

THREE TEMPTATIONS OF LEADERS

by

© **Professor Andrew P. Kakabadse**

Professor of International Management Development
Cranfield School of Management
Cranfield, Beds, MK43 OAL, United Kingdom
International Tel: (0044) (0)1234 754400
International Fax: (0044) (0)1234 752382
E-mail: a.p.kakabadse@cranfield.ac.uk

© **Professor Nada K. Kakabadse**

Professor in Management & Business Research
Northampton Business School
The University of Northampton, Park Campus,
Boughton Green Road
Northampton, NN2 7AL, United Kingdom
International Tel: (0044) (0)1604 892197
International Fax: (0044) (0)1604 721214
E-mail: nada.kakabadse@northampton.ac.uk

and

© **Linda Lee-Davies**

Senior Lecturer in Organisational Behaviour
Northampton Business School
The University of Northampton, Park Campus,
Boughton Green Road
Northampton, NN2 7AL, United Kingdom
International Tel: (0044) (0)1604 892148
International Fax: (0044) (0)1604 721214
E-mail: Linda.lee-davies@northampton.ac.uk

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Any correspondence should be addressed to Professor Andrew Kakabadse

Three Temptations of Leaders

Abstract: Despite the challenge of precisely defining the nature of temptation, this paper collects contrasting perspectives of this less attractive side of leadership and sets out to find a cure, or rather prevention, for falling into its grasp. Following a literature review of the temptations to which leaders succumb, the results of focused and intimate case studies of highly respected leaders highlights just what they are tempted with and how and why they particularly may succumb to hedonism, power and posterity. Extracts of interviews with an international sample of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and significant others reveal a distinctly human experience from which it is considered no-one is exempt. Included in the sample were female top managers but no discernable difference between the genders could be ascertained. The idiosyncratic nature of response to temptation positioned each interviewees experience as unique. It is concluded that certain measures need to be implemented in order to control and reduce the darker human tendencies when exposed to certain conditions.

Key words: Leadership, temptation, power, hedonism, posterity.

Introduction

Throughout history, individuals attracted to, and successful in, leadership roles have been characterised to display a strong desire to pursue their personal interests in addition to that of the cause or organisation they head. The sheer strength of their power often lies in their ability to influence, convince and perhaps even to manipulate others to support their agendas. President Harry S. Truman (Donovan, 1996)

acknowledged both the motivational and influential elements of leadership. He defined a leader as “a man or woman who can persuade people to do what they ought to do ... without being persuaded. They must also have the ability to persuade people to do what they do not want to do and like it”.

Once this level of power is achieved the balance between organisational good and personal interest can become blurred. Whether the successful leader is benefiting personally from organisational focus or the organisation from their personal focus, is in many circumstances not clear. In fact, is the leader gearing the organisation to their own personal agenda or are they benefiting from the organisational vision by default after altruistic action? If personal pursuit is more likely then the organisation is placed in a vulnerable position.

A rich normative literature exists on how individuals in leadership roles should exercise their discretion externally in their roles, but much less considered attention has been given to the personal and internal regressions of leaders (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2005). Such scrutiny is considered as apposite as a recent scrutiny of scandals involving leaders has emerged in the popular press. Dennis Kozlowski of Tyco, Bernie Ebbers of WorldCom, Martha Stewart of Martha’s Lifestyle and Jack Welch of GE are just a few examples of the CEO leaders who were originally perceived as individuals of high character, able to think independently and epitomise values and principles for others to follow. Whatever their supposed principles, recent popular articles highlight an apparent abuse of their privileged position. In exploration of this transgressions of leaders Aristotle (1911) recognised that

continuously behaving morally is challenging, not only due to personal weakness, but also due to facing conflicting moral principles.

In antithesis to texts that highlight the attractive side to leaders, in this paper we present the findings of a qualitative study that explores the darker side - the temptations of leaders. Exploration focuses on the desires of a sample of Chief Executives who admit to being consciously aware that particular pursuits and acts are morally wrong but nevertheless find themselves unable to resist. Temptation as a concept itself is tackled before a case study approach is adopted highlighting the critical temptations to which each leader became susceptible. In conclusion, suggestions on possible strategies that leaders can adopt to guard against temptation are presented.

Temptation

Originating from the Latin word *tentare*, meaning to test, temptation relates to a 'seductive feeling' or the desire to have or do something that one knows is best to avoid. As such, temptation is the test of an individual's will when confronted with an object considered attractive and/or displaying alluring qualities. Notably, this implies choice on the part of an individual whether to succumb or resist desire. Numerous frameworks have evolved to explain leader's behaviours through a variety of perspectives.

The developmental school of thought (Kohlberg, 1969; Weber, 1990; Trevino and Brown, 2004) distinguishes between four hierarchical stages of ethical development that move from moral awareness to moral judgment (i.e. deciding that a specific

action is morally justifiable), then to moral motivation (i.e. intention to undertake moral action) and finally to moral character (i.e. the pursuit of that chosen action despite challenges).

Similarly, theologians differentiate between three hierarchical states of temptation (Zaehner, 1988):

- “Being tempted” - a state of awareness of one’s desire.
- “Entering into temptation” – a state where one has not enacted temptation but contemplates whether to fulfil that desire rather than weighing up the consequences of doing so.
- “Giving” or “falling into temptation” – fulfilling ones desire possibly accompanied by not knowing how to escape such circumstances.

From whichever perspective, it is a common recognition that knowing a course of action is wrong is actually of little value if the individual simply ignores it or ‘cannot help themselves’. It is the middle ground between awareness and action that becomes hard to define. That motivation or contemplation which determines which side of the forked path to take is likely determined by the individual’s view of the difference between right and wrong and the choice between self and others. These ‘defining moments’ (Badaracco, 1997) question whether the motivation for rising to temptation or not stems from self, others or indeed company pressures. Inner conflict makes inner restraint indispensable (Lama, 1999) and in addition to simply resisting wrong, the path of virtuous motivation involves cultivating a default to what is right. However, the rationalist base of decide ‘where you stand’ inherent in the statements just made, has been challenged.

One view of the source of motivation is that of free will, namely the existence of a 'free will' of the rational conscious mind, 'the self', or 'the soul', in choosing ones action (Aristotle, 1911).

A second view oscillates between the two polar extremes of determinism and evolution or more popularly nature vs. nurture (Kant 1785/1910). This active debate rules out free choice, as the individual is considered to be either predetermined as nature has it that their character is largely formed or, alternatively, their nurture to date influences their sense of moral and ethical worth.

A third perspective in the determination of moral motivation focuses on what the leader ought to do (i.e. moralist perspective) or the consequences of action on ones forbidden desires (i.e. consequential perspective) (Bentham *et al.*, 1996).

These three findings are briefly discussed below.

Free Will

Thus the concept of free will, in turn leading to self directed concrete action, whether fitting or unfitting has been influenced by three ethical philosophical positions, namely those of Aristotle (1911), Kant (1785/1910) and the Benthamite Utilitarians (Bentham *et al.*, 1996).

Aristotle (1911) positioned free will as the reason for action stimulated by desire (natural impulse) or guided and controlled by 'rational' understanding. Aristotle

(1911) linked free will to both rational and irrational choice. Where free will weakens is when a person does what is wrong, whilst knowing what is right and yet follows his/her desire against that reason anyway.

Although supportive of the rationalist perspective behind the exercise of free will, Kant (1785/1910) differed from Aristotle (1911) in that he positioned moral action as a result of autonomous choice and in so doing differentiated action driven by autonomous choice from merely an emotional response. Therefore, a necessary condition for the exercise of free will as a basis for moral action is that action must be consistent with reason. The role of reason then, namely the rational human mind, is to control passion so that an individual can make 'right' choices and as such acts as a regulator of temptation.

In contrast, the Utilitarians evaluate the moral fit of the individual within the context of a complex system of relationships. Bentham *et al.* (1996) held that "nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereigns, pain and pleasure", that determine what the individual ought to do as well as what they actually do. This philosophy centres around consequences, namely evaluating the pleasure and gain to be realised against any foreseeable forfeits.

Nature vs. Nurture

The counter argument to that of free will is that of nature vs. nurture. The critical proposition is that actions result from a dynamic and complex interplay between genetics and the social stimuli to which one has been subjected (Ayer, 1976). How a person thinks and feels starts with their natural genetic make-up and is supplemented

by nature in terms of the social and learning environment the individual has been exposed to.

The ‘can’t help it – that’s the way I am’, message of the geneticists, in terms of moral evaluation and action, is supported by the psychologist personality profilers. Psychologists (Jung, 1948/1959; Lazarus, 1963) postulated that human personality differs in the manner information is acquired and interpreted. Goleman (1996) suggests that in addition to rational decision-making processes individuals use emotional process, termed ‘emotional intelligence’ to guide how to manage and interrelate with others. An individual’s latitude to exercise free will is, to some extent, circumscribed by both nature and nurture.

Intents and consequences

Countering the nature vs. nurture perspective, whilst bordering on the domain of free will, is the rationalist link between act and consequence captured in the question of what one ought to do, contemplated since Socrates. Machiavelli (1958) drew attention to the ethical dimension of power use and in so doing positioned ethics as a central theme in organisational theory. The argument pursued is that the ethical culture in the organisation derives first and foremost from the leader’s behaviour, as the leader’s direct actions or transactions and whether they follow the rules will make the difference between ethical behaviour or not. Thus, what a leader does, the act, induces a consequence, the nurture of an ethical/unethical culture of enterprise.

Regardless of the ‘typology’ of leader, the leader’s manipulation of and influence over their followers and the subsequent successful motivation of them can create an

environment for temptations to enter and ethical dilemmas to increase. Transformational leaders rely more on charismatic attributes (Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Avolio *et al.*, 1991) (i.e. personal power) and their ability to project enthusiasm to influence and motivate followers. Servant leaders, on the other hand, influence followers through their own sense of service itself. Yet which ever philosophy is adopted, if the leader's motives or ethical standards are poor, or they are subjected to an environment of increased temptation they can nurture a "dark side to leadership" (Conger, 1990) whereby the leader is driven to accomplish their visions as much through misrepresentation and manipulation.

The Study

At a time of business scandals and fallen business heroes, our aim in this paper is to understand what kind of desires pose temptation to contemporary leaders. Our interest is to examine temptation, particularly amongst leaders who act as distinct role models and ultimately set an example for others to follow. In effect, our analysis focuses on the role of the Chief Executive. We adopt the Aristotelian (1911: box XIII, 1086 a 25 ff) position of "universals do not exist independent of particulars, but *in* particulars as features of them". Hence, we do not assume a universal code of moral behaviour for CEOs but more we attempt to capture the experiences of particular CEOs in order to appreciate the nature of their code(s) of moral behaviour and further examine whether certain common themes emerge. Thus we make a Hegelian (1931) distinction between 'understanding' of CEOs' temptations and the 'reasons' for CEOs' (in) action in response to their temptations and highlight such distinction through dialectical reasoning. The narrative approach was chosen to capture the humanness of the subjects as well as illustrate their particular decisions

and dilemmas. This in itself would highlight the many levels and facets of temptation and any influence of emotions and environment in the arising conflicts.

To select the sample of participant CEO leaders, critical business journals were examined over several years to emerge with a list of 17 CEO Leaders that had been embodied by the press as displaying ethical principles, fortitude, prudence and fairness. Recognising the need for regular observation of behaviour, seven of these 17 candidates were selected on the basis of access through long term consultancy or direct and personal contact by the authors. As well as allowing their stories to be told, the seven CEO's also gave permission to interview one significant supporting person in their life such as colleagues, direct subordinates and business or personal partners to provide further supportive evidence. The study, conducted in 2003-2004, consisted of 34 interviews with 27 significant others additional to the seven which were with the CEOs in question.

Acting as consultants to the top-team or board, the authors were able to observe the behaviour of, and interaction between, the CEO and the designated supporting persons. Field notes, recordings in a journal of observation, personal interpretations and inferences were collated for the duration of the study. Further, empirical material was gathered through repeated discussion and narrative interview with each CEO and supporting person (i.e. board and top team members, friends and relatives) with a "big-ear listening" approach (Glaser, 2001) allowing each respondent to freely tell their story in the form of narrative account and an interpretive approach focused at the subjective level of individual experience (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

Being an explorative study, qualitative methods for data analysis and categorisation were employed (Sutton and Callahan, 1987). The findings reported in this paper are drawn from hand-coded data, based on the expressed desires and values which the participants highlighted as giving rise to temptation. The names of each of the study participants, whether CEO or relevant other, and their organisations have been kept confidential, referring to them only through pseudonyms. Any other details possibly identifying these individuals have been altered so as to preserve their anonymity.

Findings

Three overarching categories emerged from the data analysis, hedonism, power and posterity.

Hedonism was identified by the study participants as the pursuit of personal pleasure and self-satisfaction through the accumulation of material goods and consumerism and, or sensual pleasures. **Power** was referred to as the CEOs influence and control over his/her environment. **Posterity** was considered as the CEO's drive to establish a legacy sustained beyond their tenure in the post.

Hedonism (Pleasure): Cyril

Cyril is a self starter with a reported great personal wealth. Energetic and youthful (Respondent 15), this 38 year-old CEO has a reputation for relentless effort. From a modest background, but well educated, Cyril actively supports causes concerning equality, social justice and raising of the living standards of the underprivileged (Respondent 17). Cyril's company is viewed by shareholders and the media as ethical and one that cares for its employees and society, particularly through its investments

into the community. Cyril's self confessed weakness is the attention of women. Clearly focused and ambitious, Cyril admits to being vulnerable to scandals concerning his private life.

"I often contemplate life, and have come to the conclusion that irrelevant of how hard I try to resist the trappings of success and consequent wealth, it is impossible to escape it completely. I try to be moderate and to balance out all my actions in whatever I do. I come from a one child family and parents who were middle-class wage earners and who have given me a good education and sense of moral values. They are not religious people, so these values are not religious-based, but rather the guiding principles of moderation and temperance, which helped balance my life. I admit that by any measure, I can be seen as successful and rich, yet when I look at my private life, I see it as less than satisfactory. I already have been through two marriages, with children in each. I am now living with my girlfriend or at least whenever I am at home and not on a business trip. ... I am not and never have been into numbers and quantity of relationships, although I never had a problem in that department. ... What I really desire is quality of relationship and that is difficult to find. A beautiful woman is one temptation I find difficult to resist. Perhaps it comes as a trapping of a success?"

Respondent 2: Cyril

Cyril continued by relating personal temptations with the relentless drive to meet and face challenge.

"I wonder, if I could not afford such personal indulgence whether I would still be tempted? Perhaps, I just cannot resist the temptation of challenge, any challenge? My next challenge is to make this company even more successful ... but that does not explain why I would jeopardise any growth ambitions with personal scandals which are more likely to be reported should my company become more successful"

Respondent 2: Cyril

His female partner of that time concurs with Cyril's stated attraction to women but also highlights other deeply noted sentiments.

"I think that I am Cyril's Barbie doll. He likes to dress me and undress me. He likes me in the sensual and feminine clothes that are elegant. He likes to indulge me. I am his pleasure and entertainment. I too like nice clothes, but I prefer sporty and casual outfits that are trendy but have a creative design. I also like contemporary, minimalist, interior design. Our place in the city is decorated in such a style. Cyril is traditionalist. He prefers classical country style and his house in the country is typical of the region and very traditionally decorated. He is also very, very patriotic – an idealist. We could chose to live practically anywhere we like, but he would not even entertain, let alone contemplate such an idea. I, on the other hand, have no such attachments and could live in many different places even if they are isolated and far away."

Respondent 19: Cyril's female partner

Certainly, Cyril's mother is particularly conscious of how his emotions override critical rationality.

"... if he would only choose the right woman ... he would-be free to concentrate on business. He would be freed from all the personal dramas, wasted energies his life seems to encounter."

Respondent 31: Cyril's mother

Temptations posed by pleasure, whether physical or sensual, have been persistently documented throughout history. Examples such as King Charles II, Bill Clinton and a list of business leaders who are now fallen heroes have displayed desires that subvert

their well-being and other values. Such desires, similar to Cyril, are not easily articulated but are well recognised. Despite Cyril's self reflectivity and awareness, his seeming inability to alter his pattern of attractions, irrespective of consequences, adds to the Aristotelian view of emotion being as much a determinant of free will as that of rational discourse within a situation of plentiful resource.

“He knows this girl is irrelevant to him, but nevertheless he persists in such a way that could attract unrequired press coverage. He could have anyone he wants and in a more discrete way. Why he doesn't? – well that's Cyril!”

Respondent 12: Cyril's Senior Manager

Power: Oleg

Wealthy Russian, Oleg is Chairman and CEO of a newly founded company. He is perceived positively by western and Russia media for introducing Anglo American style corporate governance to Russian enterprise. His rise to prominence came when in 1995, the Yeltsin Government privatised state industries and Oleg, with his associates, as did other “Russian oligarchs”, acquired massive shares in enterprises for bargain prices. Oleg and his associates adopted a diversified business model and in so doing rapidly grew the company.

Since then, Moscow had more billionaires than any other single city in the world (*Forbes*, 2004). In addition to building an enterprise of international repute, Oleg, through a variety of means, exercised considerable political influence.

“Although I am not in the same business, I have known Oleg since the 1995 privatisation through various business forums and social events. We have a very good relationship. He is

smart, funny and great company. He became very successful and increasingly powerful in a very short time. Then he began to change. He become blinded by his own success and obsessed with power. He wanted it all, the ultimate pinnacle of power – political power. He believed in his own invincibility and began openly to talking about it. I recall very clearly his 40th birthday. I stopped by his office to congratulate him and convey my best wishes. At his office, there where approximately 200 business people who come to do the same. It is a relatively small community of Russians entrepreneurs and we all know each other. In a room full of these people, Oleg began to openly talk about regime change, the strategies he would pursue and the changes he would make. Many people, including myself did not know what to say and how to handle his speech. But despite that, in a way, I still like him. He is fun to be with.”

Respondent 11: Dimitry, Oleg’s Friend

According to Oleg’s associates, his desire for political power grew out from his personal wealth and not from a long standing commitment to state reform that would have been evident from a grass roots investment in political infrastructure.

“I think that the power motive with Oleg was always self-evident. Anyone, who has highly powerful international directors (some say western allies) on the board of a “philanthropic” organisation, has power in mind rather than philanthropy. However the question is how much Oleg’s power aspiration was fuelled by our own culture that searches for strong leaders and how much by his western allies that desired to see Russia in the western image?”

Respondent 29: Ivan, Oleg’s Senior Advisor

“I met Oleg for the fist time in mid-1990’s when he came to our bank to do business. He was a very ambitious and very smart young trader but rather inexperienced in large deals. However, he had an incredible network behind him and an almost ‘psychopathic’ drive to succeed. I saw Oleg becoming fast a western style Russian tycoon and none questioned whether the Russian political system was able to cope or not with Oleg’s philanthropic

donations to political parties, in a manner that governments with philanthropic cultures, such as American and UK can. ... Oleg had a vision for a new Russian era and I think he is still working on it. He is now more mature, less flamboyant, understands the perils of power, and now waits his turn. I knew Oleg sufficiently to appreciate his thirst for power. Although impatient he will now have to wait for a right time and then he will comeback more powerful and with a renewed zeal!"

Respondent 22: Mark, Merchant Banker and Oleg's Associate

From our sample, self-confidence and a strong conviction of the moral righteousness of the leader's personal vision was clearly evident. How that vision was then communicated highlighted a compelling urge and a positive self-regard. The CEOs in the sample were universally described by the significant others as individuals who possess special qualities, including a personal magnetism or charm that arouses devotion and enthusiasm from those around them.

Whether Oleg's "assured sense of self-power" (Maslow, 1973) encompassing self-respect, pride, sureness, masterfulness, self-esteem and an ability to get ones own way (Ng, 1980; Bass, 1981; Metzger, 1987) is over-inflated or not is open to debate. However, what is clear is that Oleg's self assurance and a belief in his own vision sparkles in others commitment to follow. With little challenge from his coterie; with continuous reinforcement from followers and peer group members concerning the unassailability of his vision and rich track record of successful investment and industrial growth, little wonder that Oleg became so self-absorbed.

Posterity: John

John grew-up in a traditional, Celtic-catholic family that despite being ‘financially challenged’ still promoted a strong sense of family bonding. Being the oldest of four children, John, from an early age, displayed the determination to succeed and not to end up working hard with modest return like his father. Small in stature and often a target for other kids to bully, he learned to fend for himself thus developing an overt belief in his own capability, whilst simultaneously lacking trust and confidence in other people. Only once others had proven their loyalty did John offer them more attention.

Married with three children, John’s attachment to family values was evident as he ran the organisation in a distinctly idiosyncratic manner fostering a close team culture and security of employment for those who demonstrated their commitment and loyalty. Personable, passionate, energetic and armed with an intimate knowledge of detail, John worked hard in micromanaging the enterprise, paying little reverence to ‘vision’ and ‘formal policies’, viewing the former as ‘touchy feely nonsense’ and the latter as ‘bureaucratic red tape’ that reduces flexibility and freedom to do business. His paternalistic care for people earned him considerable popularity as he projected to others a sense of them being special, which, in turn, fed his own desire to increase his own visibility, demonstrate his leadership talents and thus receive applause as a mindful steward of people and the organisation. His personable style was also recognised by the media and press where he effectively represented the organisation on the public stage.

“I made a life-style switch when I left the multi-national organisation which was paying me a lot of money which did not have the right values and adopted questionable business

practices. I moved to a new industry sector and assumed the position of CEO in an organisation that promoted my sort of values. I worked very hard in building the place up and never regretted making the switch. That is not to say that everything was perfect and that I had an easy time. Not at all, there were difficulties, and organisational baggage, but it was my kind of place. I created a special kind of business that was full of vibrancy and competitive zeal. However, like so many good things they come to an end”

Respondent 3: John, ex-CEO

Discussions with others in the organisation confirmed that John was recognised as having ‘pulled the place around’. His repositioning of the organisation in terms of profitability and international reputation was acknowledged internally and externally.

“Many thought that I overstayed and that no CEO should stay that long in one place. When the time came to retire, I worried that a new person will take different course of action and will destroy all my hard work. I had a fear that my deputy, a real visionary and a world class player would get the job and take organisation in a different direction. His vision was different to what I had carved for the organisation. I wanted a legacy so that people remembered me. The bottom-line is that I resorted to Byzantine nature tactics in search for my successor corrupting the very process I created. On the surface it all looked professional, the reputable head hunter agency, the nomination committee, the selection committee and the rest. But in the background, I controlled it all, I told the head hunter who not to put forward. When that become questioned I backtracked. I evoked the two "green devils", jealousy and envy by hand picking the selection committee members. Rumours spread amongst the selection committee of the supposed incompetence of the internal candidates. So obsessed was I that I lost the focus on who would get the job. External candidates heard that the highly able internals withdrew from the race which allowed me to persuade one of the external candidates who had no vision to come back into the race ... I deeply regret it now. Every time I read in the press that the place is going down, I feel ill. I know I am not welcomed there anymore and that hurts.”

John's version of events was confirmed by one of the internal candidates.

"If, I am honest with myself, I have to say yes, I knew that John was behind the selection process charade. However, I did not want to accept it. I liked the guy. We worked well together. He had done a lot for this organisation and I couldn't believe that he would do anything to damage it. I trusted him. What I did not suspect was that John was obsessed with his posterity. He is egocentric and he likes the limelight and being liked. Only, recently when we met by accident at a New York social event, the penny dropped. He told me how much damage done had been inflicted on his posterity by his successor and how leaving a positive legacy was important to him. ... I believe he genuinely regrets it all but looking back, I can now clearly see all the things that John had to do to prevent me getting the job."

Respondent 6: Victor, John's ex-Deputy

"In 25 years of executive search, I have never been so embarrassed and frustrated with the process of finding a replacement for John. He intervened in the process so much so that I was on the verge of blowing the whistle. The search process was so damaged by one narcissist obsessed with the preservation of his legacy. I am still embarrassed through being a part of it."

Respondent 33: Kate, Executive Recruiter

Those CEO's in the study who admitted to being tempted by posterity also exhibited narcissistic tendencies as cited by Kets de Vries and Miller (1985), such as, thriving on power, being charismatic, enjoying manipulation through building strong connections with followers who displayed dependency needs. Similar to John, the other study participants admitted to relinquishing their posts with difficulty, poorly managing or ignoring succession planning with personally groomed internal

replacement candidates. In many ways such characteristics are not unusual as history has thrown up many examples of men obsessed with their posterity. Kakabadse and Kakabadse (1999) have suggested that healthy narcissism plays a part in achieving leadership status. This element of character assists leaders to powerfully impress others and encourage followers to follow. However, Kakabadse and Kakabadse (1999) warn that there is a fine line between self-confidence and self-love.

Discussion

Each human example above not only represents their particular temptation for the leaders but also opens up question to the many different levels at which such temptation is likely to exist, not to mention how each of the three specified temptations could interlink. Where, for instance, does Oleg's power stop and John's posterity begin? It could be argued that Oleg's power is posterity driven. Making that political impact would be power turned into a legacy. There is a difference between the two characters in that one is perhaps more contained to organisational parameters than the other, but there is the similarity that both enter realms of the unreal.

Equally in terms of which comes first – the position or the temptation - Cyril may well have been as hedonistic in any position he occupied. Alternatively, his attraction may have increased with the perceived power of the position bringing more opportunities to indulge. This could also be seen as power led temptation rather than pure hedonism.

From Cyril's 'can't help himself' fun to Oleg's disillusioned need to change the world to John's paranoid control of the legacy he feels he must leave behind, there is seen a range of temptation. That range of temptation pulls on the inner self and creates a struggle between the individual and society – setting into contest ego and objects (Freud, 1962 in Singer 1994).

Further, it is evident that the degree of individual struggle and actual level of take up of temptation depends on many factors and variables. In fact, this has been shown to be the case as studies of senior executives suggest that they substantially vary in terms of their experiences, capabilities, values, and personalities which in turn provides substantial differences of interpretation of strategic challenges, personal aspirations, beliefs about what is right, sense of urgency, behavioural patterns as well as succumbing to temptation (Finkelstein, 1992; Finkelstein and Hambrick, 1996; Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 1999). Yet, one common theme to emerge from the study reported in this paper was that of obligation to shareholders, the corporation and its continued sustainability. Despite such sense of duty, pursuits and actions, recognised at the time as morally impairing the organisation and individual in question, were still undertaken. Whether as a result of the emotive side to Aristotelian free will, Kantian rationality or Benthamite Utilitarianism, the only common theme to emerge is that highlighted by Hegel (1931) who concludes that human beings contain contradictions. Certainly the study participants reported a complex interplay between six complex variables which ultimately led them to succumb (or not) to one of the three temptations discussed in this paper. These six variables are:

1 *Cognitive style* (Hambrick, 1981):

- The nature of each individual's thinking based on their own perception.

- Processes, influenced by personality characteristics (predispositions, judgements and attributions) and memories, past experiences, dreams and fantasies; *values* and prejudices).
- 2 *Sensations*: such as seeing, hearing, touching, tastes and smells.
 - 3 *Deep seated feelings* (Kets de Vries, 2001): which hold pleasant connotations as contentment, zest, lust, confidence, respect, reverence, affection, love, empathy, compassion and unpleasant designs as indifference, scorn, despair, irritation, anger, jealousy, fear, disgust, shame, remorse, guilt and anxiety.
 - 4 *Interpersonal state*: energy level and health condition beyond the control of the individual but which affect their decision-making processes.
 - 5 *Group relations*: participation patterns, sense of belonging and needing acclaim.
 - 6 *Social context*: societal structure and norms.

Conclusion

Free will, in the form of self determination, emerged as only one influence on the leader's ability to recognise, resist or give way to temptation. The influence of context, held cultural beliefs, organisational experiences and personal understandings of the leadership role, were equally powerful reported determinants of CEO action. With no common theme to tackle as a cause for rising to temptation, whether, hedonism, power and posterity, the only reliable control or prevention must come back to an infrastructure that facilitates the leader to resist temptation. Whatever support and counsel is made available to the leader, there is still one final solution that does not lie within the leader themselves but in an outside influence or control. It is concluded that there is a 'law of probability' that rising to temptation will happen and

happen in different ways and controls from within each individual vary too greatly to isolate a ‘safety stop’ behaviour. Whether temptation is viewed as an internal or external influence on the leader, it is postulated that the control to reduce or prevent it must come from the external environment in the form of rules, organisational mechanisms, transparency due to the inability to predict the effectiveness of self-determined constraints on action.

An example in ancient time is provided by Homer’s (1997) epic, *The Odyssey*, when on his homeward voyage the main protagonist, Odysseus is tempted by irresistible music made by nymphs. Being advised by Circe to stop the ears of his seamen with wax, so that they should not hear the ravishing and attractive music nor strain of his plea, Odysseus had himself bound to the mast until they pass the Sirens’ island and ceased to be heard. By creating this infrastructure Odysseus was able to resist the nymphs’ charming song that impels mariners to cast themselves into the sea to destruction and through not so doing rightly stay on their course.

More recently, such governance is replicated in the “shared leadership” model (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2005). This provides a sound infrastructure where power is shared and not invested in one individual. It will not eliminate leadership temptation but rather mediate against any abuse of leadership position.

Bearing in mind the introduction of governance safeguards against personal excess and desire, still some of the control must come from within the leaders themselves. Learning how to question self and analyse actions is the start to reviewing self-motivation and the impact that has on followers. Leaders need to understand their

own will and how they perceive the outside world as according to Socrates (Plato, 1981) an unexamined life is not worth living. It is concluded that the combination of organisational audit and the capability development of reflexivity over self will provide for the ethical and reputational safeguard of the enterprise.

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