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## Saints *and* sinners: Competing identities in public relations ethics

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### ABSTRACT

Public relations ethics is confused and often superficial in its approach, relying heavily on traditional theory, with only occasional reference to more recent developments in professional ethics, particularly feminist and global ethical perspectives.

This paper argues that the central ethical tension facing public relations as a field lies in its divided ethical identity, in particular between the idealized codes of conduct influenced by the US-based excellence project, which conjure images of wise counsel balancing duties to client and society, and practitioner-led expectations that they are advocates and should privilege clients over society. The paper touches on the wider context of professional ethics in the early 21st century from western and non-western perspectives, in order to frame current debates in public relations' ethics. Taking a Jungian approach, it suggests that the saint/sinner models represent opposing aspects of an ethical identity or archetype which can only be resolved through self-acceptance and a willingness to embrace contradiction.

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### 1. Introduction

Holtzhausen (2012) declares that "Public relations is arguably the communication discipline most obsessed with ethics" (p. 31), but this fascination seems curiously unreflexive and disengaged with current thinking in professional ethics. This paper suggests that public relations has difficulty entering ethical debates when its scholars and practitioners are divided in their ethical self-images between those who identify primarily with the excellent description of the practitioner and those who see themselves as advocates (Bowen, 2008). I suggest that the 'ethical guardian' images espoused some by scholars reflect idealized, almost saintly aspects, whereas the advocacy role is often interpreted as exonerating practitioners from societal responsibilities. The state of public relations' ethics is briefly located in the wider context of professional ethics, to illustrate the degree to which the field engages with wider theoretical discussion, and to problematize the reliance on codes. The main focus is an examination of the schism between ethical identities promoted by texts and professional bodies and those embraced by practitioners. Ideas of identity and ethics are explored, drawing on the 'circuit of culture' approach suggested by Curtin and Gaither (2007). Overall, it takes a Jungian perspective, conceptualizing dominant images of professional ethics as archetypes in order to understand the cultural complexes they manifest. A holistic resolution, drawing on dialogic rather than dialectic process, is also informed by a Jungian non-dualistic approach. The level of analysis is meso-level, looking at the profession as a whole, as opposed to macro-level, societal issues or micro-level questions of individual morality (McDonald & Nijhof, 1999; Mount, 1990).

A brief consideration of terms: most of the literature cited here uses the terms 'ethics' and 'morality' interchangeably, though some distinguish between individual and social duties (though even here there is confusion about which aspect deserves which label). Appiah (2008) draws on Aristotle's idea of *eudomania*, or what it means to live well, as the basis for ethics, reserving the term morality for normative ideas about 'how we should and should not treat other people' (p. 37).

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The words originally meant the same thing in Latin and Greek (Proulx, 1994) and they are used interchangeably here. While many of the texts and concepts cited are of US origin, attempts are made to critique assumptions regarding their implied universality, seeking a wider engagement with ethics as a cultural variable.

## 2. Professional ethics – an overview

Discussion of professional ethics tends to reflect the larger divide in the sociology of professions between what Sciulli (2005) calls functionalist and revisionist; the first consisting of those who see professions as maintaining the status quo and playing a positive role in social development (such as Durkheim, Parsons) and the latter who follow Weber in critiquing these claims and perceive professions as bureaucratic mechanisms to promote exclusivity and monopolistic practices (Larson, Johnson, Friedson, for example). Functionalists can be said to envisage professional ethics as embodying the profession's commitment to social value and also to offer a protection for ignorant clients. Revisionists see professional ethics as empty and self-promotional. Kultgen (1988) has suggested that: "The *Urmythos* from which all of the myths in the professional mythology spring is that professions are oriented to the service of humanity. Professions avow in their official pronouncements and the functionalist typification endorses the view that professions are oriented to service rather than to profit or the interest of any patron group" (p. 120).

The theoretical frameworks for viewing professional ethics have evolved from the trait approach of the early 20th century, through adoption of utilitarian (based on Bentham and Mill) and/or Kantian deontological discussion of consequences and duty. It is these approaches which inform most thinking on professional ethics (Lefkowitz, 2003). In the late-20th century, there was a flourishing of new ideas about ethics, including Habermas' discourse ethics (1979), MacIntyre's (1984) revival of Aristotle's virtue ethics, feminist ethics (Benhabib, 1992; Gilligan, 1982), postcolonial, identity and Asian ethics (Appiah, 2005; Koehn, 2001), postmodern ethics (Bauman, 1993) and others.

### 2.1. Professional codes of ethics

Most professions or aspiring professions prefer to set store in Codes of Ethics than engage in philosophical debates (Larson, 1977). As Abbott (1983) says, "Ethics codes are the most concrete cultural form in which professions acknowledge their societal obligations" (p. 856). Kultgen's (1988) analysis of American professional codes found they set out criteria for the ideal-typical professional, but as Larson (1977) points out the display elements of the ideal-typical constructions 'do not tell us what a profession is, only what it pretends to be. . .' (p. xii). Revisionist critics highlight their vacuity, like Brecher (2010), who notes that "such codes reflect exactly the ambivalence of professionalization itself: their function is at one and the same time to hold professionals accountable and to protect them from moral accountability" (p. 353). It is worth noting that codes tend to be addressed to individuals not professions, making the member responsible for maintaining collective standards (Abbott, 1983; Mount, 1990).

Pieczka and L'Etang (2001) comment that public relations texts view the issue of professionalism largely from a functionalist perspective, extolling public relations' contribution to society; "the way in which profession is understood in our field reflects the view largely abandoned by the theorists of the professions since the 1970s" (p. 228). Consequently, the prevailing notions of ethics evaluate the degree to which PR enhances social cohesion (e.g. Bowen, 2007), following the Durkheim view of professions (itself a distortion of Durkheim's writings, according to Turner, 1992). The next section looks at the main approaches to professional ethics adopted by public relations.

## 3. Professional ethics in public relations

### 3.1. Traditional approaches

Most public relations textbooks (e.g. Chia & Synnott, 2009; Johnston & Zawawi, 2009; Theaker, 2012) offer readers a choice between ethics based either on the consequences of actions as the ground for ethics (Bentham/Mills' utilitarianism) or the duty of professionals to groups such as clients, patients or society generally (Kantian), or even more often, an ad-hoc combination of both. There are problems with both, too complex to explore here, such as the appearance of impartiality in calculating relative harms and goods issuing from actions (Lucas, 2005) and the inflexibility of Kantian ethics in managing conflicts of ethical duty. There is some scholarly engagement with Kantian approaches, notably from critical scholar L'Etang (1992) and excellence supporter Bowen (2007) who, unsurprisingly, come to differing conclusions. While L'Etang suggests that codes of ethics do not stand up to Kantian principles, Bowen declares that excellence ethics conform closely to Kant's imperatives, finding that "ethics is a single excellent factor and the common underpinning of all factors that predict excellent public relations" (p. 275). Most writing from the excellence perspective on ethics draws on the systems theory (McElreath, 1996) which underpins this approach. For example, Bowen (2008) asserts that systems theory "provides a normative theoretical framework to explain why public relations is the best suited function to advise senior management on matters of ethics" (p. 273). This is the discourse which generates the 'ethical guardian' image, which persists as an idea, despite L'Etang's (2003) challenge that public relations practitioners do not have the training to take on such a role and Bivins' (1993) challenge to public relations to define the 'public interest' it claims to serve. Discourse ethics (Habermas, 1979, 1996) has been cited extensively (Haas, 2001; Pearson, 1989) to support symmetrical communication; despite very different philosophical

origins, both Habermas and the excellence approach marginalize persuasion as inherently unethical (Pfau & Wan, 2006) and the latter relies heavily on codes to uphold these exalted standards. It is worth noting here that the approaches described so far tend to rely on rational evaluation of choices to ascertain ethical outcomes and often look to rules and codes for guidance (though this often lies in the application of philosophical ideas to professional ethics, not their origins).

While Habermas offers one source of philosophical engagement with communication ethics, MacIntyre's (1984) revival of virtue ethics offers another, which has been embraced by the rhetorical school of public relations, also US-centered (it is rarely taught in the UK or Europe, according to Tench & Fawkes, 2005). Virtue ethics represents a major shift in its focus on character and reflection rather than regulation, suggesting a negotiation between competing virtues as an ethical process not outcome, and locating ethics in the agent not the act. Rhetorical approaches to public relations ethics often deploy aspects of virtue ethics (Baker & Martinson, 2002; Edgett, 2002; Harrison & Galloway, 2005; Pater & van Gils, 2003). Ideas of advocacy are found here, as rhetoric is less hostile to persuasion and seeks to balance multiple demands rather than perform idealized acts. Heath (2007) explores the tension between the symmetry proposed as the basis of ethics in the excellence approach and the ethical aspects of advocacy, noting Grunig's (2001) acceptance that not all ethical dialog can be symmetrical, or there would be no room for debate. Rather, argues Heath, ethical advocacy requires equal access to the structures and platforms of debate. Porter (2010) goes further, suggesting that 'rhetoric provides a framework for ethical public relations' (p. 128), demonstrating, like the Bowen quote above, that ethical approaches to public relations are framed by competing theoretical lenses.

However, the strongest articulation of advocacy ethics is based in marketplace theory rather than virtue ethics (Fitzpatrick & Bronstein, 2006). This model recognizes that public relations often plays a more asymmetrical or persuasive role than is encompassed by the boundary spanner, is strongly located in US jurisprudence and while it is uncritical of free market morality it does acknowledge the need for awareness of factors such as access, process, truth and disclosure (Fitzpatrick, 2006). I suggest that it is the free-market advocate who has captured the imagination of practitioners to a degree not experienced by the ethical guardian image, a view supported by the IABC research (Bowen et al., 2006). The image of the lawyer has permeated much discussion of PR ethics despite the disparities in training, status and the very different courts of law and public opinion. Before exploring this tension further, the issue of codes, so central to PR ethics, requires attention.

### 3.2. *Codes of ethics – the global export of excellence ideals*

Public relations codes of ethics are largely based on the excellence approaches to the field, explicitly or implicitly. Public relations codes have been studied in the US (Ki & Kim, 2010; Parkinson, 2001), Australia and New Zealand (Breit & Demetrious, 2010; Harrison & Galloway, 2005) and in a global context (Sriramesh & Vercic, 2009). While Ki and Kim's (2010) claim codes and value statements can be correlated with higher standards, Pater and van Gils (2003) conclude that this is not the case, except where there is supportive training in ethical issues. Parkinson (2001) suggests that the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) code of ethics is strongly influenced by the excellence model in its emphasis on symmetry and avoidance of persuasion. He argues that this in turn has influenced models exported around the world: the Global Alliance approach to ethics is broadly similar in tone and content, for example (Breit & Demetrious, 2010). This suggests that the ethical guardian ideal has been promoted as a universal norm and written into professional codes around the world. Yet the absence of detailed discussion of ethics from the core excellence texts (Grunig et al., 1992; Grunig & Hunt, 1984) is striking: codes are presented as sufficient to handle the complex conflicts of duty which constitute real ethical debate. Moreover they are rarely used as a disciplinary tool making them doubly idealistic, not to say hypothetical, both in content and application. Perhaps the primary power of professional codes lies in their embodiment of an imagined identity, both individually and collectively, as the counsel who offers wise words to the dominant coalition and refrains from doing harm.

### 3.3. *New directions*

All of the approaches discussed so far have their origins in western philosophy and treat ethics as normative and positivist, often with an emphasis on rationality, rules and procedures, especially in their application to professional ethics. In recent decades this position has been challenged by feminist ethics (Benhabib, 1992; Gilligan, 1982), postcolonial (Appiah, 2005) and postmodern perspectives (Bauman, 1993), among others. Moreover, the western domination of ethical thought has been challenged by the introduction of Asian ethical approaches to professional ethics (Koehn, 2001). Some of these ideas have recently made an impact on public relations ethics (Curtin & Gaither, 2007; Holtzhausen, 2012) but generally these new (er) directions are rarely reflected in PR text books or chapters on ethics. There is not space to elaborate each position, but they may be very broadly summarized as rejecting rationality as the primary indicator of ethics and embracing unconscious, emotional and mixed motives, as challenging universal values based on patriarchal attitudes (and research methods) to include virtues of care and responsibility, as rejecting universal values as hegemonic and ideological and as arguing for co-construction of meaning, and hence, ethics. These approaches strongly challenge unexamined cultural assumptions about 'good' and 'ethical', though they also seek to avoid reductionist cultural relativism where 'anything goes'. In the next section I explore the implications of these approaches for the construction of an ethical identity.

### 3.4. Culture, identity, postmodernism and public relations ethics

Twenty years after Bauman's (1993) key work, *Postmodern ethics*, Holtzhausen (2012) develops a postmodern approach to public relations ethics. The 'Urmythos' of codes that Kultgen (1988) refers to above is exposed as ideological, "there can never be a justification for moral codes or sets of ethical rules because they are all socially constructed and therefore serve some hidden purpose in society" (Holtzhausen, 2012, p. 33). Her postmodern approach to ethics usefully rejects 'metanarratives' such as ethical guardian or advocate, embracing instead the contradictions and complexity of contemporary practice. As she says, drawing on Bauman (1993), "The postmodern rejection of universal ethics thus focuses on the moral responsibility of the individual to the *Other* without an institutionally created ethical framework" (p. 33). This also echoes Gilligan's (1982) development of a feminist approach to virtue ethics based in the duty of care rather than justice and Buber's influential I-thou concept (1957). Ethics is thus de-coupled from rules and codes and re-located in the interior of the individual, becoming an aspect of their *identity*.

### 3.5. Public relations ethical identity(ies)

Debates about public relations' identity tend to fix on descriptions of role (e.g. the technician/manager divide), or the relationship to other, proximate, occupational groups, such as marketing (Hutton, 1999, 2001). Others, like Neff (2010) focus on how public relations is taught and organized, or focus on PR's role as the generator of organizational identity. These approaches tend toward fixed descriptors, concerning position in the organizational hierarchy, jurisdictional supremacy or communications functions. An exception is found in Curtin and Gaither's 'circuit of culture' (Curtin & Gaither, 2005, 2007) which borrows concepts from cultural and sociological study (du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay, & Negus, 1997) to reconceptualize public relations. They describe identity as 'meanings given to a particular object or group through the process of production and consumption' (Curtin & Gaither, 2005, p. 101). Identity is imagined at the individual, organizational and national levels and comprises one in a circuit of 'moments' (made up of representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation), offering a powerful model of interrelated, continuing, process-based communication with strong foundations in and implications for public relations. This interrelatedness, experiential and fluid approach is closer to that found in identity debates in other professions. For example, a review of literature on teachers' professional identity (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004) concludes that "Identity development occurs in an intersubjective field and can be best characterised as an ongoing process, a process of interpreting oneself as a certain kind of person and being recognised as such in a given context" (p. 108).

Importantly, Curtin and Gaither establish ethics as an aspect of identity, not a set of actions in certain circumstances: "identity ethics embraces diversity and pluralism. . . the need to embrace conflict, debate and critical inquiry, both for the insights they provide and for the process they facilitate of allowing all to be heard" (2007, pp. 250–252). They also urge a move away from focus on codes to examine "what meanings codes have as cultural artifacts . . . for example, ethics codes may play quite different roles in different cultures . . . [and] . . . in constructing the identities of public relations practitioners and the profession" (2005, p. 104). They reject the focus on the "public relations practitioner as sole ethical decision-maker in the organization . . . [as] typical of the modernist perspective of the powerful individual who can control and direct his environment" (2007, p. 33). The next section builds on these discussions to introduce a Jungian perspective to the debate before examining ethical identities as archetypes, aspects of a divided whole.

## 4. A Jungian approach

In Fawkes (2010a) I considered public relations from a Jungian perspective, proposing that the idealization of the excellence approach constitutes the field's 'persona', or public face, while the critics emphasize the hidden or 'shadow' aspects of persuasion and sometimes propaganda. Jungian approaches are predicated on the concept of opposition-in-unity, as in Eastern concepts of Tao, I-Ching, yin-yang: these are divided aspects of the whole. A Jungian ethic, as I explored there, implies the recognition that both are contained in the one psyche or group (Jungian ideas are often extrapolated to collective levels); that blaming the other perpetuates the divide and stunts moral growth. It does not seek homogeneity but homeostasis and recognizes that values will constellate differently in different cultures (see Fawkes, 2010b); what is important is the hard work of making such values and tensions conscious, allowing aspects of the whole to enter an internal dialog through which tensions can be addressed if not reconciled. There is no fixed outcome for such ethical struggle, it is a process. A Jungian approach, therefore, seems harmonious with the cultural and post-modern approaches outlined above, with important differences: Jung does believe in universal psychic structures, which manifest cultural variations and which he calls archetypes, the 'blueprints' for human experience organized around common experiences of Mother, Wise Elder, Child, for example. Each archetype also contains its opposite, as in Good Mother/Bad Mother. Jungians often illustrate these themes with Greek gods, whose power to embody aspects of experience still has potency. I will not enter the debate about whether Jung sees them as 'real' (Hillman, 1975) or metaphorical (Samuels, 1985). For the purposes of this discussion, it is suggested that the archetype which embodies dominant approaches to public relations ethics can be seen as the saint/sinner dyad, with one aspect comprising the 'ethical guardian' promoted by many academic texts, professional bodies and codes of ethics, and the other represented by the somewhat amoral 'advocate' preferred by practitioners.

Tables 1 and 2 collate quotes from various sources to help delineate these competing identities: it should be noted that tables combine quotes from academics in peer-reviewed journals and practitioners in unedited blogs. In academic terms,

**Table 1**  
Saintly images: the ethical guardian.

A public relations officer who is also a corporate conscience helps mold a corporation so that its goals and actions are consistent with the public good	Public relations operates for the betterment of society	Most of the ethical discussion in public relations focus on the public relations practitioner as sole decision-maker in the organization. This is typical of the modernist perspective of the powerful individual who can control and direct his environment	Public relations is the best suited function to advise senior management on matters of ethics
Ryan and Martinson (1983, cited in Bowen, 2008, p. 277)	Bowen (2007, p. 277)	Holtzhausen (2012, p. 33)	Bowen (2008, p. 273)
Truth and integrity have to be the cornerstones of our profession if we are to have any credibility with the media and the wider world	I hope any CIPR members in the audience were aware of the requirements of the Code and that they had voted accordingly	To survive as a useful marketing tool, it is a necessity that PR should be seen as a truthful medium: if we cannot rescue our reputation for honesty, we have no commercial future	In making decisions, we should be guided by a higher sense of serving the public as a whole as opposed to specific constituencies on an exclusive basis
Peter Crumpler, Director of Communication, Church of England (PR Week, February 21, 2007)	CIPR President, Lionel Zetter, from his blog (cited in Goldsworthy, 2007, p. 5)	John Mounsey, director, Trail Communications (Letter, PR Week, March 9, 2007)	Global Alliance Code of Ethics (2009)

these have different weight, but for a Jungian perspective to emerge they are treated as statements about the value of the profession and its members from different standpoints. The views of practitioners are taken from three sources: media coverage of a debate about ethics hosted by the University of Westminster in the UK and reported by one of the organizers (Goldsworthy, 2007) who also supplied me with a range of blog comments about the event from various sources; the IABC quantitative and qualitative research into practitioner views on ethics (Bowen, 2008; Bowen et al., 2006) and online essays by practitioners (Pearce, 2012; Seaman, 2011). These voices are indicative, perhaps, rather than representative, but worthy of attention.

The purpose of these quotes is not to raise the central issues of truth, lies and loyalty but to illustrate the confusion that exists in the field, much of which is tied to competing conceptions of role. In this cut throat version of advocacy (as suggested, reflecting the marketplace rather than rhetorical approaches) ethics are purely reputational, a ‘marketing tool’ at best, a liability at worst. It should also be noted that, according to Goldsworthy (2007), the main arguments for ethical standards were pragmatic; lying tends to be found out in the long-term; and debates like this are damaging to the reputation of PR. Despite being framed as an ethical debate, it would seem that core concepts of ethics were almost entirely absent and that the main dialog was a competition between self-serving arguments. It is also interesting to note that here advocacy

**Table 2**  
Sinner: the advocate.

Marketplace theory is predicated, first on the existence of an objective ‘truth’ that will emerge from a cacophony of voices promoting various interests; second on a marketplace in which all citizens have the right – and perhaps the means – to be both heard and informed; and third, on the rational ability of people to discern ‘truth’	The fact that PR people admit they need to lie occasionally is a sign of growing honesty and confidence in what they do	... industry maxim: ‘ethical PR consultancy = small PR consultancy	Are you telling the truth by creating a campaign that highlights the amazing focus of customer care and philanthropic nature of a client. . . and leaving out pending lawsuits by upset clients, former employees and product defects?
Fitzpatrick (2006, p. 4)	Daniel Rogers, Opinion (PR Week, February 21, 2007)	Goldsworthy (2007, p. 5)	Comment on blog (Jarvis, 2007)
Grunig, in common with many PR thinkers, mistakenly believes that PR is about establishing mutual understanding between publics and clients. Actually, PR is about advocacy on behalf of clients. . .	the idea of PRs as ‘moral keepers of their organization’ is rather grand	It’s simple stuff. Fundamentally you’re either a good person or you’re not	The primary code of ethics I refer to is my own moral compass. In most cases there is a clear right or wrong way to go about business activity. But, of course, that is subjective and dependant on each individual’s own moral perspectives, which will of course (and thankfully) vary
Seaman (2011, p. 8)	Seaman (2011, p. 6)	Bowen et al. (2006, p. 8)	Pearce (2012) blog

becomes grounds for abdicating moral responsibility, which is placed with the employer/client not the practitioner. This echoes the sterile debate that erupts whenever PR ethics is raised: would you work for tobacco/arms/oil/bad people? As if ethics consists of a one-off employment choice rather than a process which affects the decisions we make as communicators all day every day.

Trust and corporate reputation are also drivers behind the IABC report, *The Business of Truth, a guide to ethical communication* (Bowen et al., 2006), which surveyed nearly 2000 senior practitioners in north America, New Zealand, Israel and Australia, as well as qualitative interviews and focus groups. Their key findings were (a) that practitioners considered dealing with ethical concerns to be part of their everyday practice, though it was frequently not labeled as such and (b) that practitioners distinguish between the ethical counseling role, which involves advising management on particular situations, and managing core values by embedding relevant qualities in all communications and other activities. This could be seen as differentiating between ethical acts and ethical agents. Nevertheless the research found a sizeable proportion of respondents rejected the 'ethical counselor' role, feeling that was the province of the legal department or the CEO/board, and mentioned their lack of training in ethical theory or practice. Bowen's (2008) exploration of this material groups respondents into those who seek to offer ethical counsel (which she terms 'pro-ethical') and those who embrace the advocacy model ('anti-ethical'), implying that there is no valid ethical position other than that endorsed by the excellence approach.

Looking at this divide from a Jungian rather than excellence perspective reveals some interesting threads: for example, the binary pro/anti division introduced into the concept of PR ethics above, with advocacy characterized as 'anti-ethical' indicates a rigidity of thought found elsewhere in PR ethics literature. Perhaps the reliance on traditional, western, rational evaluation of options has exacerbated the either/or, right/wrong approach that is rejected by both postmodern and Jungian ethicists. In the latter view, the goal would not be the victory of one side over the other as this would be literally self-defeating, but rather the recognition that both are aspects of the whole and that encouraging dialog between these elements would lead to a more integrated foundation for an ethic based in realistic-self appraisal rather than idealized self-images based on denial (see Fawkes, 2010a and forthcoming for more on this).

Of course, public relations is not alone in this dilemma – as indicated earlier, approaches to professional ethics are located in functionalist western ethical ideals which are rejected by revisionist critics, but which have permeated most professions. Kultgen (1988) compiles a litany of ethical claims to serve humanity ranging from lawyers to football coaches, but urges against rejecting all merits in ethical aspirations, as does Cooper (2004) who fears that professions which claim either that there are no moral frameworks any more or create situation-specific codes lacking an underlying philosophy, lead to 'moral drift and banal choices' (p. viii).

A Jungian approach does not reject the ideal, but seeks to ground it by engaging with its implicit opposite, like analyst Guggenbuhl-Craig (1972/1991) who uses Jungian concepts to reveal the false prophet behind the preacher, the quack behind the doctor, the charlatan healer. These images are offered as warnings to practitioners, to be on guard against the temptations that gain potency by being unacknowledged. Samuels (2006), for example, explores the archetypal images that might ensnare the Jungian analyst and Becker (2004) offers integration as the foundation for a Jungian ethic for analysts. The gestation and potency of what Singer and Kimbles (2004) call 'cultural complexes' is too complex to explore here (see Fawkes, 2010b, for more on cultural complexes and public relations). Suffice to say that these ideas have been applied to groups, to organizations and to workplace relationships as well as to developing a new approach to ethics.

In summary, a Jungian approach offers a pathway to the reflexivity called for in public relations by various scholars (Holtzhausen, 2000; McKie, 2001). There are some indications of the basis for a dialog: the Grunig mixed motive model (2001) accepts (albeit reluctantly) the presence of persuasion in public relations, though the insistence on excellence as the primary foundation for ethics has not dimmed; the work of rhetoricians such as Baker and Martinson (2002) and Edgett (2002) offers a somewhat ethical approach to persuasion, though these are also predicated on an idealized version of practice. A more fruitful avenue, which resonates with some aspects of a Jungian process, lies in the circuit of culture explored above by Curtin and Gaither. Here we can see how issues of representation (the advocate) generate an identity of the 'PR for hire' which has implications for regulation or ethics (loyalty to client over society) and the nature of the goods that are produced and consumed (promotional and defensive), which in turn feed into the representation and identity. Injecting a Jungian perspective into this loop would ask that the shadow or concealed aspects of identity be explored to see what power they exerted on the whole circuit, suggesting that identity is created as much by what is unsaid and unexamined as what is declared. Such an approach has the potential to liberate both sides of the saint/sinner image from their illusory, partial and self-serving concepts of ethics and public relations. Of course, if the field cannot promote its commitment to social value, its qualification as a profession is undermined and its status diminished. However, if it cannot adequately reflect and engage with the experience of practitioners then such claims become purely hypothetical.

## 5. Conclusion

In reframing the debate on PR ethical identity I suggest a move beyond the divided 'pro' and 'anti' ethics that results from the insistence on the ethical guardian as the 'right' ethical role and leaves practitioners in the wrong. That is not to endorse the self-serving and pragmatic 'don't get caught' maxims which concern survival rather than ethics. The abdication of responsibility to legal departments or the organization/board cannot be reconciled with claims to professionalism. What both positions have in common is a lack of reflexivity, an unwillingness to interrogate the stance, what Jungians might term an 'ego-defensive' resistance, that increases the separation between the inner and outer, public and private ethics, because

the level of engagement required to review and repair this schism is daunting. As in the case of individuals in crisis, however, there is a sense that unless professional ethics in general and PR ethics in particular, evolve a greater degree of maturity and self-acceptance, the fractures will deepen, threatening the whole professional 'project'.

A Jungian approach to ethics was presented as consistent with newer approaches to professional ethics and as a means of encouraging dialog between the competing ethical identities of ethical guardian or amoral advocate, which I characterize as the saint or sinner archetype, representing the dual aspects of public relations ethics promoted in US and, by extension, many other national and global codes, of the practitioner as engaged in symmetrical dialog and social harmony and the view held by many practitioners that their loyalty is to the client or employer rather than social good. There is a challenge for both parties: on the one hand, to abandon the comforts of a professional ideal; on the other, to develop and internalize stronger ethical arguments among practitioners.

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