



# Made to Serve: The Tragic Corruption of America's Founding Values

Lucy A. Arendt, Ph.D.

Namaste—  
the Divine  
in me  
Honors  
the Divine  
in you

# Thank You



- My loving and demanding family
- My motivating mentors, especially John Harris, Daniel Alesch, and Tim Sewall
- My hardworking and inquisitive students, past and present
- Sue Mattison, Mary Baranek, & Ashley Folcik – the best Dean’s crew
- Tracy Heaser from Advancement and the Academics Subcommittee of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Planning Committee
- My inspiring “Last Lecture” faculty colleagues
- My many extraordinary faculty and staff colleagues
- Everyone who’s ever talked to me about their organization and their boss

# My Goals



- To share a way of thinking about modern organizations that has **intrigued** me for about 25 years
- To stimulate **reflection** on the role of modern organizations in our lives
- To provoke **questioning** of what is and what could be
- To grapple with what it means to be an **engaged** human being
- To expose the **damage** caused to individuals and society by the modern organization

# Overview



- The issue
- The organizational imperative
- The individual imperative
- A way forward

# The Issue

# The Issue



- - “... The central problem in contemporary America is the replacement of the Founding Values by the values of the modern organization” (xi)



# Key Founding Values



- We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain **unalienable\* Rights**, that among these are **Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.**



\* Unalienable. The state of a thing or right which cannot be sold.



# Liberty



- “Natural liberty is the right which nature gives to all mankind of disposing of their persons and property after the manner **they may judge** most consonant to their happiness, on condition of their acting within the limits of the law of nature, and so as not to interfere with an equal exercise of the same rights by other” (Burlam. Nat. Law, c. 3, § 15)
- From Dictionary.com:
  - Freedom from arbitrary or despotic government or control.
  - Freedom from external or foreign rule; independence.
  - Freedom from **control**, interference, obligation, restriction, hampering conditions, etc.; power or right of doing, thinking, speaking, etc., according to choice.
  - Freedom from captivity, confinement, or physical restraint
  - Permission granted to a sailor, especially in the navy, to go ashore.



## “Employee Wishes He Had Enough Job Security To Voice Opinion”

### News in Brief

December 3, 2014

Vol 50 Issue 48



# Who Wins?



- Who wins when people are **afraid** to share their thoughts at work?
- Who wins when people are compelled to engage in emotional and physical **labor** that may be unrelated to positive individual and organizational outcomes?
- Who wins when people are seen as replaceable means to an end rather than as having **value** in and of themselves?



- While not all modern organizations are invested in the organizational imperative, enough are ... so many in fact that most of us no longer question the 24, 7, 365 impact of these organizations on our lives
- And yet we're **unhappy** – damned unhappy! More than 50% in the U.S. report a lack of job satisfaction ...

# The Organizational Imperative



# The Organizational Imperative



- Proposition 1: Whatever is good for the individual can only come from the modern organization. The only way to achieve anything of significance is through the modern organization.
- Examples:
  - Pay
  - Benefits
  - Advancement
  - Security
  - **Identity**

The trade-off: Material comforts  
in exchange for liberty

**“I’m lucky to have a job.”**



# The Organizational Imperative



- Proposition 2: Therefore, all behavior must enhance the health of such organizations.
- So, work overtime. Bring work home. Be available 24, 7, 365. Put work before family and friends. Do more work for less pay. Do more work for fewer benefits. Put up with abusive and incompetent bosses.

# The Organizational Imperative



- Employees are required:
  - Rule 1: To be **obedient** to the decisions of superior managers
  - Rule 2: To promote **efficiency**
  - Rule 3: To be good **stewards** of other people's property
  - Rule 4: To be **rational** and expedient

# Organizational vs. Individual Imperative



Values of the individual imperative	Values of the organizational imperative
Individuality	Obedience
Indispensability	Dispensability
Community	Specialization
Spontaneity	Planning
Voluntarism	Paternalism

# Individuality vs. Obedience



## Individuality

- Liberty
- You and I know what is best for ourselves
- Personal action and satisfaction

## Obedience

- Leads to personal satisfaction?
- Complying with authority
- To advance, internalize the organization's values

# Indispensability vs. Disposability



## Indispensability

- Each person offers a unique perspective and has a unique set of talents
- As people acquire experience, they gain irreplaceable knowledge
- No one can completely replace anyone else

## Disposability

- Everyone is replaceable
- Easier to dispose of things (people) than to reuse them
- One person with a given set of qualifications is as good as another person with the same set of qualifications
- “If anyone can do the job that you do, then just that is what is going to happen. They will get **ANYONE** to do it.”

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3ttxGMQOrY&feature=youtu.be>)

# Community vs. Specialization



## Community

- Real, interpersonal relationships matter
- Individuals prized for their personal qualities contributed something unique to the continuity, warmth, and support found in community

## Specialization

- Loyalty must be to the specialized function
- A person's worth is measured quantitatively, whenever possible, by the level of one's specialized performance relative to the achievement of organizational goals
- Efficiency is king!





- Carrier Air Conditioner (part of United Technologies) Moving 1,400 Jobs to México (Feb 2016)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3ttxGMQOrY&feature=youtu.be>
- “This is strictly a business decision.” “It is important that you understand ...” “We still have a job to do ...” “This was an extremely difficult decision.”

# Spontaneity vs. Planning



## Spontaneity

- Serious problems require spontaneous, creative action
- Serendipity
- Interdependent, complex relationships that we might not be able to tease apart

## Planning

- Systematic, informed projections
- Eliminating guesswork
- Prediction and **CONTROL**

# Voluntarism vs. Paternalism



## Voluntarism

- Combining voluntarily into interest groups to engage in collective action
- A compromise between individualism and collectivism

## Paternalism

- The benevolent concern of management for the welfare of their employee “children” – making decisions and doing what is “best” for the employees – without giving them rights
- In exchange, employees **owe** their loyalty

# The Organizational Imperative



- “The organizational imperative that has displaced the Founding Values is now the central part of a new, well-entrenched system of American values. **Obedience** is essential to organizational discipline, **dispensability** is necessary for organizational change, **specialization** is required for organizational efficiency, **planning** is needed to reduce organizational uncertainty, and **paternalism** is the psychological justification for management’s dominion over the work force” (60)

# All Aboard the Belief Train



- We believe in the decency of managerial **intention**.
- We believe in the **job** over all else.
- We believe in the **vocationalization** of education.

# The Individual Imperative



# The Individual Imperative



- “The corrective (to the organizational imperative) is an ethical individualism, based upon the Founding Values” (162)

# The Individual Imperative



- Proposition 1: All individuals have the natural **right** to actualize the potentials of their unique selves throughout the stages of their lives.

# The Individual Imperative



- Proposition 2: The primary justification of any organization is the extent to which it promotes the actualization of those **individual potentials**.

“There (is) a **sanctity** to each individual’s life” (163)

# The Individual Imperative



- All individuals have the civic obligation to realize their full **potentials**
- All individuals have the civic obligation to promote **human diversity**
- All individuals have the civic obligation to reject all forms of human **instrumentalism**
- All individuals have the civic obligation to **dissent** when any individual, institution or organization abridges the Founding Values

# The Individual Imperative



- The organization of the Individual Imperative
  - Organization **size**
  - Social **enclaves**
  - Organizational **governance** and justice
  - Moral **discourse**

# The Individual Imperative



- Creating an organization that enables the “actualization of all our individual potentials”
  - Herman Miller
  - W. L. Gore & Associates
  - Virgin





**A Way Forward**

# A Way Forward



- What is the University's role in reminding society about our **unalienable rights** to Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness – both when we're "on" and when we're "off" the clock?
  - Active practitioner?
  - Role model?
  - Educator?

# A Way Forward



- Is there value in returning to our **shared governance** roots as they were understood and exercised in the past?
- If we believe that the **collective brain power** of all our stakeholders has value, how do we make sure that **all voices** are at the decision making table?
- How do we balance growth and alternative delivery methods with creating **community** and enabling individual realization of potential?
- How do we ensure that the liberal arts – and a focus on **moral truths** – are infused in all programs of study?

# Back in my day ...



Photo Courtesy of  
the UWGB  
Archives, Deb  
Anderson and her  
rockin' staff



# 36.09(5)



- The original text: “(5) STUDENTS. The students of each institution or campus subject to the responsibilities and powers of the board, the president, the chancellor and the faculty shall be

**active participants in the immediate governance of and policy development for such institutions.**

As such, students shall have primary responsibility for the formulation and review of policies concerning student life, services and interests. Students in consultation with the chancellor and subject to the final confirmation of the board shall have the responsibility for the disposition of those student fees which constitute substantial support for campus student activities . The students of each institution or campus shall have the right to organize themselves in a manner they determine and to select their representatives to participate in institutional governance.”



- Current text: “(5) STUDENTS. The students of each institution or campus subject to the responsibilities and powers of the board, the president, the chancellor, and the faculty shall have

**primary responsibility for advising the chancellor**

regarding the formulation and review of policies concerning student life, services, and interests. Students in consultation with the chancellor and subject to the final confirmation of the board shall have the responsibility for the disposition of those student fees which constitute substantial support for campus student activities. The students of each institution or campus shall have the right to organize themselves in a manner they determine and to select their representatives to participate in institutional governance.”



# 36.09(4)



- The original text: “FACULTY. The faculty of each institution, subject to the responsibilities and powers of the board, the president and the chancellor of such institution, shall be **vested with responsibility for the immediate governance of such institution and shall actively participate in institutional policy development.**

As such, the faculty shall have the primary responsibility for academic and educational activities and faculty personnel matters. The faculty of each institution shall have the right to determine their own faculty organizational structure and to select representatives to participate in institutional governance



- Current text: “(4) FACULTY. The faculty of each institution, subject to the responsibilities and powers of the board, the president, and the chancellor of such institution, shall have the

**primary responsibility for advising the chancellor**

regarding academic and educational activities and faculty personnel matters. The faculty of each institution shall have the right to determine their own faculty organizational structure and to select representatives to participate in institutional governance, except that the faculty of each institution shall ensure that faculty in academic disciplines related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are adequately represented in the faculty organizational structure.”

# A Way Forward



- **Recognize** the organizational imperative for what it is and what it does
- Use our **collective voices** to rebel against / resist the organizational imperative
- Support initiatives and organizations that align with the **individual imperative**



Because  
**people**  
matter

# Source



- William G. Scott & David J. Hart (1991). *Organizational Values in America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.