 million I would presume? Just goes to show that if you put a spin on figures then they can be used to support any argument you want.

Just because the rapacious capitalists do not appreciate the need for social awareness, doesn't mean that we don't. And another thing, how dare you deface the names of the Christian Socialites and the Rochdale Pioneers!

But my dear friend, it is not just me who brings scorn on the name of your elusive heroes. While I appreciate that Marx has the motive for vehemently attacking and mauling a proponent of an alternative form of socialism to his, he does seem to voice cutting disapproval. To him, 'Christian Socialism represents the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heart burnings of the aristocrat'. Essentially what he's saying is that the Christian Socialist movement actually favours the bourgeois and not the proletariat. So much for your working class focus. The Rochdale pioneers also failed to escape his wrath. He argued that the Lancashire workers were not being 'particularly altruistic' when they joined together in trade unions or Co-operatives. They were simply responding to the economic pressures just as everybody else of that time.

Well that is typical of the early work of Marx, that man was so out of it that in challenging

the power of the bourgeoisie he aimed a direct attack on his upbringing and parentage. Besides the man was clearly insane in wanting to centralise all instruments of power in the hands of the state.

Yes that is true.

We agree?

Don't get used to it.

By the way, how are we doing for word count?

2942 already

Shit

Yeah it's only supposed to be around 2500 words

I don't think Carole's expecting a dissertation you know.

We'll have to cut it down later. Anyway, returning to your earlier point, you seem to think you can operate in the 'hauntology' between capital and labour.

Here at the Co-operative we believe it's perfectly possible to find synergy between social responsibility and commercial gain. Besides, if we don't make money then we can't help the community

Yes I would agree with that, but you must realise that under Derrida's notion of deconstruction there is a duality between the requirements of capital and the requirements of the 'Other' - labour, ethics and social responsibility for example.

But that is where we are different to our competitors; we have found the middle line between the two extremes.

Rubbish, you are capitalists and you know it. Your ethical stance is a blatant attempt at differentiating yourself in a

time of hardship. Graham Melmoth, the Co-operative Group's previous CEO may have stated publicly that the merger between the CWS and CRS will allow the group to 'focus on commercialisation (i.e. Capitalism) with a clear sense of co-operative purpose', but he knows full well that the deal went through for commercial gain and commercial gain alone. I still maintain that the official discourse of the movement is harbouring a beast of capitalism and not co-operative values. It does seem that the utopian ideal of a co-operative operating within a capitalist environment belongs in the realms of the evangelist and not of the realist.

Graham Melmoth is a hero. Yet you portray him as a villain and you fail to acknowledge the sterling work he has done for the movement. At the ship's helm, he is slowly but surely manoeuvring the Co-operative out of choppy waters.

Captain Cook, is he?

What?

Never mind. Look, the merger effectively ensured that millions of pounds of assets were handed over to Melmoth and his cronies. What's more the Group as a whole will no longer effectively be mutually owned, just like Barbara Rogers of the Co-operative Union believes.

Barbara's like the Co-operative militia. She cannot understand that there's going to have to be some changes if the movement is going to survive in the future. Melmoth is the man who saved the Co-op, pure and simple.

But this is my point, in saving the Co-op he is turning his back on all that the Co-operative stands for. That's why I said earlier that in all but name alone there is no longer a Co-operative.

What about the 'Dividend', a symbol of the Co-

operative movement?

I wondered when you would mention the Dividend again? The 'Dividend' is nothing more than a second rate loyalty card. In a recent survey it came near the bottom of the table when compared with competitors' schemes. If you do the calculations from your publicity material, you might realise that for every pound spend you receive less than a penny back in 'Dividend' - 0.83 pence to be exact. You would have to spend somewhere in the region of £120 to get one pound back. I will agree that the Dividend meant something to people around the time of our grandparents' childhood but times have changed. The Co-operative, the 'Dividend' and the mutuality cheques were a part of their lives, but it means nothing now.

But you must realise we had to scrap the Dividend of 5% as our grand-parents knew it because it was a financial barrier to our ability to compete. Less than a penny isn't a lot but unlike our competitors it still gives people the right to vote and have a say in the shaping of the movement, it still maintains the Co-operative difference.

Ah the 'Co-operative difference', the difference that your staff are supposed to be educated in. I read in a Guardian article about the on-going training of Co-operative staff in the principles and origins of the movement yet when I asked staff in the local store if they were aware of the 'Co-operative difference' their blank expressions said it all.

They must not have been paying attention to their training that's all I can say. You have seemed so far to have overlooked perhaps the greatest of all Co-operative strengths.

And what might that be?

The democratic and member control ensuring

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the movement is run by the people and not by some out-of-touch management team.

Where do I start? Well as only 1,100 of your supposed 150,000 members voted in your last committee election it seems that democracy may be too strong a word. Besides, do you not realise society is changing?

How?

Well, as Hofstede concludes in his studies on national culture, Britain is a very individualistic nation. The majority no longer takes interest in group activities and membership, those days are gone. As for democracy, as I said earlier, the merger of the CWS and CRS effectively ended member control. Both The Co-operative Bank and the CIS are not characterised by mutuality, there is no Dividend and there is no member vote. As for the voting in 47 regional Co-operatives it seems to me that if less than 1% of the total members are voting then there must be some politics at play with the votes that do get made. The vote is unlikely to be neutral. I do not for one minute doubt that some back scratching goes on. The human race is not neutral, as Nietzsche often demonstrates, 'there will always be a will to power'.

We cannot deny we are concerned by the lack of voters but we are certain that a democratic vote will, as long as the movement is still alive, take place. I would argue then that you are wrong; there are no politics at play.

Really, then what about your strong links with the Labour party?

I'm not sure what you mean?

Well for a start the 'Co-operative Party', as the political wing of the movement, is affiliated to Labour at a regional level. Because of this you had a vote in the

election for Labour's mayoral candidate.

One vote, big deal

No not one vote. A third of the total votes go to the affiliates of the Labour party, and as the Co-operative party claims just under a third of this affiliates vote it means that effectively the Co-op party controls 9% of the total votes for Labour's mayoral candidate. A fairly large number wouldn't you say?

Well, err yes.

I won't go into detail but it seems the lack of active membership ensures that votes are anything but fair. Essentially the 50,000 strong vote of one of London's largest Co-operatives was made by the 14 people of the ruling council. Democracy is a fallacy. There was no ballot of the London Co-operative members. What did the Co-op receive in return for its position as Labour's lap dog?

Nothing, you're claims are preposterous.

Well due to Blairs awareness of the power of the Co-operative's political wing he granted a Commission to review the structure, control and management and organisation of the Co-operative. Would you believe the coincidence, the first Co-operative Commission for almost 50 years takes place just at a time when Labour needed the movements support the most. There was no vote on this, it seems that it was a private deal between Blair and your hero, Graham Melmoth, effectively by-passing the democratic structures of the independent societies and the Co-operative. Have you not noticed Blair's willingness in affirming the Labour Parties embrace of the co-operative values? Did you hear the little rumour about Party funding and Melmoth's knighthood?

That's enough, what you are suggesting is that we are devious and a politically biased entity. You know full well that the Rochdale Pioneers believed in political neutrality.

Not wishing to quote Marx again but its like he says, 'history is the great school of scepticism'.

I have had enough of this! I think we should end this right here and right now!

You mean we should conclude?

Damn right!

OK, but one final question .

What?

If Owen were to offer a critique of the Co-operative Society of today, would he treat it with the same contempt as he did with the capitalist organisations of his time? I say he would.

I give up! It's time to bring this to a conclusion.

Fine.

You and your fellow students have been so quick to judge the Co-op and have targeted it with nothing but abuse. What you must understand is that you as students are only one of many voices. You do not speak for the nation and while you look for the sleaze, the scandal and the deviance, others may search for the good, for the community concern and for the tireless effort we make in serving our customers. There is no such thing as a complete story. Of course we've had to adapt to the capitalist regime but that is inevitable. It's a balancing act and while we may, for the time being not have found the equilibrium, it is only a matter of time before our growing profitability enables us to ground out an organisation that is, in terms of societal concern, far beyond the reaches of our nearest competitor. Consider this, the gap between the rich and the poor is greater than at any time since the late 19th century, if this

is true then this surely justifies our survival and place within society. Be patient and our time will come. The days of poor management and inefficiency are over; the united movement will reign victorious.

Strong but hollow words. Ignore the views of the young at your peril because we are the shoppers of tomorrow. The elderly are the shoppers of today. Your long term future lies with us, not them. Your denial and boastfulness till the end astounds me. You should be honest and openly admit the co-operative movement is dead instead of dragging its name through the mud. Let your subscription to the capitalist system be known and then move on.

Are you finished?

No. What you are effectively doing is trading under a false name; realistically you share no resemblance to the movements fore-fathers. While one can accept that in its conception the Co-operative principles were socially and perhaps ethically motivated, it is becoming increasingly difficult to see the Co-operative principles as anything other than a brand name. Unfortunately, and it seems beyond the comprehension of the Co-operative 'leaders', the brand has very few positive connotations on which a revitalisation strategy can be based. It appears that the sands of time are no longer willing to postpone their victim's inevitable demise. Before the 'movement' makes one last grasp for air, it seems that the only escape from the gloom is to re-brand. One has only to look at the positive effect re-branding has had on the holiday division with 'Travelcare'. The Co-ops role within the capitalist meta-theatre has been taken from its grasp by the power of its competitor., The only alternative to permanent expulsion is to go back into make up, discard the Co-operative head

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garment and make a dynamic and energetic return to stage.

No way! It will never happen.

Your choice! The quest for your utopian dream is over and you know it. Marx could have been writing directly about the Co-operative when he surmised: 'a study of the past often turns into a love of the past and a desire to keep it'. If the Co-operative doesn't embrace the future, and pretty quickly at that, the past is all that it will have left!

I still disagree but this is where we must end. Can I have the last word? You'll probably agree with me.

Go on then.

Well its like Hassard and Parker (1993) once said, 'we can never know all there is to know', and you know what, they're right,

Amen.

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