



Viewpoint

Dark Entrepreneurship, the 'Dark Triad' and Its Potential 'Light Triad' Realization in 'Green Entrepreneurship'

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Abstract: This contribution seeks to achieve three main objectives. First it draws on a substantial, but often overlooked literature on wide-scale international decline in entrepreneurship as recorded in the 'business dynamics' literature. This has serious implications for academic study of entrepreneurship which must re-direct its focus to problems of entrepreneurial unattractiveness dating from at least the 1980s. More important, public policy makers and political ideologists need further to be apprised of the erroneous nature of many of their beliefs and further change the subsidy regimes they bestow on often unproductive entrepreneurship. Second, the contribution seeks one part of the explanation of the declining attractiveness of entrepreneurship in the psychology of the 'dark triad' of negative personality traits that has been connected to the literature on 'dark entrepreneurship' as a possible and partial, but important reason for the growing unattractiveness of entrepreneurship. The contribution devotes attention to the 'Mindfulness' movement in considering the detoxification of 'dark entrepreneurship'. Finally, in what may be an original response to this analysis, the contribution draws attention to recent work on a putative 'light triad' of personality traits and applies it, possibly for the first time, to secondarily researched accounts of 'green entrepreneurship'. The conclusion is that there may be a future for green entrepreneurship as a means for recovery in the current status of more traditional 'business dynamics'.

Keywords: business dynamics; entrepreneurial decline; dark triad; dark entrepreneurship; mindfulness; light triad; green entrepreneurship

1. Introduction

In contrast to a growing number of academic publications related to entrepreneurship dimensions, most government policies have begun to realize an important truth. For decades they have been showering startups and other sub-entrepreneurial firms (under ten employees) with aids, grants and generous tax reliefs. Recently, in some jurisdictions, the latest being the UK, some of this largesse has been significantly cut back [1–5]. The reason is the dawning of findings from heterodox 'business dynamics' research that there is much recent evidence that startups represent poor value for public money. Their survival rates are declining as is the general entrepreneurship profile—also during the past two decades or so. Regarding the experience of young startups in the UK, a recent study [6] shows the following: "... that most who try self-employment in the UK fail swiftly while very few go on to employ ten people (the definition of 'entrepreneur'). Sixty per cent realized less than £10,000 in taxable income. Accordingly, 20% of businesses established by 'sole traders' (defined as too small to pay VAT) close within a year and 60% close within five years ... " [6]. Subsequently, in early 2020 the UK government reduced the entrepreneurship tax relief by 90% in recognition of its lack of incentive effect.

Since Covid-19, 'lockdowns' have occurred worldwide, 'entrepreneurship' has been severely reduced in number of enterprises (small, medium and larger) and vulnerability to massively reduced demand from them as suppliers to intermediary and final customers has arisen. Little thorough research has been conducted on the 'chilling' effects of crises on entrepreneurship and that which has of late been published is both incongruously optimistic and narrowly entrepreneur-centric [7,8]. Fleetingly, Bishop [7] is one of the few academics to discover that once closed down some entrepreneurs sought belatedly to learn 'strategic planning' as also found in an industry-led productivity leadership group survey of 500 small firms of which 25% had been closed by Covid-19 [9]. However, far more common was a 'pincer' movement of small firm closures and a simultaneous collapse in startups described by the Enterprise Research Centre [10] as a '... surge in limited companies going bust being mirrored by a drop in firms setting up'. Thus, in the UK some 62,000 limited companies folded from the start of March to mid-April 2020 (UK Covid-19 peak) while a similar decline occurred in the registration of new ventures. The pincers caught a 73% increase in closures compared to a year previously and a concomitant 23% decline in new registrations over the same period [10]. It has also become clear from close reading of daily financial press reports that a great deal of fraudulent practice by entrepreneurs was disclosed in the first six months of 2020. For example, Wirecard (accountancy malpractice and money laundering), Boohoo (modern slavery), Quiz, (auditing malpractice and modern slavery), Google, Facebook, (exploitative, exclusionary monopoly practices), NMC Health, (accounting and fraudulent practice), Spire Healthcare, (illegal fee fixing), Lendy, (fraudulent misappropriation of funds), Indivior, (misleading opioid safety information), Mercedes-Benz, (emissions test 'defeat devices') faced allegations, indictments or convictions in the London Law Courts during the May-July 'lockdown' period [11-13]. Clearly, as will be shown, entrepreneurship has declined since the 1980s as quoted data below testify. Further, the Covid-19 pandemic and the preceding global crises highlighted in Doern et al. [8] have recently caused 'dark' entrepreneurship to come to the fore in the legal and financial press [14–16].

Accordingly, to present the structure of the argument it is sequenced according to the following logical steps. First, perhaps to the chagrin of many unwitting apologists for a perspective on entrepreneurs and 'entrepreneurship' that wavers between hero-worship and deliverers of salvation, the first section reports a frequently overlooked body of research that showed—well before the Covid-19 episode—that entrepreneurship was in possibly terminal decline. A second sub-element of the further overlooked explanation for this decline derived from observations by occupational psychologists, regarding 'dark triad' personalities, in particular that a variety of 'dark entrepreneurship' personality traits should be examined as a complement to more usual 'institutional' hypotheses for it. Thus, the observed reputation for fraudulence, unfair competition and cheating often associated with entrepreneurial behavioral traits had also made it unattractive to newcomers. Third, the paper explores 'dark triad' analysis further by analyzing its three main psychological components of narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy and their manifestations in entrepreneurial firm practices of different sizes, for example the evolution of the Disney company from startup to corporate scale. Fourth, unhappy that all entrepreneurship should be tarred with the 'dark entrepreneurship' brush, the article identifies a weaker, but existent 'light triad' of personality traits that offer a more optimistic psychological profile. Fifth, and finally, the contribution seeks exemplars of more attractive business practices, as found in two leading apparel and footwear firms that score highly as models of good practice in benign management as 'green entrepreneurship'. To extend the exemplification in a different, more complex industry, which is the world's leading manufacturer of electric vehicles, an account based on in-depth documentary research is provided. Each of these exemplars practices 'light triad' management to a greater or lesser extent showing that the imagery of 'green entrepreneurship' (despite certain identified flaws) has potential to revive the reputation and performance of entrepreneurship more generally.

For the purpose of this contribution, the argument has considered elements of 'sole trader', 'startup' and 'entrepreneurship'—both smaller (under ten employees) and larger (as in corporate 'intrapreneurship') where these shed interesting light on the 'related variety' of the phenomenon.

Why this variety? Because as we shall see in the following sub-reviews and empirical narratives, the causes of decline that lie in the truth of a widely believed myth are scientifically interesting because they reveal important processes of evolutionary change in mass social cognition, agency and practice. Why did slavery once prevail, but again revive in the twenty-first century? Why does diversity thrive in media representations of multiracialism, but racism persist in everyday working and community life? Why did smoking decline yet also persist among some? How did sexism decline in the workplace, but male violence towards women thrive domestically? Of course, such contradictions can only be raised, but not resolved in one article. However, to the extent there may be deeper structures that advance 'pattern recognition' for change and resistance across social science fields, some added value may accrue.

While the definition of 'entrepreneurship' explicitly includes startup efforts from an existing business that may be a new branch or subsidiary, here we mostly focus mainly on startups as autonomous or independent businesses. This may seem somewhat contradictory by first allowing some large corporate entities to qualify as entrepreneurs even if many recent books claim they are often simply 'rent-seekers' otherwise a very specific 'entrepreneurial practice', but really only consider 'new venture creation' as fulfilling the key defining criterion for 'entrepreneurship'. Relevant 'rent-seeker' analyses include: Erixon & Weigel [17]; Lindsey & Teles, [18]; Tepper & Hearn [19] and Mazzucato [20]. We must be careful about one type of time-dimension in some of the US 'business dynamics' literature in light of the observations of the following researchers [21] who see no difference in spatial variation of entrepreneurial decline as between metro areas and rural areas. Their data show such variance is not significant, rather entrepreneurial decline is ubiquitous with sectoral time-lags. That is, the year 2000 dot.com downturn was mostly uniform in timing, but later than the retail new firm formation boom that preceded it and the slump which is now succeeding it. However, of course mature corporations, even if 'rent seekers' are likely or certain to be older than most entrepreneurial 'startups' though some 'entrepreneurial' small firms may conceivably have remained small for generations, if only a minority.

In general, there is an obvious increase of research into entrepreneurship, but it belies statistics that show for most advanced economies entrepreneurship has been in secular decline since the last century. Publication rates are hardly a convincing indicator of the health of the object under inspection or review. Rather, it may just as easily be an indicator of the demise of a dearly held belief or ideology like 'the American dream' that authors like George Stiglitz [22] demonstrate to be an Emperor with no clothes. Without dwelling further on this 'puncturing of propaganda' regarding entrepreneurship in general (for a recent treatment, see Cooke, [23]), of interest in this contribution is limited exploration, not so much of its ideological discourse analysis, as its increasingly widely analyzed and narrated socioeconomic psychoanalysis. The following section of the paper devotes attention to a psychological syndrome referred to as the 'dark triad' of asocial mental health conditions. The following section reviews research literature that psychoanalyses 'dark triad' pathologies in entrepreneurs, with subsections on small and large-firm entrepreneurship of that kind. There is then, a new review and analysis of contemporary remedies or solvents that seek to counter the 'dark triad', referred to at the extreme as a circular, neoliberal-accommodating cognitive practice referred to by Purser [24] as 'McMindfulness'. Later we explore the possible remedies of 'green entrepreneurship' as an antidote to both the 'mindfulness industry' and the perils of 'dark entrepreneurship'.

2. Some International Evidence for Entrepreneurship Decline: Dark Triad Traits

Above all, much mainstream 'business dynamics' and 'entrepreneurship' research fails to recognize, at best, growth stabilization in the US of late (see Table 1: for comparison here, GEM data report 'opinions'; other 'observational' data register steep declines in US entrepreneurship) and steeper declines in major European economies. Metrics of the share of adult populations engaged in early stage entrepreneurship (Table 1) reveal that for 2018 levels fell in the UK, Germany and France. UK declines occurred in the business birth-rate (2016–2017) and survival rate of firms (exits) of from 288,000 to 357,000. Further, there was a sharp fall in business entries, with at least one employee, between 2017

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and 2018 and a rise in business exits since 2016. It is clear that entrepreneurship is not as attractive a career option as it once was.

Table 1. Com	parison of total entreprene	eurship activity among	g four countries adı	ult population
2014-2018. Sou	rce: Roper & Hart [25]; Glo	bal Entrepreneurship M	lonitor (GEM) data.	

	United States	United Kingdom	Germany	France
% Entrepreneurs 2014	13.5	8.5	6.3	6.3
% Entrepreneurs 2018	13.7	7.9	5.2	4.0

Table 1 shows stabilization for US while entrepreneurial decline occurred in the European comparators. Elsewhere OECD [26] showed decline registering in US, Canada and UK since the 2008 Financial Crash, some even dating from 2000 or before or from 2017 in the UK case. Other countries in OECD [26] all in entrepreneurial decline include Canada, Belgium [27], Brazil, Costa Rica, Japan, New Zealand and Norway—notably for high-tech firms. Japan's business dynamics stagnated for the past twenty years. Turning to the US, Hathaway & Litan [21] studied this. These authors cite research by Decker [28], Haltiwanger et al. [29] where startups declined in the US across every sector of the economy including high tech since 2000. Their assessment that no more than 20% of the workforce is employed in firms founded later than the mid-1990s is surprising given the apparently mistaken assumption that most well-known entrepreneurs created their firms in the last decade alone. Accordingly, none of the OECD comparators in the [26] study seem to have performed well in terms of business dynamics after the crisis, but in many cases they were already slowing down in that respect before 2008.

Turning to the US, where most research has been conducted on entrepreneurship decline, we start with Hathaway and Litan's [21] study. The authors quote copious research by authors like Decker [28], Haltiwanger et al. [29] and others that show that startup activity declined in the US across every sector of the economy including high tech since 2000. This also applies to every state and metropolitan area where, typically, startups used to be responsible for most employment growth. US entrepreneurship has clearly gone into reverse. The assessment that only 20% of the workforce is now employed in firms born after the mid-1990s is surprising given the hype about entrepreneurship and the widespread belief that many household name businesses were created in the last decade alone. Contrariwise, attention may be drawn to a summary article by the group of researchers into this issue led by Decker et al. [23] starting with their cited paper entitled "The decline of high growth entrepreneurship". They point at the outset to a significant change in high growth entrepreneurship since the 1980s to 1990s when decline was dominated by a dearth of startups in the retail trade. By the 2000s though, this profile was replaced by a different segment of the startup product market with a sharp decline in high-growth young businesses in key innovative sectors like high tech. Clearly there was a marked decline in transformational entrepreneurs in this sector. Their contribution aims to tease out key factors that hypothetically may be considered responsible for this change. Among these more 'institutional' factors include: the loss of lower-skilled work, that once stimulated entrepreneurial activity, due to automation and latterly, robotization; the often exacting skill-requirements of new technologies in, for example, artificial intelligence (AI) which raises barriers to entry; fluctuations in the availability of venture capital; the pernicious effects of large, once innovative firms that acquire startups as a means of rent-seeking; and the baneful effects of online retailers like Amazon in hitherto specialist entrepreneurial retail outlets. However, these more 'structural', institutional explanations fail to notice that entrepreneurship has become increasingly unattractive to potential entrepreneurs because of the vanity, misogyny and destructive entrepreneurship shown especially by digital entrepreneurs. Many of these 'dark entrepreneurs' have created markets by exploiting 'attention' psychology, 'addictive' practices for users and identity theft in pursuit of targeted customer advertising amounting to unwanted 'surveillance'.

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Accordingly, an emergent literature has sought to explain why entrepreneurship may also be in decline because it displays unattractive 'dark triad' traits. This psychological framing offers a completely different perspective from the economists' institutional explanation. The phenomenon of 'dark entrepreneurship' has been studied most in psychology by the likes of Mathieu & St. Jean [30]; Klotz & Neubaum [31]; Lange, Paulhus & Crusius [32]; and Landay, Harms & Credé [33] and others, e.g., in law: Sheehy, Boddy & Murphy [34]. This and related literature reveals harmful practices for firms and their employees and deplorable outcomes for those who suffer bullying, 'gaslighting' and other forms of psychological abuse in the workplace. It is thus conceivable and reflected in the consensus on this in the research literature, that as well as making aspects of 'dark' entrepreneurship unattractive to experience as an employee, it is even more unattractive to imagine emulating as a business leader. Thus, entrepreneurship is frequently presented as a positive economic market-focused activity in its own right. Accordingly, entrepreneurship in policy and research remains dominated by those with an interest in it being represented as a purely market-based, individualistic activity, which unquestionably contributes to the economy [35].

However, if as Schumpeter [36] held: " ... entrepreneurship is mostly regarded as ... the fundamental impulse which keeps 'the capitalist engine in motion' (Schumpeter [36], p. 83) " it is instructive that despite his alertness to destructive entrepreneurship, it was William Baumol who was early in articulating the darker viewpoint: according to Baumol [14], entrepreneurs may be divided into two categories, namely productive and unproductive ones, so the unproductive ones are divided into subgroups like rent-seeking entrepreneurs and destructive entrepreneurs, including the organizers of criminal groups. Authors we have earlier cited [37] believe that Baumol's insight has become true for the US and that just as the likes of Tepper & Hearn [19], Erixon & Weigel [17] and Lindsey & Teles [18] argue for large US corporations, business dynamics research shows the same. This is especially true if we attend to the implication that 'sorting' by concentration is part of a lobbying effort by 'superstar' firms to secure unearned 'rents'. These result in massively polarized returns to capital and widening the gap with returns to labor. Accordingly, for entrepreneurial firms, the same is true, except that entrepreneurship of the creative Schumpeterian kind has declined massively as rent-seeking, cronyism, lobbying and 'markups' (or artificial price inflation) have displaced innovation and other productive business activities. This may occur due to aspects of entrepreneurial psychology, notably where enthusiasm or even an exultant interest in an idea may produce response patterns that are obsessive, blind, misdirected or display resistance to exploring alternative options. Moreover, employee studies of obsessive behavior by the entrepreneur towards new ideas has shown them losing organizational efficiency and effectiveness from seeking to adopt too many new practices and procedures, leading to distractions, work fragmentation and an inability to implement the ideas in question [15,38].

This dimension of entrepreneurial obsessiveness and employee misdirection in consequence is exhaustively analyzed by Boje [39] in a 'postmodern storytelling' deconstruction of the persona and proprietorial nature of the Walt Disney organization. The official view, uncritically replicated in a bought-in documentary by the BBC, is that the firm was like a family. In 1919, Walt Disney and his partner Ub Iwerks were equal partners in a Kansas City enterprise called Iwerks-Disney Commercial Artists Company, prioritizing Iwerks as the skilled animateur. In 1922, Disney, with the approval of Iwerks who, daunted by poor sales, had taken a job with the Kansas City Ad company, reorganized and renamed the studio Laugh-O-Grams. It was set up on the apprenticeship and journeyman lines then typical of artisan animation firms. Iwerks still believed, however, that he remained Walt's business partner. By 1923, Laugh-O-Grams became insolvent and Walt moved from Kansas City to California to join his brother, Roy. They formed the Disney Brothers partnership, with Iwerks as a 20 percent partner. In 1925, Walt told his brother and Iwerks that the name of the business was being changed from Disney Brothers Studios to Walt Disney Studios. Subsequently, four Disney cartoonists defected to Charles Mintz, an animation distributor who official accounts cite as the originator of a competitor to the famous Felix the Cat cartoon.

Official histories report Mintz created the competitor cartoon (Oswald the Rabbit) while Disney biographies stated Disney claimed Mintz 'stole' it. Boje's rummaging in the Disney archives discovered that Iwerks created Mickey Mouse (by rounding Oswald's eyes and ears as drawn by Mintz), despite Walt's claims that he drew it and even that his wife did. Boje also found the undisclosed story of the animators' defection to Mintz involved Walt's autocratic style of management which was Taylorist (scientific management) in inspiration. Humiliatingly, the early official stories depict Iwerks as an employee, rather than an owner, and that he showed disloyalty to Walt by abandoning him. However, later histories state that Iwerks resigned due to Walt's managerial interference with his craft intensive artisan animations. Accordingly, Iwerks was receiving scant recognition for his animation skill, and Walt was undertaking work fragmentation and distracting the attention of routine (scientific management) animators. To conclude this vignette of early Disney Studios history, Boje calls him a 'tyrant', but in postmodern style he also distances himself from the left narrative of the discourse about Disney:

"... Eliot's [40] book presents Disney as an alcoholic, either entering or coming out of a nervous breakdown, an anti-Semite who kept Jews out of top Disney positions, a racist who only employed blacks to shine shoes, an undercover FBI informant for 25 years, a radical right-wing anti-unionist, as aligned with known members of organized crime, and as telling stories of communist strike leaders to the House Un-American Activities Committee." [39,41]

This is as expressive of postmodern 'difference' and the echo-chambers that much contemporary thought about experience expresses in an era of 'post-truth' and 'fake news'. However, nowadays the simplicities of 'spin' mean any account of Snow White must be conscious of the Wicked Witch, something Disney learnt about storytelling from the Brothers Grimm, unlike his successor Michael Eisner for whom the Disney story is truly a fairy tale [39,42]:

"... In 1923, Walt arrived in Hollywood with drawing materials under his arm, \$40 in his pocket, and a dream. Waiting for him at Union Station was his brother Roy, who would dedicate his life to making Walt's dream come true. Together with their wives, Lilly and Edna, working alongside them at night around the kitchen table, they struggled to keep a tiny studio alive."

3. Dark Entrepreneurs, the Dark Arts and the Dark Triad

Hence, we have introduced the unexalted projection of William Baumol's [14] positioning strategy of the entrepreneur and exemplified the ambiguity that such gives rise to in Boje's interesting biography of the Walt Disney operation, particularly its 'polysemous' or multiple narrative meanings aspects. This deconstruction is reminiscent of Akira Kurosawa's much earlier invention of the 'Rashomon effect' in his 1950 film that pinpoints the notorious unreliability of witnesses to a significant event. The deconstruction addresses contested interpretations of events, the existence of disagreements regarding the evidence of events and subjectivity versus objectivity in human perception, memory and reporting. In more academic language it involves: '... the naming of an epistemological framework—or ways of thinking, knowing and remembering—required for understanding complex and ambiguous situations' [43]. We have argued that much representation of entrepreneurship in economics is mostly fairy tales masquerading as poorly disguised pro-market ideology [44]. A large part of the argument in this contribution is that this is a contributory factor in the decline in attractiveness of the entrepreneurial vocation. In what follows, we shall explore the lineaments of this proposition by examination of the key theoretical explanation for it: this requires further and deeper exploration of 'dark entrepreneurship'. In a following section of this contribution we shall devote some attention to its corollary of 'light entrepreneurship'.

To achieve this, we, first, present the psychological thesis concerning the 'dark triad'. This construct is associated with psychology and refers to the personality traits of narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy. Individuals possessing relatively negative and destructive personality traits, namely

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the dark triad of personality, motivation and execution can fit the 'dark entrepreneur' identity well. Dark personalities researchers have also conducted other comparable studies utilizing the 'dark triad' formulation. Thus, forensic scientists, personality traits researchers and occupational psychologists studying 'job burnout' have conducted such studies [12,45]. They concur that the profiles of dark personality traits are defined, first as narcissism, second as Machiavellianism and third, as (Sub-clinical) psychopathy (subclinical meaning not visible from a clinical test [46]). More recently, Paulhus [47] concluded that *callousness*, the trait of being insensitive to others, is the driver for and bridge among the dark triad for overlap among the three key personality traits. To be more specific, parsed below from Prusik & Szulawski [12], narcissism includes an inflated ego, control-freakery, exultation, vanity and 'hubris,' being admired and acknowledged by others; Machiavellianism is characterized by cynical, paranoiac, misanthropic and immoral beliefs; emotional detachment; insouciant and self-serving motives; strategic long-term planning; manipulation and exploitation; while Sub-clinical psychopathy is denoted by 'imperiousness' both towards other people and social regulatory mechanisms, impulsivity, ingratitude and a lack of guilt, mortification or remorse for harming others.

It is clear that these personality traits are, to most normal people, judged largely unattractive because they betray a malevolence that is more normally associated with extreme unpleasantness bordering on the 'Heart of Darkness' perspective towards dehumanization captured by Joseph Conrad [48] in his novel of that name. Accordingly, it is clear from the account above that the dark triad of personality leads to destructive and harmful behavior to organizations which in turn can have direct impacts on other employees' wellbeing and that of their perpetrator(s). What is now needed is the available research to facilitate an exegesis of the extent towards which the dark triad has been shown to characterize the personality traits of entrepreneurs. For that, we begin with the following. Personality traits are typically associated with characteristics of individuals. Accordingly, entrepreneurs identify more than most with their individual businesses. As such, entrepreneurs are seldom as hierarchy-dependent as most workers and they normally experience much work-related autonomy. Entrepreneurs are often defined as having risk facing and risk taking personalities and that is among the main reasons for individual interest in entrepreneurship activities. It is also evident from relevant research that the dark sides of personality traits have a pervasive influence on entrepreneurs and subsequently entrepreneurship activities. Research has found that there is a positive relationship between the dark triad of personality and unproductive entrepreneurial motives, confirming Baumol [14]. Narcissism is also related to entrepreneurial intention [30]. Defining positive and negative effects of personality traits on entrepreneurs' managers is beneficial to understand many different organizational outcomes [16]. Finally, entrepreneurship is associated with excessive work and even overwork, complicated and accompanied with burnout for the incumbent [12]. Without laboring the copious research findings on the negative effects of dark triad personality traits upon entrepreneurs, it is plain that to be inflicted with such an orientation is sufficiently unattractive to the majority (as revealed in Table 1) that for the rest it practically constitutes a deviant and inhuman orientation.

Hence, reflecting upon dark triad analysis of entrepreneurialism, it is possible to over-emphasize the degree to which its association with neoliberal, free market and individualistic hegemony can color a rather reductionist world-view. Everything is increasingly presented as 'entrepreneurial', including everything from ordinary labor processes to university researcher engagement with an entrepreneurial and/or 'transactional' engagement with others and for whom, money alone is the main transactional relationship. This chimes with the 'financialization' of production and services in the economy [14] argues, putting liquidity and return on investment capital itself even before any of its productivity and employment potentials. Others speak of the workplace as 'post-social', where individualistic secrecy, envy and perceived inequity along race, class and gender lines has become entrepreneurialized. This is fomented by the bonus culture, employee ratings and narcissistic consumption. In such circumstances the dark triad disconnects humans from contexts which further entail 'algorithmic dependence' [49] that may turn into 'digital addictiveness'.

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This is now a demonstrable product of dark triad implementation of 'digital attention capture' at the Persuasive Technology Lab directed by the behavioral psychologist B.J. Fogg [50]. Fogg's class at Stanford University became notorious for training a generation of Google, Facebook, Instagram, Uber and Snapchat entrepreneurs to use psychological insights to influence users' practices. Among these, Instagram's founders Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger were known for promoting 'vanity' among its users, a trait that attracted Facebook to acquire it for \$1 billion in 2012, allegedly for fear of Twitter's 'category killer' potential towards Facebook were it to succeed in its desire to buy Instagram [42]. This is characterized as Facebook's 'copy, acquire, kill' strategy when rivals emerge, as reported in US House judiciary hearing minutes [29]. Mark Zuckerberg's paranoia (Machiavellianism; [51]) led to payment of the \$1 billion for an Instagram workforce that boasted 13 employees at the time. Facebook later acquired WhatsApp's 55 workers for \$19 billion in 2014 to counter the comparable threat that WhatsApp was equally capable of being a Facebook killer. Readers will recall this contribution's inclusion of 'vanity' as a key element of the dark triad trait of narcissism and 'paranoia' similarly in relation to Machiavellianism. The key vitamin for this form of addiction is the user's 'undivided attention'. One of the Fogg alumni, Tristan Harris, whose startup Apture was acquired by Google in 2011, became a critical insider of 'attention capitalism' as he termed it, discussed it with Google CEO Larry Page, who gave him a new position of 'design ethicist' yet his contrarian outlook earned him the (saintly) epithets 'the closest thing Silicon Valley must a conscience' and a 'Silicon Valley apostate' [52]. Accordingly, with like-minded apostates he established the Centre for Humane Technology (CHT) to proselytize about the evils of 'attention capitalism' as represented by big tech social media firms with which he had once interacted. His evangelism focuses on AI nowadays, referencing the ineluctable rise of its 'stealth supremacy' over human traits like 'vanity', 'paranoia' and 'hubris': in other words, facets of the dark triad. Its stealth occurred by 'information overload' after the arrival of the 'tabbed browser' that fixed multiple page tasking. This was then exacerbated by smartphones that flattered human vanity, egoism and imperiousness with uncritical 'likes'. Finally, a phase has been reached consisting of measurably shorter attention spans, addiction, disinformation, narcissism, outrage and polarization. For example, the 2019 Russian face-aging algorithm that users could share online induced 150 million visitors to entrust images, names and emails to the 'bots' purely in the name of 'vanity'. Similarly, You Tube videos persuaded anti-vaccination propaganda to outperform fact-based information [53]. The problem, Harris stated in a CHT podcast called 'undivided attention' is that two of the largest big tech firms, Facebook (including Instagram and WhatsApp) and Google (including YouTube), have been incentivized to create a 'digital dark age' where disinformation outcompetes information. Harris' contrarian response is to lobby alumni colleagues or disciples like Evan Spiegel founder of Snap, Jack Dorsey of Twitter, Roger McNamee former Facebook investor and mentor to Mark Zuckerberg through CFT and shift the dial away from the new Dark Ages.

Even Fogg has been influenced marginally to change his center's name from the Persuasive Technology Lab to the Behavior Design Lab. This is meant to foster 'good habits' under the mantra that: 'In 2020, we will start to realize that being chained to your mobile phone is low-status behavior, similar to smoking.' However, what does that mean? Especially when his client Eric Schmidt, CEO of Alphabet, Google's parent is on record lecturing the assorted luminaries of the Davos World Economic Forum to the effect that in future:

"There will be so many IP addresses ... so many devices, sensors, things that you are wearing, things that you are interacting with that you won't even sense it ... It will be part of your presence all the time. Imagine you walk into a room, and the room is dynamic." [38,54]

Fogg and Schmidt are like most IT entrepreneurs, engineers and technologists, more able to discuss the positive or 'light' side of innovation than reflect upon new ways to deal with the 'dark'. They are not particularly clued-in to the nuances of privacy, critique and democracy. As Fogg revealed, he:

"... was ... interested ... in rhetoric. I had discovered Aristotle, and I thought, 'All this power of persuasion] could come to technology" [50]

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Influenced like the 'surveillance capitalists' anatomized in Zuboff [55], by behavioral psychologist B. F. Skinner, Fogg began to explore the 'art of persuasion' informed by Skinner's finding that rats would endure starvation if fed consistently but would go mad if fed inconsistently —coincidentally the explanation why the slot machine is both more addictive and generates more profit than any other kind of gambling. The smartphone operates on the same addictive principle, as are the apps installed on it. Yet Fogg claims his studies were motivated by altruism (e.g., ambient social care apps) and augmenting 'good habits', for which he has been rewarded with death threats for propagating addictive technologies. But 'addictives' gained prominence from the Internet platforms which facilitated persuasive 'addictive capitalism', when Facebook knocked on his door in 2007. That Fogg 'Facebook class' of one hundred students (including Tristan Harris) launched seventy-five careers into the nascent big tech industry, with 550 Silicon Valley 'intermediaries' like venture capitalists, innovators and engineers joining the final presentations, according to Foroohar [54]. Harris learned the art of 'hijacking' users' attention by means of social pressure and network effects in the 'Facebook class'. Like Harris, Fogg takes regular detoxification breaks. These are to protect themselves and particularly their children from the pernicious and pervasive effects of 'addictive capitalism,' the ego-driven nature of which means 'an army of engineers are working to get you to spend more time and money online'. (Harris quoted in [56]). CHT's important task is to help algorithm developers choose to design for 'empathy' in their business models not for the present addictive tobacco industry configuration or the 'loot boxes' business model typical of the gaming and gambling industries.

4. Mindfulness: Empathy or Neoliberal Opportunism?

A different response to the momentary 'entrepreneurial avalanche' of 2007 has been the pursuit of 'mindfulness'. According to the following: 'Mindfulness is a state of active, open *attention* to the present. This state encompasses observing one's thoughts and feelings without judging them as good or bad' *Psychology Today* [57]. Evolved from Buddhist meditation through Zen training, mindfulness is a mental discipline, based on the practice of deliberately projecting attention on physical sensations, emotions and thoughts. Using such techniques, proponents claim, it is possible to cultivate a kinder, more accepting relationship with self-image and the external world. Some evidence shows that applying these ideas and exercises can offer relief from a range of symptoms such as mental stress, depression and poor concentration. It may be thought that such training may also depress the 'animal spirits' that are thought to be the wellsprings of entrepreneurship. However, to the contrary, the author of a critique focused on the context of the entrepreneurial sphere argues that even meditation has been turned into an entrepreneurial fashion, as Ron Purser argues in his book on mindfulness, aptly titled McMindfulness [24].

Purser's [24] principal source of skepticism is the proliferation of mindfulness-based interventions designed to make individuals mentally fit for the ruling socioeconomic system. The most prominent of these is mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR), a program designed by American medical academic Jon Kabat-Zinn, promoted to groups ranging from primary school students to CEOs. Kabat-Zinn reconfigured mindfulness within a broader frame of collective political responsibility. Thus, it was supposedly not simply a conventional instrument for shaping a neoliberal self, but a form of self-care intended to support collective political change. However, rather like supermarkets feed obesity while the pharmaceutical industry invents cures, individualistic market forces of commodification now dominate the original impulse. With monetization, according to a review of 'McMindfulness' [11] mindfulness has been reduced to a privatized self-help technique complicit with a neoliberal ethos of self-responsibility. As we have seen, dark triad analysis perceives such personality traits as reinforcing impersonal or dehumanizing systems of oppression and injustice.

Reducing mindfulness to a mere performance enhancement technique divorced from a firmer societal and ethical grounding is questionable. Normalizing the neoliberal outlook, Humphreys [11] means it can even be weaponized, as the US military is doing by investing in mindfulness for optimizing military cognitive performance. This is officially referred to as instilling 'sustained attention response'

(SART) skills. The authors in question [58] investigated the impact of mindfulness training (MT) on attention improvement performance, notably lapses associated with task-unrelated thought (i.e., mind wandering). Periods of persistent and intensive demands were proposed to compromise attention and increase off-task thinking. Their research investigated if MT may mitigate such undesirable effects and promote cognitive resilience in armed forces undergoing intensive predeployment training. It did.

Decontextualizing mindfulness transforms it into an ethically neutral instrument for such purposes which can subsequently be assimilated into corporations and institutions with oppressive structures and dubious social and environmental ethics. To exemplify, the 'grand challenge' of climate change involves unlocking the carbon paradigm which is cultural, societal and politico-economic as well as self-transforming [59]. Mindfulness is presented in 'McMindfulness' as equally locked-in to its current ethically neutral, quietist, isolationist, self-absorbed and individualistic form. As Humphreys [11] concludes his review:

"... Mainstream psychology has a long history of pathologising dissent and individualizing social problems. Even the notion of a 'cure' presumes an underlying illness or disorder along with the manufacture of the vulnerable subject who is 'at risk' and therefore in need of psychological treatment ... This dominant and political biomedical model of mental health is closely aligned with a neoliberal ethos that is hostile to social change and political explanations of stress ... " [11,60]

If new age sensibility is not sufficient to unlock the carbon paradigm, some narrative twists may facilitate practical guidance if it is based on inverting the dark triad into a light triad and seeing how 'green entrepreneurship' measures up to its guiding principles. Accordingly, in the final main section of this text we, first, introduce some theoretical guidance on the 'light triad' of personality traits and then take a few sub-vignettes of actual entrepreneurial 'green' practice, illustratively original if not entirely definitive.

5. The Light Triad and a Future for Entrepreneurial Ethical Recovery?

Hence, what are the three elements of the light triad? The research conducted on this topic is currently quite thin. Only in recent years has the nature of humanity's positive side been getting much attention. Thus, some studies investigating traits like generosity, altruism and empathy are emerging [61]. However, these authors note that most of the work on this human nature spectrum has only been concerned with one end or the other, meaning empirical investigations involving both the dark and light triads are required to deepen understanding. We essay some sketches through 'light triad' vignettes of 'sustainable entrepreneurship' to illustrate elements of the varying intensity of such combinations in the case-material subsection that follows this one. The three subscales of the light triad scale are conceptualized as follows:

- Faith in humanity—or the belief that, generally speaking, humans are good;
- 2. Humanism—or the belief that humans across all personalities deserve respect;
- 3. Kantianism—or the belief that others should not be treated as pawns in games.

Those who score high on Kantianism are more likely to see a person as a person, not as a means to an end; participants who test high on humanism are more likely to value someone else's dignity and worth; and people who see higher scores for faith in humanity tend to think that humans are basically good. In a series of experiments, Kaufman's team tested an LTS method, the light triad scale's (LTS), validity and reliability, also ensuring they were focusing on characteristics that were conceptually opposite from those of the dark triad test. Following experimentation with more than 1500 respondents, conclusions of the research were as follows: They judged reliability and validity by observing that the LTS gives distinctive measures rather than inversions of dark triad test results. However, absence of darkness did not necessarily indicate the presence of light, there being some degree of independence between the light and dark triad, leaving room for personalities to have a mix of both light and dark traits. (This is also discernible in the illustrative case material narrated

below). An important finding—seldom spotted in dark triad research—is the gender variation of such personality tests. Thus, in findings Kaufman et al. [61], refer to as 'portraits of the light vs. dark triad,' respondents scoring high on light triad traits tended to be older, female and have experienced less unpredictability in their childhoods. They also tended to report higher levels of religiosity, spirituality, life satisfaction, acceptance of others, belief that they and others were good, compassion, empathy, openness to experience and conscientiousness. Meanwhile, those scoring high on dark triad characteristics tended to be younger males and psychologically more driven by success, power, fleeting sex and relationships. Further, they were relatively uncompassionate, disagreeable, unempathetic, self-satisfied, but reportedly skeptical of apparently good motives.

In the limited space available, some critique is warranted of this approach. First, it depends on stretching meanings to breaking point. Thus, what is 'good'? Is it virtuous, saintly or 'good at one's job'? In the last-listed case can that be a form of narcissism or Machiavellianism? Being a good competitor may not imply 'saintliness', which LTS seems mainly to be in quest of. Second, LTS lacks a concept of 'uncertainty' which would mean having no notion of 'untrustworthiness' that may cost lives in, for example, suspicion of terrorist intent. Finally, Kantianism as deployed here neglects the possibility of purposive action because it is evidently unaware of the political nature of collective action, which involves manipulating leader–follower power relations [62]. Nevertheless, we now turn to examples of 'shading' or *chiaroscuro* in ostensibly virtuous sustainable practice by entrepreneurs.

6. 'Green' Entrepreneurial Practice—Warts and All?

6.1. Vaude

In the following narrative this contribution presents research that deploys ranking studies conducted of annual performance in 'green entrepreneurial' practice for the first two vignettes. This is followed by related and relevant research from outside that ranking, but which interrogates the subject on comparable dimensions. Thus, for the next immediate two case studies the firms in question are ranked on three criteria: climate change and carbon emissions; company environmental policy; and labor and supplier relations. For the third case, comparable criteria are mobilized. We begin with Vaude, which has achieved the RankaBrand A-Label. Accordingly, RankaBrand's assessors recommended Vaude's jackets, trousers and other outdoor & sports clothing most highly. In the domain of climate protection Vaude scores points with their use of renewable energy. Regarding environmental protection, points are scored for their collection that is partly made of environmentally friendly materials, including those that are bluesign® certified and for their packaging and waste policies. As a member of the Fair Wear Foundation (FWF), Vaude is actively involved in improving working conditions for employees and those of its suppliers, reporting transparently on the results. A list of suppliers has also been published. Thus, the active brand-name incumbent is VAUDE Sport GmbH & Co. KG, the head office of which is at Obereisenback, Germany. There, its primary active sector is sport and outdoor clothing for adults and children. The Vaude range consists of bags, caps, shirts, pullovers, jackets, dresses and shoes and scores 'A' with 27 points out of a possible total of 34. Equivalent brands like Patagonia, Jack Wolfskin and Fjällräven score 'B'. 'C' and 'D', respectively.

Although Vaude increased its own operational climate footprint from 494 tons of CO_2 in 2016 to 529 tons of CO_2 in 2017, it fully compensated these emissions through gold standard certifications. Vaude uses renewable energy for its electricity consumption at its own premises only. This energy is generated by its own solar panels (27%) and the remaining energy is purchased from a green electricity provider (*LichtBlick*). Although the exact percentage of environmentally preferred materials such as organic cotton, Tencil and recycled materials is difficult to determine, an estimated share of at least 40% is advanced as being considered reliable. As well as gold standard certifications Vaude has offset its marginally growing emissions with a reforestation project in Costa Rica. Vaude also reports on a supplier training program saving 5000 tons CO_2 annually. On company environmental policy, more than 95% of the firm's collection is certified with its in-house Green Shape label. The company

also reports that at least one of *RankaBrand*'s suspect listed chemical groups (PFC) is completely eliminated from its apparel production. Whether or not more than one suspect chemical group was completely phased out from their global supply chain and products remains unclear. The firm has a second-hand shop on eBay for re-commerce and also offers instructions to customers to repair products and encourages customers to visit a repair café, where they only must pay for their materials used and to receive assistance in repairing the products. Regarding labor conditions and fair trade for suppliers, at least 88% of Vaude's production sites and at least 50% of workers are familiar with the Fair Wear Foundation (FWF) Code of Labor Practices. Vaude has published a list of direct suppliers that are likely to cover 90% of its total production, effective from 2017 including the full addresses/products that were made in each factory. It also publishes a further list of suppliers further down the supply chain. For its four factories in Vietnam Vaude has paid a model regular wage to sewing operators that is above most of the FWF living wage estimates but has not yet been given the 'Advanced Approach' status by the Fair Wear Foundation.

6.2. Veja

We follow Vaude with Veja, the Brazilian–French sports shoes producer that professes top green and vegan credentials for its manufacturing process. It was founded in 2005 by François-Ghislain Morillion and Sébastien Kopp. It is ranked first globally by *RankaBrand* in its 2019 running order, which interrogates firms on their claims to sustainability. Veja achieved the top-ranking 'C' position (denoting 'Reasonable': could do better) with the highest share of positive scores among that category of four companies manufacturing shoes and footwear. The *RankaBrand* website summarizes its performance as follows:

"... The company earns good points on their material use and their avoidance of the use of hazardous chemicals. Concerning labor conditions, VEJA needs to make more steps to prove that workers are compensated fairly..." [56]

On questions regarding climate change and carbon emissions, Veja reduces these impacts by use of renewable energy in its own operations, such as the use of renewable energy at its headquarters. Later, Veja mentions that 90% of its own use of electricity is renewable. The company webpage mentions that this is purchased from ENERCOOP, a co-operative renewable energy supplier co-founded by Greenpeace and headquartered in Paris. It manufactures product near the Florianopolis, Santa Catarina shoe cluster in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Veja trainers (including vegan) and accessories are made of organic cotton (from north east Brazil), wild rubber from the Amazon, vegetable-tanned leather and recycled plastic bottles. RankaBrand notes more than once that the Porto Alegre manufacturing plant is not fueled with renewable energy and admits similar for some of its supplier network, claiming it is difficult to control use by suppliers of Amazon cattle for leather. On company environmental policy Veja only claims 'more than 25%' of its preferred materials being used in its sneakers production. Finally, regarding labor and supplier relations, RankaBrand finds Veja's performance in need of improvement. Veja mentions that the International Labor Organisation (ILO)-founded Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) Base Code of Conduct is applicable down the production chain, but it is not clear if Veja also actively performs audits on, e.g., spinners and weaving factories. Regular audits of labor standards are held, but those appear not to be verified and classified by eligible third parties. Veja reports that average wages in their factory are substantially higher than the minimum wage. However, the 2018 audit report suggests this is industry average and lies well below the calculated local living wage. Concrete results of Veja's labor conditions policy for leather producers and the fabric manufacturing phases from spinning to final fabrics for cotton are not reported.

6.3. Tesla

We round off our three 'light triad' narratives by reference to the earlier-mentioned example of Tesla which, as well as having pioneered mass-production of electric vehicles (EVs) and automated driver vehicles, innovated high quality Lithium-ion batteries to fuel them. A further 'Gigafactory' was built in Buffalo, New York State, in which to produce solar roof tiles, also boasts a renewable energy, robotized, sustainable factory system and fair trade company policies towards employee wages and conditions. With regard to Tesla and its CEO's claims to the first two commitments, it can be shown that while solar roof power was installed at Tesla's first and smaller European factory in Tilburg, The Netherlands, in early 2020 nothing like the full rooftop array on the Nevada Gigafactory was evident over four years after it opened. Hence, at the very least this points to signs of inflated, ego, vanity and hubris. A further instance of mildly psychopathic transgression of sustainability norms concerns CEO Musk's recent infraction in cutting down pine trees on the site of his next Gigafactory near Berlin. The administrative courts of Brandenburg and Berlin intervened on appeal against state environmental approval for clearing 92 hectares because planning permission had not yet been granted. This was due to a complaint against the tree-felling from the Grüne Liga Brandenburg. Local and national lawmakers had been caught out by the strength of opposition to the Gigafactory, with hundreds of demonstrators protesting over what they say is the threat it poses to local wildlife and water supplies. It can be argued that this is hardly a capital offense, but its hastiness and lawlessness are both indicators of narcissistic behavior in respect of 'control-freakery' and sub-clinical psychopathy regarding imperiousness and failure to show remorse for harm done to others.

A final instance of this entrepreneurial insouciance by 'green' CEO Musk concerns Grohmann Automation, located in Rheinland-Pfalz between the Cologne-Düsseldorf auto-cluster and the south German auto-clusters where Tesla had already contracted quality suppliers for Tesla Model S and Model 3 electric vehicles (EVs) such as ZF Lenksysteme, ADAC, Stabulus and Angell-Demmel (Faurecia). Grohmann manufactured robotics used in battery and electronics production for Tesla at its Gigafactory [9] in Reno, Nevada US. By 2020, Tesla now had Giga [43], in Buffalo, [14] in Shanghai built and [38] planned for Berlin. In 2017 Tesla acquired Grohmann as a global single source for battery pack manufacturing, which was a cause of friction over quality with its alliance partner Panasonic at Reno and Buffalo. After acquisition, Elon Musk insisted that Grohmann must sever its supplier ties with German auto-assemblers, which upset the manufacturers, the unions and the former founder–owner Grohmann himself, who resigned. Subsequently, Mercedes-Benz announced it was struggling to meet battery demand for its new 'intelligent' EQC model as Tesla had bought Grohmann which had hitherto been hired by Mercedes to build up its own battery manufacturing capacity [63]. This could be considered Machiavellian, if not psychopathological behavior expressed in a cynical, self-serving and unremorseful mentality.

7. Conclusions

There are three of these that can be utilized to tie together the narrative presented above. The first is that a widespread belief in most modern advanced economies is that entrepreneurship is on the rise and has been for many decades. However, a moment's inspection of data on international 'business dynamics' or the emergence of startup or spin-off enterprises and their evolution into entrepreneurial businesses is almost wholly unfounded. This fact presents a major dilemma for entrepreneurship studies that have for long been based on a rather exultant portrayal of the perceived heroic practices of venturesome individuals. Moreover, this undermines the belief that entrepreneurship is thriving among the political and policy disciples who assert that entrepreneurship will 'save capitalism'. Pointing to the youthfulness of the Silicon Valley 'class of 2007' that spawned so many sometimes gargantuan entrepreneurial businesses simply reinforces the underlying dogma. However, as we have shown using data and argument, these often gigantic businesses are simply the 'tail' of a statistical distribution that reveals, once again, the ancient 'fallacy of composition' or 'generalizing from a sample

of one (or fewer)' that remains the basis of the 'post-truth' and 'fake news' variants of a populist, 'feelings-based' deformation of information broadcasting in the contemporary world.

Second, this contribution argued that among many influences that have weakened the attractiveness of entrepreneurship as a vocation are: the overshadowing of entrepreneurial opportunity by the predatory activities of, for example, the aforementioned social media giants and their acquisitions; the exacting nature of the intellectual skills required to become successfully entrepreneurial in a technological world evolving into a 'post-social' mode of automated intelligence; and the rent-seeking 'financialization' of large enterprise that prefers to hoard superprofits than invest in corporate innovation, relying on buying a diminishing pool of real 'innovation' from the aforementioned declining number of available entrepreneurs. Adding to these points is the larger one that 'entrepreneurship' has become less and less attractive because of its increasing portrayal as suffering a major image problem with potential participants for its 'dark triad' of associated personality traits that are needed to be 'entrepreneurial'. Successful entrepreneurs are widely presented as being narcissistic, Machiavellian and psychopathic to be successful. Media stories of their egotism, self-obsessiveness, manipulativeness and unconcern about harming the psychological stability of others has made 'entrepreneurship' an unattractive combination of personality traits to emulate.

Finally, this contribution sought to discover the extent to which there is a counter-literature and examples of counter-evidence to the 'dark entrepreneur' model that has been presented since its first formation in Kets de Vries [15] and Baumol [14]. A recent literature exists on the 'light triad' of: faith in humanity, humanism; and respectfulness that combined to emphasize religiosity, spirituality, life satisfaction, acceptance of others, belief that they and others were good, compassion, empathy, openness to experience and conscientiousness. Even the most-noted authors of research into these personality traits concluded that their 'saintliness' militated against their prevalence. Accordingly, they recommended that more research was needed into the complex and variable spectrum of characteristics that may be found in a wider study that controlled for both 'light' and 'dark' mixes of personality traits. In an illustrative sketch of three such hypothesized mixes among 'green' entrepreneurial types we found potentially fruitful evidence that while each case studied was hardly 'saintly' their 'light/dark' entrepreneurial personality mixes showed promising and often attractive characteristics compared to the 'dark' stereotype. Our conclusion is that developing and applying appropriate mixes of 'light' and' dark 'triad entrepreneurial traits is likely to enhance the attractiveness of entrepreneurship where it is characterized also by a commitment to 'green' and 'sustainable' entrepreneurship values and practices.

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