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THE DENIAL OF SLAVERY IN MANAGEMENT STUDIES

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THE DENIAL OF SLAVERY IN MANAGEMENT STUDIES

> "Throughout the era of slavery the Ne.g.ro was treated in a very inhuman fashion. He was considered a thing to be used, not a person to be respected. He was merely a depersonalised cog in a vast plantation machine."
>
> Martin Luther King (1956), in King (1986, p. 5)

INTRODUCTION

This article is about the wrongful exclusion of American slavery from histories of management. There is at least an argument that this is of intrinsic relevance to management studies. This is a part empirical revision that writes in a missing link with one of the most significant, and devastating social processes to have affected Africa, Europe, and the Americas in the modern era. This revision extends what is recognized as the collective understanding of our field.

If this is not enough, however, there is additional significance in relation to the construction of management history, and the purposes that that history serves. This derives from a view of history that its writing is as much about the present in which it is produced, as it is about the past. History is "never for itself. It is always for someone" (Jenkins 1991, p. 17); and as Cooke (1999, p. 83) points out, "the way history is written, the choices made in selecting and ignoring past events are shaped by prevailing, albeit competing power relations and their associated ideologies."

From this position, what is called history, but might more accurately be called historiography, contributes to the le.g.itimization of present day institutions, practices, and bodies of knowledge; but also to emergent and established critiques thereof. Thus, a standard history in which management first emerges on the US railroads from the 1840s onwards (Chandler (1977)) associates it with what is often represented as an heroic, frontier extending episode in the history of the United States. Extending Pushkala Prasad's (1997) identification of the intra-organizational imprints of the myth of the frontier, this association can be seen to give management a broader social and cultural le.g.itimacy.

A history which constructs an alternative narrative, in which American, and particularly US pre-Civil War slavery is a site of the birth of management (as is the case here) gives management quite different associations, with oppression and exploitation. This history would imply quite a different view of the social le.g.itimacy of management in itself. In making its case, presenting data and the interpretations of non-management historians, it would also undermine any claim of the heroic model to be based in the only empirically true representation of the past.

Of course, such a history would equally challenge *any* version of the history of management which explicitly or otherwise excludes slavery. Every version I have seen does so exclude; this a general phenomenon. It is the case even of critical approaches to management, including those which present alternatives to orthodox historiography (e.g. Jacques 1996), and/or point to other historical instances of management's complicity in the worst forms of oppression (e.g. Burrell (1997) on management in/of the holocaust). The implications that this article has for these versions does vary according to their historical/ historiographical approach and position, and these are addressed in the conclusion. There are implications are for the whole of management studies, though; and it is management studies as a whole which has excluded – indeed denied – slavery.

A Prima Facie Case

At the time of writing, this is feels like quite a remarkable claim, and indeed part of my main thesis is that it is unprecedented. But even the briefest prima facie consideration of the organization, scale, and significance of slavery provides strong support. Martin Luther King's use of metaphor associated with the production line and bureaucracy (Morgan (1986)) is neither anachronistic or unique. Fogel (1989, p. 28) confirms this with a quotation from Bennet Barrow's Highland plantation rules: "A plantation might be considered as a piece of machinery. To operate successfully all its parts should be uniform and exact, and its impelling force re.g.ular and steady."

Equally telling is Olmsted, who wrote in 1860 of one plantation (1860, pp. 53-54): "The machinery of labor was ungeared during a day and a half a week, for cleaning and repairs, experience having proved here, as it has in Manchester and New York, that operatives do very much better work if thus privile.g.ed.... Re.g.arding only the balance sheet of the owners ledger it was admirable management." In this short paragraph Olmsted employs the machine metaphor; suggests a conscious proto-hawthorne manipulation of rest periods and

uses the very word “management” to describe this. In repeating a parallel he makes elsewhere with Manchester and New York (1860, p. 27), Olmsted also by implication locates the plantation within a global, capitalist, economy.

Elsewhere, in one of the few direct references to slavery in management histories, Jacques (1996, p. 42) claims that the US Civil War “is usually represented as either a contest between state and national authority or a fight to end slavery. It was in part both these things, but it could more appropriately be termed the country’s Industrial Revolution. By 1865, the industrializing North of the US had politically demolished the feudal economy of the manorial South.”

This is not a received view amongst contemporary historians (see McPherson, 2001). Fogel (1989) shows that if the North and the “feudal” and “manorial” South were considered separately, and ranked among countries of the world “the South would stand as the fourth most prosperous country in the world in 1860. The South was more prosperous than France, Germany, Denmark or any of the countries of Europe” (1989, p. 87). The South was also continuing to industrialize, albeit more slowly than the North, on the basis of slave labor; and it was in reality not a separate country but an inte.g.ral, and according to Richards (2000) the most politically powerful, part of the burgeoning US state and capitalist economy. Fogel states: “throughout the eighteenth century, the great plantations of the sugar colonies…were the largest private enterprises of the age, and their owners were among the richest of all men. The same can be said of the cotton plantations in the United States on the eve of the Civil War” (Fogel, 1989, p. 24).

Of course, the eve of the Civil War takes us well into the time period of 1840 onwards in which orthodox histories (Chandler 1977, also Wren 1972) have management emerging on the railroads. According to Taylor (1999, p. xxvi), by 1860 “capital investment in slaves in the [US] south – who now numbered close to four million, or close to one third of the population – exceeded the value of all other capital worth including land”. US slavers could therefore literally have claimed ‘our people are our greatest asset’. Management studies is concerned with a field which can define itself as about “the process of getting activities completed efficiently with and through other people” (Robbins, 1994, p. 3). Yet it has not exhibited even superficial curiosity about how these four million enslaved people were managed, at the very time and in the very nation where it claims management to have been born, in a set of long established, economically important organizations.

The Structure and Approach of the Article

As I have already stated, this is the case for the range of differing understandings that there are of management. Considering these understandings collectively, and trying despite their difference to account for the exclusion of slavery is not without its methodological problems. But as the next section demonstrates, none of the three main schools of managerial thought Grey (1999) identifies (technical, elite, and political) sees the management of people who were slaves as having anything to do with modern management.

That section will also explore why this is the case. Recognizing the vastness and diversity of the field Grey quite helpfully follows Reed (1989) in identifying exemplar texts for each of the schools; and he also argues despite their differences they together constitute a taken for granted understanding of what management is. These exemplars, and this taken for granted understanding are then examined to reveal the often implicit logic which appears to have led to the denial of slavery.

Subsequent sections of the article will in turn refute the three main components of this logic. Section three will analyze slavery's relationship with capitalism, and its role in the emergence of industrial discipline. Section four will review how slave plantations were managed, and section five will set out the extent to which there was a distinctive management occupational cate.g.ory in the ante-bellum south. The material that is drawn on in these three sections, aside from one or two primary sources, is the work of political, social, and economic historians of slavery. That these are secondary rather than primary sources actually lends strength to the underlying claim of denial. The material which management studies has ignored is not obscure hard to retrieve primary data; but the often publicly acclaimed (e.g. David Brion-Davis, cited below, has won the Pultizer Prize, the Bancroft Prize, and the National Book Award for books on slavery) and widely reviewed work of those with a longstanding and substantial institutional presence in the academy.

The conclusion assesses the implications of the preceding sections on their own terms, in relation to management history/historiography more generally, and for various versions of that history. In so doing it proposes a more postcolonialist understanding of that history; but at the same time suggests that this should not be seen as the only, or even primary significance of the article. If there is to be one message above all to arise from this article, the conclusion suggests, it is that with which it started – that management studies has wrongly excluded slavery; and that that exclusion is properly termed a denial.

THE ABSENCE AND PRESENCE OF SLAVERY IN MANAGEMENT LITERATURE

The Standards on Slavery

When it comes to slavery's actual, rather than metaphorical, presence in management there is little to be found. The standard histories of management either make no mention at all of ante-bellum slavery in the modern context (for example Pollard (1968) Wren (1972)), or alternatively explicitly exclude it from modernity, as we have already seen with Jacques (1996). An explanation of both unspoken and explicit exclusions is sought here in a review of three texts proposed as exemplars on management by Grey (1999), after Reed (1989), namely Burnham (1945), Braverman (1974) and Chandler (1977).

Grey follows Reed in distinguishing between technical, elite and political accounts of the emergence of management. In the technical account, exemplified by Chandler, the "growth in scale and complexity of capitalist enterprises required the development of a new group of specialists to manage" (Grey, 1999, p. 566); hence the requirement to coordinate through the visible hand of these managers rather than the invisible hand of the market. In the elite account, exemplified by Burnham, management is seen as a body of theory and practice which sustains an advantageous status for a particular, managerial, elite, which is able to attain that position in the first place because of the separation of ownership from control. In the political account, exemplified by Braverman, management emerged from the drive to subject workers to the discipline required by capitalist accumulation. According to Grey, "it may be noted that while this political approach to management is opposed to the functionalism of technical accounts of management, it has its own functionalism: workplace discipline is seen as functional of the drive for capital accumulation, and is at least in indirect form, functional to capital accumulation" (1999, p. 568).

All three exemplars locate slavery outside the development of modern management. Burnham presents a quasi-Marxist epochal history of economic development, which concludes not in socialism but managerialist corporatism, and does therefore cover the era of ante-bellum slavery. But for Burnham wage labor is a defining characteristic of the capitalist epoch, implicitly precluding any consideration of slavery, which consequently is only mentioned briefly in relation to feudalism. For Braverman, the production process is framed by the "antagonism between those who carry on the process and those for whom it is carried out, those who manage and those who execute...." (1974, p. 68). But again, any recognition of this antagonism on ante-bellum plantations is precluded by wage labor as a defining feature of capitalism, and slavery is only mentioned in relation to ancient E.g.ypt.

Chandler pays most attention to slavery, over three pages; but these are three of 500, and their title ("The plantation - an ancient form of large scale production" (1977, p. 64)) makes his pre-modern situating of slavery clear. Chandler clearly recognizes some managerial complexity in the plantation economy. It is accepted that there was some division of labor, and managerial record keeping suggested a certain level of sophistication. Chandler also states that as the first salaried manager in the US, "the plantation overseer was an important person in American economic history. The size of this group (in 1850 overseers numbered 18,859) indicates that many planters did feel that they needed full time assistance to carry out their managerial tasks" (1977, p. 64). Despite this it is asserted that the Southern plantation "had little impact on the evolution of the modern business enterprise" (1977, p. 66), for three reasons. First, notwithstanding the nearly 19,000 overseers, Chandler claims there was no meaningful separation of ownership and control. "The majority of southern planters directly managed the property they owned" (1967, p. 64) which, we should remind ourselves, included people, and cites Fogel and Engerman's (1974) claim that many owners of large plantations did not employ resident salaried overseers.

Second, he argues that plantations were limited in scale. Thus the "plantation workforce was small by modern standards. Indeed it was smaller than in contemporary New England cotton mills...[in] 1850 only 1,479 plantations had more than 100 slaves" (1977, p. 64). The scope for managerialism to develop was by implication constrained; hence Chandler's third argument, that there was a lack of managerial sophistication on the plantations. The managerial task was "almost wholly the supervision of workers" (1967, p. 65), which by implication was straightforward, and indeed a little more than a seasonal requirement ("only at those critical periods of planting and harvesting.... did the work of the planter the overseer and the drivers become more than routine" (1977, p. 65)). Division of labor was limited, the accounting there was simple, and in any case book keeping was more likely to be undertaken by the plantation owner.

A Logic of Denial

What the exemplars Burnham, Braverman and Chandler have in common is the construction of a grand narrative, in which the emergence of management as an activity and of managers as a group or class is a consequence of the growth and increasing industrial sophistication of a globalising capitalist economy. In addition, for Grey, for their real theoretical differences the three perspectives "collectively constitute the fabric of the knowledge through which the

commonsense and taken-for-granted reality of management is woven". This knowledge is that "... management is what managers do" (1999, p. 569); that is, a conflation of a certain set of distinctive managerial activities ("what managers do") with an occupational cate.g.ory possessing a distinct managerial identity (i.e. "managers"). Taken together these shared features produce three inter-related tests for inclusion in modern management, which whatever it was that facilitated profitable production on the backs of 4 million enslaved people apparently fails. First, for management to be modern, it has to take place within the capitalist system. Slavery is excluded from capitalism explicitly by Chandler with his assertion of ancientness, and his claims for a lack of separation of ownership and control in particular, and tacitly by Burnham and Braverman with their specification of wage labor as a defining feature. Second, for management to be management, the activities carried out in its name have to be of a certain level of sophistication – for Chandler, beyond the apparently simple harnessing of enslaved people's seasonally varying labor, for Burnham and Braverman in order to achieve wage laborers' submission to capitalist relations and processes of production. Third there has to be a group of people carrying out these management activities who have a distinctive identity as managers.

The following three sections will show that the ante-bellum plantation economy actually passes rather than fails these tests. I will be.g.in by exploring the case not just for locating the plantation economy within the development of capitalism, but for seeing it as a site of the emergence of industrial discipline, as attempts were made to overcome the resistance of enslaved people in the production process. Next, I will show that managerial practice in the face of this resistance was sophisticated to the extent that it closely resembled what we now see as scientific management and as classical management theory. Third, I will show there was a substantial (greater even than Chandler allows) cadre of managers, labeled as such, with a managerial identity sustained by white supremacist racism. Although much that follows in these sections explicitly rebuts Chandler, it only does so because his is the only history of management which gives slavery serious mention. To restate, this article is about the exclusion of slavery throughout management studies, not just in Chandler.

SLAVERY, CAPITALISM AND INDUSTRIAL DISCIPLINE

Slavery and Capitalism

It must be acknowledged immediately that there is some support for the identification of ante-bellum slavery as pre-capitalist (and therefore pre-modern) precisely because wage-labor was absent (see Genovese, 1969, 1975; Smith, 1998). This analysis coincides with that implied by Burnham and Braverman, and apparently provides some justification for the exclusion of ante-bellum slavery from modern management.

This view is however contested; indeed one of the central debates in the history of slavery has been whether slaveholders in the 19th century US were actually an "a pre-capitalist seigneurial class" (Reidy, 1992, p. 31) or an entrepreneurial capitalist class. The alternative analysis, moreover, not only questions whether wage labor is a defining feature of capitalism, but also uses the very modernity of organizational forms and processes on plantations as a central component of its case. That is, there is a substantial, long established, but still growing literature that shows just how managerialist in the modern sense ante-bellum plantations were. This has been ignored by management studies. The slavery as capitalism position is associated in terms of US slavery with, for example, Fogel and Engermann (1974), Fogel (1989) (as we have already seen), Oakes (1982) and Dusinberre (1996). It is summarized thus by Smith (1998, p. 13): "True, they did not employ free labor on their plantations. But the way slaveholders organized their workforce, the way they treated their bondpeople, their heavy involvement in the market economy, and their drive for profit made them *much more* capitalist than historians like Genovese are willing to concede".

The added emphasis indicates how the debate has moved on from one between absolute capitalist – pre capitalist positions to the consideration of questions of de.g.ree, and of the significance of slavery in the transition to the modern capitalist economy. As an illustration, Genovese (1998) has praised Dusinberre's account of rice production in the South Carolina and Georgia, despite its coupling of an account of the utter horror of slave labor in the swamplands with an unequivocal argument that those responsible were capitalist. Dusinberre argues in relation to a particular slaveowner that:

> "he and his predecessors had made a massive investment (of other people's labor) in embanking, clearing and ditching the swamp, so as to enhance the productivity of future laborers. This is what capitalist development is all about – the increase of labor productivity by combining an ever-increasing proportion of capital with the

> labor of an individual worker, so that the laborers product becomes much larger than it could otherwise have been…" (1996, pp. 404-5).

For Dusinberre, the relatively low cost of labor to the slave owner, and the ability to coerce slaves, outweighed the benefits of wage labor, which slave owners could of course have chosen to use. More, while the slave owner's capital stake in a slave was greater than that in a wage laborer, "a planters capital investment in a slave was "not so "fixed" and unchangeable as that in a rice mill" (1996, p. 405), and a slave could be disposed of quickly at market. Reidy (1992) produces similar arguments in relation to South Central Georgia, and Johnson (1999) shows the deal making and speculation in ante-bellum slave-markets was of a complexity which reflected the significance enslaved people embodied as capital. Individual traits of age, gender, beauty, skin color, strength, attitude and so on were catalogued, classified and measured one against the other, reducing people to commodities who were traded as such in a modern commodity market, irrespective of family ties, personal desires and aspirations, or indeed their very status as human beings.

For Oakes (1998), though, the key issue now is not whether slavery was or was not capitalist, but the relationship between capitalism and slavery. Oakes commends both Genovese (1992), and Blackburn (1997), who analyses the development of New World slavery (i.e. in the Americas as a whole and not just the USA) up until 1800, that is before the major pre-Civil War expansion of slavery in the US. Nonetheless, Blackburn's intention is to explore the "many ways in which American slavery proved compatible with elements of modernity [which] will help dispel the tendency of classical social science… to equate slavery with traditionalism, patrimonialism and backwardness" (1997, p. 4), and goes on to argue that slavery, inter-alia advanced the pace of capitalist industrialization in Britain, and conversely that industrial capitalism boosted slavery. Though Blackburn's work is relatively new, this is not a recent argument, but one which can be found in, for example, Moore (1967), which specifically identifies the southern plantation economy as part of the engine of broader US capitalist development.

Resistance and Industrial Discipline

Blackburn goes on to make the link between capitalism, slavery and the emergence of management more explicit. In so doing he contradicts Chandler on the irrelevance of slavery to modern enterprise (1997, p. 588):

> "The contribution of New World slavery to the evolution of industrial discipline and principles of capitalist rationalization has been ne.g.lected....[In] so far as plantation slavery was concerned, the point would be that it embodied some of the principles of productive rational organization, and that secondly, it did so in such a partial or even contradictory manner that it provoked critical reflection, resistance, and innovation...."

Blackburn locates this "reflection, resistance and innovation" outside the plantation, with "the secular thought of the enlightenment which was important for anti slavery because it explored alternative ways of motivating labourers. It established the argument that modern conditions did not require tied labour" (1997, p. 587). He continues "Not by chance were prominent abolitionists in the forefront of prison reform, factory le.g.islation, and the promotion of public education. In each area progress was to be potentially doubled edged, entwining empowerment with discipline." It was not just abolitionist views alone of human motivation, and of organization more generally which were informed by enlightenment thought, however; indeed there is clear evidence that it was used to explore ways of maintaining the productive oppression of the people who were slaves. Hence, according to the Southern Cultivator of 1846, quoted in Oakes (1982, p. 153) "[n]o more beautiful picture of human society can be drawn than a well organized plantation, thus governed by the humane principles of reason."

Furthermore, while Blackburn is correct that resistance to slavery was important to development of industrial discipline, he takes no account of the innovation of managerial strate.g.ies for dealing with this resistance at the intra-organizational level, within the labor process itself. The resistance which slave managers developed practices to address day to day was not that of famous abolitionists, but that of the people who were slaves. Debates as to the nature and significance of these people's resistance and coercion are as central to histories of slavery as those surrounding its place within capitalism. Controversially, Elkins (1959) drawing parallels with concentration camps argued that an infantilized slave consciousness was imposed by various oppressive means, such as the forbidding of literacy or any act of individual initiative. This was countered by presentations of various forms of

slave resistance and self organization which suggest that people who were enslaved had a clear and sophisticated consciousness of their oppression (e.g. Webber, 1978).

Also controversial was the work Fogel and Engerman (1974), whose case for slavery as rationalist capitalism went so far as to argue, inter alia that people who were enslaved bought into a protestant work ethic, and that slaves were rarely physically mistreated, as no rational capitalist would intentionally damage their own property. Fogel and Engerman's representation of the everyday life of slavery was contradicted by others drawing on an equivalent level of empirical and archival data, who detailed both its harshness and cruelty, and the extent of slave resistance (see for example David et al., 1976). Fogel's subsequent work (1989) backed away from his and Engerman's initial position and appeared to recognize the validity of the opposing case; for example, he acknowledges Stampp's (1956) earlier view that there was almost an anti-work ethic, a moral code amongst slaves which made resistance a duty.

Taken together, recognizing that there are profound differences of principle, the various analyses suggest a range of forms of discipline matched by a variety of forms of ever present resistance. This variety ranged from the less frequent, and high risk insurrection or absconding, although Franklin and Schweninger (1999) argue that slaves' willingness to escape has been understated, through arson (Jones, 1990) to acts familiar from any account of work in modern organizations – for example, overt or concealed insubordination, sabotage and theft (Genovese, 1975). Patterns of discipline and resistance varied over time, according to geography (escape was more frequent in states closer to the North), and to industrial/agricultural sector. There were also understandable desires on the part of enslaved people to improve their circumstances, or at least mitigate the harshnesses of their existence. The empirical evidence leaves no doubt that these were real, taking the form of the most inhuman extremes of physical punishment and, even under the most paternalist owner, the ever present and often implemented threat of sale of partners or children (again, see Jones, 1990). Slaveholders tried to manipulate these desires to limit resistance; and in conjunction with and as part of this manipulation attempted to use a range of what can only be seen managerial techniques with, as was ever to be the case, only partial de.g.rees of success.

A Case Study: Soldiering in the fields

In 1861 Olmsted provided an example of plantation industrial discipline, depicting work in production line terms:

> "[Slaves] are constantly and steadily driven up to their work, and the stupid, plodding machine like manner in which they labor is painful to witness. This was especially the case with the hoe gangs. One of them numbered nearly two hundred hands....moving across the field in parallel lines, with a considerable de.g.ree of precision. I repeatedly rode through the lines at a canter, with other horsemen, often coming upon them suddenly, without producing the smallest change or interruption in the dogged action of the laborers, or causing one of them....to lift an eye" (1861/1953, p. 452).

This was later partially quoted by Fogel (1989, p. 27), and conveys an image of resistance overcome by industrial discipline. What Fogel doesn't quote is an earlier section in Olmsted which suggests resistance was not always overcome. This is introduced with the claim that "...slaves...very frequently cannot be made to do their masters will...Not that they often directly refuse to obey an order, but when they are directed to do anything for which they have a disinclination, they undertake it in such a way that the desired result is sure not to be accomplished". Significantly, the section in Olmsted is entitled "Sogering", (1861/1953, p. 100). According to Partridge (1984:1111) the verb soger, dating from the 1840s means "to shirk and/or malinger; to pretend to work....Also *soldier*". It is "soldiering" (1967:11), of course, that Taylor famously sought to address in 1911 in the Principles of Scientific Management. Olmsted makes no further reference to the term, but goes on to draw parallels between slaves and soldiers and sailors, who find themselves "in a condition in many particulars resembling that of slaves" (1861/1953, p. 101), albeit a condition entered into (according to Olmsted) by voluntary contract, who obey the letter of an instruction but defeat the purpose.

Franklin and Schweninger (1999) suggest that because slave resistance, particularly escape, carried on in the face of efforts to impose industrial discipline that therefore it did not work. But it is also the case, as Reidy (1992) argues, that these efforts were nonetheless intended to overcome resistance, just as soldiering was represented by Taylor as something to be overcome by scientific management; and the economic growth of slavery suggests that these efforts, while not eliminating resistance completely, worked well enough for the

enslavers. The next section will show just how managerialist, in the modern sense, these efforts were.

SLAVERY AND "WHAT MANAGERS DO"

The pattern of slave resistance, combined with the scale and significance of the plantation economy suggest a strong circumstantial case that the operation of slave plantation and the handling of enslaved people must have been more complex than Chandler allows. This section shows that there is no need to rely on circumstantial evidence alone, and instead that modern managerial practices were to be found in the operation of the ante-bellum plantations. Taylorism and classical management theory, as summarized by Morgan (1986, p. 30 and 26 respectively) are the benchmarks of modernity here. Taylorism can be seen in the application of scientific method, the selection of the best person for the job, and the monitoring of performance. The principles of classical management can be seen in the division of labor, the development of sophisticated organizational rules, a chain of command, a distinction (just) between line and staff esprit de corps, analyses of the appropriate span of control, debates about unity of command (related to the separation of ownership and control), and attempts to instill discipline. The separation of conception from execution, the final principle of Taylorism, is dealt with in the next section.

Scientific Management and Slavery

Brion-Davis (1998) suggests that Ellis (1997) portrays Thomas Jefferson as "an efficiency expert, a kind of proto-Frederick Winslow Taylor". Jefferson established a slave run nail factory on his estate at Monticello in 1794. "Every morning except Sunday [Jefferson] walked over to the nailery, to weigh out the nail rod for each worker, then returned at dusk to weigh the nails each had made and calculate how much had been wasted by the most and least efficient workers" (Ellis, 1997, p. 167). Ellis continues to describe the "blazing forges and sweating black boys arranged along an assembly line of hammers and anvils...". Despite acknowledging this proto-Taylorism, Brion-Davis takes Blackburn's argument with respect to abolitionists and industrial discipline further, making a specific link between it and Taylorism:

> "English and American Quakers who were in the vanguard of the abolition movement also led the way in devising and imposing newer forms of labor discipline. There is a profound historical irony in the fact that "Speedy Fred Taylor", our century's exponent of efficiency of and the first to dispossess workers of all control of the

> workplace was born of Quaker parents in Germantown, Pennsylvania, the site in 1688 of the world's first great petition against human bondage" (1998, p. 51).

This underplays just how Taylorist "proto-Taylorist" slave organizations were. Long before Taylor, workers who were slaves had been "dispossessed of control over the workplace", and subject to "newer forms of labor discipline". Hence, as Blackburn himself points out, even in the late seventeenth century, in the British Caribbean "[t]he plantation was a total environment in which lives of the captive workforce could be bent unremittingly to maximize output" (1997, p. 260). This, in passing, counters Chandler's exclusion of the plantation from managerial modernity on the grounds of the unintensive seasonality of slave labor, as does the experience of Frederick Douglass (1996, p. 64):

> "We were worked in all weathers. It was never too hot or too cold; it could never rain, blow, hail or snow, too hard for us to work in the field. Work, work, work was scarcely more the order of the day than of the night. The longest days were too short for him [the slaver], and the shortest nights too long for him."

Empirical confirmation of Douglass is provided by Stampp (1956), Fogel (1989), and Campbell (1989, p. 120) who shows seasonality for slaves in Texas meant a 10 hour working day in January and 12 in July.

Elsewhere Oakes (1982) summarizes plantation organization in a chapter entitled "factories in the fields"; and Reidy, (1992, p. 38) talking of the growth of larger scale Georgian plantations in the 1830s, which involved the acquisition of both smaller plantations and slaves used to working on them talks of a "campaign to reshape the relations of production" in which ""[s]cientific management" – of seeds, soils, animals, implements and techniques as well as laborers provided the framework", although he takes the claim no further in terms of the purposes of this article. It is arguably the case, then, that the proto-Taylorianism which Jefferson brought to the nailery was not innovative, but a transfer of managerialism from the plantation fields to manufacture. Thus the supposedly Taylorian application of scientific method to the labor process, evident in Jefferson's measuring of individual output and scrap, was long established in slave worked organizations. Blackburn (1997, p. 463) identifies "attempts to introduce a form of work study calibrating what could be extracted from each slave" as early as the mid 18th century, and goes on to cite a planter's diary:

> " as to all work I lay down this rule. My overseers then their foremen close for one day in every job; and deducting of that 1/5 of that days work, he ought every other day keep up to that. Therefore by dividing every gang into good, middling and indifferent hands, one person out of each is to watched for 1 day's work; and all of the same division must be kept to his proportion"

Another set of plantation rules states (Scarborough, 1966, p. 69): "[the overseer] must attend particularly to all experiments instituted by the Employer, conduct them faithfully and report re.g.ularly and correctly. Some overseers defeat important experiments by carelessness or wilfulness." Wesley (1978) notes widely reported 1850s experiments at the Saluda cotton mill in the 1850s, which found that found that slave rather than free labor resulted in a thirty percent cost saving. More, Smith (1997) shows that from the 1800s onwards the greater use of more and more accurate watches and clocks increased time discipline, and led to more accurate measurement and management of slaves' productivity.

Classical Management

There was also a systematic approach to the division of labor, which is associated both with Taylor and classical management more generally. Fogel (1989, p. 26) argues that sugar plantations saw developments in industrial discipline, "partly because sugar production lent itself to a minute division of labor, partly because of the invention of the gang system, which provided a powerful instrument for the supervision and control of labor, and partly because of the extraordinary de.g.ree of force that planters were allowed to bring to bear on enslaved black labor". Although a small proportion of plantations were engaged in sugar production in the US, the gang system spread to other crops (with the notable exception of rice), and for Fogel (1989) and Reidy (1992) it is a mainspring of economic success. Reidy, discussing cotton adds: "in short, the gang system of labor, backed by the lash, proved an excellent mechanism for the subordinating large numbers of slaves to the will of a small number of masters" (1992, p. 37).

The gang system required a complex division of labor. First, there was that between those slaves who worked in gangs, and those who did not, for example artisans. On sugar and cotton plantations gangs were usually of 10 to 20 people, but sometimes far larger. Second there was an internal division of labor within the gang "which not only assigned every member… to a precise task but simultaneously made his or her performance dependent on

the actions of the others" (Fogel, 1989, p. 27). Thus on one plantation, in which the planting gang was divided into three classes (in pre-Taylorian selection of the best person for the job), according to a contemporary account (Fogel, 1989, p. 27):

> "1st the best hands, embracing those of good judgement and quick motion. 2nd those of the weakest and most inefficient class. 3rd the second class of hoe hands. Thus classified, the first class with run ahead and open a small hole about seven to ten inches apart, into which the second class drop from four to five cotton seed, and the third class follow and cover with a rake."

Thus, third, work was divided between gangs, in a way designed to produce inter-gang dependencies and tensions (again, Fogel, 1989). The use of gangs also developed what Blackburn (1997, p. 355) identifies as an "esprit de corps" (which sometimes erupted in insurrection) in which effort and commitment for one's peers was manipulated for slave owners ends; although the term Chandler uses (1977, p. 65) to describe gang labor – "teamwork" – is of more current, if unwitting, resonance. Oakes (1982, p. 154) also sets out the chain of command: "all were subservient to those immediately above them, and at each level of bureaucracy, duties and responsibilities were explicitly defined. On large highly organized plantations there might be separate rules for watchmen, truck-minders, nurses, cooks as well as drivers, overseers and field hands. The chain of command went upwards from drivers to overseers to masters. Always there was obedience".

Along with this was an ongoing consideration of the optimum span of control. Hence "for any thing but corn and cotton 10-20 workers are as many as any common white man can attend to" (Hammond, 1847 in Scarborough, 1966, p. 9). Scarborough continues, " a ratio of fifty slaves to one overseer was considered the most efficient unit in the plantation South". There was also a debate over unity of command and centralisation of authority revolving around the involvement of plantation owners in management (i.e. the separation of ownership from control): "To make the overseer responsible for the management of the plantation he must have control of it otherwise he cannot be responsible, because no man, is nor should be responsible for the acts of another"(Southern Cultivator, 1854 in Scarborough, 1966, p. 118). It is even possible to distinguish, just, between line and staff. A visitor to a Louisiana sugar estate of 6 plantations noted that it employed six overseers and a general agent, and "staff" employees covering a traditional managerial trinity - financial resources (a book-keeper) literal human resources (two physicians and a preacher) and

plant (a head carpenter, a tinner and a ditcher). The visitor added “Every thing moves on systematically, and with the discipline of a re.g.ular trained army” (Stampp, 1956, p. 43).

This mention of discipline leads to its consideration in the classical management sense of “obedience, application, energy, behavior and outward marks of respect in accordance with agreed rules and customs; subordination of individual interest to general interest through firmness, example, fair agreements and constant supervision; equity, based on kindness and justice, to encourage personnel in their duties....” (Morgan, 1986, p. 26). That management of slave plantations was “routine”, as Chandler (1977, p. 65) has it, was by design. Overseers were told “[t]wo leading principles are endeavored to be acted upon... 1st to reduce everything to system 2nd introduce daily accountability in every department”. (Southern Agriculturist, 1833, in Starobin 1970, p. 91); and “... arrangement and re.g.ularity form the great secret of doing things well, you must therefore as far as possible have everything done to fixed rule.” (n.d. in Scarborough, 1996, p. 74). This emphasis on re.g.ularity and routine, the division of labor, and rules was widespread (see also Stampp, 1956). Indeed, Oakes (1982, p. 154) goes so far as to argue that “before punishment and persuasion, rules were the primary means of maintaining order on the ideal plantation” and that the overarching purpose of all plantation management – rules, division of labor, chain of command – was to achieve obedience on the part of slaves. Unity of interest was stressed; according to a planter in 1837: “The master should make it his business to show his slaves, that the advancement of his individual interest, is at the same time an advancement of theirs. Once they feel this it will require but little compulsion to make them act as it becomes them” (Stampp, 1956, p. 147).

This was apparently not felt by slaveowners and managers to incompatible with the systematized cruelty that clearly existed, albeit dressed up in claims for reasonability and fairness. Hence, another set of rules for overseers states “[i]f you punish only according to justice & reason, with uniformity, you can never be too severe & will be the more respected for it, even by those who suffer”(Scarborough, 1966, p. 74). According to (Reidy, 1992, p. 37):

> “In placing jurisdiction over field operations in the hands of overseers, planters encouraged the use of the lash, the prime mover of slaves working in gangs. Cracking whips constantly punctuated field labor, but slaves suffered more serious whippings – often in the form of “settlements” at the end of the day – for falling

short of quotas, losing or damaging tools and injuring animals. Defiance of plantation rules, such as keeping cabins clean met the same kind and de.g.ree of punishment".

Reidy suggests that the employment of overseer managers was the norm, at least in central Georgia. The next section will show how far this was the case for the ante-bellum South as a whole, and that these overseers really were "managers".

MANAGERS, RACISM AND THE MANAGERIAL IDENTITY

Overseers and Managers

This section shows how the organization of ante-bellum slavery passes the third and final test for inclusion in modern management, namely that there was an occupational cate.g.ory with distinctive managerial identity. It also provides disturbing evidence of how this distinctive identity was le.g.itimized. To be.g.in, as the quotation from Olmsted in the prima-facie case above suggests, the description of overseers as managers, and the use of the term managing or management to describe their practice is not anachronistic. As Franklin and Schweninger (1999, p. 241) point out, "advice.... came from the pages of periodicals such as De Bows Review, Southern Cultivator, Farmer's Re.g.ister and Farmer and Planter, in articles "On the Management of Slaves", "The Management of Ne.g.roes", "Judicious Management of the Plantation Force", "Moral Management of Ne.g.roes" and "Management of Slaves." This in turn provides confirmation, if it is still needed that there was a managerialist consciousness and reflexivity associated with slavery.

Moreover, Chandler's representation of the size of this cate.g.ory is open to challenge. While obliged to acknowledge that the number of salaried plantation managers in 1850 (18,859) is significant, Chandler nowhere explains the cate.g.orization of ante-bellum slavery as ancient nonetheless; neither does he in The Visible Hand, or elsewhere (e.g. Chandler, 1965, 1994) provide a comparative figure for managers on the railroads, where modern management was supposedly concurrently being born. Nor does he explain his choice of 1850 rather than 1860. According to Chandler's source, Scarborough (1966, p. 11), who uses US census data, the number of plantation managers slightly more than doubled in this 10 year period, rising to 37,883. The increase is explained by plantations merging (bigger plantations, fewer owners, more managers – hence an increasing separation of ownership and control) and the expansion of slavery into the "new" parts of the western US. Accordingly, the number of plantations with more than 100 people who were slaves had increased to 2,279 by 1860 (from the 1,479 in 1850 cited by Chandler (1977), above).

Racist Construction of the Managerial Identity

The empirical data demonstrate, therefore, that there was a substantial and growing group of people using what are now seen as management practices, who were known as managers, running ante-bellum plantations. What is also clear, and discomforting, is that white supremacist racism underpinned the creation of the managerial identity. The key principle of Taylorism in the construction of this identity, hitherto unaddressed, is the separation of conception from execution, the shifting "of all responsibility for the organization of work from the worker...". What distinguishes modern managers as managers is that they "...should do all the thinking...leaving workers with the task of implementation" (Morgan 1986, p. 30). On the plantations this principle was specified thus "[t]he slave should know that his master is to govern absolutely, and he is to be obey implicitly... he is never for a moment to exercise either his will or his judgment in opposition to a positive order", and slaves should have a "habit of perfect dependence on their masters" (Southern Cultivator, 1846, in Stampp, 1956, pp. 145,147).

Racism was used to justify the assumption of this right to manage. Attempts were made to impose "a consciousness of personal inferiority"; slaves "had to feel that that their African ancestry tainted them" (Stampp, 1956, p. 145). According to Oakes "[t]he ideal plantation was a model of efficiency. Its premise was black inferiority..." (1982, p. 154). Black people were cate.g.orized as the moral and intellectual inferiors of whites, suitable only for drudgery, and beseeching management. This is epitomized in Hammond's infamous speech to the US Senate in 1858 (quoted in Frederickson, 1988, p. 23).

> "In all social systems there must be a class to do the menial duties, to perform the drudgery of life. That is a class requiring but a low order of intellect and little skill. Its requisites are vigor, docility, fidelity. Such a class you must have...it constitutes the very mud-sill of society...Fortunately for the South we have found a race adapted to that purpose to her hand...We do not think that whites should be slaves either by law or necessity. Our slaves are black, of another, inferior race. The status in which we have placed them is an elevation. They are elevated the condition in which God first created them by making them slaves."

Kanigel provides evidence of Taylor's own concurrence with this view, notwithstanding his abolitionist parents, quoting him saying in 1914 (1998, p. 522):

> "Only a few hundred years ago a great part of the world's work was done by actual slaves....and this slavery was of the very worst type –far worse than that of our own country in which the black men (on the whole an inferior race) were made the slaves of the white men."

Having criticized Jacques in the introduction, it is important to note his recognition of the racist continuity in Taylorism. This is exemplified in the representation of the pig iron shifter Schmidt in the "Principles of Scientific Management". Taylor's right to manage, to conceive in order that Schmidt might execute, is implied both in description of him as "mentally sluggish" (Taylor, 1967, p. 46) and in the representation of him, as Jacques puts it (1996, p. 81) as "childlike". Hence:

> ""Schmidt, are you high priced man ?"
> "Vell, I don't know vat you mean"
> "Oh yes you do..."
> "Vel I don't know vat you mean"
> "Oh come now answer my questions.... What I want to find out is whether you want to earn $1.85 a day or whether you are satisfied with $1.15..."
> "Did I vant $1.85 a day? Vas dot a high priced man? Vell yes I vas a high priced man..."" (Taylor, 1967, p. 45).

Jacques points out that Taylor here adopts an infantilizing slavers' voice, as a comparison with a slave owner's account of a black foreman's behaviour under threat of flood confirms: ""Marster! Marster!" he called up to the big house; "For Gawd's sake Marster, come! De levee done broke and de water's runnin' 'cross de turn row in de upper fiel' jes' dis side de gin! Oh Gawd A'mighty ! Oh Gawd A'mighty!"" (Van Deburg, 1979, p. 49).

The slaveowner urges the slave to "be a man" and commands the slaves to put things to rights. They "gathered around him in their helplessness, trusting implicitly in his judgement, receiving his rapid comprehensive orders" (Van Deburg, 1979, p. 49). This too leads us to another, final, challenge to Chandler. Here it is the slaveowner who is depicted as capable of the managerial brainwork, and this may be seen as supporting Chandler's assertion apparently based on Fogel and Engerman (1974), that there was little separation of ownership from control. But, again, things are not quite as they seem. Fogel and Engerman's

argument that there were relatively few salaried managers is made in support of a once again controversial and contested (again see Day et al., 1976) claim that non-salaried, (i.e. slave) managers were "ubiquitous" (1974, p. 211) on plantations. This in turn was a plank in their main case, diametrically opposed to Chandler, that the plantation system was modern, with slaves (metaphorically) buying into the system. Neither Fogel and Engerman nor their critics argued that plantations had no managers; rather the issue was who the managers were.

CONCLUSION – SLAVERY'S MULTIPLE SIGNIFICANCES

This article has shown that there is a strong case for arguing the ante-bellum plantation system was not pre-capitalist; and certainly that there is no real question nowadays that it is implicated in the broader processes of capitalist development, and that it was a site of the early development of industrial discipline. It has also shown that plantation management has passed the other two tests for inclusion in the history of management – the existence of a sophisticated set of managerial practices and of a significant group of managers described as such at that time.

The industrial discipline which emerged on the plantations was not disconnected temporally, spatially or in substance from that which emerged in other parts of the US economy. The imprint of slavery in contemporary management can be seen in the ongoing dominance from that time of the very idea of the manager with a right to manage. It can also be seen in the specific management ideas and practices now known as classical management and scientific management which were collated and re-presented with these labels within living memory of the abolition of US slavery. As this article has shown, this presence of managers and management is widely documented outside management studies, but has not had any mention within it

These are findings enough, and the temptation is to leave things as they are, and not diminish or dilute them by further theorizing at this stage. However, a claim was made in the introduction of further significance for management history/historiography. The exploration of what this might be leads to a reaffirmation, however, that it is the link with slavery, and its consequences, that is the most important finding of this article; it also reinforces the use of "denial" over "absence".

Postcolonialism

This article shows one way in which management owes more than a little to European settlers' and their descendents' exploitation of the six million Africans who were transported to the Americas, and their 4 million fairly immediate ante-bellum descendents. It quite clearly therefore also shows it to be one of the "new ways of perceiving, organizing, representing and acting upon the world which we designate as 'modern' [which] owed as much to the colonial encounter as they did to the industrial revolution, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment" (Seth, Gandhi and Dutton, 1998 p. 6). That is, this article supports a postcolonialist understanding of management.

According to Seth, Gandhi and Dutton: "(p)ostcolonialism has directed its... critical antagonism towards the universalising knowledge claims of 'western civilization'; its "protestations *against* 'major' knowledges and *on behalf of* 'minor'/deterritorialized knowledges" (Seth, Gandhi and Dutton 1998, p. 8). Unlike Holvino (1996), this article does not address these deterritorialized knowledges in management. But its deconstruction of the managerial 'major' knowledge might claim to be postcolonialist, in that it reveals an aspect of the process through which, in the face of resistance:

> "The countries of the West ruled the peoples of the non-Western world. Their political dominance had been secured and was underwritten by coercive means...It was further underwritten by narratives of improvement, of civilising mission and the white man's burden, which were secured in systems of knowledge which made sense of these narratives, and were in turn shaped by them." (Seth, Gandhi and Dutton, 1998, p. 7).

The support that this article offers for postcolonialism in management is important, given that it is otherwise quite rare, exceptions being Holvino (1996), and Anshuman Prasad (1997, 2003). However, I am anxious that this is not seen as its primary significance. This is a shift from my own initial position (indeed the first version of this article was written for a postcolonialism conference stream).

Part of my caution derives from a recognition that other theorizations might equally claim to be sustained by this paper. Marxism, as Loomba (1998) points out, also gives central a role to imperialism, although its representatives in management studies (not least, the exemplar Braverman) have yet to acknowledge this. The material in this article might also be

reordered in a way which supports Burrell's poststructuralist/Foucauldian view of management history, which might otherwise reasonably claim to have been badly done to, excluded even, by the ideal type linear model of management adopted here (but more on this to come). [1]

Thinking about slavery and its consequences not in grand global imperialism terms but in relation to social processes closer to those normally associated with management studies, that is of organization and management, also suggests another narrative, a kind of meta-level grounded theory. In this, it is white racism particularly towards African Americans, and resistance thereto in work organizations which is the continuing and defining strand. While the Civil War ended formal slavery in the US it did not end the racism that underpinned it, as we have seen in relation to Taylor. This racism, and resistance to it did not, and does not stop at the door of the workplace.

Thus King (1995) outlines how from the early to the late-mid 20th century, as white Southern politicians once again gained the upper hand, the Federal Government actually extended its anti African-American se.g.re.g.ationist employment practices. In 1913 W.E.B. DuBois stated in an open letter to the unequivocally racist (again King 1995) President Woodrow Wilson, who within management studies is also known as the founder of public administration (Shafritz and Hyde 1992):

> "Public se.g.re.g.ation of civil servants in government employ, necessarily involving personal insult and humiliation, has for the first time in history been made the policy of the United States government. In the Treasury and Postoffice [sic] departments colored clerks have been herded to themselves as though they were not human beings. We are told that one colored clerk who could not actually be se.g.re.g.ated on account of the nature of his work has consequently had a cage built around him to separate him from his white companions of many years …." (in Lewis 1995, p. 446).

Cooke's (2003) postcolonialist recasting of the invention of group dynamics and action research as mechanisms of surveillance and control of African American rebellion can also be fitted into this account. In the related context of Organization Development, there is Wells and Jennings' assessment of contemporary US organizations as "neo-pigmentocracies" with "quasi-herrenvolk democratic cultures' (1989, p. 108). Bell and Nkomo's (2001) contrasting of black and white women managers' experiences would add gender to this

strand. While there are already generally micro-level considerations of dealing with racism in relation to specific and current management practices, for example equal opportunities in employment and HRM, this all points to a need to acknowledge race, and particularly anti-African American racism, as a continuing factor in the historical development of management.

Such an acknowledgment would however be contrary to Burrell's (1997) argument against linear histories of management. Ending linearity not only challenges the authority of existing meta-narratives; it removes the opportunity for nascent (e.g. postcolonialist) or under-written (e.g. anti-African American racist) continuities to be codified within management studies. Burrell does have a point that linearity can be an exclusionary force, though. The final cause of my caution about seeing this article primarily as postcolonialist is that while a consideration of management in slavery supports postcolonialism (and perhaps other social theories), a postcolonialist (or any other) theorization should not be a prerequisite to any consideration of slavery. This is particularly the case given that whatever existent or emergent theorization we use to frame the past, the link between management and slavery is always waiting to be obviously made. It is a transcendent feature, not least because slavery through the very nature of its human devastation and oppression has an empirical significance which does not need prequalification. This is notwithstanding all I have said in the introduction about the epistemology of the past. Burrell (1997) was right to consider the relationship between management and the holocaust (not that I otherwise see any point in comparing it with slavery), on the same grounds, because the holocaust was the holocaust.

Some of the histories of slavery used in this article do make heavy use of social theory (e.g. Genovese's Marxism). But generally, it is not this theory, but the scale and scope of slavery itself which makes its investigation a le.g.itimate, indeed moral, academic imperative. History as a discipline, of course, has different research priorities to management studies. Nonetheless, from its prima-facie case onwards this article has shown slavery to have had a particular affinity with management, which management studies might be expected to have addressed before now. The weight of evidence shown here to underpin this expectation is so great that denial is surely the appropriate term.

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[1] In passing, there is in Cuba's Valle de los Ingenios ("ingenios" being the Cuban Spanish term for slave worked sugar mills and plantations, as well as generic Spanish for engines; thanks to my colleague Armando Barrientos for explaining this) the 150 foot tall Manaca Ignaza watchtower (1835), designed to give armed guards a 360 de.g.ree panoramic view of slaves in the fields and mills from every floor. These people themselves could not see whether or not they were being observed, however. (Fraginals 1976). The tower is, in other words, a panopticon.