

The economists had a stylised conception of the Federal court – one that exaggerated its control of affairs. The Court's willingness to listen to economists was no doubt due partly to its own lack of economics expertise: it was entirely composed of lawyers. (p. 697)

In his conclusion to the book, Hancock poses the question, 'Did (the Arbitration Court) deliver outcomes that were economically sound?' (p. 709). Hancock's answer is even handed. He notes that the principal concern of the Court, particularly in its early years of operation, was to avert industrial disputation and to impose wages and conditions which were in the capacity of employers to pay. Initially, the Court posed these questions in microeconomic terms, but as decisions about the basic wage became more significant, the Court was required to take a more macroeconomic role in regulating the economy by wage setting.

While the role of the federal arbitral tribunal is now diminished, compared with earlier decades when the industrial relations system was more centralised, the issue of how the wages system in Australia should be regulated continues to be a major subject of economic and political debate. Hancock notes that in the period covered by his book, 'arbitration operated in a world of institutions and economic power wielded by large employers, employers' associations and unions. In such a world, without arbitration, outcomes would have reflected relative industrial strength' (p. 710). He concludes that the Court made a major contribution to Australian society by 'tempering bargaining strength and intruding notions of fairness and policy' (p. 710).

The book provides a positive case for the role which the federal arbitral tribunal played in developing a political culture and an economy which enhanced and protected the living standards of working people and their families in the first four decades of the Commonwealth of Australia. Hopefully, a subsequent volume will trace the development of the wages system through the post-war years to the present time. Many of the issues in this volume are relevant to the current debate about the future of wages policy in Australia in an era when the economic power wielded by unions and employer associations is greatly reduced and the federal tribunal is far less powerful. How the balance between profits for employers and equity for wage earners can be achieved in the future, with the traditional industrial relations institutions so diminished, is an issue still to be resolved. Policy makers and practitioners in industrial relations would do well to read the lessons of history contained in this volume and gain wisdom from past experience.

Thomas Klikauer, *Managerialism: A Critique of an Ideology*. Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire and New York, 2013; 368 pp.: 9781137334268 (hbk), USD100.00 (hbk)

Reviewed by: John Lodewijks, *University of Western Sydney, Australia*

This is a dark yet scholarly treatise. The author is widely read in philosophy, management and economics – there are 936 footnotes consuming 67 pages of single-spaced text – but has deliberately tried to keep a low profile, leading the solitary scholarly life and concentrating on writing books that have generated quite a reputation, unknown to most of his university colleagues but acknowledged by no less than Chomsky.

This book is a philosophical diatribe against Managerialism. The author argues that the liberal capitalism of the 18th and 19th centuries was replaced by 20th-century welfare and mass-consumer capitalism based on manufacturing with strong unions and government involvement. This has now been superseded by 21st-century managerial capitalism and corporate globalisation that has marginalised unions and substantially reduced the power of the State. As the number of non-blue-collar non-production workers increased, manufacturing was outsourced, downsized, franchised, off-shored and relocated. This changed the face of manufacturing capitalism towards service and knowledge capitalism and eventually mutated into managerial capitalism. Managerial capitalism is fundamentally different from what came before it and far more sinister.

Management comprises planning, organising, staffing, leading, directing and controlling an organisation. Managers are people in position of institutional power who monopolise decision-making and have a shared set of ideological beliefs and practices that engineers compliance and applies generic management skills and knowledge (key performance indicators (KPIs), Balanced Scorecards, 360-degree-appraisals). A growing class of petty-managers – middle-management, line-management, supervisors, overseers, section-leaders, team-leaders and so on – has multiplied. However,

The main features of Managerialism ... are unremitting organisational restructuring, sharpening of incentives, and expansion in number, power, and remuneration of senior managers, with a corresponding downgrading of the role of skilled workers. This is accompanied by the trilogy of 'downsizing-rightsizing-suicising'. (p. 7)

Consistently and continuously advocating 'change management' and 'corporate restructuring', hierarchical management structures standardise everything and demand mass conformity and with numbing regularity, decent people knuckle under the demands of managerial authority and coercion. Corporate psychopaths, with moral deafness and bipolar disorders, rule while giving and receiving orders is the sole determinant of managerial conduct.

The author continually quotes Hegel and Kant – and Hegel's student, Marx – and states that Managerialism can never eliminate the fact that surplus value remains the result of exploitation of living labour (p. 50). The horror of early factory regimes has been replaced by today's outsourced sweatshops. Capitalism's 'ruthless, harsh, unforgiving, violent, bloody, and torturous past' has now evolved into managerial dictatorships of misogynous and authoritarian regimes, where corporate decisions that are inhuman, immoral and unethical are made without misgivings (p. 168). Managerialism is undisturbed by ethics or morality as managers disassociate themselves with the number of family members affected by mass-redundancies, the psychological suffering caused by work-related stress or industrial accidents and the number of wildlife extinct through industrial pollution. Managerialism eradicates humanist values – modern slaves are renamed by the more fashionable term of human resources – and profits take precedence over workers' health and well-being, peace, environmental preservation and even national security.

The author claims that Managerialism is the most effective political instrument of any society that ever existed (p. 28). The alleged crimes of Managerialism are breathtaking.

The author claims that the Holocaust was ‘an application of modern managerial and organisational principles’ (p. 109) and a textbook example of scientific management. Without modern management techniques, the Holocaust could not have happened. Moreover, Managerial capitalism ‘exploits human beings, animals and nature’ (p. 257) and has led to bird flu, SARS, and mad cow disease, while engaging in the excessive extraction of natural resources, wasteful exploitation, clearing of forests and wholesale deforestation. Tobacco companies have killed 100 million people while oil spills, asbestos-related deaths and chemical wastes pollute our environment.

Academic institutions have also not been immune. Managerialism has successfully colonised universities who now sell degrees to students with no interest in theory, ethics, the quest for knowledge and ‘no love for wisdom’. The one-dimensional interest of students is to convert their degrees into higher salaries while academics are promoted primarily on their ability to attract external funding. Vice-chancellors now receive CEO-equivalent remuneration packages, and ‘higher education’ is no longer ‘high’ but vocational in character. University degrees have been continually cleansed of critical content – he notes the anti-theoretical and ahistorical management studies field that he works in – and entire university departments have been closed down (p. 76). There are continual assaults on critical and non-managerial activities and disciplines in academia and those unwilling to conform are culled in the latest managerially invented restructuring programme. He states in the ‘Acknowledgments’ that he is ‘grateful to those from his own university that shielded him from the worst excesses of Managerialism’.

The author rebels against ‘the sick world in which we live’ (p. 214). Our heroes are no longer those who have pioneered universal health care, public schooling for all, the 8-hour day, universal suffrage, human rights, full employment and civil rights but TV celebrities, movie stars and sports men (p. 132). Celebrities, action heroes, people with no talent in talent-shows, soap opera figures, silly game-shows, self-appointed experts, mind-numbing commentators, disguised lobbyists, religious and evangelist believers and celebrity CEOs represent today’s popular culture (p. 87). The attention given to Paris Hilton, Charlie Sheen and Lady Gaga illustrates the trivialities and meaninglessness of everyday lives. Our quest for materialist goods and petty consumerism leads us to ‘buy things we don’t need with money we don’t have to impress people we don’t even like’ (p. 180). Managerialism’s perpetual drive for economic growth leads it to continually invent false needs with its engineered obsolescence that leads to perpetual unhappiness, overconsumption and wasteful living. The result is empty lives of drudgery, monotony, resentment and apathy in over-affluent managerial society. Mindless entertainment and senseless overconsumption are accompanied by a rise in loneliness and social isolation.

The colonisation of the human mind to conformist behaviour and aspirations has been engineered by the indoctrinating powers of corporate mass media; the USD120 billion global marketing industry. It has promoted values of greed and materialism over ethically and environmentally conscious individuals. The result has been Managerialism’s pathological features – overproduction and consumption – one billion obese people while another billion go hungry – global inequality, unemployment, waste, insecurity, misery, repression and global environmental destruction. The author notes the ‘new trilogy of Managerialism, mass consumption and corporate mass media’.

The author says 'Karl Marx was right' (p. 170) in many respects. Managerial capitalism has continued the reproduction of inequality and enslavement. Unequal income distribution and a deregulated economy – the 'Privatisation of everything' – are prerequisites for managerial capitalism. Management's constant restructuring is a modern form of enslavement. But Marx's proletariat has been pacified. Individuals are unaware of the way their minds have been colonised; they have been made to believe that they can find happiness in cars, iPods, iPhones, McMansion homes, flat-screens – they suffer from Affluenza – induced by the siren calls of the corporate media that preys on egoism, selfishness and individualism. This has led to the managerial theft of the human mind and spirit and the decline of working-class consciousness and the complete annihilation of political radicalisation. Revolt and revolution are no longer possibilities despite the token Occupy Wall Street Movement.

Nevertheless, says Klikauer, the end of capitalism is nigh. The perpetual-growth ideology will become Managerialism's own negation. In true dialectical fashion, there is a contradiction of growing output of goods and services and growing environmental destruction. Infinite economic growth is based on finite earthly resources. Managerialism's sweeping rationalities of efficiency and infinite growth remain deeply irrational. The Marxist contradictions cannot be denied. Technological advances cannot save the day for technology 'can never mark a transition to a higher stage of human civilization' (p. 251). The destructiveness of managerial progress ends its own ideology. The capitalist mode of production is manifested in the contradiction between corporate ownership and ethical-sustainable production. Global warming, resource depletion and environmental destruction are inevitable. Unsustainable consumerism leads inevitably to global environmental annihilation.

The author is fuzzy on the actual process of the collapse of managerial capitalism and the emergence of a post-managerial society – much like Marx was on the end of capitalism and what came after. We are simply told that it will inevitably collapse through environmental limits, but life thereafter is only dimly sketched. It is suggested that individuals will turn off their TV sets, internet access and emails and the space gained would open up people's minds to 'beauty, enlightened reading and comprehension via critical reflection, and the aesthetic, ethical and artistic life'. A post-managerialist society, communally planned, is based on the absolute minimum labour required so that the vital needs of all members of society can be satisfied. There is no accumulation of capital, and resources are used sustainably. Abundant free time is created, as individuals are mostly freed from work and conspicuous consumption, and this allows a transformative process of individuals back to the ethics of a 'good life' free of toil, dependence, violence, domination and the ugliness of environmental destruction. Society is emancipated from 'repression, drudgery, misery, alienation, depression and injustice'. We are told that there is a move to a post-managerial sustainable environmental awareness and a non-wasteful society, so that people would now act freely and collectively and retake control of the means of sustainable production and relinquish class stratifications.

This summary I think allows the reader to get the gist of a very dark narrative with a fairy tale ending. It is a story of a handful of multinational corporations that divide up and control global markets in a non-democratic, authoritarian and dictatorial manner that leads to widespread worker dissatisfaction, alienation, bullying, harassment,

resentment, alcoholism and a pandemic of depression and stress. However, the inherent contradictions of managerial capitalism will lead to its demise, in the midst of environmental collapse, and the eventual return of 'community self-fulfilment, happiness and enjoyment, self-determination and self-actualisation, human freedom, and mutual and equal recognition'.

If one can avoid the temptation to cut one's wrists while reading on to discover further instances of the perverse nature of society and its pathologies, one must acknowledge the quality of the scholarship displayed by the author. Yes, there is far too much repetition, and the language is quite convoluted in places. Yes, the author could never be described as a 'glass half full' person. Yes, the Marxist veneer may not be persuasive. Perhaps more could have been made about the special role of finance capital, with its privatisation of profit and a socialisation of debt, in the FIRE (Finance, Insurance and Real Estate) economy. Perhaps there should have been more empirical content and case studies – although the author is clearly aware of these as illustrated in the copious footnotes. But the issues raised are important and require serious engagement.