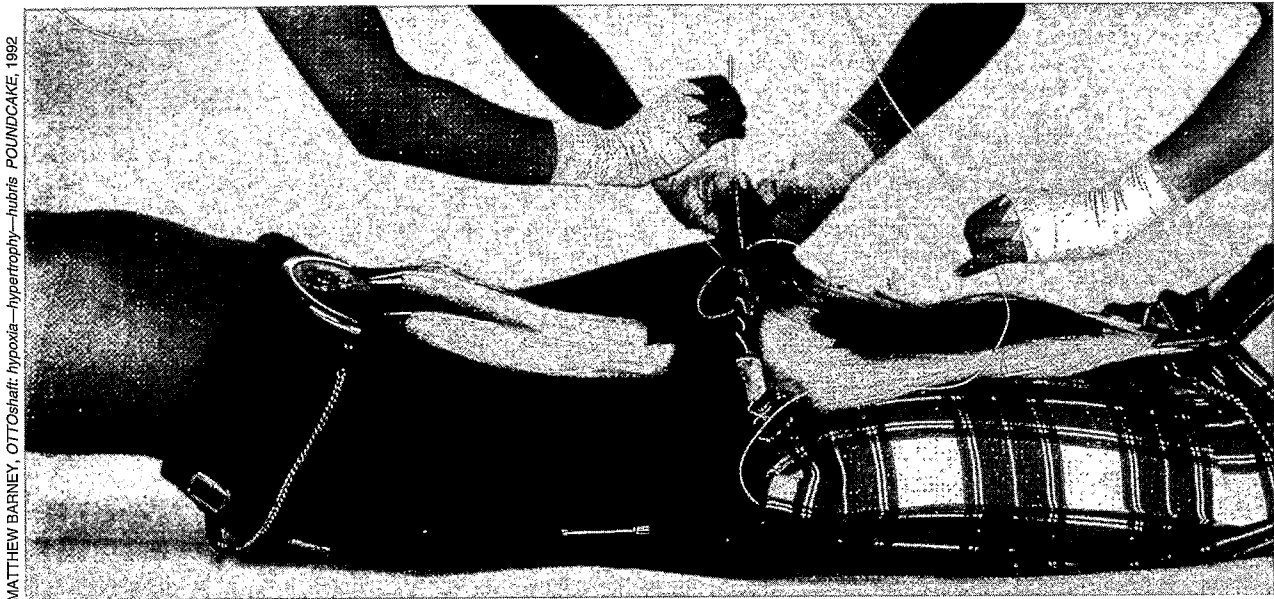# EDGES

N E W   P L A N E T A R Y   P A T T E R N S

MATTHEW BARNEY, OTTOshaft: hypoxia—hypertrophy—hubris POUNDCAKE, 1992

THE TRANS-ESTABLISHMENT STYLE

by BRIAN STANFIELD   As I was writing this chapter, King Hussein of Jordan died. The

world watched his funeral on TV. Many people were asking, "Why is this such a big deal? Why

are all those heads of state there?" National leaders came from Russia, USA, Israel, many Arab

states, and all over the world. Hussein was widely respected for many of his qualities: his

statesmanship, his geniality, his peace-making. He began by fighting the Israelis but gradually

shifted to a mediating role which climaxed at the River Wye Summit in 1999. The older he got,

the more he was able to stand above partisan rivalries and national hatreds and forge processes

of conciliation. He was not always like this. There were times when he chose sides, but the

longer he lived, the more he refused to be boxed into a position. For many people who equated

the Middle East with terrorism, he put a human face on the Arab world.

Most facilitators would agree that one of the biggest bugaboos to be overcome on the path to real social change is partisan politicking and the confrontational approach. We all think that, if we are on the side of social change, we are of necessity against something else, against a certain political party, or a corporation, or an economic system. While we may deplore the innocent suffering created by these and other agents, the social pioneer is always for something, namely, the creation of a more human future for everyone. To create that new future, that new structure, that new approach, demands creativity, ingenuity, and the willingness to use whatever resources are around.

The reader will recognize "establishment" and "disestablishment" as words in common use. There were no names for the other dynamics in the triangle of dynamics we saw operating in society, so we made them up: pro-establishment and trans-establishment.

A little explanation is needed to introduce some key terms. Any agent of social change operates, at times, in a "no man's land", shot at by both sides.

The pro-establishment is that part of society that guards the status quo. They work to preserve what is, guided by what has been. The pro-establishment is dedicated to maintaining familiar standards while resisting their disruption. As writer and philosopher John Cock puts it: "they are the bankers, lawyers, elected representatives, bishops, business leaders— the leaders and pillars of civilization."

The disestablishment stands in opposition to the commonly accepted social structures and traditions of society; consequently, it is in tension with the pro-establishment. It is important to understand that both the pro-establishment and the dis-establishment are part of the establishment; they both sleep in the same bed. One side is absorbed with maintaining what is; the other side is obsessed with tearing it down. The dis-establishment calls the establishment into question, demanding that it be accountable, and that it let no one fall out of the structures of society or community.

One side is absorbed with maintaining what is; the other side is obsessed with tearing it down. Their concern is with the past, either attempting to keep the past and perpetuate it (the pro-establishment), or to destroy it (the dis-establishment).

The third pole of this triangle is the trans-establishment, transcending both the pro- and the dis-establishment to make a difference. While the dis-establishment and pro-establishment argue over the shape of the present or the past, the trans-establishment asks the futuric questions on behalf of everyone else.

Of course, none of these forces is monolithic. They are each made up of many elements. The intent of the trans-establishment forces is to model and create the new while holding the tension between the pro-establishment and the dis-establishment. It is constantly enabling the old to be pushed into the new.

For example, in the arena of education, the dis-establishment demands that the total system be torn down, so we can start all over again. The establishment holds on to the structures that exist, while making cosmetic changes here and there. The trans-establishment works within the structures, to create the models that will change education from the inside out.

Society needs all three dynamics. These forces need each other, and so does society. Without the establishment, there would be no structures for the trans-establishment to work creatively within, or to engage the passion of the dis-establishment. Without the dis-establishment, the pro-establishment would never be held accountable, and would never have to face up to the forces of change. Without the transestablishment or the disestablishment, society would stagnate and grow comatose.

THE TRANS-ESTABLISHMENT APPROACH

The trans-establishment is prepared to work with anyone to create new responses. When we act as the trans-establishment, we abandon the dualism of good people and bad people, of friends and enemies. As trans-establishment, we assume that all players are potential allies. We seek collaboration, partnership and cooperation at every point.

Some years ago, government critics (disestablishment) were decrying the government's apathy (establishment) towards the possibility of recycling glass, certain plastics and paper. Instead of writing more criticism, a team (trans-establishment) gathered some resources and created the roadside Blue Box recycling campaign in a delimited area as a demonstration that said, "This can be done." The government saw the value of the Blue Boxes and decided to set up the recycling scheme in many cities and towns in Ontario.

Pro-establishment
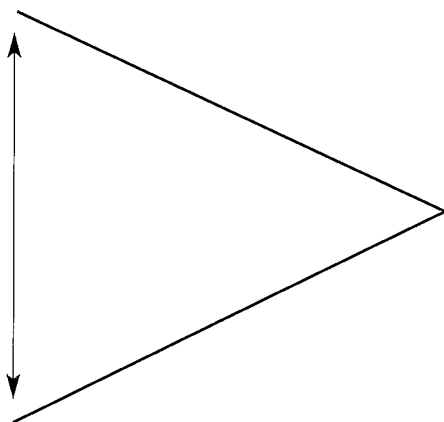
Trans-establishment

Dis-establishment

Perhaps nowhere is the transestablishment style more needed than in our communication processes. We are used to aggressive election campaigning, investigative reporting, to change involving criticism, mutual recriminations, public demonstrations, arguments in meetings and trying to demolish the opposition in one way or another. At least in the Western world we tend to respond to social issues in very combative, judgmental ways. We tend to see our issues as an assault on our reason by the prince of chaos. The innocent suffering involved in many social issues gets lost in the torrent of argumentation. We do not have a vision of what could be. We are more concerned with how these issues are impinging on our sense of order and personal comfort, than with the damage they are doing to society as a whole and the people around us.

You may remember the bitter confrontation in Clayoquot Sound some years ago in British Columbia between the timber giant MacMillan-Bloedel and the environmental organization Greenpeace. You may not know how the whole situation was turned around.

Company officials had been acting as if MacMillan Bloedel was stuck in a highly polarized ideological battle defending its logging practices as the right and only approach. Greenpeace, for its part, had decided earlier in Spain to use a protest over the company's logging in Clayoquot Sound to launch an international campaign against clearcut logging. The stage seemed to be set for permanent war between the two parties.

The company had received some outside advice from consultants that it needed to pay closer attention to its adversaries. Critical to the process was a re-imaging of the relationships between the parties as a marketplace where no one ruled. What happened was that certain visionary elements in the company began back-channel communications with Greenpeace. At a certain point, images shifted and the parties saw that they could drop their weapons and acknowledge the good ideas of the other side. The parties saw they could achieve more by working together than by confronting each other in the press at home and in the marketplace. A genuine dialogue began, and, wonder of wonders, Greenpeace saw how they could influence MacMillan-Bloedel's policy.

Within the logging company, the Clayoquot series of protests had convinced its key executives that something had to change. It established an eight-member board of review to develop a proposal for a new lumbering policy. These plans were shared with Greenpeace and government officials.

The new logging system leaves some trees on a logged site. The trees are left in groups, strips or islands to provide habitat for wildlife and help regenerate a new forest. The new system allows the company to log more selectively and do away with the massive clearcutting that had been its previous policy.

The process and its results are a testimonial to what can happen when conflicting parties throw down the gloves and say, "Why don't we work together on this?" It became obvious that there were trans-establishment people on both sides, and that made it work. Neither side sold out, but found a good neutral solution.

Subsequently "MacBlo" has been purchased by another company, but the story remains exemplary.

From the trans-establishment style flow a number of other approaches.

FRAMING
The key method of the trans-establishment approach is framing, or establishing a framework of support and authorization around a change project. Rather than launching their social change project by attacking the powers that be, those of the trans-establishment stance take the opposite tack—seeking the blessing, support, and involvement of those in authority. Walter Wink in *The Powers That Be* describes these powers as not only the people who run things in our society, but as the unseen powers that shape the present and dictate the future. These powers are capable of positive and negative effects. They can stop any social change project dead in its tracks. "Hence,' continues Wink, "acknowledging the powers is an indispensable part of social action." We also know that if we can get the powers on our side, they are capable of smoothing the way into the future quite remarkably. So, where the disestablishment is concerned with criticizing and confronting the powers that be, the trans-establishment is focused at getting them on side and even involved.

This care for getting the establishment on side does not mean getting in bed with the establishment. Framing appeals to the self-interest of these powerful people and, perhaps, enlists them in some aspect of the task, engaging them in particular roles, thus turning them into collaborators who see they are making a difference. For example, when ICA was conducting community forums in North America some years ago, we would call on the mayor to let him know what we were planning, but also to invite him to give the opening address, and ask if there were other resources he could make available. The mayor felt both honoured and empowered by this request. He became both supporter and ally.

Now, every community or organization or social structure has these powers present. Things don't happen in a community unless certain channels, such as the mayor, are honoured. This is a fact of life. The real power may not be the mayor, or a board, at all. Some organizations are run by a little old lady from her knitting needles, rather than by the official board. In a corporation, no matter how many sanctions you have from the higher-ups for some creative change project, unless you get the finance office or the technical expert or the mailroom on side, your project will get stalled, and you will never know who did it. You will think someone on the board or some middle management guy is blocking you, but it won't be. A community or organization has its own authorizations. Your strategy must include finding them (both the silent and the overt powers) and letting them know what you intend to do.

In one community I worked in, the "power" was another change agent. Her name, ironically enough, was Felicity. Felicity had been working in the community for 20 years. She was a very down-home person. Everyone knew her. She was passionate about social change. She also didn't like a whole lot of other people around trying to queer her pitch. It was as if she sat at the centre of a very large spider web. You would not get anything done in that community unless you got her on your side, or at least in the communication loop. You could fret and fume all you liked at the situation, but it did no good. It was just a fact of life that you checked what you intended in the community with her. Otherwise you got

stymied. So you'd catch Felicity coming out of the community centre and ask for a minute of her time, and tell her the plans for a big workday on the park. Felicity would just nod and say, "Sounds like a good idea." And that was that. I also remember a time when we tried to do a workday tidying up a vacant lot without checking with her. For some reason, none of the usual volunteers showed up.

There are always symbolic powers without whose symbolic "nod" you don't go very far. They may be church leaders in a local community, leading business and political figures in an urban project, or key figures like Felicity. While not all give the symbolic nod, they can block or stop anything you do. Unless you can involve those key figures in some way in what you are about to do, nothing is going to happen. There are also middle authority figures. They cannot stop you, but can make life miserable. While the dis-establishment strives to work its change in defiance of the powers that be, the trans-establishment always seeks some advantage from them, without kow-towing—working to get just enough of a nod to be able to move forward.

Facilitator Jo Nelson tells about two communities in Texas she was familiar with. They had two entirely different approaches to developing their communities. One community's approach was to fight the Anglo landowners; then they began fighting each other. They got nowhere. The other community enlisted the landowners' support in developing their community. Their community project is still going strong.

COLLABORATION

When we go into a community to get something done, we are courageous when we act alone, but crazy if we think we can do it all on our own. We need a team—partners and allies. And yet, for some reason, people are sceptical or fearful of sharing their project with other people. The trans-establishment style consistently demonstrates its willingness to work with many different kinds of people. In meetings, a trans-establishment leader is open to the diversity of participants. Such a leader accepts every piece of information offered or question raised as valid, coming as it does from authentic life experience. Everyone in the group is understood to have a piece of

There are always symbolic powers without whose symbolic "nod" you don't go very far.

the puzzle. The leader obtains the whole picture, not by selecting the information that makes good sense to the leader but by recognizing, hearing and understanding all the perspectives. Most conflict assumes two opposing sides to an issue. Recognizing the many possible perspectives involved in any one topic moves people beyond a dualistic worldview and allows them to see a larger picture. When the problem is reframed, the possibility for effective solutions increases.

A provincial Lotteries and Gaming Conference, concerned with some negative public images, called on ICA facilitators recently to conduct two workshops—one on the positive and negative impacts of lotteries and gaming on the people and communities of the province, and one on what could be done to accentuate the positive impacts and lessen the negative.

These two questions set up the expectation that people would deal with the whole picture, and this is key. The first workshop got out all the perspectives at once by writing them on cards arranged on the wall in front of the group. The process acknowledged the real positive and negative impacts, and defused defensiveness so there were no arguments from either side. Then the facilitator asked people to bring their creativity to bear on the whole issue rather than just fighting for one side or the other. It moved the outcome from being controlled by the loudest or most politically astute lobby to turning all the interest groups' energies to finding the best solutions. People were astounded at their own creativity and that of others, as everyone's contributions went up on the wall. Some people were disappointed because they did not like being unable to control the outcome of the meeting. Most were delighted to see everyone's contributions received as part of the solution.

The people who end up standing with a trans-establishment leader to form a group to work on an issue will probably not be the ideal combination of people that the leader envisaged. It may be more like the odd collection in *The Dirty Dozen* or the even weirder combination in *Trading Places*. The struggle for us at this stage is to believe that the group we have is the right group to wrestle with the issue at this time. In this awareness, we know we do not have to call in experts, although, at times, they can be relied on to provide special technical input. We trust that the people in the room, at the particular meeting, have the answers and are capable of wrestling with the issues and questions.

So, the next time you take a look around your workplace or your local community, or a group you are facilitating, ask yourself: Who is acting as the trans-establishment here? Who's trying to work in the collaborative mode? Where are the proactive people? Where are the union people who are trying to work collaboratively with both workers and bosses? These are probably the trans-establishment. They may not be many, but you can work with them to make a difference in your workplace or neighbourhood in the years ahead. They show up in the strangest places.

In summary, the trans-establishment style preserves social change enterprises from a host of ineffectual mindsets: do-goodism, liberalism, the band-aid approach, the agitation approach, the blame-the-government approach, the lobbying approach. The trans-establishment moves society forward without confrontation or agitation, but through engaging people out of a consensed-on understanding of what is necessary. It engages in authentic social change that does not take the side of the government; does not take sides against the government; does not criticize the government but works to fill the gaps left by government. Its social change takes no sides except standing for the creation of the new, and letting those who want to hang on to the past do so. And in the midst of all the social engagement, the trans-establishment style does not forget the quality of humanness that beckons to others and lures them on to greater heights and more intense experiences of being human. ❖

A Miracle of Collaboration

GATHORNE BURNS

In medieval times, architects were more like facilitators than people who sat in offices at drafting tables making building plans. They got down and dirty, worked with the contractors and the trades, and learned how to create and design buildings by working on site and facilitating the whole process. This story by architect Gathorne Burns shows how the original role is being recaptured today.

In complete secrecy, I was handed the job of architect to build a courthouse to be used to try 35 members of a Winnipeg-based gang. The case, a first in Canada, comes under new federal legislation that was meant to deal with the biker gangs in Quebec. In this case it is being used in the trial of a small gang in Winnipeg. The legislation requires that the whole gang be tried as one—if they are found guilty as a gang of being involved in illegal activities, then the whole gang is sentenced. A stipulation is that the Crown must be able to present the case within six months of the arrest.

As an architect I knew there was not an existing courtroom in the province large enough to accommodate the 35 accused, a judge, court clerks, up to 25 sheriff's officers, a jury and 50 lawyers for both Crown and Defence, and also include space for the media and at least 35 places for the public—a minimum of 176 persons. It required a room bigger than two basketball courts, and must be free of any columns. The architectural problem was to build a temporary court room large enough to hold everyone, in one-third the time it usually takes.

After the gang was arrested in November, I went with a team of Manitoba Government Services people looking for a site. Because of the tight time frame and because it was winter we had to look for an existing building we could renovate. We looked at mothballed schools, an old juvenile detention centre, some unused office buildings, and we were running out of options. I got the idea of looking at former supermarkets or warehouses. That did it. We found a former warehouse, 1960 vintage, with high ceilings that had been used for a seed-sorting operation. The warehouse was filled with metal bins the size of houses. The bins were filled with pigeons.

We began building a stage set inside this old warehouse. Most of the metal bins are gone, but some remain. It feels strange to go into this ugly building, walk by some remaining bins, and then enter a big, temporary but luxurious, court room.

I have been trying to replicate the instant camaraderie we experienced in this project, and bring it to other construction projects. Having the luxury of choosing all your favourite people in the trade did contribute towards the bonhomie. But so did making all the decision making meetings open for participation, and maintaining flexibility in daily operations.

What a job it was—unlike anything I have ever experienced. There were none of the usual fights between contractor and architect, and no fights between the subtrades. There was so much co-operation all round, I thought I'd died and gone to heaven. From November to May everyone was consulting with each other. No one was off in an ivory tower making decisions alone. We instituted a weekly forum every Tuesday morning in which everyone participated in naming the current problems and seeking solutions. It was unimaginable the great number of times one person or company came up with a gem of an idea to solve another's problem—unheard of on any other dog-eat-dog construction site.

Since eight gang members were still at large, eluding the November '98 round up, the operation had to be done in complete secrecy. The secrecy was based on a real concern that the place might be bombed. But secrecy might also have been a legal issue, with defence lawyers left purposely 'out of the loop'. The Crown may have wanted to keep defence lawyers believing that since there was no place to hold the case, their clients might go free! In fact, some defence lawyers did little, disbelieving that the Crown would find a location for the case to be held with all the necessary size and security, allowing the Crown additional time for preparing their case.

With so much secrecy the only people you could talk to or joke about the building were fellow workers. Until security features were installed, there could be no communication between even workers and their spouses.

The Supreme Court's decision of many years ago said that the Crown had to be in a position to try a person within a reasonable period of time, in this case six months. Since gang members were arrested in the first week of November 1998, the court was finished and ready for use before the end of May 1999. Regarding the naming of the courtroom, there are several irreverent names floating round, but the more dignified name is the Chevrier Court—after the street it's on.

It was quite an accomplishment to get the project done on time, so on May 20 we had 'our wind-up' party, a lunch paid for by the contractor in the new court room for all those people who participated in building it. The new lawyers' tables in the court room proper were covered with thick paper, and more chairs were brought in. Appropriate words of thanks were said by the contractor's site superintendent and by a representative from the Manitoba government. and then everyone feasted. We popped champagne bottles; some of the corks even hit the 18-foot-high ceiling— "Ouch" went the government representative; "Watch that new ceiling!" What was exceptional about this wind-up celebration was that everyone was invited—from the painter up to the architect. This was noted by several people as being a first in our experience.

The contractor's superintendent concluded it all when he said in his final thank-you's: "All this (and he threw his hands up in the air) and we are all still friends!"

The key features of this project were:
- Its uniqueness: a first-ever project, highly secret but highly public.
- A tight timeframe, but not impossibly tight.
- A collaborative mode.
- Participation of everyone in the weekly meetings, not just the usual site people.
- Facilitated meetings for everyone involved in the project.
- Inclusiveness at every point, including the celebration. ❖

Gathorne Burns is a longtime ICA colleague and well known architect in Winnipeg.

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CANCELLATION POLICY Refunds, less a US$50.00 or Cdn$80.00 administration fee per person, may be obtained by writing to the IAF office at 7630 West 145th Street, Suite 202, St. Paul, MN 55124 USA. Requests for refunds must be postmarked no later than March 15, 2000. Requests postmarked after March 15, 2000 will receive a refund of 50% of the fee paid. Refund requests cannot be honored after April 10, 2000.

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Based on all the help that Canadians have given to help set up IAF Conference 2000 in Toronto and from the 300 people who have made proposals to present, there is no doubt that facilitators across Canada have taken a keen interest in developing this emerging profession.

For those of you considering attending, you'll definitely get what you need from the 120 pre-conference and concurrent sessions. But beyond that, you'll get everything else as well! For example, you'll be able to take home abstracts of all the sessions.

Almost by definition, facilitators know how to listen, to understand and to communicate. This translates into an interactive conference where the dialogue and learning take place at a high, but practical level. Since facilitators know how to keep group energy up, IAF parties and celebra-tions are always great fun, with a balance of high energy and relaxation.

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ICA Canada is delighted to announce that Erwin Allerdings of Saskatchewan and Barbara J. MacKay of Manitoba have graduated from ICA Canada's three-year Advanced Facilitator Program. Erwin and Barbara have both demonstrated the highest level of capacity and professionalism in their practice of facilitation with dozens of clients. Erwin works for the federal government in Regina within PFRA, and Barbara is the principal of NorthStar Facilitators in Winnipeg.

ICA ASSOCIATES

Corks popped at the ICA office when we discovered, by mail, that after months and months of hard work and waiting, ICA Associates Inc. had been officially registered as a corporation on June 30, 1999. This fulfils a directive by the ICA Canada Board of Directors to establish a for-profit corporation, partially owned by ICA Canada, with aims and objectives that are compatible with ICA Canada.

IAF ON-SITE ACTIVITIES

On Saturday October 16, ICA Canada will host an event to help put finishing touches on the design of IAF Conference 2000. The topic will be the next big challenge for the conference coordinators, which is to find about 70 volunteers who will be able to work at the conference April 27-30, 2000, helping with registration, logistical set-up, greeting and hosting, speaker buddies and traffic flow. The October 16 event, at the ICA office, will outline all the opportunities for helping out at IAF2000. For information, call Bill Staples at (416) 691-2316.

STOP PRESS

The Journal of Authentic Leadership is a journal of quotes for each day of the year, not year-specific, so you can use it year after year. Quotes that hit you between the eyes, that make you stop and think, that pick you up and move you forward on your journey. Quotations are excerpted from ICA Canada's upcoming book, *Authentic Leadership from your Own Backyard: Twelve Stances of the Social Pioneer*. Each page is devoted to one of the stances in the Authentic Leadership book. There is room for you to write your own reflections. The Journal will be out in plenty of time for your use in the year 2000. Further inquiries: ICA Canada.