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PART 4: ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS AND IDENTITY: DEFINING THE NEW PARADIGM

Chapter 18: Organizational Culture in a Wider Field: Is There a Post Post-Culture?

Chapter 18

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN A WIDER FIELD

Is There a Post Post-Culture?

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The Premature Death of Culture?

Discussions of organizational culture customarily begin by pointing out that the concept of culture is notoriously difficult to define. Nevertheless, as Michael Fischer (2007) recently demonstrated, over the past century and a half, anthropologists have sequentially laid the foundations for cultural understanding that is increasingly sophisticated and more responsive to rapid and occasionally dramatic social and technological changes in contemporary contexts:

> Culture is (1) that relational (ca. 1848), (2) complex whole. . . . (1870s), (3)
> whose parts cannot be changed without affecting other parts (ca. 1914), (4)
> mediated through powerful and power-laden symbolic forms (1930s), (5)
> whose multiplicities and performatively negotiated character (1960s), (6) is
> transformed by alternative positions, organizational forms, and leveraging of

symbolic systems (1980s), (7) as well as by emergent new technosciences,

media, and biotechnical relations (ca. 2005). (p.1).

The term *culture* clearly has many different meanings. These are not simply a product of perspectivism—whatever empirical phenomena the term culture is intended to capture, its very plasticity indicates the real-world creative adaptability that social cultures possess. Fischer's semantically sedimented and historically layered definition above illustrates this dynamism. But in applying the term to organizations, this adaptability has not been acknowledged in all interpretations or schools of interpretation. This chapter will take the position that the concept of culture remains important to contemporary organization studies, but that the field needs to be fully aware of developments in the study of culture and its related concepts outside its immediate area of concern—which include anthropology, art and design, politics, and cultural-media studies—to appreciate the impact and potential impact of its contemporary mutability. This may mean that the concept of culture, with respect to organization studies, moves so far away from the dominant concerns of the 1980s with shared meaning and those of the 1990s with representational fragmentation control and resistance that such work is best described as postculture (Calás & Smircich, 1987) or post postculture (Marcus, 2007). The characteristics of postcultural outputs in organization studies will be considered, and the possible defining features of a post postcultural mood that may be emerging in terms of theoretical translation, theoretical intensification, empirical expansion, and methodological intensification will be briefly sketched.

In 1987, Marta Calás and Linda Smircich introduced the term *postculture* to debates about organizational culture, asking the question, "Is the organizational culture literature dominant but dead?" They were not unaware that the designation *post* does not necessarily always indicate a clean break with the past, but their purpose was to argue that existing

mainstream perspectives on culture were moribund. Such approaches were entitative (Chan, 2000, 2003) in that they followed Michael Pacanowski and Nick O'Donnell-Trujillo's (1983) distinction, also made by Smircich (1983), in seeing culture as something that an organization has, rather than something it is (the instantiative approach). They argued that the term culture had become so distorted by this representation that it was necessary to establish new discourses to make important and critical points about the qualitative texture of organizing and the tensions within it to avoid their co-optation into a more conservative and perhaps performative set of assumptions.

Of course, some approaches to culture were already following heterodox lines in different ways and were already postculture in that they had engaged with and distinguished themselves from dominant, functionalist representations of culture. But there is also a sense of a period of time when, following the rapid burgeoning of performative literatures in the wake of the mass popularity of guru books in the early 1980s, the field of organizational culture had a somewhat unitary core and a diverse and divergent periphery. Calás and Smircich's (1987) break with this situation foreshadowed the significant movement of conceptual attention in the 1990s, discussed in this volume by Alvesson (see Chapter 2), from studies of culture into studies of identity and discourse.

Calás and Smircich (1987) classified the explosion of organizational culture literature along three lines of concern: (1) anthropological themes (cognition-knowledge structures; symbolism discourse; unconscious psychodynamic), (2) sociological paradigm (functionalist, interpretive, critical), or (3) epistemological interest (technical, practical, or emancipatory). These were symptomatic of contemporary debates between cognitive and symbolic anthropology, the incommensurability or otherwise of [Gibson Burrell and Gareth Morgan's (1979) paradigms, labor process theorists, and Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action. One might further note four predominant clusters in the literature: (1) cognitive-

functionalist-technical (psycho-performative), (2) symbolist-functionalist-practical (symbolic pragmatism), (3) symbolist-interpretive-practical (symbolic culturism); or (4) symbolist-critical-emancipatory (symbolic radicalism), although much is left out of such schematics (see also Brewis & Jack 2009, pp. 236–237). But the point was well made: most of the mainstream literature, which had its forerunners in the late 1970s, although its roots extended much earlier and overlapped with literature on organizational symbolism, was implicitly if not explicitly wedded to the structural-functionalist approach in anthropology (Meek, 1988; Parker, 2000). Other approaches were rarely considered in-depth and were often given a functionalist gloss. In this frame, whether it was hegemonic-managerialist, emancipatory-resistant, or a sociopolitically neutral analytic perspective, culture was a tool for getting things done. When potentially radical approaches such as semiotics were adopted, which had been a powerful tool in European literary, political, cultural, and media studies for two decades, they were taken up for their performative capacity to expand the interpretive repertoire without much attempt to utilize their critical leverage. By the late 1980s, with a few exceptions such as John Van Maanen (1988) and Michael Rosen (2000), the more radical possibilities of the cultural approach hadbeen marginalized, in the United States at least, through their cooption into the mainstream. Stephen Barley, Gordon Meyer, and Debra Gash (1988), in an extensive bibliometric study of the early growth of the organizational culture literature and an early example of the field's demonstrable self-regard if not its self-reflexivity, developed an argument that could be seen to provide some empirical support for Calás and Smircich's dominance claim. This argument was that the culture literature divided into academic and practitioner-oriented outputs and that the latter had come to swamp the field, which meant that it effectively turned its back on exciting new approaches, emerging particularly from social anthropology (Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Marcus & Fischer , 1986).

The Emergence of Postculture

In Europe, however, the different theoretical provenance of culture had already generated a significant radical acceptance, drawing particularly on work being done in media and cultural studies that sought to revise Marxist analyses building on strong traditions in critical theory and to develop and apply the ideas of Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jean Baudrillard, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari—theorists who could, with varying degrees of caution, be considered postmodern (Linstead, 2004, 2009a, 2009b). Culture here included the idea of popular culture, a means of both dissemination and contesting ideology, which for Frankfurt School critical theorists (e.g., Habermas, Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Max Horkheimer, Karl-Otto Apel) was the main product of the bourgeoisie facilitating the manipulation of a docile working class by intervening in their everyday sensemaking processes. In Europe, the radical tradition was associated with sociological approaches, with poststructural and postmodern ideas assimilated into the social and organizational sciences by this route; in the United States, it was anthropology that radically influenced ideas of writing, representation, and power in relation to culture (Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Marcus & Fischer , 1986; Tyler 1987) Culture from these perspectives was seen as a construction of its mode of representation, which required reflexivity and self-reflexivity from those authoring its various representations (Linstead, 1993, 1994; Jeffcutt, 1994). Representation was seen to be in crisis, and with it, the concept of culture became destabilized. Emerging threads of postculture at this point could be categorized as resistant (approaches that saw culture as another tool of control designed to extract more surplus value from the workforce; e.g., Ray, 1986; Willmott, 1993); interpretative (frustrated with dominant functional performative approaches and seeking to evade representative capture that varied in politicization from the naive to the sophisticated; e.g., Mary Jo Hatch), or postmodern (emphasizing the instability of categories of

representation and the differences that underlay them, varying in the extent to which they excavated language [deconstruction], traced contingent discursive formations through history [genealogy], or concentrated on interrogating the proliferation of new forms of both organization and representation [simulation]).

In organization and management studies, culture works somewhat differently from its role in anthropology, being operationalized less as a concept and more as a metaphor, and often a very loose one at that (see Alvesson, Chapter 2, this *Handbook*). Where it refers to specific cultural forms found in traditional anthropological studies, such as rituals, rites, taboos, and totems, having counterparts in modern organizations, the metaphorical dimension seems clear enough if too often specious (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). The apotheosis of the functional approach was perhaps Harrison Trice and Janice Beyer's (1993) contribution; despite its predominantly functional premise, often prescriptive tone, and performative conclusions, it was historically informed, reflexive within its avowed limits and unsympathetically critical of those who, like Edgar Schein (1985), they saw misrepresenting and misusing anthropological scholarship But the reference to culture as an abstract concept (rather than as its concrete exemplars) very quickly became itself the target term of the metaphor so that the linking of one abstraction (organization) to another (culture) at a metalevel, with a consequent loss of perspicacity (Morgan, 1986), was offered. This slippage created some confusion when conceptual and philosophical frames beyond the familiar interpretive and symbolic were introduced into the analysis. Accordingly, Stephen Linstead and Robert Grafton-Small (1992) indicated some relevant considerations that might guide explorations of culture in organizations in the light of poststructuralist and postmodern thinking.

Performing Postculture

Linstead and Grafton-Small's review (1992) of the contemporary field of organizational culture studies, identifying in particular a variety of critical orientations that had developed during the previous decade and were simultaneous with the growing dominance of the more moribund mainstream approaches (varieties of "corporate culturism") of which Calás and Smircich (1987, 1997) were skeptical, emphasized strategies for the production of culture at the expense of the creativity shown by the consumers of culture (i.e., organizational members). Many critical interventions did not fit neatly into Calás and Smircich's (1987) framework. Indeed, these more critical approaches could be regarded as being evidence of the emergence of postculturism, as discussed above. Problems emerging throughout this early work were classified as follows:

♦ *Organizational culture versus cultural organization*—where culture was objectified rather than seen as field, context, or process, with the organization as a site for the intersection of cultural influences from outside as well as inside the organization;

♦ *Cultural pluralities*—where the existence of conflicting interests in tension and the need to submerge these behind a façade of cohesion to facilitate operations leads to the paradox that a strongly asserted corporate culture may be a sign of powerful underlying tensions;

♦ *Rationality and the irrational*—where culture was either seen as irrational or sentimental rather than exhibiting alternate rationalities, or the symbolic was seen as reducible to banal logical messages;

◆ *Common knowledge and its constitution*—where the symbolic constitution of specific organizations is taken as a fact and relatively static rather than fragile and subject to continuous discursive reconstruction;

◆ *Power and ideology*—neglected by most mainstream corporate culture literature but central to the sort of cultural analysis conducted by Foucault through his concept of discourse and its analysis (although Foucault rejected the term ideology in his early work); and

◆ *Individualism and subjectivity*—where culture was seen to be predominantly a product of the actions of thinking, unitary, decision-making selves, negotiated through small groups and aggregated at organizational level: the sum total of shared or overlapping meanings across subgroups and subcultures (see Linstead & Grafton-Small, 1992, pp. 335–40).

Linstead and Grafton-Small go on to present some core conceptual resources for rethinking culture as text, and what emerges from this consideration is a new fivefold postmodern approach to reading (rather than interpreting) culture in terms of the following:

◆ *Text and Subjectivity*—approaching culture as a text, but utilizing a poststructuralist understanding of the text as intertext, embedded in and connected to other already existing texts, rather than as the product of an author (or even an authorial collaboration). Meaning is an emergent outcome of an open and unfinished process of production (writing) involving authors, readers, texts, and other texts and is constitutive of the subjectivity of creators and consumers (drawing on Roland Barthes and Derrida);

◆ *Discourse*—approaching culture as a discursive complex of talk, text, institutions, attitudes, and entailed actions and examining the discourses that constitute it, their

effects, rationales, and resistances (drawing on Foucault). Subjectivity is discursively constituted, determined, evaded, and resisted. For example, the discourse that every action should have a useful output will yield a different set of attitudes, behaviors, controls, structures, and models for action than one that prioritizes creativity for its own sake and sees application as a more downstream activity;

♦ *Paradox*—appreciation of the inevitable paradoxicality of culture as undecidable différance rather than shared meaning, as "shared meaning is nothing but the differal of difference." (Linstead and Grafton-Small 1992:345)[Culture appears as an outcome of representational processes that shape subjectivity, rather than being a collective cumulation of individual interpretative strategies, thus drawing attention to its own opposite whilst seeking to suppress it (Young, 1989);

♦ *Otherness* (or alterity)—appreciation of the importance of the Other in supplementarity, culture as shaped through the trace, and the reciprocal operations of the principle of return in sting, gift and desire. Culture is a fluid result of relationality and has an ethical dimension (drawing on Derrida, Elias Canetti, Marcel Mauss); and

♦ *Seduction*—appreciation of the seductive processes of the formulation of culture and image as simulacra and the workings of manufactured desire against practical interest (drawing on Baudrillard, Deleuze and Guattari)

This set of considerations has methodological consequences in that it requires the ethnographic pursuit of a detailed articulation and analysis of everyday practices, exploring the marginal creativity of culture consumers in particular socioeconomic contexts and circumstances, studying the bricolage of organizational members within the Foucauldian

microphysics of what Michel de Certeau (1984) calls the "tactics of everyday practice," with a reflexive awareness of the textuality and intertextuality of such constructions. It also drew attention to issues of how culture is written and represented and the consequences of this for common assumptions being made in organization studies at the time.

Reconsidering the Breach: Continuity in Culture as a Practical Concept

Barley et al. (1988) made a sharp distinction between academic literature on organizational culture and practitioner, performative literature aimed at intervention. But Andrew Chan and Stewart Clegg (2002), however, retrospectively observe that the distinction was in practice rather more difficult to make than Barley et al. (1988) acknowledge. For Chan and Clegg, as for Carol Axtell Ray (1986), the corporate culture discourse was a form of symbolic control in continuity with the historical objectives of bureaucratic control, but this was not a matter of a simple opposition of theory and practice: It was a translation of knowledge from one field to another in the light of emerging discursive technologies that were themselves technologies of practices that construct organizational conduct (Latour, 2005). As they put it,

> The culture discourses of the last two decades have been constructed in terms
> of a neoliberal rationality (Rose, 1993) whose logic is very different from
> that of the Human Relations School and the Welfare State. In a neo-liberal
> scenario, the cultural discourses of management act not only as discourses
> but also as technologies that construct more "free" and "responsible"
> workers. . . . These technologies *construct conduct* (Gordon, 1991) in
> organizations through the application of abstract rules and procedures that
> are legitimized discursively by re-imaging the contemporary subject as an
> autonomous self of the new times. (Chan & Clegg, 2002, p. 268)

Chan and Clegg take Tom Peters and Robert Waterman at their word (Colville, Waterman & Weick, 1999) as having a deep respect for, and extensive knowledge of, organization and management theory (which as former Stanford academics, one would expect) and a desire to translate its insights for a wider audience that could put them into practice—which places them in a social science tradition extending at least to Auguste Comte. They reject cultural interventions as being a new knowledge project, arguing that the culture project has been consistent in its knowledge-interests and that pragmatic concerns are not new.

The corporate culture project, then, was an extension of previous discursive projects of control, which could be understood as extra-organizational, but this was also, and crucially, parasitical on scholarly developments in the broad field of organizational culture. This permeability of theory, practice, and everyday life in the construction of culture meant that any attempted demarcation of types or levels of culture within organizations became "by no means clear" for such authors as Martin Parker (2000, p. 2). He questioned Linstead and Grafton-Small (1992), who drawing on Smircich (1983) had made a distinction between *corporate culture* and what they called *workplace culture*, *culture in work*, or *organizational culture*:

> [Corporate culture is]A culture devised by management and transmitted, marketed, sold or imposed on the rest of the organization . . . with both internal and external images . . . yet also including action and belief—the rites, rituals, stories, and values which are offered to organizational members as part of the seductive process of achieving membership and gaining commitment.(Linstead and Grafton-Small 1992 p333)

If such a distinction is to be worth maintaining at all, it certainly requires reformulation to avoid any suggestion of a simple dualism because both essentially descriptive rather than abstract categories are far more open than the original formulation might imply, each both formally and informally feeding off the other. Corporate culture as a term can be used to refer to any explicit and self-conscious attempts to create a cultural formula on behalf of a body—contrary to Parker's view, this does not have to be a corporation, just an organized group that perceives itself as a body corporate, and that may be incorporated in a variety of ways. The distinction is worth preserving here in that it identifies specific and reflexive corporate culture initiatives and interventions that continue to be initiated empirically. Furthermore, as Mats Alvesson and Leif Melin (1988) observed, there are a variety of modes of acceptance or rejection of these, from enthusiastic embrace, through grudging compliance, to subversion and resistance. It also allows for Chan and Clegg's (2002) arguments that such initiatives may, however, freely be translations of theory and that discursive continuity both within and without the organization may support the formation of subjectivities so that compliance, consent, or even co-construction become the more likely outcomes. Culture in work is that interactive, practice, and event-based set of orientations that emerges in any group through involvement in a practice—even a virtual or abstract one that requires only symbolic rubbing shoulders, such as that between communities of practice of knowledge producers. At times, and in specific contexts, corporate culture and culture in work might seem to be isomorphic and at and in others so dramatically differentiated as to constitute opposition on the precipice of revolution. Organizational culture then can be deployed conceptually to capture what Parker (2000) is interested in and to preserve his insight into the sites and spaces, material and epistemological, where these different alignments laminate, mesh, and coemerge—and in which novel understandings can develop that are more than either. So although sufficient discontinuity to posit both a surge into

culture studies, and a reactive sidestep into postculture, can be seen, it should not be forgotten that not only were there continuities, but that other disciplines that served as resources for the cultural shift continued to develop in often blissful unawareness of movements in organizational culture.

The Legacy of Postculture

The postculture move was heterogeneous and had its beginnings even before the culture or corporate culture movement reached its height, as Hugh Willmott (1993) notes. For some realist writers, it was simply a matter of not buying into corporate hype and seeing power and exploitation for what it was—cultural analysis was merely the explication and elaboration of new symbolic modes of control. Postculture represented "a challenge to cultural analysis that would treat culture as merely communicative, symbolic, and openly political, 'you get what you see,' uncompromised by hidden meanings, displacements, and self-deceptions" (Fischer, 2007, p. 270). For others, such as Howard Schwartz (1990) **added**it was a matter of applying a serviceable but alternate set of theoretical resources to what were now recognizable as cultural materials. Schwartz's brilliant psychoanalytic interrogation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) culture and its contribution to the *Challenger* shuttle disaster is exemplary, the more so since the 2003 *Columbia* disaster inquiry found that the same issues continued to persist in the organization.

For some researchers, the borrowed culture metaphor had provided an opportunity to enrich basically functionalist contingency approaches to organizing with the symbolically richer conceptual framework provided by structural-functionalism in anthropology. This essentially conservative move was popular and influential and was perhaps most thoroughly catalogued and appraised by Trice and Beyer (1993) It was, however, challenged by adoptions of insights from interpretive and symbolic anthropology, rooted in the 1960s and

1970s. Unfortunately, this influence was often superficial and led to the birth of what George Marcus called "thin ethnography," which ranged over the surface of corporations and institutions, adopted a narrow range of methods, and did not seek to trace deeper connections that may run beyond the boundaries of the organization.

Postculture was partly a reaction not only to structural-functional approaches and to corporatist ones, but also to the less rigorous varieties of the interpretive-symbolic approach, a position summarized by Paul Bate (1997) At the conservative end of the spectrum, Joanne Martin (2002) in several cumulative works, sought to integrate functional, interpretive, and postmodern perspectives in a tripartite (integration-differentiation-fragmentation) framework that ultimately, the more it was elaborated, revealed its inability to escape from an essential functionalist formulation of the problem, one that seems crude when put beside anthropological contributions to thinking the problem through (Fischer, 2007). Other writers—ones most closely related to postmodernism in organization studies (see Cooper & Burrell, 1987, for a seminal text or more pertinently those working on the insights of the new anthropology (Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Marcus & Fischer, 1986; Linstead, 1993)—connect the cultural approach to philosophical and social thought more broadly, keeping in mind that placing boundaries on cultural processes—writing culture—was traditionally an arbitrary and introspective strategy. This approach, on the one hand, turned back toward a fine-grained critique of the construction of theory about and accounts of organizational culture, and on the other hand, sought to develop new modes of constructing, writing, and representing cultures, using a range of approaches to collect data, a range of media for representing them, and challenging received notions of authorship both of culture and of accounts of culture. The work of Michael Rosen, collected in his 2000 retrospective, captures the range of these struggles with a nuanced grace.

At the end of the decade, Calás and Smircich (1999) noted, however, that postmodernism in organizational thought had generally adopted one of two theoretical-methodological styles: one of deconstruction, based on Derrida's thought but focusing very much on the postinterpretive analysis of texts, either about or produced by organizations, and the other, more popular genealogical approach, focusing on the analysis of organizational discourse and the workings of power and knowledge within them. Although this remains broadly true of nonmainstream direct or indirect treatments of organizational culture, other possibilities flagged by Linstead and Grafton-Small (1992) were relatively neglected. Baudrillard, for example, despite his massive popular impact in this period, remains a relative rarity in organizational culture studies unless one counts George Ritzer's (1990) deployment of his ideas (Hancock & Tyler, 2001; Letiche, 2004b). Lyotard is cited almost exclusively for his work on knowledge and information and for his critique of *grandes histoires* and advocacy of *petits reçus* (Letiche, 2004a; Jones, 2005), which was a rather brief excursion, rather than for his work on aesthetics, the sublime, and the différend (which were perhaps equally relevant to understanding the symbolic dimensions of culture and the nature of cross-cultural understanding).

Calás and Smircich (1999) argued that it was time to move beyond postmodernism in organization studies and to engage more directly with real-world concerns. They argued that the concentration on revealing the uncertainty and instability of theory (and indeed of culture), the decentering of the subject (and cultural subjectivity), the exposition of how power fixes the representations of knowledge and naturalizes them, the problematic relation of subject and author, the undecidability of meaning, and the end of reassuring and motivating metanarratives made it impossible not to read the world a different way, with much less assurance and greater reflexivity, but the challenge now was to engage with it in a different way.

Here, the problem is not of depth—the discussion of Derrida and Baudrillard is more than competent—but of breadth, especially the breadth associated with the understanding of culture anthropologically in terms of its multifaceted nature and its connectedness across obvious boundaries. Postculture work, in common with much of the work Calás and Smircich (1999) cite, concentrated on a relatively narrow range of poststructuralist philosophical inspiration and seemed to have little appetite for new translations of Derrida and Foucault in particular that directly addressed ethics, gender, governance, and globalization. Some authors, as Alvesson notes (Chapter 2, this *Handbook*), took their cultural concerns into other areas, and the term culture dropped from their vocabulary. But other authors maintained their concern with culture while engaging with new theory, new concepts, new forms of organizing, and new modes of representation, carrying forward concerns from earlier periods into what could be regarded as post postculture.

Post Post-Culturec: An Established and Emerging Aesthetic and Political Field

Marcus (1994), having heralded the demise of postculture in anthropology, recently remarked that, despite its advances, anthropology remains as a discipline stubbornly wedded to traditional methods and approaches. He argues that anthropologists need to move away from analyzing culture partly because "the culture concept is no longer viable analytically *and* it has been appropriated by everyone"—which includes management studies (Marcus, 2008 p 3) . Timothy Hallett (2003, p. 129) nevertheless argued that although academic interest in culture had

> sunk into the bog of debate, the issue has regained topical interest in politics
>
> and the media. The recent spate of corporate scandals has been accompanied
>
> by outcries for cultures of responsibility within organizations . . . we need an

approach that overcomes the deficiencies of earlier work. Though poised for

a comeback, organizational culture needs an overhaul.

Seven years later, the scandals have not abated, nor have the calls for responsible cultures rather than bonus cultures, but the theoretical overhaul is, and has been, underway.

Post postculture as an epoch began, in management and organization studies, toward the end of the 1990s, some half a decade or more behind anthropology, although it has visible and active beginnings before this. It has not by any means reached its apogee and is characterized by developments in realist and nonrealist thinking that reach both forward into new theory and methods and backward to rediscover both familiar and overlooked sources. It displays a willingness to translate the knowledge of other disciplines and fields into insights for organizational culture, to trace interconnections, and to intensify the development and application of theory with a renewed emphasis on methodological experimentation. Finally, it is much more likely to engage directly with issues of social, rather than simply organizational, change and to take a critical ethical and political stance. Some examples follow.

Theoretical translation. This sociologically influenced approach emerged via a critical engagement with cultural and media (particularly subcultural) studies into embracing the field of popular culture as an object of investigations for its organizational connections, both representationally as an industry. As such, it has theoretical resources in work on consumption, commodification, commodity fetishism and kitsch—work that has origins in Karl Marx and has been a central part of the anthropological canon for most of the 20th century (Fischer, 2007, p. 6).

This approach, attuned to the analysis of specific contemporary popular media outputs, argues that popular culture carries with it countercultural and counterhegemonic

messages that undercut, in varying degrees, the comforting messages of the mainstream (Hassard & Holliday, 1998; Rhodes & Westwood, 2008). Sometimes, the same work may contain elements of both. The study of humor in organizations, which has a relatively recent history, is an example (Collinson, 1988; Linstead, 1985; Westwood & Rhodes, 2006). Popular culture outputs may both express and accommodate resistance, and indeed, the very expression may be the accommodation. Of course, it may also stimulate further resistance, and the development of subcultures, so the process is complex. The critique extends to the consideration of carnival as a critique of social hierarchies and domination and as a space and time of resistance (Bakhtin, 1968; Hazen, 1993; Islam, Zyphur, & Boje, 2008; Rhodes, 2001,2002). Attempts to integrate the idea of carnival, and its associated concept polyphony, have stretched the metaphor to varying degrees in relation to organizations (Belova, King, & Sliwa, 2008). Attempts to repress the dangerous carnivalesque impulse have contained its main form of expression from mediaeval times, but the onset of mass-popular culture has in particular facilitated its movement fluidly in all directions to find an outlet where one presented itself, in forms of popular culture including films and TV, cartoons, car-boot sales, rock'n'roll, "playful" workplaces, and even in modern versions of carnival itself. There is strong evidence that cultural formations and processes flow across organizational boundaries, and this indicates that there is a need to open organizational culture further to better absorb new evidence to readdress and challenge existing positions.

On a related note, Joanna Brewis and Gavin Jack (2009) argue that popular culture has established over the past 30 years some formidable conceptual tools for cultural analysis. Debates here in cultural studies are more complex than much of what has so far appeared in organization studies, but there are at last signs that more researchers studying organizational culture are beginning to take some of this material into account in their own thinking. One example, with its roots in the work of Adorno and Benjamin on the negative effects of mass

culture, which combines and rethinkspsychoanalysis and Marxism, is concerned with the ways in which mass culture purveys a bland and deadening sentimentalized version of reality to its consumers, as kitsch. This amuses, dazzles, comforts, reassures, and distracts them from fully realizing and responding to some of the harsher realities of their unemancipated state. Kitsch enables and promotes the circulation of images that turn thought and feeling into formula, and therefore, into products for consumption; help to ingrain and recycle existing modes of thought, even when quite technically inventive, about both the human and natural worlds; and consequently, contribute to stabilizing particular institutional structures (which both employ and are the object of kitsch representations, often in subtle ways), patterns of advantage and disadvantage, and power disparities. This understanding can be extended to organization theory as a cultural artifact and to representations of organizational culture itself, where it can be seen to connect to some aspects of the work of Max Weber on bureaucracy and rationality and to that of Baudrillard on simulation, as it does in the work of Ritzer (2000, 2005) on McDonaldization and enchantment, which embeds organizational culture in societal, and even global, cultural processes (Böhm, 2005; Linstead, 2002a).

Theoretical intensification. During the past two decades, the initial interests of the field of organizational symbolism developed from their origins as an epiphenomenon of cultural concerns into a more philosophically informed and less experimental interrogation of organizational aesthetics (Gagliardi, 1990; Linstead & Höpfl, 2001; Strati, 1999, 2000; Turner, 1990). On the one hand, this showed itself in a deepening of the study of the scholarly roots of aesthetics in the humanities and, most particularly, in the importation of concepts and approaches from the arts, both theoretical and empirical. This has inter alia involved a reconsideration of the roles of creative processes and creative persons in the formation of organizational culture, including entrepreneurs. Although in some of its variants

it has been largely uncritical of functionalist assumptions, in others, it has importantly contested them, especially those in Schein's (1985) almost universally familiar model of culture in which leaders provide the important foundational materials in setting values and are active in promoting their expression, and creatives are difficult to manage and remain on the margins (Guillet de Monthoux, Sjöstrand, & Gustafsson, 2007; Hjorth, 2004, 2005; Schein, 1985).

Concerns with postmodern thought, initially exclusively associated with the idea of the post, have not been superseded but developed by some commentators and researchers. Although far from exhausted, the work of Baudrillard, Deleuze and Guattari (Linstead & Thanem, 2007), Slavoj Žižek (Böhm & de Cock, 2005; de Cock & Böhm, 2007), Peter Sloterdijk (Kaulingfreks and Ten Bos, 2006), Paul Virilio (Redhead, 2004), Michel Serres (Letiche, 2004c) among others, as well as the later ethical and political work of Derrida and Foucault, have been opened up to organizational relevance. Furthermore, developments in the area of postpositivism have addressed the nature of realism and ,in critical realism, have attempted to preserve the central role of objectivity while recognizing the insights of social constructionism (Archer, 1988, 2007; Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2001). Contemporary moves are underway to establish productive dialogue over the nature of the "real" between constructionist and realist perspectives in the study of culture and the continued incorporation of new conceptual repertoires (e.g., Deetz, Newton, & Reed, in press).

Empirical expansion. Here, the new anthropology has made a significant contribution in providing evidence linking the cultures of globalizing capitalism to the cultures of the workplace (Holmes & Marcus, 2005, 2006; Marcus, 1998; Newfield, 1998; Ong & Collier, 2005; Tsing, 2004). For example, in a groundbreaking, book-length ethnography of Wall Street, Karen Ho (2009) studied (as she described it) the cultural production of liquidation.

The culturally organized nature of a variety of new and changing sites including financial centers, advertising agencies, domestic and offshore call centers, elderly care homes, warehouses, casinos, online communities, merchant ships, the military, the police, firefighting, telecoms, sex work, the circus, security work, family firms, the motor industry, tattooing, and modeling has been documented across several journals, most notably in *Culture and Organization*. A year-length ethnography of one of Augé's (1995) supermodern nonplaces—a major airport—has just been funded by the U.K.'s Economic and Social Research Council (*Daily Mail*, 2010).

The study of culture as gendered has acquired a substantial empirical base since the 1980s, with key contributions from Silvia Gherardi (1995), Gherardi and BarbaraPoggio (2007) and the journal *Gender, Work and Organization.* Connections between gender and other forms of difference, and hence potential sources of discrimination, were flagged as cultural by Joan Acker (2006), who argued for a view of organizational cultures as multifaceted inequality regimes. Bobby Banerjee and Linstead (2001) made a critical intervention in linking discourses of globalization to discourses of domestic multiculturalism, and Brewis and Jack (2009) summarized several important contributions to the analysis of culture using postcolonial theory; one should also add Loïc Wacquant's (2004) courageous study of race, class, and masculinity in his ethnography of a ghetto boxing training gym. Alongside the deployment of postmodern concepts, the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1992, 1999), who critically extended the concept of capital to include cultural, social, and symbolic capital, has provided theoretical and methodological inspiration for several researchers.

Methodological intensification. Experiments in representation, following NormanDenzin and Yvonna Lincoln's (2005) fifth and sixth moments of qualitative inquiry from 1990 to 2000, have taken place in several formats. The Standing Conference on Organizational

Symbolism (SCOS), formed in 1982, provided a space for symbolic events from its earliest conferences, and even as it has grown more formalized, it has continued to create spaces for the gestation of ideas and their presentation in nontextual ways. Its journal, *Culture and Organization,* established in 1995 and published by Routledge, is replete with experiments in textual form and visual content, alongside articles from a diverse international community of scholars, including the most eminent in the field. In 2002, building on work on aesthetics during the previous decade, a biennial conference, The Art of Management and Organization, was founded by SCOS members, and subsequently a journal, *Aesthesis,* was launched under the founding editorship of Ian King and Jonathan Vickery. The journal itself comprised an art work in glossy A3 format with full-color illustrations, photographs, and often a CD, providing a space, and a motivation, for work that could not be accomplished any other way. The interest in sensuous methodology has led to active research programs on the visual (Warren, 2008), auditory (Corbett, 2003; Linstead, 2007), haptic (Rippin, 2006), and olfactory (Corbett, 2006) dimensions of culture and on the relation of bodily experience to cultural knowledge. Some of this work has also been related to a parallel thread on narrative and storytelling, a development related to but distinct from discourse analysis with grounds in folklore, myth analysis and psychoanalysis, and the deployment of narrative methods in culture analysis (Boje, 1991, 2001; Czarniawska, 1998; Gabriel, 2000; McCabe, 2009). ADDED Experiments in narrative presentation have been employed in work on cultural change in the police service (Bruining, 2006), painting has been used as a research tool on occupational therapy regimes (Kuiper, 2007), and the short film format has been used to explore the cultural and industrial context of solo climbing in a Deleuzian frame (Brown & Wood 2009; Wood &Brown , in press).

Ethics and politics. It was frequently asserted of postmodern thought during the post period of the 1990s that it was by turns pessimistic, deterministic, and radically relativist in advocating anything goes and had no grounds from which to make secure moral judgments or ethical recommendations because it regarded knowledge, and hence evidence, as undecidable or uncertain. Even the better discussions of the time often entertained this line of criticism (Hancock & Tyler, 2001; Parker 2000). But the fact that this was never necessarily the case with postmodernism has been brought home emphatically by the availability of the later work of Derrida in particular, but also by the work of Foucault, Emmanuel Lévinas, and Paul Ricoeur (Linstead, 2004). The journal *ephemera* has played a significant role in introducing new continental thought to the study of organizations and organizational culture via the discussion of the work of a wide range of thinkers on ethics and politics, including [Alain Badiou, Jean-Luc Nancy, Giorgio Agamben, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. Perhaps the most significant for the future, already a major influence in politics, is Jacques Rancière (2006), whose political aesthetics brings together the two areas often felt to be inadequately reconciled, or irreconcilable, in previous cultural work.

Conclusion

> Life, it seems, for almost all disciplines and specialties, has outrun the pedagogies in which we were trained, and we must work anew to forge new concepts, new forms of cultural understanding, and new trackings of networks across scales and locations of cultural fabrics. (Fischer, 2007, p. 38)

There are no new ideas and none on the horizon, as well as no indication that

. . . [the] traditional stock of [cultural] knowledge shows any sign of

revitalization . (Marcus, 2008, p. 3)

It seems clear that researchers are post the sort of cultural approaches prevalent in the 1980s, and some of the postcultural approaches that followed were perhaps inadequately formed. Culture as a concept is always parasitic on the field to which it is applied—organizational culture needs organizations, popular culture needs mass media—and hence is plastic, both spatially and temporally. At the same time, like any parasite, it irritates the system to which it is attached and provokes a response thatresearchers neither think of nor manage organizations in the same way when they think culturally (Serres, 2007). For Marcus, the concept of culture has now attached itself to and has been changed by so many systems that it can no longer stimulate anthropology usefully; for Fischer, it is still unfolding, challenging and challenged, dynamic over time. In organization studies, one style of thinking about culture is undoubtedly moribund, but this does not mean that culture has by any means become enervated as a concept. Not only does it need to change, but also the literature reviewed in this chapter indicates that it is indeed changing through theoretical translation, theoretical intensification, empirical expansion, and methodological intensification. But what recent developments emphatically underscore is that culture was always multifaceted, whether it has been recognized it or not, and researchers continue to need concepts and methods that are equal to the challenges of this recognition.

Regardless of approaches taken in organization studies, there are still many rich and dynamic ways to think culturally. But although researchers might not necessarily think of culture as they once did, cultural thinking about organizing has merely moved into a new

space, rather than having been left behind. Researchers may be post postculture, but only by recognizing that culture is post itself.

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