

# Which lessons can management theorists still draw from Stoicism?

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## Introduction

Humanity's impact on this planet has become more and more evident as populations have risen, and our planet's resources shrunk. As egotistical species, only one actor is at cause: humans. Where did it all start? How did we become efficiency-hungry species, rather than continuing to live in synchronicity with nature? This paper more closely explores the foundations of our business practices, ones that have led us to scavenge effectiveness and productivity at the detriment of mother nature and our other non-human species. By breaking down the Classical Management Theories that have laid the foundations for our society, this thesis will uncover the scientific nature of our theories. The significance of understanding the erroneous routes we have been taking allow us to redirect the nature of our foundations, into a more equal manner of conducting our practices. This is where Stoicism perfectly fits as a philosophy, which will be incorporated as the alternative way of thinking that humans should adopt in management and corporate roles.

My position is simple: by going back to Stoicism, and instilling its virtues in our capitalist society, we should enable the rising generations to live conscious of their place in the environment, but also treat it from the eco perspective rather than from the ego. Through understanding how much control we have over our actions, and over our impact on others, a Stoic leader can gain their prestige not because of the millions they are bringing in each year, rather from the good they have disseminated all around.

This paper will be divided into three parts. Part 1 will give a historical recount of our management practices, by diving deeper into where our management theories come from. This part will have two sub section, the first diving deeper into the classical management movement, while the second will have a more thorough description of the impact *causal* scientific explanations have had on business. Part 2 will dive deeper into Stoicism, by retracing its history and highlighting its ideas. Finally, Part 3 will consist of a two-part analysis: the first will be to present corporate myths that we have lived by without questioning. A Stoic perspective will be applied to this as to show a different course of action. The second part will be an example of a corporate program that can be put in place as to rewire organizational values to be more in line

with Stoic thought, which would result in being more thoughtful of one another as well as Mother Nature.

What can we learn from Stoic ideas that we can apply to our management practices by understanding the fundamental errors?

## Part 1: History of Management

The first route of trying to apply Stoicism directly on modern management theories become quite a challenge. As my goal was not to put a Band-Aid on current management practices to superficially instil Stoicism, I realized my focus had to be on understanding the *roots* of what is driving bad management theories today, to reach a more fundamental level of what halted good business practices from occurring from the beginning. From this, doing a Stoic analysis of business would have a greater effect.

### 1.1 A Historical Perspective of Management

Starting in the city of Ur, Iran, the history of management can be traced back to 3000BC. Through written records, Sumerian priests showed us that they were able to find their own method of recording business transactions<sup>1</sup>. Equally seen in early Egyptian papyri, dating back to 1300BC, the translations relay the importance of organization and administration in their bureaucratic states. Fast-forward to 400BC, Plato recognized that management was a separate art to technical knowledge and experience, and promoted the *principles of specialization*<sup>2</sup>. Specifically, in *The Republic*, he commends young men to be carefully selected as to ensure they can learn the appropriate skills and personalities to eventually serve as leaders. We notice here already the rise of understanding *specialized labour* as well as training. As we continue to move forward in history, we similarly spot the beginning of *delegating authority*, and having a *chain of command* in place, which many have used as an explanation for how Rome was able to efficiently expand into the empire it became<sup>3</sup>.

As we have built on these practices, the history of management witnessed three main movements in its academia. Starting from the classical management movement (which we will dive into shortly), the behavioural management movement and ending with the modern management movement<sup>4</sup>. They each have their own sub-approaches, vastly different in their focus points, but each adding their own perspective of management to the bigger movement. As

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<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Pindur, Sandra E. Rogers and Pan Suk Kim, "The History Of Management: A Global Perspective", *Journal Of Management History* 1 (1995) 59-77

<sup>2</sup> Wolfgang, Sandra and Pan (Management) 58

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 59

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 60

an example, the behavioural movement, which followed the scientific, believed that business research should be focused on the human aspect of the discipline, comprising the human relations approach and modern behaviourism<sup>5</sup>. For the sake of this paper, I will only be touching upon the classical management movement, the reason being its strong foundations and influence among management practitioners today (and throughout history). The rest of the movements remain quintessential in understanding the overall body of management, yet remains beyond the scope of this paper.

### **1.1.1 Classical Management Movement**

Rising through the years 1885 and 1940, the classical management movement is the oldest and most widely instilled school of thought in the world of management. As the Industrial revolution was starting to bloom, it was necessary to provide a rational and less subjective basis for the management of companies. Why was it so necessary? This period in history was experiencing a change from what was known as the handicraft system, where people shifted from working at home or in small shops, into larger surfaces or factories, where bigger groups of workers were brought together<sup>6</sup>. It created a need to have efficient plans, a systematic organization, a body of influence and clear control of all work activities within an organization.

Much like the behavioural movement, the classical era had two main thrusts: the scientific management and the general administrative management<sup>7</sup>. While the former had a greater focus on improving productivity through evaluating workflows, the latter theory examines organizations in their totality, as to find methods that will make managing different people within a complex division of labour more effective and efficient. Its time in history is set between the years 1895 and 1940, but we have witnessed a renewed interest in this movement as a method to increase productivity, cut costs, re-evaluate effectiveness and organizational efficiency in companies<sup>8</sup>. This point is pivotal in understanding why the roots of management are ingrained in this classical movement. As we will see shortly, the scientific movement had its focus on the workflow of low level management, as to improve efficiency for greater profits. It

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<sup>5</sup> Wolfgang, Sandra and Pan (Management) 60

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 60

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 60

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 60

was not a time to consider the environment, since depletion of resources or sea contamination had not come up as issues this far.

### **1.1.2 Scientific and Administrative Movement**

As the Industrial Revolution was installing itself through the skeleton of our society, the scientific movement was the first to sneak itself into America's corporate body in the early years of the 20th century. A grand part of what we know as management thinking, has since, either been a reaction or a development of it<sup>9</sup>. As the founding father of the scientific movement, Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856-1915) knew there was a motivational problem among employees, at the time called "soldiering", or the attempt for workers to work the least amount possible for the longest amount of time<sup>10</sup>. He set on a scientific based solution to this problem by measuring worker productivity, and by setting targets for workers to achieve. In his first publication in 1895, "A Piece-Rate system", Taylor describes how he had managers walk around the factory with stop watches and notepads, carrying out time-and-motion studies which eventually developed the concept of paying workers for their output rather than their time. His prime belief was that "the principal object of management should be to secure the maximum prosperity for the employer, coupled with the maximum prosperity of each employee"<sup>11</sup>. It is here that we start seeing the need to intertwine the interests of management, managers and workers, taken from a bottom up approach.

As Taylor was revolutionizing the manufacturing processes in America, France was subjected to a similar shift through Henri Fayol (1841-195), who became the founding father of what we know today as the administration school of management. His approach was different to Taylor's in that, rather than focusing on how the workers could increase efficiency from the lower levels, Fayol used a top-down approach, paying greater attention to the point of view of the senior managers<sup>12</sup>. For Fayol, the command function had to continue running effectively and efficiently, achieved by organizing and planning a series of coordination and control methods. His recommendation included having regular meetings for the department heads, including

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<sup>9</sup> "Scientific Management". *The Economist*, 2009. Accessed at <https://www.economist.com/news/2009/02/09/scientific-management> on June 03 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Wolfgang, Sandra and Pan (Management) 61

<sup>11</sup> John Sheldrake, 'Management Theory' *London: Thomson Learning* (2003)

<sup>12</sup> 'Frederick Winslow Taylor'. Accessed by <https://www.economist.com/news/2009/02/06/frederick-winslow-taylor> on June 05 2020.

liaison officers to continuously improve the coordination of organizational operations<sup>13</sup>. It is here that we witnessed the beginning of giving top management more directional power in terms of planning and controlling, which also had to be remunerated by sharing the profits with the different managers involved.

## 1.2 What Science did to Management

Modern day management, as can be understood from its history, is an integrated whole that has accumulated theories and practices to be used timelessly, but with contextual edits. However, the floods of corporate scandals that have come to light in the past decade (a good example would be the Enron or Tyco case) give us a taste of the theories and ideas upon which we chose to continue to strengthen our practices<sup>14</sup>. Take for example a course in corporate governance, mainly rooted in ideas of agency theory. We have made students believe that one should not trust a manager to do their job, only of course, to maximize shareholder value, but that to overcome these agencies, a manager and a shareholder's incentives must be aligned<sup>15</sup>. For this, one must, for example, make stock options a larger part of their pay, where traits of this developed notion could already be traced to Taylor's first "Piece-Rate System", as was previously touched on.

Similarly, in organizational design courses, based on transaction cost economics, we have created the need of tightly monitoring and controlling people to prevent any opportunistic behaviour<sup>16</sup>. As was discussed, a basic idea of Fayol's top-down approach is touched upon here. While these theories can largely be learned in school and from books, those who never stepped foot in a business school have equally adapted and learned to think in these ways<sup>17</sup>. The explanation is that these ideas and theories have been floating all around us, bred from a culture of legitimizing certain actions and behaviours, while delegitimizing others, overall moulding a normative and intellectual order, from which daily decisions are made<sup>18</sup>. John Maynard Keynes (1936) makes a point about this in his book *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and*

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<sup>13</sup> Wolfgang, Sandra and Pan (Management) 63

<sup>14</sup> Sumantra Ghoshal, 'Bad Management Theories Are Destroying Good Management Practices', *Academy Of Management Learning & Education* 4, 1 (2005) 75-91

<sup>15</sup> Michael C. Jensen and William H. Meckling, "Theory Of The Firm: Managerial Behavior, Agency Costs And Ownership Structure", *Journal Of Financial Economics* 3, 4 (1976): 305-360

<sup>16</sup> Oliver Eaton Williamson, *Markets And Hierarchies, Analysis And Antitrust Implications*, New York: Free Press (1975)

<sup>17</sup> Wolfgang, Sandra and Pan (Management) 64

<sup>18</sup> Sumantra (Management Practices) 75

*Money*, when he explains that anyone that is not an economist or a political philosopher, holds no power, whether they are right or wrong. “Indeed the world is run by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences are usually the slaves of some defunct economist...But, soon or late, it is ideas, not vested interests, which are dangerous for good or evil”<sup>19</sup>. The practical men Keynes refers to, are exactly the managers who continue to blindly follow without any intention to make matters better. In fact, it is those who believe they are exempt from any intellectual influence that are the most wrong: there are no exceptions to the intellectual slavery through which these men treat the “real world”<sup>20</sup>.

The argument I am proposing here is not that one should ignore the importance of following a normative and instilled order as to lessen the probability of “normalized chaos”. Rather, that certain practices have been blindly followed and taken as the “only” way to go forward with business. We have overlooked the idea that although a range of factors are involved when a company creates value, including the environment, the mental states of employees as well as individual well-being with the self, we have not only chosen to distribute that value to the few at the top, but have left the remainder at a growth break. And what is the overarching subject present in all scenarios? The self. The individual, with its subjective beliefs and virtues that drive it forward to act. And it is the complicity in the aggregate of these acts that have led us to the world we live in today. We will be returning to this point once we introduce how Stoic ideas can help us make a difference on a fundamental level.

As we have previously seen, the scientific movement ingrained itself into the discipline of management, one that would typically fall under a “social science” but continues to use the causal explanatory model of the natural sciences. This takes us into understanding how our modern approach of taking a social science model and quantifying it, has in a sense freed our business education from any sense of moral responsibility. As long as the numbers justify the means, we go forward. This idea was brilliantly described by an academic from the Cambridge University, Jon Elster (1983), in his paper *Explaining Technical Change*. Through his dissection on the differences between natural sciences and social sciences, he shows how we have allowed

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<sup>19</sup> John Maynard Keynes. *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*. 24 (1936) 5

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 75

for a “scientific” approach when considering a pattern or law with regards to human intentionality. We have allowed for the discipline of business to be reduced to a sort of chemistry, to the point where even if a manager does play a role, it will be taken as determined by an interplay of economic, social and psychological laws that will have inevitably shaped the subject’s actions. Legitimized financially by benefiting corporations and taken as valid by our society, these beliefs have become dominant and widely accepted in our cultures<sup>21</sup>.

How does he show this? Best described by the diagram below, Elster (1983) argues that a fundamental difference resides in the mode of explanation that is relevant for each field<sup>22</sup>. He categorizes these modes into causal, functional and intentional explanations. From the diagram, one can see that, for example, in the natural sciences, and more specifically for inorganic matter, the *only* valid mode of explanation falls in the causal explanation. Following his logic, one can see how functional explanations, which for the majority are based on notions of benefit, evolution and progress, do not fit physics, chemistry or inorganic matter explanations. Functional explanations, as he describes, more closely fit sciences in organic matter, such as biology, since the explanation of a certain feature of an organism will point to the way it enhances its reproductive fitness. This conclusion can be reached due to the overarching causal theory of natural selection. In the same way, intentionality will play no role in biological explanation, as the driving force in the process of evolution is due to random error or mutation, where any source of variation or unit of selection has no influence<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Stewart R. Clegg and Anne Ross-Smith, "Revising The Boundaries: Management Education And Learning In A Postpositivist World", *Academy Of Management Learning & Education* 2, 1 (2003): 85-98

<sup>22</sup> Sumantra (Management Practices) 78

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 78



specific action done by an individual to be caused by a specific intention, it should not be diminished to a causal explanation<sup>27</sup>. Rather, as Elster (1983) eloquently states “using causal explanation, we can talk about all there is, including mental phenomena, but we shall not be able to single out mental phenomena from what else there is”. To put it simply, management theories nowadays have strived towards going down the road of causal or functional modes in their explanation, as Ghoshal (2005) explains in his study of *Bad Management Theories vs. Good Management Practices*. Ethics and morality, he argues, are mental states that in the past have necessitated to be excluded from theories, and thus, from the practices that such theories have shaped. We have witnessed time and time again the explicit human denial of the need for ethics or moral considerations to be included in the practice of management, on a level of the self, the others and the environment. And as Ghoshal (2005) defended in his article, these amoral ideologically-inspired theories that are so deeply ingrained have only freed students from feeling any sense of moral responsibility.

This paper is not trying to disregard the work these scholars are doing for the world of management, but rather to shine a light on the way academic research is undoubtedly bringing negative influences to the practice by disregarding the importance of virtue and morality. However, before going forward, I must prelude by noting that behavioural theories of management did follow the classical movement, and were able to solve a part of the human evasion of moral responsibility that will be discussed below. However, certain Stoic practices and beliefs should have been instilled at the moment the foundations were introduced, which is what I will present below.

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<sup>27</sup> Sumantra ‘Management Practices’ 79

## Part 2: Stoicism

Rather than hungrily looking to reap the most rewards, the self should have been the core idea as stoics strongly connect their sense of purpose to nature, rather than financial remuneration. It was quite the challenge to sieve through the plethora of aphorisms and metaphors that Stoics have used to deliver their practical advice, to arrive at a coherent division of thematic clusters, which is why this part will follow a different order. In Part 2, I will be touching upon the importance of well-being in Stoicism, in the context of ourselves but also to nature, leading me to discuss its implications in the business world in Part 3.

The Hellenistic era of philosophy, a time characterized by the spread of Greek culture and language, the flourishing of the arts, science and philosophy, was when Zeno of Cyprus (c. 334 BC – 262 BC) made Stoicism the foundation of his life's work and legacy. After the wealthy merchant lost everything in a shipwreck in Athens, he stumbled upon a book by Socrates (c. 470-399 BC) and Stoicism was born<sup>28</sup>.

Deeply rooted in Socrates's philosophies, Stoicism is based on the practice of virtue ethics, necessary for one to achieve happiness: the focus was solely on the power of strong virtues, tolerance, and self-control<sup>29</sup>. More specifically, the name Stoicism comes from the name *Stoa Poikile*, or painted porch, the decorated public colonnade where Zeno and his disciples gathered for discussions. Although nowadays the word "stoic" is used to denote a character that does not display emotional extremes, containing all hardship and pain without showing their feelings, Stoicism was more than a simple attitude of life<sup>30</sup>. Pigliucci (2017) put it best, "in reality, Stoicism is not about suppressing or hiding emotion—rather, it is about acknowledging our emotions, reflecting on what causes them, and redirecting them for our own good"<sup>31</sup>.

The base of Stoic belief centres around the idea that our world operates according to a web of cause and effect, resulting in a rational structure of the universe, called *logos*. The main idea is that although we cannot always have control over the things that happen to us, we can

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<sup>28</sup> Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, and Robert F Brown. *Lectures On The History Of Philosophy 1825-6*. Ed Oxford: Clarendon Press (2006) 264-270

<sup>29</sup> Massimo Pigliucci, 'How To Be A Stoic' London: Hachette UK (2017)

<sup>30</sup> Massimo, (Stoic)

<sup>31</sup> Massimo, (Stoic)

control our reaction and our approach to those events<sup>32</sup>. Rather than imagining an ideal society, it is about learning to deal with what is given to you, while pursuing self-improvement through four main cardinal virtues, namely: practical **wisdom** or the ability to navigate complex situations, in a logical informed and calm manner; **temperance**, being able to self-restrain and moderate all aspects of one's life; **justice**, where even if one has done wrong, being able to treat them in all fairness; and lastly, **courage**, not just in extraordinary circumstances but being able to live all events with clarity and integrity. If one's life is experienced trying to act in a virtuous manner, a eudemonic life would result.

Although Stoicism values self-improvement greatly, it is not a selfish philosophy. For example, there was a time when Romans would consider slavery as property. At the time a Stoic philosopher and statesman (among other professions), Seneca called and preached for a more humane treatment, stressing that we should all have the same fundamental humanity no matter who we are. The main belief here was that only those that have cultivated virtue and self-control within themselves, could bring positive change in others<sup>33</sup>. Similarly, as one of the major emperors to rule Rome, Marcus Aurelius (CE 161–180) was a strong believer in Stoicism. Many believe that during his 19-year rule, this philosophy is what helped him lead the Roman Empire through two major wars while simultaneously dealing with the death of many of his children. This is why a greater part of this philosophy is practical, as it teaches people how to deal with their emotions and sorrows, rather than how to live their lives<sup>34</sup>.

A late stoic writer, Epictetus (c. ad 55–c. 135), outlined that living a virtuous life would lead to the telos (end) of *Eudaimonia* (a state of flourishing, being happy, healthy and prosperous)<sup>35</sup>. What exactly leads to a *eudemonic* life? Stoics were not naive, and understood that certain circumstances are more favourable than others, which they called “preferred indifferents”. These comprise all that is beyond one's character, including friends, good health, material possessions such as cars, and houses: things everyone should have rather than lack<sup>36</sup>. Preferred indifferents have a unique purpose, in that they help Stoics make a distinction between

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<sup>32</sup> Massimo, (Stoic).

<sup>33</sup> Elizabeth Asmis, "Seneca's On The Happy Life And Stoic Individualism", *Apeiron* 23, (1990): 219.

<sup>34</sup> Massimo, (Stoic)

<sup>35</sup> Karl, Johannes A. "Stoicism and Wellbeing." Accessed at [osf.io/w4b6t](https://osf.io/w4b6t) on June 18 2020.

<sup>36</sup> Massimo, (Stoic)

good and bad. If any should compromise with one's virtuous character, one should be wise enough to abstain from them. Although they would not disagree with the ideas that it would be better to be healthy over being ill, or being rich over being poor, it should at no point interfere with the subject's moral integrity and virtues<sup>37</sup>. As social beings, Stoics placed social status and good reputation under these indifferents. Nevertheless, their core belief remained that everyone is fundamentally equal, regardless of rank or social value and that to reach a happy life, one should adopt the practice of the four virtues discussed above<sup>38</sup>. Nevertheless, as Seneca explains, one should not act virtuous in order to reach a happy life, since there is no proof or guarantee that this will be reached. Rather, one should act for their own pleasure and purpose, as the only part they can control is their actions. With that control, the ultimate goal should be to reach *apatheia* or a place where one is not perturbed by their *pathè* (their passions) since they are symbolic of negative emotions<sup>39</sup>. In Stoic language, passions translate to suffering. And when one is suffering, one is not in control. What follows is that passions are an obstruction to happiness, meaning that to reach the tranquility of the mind, or *ataraxia*, *apatheia* is necessary. Reaching a *eudaimonic* life would then consist of finding a state where one's mind is not perturbed by external situations or occurrences, or a state where one would not experience negative emotions. Therefore, happiness should not be a peak from which one comes down. Quite the opposite, happiness should be a place where deep valleys should not exist<sup>40</sup>.

As previously mentioned, rationality guides Stoicism, and since reaching the calmness of the mind by omitting negative emotions is not an easy endeavour, Stoics used the guiding principles of reason and causality to remain on track. The universe is a rational place that should be understood as so. Their belief was that reason in itself would help as a compass upon which to decide how to act virtuously when responding to situations. Every person can be happy, acting with a recipe of self-control, reason and acting virtuously, all sufficient for reaching a state of happiness. And a happy life as experienced by a Stoic, is one where one's life is lived in accordance to nature<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> Massimo, (Stoic)

<sup>38</sup> Elizabeth, 'Seneca', 219

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 219

<sup>40</sup> Massimo, (Stoic)

<sup>41</sup> Massimo, (Stoic)

Living a purely Stoic life deems a difficult challenge, one that only a few were able to reach such that they called these individuals “Sage Stoics”. As Seneca writes *In Of a Happy Life (De Vita Beata)* Seneca writes:

“I am not a wise man, and I will not be one in order to feed your spite. So do not require me to be on a level with the best of men, but merely to be better than the worst: I am satisfied, if every day I take away something from my vices and correct my faults. I have not arrived at perfect soundness of mind, indeed, I never shall arrive at it: I compound palliatives rather than remedies for my gout, and am satisfied if it comes at a rarer interval - and does not shoot so painfully”<sup>42</sup>.

The above is a noteworthy sentiment shared by Seneca, as many Stoic philosophers could not call themselves Stoic Sages. This passage is able to reflect two aspects of Stoicism: perfection should not be aimed for, as this would be too high of a standard to reach, and accepting that the journey will be one of trial and error. One should seek to apply the ideals to their life, while learning from their faults as they go. Seneca lived in ample wealth, being one of Emperor Nero’s (AD 37-68) advisors. However, although regarded as a preferred indifferent, his wealth was something he could live without. And while many used this aspect of his life to call him a hypocrite for not following his own philosophy, he responded with an analogy in *Of a Happy Life* saying that a mountain climber that fails to reach the top should be congratulated for his ambition, rather than deprecated for not reaching the ultimate goal<sup>43</sup>. A stoic should not be expected to live happily in poverty to prove to anyone their philosophy of life. Enough is to do the inner work for yourself.

The overall understanding and applicability of this philosophy is what has led many to apply it to their theoretical foundations, as well as adopt it as a lifestyle without feeling like they are not underachieving. Its applicability can be felt in a multitude of fields, including Religion and touching many subsequent philosophers. These include, but are not limited to Spinoza’s work, Erasmus, Descartes and Montesquieu, as well as touching on traits of Christianity<sup>44</sup>. It

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<sup>42</sup> Charles Dudley Warner, *Library Of The World's Best Literature, Ancient And Modern* (New York: Warner Library Co, 1913).

<sup>43</sup> Charles, ‘Best Literature’

<sup>44</sup> Massimo, ‘Stoic’

easily fits many other beliefs, and its attempt to rationally understand the universe without imposing itself as the ultimate truth, is what has given the philosophy its profuse application. The Stoic God is also one that can be left up to interpretation, whether from the perspective of a Spinozist or that of a classical theorist, further proving its expansive consonance with Stoic ideals.

## Part 3: Implications on Business

As seen from the classical management roots, our management foundations have led us to artlessly behave in the way we practice business. From the substantial corporate ecological footprint, to the inhumanity with which we treat third-world country employees, we have persistently freed ourselves of any sense of moral responsibility on the grounds that “there has been a 25% increase in sales this month!” or “dividends will be able to be paid out this year!”. The discussion of who should be socially responsible for the business has been obstructed by the fact that a business is an artificial entity, and it cannot make a decision. Nestle itself cannot make a decision for its employees, implying most decisions are made by the individual proprietors or corporate executives<sup>45</sup>. Executives have a responsibility to their employers, which is to do business according to their wishes and desires i.e., making as much money as possible within the basic rules of society and *some* form of ethical custom<sup>46</sup>. Thus, I will attempt to analyse how Stoicism could be applied to today’s business practices as a way to circumvent the detrimental foundations that have plagued our management styles for decades. Among the viruses I will discuss how corporate myths have eroded our perceptions of social responsibility, as well as the internal vision of an organization. For the latter, I will suggest programs to be put in place to ensure that one’s well-being can affect and improve the health of an organization.

### 3.1 Environment

Humankind has pushed the planetary boundaries to new extremes, becoming more evident through climate change, an increased biodiversity loss, ozone depletion and ocean acidification, to name a few<sup>47</sup>. The protagonist of all these catastrophes has remained our species’ economic and technological hunger or rather ‘inventiveness’, such that the speed at which nature fundamentally changes resides in our hands with catastrophic effects<sup>48</sup>. However, the pattern that one can sense in this continued ecological dependency, is that the current depletion of natural resources is not an unfortunate by-product of industrialization, but rather a disguise for our

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<sup>45</sup> Milton Friedman, "The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits." *In Corporate ethics and corporate governance* (2007) 173-178

<sup>46</sup> Milton (Social Responsibility) 1

<sup>47</sup> see Rockström, J., et al. 2009:461; Whiteman, G., Walker, B., and Perego 2013:307-336

<sup>48</sup> Anderson, K. and Bows, A., 2008. Reframing the climate change challenge in light of post-2000 emission trends. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences*, 366 (1882), 3863–3882.

continued dependence on economic growth and expansion of consumption<sup>49</sup>. The goal with this section is not to depict or assemble a case with ample evidence of how corporations have overstepped their boundaries, but rather to showcase three myths that have created a socially acceptable narrative to disguise their actions. It has enabled a dismissal of how much our fundamental theories have set the ground for these practices to be acceptable.

### **3.1.1 Corporate Environmentalist Myth**

In the past decades, firms have been coming forward about recognizing how their developments, production and consumption of their products and services have triggered the environmental problems we face. Defined as corporate environmentalists, they have become active participants in solving our big issue through our consumption of ‘green’ products and services<sup>50</sup>. Rather than comply with environmental regulations, these corporations have shown us that economic growth and ecological well-being are mutually exclusive topics, and that environmental issues should be embedded in their key strategic concern, as to live by the “do well by doing good” motto<sup>51</sup>.

We have seen in the corporate world that any criticism coming from environmentalists will be counteracted through capitalist change as to maintain social legitimacy<sup>52</sup>. Fast changing contexts have conditioned the corporate mind-set to continuously adapt to ecological critique, creating in its response ‘green’, ‘natural capitalism’ and ‘organizational sustainability’<sup>53</sup>. It would be outrageous to think that reduction in profits or decreased company growth should happen, since as Willmott<sup>54</sup> puts it, ‘...the most common response to ecological critique – from politicians, media, and corporations – has been to marginalize, obfuscate, trivialize, or simply deny its concerns, and also to develop self-serving remedies (e.g. carbon trading) that may actually exacerbate the problems’. From a creativity perspective, it has motivated money hungry organizations to creatively consume the natural environment, to the extent that we have become cannibals in consuming the Earth’s life support systems without realizing<sup>55</sup>. From a political

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<sup>49</sup> see Schnaiberg, A. and Gould, K.A., 1994; York, R., 2004:355–362.

<sup>50</sup> Christopher Wright and Daniel Nyberg, "Creative Self-Destruction: Corporate Responses To Climate Change As Political Myths", *Environmental Politics* 23 (2013) 210

<sup>51</sup> see Porter and Van der Linde 1995:73, Falck and Heblich 2007:247

<sup>52</sup> Christopher (Corporate Responses) 210

<sup>53</sup> Christopher (Corporate Responses) 207

<sup>54</sup> Hugh Willmott. "Spirited Away: When Political Economy Becomes Culturalized1...". *New Spirits Of Capitalism?*(2013) 98-123.

<sup>55</sup> Christopher (Corporate Responses) 207.

perspective, it has created a new function in guiding individuals, groups and societies by providing the significance of such political conditions and the resulting experiences<sup>56</sup>. In itself, our political experience and activities have been shaped by these narratives to avoid the complexity that exists. As Bottici and Challand (2006) explain, it is the current mediatised marketing society that has created a pool of opportunity for these political myths to persuade us<sup>57</sup>.

From a Stoic perspective, and more specifically based on Marcus Tullius Cicero's (106-43BCE) Book I, *De Officiis*, our business foundation would have been based on moral grounds, instilled throughout society as to halt corporate deception. Marcus was a statesman and politician, who was most famous for his texts that were written forms of his infamous speeches<sup>58</sup>. He wrote four important theses, one of which *De Officiis* falls under, specifically touching upon the theme of social duty and more specifically, honour. It is written in the form of a letter for his son following the death of Julius Caesar in 44BCE where his writings show a strong Stoic influence to deal with societal responsibilities<sup>59</sup>.

Using his teachings as business foundations, the corporate stoic would instil honour, and its four concepts as core principles. These include the search for truth, maintenance of social relations, fortitude, and decorum. Starting with truth, Cicero would argue that as one of our unique features as a species, curiosity should be a main driver to give meaning to our social lives, claiming that "the knowledge of truth touches human nature most closely"<sup>60</sup>. He would advise that the search for truth should be in some utility for the common good, as "all these professions are occupied with the search after the truth, but to be drawn by study away from active life is contrary to moral duty"<sup>61</sup>. He would continuously reinforce the need to question these 'corporate truths', where any knowledge obtained academically should be praised as virtuous and shared with everyone<sup>62</sup>. Moreover, Cicero understood that as social beings, the

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<sup>56</sup> Chiara Bottici and Benoît Challand. "Rethinking Political Myth: The Clash Of Civilizations As A Self-Fulfilling Prophecy". *European Journal Of Social Theory* 9, 3 (2006) 315-336.

<sup>57</sup> Chiara and Benoit, 'Political Myth'

<sup>58</sup> João Dickmann, "De Officiis", *Ancient History Encyclopedia* Accessed at: [https://www.ancient.eu/De\\_Officiis/](https://www.ancient.eu/De_Officiis/). On June 25 2020

<sup>59</sup> João, 'De Officiis'.

<sup>60</sup> Walter M Miller. *De Officiis With An English Translation*. London: W. Heinemann, 1956. 18

<sup>61</sup> Walter, 'De Officiis', 19

<sup>62</sup> João, 'De Officiis'.

maintenance of healthy relationships was key. For this, he wrote in detail how justice and generosity were the necessary pillars to have peaceful development in a society. Essentially, as an executive, this philosophy would condemn all those that harm another through their actions, as justice is described in *De Officiis* as “keep one man from doing harm to another...and the next is to lead men to use common possessions for the common interests”<sup>63</sup>. Were he to exist in a society with corporate environmentalists, Cicero would argue that values such as greed and fear are the drivers of their decision making, criticizing them for losing their virtuous traits. In terms of generosity however, he would advise us not to give as to exceed one’s means, nor to harm anyone consequently. Rather, generosity’s only goal should be the Republic’s (or society’s) welfare and prosperity<sup>64</sup>.

### **3.1.2 Corporate Citizenship Myth**

Following is the myth of corporate citizenship, defined as setting corporations as the civil actors that can determine the necessary political agendas and suggest which environmental and social needs are necessary to drive environmental solutions. The hypocrisy in this is that companies will present themselves as role models that embody ‘the ideal practices’ and capabilities that will ensure our well-being as well as future generations’. With a society that will fall for any marketing trick, we have learned to fall for their creative skills without questioning them. Corporations will ensure their advertisements continuously scream their ‘green’ initiatives, such as a corporate advertisement that proclaimed ‘Yes, we are an oil company, but right now we’re also providing natural gas, solar, hydrogen, geothermal, because we live on this planet too’<sup>65</sup>. The importance of this myth lies in that it has resulted in political identities and specific meanings for ordinary citizens<sup>66</sup>. This was demonstrated through advertisements run by the coal and manufacturing companies. The goal was to frame the public against the carbon tax, by emphasizing the voices of miners, small-business owners and factory workers as subjects opposed to the government’s move to price carbon emissions. For this, they focused on job losses, business closures and highlighted the detriment to local communities. It worked, as several riots ensued against a ‘carbon tax’, where they had repeated the narrative of job threats

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<sup>63</sup> Walter, ‘De Officiis’, 22

<sup>64</sup> João, ‘De Officiis’.

<sup>65</sup> Christopher (Corporate Responses) 212

<sup>66</sup> Christopher (Corporate Responses) 213

and increased costs of living they had been fed<sup>67</sup>. Ordinary citizens thus took to retell the discourse they had been seduced by.

From a Stoic perspective, a rational executive would have to adhere to virtue, a strong form of ‘knowledge’ that would make the subject act with prudence, self-control, courage and justice on every potential human endeavour. If a Stoic were to be doing business, the subject acting according to these virtues would end up spilling the effects in the transactions and dealings he would be carrying out. No decision or movement would be taken without the consideration of the virtues, a state of rationality that lets the subject be in balance with nature’s logos<sup>68</sup>. This behaviour would be taken to all aspects of life: to the romantic life, to the professional life, as a stakeholder part of society and so on. By following virtues, if the person can assent to the right cognitive choices for each occasion, never for its or their own sake, rather because it is the right thing to do, they would become a Sage<sup>69</sup>. As an executive, they would be renowned and understood as a person to be looked up to. As previously mentioned, Stoics knew that a good reputation should not be the end in itself, yet they still understood the importance of having role models. Specifically, in Ancient Greece, it was common to openly discuss the idea of role models (or Sages for Stoics) and the virtues they lived by. When discussing role models in the sense of the corporate environmentalists, having a Sage as a leader would show the rest of the world, and mainly the company itself, that the best human life to be lived is through virtue, and as Gill (2020) explained, “a form or expertise or skill, knowledge how to live well in every way, a form of knowledge that shapes the whole personality and life”<sup>70</sup>. The leader would remain rational, show courage when necessary, not be scared to share his knowledge and in times of need, would refrain from acting in ways harmful to society. On the other hand, for employees, rather than merely following the Stoic executives’ orders, they would need to critically judge whether it would be harmful or beneficial to follow, and as Seneca advises, to only follow if the act is virtuous. However, in the context of the carbon tax example, the Sage would understand the short-term social detriment that would ensue from applying the policy, but would

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<sup>67</sup> Marian Wilkinson, "The Carbon War", *Accessed at:* <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories/2011/09/15/3318364.htm> on 26 June 2020

<sup>68</sup> Massimo, (Stoic)

<sup>69</sup> John Sellars, *Stoicism* (University of California Press, 2006).

<sup>70</sup> Chris Gill, "Stoicism And The Environment", *Accessed at:* <https://modernstoicism.com/stoicism-and-the-environment-by-chris-gill/> on 20 June 2020

communicate and make sure his followers understand the long-term benefits of having such a tax be instilled in society. It would not be to their detriment, although financially it would seem as so, but rather in the best interest of all stakeholders involved, and always keeping nature at the forefront.

### 3.1.3 Corporate Omnipotence Myth

Lastly, the corporate omnipotence myth is a mix of the above, presenting corporate capitalism and marketization as the only viable solutions to tackle the social and environmental issues<sup>71</sup>. From the rational and effective managerial practices we have set in place, corporate capitalism has been portrayed as a superior economical organisation. Rather than having groups of thinkers come up with new ways of doing business or listening to those that demand change, this myth stresses how inevitable it is for us to continue with capitalism in the future<sup>72</sup>. It has diminished our response to climate change to merely pricing carbon emissions and continuously commodifying nature. As we saw earlier, our foundations naively set us on a mission to remain within the confines of ‘rational’ and ‘efficient’ when doing business. What is being missed now is that it is these two factors that paint the narrative for our response against climate change, with an overreliance on the existing logic of capitalism and neoliberalism<sup>73</sup>. Governments introduced policies that only further mirror the corporate logic that ensures money-mediated relations between consumers and producers remain. No stakeholder has remained out of the confines of capitalism thus far. It ensured that we both commodify carbon as a measurable and tradable ‘carbon’, while selling customers a greenwashed narrative that ‘we are tackling climate change together’. Polanyi (1957) put it best when he said that climate change has become an enterprising opportunity, where the market-based solutions are seeing the unintended consequences as ‘market failures’, rather than for what they are, a failure of the ‘market society’<sup>74</sup>.

With these thoughts in mind, a Stoic would enter our society and instead of instilling a specific solution to move away from capitalism, it would instil a process for our leaders to move towards virtue as a philosophy of life. As Massimo Pigliucci (2007) states:

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<sup>71</sup> Christopher (Corporate Responses) 213

<sup>72</sup> Christopher (Corporate Responses) 213

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. 214

<sup>74</sup> Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957).

“Stoicism is about developing the tools to deal as effectively as humanly possible, with the ensuing conflicts, it does not demand perfection and does not provide specific answers: those are for fools who think the world is black and white, good versus evil...”<sup>75</sup>

Thus, what I will propose for this myth, based on Stoic thought, is a process to realign with nature as an ethical norm<sup>76</sup>. Naturalism prevailed in ancient thought, where Aristotle argued that to truly understand what counts as human happiness, one should reflect on what makes humans so distinctive. The Stoics took this idea one step further, and claimed that upon reflections about virtue and happiness, we should not attach ourselves merely to human species, rather to the natural universe as a whole<sup>77</sup>. An important point here is that Stoics believed we should embody characteristics of the natural world as to bring ourselves closer to falling in line with those features. In this sense, Stoics were early cosmopolitans who believed everyone should be treated as if they were our relatives, taking this sentiment to other beings<sup>78</sup>. While scholars have found it a challenge to understand what Stoics meant by these claims, I offer a possible two-part explanation from the aggregate arguments I have come across, that could serve us to apply these ideals to our capitalist societies.

The first point to consider is that Stoics pointed out two main characteristics from nature that us as humans also embody. The first is the cyclical rationality and structure that prevails in the natural world. Stoics were able to decipher the way nature has a natural order, manifested in the patterns that we all experience i.e., the cycle of the seasons or the movement of the planets<sup>79</sup>. Similarly, we notice this in the web of cause and effect that was touched upon earlier in this paper. They took to see that our lives were made in an equal form, expressed in how strong virtues enabled a coherent and interconnected set of qualities. If rationality and order prevail in our lives, the result would be happiness from consistently remaining within the confines of nature – and thus, rationality<sup>80</sup>. From this line of thought, a corporate Stoic would understand

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<sup>75</sup> Massimo, ‘Stoic’

<sup>76</sup> Chris, ‘Soicism’.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Massimo, ‘Stoic’.

<sup>79</sup> Chris, ‘Soicism’

<sup>80</sup> Chris, ‘Soicism’

that although the free market sets a certain structure, it causes a detrimental and rather negative effect on everything around it i.e., degradation of nature, improper treatment of third country employees. If he were to realign our ways of doing business, a cause and effect of actions would be taken as the primary point from which to make decisions.

The second characteristic Stoics observed was the providential care in nature. They concluded this from seeing certain parts of nature, in human or non-human animals, instinctively preserve not only their own lives, but also their offspring's<sup>81</sup>. Although we have predominantly relayed this duty to women in our society, we all remain instinctive animals with the capacity to survive and care for the other. Stoics understood this point, and saw ethical concern for other beings to merely be an extension of the providential care with which we are born. In this way, Stoics were able to understand how it would be a projection of the characteristics of nature as a whole, which would serve to create models through which to shape our lives and actions<sup>82</sup>.

The main point of having both these characteristics instilled in business, that of rationality and providential care, is that it is worthwhile to continuously remind ourselves of our integral part of nature, since we mostly act as if we were two separate entities. A Stoic leader would instil this in his corporation's beliefs and values, as to ensure that all subordinates make decisions based on the interconnectedness we share with not only our societies but the greater natural world.

### **3.2 Possible Program to Instil**

We will use the above myths as triggers to understand small changes that could happen in organizations. Although it can be argued that this could also be on an educational and political level, this is beyond the scope of this paper. Rather, I will propose the implementation of a basic corporate program based on two factors: Stoic philosophy and John Ketter's book "Our Iceberg is Melting"<sup>83</sup>. Simply put, the book proposes an 8-step process for parties going through change.

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> John Kotter, '*Our Iceberg Is Melting*'

I am not implying that applying a Stoic philosophy represents an organization change, rather that it should create the need for a change in vision for everyone to act on the same basis.

# 8 Steps to Change



Figure 2: 8-Steps to Driving Change<sup>84</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Reading Graphics, *8 Steps To Change*, image, 2020, <https://readinggraphics.com/book-summary-our-iceberg-is-melting/>.

The image above explains the 8-steps necessary to drive change. However, the focus of the program will be on steps 3 and 5. This is because instilling Stoic philosophy will be more about defining a virtue for the company and empowering them to empower others in applying the philosophy. I will not devise a plan on how to apply these ideals, rather which philosophies to follow to make a lasting change.

### **Action 1: Define a Vision & Strategy for Change**

*“That which isn’t good for the hive, isn’t good for the bee.”*  
—*Marcus Aurelius*<sup>85</sup>

Step one will incorporate changing the perspective that employees are making decisions for the ecosystem rather than just the company. By using the quote above, the important Stoic concept of *sympatheia* is touched upon. We are part of an interconnected cosmos, implying that everything in this universe is part of a larger whole<sup>86</sup>. Marcus reminds us that we are all a bee in the hive, highlighted later in his journal by stating “that which doesn’t harm the community can’t harm the individual”<sup>87</sup>. Although something might be perceived as subjectively good, might not imply it’ll be good for everyone, equally for a bad thing. This can be applied to hedge fund managers, who often bet large amounts against the economy and by rooting for everyone else, they are letting everything else fail. A Stoic mentality understands the proper impulses that lead to the right actions, arising from themselves but carrying the good for the whole<sup>88</sup>.

*“Ambition means tying your well-being to what other people say or do. Self-indulgence means tying it to the things that happen to you. Sanity means tying it to your own actions.”*  
—*Marcus Aurelius*<sup>89</sup>

The next step will be to remind employees that they too should be leaders. Rather than letting the wins corrupt their self-awareness, or remaining within the confines of ego and self-glorification, relay the Stoic ideals to seek continuous improvement through self-study. If success remains a

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<sup>85</sup> Marcus Aurelius, Robin Hard and Christopher Gill, *Meditations* (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2011) 6.54

<sup>86</sup> Ryan Holiday and Stephen Hanselman. *The Daily Stoic*. Penguin, (2016).

<sup>87</sup> Robin, *Meditations*, 297

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Robin, *Meditations*, 6.51

constant surprise, one will never believe in themselves enough to know they can repeat it over and over if failure comes around. In Greek mentality, the modesty of moderation means it is about poise, not pose.

### **Action 2: Empower Others**

*“One person, on doing well by others, immediately accounts for the expected favour in return... A third kind of person acts as if not conscious of the deed, rather like a vine producing a cluster of grapes without making further demands...Such a person, having done a good deed, won’t go shouting from rooftops but simply moves on to the next deed just like the vine produces another bunch of grapes in the right season.”*

—Marcus Aurelius<sup>90</sup>

Empowering others means being a leader that leads. As one expects themselves to be a leader, it will be evident that our jobs should be thankless. One must do what they are expected to do, not for the credit or the recognition, rather because it is our duty. It is that simple.

*“If anyone can refute me, show me I’m making a mistake or looking at things from the wrong perspective, I’ll gladly change. It’s the truth I’m after.”*

—Marcus Aurelius<sup>91</sup>

In a world where power means domination, a culture of silencing inferior ranks reigns<sup>92</sup>. To think we know it all always comes from a place of power. Marcus advises that if the goal is to be wise, one should continuously question and come from humility rather than a place of certainty, arrogance or mistrust<sup>93</sup>. Learn, question, and continue the quest towards

Each organization would have to tailor the barebones of my proposal to their subjective narratives, but ensure objectivity remains in the virtues and values adopted.

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<sup>90</sup> Robin, Meditations, 5.6

<sup>91</sup> Robin, Meditations, 6.21

<sup>92</sup> L. Perlow and S. Williams, "Is Silence Killing Your Company?", *Business Harvard- Review* 31(2003) 4

<sup>93</sup> "12 Lessons On Leadership From The Last Great Emperor", Accessed at: <https://dailystoic.com/12-lessons-on-leadership-from-the-last-great-emperor/> on 28 June 2020

## Conclusions

It is a natural human inclination to want efficiency at the forefront of any endeavour. However, a dive into the history of management has shown us the detriment of such pursuit. Firstly, it has highlighted that each era has its own innovation: the industrial revolution required a more efficient way of handling factories compared to the handicraft system. Until then, each shop owner defined their own means to produce at their highest efficiency level. However, the fact that the scientific movement helped one generation is not to say it will help the next, an overlooked detail since it remained part of our management foundations until this day (seen in mass production facilities for example), rather than adapted fundamentally. Second, as factories were growing, an administration to oversee the increase in human labour was necessary. The roles taken by managers and subordinates fit the time at which it was created, but required a much needed change as the years went by. It is not to say they were not necessary starting grounds, rather that the styles of management should have changed with the times.

By understanding the roots of management, it is evident that the scientific movement penetrated and conquered this social science, at a human detriment. Jon Elster (1983) demonstrated how although management falls under a science, it should not be treated as a natural science. Natural science requires a functional or causal explanation in its conclusions, while social sciences warrant intentional explanations, considering human intention is its guiding variable. His paper was able to show how the social sciences hold no general rule akin to that of natural selection in the natural sciences, and making any causal or functional conclusion ignores intentionality, disregarding ethics and morality in its application.

By understanding how intentionality has been left out of most management theories, as these theories have been devised under a scientific pretext and thus have ignored the moral aspect of humans, a Stoic philosophy seemed appropriate to suggest a needed change in our practices. Stoicism was more than a simple attitude of life as it grounded itself in four cardinal virtues: wisdom, justice, temperance and courage. By following these virtues in any situation faced, one would rationally reach *Eudaimonia*, or a prosperous state of life and health. Stoics understood very early on that thoughts guide behaviours, and if these thoughts are directed towards good, then good will ensue. Omitting negative thoughts and passions would lead to a

calmness of the mind that would permeate to all inhabitants of this earth, including all non-human animals.

Through this philosophy, one can see how easily it can be applied to the corporate myths we have been made to believe about the betterment of the environment. Firstly, while corporations have been coming forward about their impact on the environment, they have simultaneously presented solutions with the same basis that caused the problems in the first place. This has been covered by narratives of ‘green’ and ‘organizational sustainability’, which we have consumed on the grounds that our purchases are ‘helping’ and ‘moving the planet forward’. Stoicism here would advise for truth, not only from the corporate side, but for citizens to critically seek their own facts. It should be a categorical imperative for justice and generosity to guide corporate behaviour.

Secondly, as large entities in our society, corporates have made us believe that they hold the ‘recipes’ and the ‘political agendas’ necessary to drive environmental solutions. They have successfully amended the social discourse by seducing citizens into behaving in their benefit, either through rioting against carbon taxes, or by believing that a gas company is doing good by *also* having green energy in their product selection. A Stoic corporate leader would have instilled virtue from the very beginning, understanding that if we all follow the same morality, good will spill over into our transactions and ways of doing business. Additionally, the leader’s “sage” title would allow others to follow in his footsteps, and create a community of good.

Finally, corporate power has also led the narrative that capitalism and marketization is the omnipotent force in solving our environmental issues. It stresses the idea that this is the only way to do business in the future if we are to have a ‘greener’ world. We have diminished our actions to setting carbon taxes by continuing to commodify nature. For this, a Stoic leader would realign corporate values in setting them more closely to mirror nature’s rationality and providential care. As such, employees would conduct business by always keeping our interconnectedness at the forefront of their decision-making.

To tie all these ideas together, I propose for a program to be instilled at the organizational level to revisit a firm's values and vision, based on John Ketter's 8-step process to deal with change. Two paths of action ensue: the first is to define a vision and a strategy for change. Since this would be subjective to each firm, I advance to go by two maxims, the first being to remember we are part of a larger whole, while the second is to continue the art of self-study both through wins and losses. The second maxim would be to empower others through the change. A leader should always lead by example, and instead of striving for recognition, choose to act by one's duties thanklessly. Moreover, rather than assuming the leader knows it all, instill a continuous questioning of actions, and morals as to remain humble and just.

Understanding where management practices are founded, and seeing how the theories are based on a mode of explanation that does not fit, one can easily see how a change is necessary. A limitation of this paper lies in its scope, as more than just organizational programs should be set in place. Policies should be re-visited, educational programs should be re-written, and our societal narrative re-shifted. Moreover, Stoicism must have its drawbacks in the long-term, necessitating for the philosophers of our time to thoroughly think of viable solutions to the shortcomings.

With this, I leave you with an ABBA quote we should learn to disassociate from:

“The winner takes it all”

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