



#### X. "Bodying Forth" in What We See Around Us

COS: So what really is the thing called "the whole"? Is there any relevance of that for management and for living in organizations?

Tom Johnson: Well, I think there's powerful relevance. I draw my basic thinking in that regard from Henri Bortoft, and Bateson as well.

COS: Which is?

Tom Johnson: Bortoft is more explicit. He talks about the counterfeit whole versus the authentic whole. I struggled for a long time trying to figure out what he meant, but I think those differences are very meaningful and get at what you're talking about here. Were they to be understood by business people, they could trigger a profound change in thinking that would lead to quite different actions. It gets back to all the things I've been talking about. You can see the universe as objects that are there because they embody a pattern that in effect bodies itself forth uniquely every moment. I think there is a generative process at work throughout the entire universe which follows certain principles or a pattern that we are aware of in this bodying forth in what we see around us. The parts are everything you see. Anything is mirroring these patterns and principles, mirroring the whole. I'm not sure Bortoft would agree with that interpretation, but I think that's what he's saying and what he's drawing from Goethe. That's nature. If you look at a machine, created by the human mind, the parts don't mirror the whole. The parts—

COS: Are outside of the whole.

Tom Johnson: Yes. They're outside of the whole.