# The Discourse of Organization Studies: Dissensus, Politics, and Paradigms

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# Introduction: The Power and Politics of Organization Studies as a Discourse

To publish a book called *Debating Organizations* is a political intervention. It is political in two related senses. First, it participates in the mundane politics that frame the "organization studies" field. It is political also in the sense that it participates in that discourse captured under the rubric of "organization studies," a discourse constituted by a matrix of texts, theories, concepts, practices, and institutional forms and arrangements. We conceive of organization studies (OS) as a discourse comprising an agglomeration of texts – in the broad sense – demarcating a discursive space linked to the signifier of organizations and instantiating an institutional context. As a discourse, OS is a knowledge–power nexus. It lays claim to a capacity to talk about organizations and related phenomena intelligibly and authoritatively. As all discourses it works through practices of inclusion–exclusion. That is, some texts and some claims to knowledge are deemed legitimate, right, proper, and are allowed incorporation; others are deemed illegitimate, improper, wrong – or even bad and mad – and are excluded. Of course, different authorities may see the world in different terms.

Organization studies cannot be represented by some notion of a coherent, homogeneous and all-encompassing discourse, as our suggestion of competing authorities is meant to suggest. Normally, all discourses tend to be partial, incomplete and inconsistent. Discourses are also dynamically interdependent, displaying layers of embeddedness. As a discourse OS refers to other major discourses: for example, it clearly has a proximate general relation to discourses of psychology and sociology while it has little relationship to discourses of Catholicism – although specific areas such as "business ethics" may draw on general Catholic notions of "social justice," for instance – so that it must also be allowed that discourses contain "subdiscourses."

Discourses vary in terms of their longevity, coherence, and power effects. Some attain an apparent coherence and centrality for members who define themselves, or may be defined as, a given language community. Membership of such a community allows members to constitute positions of intelligibility from whence that which they claim to speak may be made

meaningful and/or truthful-seeming. It also constructs an institutional frame constituting a material context of power and control, through which those authoritative interests vested in discourses are disseminated, protected, and policed. Boundaries will be marked, staked out, and preserved. From within these boundaries, other discourses may appear more fragile, containing more obvious fractures and inconsistencies, with knowledge claims that are more tenuous and localized. The positions of intelligibility they construct will often be seen as more ambiguous, uncertain and weakly delineated. Such discourses, constituted as outside the authoritative boundaries, will typically instantiate only insubstantial institutional frameworks or none at all. All discourses are in a constant state of change as the interactional and textual work that sustains them ebbs and flows. They broaden, develop, and strengthen, but they also wither, decay, and die and are reconstituted as they synthesize, bifurcate, coalesce, and fragment. Authority, in the discursive world, may be a more fragile thing than it presumes, when viewed politically.

The political nature of OS discourses, like all discursive spaces, trades in a knowledge– power nexus. Whilst they may lack coherence and consensus, all elements in these discourses claim to make knowledgeable representations about organizations. Any such knowledge claim is, immediately, an exercise of power. Knowledge representations are a claim to a discursive space, a carving out of a position that simultaneously excludes other possible representations. We will consider this aspect of discourse by exploring OS as a contested topographical terrain marked, throughout its history, by fragmentation and diversity. The discourse of OS is also political in the more mundane sense in which it is characterized by institutional structures and arrangements, hierarchies, instruments of control, and the paraphernalia of power and command systems. We will deal with this aspect of the discourse in the second half of the chapter.

# A Topography of the Discourse of Organization Studies

## From birth: the post-Weberian divide and other fissures in the discourse

While OS has a relatively short history, characterized by diversity and a degree of fragmentation, and its texts are multitudinous and various not only with respect to content but also with respect to the theoretical and methodological stances adopted, it can be seen to comprise many partially overlapping discourses the overall frame of which we will refer to as the discourse of OS. The discourse has also constituted a significant institutional frame, but that too is somewhat ad hoc and disjointed in places. We see OS as a contested discursive terrain, within which there has always been (and continues to be) a variety of voices engaged in a political process of claims for recognition, acceptance, and dominance. That OS is a "contested terrain" has been attested to by numerous authors over the years (e.g., Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Perrow, 1973; Clegg and Hardy, 1999). We would argue that it has always been thus. Koontz (1961) referred to the "management theory jungle," a view he did not revise when he revisited the theme nearly twenty years later (Koontz, 1980). In the interim, Perrow (1973) reported on the state of the field in similar terms. A decade later Astley and Van de Ven (1983) pointed to disparate logics and vocabularies fragmenting a dispersed field. Pfeffer (1982: 1) lamented that "The domain of organisation theory is coming to resemble more of a weed patch than a well tended garden" and, extending the metaphor, suggested that a "good deal of pruning and weeding is needed" (ibid.: 2). He also questioned whether a sense of progress was discernible and whether the domain's constituents – managerial and administrative practitioners – were served by this proliferation and lack of selective breeding. After surveying the field and critically dissecting various perspectives, he set out a prolegomenon for a redirected and revitalized discipline. Pfeffer attributes the diversity and fragmentation of the field, in large part, to its relative immaturity and its inter-disciplinary nature, which negates the productivity of research and the speed and efficiency of clinical diagnosis of organization conditions.

What is the genesis of the discourse of OS? The field awaits a Foucauldian genealogy and we do not intend to attempt that daunting task here. Pfeffer (1982) offers his own prosaically historical account. Unlike many others, including contributors to this volume, he does not trace the field to the work of Weber, Saint-Simon or Comte; indeed, Weber is referred to only twice and then only in passing and in relation to more recent theories of rationality and size-structure relationships. Pfeffer's concern is with the institutional development of the field in its location in the academic sanctums of US universities and journals. From this purview, Freeman (1982) notes that there is no entry for "organization" in the index of the American Journal of Sociology for the period from its foundation in 1895 to 1947. Pfeffer acknowledges that the roots of industrial psychology go back to the early 1900s but notes the distinction between organizational psychology – with a distinct focus on organizations – and industrial psychology as more recent. Locating psychology as the central element in the early core of OS studies is, perhaps, a reflection of the more individualistic and microlevel concerns that have driven much US-based theorizing. Continuing his institutional historicizing, Pfeffer points to the establishment of the Administrative Science Quarterly in 1956 as the first journal dedicated to the "emerging field of organisational behaviour and administration" (Pfeffer, 1982: 28). The emergence of the Academy of Management Journal in 1958 is seen to indicate the coalescence of a recognizable contextual field for OS. He appears to concur with Scott (1981) in identifying the late 1940s to early 1950s as the period in which OS emerges. Pfeffer does, usefully, tie the development of the discourse to the wider social context, arguing that this context has an implicit relation to developments within the field. He acknowledges that "much additional work remains to be done in understanding the sociology and ideology of organisation theory" (Pfeffer, 1982: vii). This remains true, although there have been significant contributions from, among others, Burrell and Morgan (1979), Clegg and Hardy (1999), Hassard (1993), and Reed (1992).

Pfeffer's historical location, apart from ignoring Weber, also neglects the foundational work of Fayol (1916), Mayo (1933), Gauss (1936), Gulick and Urwick (1937), Barnard (1938), Mooney and Reiley (1939),<sup>1</sup> Roethlisberger and Dickson (1939), Merton (1940), and Urwick (1943). This is not to mention the "classics" – Taylor, Pareto, Babbage, Adam Smith, Machiavelli and Sun Tzu! Orthodox histories tracing these early influences can be found in Perrow (1973), Scott (1981), and Wren (1972). The point we want to make, however, is that diversity and contestation are apparent right from the outset. Mayo's concerns are clearly different from those of Gauss or Barnard; Weber's analysis, interpretation, and intention were very different from those of Fayol, a matter that was recognized early on – for instance, in his overview, Koontz (1961) identified six differentiated approaches to the study of organizations and management, which he expanded to eleven in 1980.

Other writers, such as Burrell (1999) and Clegg and Hardy (1999) do position Weber as central to the emergence of OS as a field. Indeed, Burrell points out that alternative readings of the Weberian project produce an almost immediate fragmentation. On the one hand there is an interpretation that sustains the integrity of *verstehen* and Weber's deeply critical analysis of the march of rationalism, the impersonalism of modernity's modes of organizing, and the antidemocratic and exclusive practices of the emerging order. On the other hand is Parsons' appropriation of Weber for the purposes of promoting a structural functionalist interpretation of social systems and organizing. From this perspective, rationality is merely a tool, one that can be applied to the effective structuring of organizations. Weber's dark concerns with the irrationality of what passes for rationality within the "iron cage" are ignored in favor of an interpretation that focuses on matters of efficiency, effectiveness, and stability in organized systems. The epistemological differentiation between understanding and explanation/prediction that Weber articulated is a demarcation still sustained within contemporary discourse; in this volume Case and McKinley (chapter 5) bear witness to the continuing importance of the divide. For Burrell (1999), at its very inception OS is a contested discourse. The bifurcation of readings of Weber as, on the one hand, contributing to a structural-functionalist project for locating the sources of order, and on the other as a critical analysis in which the modernist rationalist trajectory is seen as dehumanizing, undemocratic and damagingly centripetal, is a fissure that continues to slice through the discourse. In more substantive terms, much of the early debate in OS from the 1940s to the early 1960s, following Weber, was concerned with the properties, functions and dysfunctions of bureaucracy. This includes classic debates about inherent tendencies to order versus inherent tendencies to conflict within organized systems.

Returning to a textual history of the discourse, Selznick's (1948) "Foundations for a Theory of Organization" represented an explicit crystalization of a theoretical stance that, in many respects, became the core of a dominant orthodoxy in OS, that of structural-functionalism. As an overarching ontological and epistemological position it was promulgated in authoritatively influential works by Merton (1940, 1949) and Parsons (1956, 1964), and carried through into, amongst other areas, theories of formal structure (e.g., Blau and Scott, 1962), varieties of systems perspectives (e.g., Katz and Kahn, 1966; Kast and Rosenzweig, 1985), structural contingency theory (e.g., Blau and Schoenherr, 1971; Pugh et al., 1969), and certain environment–organization relationship theories (e.g., Aldrich, 1979; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967). In this volume Donaldson (Chapter 4a) clearly states that contemporary contingency theory is underpinned by structural-functionalism and acknowledges the debt to Merton. As he says, "organisations become structured so as to provide effective functioning."

There are those who argue that the OS field once had coherence and consensus. Donaldson (1985), for example, maintains that organization theory has a solid core of normal science centered on contingency theory and its structural-functionalist underpinnings. Atkinson (1971) had earlier proclaimed this as a general sociological interpretation of an apparent consensus. Almost three decades later, Reed (1999) was also to see structural-functionalist interpretations of systems theory as the dominant approach throughout the 1950s to the 1970s. However, the apparent coherence of the field around structural-functionalist informed contingency theory was, according to Burrell (1999), an illusion. There were always alternative and dissenting voices. Even during the 1960s, when the structural-functionalist perspective apparently occupied center stage, there coexisted major alternative approaches. Still central, for example, remain Weick's conceptualization of organization as a process, not a structure – a verb, not a noun (Weick, 1969) – an important and sustained ontological differentiation (see Weick, chapter 6a). Cyert, March and Simon also emphasized process and de-emphasized structure as well as making rationality problematic and proposing an embryonically political model of organization (e.g., March and Simon, 1958; Cyert and March, 1963). Meanwhile, in a totally different intellectual space Goffman (1961) applied

his poetic, dramaturgical skills to deliver vivid insights into organizations, while Bittner (1965) developed an ethnomethodological perspective which focused on organization as, above all, a socially managed accomplishment. The core debates identified by Astley and Van de Ven (1983) in their overview of OS centered on issues of the organization–environment relationship and strategic choice, posing challenges to the overall contingency determinism of the Aston school of theorists: these were the high visibility debates of the early 1970s (Child, 1972), around which subsequent polemics were to circle (Donaldson, 1985). Of note here is that in this 1983 summary of the field all the perspectives considered were broadly within the structural-functionalist orthodoxy.

It is evident that Child's (1972) advocacy of "strategic choice" against structural determination drew much of its insight from the impact of the sustained attack on structuralfunctionalist and systems perspectives on organizations heralded by the publication of Silverman's The Theory of Organisation: A Sociological Framework (1970). Referred to as an "Action Frame of Reference," Silverman's perspective drew on Weberian verstehen, as well as the phenomenology of Schutz (1964) and particularly, the social constructionism of Berger (Berger, 1966; Berger and Luckmann, 1965). Meanings become the point of focus, and, as Silverman says (1970: 127), "actions arise out of meanings which define social reality." In some respects this represented a turn in the discourse, not that Silverman was the only theorist pursuing a phenomenologically inspired or social constructivist epistemology (we have already noted Bittner and Goffman) - but Silverman produces an open engagement with and critique of the orthodox position. He expressly denounces the kind of structural determinism and objectification he sees prevailing in the orthodoxy and declares positivistic explanations as "inadmissible." Following developments within sociology around symbolic interactionism, social constructivism, and ethnomethodology through the 1960s and 1970s, an alternative perspective on organizations came increasingly to the fore. It took a number of forms, including ethnomethodological (Silverman and Jones, 1976; Zimmerman, 1970) and dramaturgical approaches (Mangham and Overington, 1987). It is best captured under the general rubric of interpretivism (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). It is an approach that entered more into the mainstream following the emergence of organizational culture as a focus of interest for both practitioners and scholars in the early 1980s.

Burrell and Morgan (1979) provided a significant exploration of the fissures within the discourse through their delineation of the field into four "paradigmatic" positions. They again position the "functionalist paradigm" as the orthodoxy within the field, particularly the systems perspective. Interestingly they also see Silverman's Action Frame as residing just within the functionalist paradigm. The "radical humanist paradigm" was at that time the least developed. Its roots were in Lukacs, Gramsci and the Critical Theorists. Burrell and Morgan recognized the lack of development of this paradigm in OS but they do cite, for example, Beynon (1973) and Clegg (1975). It is an approach that has been reinvigorated since the 1980s (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Fischer, 1990; Forester, 1985). We noted in the preceding paragraph the emergence of an alternative to the dominant functionalist orthodoxy in OS from the "interpretive paradigm," and this too has expanded latterly with ethnomethodological (Richards, 2001) and social constructivist approaches continuing to have an impact – the latter being represented in this volume by Czarniawska (chapter 4b). The fourth paradigm, that of "radical structuralism" is perhaps the one that declined most through the 1980s and 1990s. It draws upon either a Marxist or a neo-Marxist analysis, or a radical interpretation of Weber. Under the former we have the work of Braverman (1974) and labor process theory, and the work of Allen (1975) and researchers such as Hyman (1975), who offered a radical interpretation of industrial relations. Under the latter were writers such as Eldridge and Crombie (1974), Miliband (1973), Mouzelis (1975), and Clegg and Dunkerley (1980).

These four "paradigms" are framed within the matrix constituted by a subjectiveobjective dimension and radical change-regulation dimension. These fissures are still apparent to a large extent, although there have been shifts in and around the frame. The frame is perhaps inadequate in as much as it cannot provide for the incursion of postmodern perspectives into the discourse. Burrell and Morgan saw the second dimension - radical change versus regulation – as a means of resurrecting the older debate between conflict and order that had dominated sociology and early organizational analysis until the 1960s. They saw the supposed demise or resolution of that debate as false and reinstated it as the core differentiating problematic in OS. This debate resurfaces in an interesting context in this volume with the discussion about institutional theory. In the Lounsbury-Phillips debate (chapter 7) we see a sophisticated attempt to move institutional theory towards a more processual position, one that can account for change (something also taken up by Jennings and Greenwood (chapter 6b). More in line with Burrell and Morgan's original concerns, contrast Donaldson's (chapter 4a) and Hinings's (chapter 9a) structural-functionalist conception of organizations as systems of order with Phillips's (chapter 7b) or Munro's (chapter 9b) concerns with power, modes of domination, and change.

Burrell and Morgan discussed four debates precipitated by the essential subjective– objective fissure. These debates were over: (1) ontology – nominalism versus realism; (2) epistemology – positivism versus antipositivism; (3) methodology – ideographic versus nomothetic; (4) human nature – voluntarism versus determinism. The first three of these obviously correspond to three key debates that occupy Part I of this book. They are clearly fissures that continue to be inscribed within the OS discourse. We will turn to those debates as represented here shortly. Before that we will examine further fragmentations in the discourse marking the contemporary scene.

## A contemporary configuration of a fecund field

The OS discourse became even more pluralistic after the 1980s with the emergence and consolidation of a number of different perspectives, some of which were prefigured in Burrell and Morgan's (1979) analysis, while others were not. One of these was organizational economics, a market-based approach. The relationship between economics and organization theory has been, for the most part, awkward and tenuous. Much of the disjuncture circulates around differences in levels of analysis, with economics only fitfully engaging with organizational-level phenomena, mostly via theories of the firm, the most significant contribution in this respect being Coase (1937). The past twenty years have seen a somewhat tighter coupling of economics and organization theory, to a large extent precipitated by Oliver Williamson's (1975, 1990) transaction cost economics and, to a lesser degree, agency theory. More latterly, aspects of strategic management theory, resource-based theories and the so-called structure-conduct-performance perspective have incorporated economic theories to explain the constitution of organizations, their interactions with the market and each other, their competitive position, and the requisite forms and strategies they need to adopt. Transaction cost analyses suggest that the very formation of organizations rests on the economic imperatives of minimizing or reducing the costs of economic exchange, given the realities of market uncertainties and imperfections, and the dangers of opportunistic

behavior. It rests firmly on assumptions of determinedly rational economic behavior, albeit of a bounded nature. Such economic imperatives drive not only the constitution of organizations, but also the nature of interorganizational relationships, strategic positioning and organizational design. Organizations, their forms and relationships, are a function of rationally economic responses to markets. This has been a powerful paradigm within OS studies since the early 1980s. Reed (1999: 33) situates population ecology models (Hannan and Freeman, 1989) in the same intellectual space as transaction cost theory. While acknowledging differences, he argues that they share assumptions "that unify internal administrative forms and external market conditions by means of an evolutionary logic which subordinates collective and individual action to efficiency and survival imperatives largely beyond human influence."

The perceived exclusivity of economic rationalism, overreliance on the market as the level of analysis, and the universalizing tendencies of organizational economic perspectives has led to criticisms that an "undersocialized" conception of economic action is engendered. Granovetter (1985) has argued for a more radically "embedded" account of the social organization of economic action. The essence of the critique is that economic theories decontextualize both economic action and the organizational forms thereby derived, by underplaying the significance of the social and cultural forces within which economic action is constituted. Making the "economic" an autonomous sphere for analysis can be achieved only by suppressing everything that, in fact, does not make it so – such as social relations, ties, and networks. Granovetter argues that economic exchanges are embedded in complex, ongoing social relationships with attendant values and patterns that extend beyond mere economic utility. Economic exchanges are differentially framed by the specificities of institutional, social, and cultural contexts and the relationships and values that inhere within them. Economic action is both embedded in and emergent out of ongoing, socially constructed relationships that are not confined to matters of simple economic efficiency. The structuring of economic behavior, then, reflects this social embeddedness and the values that circulate within the cultural, social, and institutional context.

Another critique, made forcefully by Perrow (1986), suggests that organizational economic approaches lack a theory of power and a full consideration of human agency. Whilst the issue of power has been central to OS since Weber, it has been oddly neglected theoretically, except at the more micro-level of interpersonal or inter-unit influence. Significant exceptions have been Clegg (1975, 1979, 1989; Clegg and Dunkerley, 1980) and, in a different key, Pfeffer's (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978) resource dependence model. An interest and focus on power has re-emerged more latterly under the influence of Foucault.

The second approach to have taken a key position in the OS discourse since the 1980s is institutional theory. The foundation for this was Meyer and Rowan's (1977) analysis of the symbolic properties of organizational forms. In the 1980s the approach focused heavily on how new institutions take form, and particularly on issues of symbolic legitimation and isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; DiMaggio, 1988). The essence of the approach is that organizational forms/structures have symbolic as well as functional resonances. The symbolic properties of organizations draw upon and speak to the institutional context in which a particular organization is situated. The symbolic properties must resonate with and draw support from the institutional environment and the values and interests represented therein. Thus, organization forms are determined by expectations of what types of structures and practices are likely to meet with institutional support, disregarding the utility of those structural choices for matters of internal functionality and efficiency. The approach

is imbued with a functionalist purview, although there is some sophistication in current renditions and their focus on the processes of institutionalization. Indeed, by the late 1980s the approach began to respond to criticisms – both internally and externally generated – that it also had neglected the role of agency and the effect of power relations (DiMaggio, 1988; Hirsch and Lounsbury, 1997). It was also increasingly recognized that the theory had become a theory more of stasis than of change (Powell, 1991). The approach has undergone important shifts and reorientations, leading some to refer to a new institutionalism (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Hirsch and Lounsbury, 1997) characterized most profoundly by an interest in the *processes* of institutionalization and a greater preparedness to address the issues of power and agency. Lounsbury (chapter 7a) provides an account of these developments and is challenged from the viewpoint of critical discourse analysis by Phillips (chapter 7b). Jennings and Greenwood (chapter 6b) also utilize developments in new institutionalism to attempt a synthesis of enactment theory and institutional theory to explain processes of change in institutionalized areas of organizational life. Once again, not only do we see contestation within the wider OS discourse as these approaches enter and struggle to carve out a place, but we also see fairly intense debate within approaches.

The most recent fissure in the OS discourse has emerged from the "postmodern turn" in the analysis of sociocultural phenomena.<sup>2</sup> As we have indicated, Burrell and Morgan's (1979) schema cannot easily accommodate the approach. Perhaps a new category to add to their scheme (if one were needed) is that of radical poststructuralism. However, it is misleading to pretend that postmodernism is a coherent discourse; indeed, most of the key protagonists we have annotated above disavow the label. There are major differences, for example, between Foucault and Derrida (there are even major shifts within Foucault's corpus from his "archeology" through his "genealogy" to his concern with "care for the self"). However (permitting ourselves a huge gloss), there are some points of commonality relative to other approaches in social and organizational analysis.

It is important to distinguish between postmodernity – as an historicized delineation that posits a new Zeitgeist contrasted with that of modernity – and postmodernism as an intellectual practice that problematizes philosophy and all matters of ontology and epistemology. Postmodernity suggests that modernity, initiated by the Enlightenment project of progressive development through rationalism, has come to an end and that a new set of social-cultural, technological, and semiotic conditions have come into play. For some the postmodern signals radical disjuncture in the formation and operation of capital and/or in sociocultural forms in a postindustrial world (e.g., Jameson, 1991). This, and related changes in work and technology, have prompted talk about postmodern organizations (e.g., Clegg, 1990). Lyotard (1984) argues more profoundly that the change has more to do with the state of knowledge and with shifting problematics of legitimacy under conditions of radically altered technology. Postmodernism represents a radical challenge to the traditions of Western philosophy. It challenges, subverts, or reverses many of the sacred shibboleths of that tradition. It rejects both idealism and realism. Postmodernism is a reaction against the presumed certainties delivered by reason (the promise of modernism) and by the grand, totalizing narratives through which they were represented. It seeks to move beyond the illusions of structuralism's base-superstructure relations and concern with origins, centers, and fixities. It derides what Derrida (1976) refers to as logocentrism in Western thought, which involves a strong orientation towards "an order of meaning – thought, truth, reason, logic, the Word – conceived of as existing in itself, as foundation" (Culler, 1983: 92). Postmodernism rejects any metaphysics of presence in which a knowing consciousness

guarantees the meaning of any experience, utterance or text. It subverts and challenges existent hierarchizations and privileging of knowledge: speech-writing, centre-periphery, subject-object, self-other. Correspondence and representational theories of language and knowledge are called into question. The "linguistic turn" in postmodernism sees meaning circulate in an endless, deferred, play of difference constituted by relations of signifier to signifier, without the anchor of a signified representing an external "real world." There is no point of external entry into this "seamless web" of signifying relations, no outside, or metaposition of objectivity from which a disinterested, innocent, or neutral analysis or commentary can be constructed. There is, however, a practice of closure by which to construct discourses that pretend to truth, fixity, and finality. There are claims to speak with knowledge and certainty, which offer representations of the real. However, these claims can be made only through an exercise of power within which a given discourse espouses an area of knowledge as its own and, in so doing, excludes alternative knowledge claims. This reflects Foucault's well known knowledge-power nexus (Foucault, 1980; Rouse, 1994). Indeed, every act of signification is an exercise of power in which social life and meaning can be seen only as an endless play of textual strategies, as meanings are constructed and deconstructed in ongoing interactional activity.

Postmodernism or poststructuralism applied to OS first began to appear in the mid to late 1980s (Burrell, 1988; Cooper, 1986; Cooper and Burrell, 1988; Martin, 1990; Travers, 1989; Westwood, 1987). Important anthologies and/or summaries appeared in Hassard and Parker (1993), Hassard and Pym (1990), and Reed and Hughs (1992), with precursors in Morgan's Beyond Method (1983) and Reed's Redirections in Organizational Analysis (1985). Much of this early work was primarily an exploration of the feasibility of the application of the postmodern perspective to OS. It was only later that more detailed analysis was forthcoming and the approach was applied to more specific organizational issues. These have included postmodern or deconstructive reinterpretations of organization (Burrell, 1997; Chia, 1998, 1996, also this volume, chapter 3b; Cooper, 1986; Kilduff, 1993), reinterpretations of organizational culture (Calas and Smircich, 1991; Chan, 2000, also this volume, chapter 10b; Linstead and Grafton-Small, 1992), viewing human resource management from a powerknowledge viewpoint (Townley, 1993, 1994), reassessing leadership (Calas and Smircich, 1991), identity, gender and the body (Brewis, 1999, 2000; Brewis et al., 1997; Brewis and Linstead, 2000; Hassard et al., 2000; Kerfoot and Knights, 1993), reconceptualizing power (Clegg, 1987, 1989; Dandeker, 1990; Jermier et al., 1994), communication, technology, and organization (Cooper, 1987, 1993; Kallinicos, 1995).

It is important to recognize that the fissure introduced by the postmodern perspective is a deep and radical one, given that it represents such a divergent appreciation of the ontological basis of organization. As Chia (chapter 3b) argues, organization is a process, not an entity. It is a world-making process: an elemental process of becoming in which flux is fixed through the structuring effects of language. Conceiving organization as process immediately has radical implications for epistemology and for methodology. Postmodernism is antithetical to the epistemology of positivism, neopositivism and all forms of naive realism.

Burrell and Morgan's (1979) "interpretive paradigm" continues to be much in evidence in the current OS discourse. Whilst there are those who still pursue OS via an ethnomethodological (see Richards, 2001), dramaturgical (e.g., Kärreman, 2001), and even a symbolic interactionist perspective, a broad social constructivist approach tends to be more dominant (see Czarniawska, 1992, 1998, this volume, chapter 4b). We have already made reference to

the roots and some of the elemental features of social constructivism. It should be noted that, while a distinction is often drawn between interpretivist and constructivist approaches, there is much commonality (Schwandt, 1994). The essence of social constructionism is a concern for the lived experience and meaning making of people in their localized and specific contexts. The "object" of study is the life world and meanings constructed by people in and through their social interactions. Reality, in this sense, is not external and pre-given, but is the meaningful social outcome of coacting partners attempting to make sense of what is going on and, usually, to construct mutually accommodating lines of action (although they may understand each other all too well but wish to signal conflict and hostility. It is important not to let a functionalist overemphasis on order swamp the constructionist analysis). Organizational ontology reflects such constructivist concerns through stressing that there is no external and material organization beyond the mutually constituting activity of members' interactional work. Organization is an accomplishment: its status and being are dependent upon the ongoing interactional efforts and sense making of involved members. Methodologically, there is no objective world to be observed and recorded in a direct sense, rather the researcher needs to *interpret* the socially constructed world, the meanings and meaning-making processes of those involved in creating and sustaining their particular life world. This naturally makes language, especially language-in-use, a prime investigatory and interpretive focus. It is here that social constructionism abuts discourse analysis, which has also witnessed an increased level of activity (Grant et al., 1998; Mumby, 1993). In a related intellectual and discursive space we also find varieties of narrative and storytelling analysis (Boje, 1991, 1995, 2001; Gabriel, 1991, 1995, 1997; Phillips, 1995). In this volume we see Phillips (chapter 7b) outline a version of discourse analysis informed by critical theory. Also in this volume Czarniawska (chapter 4b) again positions Berger and Luckmann (1965) as the "main manual of the constructionists-to-be" and insists on examining the "how" of social constructions, not the outcomes in forms of representations. In other words, the interest is in the processes by which social meanings and social representations are constructed. This includes the processes that construct institutions – and their deconstruction – and the very processes by which things become objectified and reified. Like other constructivists, Czarniawska's concerns are with epistemology and, one might say, with the mundane epistemological processes of everyday social action. Neither ontology nor methodology is to be decided a priori. The ontological statuses of phenomena are part of what is researched and the methods are determined by the phenomena under investigation, the particular context, and the types of questions being asked.

A perspective with a long heritage – for example, in versions of labor process theory – but one that has re-emerged latterly with its application to OS, is critical theory. We have already noted some key ontological and epistemological aspects of a critical theory approach to organizations. This tradition draws upon Habermas, Adorno, Horkheimer, and other adherents of the Frankfurt school of critical theorists. A key thesis in this approach is that management and organization occupy such a central and defining position in contemporary social structures, processes, and discourses that they warrant critical scrutiny. The supposed rationality, neutral efficiency, and positive contribution of management/organization should not be taken for granted. Critical theory seeks to reveal the ideological underpinning of structures, practices and discourses that masquerade as innocent and commonsensical. It seeks to expose power systems and relationships that are repressive and exploitative. To quote two of the major proponents of the critical perspective, critical management seeks to challenge: the myth of objectivity and argues for a very different, critical conception of management in which research is self-consciously motivated by an effort to discredit, and ideally eliminate, forms of management and organization that have institutionalised the opposition between the purposefulness of individuals and the seeming givenness and narrow instrumentality of work–process relationships. (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992: 4)

Of chief importance with respect to this diverse topography within OS is the recognition that almost all of these diverse perspectives (or, if you will, approaches or paradigms) remain in play. This is an indication of the potential inapplicability of the notion of "paradigm" to the field. There has been no discernible point in the history of the field where a paradigm has attained sufficient dominance that it has a status approximating that of a "normal" science. Nor has there been a revolutionary period in which an opposing and previously marginal paradigm has supplanted the functions of a normal science. The contemporary topography of the OS discourse has no more consensus or coherence than it ever had: if anything it is more polyphonous. As Donaldson (1985, chapter 4a), Hinings (chapter 9a) and Ashkanasy (chapter 10a) make abundantly clear, a positivistic, structuralfunctionalist approach is alive and well in the discourse – although not as dominant as it once was or as Donaldson (1988, 1995) would like it. Environmental determinist and evolutionary models are also still evident, as are decontextualized and deterministic organizational economic models within a rationalist, functionalist perspective, and they continue to thrive. Despite the disavowal of positivism and a nuanced discussion of social realist ontology, McKelvey (chapter 2a), McKinley (chapter 5a) and Boal, Hunt and Jaros (chapter 3a) all occupy positions within the trajectory of the traditional orthodoxy in OS. Whilst they would reject the label and the dichotomising,<sup>3</sup> they reside on the "normal organization science" side of Marsden and Townley's (1999) bifurcation of the field into "normal organization science" and "contra-organization science." If it is meaningful, this distinction delineates the deepest fissure in the OS discourse today. On the contra side we find the interpretivists, social constructivists, the "posties" (poststructuralists and postmodernists), and the critical theorists. Although not a perfect alignment, in some respects the pointcounterpoint positions in this volume are aligned across this divide.

It also needs to be noted that the contestation is not just across paradigm positions or approaches because much debate occurs within paradigms and within the frame of particular orientations. For example, Pfeffer (1993) is not only antithetical to social constructivist positions he is also highly critical of rational choice theory. Similarly, Donaldson (1985, 1990, 1995) elevates contingency theory above other "orthodox" approaches such as population ecology, organizational economics and institutional theory. It would seem that there is struggle within the orthodoxy as well as against the opposition outside the boundaries of what is considered to be "normal." Similarly there are debates between, say, critical theorists and postmodernists, or social constructionists and deconstructionists. Even within so-called postmodern purviews there is much diversity and contestation.

# Responding to Diversity: The Politics, Ethics, and Pragmatics of the Discourse

#### Introduction: closure, openness, and straw persons

What are the responses to the contested nature of the field from the various discursive arenas? Some appear to be alarmed by the diversity, lack of coherence, and contestation. We have already noted Pfeffer's (1982) consternation at the "weed patch" that is the field and his suggestion for some prudent pruning. A decade later he made a more programmatic call for paradigm closure (Pfeffer, 1993). He argued that progress in the field can be made only if there is consensus around a paradigm – and for him this should be around the orthodoxy of structural functionalism. He further suggested some institutional means for ensuring paradigm purity and an effective policing of the boundary of this politically constituted and more limited discourse, one which critics have jokingly referred to as the "Pfefferdigm" – because it promotes a Pfefferian paradigm as its view of the world. The rest of us are urged to stop making sense in other terms and knuckle down to the serious business of forging common sense making around the Pfefferdigm.

Others have shown similar alarm at the fragmentation of the field and urged consensus and paradigm closure, although they have not been as willing as Pfeffer to introduce institutional politics to achieve this (Donaldson, 1985, 1995). Donaldson prefers to allow what is defined within the framework of positivist theory as reasoned argument and the testament of empirical findings to achieve the desired result. McKinley has been equally disturbed by the state of the field, its divisions and lack of progress, and argued that greater construct objectification based upon definitional consensus over core constructs is the way forward (McKinley and Mone, 1998; McKinley and Scherer, 2000, and this volume, chapter 5a). Definitional consensus would also lead to convergence over measurement. Like Pfeffer, there is advocacy of a politically informed institutional device to facilitate the consensus in the form of a "democratically produced" construct dictionary (McKinley and Mone, 1998). The nature of the democratic process is a most point and obviously further deepens the politicization of the field. McKelvev is even more pessimistic, declaring OS to be prescientific, the antidote to which, it is suggested, is a strategy based upon Campbellian realist ontology by which it can best move forward to scientific status (McKelvey, 1997, 1999, and chapter 2a). He sees the resolution not in terms of paradigm closure or diversity but in terms of "models" that deliver desired results to external constituents (McKinley, 2001). In effect, he sees the field as a market, where the pragmatics of delivering useful outcomes should decide which approaches survive and which do not. In McKinley, as in Pfeffer, we see an overt pragmatic politics promulgated as the means to redirect and give impetus to the field. Even Reed (1999: 26) referred to the field as "a cacophony of querulous voices totally lacking in general moral force and analytic coherence." Reed's solution is not a retreat behind a more narrowly construed paradigm delineation, but a careful exposition of core problematics and the search for synthesis.

Within the field, others are more prepared to tolerate or even celebrate the polyphony. Clegg et al. (1996) say that they value conversation, discourse, and open, cooperative inquiry across boundaries. This requires, they suggest, a certain agnosticism (Nord and Connell, 1993) wherein they eschew belief in any ultimate form of knowledge. There is a long tradition that puts value in the engagement of alternative or opposing positions. In the literature on creativity there is a strong belief that diversity, and even conflict, is conducive to creativity. The notion of creative abrasion reflects this dynamic. Hardy (1994) has also argued that a state of fragmentation means that the discourse retains an open texture and that means there are spaces in which weaker, emergent or less dominant and orthodox positions can find a place. This is important with respect to the politics of the discourse. Burrell (1999) has argued that the proponents of paradigm incommensurability in OS have put their case with this political dynamic in mind. We shall return to the issue of incommensurability shortly.

In putting this book together we signal our recognition of the diversity in the field, but we do not share the alarm exhibited by some of its practitioners. We see the field as healthily fecund -a ripe arena with much creative and productive energy. We contend that it has always been so, and is likely to continue thus. In constituting a book in this format our intention and aspiration was not necessarily to precipitate synthesis and resolution in the hope of "progressing" the field. Not that synthesis and rapprochement are necessarily a bad thing. Rather, we see value in having varied positions available to the reader in the same space, so that the diversity can be appreciated and the differences better understood. It is apparent that much of the opposition and antagonism in the field is often based on misunderstanding. There is much attacking of straw-persons in evidence in this volume too. One such straw person implicitly or explicitly identified among the contributions is a simplistic view of positivism as the guiding philosophy of orthodox OS. At best, positivism is shorthand for a certain, often unexplicated, set of assumptions guiding the scientific OS enterprise. Equally, we are alarmed by the various postmodern straw persons that have come under attack, particularly in terms of a presumed relativism, amorality, and rampant subjectivity. It is clear that many opponents (including some of those in this volume) have not taken the trouble to familiarize themselves fully with postmodernism but prefer to rail at what they would want it to be, as Quixotic "windmills" at which their barbs and lances might tilt. Part of the function of the book is to help to diminish such lacunae. We are not supportive of attempts to artificially achieve closure in the discourse through institutional politics. Such politics already exist and we have no wish to see them further rigidified and strengthened.

## Institutional politics in organization studies

Organization studies is a field of practice. It has not reached the stage of professional practice and institutional framing that, say, medicine has, but it is a bounded field of practice and the bounds are policed by those institutional parameters instantiated within its discourse. The paraphernalia of professional academic practice inevitably constitutes a power field. There are mechanisms of control in place that police boundaries - that determine what is included and taken as legitimate and proper and what is excluded and deemed to be improper and illegitimate. OS is an unstable field in some respects, but there are some deeply entrenched professional practices that are extremely robust. Chief among these are the rules of entry into the profession, the rules of research, and the rules of publication. Clearly these exhibit interdependence. To practise in the field there is a clear and distinct trajectory of professional development and qualification attainment. To get published, participants need to meet certain epistemological, methodological, and stylistic requirements. An obvious manifestation of this resides in the politics of publication, particularly journal publication. As one of the chief outcomes of practice in professional knowledge fields, publication is of acute significance to the construction and maintenance of the field. Journals not only represent the prime mode of dissemination of knowledge, they are also part of the technology by which any field constitutes and sustains a professional status and through which membership of the field/profession is policed. The openness of a field is at issue in and through the practice of publication.

Keepers of the dominant and orthodox position within OS tend to be institutionally able to sustain and perpetuate their foundations, almost as holders of the citadels of publishing power, to the extent that they have control and manipulation of key journal publication processes. In the citadels that are thus maintained, work that does not fit dominant perspectives tends to be delegitimized and struggles to find its way into published form. One strategic response is for the less powerful and nonorthodox approaches to try and establish their own institutional frame and publications. An example of this is the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism (SCOS), which began as an offshoot of EGOS and had an early focus on the symbolic processes of organizations, particularly with respect to organizational cultures. It is now "home" to an eclectic set of researchers who seek to pursue nonorthodox, postmodernist, and/or critical perspectives. It has its own association, annual conference, and journal. However, the politics of the field maintain SCOS and similar offshoots somewhat at the margin, and participation in SCOS and output related to it does not provide an entrée into the dominant institutional orthodoxy. Being pragmatically blunt: a presentation at a SCOS conference does not count for as much, in professional terms, as a presentation at an Academy of Management conference if one were seeking a post at a top US business school!

We want to consider further some aspects of the politics of the discourse by examining two events that struck us as having resonance with the concerns of this book and by exploring, reflexively, aspects of the process by which the book came into being.

The first event was a private one and relates to the involvement by one of us in a research meeting, one that we suspect was not at all atypical of the micropolitics of research. The meeting involved four researchers who met to discuss a research opportunity that had presented itself. Without going into detail, the discussion focused on possible lines of research and their potential outcomes. Three of the researchers present were from orthodox, micropsychological traditions within OS. Although the research issues were potentially socially important and complex, the direction of the discussion was led by considerations of methodological conventionality, the availability of measurements, and the publishability of the variables addressed. The story has resonance not only with the methodology of OS but also with the politics of research and scholarly practice as well as the wider issue of the point, meaning, and value of research conducted under the rubric of OS.

Practitioners in the field are usually acutely aware of the politics of research and publication. Professional training, development, and socialization already inscribe practitioners with sharply delineated ideas about research practice, methodology, modes of writing and accompanying stylistics, and a broad ethos with which to approach the research task and generally conduct themselves as professionals within their field. We are not suggesting that there is complete homogeneity in this regard, but there are some dominant orthodoxies that many practitioners imbibe as they work themselves into the practice – as they practise. The point is not to bemoan such rather obvious politics but to note that, as our example suggests, the orthodox frame not only polices the boundary through the mechanics of publication but also actually works to shape proactively the way research questions are addressed and the types of issues that are deemed worthy of investigation. We are reminded of Burrell's (1993) attempt to have a video presentation he made at a conference institutionally legitimated as a properly productive academic outcome, as well as a controversy concerning an Afro-American academic at Harvard University, from the School of Afro-American Studies, who made a rap record, for which he was severely reprimanded by the university authorities. As Taylor and Saarenen (1994) suggest, "If you publish an article in the leading journal in your discipline, your arguments and conclusions can be challenged but your seriousness cannot be doubted. A media product, by contrast, appears frivolous and would never be characterised as 'the public use of reason'."

It is not just the media in which output should be produced that is prescribed by the orthodoxy in OS but also the writing style. As part of the rhetoric of objectivity within the orthodoxy, the writing style should, ideally, be cleansed of anything intimating the subjectivity of the author(s). The language should be impersonal, neutral, and devoid of feeling. The rigors and confinements of academic style have been ably summed up by Richardson (1992):

Nearly every time [social scientists] broke into prose, they tried to suppress [their own] life: passive voice; absent narrator; long, inelegant, repetitive authorial statements and quotations; "cleaned up" quotations, each sounding like the author; hoards of references; sonorous prose rhythms; dead or dying metaphors; lack of concreteness or overly detailed accounts; tone deafness; and, most disheartening, the suppression of narrativity (plot, character, event).<sup>4</sup>

It is these stylistic expectations that we largely conform to here, it should be acknowledged. We want to be seen as serious! There exists a conceit that the mode and style of representation in academic writing can be separated from the meanings that the representation pretends to convey. This is a conceit not shared by some. Richardson (1994) documents the conventions of academic writing practice and reveals the inherent metaphoricality of scientific writing and the implication of stylistics for research practice, a point also made by Rhodes (2001) in *Writing Organizations*. In this volume both Case (chapter 5b) and Gherardi (chapter 11) make use of or make reference to the use of irony within academic writing practice.

Another aspect of the micropolitics of scholarly practice is the use of the reference and the citation. These are, at one level, indicators to fellow practitioners that the author shows mastery of the discourse, at another level they are a recirculation of accepted texts that have attained legitimacy in the discourse. The deployment of particular citations and references from within the extant discourse to bolster and justify a new entrant reflexively reaffirms the efficacy of the discourse. At the same time, the ability to cite and reference properly reaffirms the author's status as a *bona fide* member of the scholarly community (see Bjorkegren, 1993). As Taylor and Saarenen (1994) again note, "On the assembly line of knowledge, the intellectual produces print, which, in turn, produces the intellectual." As Westwood (1999) has noted, there is an odd dynamic of supplementarity in the use of references in relation to the presented text. "The reference list performs a peculiar supplementarity to the body of the text, signaling by its presence an absence in the text. The text presents as a coherent, complete account, but, without references, is incomplete. The references mark out a discourse beyond the text: indexing the intertext." By similar logic, there is an odd supplementarity in this introduction to this text.

There is one other matter we should note: this is a book. By which we mean more than to state the self-evident. Obviously this is a book. But in being a book it is not being a journal. And in the hierarchies of knowledge that shape the OS field, increasingly the US norm that a journal is better than a book, that, indeed, books are some inferior form of scientific life compared with the rigorously refereed journal article, is a widely held article of faith. Don't write books – produce articles, is an exhortation that we have heard many an academy cohort of graduate students receive. Now, in the United States, where graduate classes are many and the thesis is less in the overall weight of things, this may be sage advice. A small thesis – in terms of weight and length – probably would not translate into a good book. Indeed, one of us has had occasion to advise publishers to reject a number of US theses for

publication simply on the grounds that they were insufficiently substantial to conform to the norms of the book. Yet the US norm is not the universal norm – in most other academic cultures with which we are familiar the thesis is the sole product of the apprenticeship and the norm is that a substantial piece of work that narrates a significant research journey should be produced. Such work, particularly if it has an integrated narrative flow throughout its chapters – it tells an unfolding story – may be less easily rendered in the discrete charms of the journal article formula.

We could go on and explore this type of institutional politics *ad nauseam*, but the point is perhaps made. It is important to recognize this volume as a participant in those processes and to reflect on what that means. To pursue that reflexively we want to detail a second recent event.

## Terms of engagement: the politics of debate

The second event that resonated with the concerns of this book was the occurrence of an Australian general election, one that was concluding as we set about writing. We shall first make the general point before linking it with the specifics of this volume.

As has become *de rigueur* in this age of the media spectacle and the sound bite, the leaders of the two major parties<sup>5</sup> were invited to conduct a televised "debate." The leaders of the two parties went head-to-head, being dramaturgically framed in the typical manner. At issue - and this is the point of resonance - is the politics of exclusion that typifies such debates. Only the two major parties were invited to debate in this ultimate of modern forums. None of the lesser parties was given the opportunity to participate – something that vexed, and was the cause of public complaint by, the leader of the third most powerful party - the Democrats. This fact echoes Burrell's (1999) observation that debating is a practice engaged in by the powerful and privileged. This raises the question of who and what are excluded from debate. Demonstrators against and detractors of globalization have claimed that at key forums, such as the World Trade Forum in Seattle and in Milan, they and certain key oppositional positions are excluded from the debate taking place among the official representatives of the global economy. However, even those demonstrators occupy relatively privileged positions of access compared with some of the more marginalized recipients of the effects of globalization and they are, through the use of spectacle, able to garner some attention. The general point is that orchestrating a debate will always exclude somewhat more than it includes. And editors are orchestrators *par excellence*.

The issue of exclusion causes us to reflect on the role of editors in general, and in projects such as this in particular. Editors clearly occupy a position of power – in the way a text is defined and framed, in the processes of selection, and in the act of editing itself. This is particularly trenchant with respect to journal editorship, a power we have wielded elsewhere and on other occasions, but is no less evident here. We have exercised such power. While some of its effects are apparent materially in the form this text has taken there are other, less visible, effects of the process. Who was excluded from these "debates" through the editorial process? While that is hard to answer, because, in principle, so many are excluded, we can approach the issue by reflecting a little on the process of inclusion. We presume that, like many academic edited texts, the volume you are now reading results from a process that includes both careful designs mixed with happenstance and serendipity. The issues addressed in the book are our selection – and we are fully aware of how partial that selection is – but guided by sets of presumed relevances in the extant discourse. How were authors

chosen? Naturally, we identified people who had written on the issues under consideration, but in so doing we were in part driven by criteria such as reputation, academic standing, and quality of published output. Publishers enter the political process too; they indicated their desire to see "known" people, with reputations, included in the project. These strategies were not uniformly applied; we have made a conscious effort to also include authors who we felt had written cogently or interestingly on the issues but whose reputations are perhaps not yet fully established. Again, we circle back into the politics and the issue of what "reputation" signifies as we play our part in this political game of brokerage.

The point is not to flatter, or demean, our contributors; rather it is to reflect on the politicized nature of the production of texts – in general, but in this instance particularly in OS. As we have noted, this politicization is not confined to the production of monographs. Who and what were excluded? There is no debate on organizational aesthetics, for example, or on sexuality and organizations, or on humor – all things we find fascinating. It is apparent that we were operating with some notion of what was more central and what more peripheral to the field, and also with some notion of what was contested and what was not. We were also, presumably, led to our selections in part by reflections of appeal and marketability. These are clearly political notions concerned with the power effects of inclusion and exclusion. Marshall, Mills, and Gherardi too reflect on the politics of exclusion in chapter 11.

We were conscious that the book's format, in terms of point-counterpoint, is deliberately provocative, but we had not anticipated the antipathy that the form fomented among some of our contributors. It was salutary, for example, to be reminded of the masculinist nature of the form (Gherardi et al., chapter 11). The word "debate" derives from the old French meaning "to strike down," so the combative element is etymologically imbued. There are obvious dangers inherent to the point-counterpoint structure, some of which have already been intimated. There is the danger that it is a privileged form that simply reproduces existing power structures – including gendered ones. There is also the danger, as Peter Case notes (chapter 5b), that the adversarial nature of the form will not lead to active and fruitful engagement, but rather will result in defensiveness and obscurantism, hostility, or even studied avoidance.

Perhaps naively, we hoped that a point-counterpoint, debate format would allow a more active and productive engagement between positions in OS that typically would not be engaged - indeed, would not even inhabit the same textual space. The whole project is clearly premised on the view that the field of OS is characterized by diversity and heterogeneity. There are perspectival differences not only with respect to methodology and theoretical stance but also more radically in terms of ontological concerns of what problems should be addressed and upon whose behalf. The book is informed by the value that heterogeneity is worth while in itself as a celebration of intellectual curiosity. We believe that the field develops best through the tensions generated by the active engagement of varying positions and paradigms. It struck us that too often debate is not met and opportunities for the productivity of thesis meeting antithesis, or the mere juxtaposition of radically opposing perspectives, are lost. Regrettably, certain institutional orthodoxies often collude with this isolationism and paradigm exclusionism. In other respects there is simple inertia, ego-defensiveness, or lack of opportunity. Against these currents of torpor of one kind or another we have sought to provide a vehicle through which the rich topography of the field can be more fully explored within the same space. Topographies of clashing tectonics, robust monoliths, volcanic irruptions and ghostly implosions were our desire. We wanted to set before the reader as full an array as possible of the areas of critical contestation

around core issues. We sought an expressly polyvocal, multipositional text constructed around dyads of point and counterpoint, thesis to antithesis, paradigm against paradigm. That was the aspiration.

In order to facilitate this aspiration we adopted a unique process. Once authors had been identified and their cooperation assured each was asked to provide a brief position statement of two or three pages in length. These position statements were passed over to their respective counterpoint contributors anonymously. Contributors were then invited to construct drafts of a full text. These were also exchanged anonymously. At the same time the editors provided some feedback and commentary. In the last stage, authors construct a second draft in light of feedback and commentary and submit a final version. The process had some complexity and, it must be admitted, proved difficult to adhere to absolutely.

The somewhat convoluted process was adopted in order to facilitate active engagement between positions, rather than a mere passive juxtaposition. The effectiveness of the strategy and process was, frankly, mixed – as readers will become aware. In some cases counterparts have actively engaged; there are even instances of suggested rapprochement. At the other extreme are situations where the authors elected not to engage and were happy to state their case and let it stand beside that of the counterpoint in splendid isolation. For Czarniawska (chapter 4b) this was an express strategy, following Rorty, to "argue for the attractiveness of one's position and not against the position of others." There is value for the reader in having counterpoint positions juxtaposed in the same textual space.

Another organizing effect of the book is the alignment and sequencing of contributions. The point, obviously, is to construct positions of difference. After identifying issues we sought to locate positions of difference with respect to them. The tacit reasoning appears to have to been to seek out maximal differentiation. Broadly, although this is not uniform,<sup>6</sup> the point position has been sourced from the more orthodox or mainstream positions on the issues. The counterpoint is typically representative of an oppositional, critical, or radical position on the issue and/or in relation to the espoused orthodoxy. We are aware that this framing is not innocent; in a sense it reflects certain viewpoints about what is orthodox and what is not. Such viewpoints are clearly ideologically informed and eminently debatable. What, then, do we mean by orthodox and mainstream? What we have not done, as appears to have been inferred by some of our contributors, is to expressly juxtapose paradigmatic forms of neopositivism with varieties of postmodern critique - although in some instances that is the result. However, it will become apparent to the reader that this is not the only point of differentiation in the alignment of debating positions. Our notion of orthodoxy had several nodes of identification, nodes that were rarely present collectively in any one case. These nodes would include what we, however problematically, would characterize as a broadly neopositivist epistemology but also included more mundane indicators, such as appearance in mainstream journals, managerialist value orientations, and august institutional location. In one sense it is a comment on the nature of the contemporary field of OS that the distinction between orthodoxy and nonorthodoxy is extremely problematic. This is partly why we did not adopt a systematic strategy in framing the debates - it was often a more prosaic matter of identifying people who had something to say that was different from a counterpart on the issue at hand.

An interesting by-product of this process of selection and alignment is that proportionally there are more US-based scholars in the point position and more Europeans and others in the counterpoint position. This may reflect a certain geopolitics within the field, but it may also be an artifact of our own backgrounds and location. Nonetheless, there is a geopolitical material reality that underlies the experience of which there is further evidence in a crosscitation study comparing the *Administrative Science Quarterly* (US-based) and *Organization Studies* (Europe-based). This revealed that articles in the *ASQ* mainly cited US scholars in US journals whereas in *Organization Studies* the citations were more expansive and inclusive (Üsdiken and Pasadeos, 1995). For instance, Weber and Foucault don't rate in the *ASQ* although they make the top ten in *Organization Studies*.

# The ethics of the discourse

One major issue in the discourse of OS is the question of ethics. Reed (1996: 25–6) argues that, at its inception with Saint-Simon, OS was concerned with the moral capacity of organizations to resolve the growing conflicts in society between collective needs and individual wants. Organization was a method of imparting required order. Today, Reed continues, OS lacks a moral force. It is an issue touched on implicitly or explicitly by a number of the contributors and one that impinges on or is an effect of the discourse at a number of levels. At a very broad level there is the matter of whether science in general, and OS in particular, is, or should be, value-free. From a positivist, neopositivist, or "strong" realist perspective, ontological practice aims to provide knowledge of things "as they really are" and epistemological practice seeks to provide an objective account of that reality. A presumed distance between the object to be investigated and the investigating subject accompanies the objectivism. Any researcher influence on the object of study is deemed to be contaminative and a threat to validity, with steps taken to eliminate or reduce such influence. Values are considered to be confounding variables, thus the aspiration, at least, is to a value-free science. The science of explanation is differentiated from any application that may be derived from the explanation. McKinley (chapter 5a) makes a somewhat extreme statement in this regard when asserting his belief that "organizational scholars are relatively isolated from the 'real world'. I am not overly concerned about the unanticipated destructive effects their construct objectification might have on that world." However, the explanatory aim is supposed to deliver possibilities for prediction and control (Hesse, 1980). This clearly raises the question, although it is infrequently addressed, of who is to predict and control, for whom, or for what purpose? For constructivism an ontological practice is entailed in which organization's and people's socially constructed, localized and contextualized realities (and they may be multiple) are apprehended from the perspective of those engaged in such constructions of reality. In epistemological terms the distance between object and subject is dissolved. The constructivists recognize their impact on the research "object" and the act of interpretation, and seek a reflexive strategy to take that into account. The understandings evolved from the research practice are a co-enactment between researchers and researched. In this case, the values of the researcher cannot be bracketed out, and the values of the "object" of the research are very much of interest. Whilst not uniformly so, often there is an aspiration that an understanding of constructions will lead to more sensitized policies and treatments of those whose life world is examined. Alternatively, it may be the intention that the researched gain insight into their own constructive processes and become aware of alternative and improved constructive realities that they can participate in. From the perspective of critical theory the ontology can be described as historical realism and the concern is with the political, social, and discursive structures that are responsible for maintaining a particular power order. Once again the values of the researcher and of the researched are present in the research context, the interpretation, and the effect. The motivating value is emancipatory. The aim of research practice is to critique and ultimately transform the power structures that are seen as repressive and exploitative in some form. Indeed, from this perspective, avoidance of values would be considered as unethical. (The contributor most sympathetic to this perspective is Phillips, chapter 7b.)

The above is not meant to imply that a positivist or realist position is unethical or displays no interest in ethics. Rather, ethical matters are, in a sense, external to the research practice. Ethical standards are applied and enforced that legalistically frame the research practice. These standards, which on the one hand guide the researcher and protect the research object, are also there to ensure that the researcher does not contaminate the "object" of study. However, this tends to mean at the micro-levels of research practice – the *effects* of research, in their application, are another matter. Some researchers within the positivist/ realist position, including contributors such as Donaldson, would argue that the highest ethical standard is the pursuit of "truth" and the revelation of the objective contours of reality. Others would argue from an ethics of pragmatics. In the simplest form the argument would be that the research practice is ethical if it results in the improvement of organizational practice. There is surface plausibility here. Given the centrality of organizations to all we do, who would challenge the notion that producing more effective organizations was not a worthy enterprise? Of relevance to these concerns is the debate on globalization in this volume. Whilst both authors give a nuanced account, Jones (chapter 8b) has a more critical stance and analyses more the power effects on the marginalized and disadvantaged. Parker (chapter 8a) tends somewhat more to see the positive transformative effects of improved transnational corporations and global financial and trade systems. Despite the plausible aim of improving organizations, questions still remain about who has access to the knowledge of the researcher, who deploys it and to what ends. In some more radical forms of constructivism the researcher ensures that ownership of the research, the data, the results, and the effects either rest with or are shared with the researched (Cancian and Armstead, 1992; Elden and Chisholm, 1993; Hall et al., 1982; Reason, 1988; Reason and Rowan, 1981). In much orthodox research in OS the question of "for whom is the research" undertaken is either not addressed or glossed as being a nonquestion (since the research is purely objective and neutral and the applications are someone else's business), or there is acceptance – explicit or taken for granted – that the research is for managers and/or policy formulators. This can mean that OS takes on a distinctly managerialist hue. This position is apparent, for example, in Pfeffer (1982). In this volume McKinley (chapter 5a) seems to concur when, citing Bever and Trice (1982), he argues that the inability to objectify constructs means that the field is unable to generate "objective, believable knowledge that is utilizable ... by managers." Specific notions of audience and usage imply a value position and are implicitly used to invoke an ethic.

Postmodernism has often been castigated for being amoral and/or promoting an ethical relativism. This is a misreading; for instance, the moral purpose of Foucault is abundantly clear (e.g., see Simons, 1995) and Derrida has been at pains to reject accusations of amorality (see Bernstein, 1991). Similarly, in this volume, Case (chapter 5b) is keen to avoid being positioned as a nihilist and supporter of moral relativism. He clearly asserts that there is a "political and moral dimension to the choices made by social scientific researchers." He sees the language of research and theory as ineluctably inhabited by ideology and by practices of power. Indeed, he considers the struggle between subjective and objective forms of know-ledge as a moral struggle. Along with others, Case sees a moral hazard in the expressly manipulative, predictive and controlling aspects of the positivistic enterprise. In similar vein Czarniawska (chapter 4b) defends constructionism against the charge of amorality. This emanates, falsely in her opinion, from either interpreting constructivism as relativistic and incapable of taking a moral stance, or from regarding it as being merely descriptive and thus not taking a moral but merely an ethnographic position. Czarniawska counters by pointing out that constructivism supports neither deterministic nor absolute voluntaristic postures. She is, however, clear about the moral imperative in research practice, maintaining that any question about the purpose of research activity should be answered from an ethicopolitical position and not a methodological-ontological one. Hassard and Kelemen (chapter 2b) also take on the moral imperative, asserting that we live in times of moral ambiguity and that researchers' own ethical positions should guide their research practice. They also advocate the postmodernist ethic of trying to ensure that the repressed, marginalized and the silenced in society are given a voice through research practice. We would argue that whilst this might be desirable in an abstract sense, glib adherence to the doctrine could be misleading. Merely "giving a voice" does not guarantee a resolution of the conditions that construct a group's marginality or repression; indeed, it can exacerbate the situation by providing a clearer target to aim at.

Ethics within the OS discourse was not formally included in this volume - perhaps it should have been - but, significantly, the issue emerged variously among the contributors such that we felt it worth while to raise some of the issues here.

## Debating Organization: Fissures in the Topography

## Introduction: critical fracture lines

We have already indicated fracture lines constituted by very different approaches within OS, both historically and contemporaneously. There is a multiplicity of more specific fissures and points of contention around issues and themes, and we do not intend to pay attention to all of them here. Furthermore, the volume itself represents our contributors' attempt to identify and explore some of the key debates and so it would be redundant to elaborate overly upon them here. However, we want to provide some indication and some context for those debates. In line with our earlier argument, the points of fracture apparent in the discourse today have, in many respects, remained present since the discourse came into being. We have, for example, already noted the early divergent interpretations of Weber that constituted a fracture – or rather a set of fractures – persisting down to today.

We have also noted that for Pfeffer (1982) the discourse disperses around a twin problematic of levels of analysis and approaches to action. The former is, for him, a matter of whether organization theory takes organizations themselves as the appropriate unit of analysis or a suborganizational unit such as individuals or groups. The latter problematic is concerned with the determination of action and is partly a question of causality. His first category of action is a form of voluntarism in which action is a function of rational, purposive, goal-seeking behavior. The second is a form of determinism under which action is shaped by the external context. The third (although misrepresented by Pfeffer) is a form of social constructionism wherein action emerges as people interact and locate and constitute meaning. Clearly these cleavages are also still apparent within the discourse: for instance, contrast the positions of Donaldson and Czarniawska (chapter 4). Indeed, Reed's (1999) more recent survey of the field, which identifies four key areas of debate, reproduces most of Pfeffer's problematic as essential contested domains. One of these, which he terms individualism versus collectivism, resonates with Pfeffer's problematic of units of analysis. A second theme, where Reed contrasts agency and structure, approximates Pfeffer's concerns with action, where structure resonates with notions of external determinism, and agency deals with the bringing into being of structures, and other meaningful forms, through human action and interaction. Reed's third theme is a straightforward epistemological dissensus between a broadly conceived constructivism and an equally broadly conceived positivism. A point of fragmentation not attended to by Pfeffer is a local-global problematic. At one level this looks like a unit of analysis argument but on closer inspection actually refers to the postmodern concerns for metanarratives and totalizing theories. The issue is whether it is sensible to attempt the construction of universalizing, decontextualized, and grand explanatory systems. The alternative is to see this as representing a logocentric fallacy, an imposition of fictive order and homogeneity on flux and diversity, and a gross knowledgepower ploy reactionary in scope and serving only to bolster existing center-periphery relations. Instead of global explanation what would instead be legitimized would be localized investigations that seek to understand the politics of meaning making within immediate and specific contexts.

Some of these core fractures are tackled by contributions to this volume either directly or indirectly. Most occur in Part I, dealing with the foundational issues of the status of the field/discipline, its ontology, epistemology, and methodology. The other debates occur around more focused issues or themes, although even here these foundational debates resurface frequently. Before moving to the debates around the three related issues of ontology, epistemology, and methodology we want to consider the nature and status of OS as a field, discipline, or, as we would say, a discourse. We have already argued that this discourse is relatively new and, as such, does not have the coherence or power effects of some more established discourses. We constituted this debate for our contributors in terms of whether the notions of field or discipline are applicable and whether the discourse had constituted an institutional frame and, if so, its nature. We also invited consideration of the proper and legitimate scope, content, and boundaries of the field/discipline. In particular we wanted to address the issue of whether or not the field/discipline has, should have, or could have, coherence and consensus with respect to matters of scope, content, and boundary.

## Politics revisited: paradigm incommensurability

The nature and status of the field and/or its perceived status as a discipline are clearly of some interest but are perhaps less at issue than are conceptions about the coherence of the field and the desirability of its being so. This has been a concern for some time, but has perhaps intensified in the last couple of decades. This more recent engagement with the issue has revolved around the incommensurability debate and the articulation of various programmatic agendas for the discipline/field that aim to reconstitute OS as a consensual, coherent framework within which more effective development might flourish – often thought of in terms of a gathering of resources against competitors. Such activity entails attempts to delineate carefully the field/discipline, to give specificity to scope and content, and to police the boundaries of the discourse. It reflects the "weeding and pruning" that Pfeffer (1982) referred to. The counterpoint is the view that such an exercise is both untenable and undesirable. Whether as field or discipline (and the inclinations from the counterpoint are towards the former), OS has been, is, and should remain, an open discourse characterized by inherent indeterminacy with respect to the questions of scope, content, and boundary.

Let us deal directly with the vexed issue of paradigm plurality and incommensurability. Some concerned with the status and strength of the field maintain that diversity and paradigm plurality is *the* problem that hampers the legitimate – or legitimizing – progress of the field. The argument is that OS is characterized by the existence of different paradigms and that it is this, in particular, that is responsible for the fragmentation of the field and for its lack of cohesion and progress. This was the line taken by Pfeffer in 1982 and one that he has pursued more radically since, particularly in his 1993 AMR piece. Pfeffer sees OS as a failed field, as a failed science. Its scientific status and sense of progress are hampered by a lack of consensus about key issues in the scientific enterprise: what problems to address, what level of analysis, what epistemology, what methodology? Pfeffer's solution is overtly political: to maneuver one central paradigm into a position of dominance, require compliance with it, and institutionally police the boundaries of the orthodoxy. Donaldson (1985) makes a similar plea for paradigm consensus but without the authoritarian accompaniment. McKelvey (chapter 2a) shares Pfeffer's analysis of the state of the field but rejects the solution, as we have discussed. Calls for defense of the orthodox faith have not been met without rebuttal. Van Maanen (1995), for instance, mounted a spirited attack on Pfeffer, making a plea for intellectual openness.

The debate surrounding paradigms and their incommensurability in OS was most intense following the publication of Burrell and Morgan's (1979) work, since they cast the whole argument in terms of paradigm and made much of the incommensurability thesis. Initial critique of their work objected to the reduction of the field to a simple and static 2 × 2 matrix. However, the argument took a different turn and became more heated following Donaldson's (1985) defense of the structural-functionalist orthodoxy in OS. This was followed by a special issue of *Organization Studies* (1988) devoted to debate of the issues raised by Donaldson's contribution, marked by Aldrich's broad support for Donaldson (Aldrich, 1988). Reed (1985) also considered the state of the field and the issue of paradigm plurality. He argued that there were four types of response: integrationism, isolationism, imperialism, and plurality – responses still in play today. Reed's preference then was for tolerant and productive pluralism but by 1999 he seemed to have shifted slightly, rejecting the retreat to certainty represented by Donaldson and Pfeffer *and* the "distortions of relativism" represented by advocates of paradigm isolationism as well as some proponents of a postmodern perspective (Reed, 1999: 45).

The proponents of paradigm incommensurability have sometimes come not from within orthodoxy but from the more critical edges of discourse, where asserting incommensurability is seen to preserve OS as an open text in which multiple voices can find expression. Incommensurability provides the disengagement and hence protected environment that the weaker, less established, or more marginal paradigm positions need so that they can continue to develop (see Jackson and Carter, 1991). Burrell (1999) is in sympathy with this idea and supportive of the multiple metaphorical lens approach advocated by Morgan (1988). Willmott (1993) and Hassard (1988, 1991) both reject the paradigm incommensurability thesis, but on different grounds. Hassard promotes a multiple paradigm research practice, repeated in this volume (chapter 2b), which states that paradigms are not fully incommensurable because there are points of contact or transition zones. He sees not only paradigm diversity in OS but increasing levels of methodological diversity, seen as a healthy antidote to the failed dominance of positivistic epistemology. The multiparadigm position represents an alternative to either paradigm imperialism or paradigm isolationism.

We would argue that there are no paradigms in OS. Less dramatically we suggest that the use of the concept of paradigm has been misplaced and has misled the field into a timeconsuming and redundant debate. It is widely acknowledged that the original Kuhnian conceptualization (Kuhn, 1962) was flawed in that the notion of paradigm was loosely and variously defined. Even Kuhn subsequently revised his views on paradigms significantly (Kuhn, 1970a, 1971). But more important in our view is that the notion of paradigm was developed in relation to the natural sciences – and physics in particular. It is significant to note that in his preface Kuhn tells us that it was the disparity between the fractious debates in the social science community over the legitimacy of research problems and methods and the relative quietude apparent in the natural science communities that was the motive for his investigation of paradigms. Given that the idea of a paradigm was developed in relation to a careful historico-philosophical investigation of the development of theories in the natural sciences, why should we expect such an investigation to have a bearing on developments in the social sciences? This can be the case only if we assume absolute equivalence between scientific endeavors, if we affirm the "unity of science" banner under which Kuhn's book was (ironically) published, regardless of the phenomena under investigation, if we assume a superordinate, single, unified, and monolithic conception of all science.

In his 1969 (Kuhn, 1970b) postscript to the original, Kuhn engages in some remedial repair following critiques of his work. He admits to the definitional confusion, suggesting that "paradigm" has been used both to delineate what unites a community of scientists and as a set of puzzle solutions that act as exemplars to a group of scientists. On reflection he finds the former inappropriate and replaces paradigm with "disciplinary matrix." The matrix is multifaceted but centrally includes "symbolic generalizations," beliefs in particular models, and shared values. The argument by McKelvey (chapter 2a) that if paradigms were truly incommensurable one would not be able to talk about them simultaneously is undercut by Kuhn's reinterpretation of disciplinary matrices. One can clearly talk about different "paradigms"; there is no inherent limitation in terms of available language or real problems of translation (as Kuhn makes clear in the postscript). Incommensurability, if there is any, rests on differential values and beliefs. This would be more akin to Castenada's struggle to understand the shaman's world view (Castenada, 1970) than it would be a problem of language. Paradigm, in Kuhn's revision, refers to the tacit knowledge that scientists acquire through solving problems and through the exemplars they draw upon to do so. This enables them to perceive phenomena and puzzles in terms of similarities with past situations and to apply routines provided by exemplars. It is not clear to us that this situation prevails in OS, or in most of the social sciences. Incommensurability may be manifest in different vocabularies but such difficulty is, in principle, translatable and thus surmountable, as long as the translation is two-way and contextually acute. More importantly, incommensurability is a function of tacitness and of variable values, which lead scientists to have different world views and perceptions of problems.

One might argue, as McKelvey (chapter 2a) does, that OS is not a science: that it is in a prescientific, preparadigmatic state. But this presumes too much and practises "physics envy" to a heightened degree. Not waiting for Godot, but waiting for Newton. We would prefer to argue that OS is not a science in the mold of a natural science, nor should it be; that the label of "science" must allow different forms of science to exist and not apply the canons of a presumedly uniform (itself contestable) conception of a natural science to all types of research and theorizing activity. Geology, evolutionary biology, and cosmology, for instance, are not generalizing sciences such as physics aspires to be for the simple reason that their data is already there, elapsed, fragmentary, and not subject to experimentation. McKelvey wants to push OS towards a particular type of scientific status informed by Campbellian realism, which he depicts as a viable postpositivist epistemology. He undercuts Hassard's and others' attack on positivist epistemology in OS by arguing that positivism was "epitaphed" by Suppe (1977). This is an argument repeated by Boal, Hunt, and Jaros (chapter 3a). In fact McKelvey would write the epitaph of most current OS researchers by arguing that they are, for the most part, classical positivists, flawed logical empiricists, or relativists, and that each of these epistemologies has no legitimate philosophical basis, and thus should be terminated with prejudice. He claims scientific realism,  $\dot{a}$  la Suppe and Campbell, to be the epistemology that has informed the natural sciences for some time and regards it as the only viable epistemology if OS is to progress. However, whilst pronouncing on the delegitimation of positivism he suggests the "shibboleth" still lingers in OS - and cites Pfeffer and Donaldson as exemplars (see also McKelvey, 1999). Whilst undoubtedly Suppe's arguments have been influential, it is incorrect to suggest that his is the only contemporary epistemology of (natural) science that has coinage today or that it has not been contested (see, for example, Leplin, 1984; Papineau, 1996; Putnam, 1981). Among the alternatives that have wider acceptance than McKelvey gives credit are van Frassens' antirealist constructive empiricism (van Frassen, 1980), or other varieties of constructivism (e.g., Fosnot, 1996; Galison and Stump, 1996).

## Point-counterpoint: constituting debates in OS

#### Foundational debates: ontology, epistemology, and methodology

These three issues represent the most elemental, persistent, and incisive of fractures in the OS discourse. They represent fundamental issues on which there continue to be radically different perspectives that have implications for the whole conduct of OS.

Whilst it is probably fair to say that for the vast majority of researchers in OS the ontological status of organizations and other organizational phenomena is nonproblematic and taken for granted, the ontological question is elemental to how the study of OS phenomena is conceived of and constituted. We have already signaled the importance of the issue at numerous points, indirectly, for example, with respect to the question of levels of analysis. That issue can reflect levels of comfort with notions of the ontology of individual persons as opposed to the existence of organizations as entities. Following from the discussion in the previous section, Boal, Hunt, and Jaros (chapter 3a) cite the philosophy of Russell and Moore to posit realist ontology in the classic sense of entities existing independently of our perception of them. They contrast this with subjectivism, symbolic or interpretive interactionism, social constructionism, and postmodernism. Like McKinley, they seek to distinguish between scientific realism and positivism – claiming that this allows them to include unobservable phenomena as real. The reality of scientific phenomena can be inferred from their effects even if the putative phenomena in question are not directly observable. A basis for the realist position is objectivity, which they assert against what they depict as postmodern objections based on the determination of reality by language/culture, as well as incommensurability arguments, the idea that certainty and truth are unattainable, and the view that observations are themselves already theory-laden.

In contrast to Boal, Hunt, and Jarros, Chia (chapter 3b) pursues a "becoming ontology" as opposed to the long tradition of a "being ontology" that posits reality as atomistic,

thing-like, unchanging, and preformed. He shows how the particularity of Western thinking and ontology has been shaped by language, and particularly by the effects of the alphabet and typography. He sees organization as a process and definitely not as an entity – not even a socially constructed one. Organization is a process through which order is realized, and more fundamentally as a process for "real-izing the real" – or, as his title suggests, as a world-making process.

Ontological issues recur in several of the other contributions. As becomes apparent, it is virtually impossible to talk about *epistemology* and methodology without giving some consideration to ontology. We constituted this debate in terms of what remains perhaps the most central epistemic division in the discourse, that between what we would still term a positivistically informed position and one that is social constructivist. We hold to the view that the dominant orthodoxy in organization theory is informed by an approach that emerged from a positivistic philosophy of science coupled with neostructural functionalism. Some areas of empirical OS have made little movement away from the classical hypothetico-deductive model. This is the position maintained by Donaldson, and he provides a succinct reprise of that here. He rejects the formal strictures of logical positivism but sustains a positivist and, at times, almost Popperian view of epistemology in OS. He is firm in his belief that such an approach offers the best prospect for delivering viable generalizations and for establishing causal relations beyond commonsense apprehension. Social constructionism, as far as Donaldson is concerned, will always fail to deliver this because it remains tied to mere description anchored to the historically specific and to accounts of individual intentions. He positions his type of positivism within a normal science paradigm of structural functionalism that is primarily manifest in OS in the form of contingency theory.

In disciplines/fields other than OS (for example, anthropology) the intellectual Zeitgeist has precipitated a challenge to the positivistic orthodoxy, one informed by questions posed by a deeper appreciation of the reflexive nature of knowledge and knowledge construction. As we have noted earlier there are various forms of constructivism opposed to positivism. In this volume Czarniawska (chapter 4b) outlines and defends social constructionism. Donaldson accuses social constructionism of only delivering at the level of common sense, which Czarniawska counters by suggesting that it is actually the study of common sense. Social constructionism is the attempt to examine how people construct a sense of social reality through their interactions. It also seeks to surface that which is taken-for-granted and studies how people construct their own ontologies. She maintains that social constructionism is not anti-realist in any naive sense, but that it is against essentialism.

The discussion of *methodology* (chapter 5) also dwells considerably on the terrain of ontology and epistemology. Orthodox OS aspires to the status of a "hard" science and has deployed methodologies that treat organizational phenomena as objectified entities, the properties of which can be captured as data and subjected to analysis. Aspirations to objectivity, replicability, validity, and reliability, and to practice that permits the unproblematic representation of underlying reality, have led to a strong preference for methodologies that enable the quantification of properties of a phenomenon and statistical manipulation of data that are taken to represent it. Empirical investigation is preceded by theory building, which identifies variables and anticipates their causal relationships, through the hypothetico-deductive method. Statistical manipulation seeks to reveal the nature and extent of the relationship between measured variables. Such revealed relationships, where they are in the predicted direction, support the theory, thus bolstering its claim to represent the reality of the area of the phenomenal world under investigation. Adherence to this methodological practice secures objective representations of organizational realities, even if periods of accumulation are required, and even if the current version of reality is tenuously subject to the possibility of future falsifiability. The practice and the representations offered are held to be value-free and uncontaminated by the presence of the researcher.

This has proven to be a highly robust orthodoxy and one that, essentially, remains dominant in OS studies. It has, however, come under progressive and increasing challenge, particularly from, to use a catchall, "interpretativist" epistemologies (including symbolic interactionist, ethnomethodological, and social constructivist perspectives). More recently, poststructuralist and postmodern perspectives have radically challenged the epistemological ground of organization studies and thus the methodologies by which it is presumed "knowledge" is constructed and represented. Two issues are at the heart of these more radical critiques. The first concerns representational issues, especially the capacity of orthodox methods adequately to represent phenomena. Not surprisingly, methodological practice is predicated in turn on ontology and epistemology. Once the entitative nature of organizations is questioned, making organizations into social constructions or texts, and once knowledge about organizations is problematized and decentered, the notion of appropriate methodological practice must also shift.

The second critical issue is the burgeoning awareness of reflexive practice, challenging the objectivity and value-free assumptions of orthodox positions. That objects of knowledge are socially constructed and that the researcher's subjectivity cannot be divorced from that process entails negation of the security of the sense that there is an objective reality that can be transparently represented. It is through research practice that the researcher reflexively makes available or constitutes the "objects" of and for investigation. Case (chapter 5b) cites Cicourel's (1964) warnings about how language, cultural meanings, and the properties of measurement all construct a frame through which the researcher observes, selects, and filters phenomena. There are no pre-existing phenomena outside of this "grid." In this sense scientific theories and explanations are themselves social constructions, as admitted by Donaldson (chapter 4a). Consequently, debate about methodology is actually a language game in which participants move in a Foucauldian power-knowledge nexus. Case wants to join Feverabend (1975) in a celebration of methodological diversity, seeing orthodox empiricism as only one pathway to representation and knowledge. But he does not propose methodological anarchy without ethical responsibility, hence his notion of *subjective authenticity*, and, as we have seen, he sees neopositivism, as both epistemology and method, as "morally dubious" in its deterministic, reductive, and manipulative effects.

In somewhat similar vein, Linstead (1993) proposed a deconstructive ethnography for which the practices by which representations of the "real" are mounted within mundane (organizational) contexts become the "object" of study. In other words, this proposes research that does not offer up a representation of organizational phenomena so much as interrogate the means by which organization members produce such representations, and seek to have them accepted and legitimized, and thus deconstruct such practice. Ethnography, while not new to OS, can be seen as a more viable methodology than the representational number fetishism of orthodoxy. Ethnography does not impose *a priori* structures and categories on to the phenomena under investigation; it does not objectify and seek transparently to represent, and it is capable of attending to issues of reflexivity. The challenge is not to make reality problematic through practices that aim to reveal pluralities but rather to question the means by which any such representation is accomplished.

McKinley's (chapter 5a) counterposition also focuses on the objective–subjective dichotomy and accepts that the abstractions that social scientists deal with in their theorizing are social constructions. The issue is the nature and quality of such constructions. Objectivity, from his perspective, is gained via the achievement of a construct consensus that overrides subjective idiosyncrasies. There is a need for consensus over construct definition, argues McKinley, and he has gone so far as to suggest a "democratically produced construct dictionary" to achieve this (McKinley and Mone, 1998). (It sounds a little bit like Godard's *Alphaville*: a place where words – and their associated concepts – can easily disappear.) He argues that OS is in a weak state because of its limited construct consensus and that postmodern approaches, whilst providing operational creativity, inhibit the emergence of such consensus through a surfeit of creative imagination. Abstracted, constructed, consensually agreed constructs should be the phenomena that OS deals with. This would resolve the ontological dilemma, since the objectification that a definitional consensus process brings about would provide/produce object-like phenomena for investigation.

#### Framing debates: environment, institution, globe

The three debates featured in Part II are all concerned, in very different ways, with the wider context in which organizations are constituted and function.

The relationship between organizations and their *environments* has been an ever-present central concern within OS, and various formulations have addressed the relationship. As with other issues, there are paradigmatic matters of ontology and epistemology that underpin the different perspectives taken. There have been disparities with regard to the various degrees of determinism that the external environment exerts with respect to organizational form and functioning. There have also, as a corollary, been discussions about the nature and permeability of any boundary between organizations and their environments. Some perspectives argue from a more determinist position, suggesting that elements in the environment are responsible for the determination of organizational form and function. A variant on this is population ecology, which offers a Darwinian-type explanation of the capacity of an environment to support a given population of organizations (Hannan and Freeman, 1977, 1989), with implications for how organizations are structured to ensure "fit" with the environment in order to ensure their survival. Even aspects of institutional theory have determinist elements, albeit in a different form from those of population ecology. The alternative is to give greater credence to the interpretive and determining power of organizational actors. This debate was rehearsed early on in organization theory (e.g., debates between John Child, Howard Aldrich, and the Aston school) but continues to be a current theme. The debates also abut with the question of the limits and form of rational decision making within organizations.

The population ecology and organizational evolutionary perspectives continue to be a vital subfield within OS (Baum and Singh, 1994; Hannan and Carroll, 1992; Hannan and Freeman, 1989; Singh, 1990). We could have constituted a debate from within, or in juxtaposition to, that project. (For a recent overview, including internal contestations, see Baum, 1999.) Instead we elected for a more subtle debate around Weick's notion of enactment. We originally anticipated an engagement between contemporary interpretations of environmental determinism and the notions of sense making and enactment championed by Weick. However, Jennings and Greenwood's account (chapter 6b) is appreciative of Weick's position and actually seeks some rapprochement between enactment and institutional theory. They attempt this in view of their interpretation that the conundrum for an enactment perspective is explaining exogenous sources of change in institutional arrangements whilst the conundrum for enactment "theory" is explaining endogenous sources. Weick (chapter 6a) clarifies some of the misunderstandings that have arisen around enactment.

Jennings and Greenwood's contribution provides a very fruitful segue into the next debate around *power and institution*. We have noted earlier that, although in some respects power is fundamental to the very constitution of organization, it has languished in a relatively neglected or impoverished state for much of OS's history. This is partly a result of attempts to delegitimate power in theories of bureaucracy which stressed the formal and impersonal rule of authority. Subsequently, however, power has emerged conceptually as both an inherent structural feature of organizations and as a resource that organization parties can marshal to exert influence. The dominant theoretical underpinning has focused on some form of dependence model, following Dahl's classic formulation, which has been extended into organizational theory through strategic contingency theory. More recently, following Clegg's (1989) work, a conception of power/institutions, influenced by Foucauldian theory, has developed. The debate here was not constituted directly in terms of power, but rather in terms of the power-institution relationship. We have already outlined the core orientation of institutional theory (IT) in terms of organizational forms/structures having symbolic as well as functional resonances. The symbolic properties of organizations draw upon and refer to the institutional context in which a particular organization is situated. The symbolic properties must resonate with and draw support from the institutional environment and the values and interests represented therein. Thus, organization forms are determined by expectations of what types of structures and practices are likely to meet with institutional support, disregarding the utility of those structural choices for matters of internal functionality and efficiency. It is an approach imbued with a functionalist purview, although, as noted, there is some sophistication in current renditions and their focus on the processes of institutionalization. Lounsbury (chapter 7a) provides a very cogent account of institutional theory, particularly in terms of the concerns of new institutionalism and other developments in the area. He is particularly keen to demonstrate how institutional theory is moving to counter criticisms that it has failed to address issues of agency, power, and change.

The debate with Phillips occurs around issues of power, agency, and the processes of institutionalization. Phillips is critical of institutional theory's focus on the constraining effects of institutions to the neglect of their enabling effects. He is further at odds with what he sees to be a neglect of micro-level issues and processes and of the textual or discursive constitution of institutional theory. Indeed, he mounts his attack from the position of critical discourse theory. He wants to see institutions as socially constructed in and through discourse – and argues that institutional theory neglects the *processes* of institutionalization, claiming that it focuses on effects, not construction processes. Critical discourse theory draws upon a social constructivist epistemology to analyze *how* institutions are brought into being as discursive accomplishments. Their textual nature means that they are tenuous and in a state of flux, thus conditions of change are brought more into the foreground. Since discourses are also processes of knowledge–power, critical discourse theory is better able to address power issues in the institutionalization process.

We now turn to *globalization*, which, to be frank, we elected to pursue rather less for its extant theoretical contribution to OS than for the imperative that OS come to terms with its implications.

In setting up the debate we conceived of the issue broadly, recognizing the reality of globalization processes, but also recognizing that the exact nature of globalization remains problematic and contested. In particular we wanted to have the issues of globalization addressed in terms of its manifestation and impact, not only on international business and finance, but also in all other cultural spheres. The arguments typically produced in the international business literature suggest that globalization has distinct implications for business strategies, structures, and practices, and that as these become clearer their adoption is essential for business success and competitive advantage. Others extend the argument, suggesting that globalization will bring benefits beyond those accruing to corporations. Variously it is argued that globalization can encourage national economic and social development, aid international understanding and reduce conflict, facilitate the spread of democracy, and so on. Others suggest that this kind of argument serves as a rhetorical device driven by the aspirations of political-business elites, while it masks a less positive reality. Critics argue that the sociocultural aspects of globalization are neglected in the rationalist economic/business rendering. The accusation is that it has more than a taint of postcolonial imperialism about it. The benefits may accrue to the First World (although even that is contested by some), but the Third World will be further marginalized and impoverished in the process. Some nations, communities, and groups may not only fail to benefit materially and economically from the process, but damage may be done to sociocultural systems, and even to the range of distinctive or perhaps unique cultural identities valorized within these systems. The perspective adopted by international business advocates is really only an extension of the kind of orientalist mindset that has characterized Western discourse and its relations with the "other" from the beginnings of colonial expansion onwards.

Whilst both contributors provide a nuanced and detailed analysis, Jones's (chapter 8b) purview is the more gloomy and critical. He focuses more on the fragmenting and marginalizing structural effects of the globalization project of advanced capitalism. He sees the socioeconomic formation being reconfigured into a privileged "techno" economy and a disadvantaged and disenfranchised "grunge" and informal economy. The transnational corporation (TNC) is, in his view, central to and constitutive of this structural formation and is effects. Parker (chapter 8a) tries to locate and analyze a balance of effects of globalization – some negative and destructive, admittedly, but some also positive and developmental. She argues that globalization has inclusionary effects as well as exclusionary. A key feature of her position is that TNCs are but one player, and that it is meaningless to caricature them as purveyors of evil. The reality is that TNCs are just part of a complex network of relationships between local and global organizations involving commercial enterprises, state bodies, communities and NGOs as well as other players in the not-for-profit and voluntary sectors. In that complex network the effects of globalization are materialized and debated over – such effects are neither uniformly bad nor uniformly good.

## Debating structure and culture: entity versus process

The debates in Part III deal with two aspects of organization that have generated among the most voluminous empirical and theoretical output: organizational structure and organizational culture. The former has been the subject of intense and central scrutiny since OS came into being. The latter is more recent, but has generated intense interest both practically and theoretically since the 1980s. In the debates constituted here we have two of the most sharply delineated sets of positions in the whole volume.

Within the functionalist paradigm, *structural* contingency theory has occupied a position at the heart of organization design/structure orthodoxy. It addresses the complexities associated with determining organizational effectiveness in the light of the obvious realization that no single structural form is optimally effective as a vehicle for the attainment of organizational goals. Optimal structures are contingent upon a range of variables impinging on organizations such as size, technology, task uncertainty, and strategy. These are characteristics of the organization but are themselves dependent upon the environment in which the organization functions in terms, for example, of its turbulence and complexity. Organization effectiveness is a function of the capacity to develop/design organization structures that "fit" these contingent conditions. The theory, at its core, is one of environmental adaptation. It is a view of organization structure and design that has been championed by Donaldson and Pfeffer and continues to be the theoretic rational for much of the research and explanation in OS. Üsdiken and Pasadeos (1993) have shown in their analysis of citations that positivist approaches in general, and contingency theory in particular, are still central to US-based organization theorists. Hinings (chapter 9a) regards the emergence of organization theory as a distinct subject separate from the sociology of organizations as an effect of its promulgation of structural contingency theory. Indeed, he sees the question of structure as having been the root question in OS since its foundations in Weber. Structure also remains central to what Hinings sees as a second key strand of contemporary organization theorizing, namely approaches that seek to explain organizational variation through identifying configurations and constructing typologies. The significance of establishing a thorough and complex taxonomy for the development of OS has also been emphasized by McKelvey (2001). Hinings admits that the value of taxonomizing is that it can reduce complexity. He goes on to discuss the centrality and criticality of structure, albeit from a different viewpoint, for both popula-

Structural contingency theory has been critiqued from a variety of perspectives. Social constructivist arguments suggest that it represents an abstract, determinist view of organization structure devoid of human agency and blind to the emergent, socialized generation of structures. It has also been challenged on the basis of an unwarranted continuing adherence to functionalism and/or a form of systems adaptation theorizing with roots in organicist and evolutionary rhetoric. A more radical challenge is provided by postmodernist or deconstructive approaches in which the notion of organization is itself made problematic. Cooper (1986), for example, in deconstructing the notion of organization, shows how organization is inscribed out of dis-organization, which, through reversal, becomes the prior state. He also destabilizes the notion of organization structure by working with notions of margin and supplementarity, which disassemble the boundary of organization.

tion ecology and institutional theory. Structure, he argues, is also at the center of more

recent debates about new organizational forms and organizational transformations.

Munro (chapter 9b) maintains that structural contingency theory has failed to respond to the challenge of social interactionism, the turn to culture, and the sociology of organizations' earlier concerns with the more generic question of "social order" and the varied responses to that problematic than contingency theory chooses to acknowledge. More damagingly, he argues that, pragmatically, there is a turn away by enterprises from the concern for structure as organizations practically seek out flexibility and a multitude of mutations and variations of organizational forms and relationships have proliferated. He argues that contingency theory has imploded, since a rationale for structure is now virtually incidental to the defining forces of markets. There is no single, simple form of order – indeed, order is a process constantly at play with disorder. (There are echoes of Chia – chapter 3b – here.)

Structure is a rather irrelevant supplementarity to the real task of responding to markets and their dynamics. In opposition to the structural determinism of Hinings and Donaldson, Munro sees structure as an effect of interactional processes, or as a legitimating device or "rhetoric of motives." For him the rhetoric of structures and authority is dying, weakened by the struggle against market rhetoric, a rhetoric that actually seeks the dissolution of structures. Managers struggle in this newly constituted discursive clash. Their very role and function are disturbed and are under renegotiation. Managers must make themselves visible and in a sense construct their identities within the miasma of uncertain and shifting organizational and market forces. Organizing is actually a matter of shifting relationships in which managers seek to find a location and a presence. It is a politicized process in which structure is found and then dismantled in an ongoing double process.

The corporate culture literature has shown explosive growth since the early 1980s, on both the academic and the popular fronts. An industry has grown up on the promise of achieving a type of organizational unitarianism, displaying coherence and unidirectionality to enhance organizational performance without having to rely upon strategies of coercion or the expensive bureaucratic monitoring and control systems of the past. Apart from the skeptics who contest the value of the culture metaphor at all, and the very existence of corporate cultures, the most intense debates have been around three core issues. First, there has been contestation about the meaning, content, and operation of culture and the appropriateness of its extension from anthropology into organization studies. For some culture is merely metaphorical, if not rhetorical – a kind of managerialist textual strategy – whilst for others it is a complex of shared social values, symbolic representations and organizational practices that are concretely determining of individual and group motivation and behavior. Second, there is criticism of the presumption that there could be a unitary cultural form that embraces all organizational members and brings the desired motivational impetus: the type of unitarian ideal of which organizational practitioners have long dreamed. A value consensus has developed, it is argued, such that the "invisible hand" of culture has been seen to guide people's actions in appropriate directions, irrespective of what "really" happens. The critique is that organizations are inherently plural and that any presumed coherence is either a fiction or a politically accomplished outcome. Either way, if the notion of culture is to be retained, the notion of a unifying, monolithic single culture is increasingly seen to be untenable; instead, organizations need to be thought of as composed of multiple cultures, some of which may be antithetical to the "official culture." Third, there is the question of whether a culture can be "engineered" through managerial intervention and constructed in a determined, controllable, and controlled manner. Manipulations of values, of symbols, and of structures and practices have been variously advocated as ways to construct or alter the cultures of organizations. That this is a feasible project is strongly contested by those for whom these interventions are in violation of the very concept of "culture."

In this volume Ashkanasy (chapter 10a) presents an orthodox case for culture as an authentic phenomenon that has an impact on organizations and is measurable. He argues this from a structuralist realist perspective, in contrast to what he terms social interactionist and "linguistic convenience" ontologies. His conception of cultures is orthodox: he sees them as comprised of shared values, with universal values, that can be effectively measured. He accepts that cultures can be multilayered within an organization, but that there is still a determinable effect upon behavior and, albeit complex, also on performance. He is at pains to differentiate corporate culture from organizational climate. In contrast, Chan argues

that culture is a process – it is a verb, an activity – not an entity. This parallels Chia's (chapter 3b) treatment of "organization" in general. For Chan culture is an accomplishment in which meaning is instantiated through words and deeds. It is an achievement of order in an ethnomethodological sense, always in flux and in need of renewal. Any determinable pattern is a *post facto* abstraction imposed on this process. Chan invokes a Weickian sense of enactment to depict the culture forming process.

#### Debating identity and relationships

Gender issues in organization studies have had a short but vigorous history. Informed originally by the pragmatics of discrimination and segmentation, and by the concerns of feminist critique, the issues have increased dramatically in complexity and sophistication. A critical point in contemporary debates centers on the conception of gender and its place and relevance in organizations and organization theory. On the one hand are those who have argued for notions of the gendered structuring of organizations from a position that sees this structural disadvantage as the main problematic to address. Those who support the articulation of gender differences and explore the implications of that difference for individuals and organizations are in a similar vein. In contrast to positions that take categories of gender as useful and tenable, either as given or as nonproblematical, are those who adopt a more radical, postmodern feminism. The issue here is to make categories of gender problematic by focusing on the processes by which gendered subjectivities and identities are constructed. This would entail an analysis of the location of gendered selves in the knowledge-power nexus. It is to these latter issues that Gherardi, Marshall, and Mills attend in chapter 11. They first question the debate structure proposed for the volume, and use that as a vehicle to launch into a discussion of the gendered nature of debate, inquiry, and explanation. There is much concern with the problem of a degendered epistemology. Part of this involves a discussion of the impossibility of getting outside a male-constructed language game and epistemic hegemony. Possible responses from within that prison house are to engage in the subversive and "eccentric" practices of hypocrisy, transgression, and irony.

The issue of *trust* has long been crucial in OS, given its centrality in all manner of coordinated human interaction and exchange. Whilst explicit in the early sociological deliberations of Weber, Simmel, and Parsons, trust has remained something of a subtext, perhaps apart from the important work of Alan Fox (1974), until its recent re-emergence centerstage during the 1990s. It is not easy to determine the motivating spirit behind the flurry of interest in the issue of trust. One view is to see it as an expected and belated return to a core aspect of human interaction. Another view would see it as a reaction to the partial dissolution of tight structures and the emergence of the more loosely coupled, contingent, temporary, and networked structure of many contemporary organizational forms and relationships. Still others would see it as partial offshoot of corporate culture perspectives where explicit controls are traded off against more tacit and implicit systems of control and coordination. Whatever the precipitating cause, the issue of trust has grabbed the attention of the academy.

As with corporate culture, trust has rapidly become seen as a strategic issue. Managers' attention has been drawn to the issue by consultants' offers to intervene and repair situations of distrust or to design contexts in which trust can be built into organizational practice and so enhance performance. Trust is fast becoming the new social cement (after culture) which will reintroduce coherence and stable order to organizations and relations between organizations. Such maneuvers are met with critical skepticism in some quarters, including

Sievers (chapter 12b). There is a dissenting view of trust, however: the regeneration of interest in trust may be a desperate response to the conditions of postmodernity. On this view, the turbulence, uncertainties, fragmentations, implosions, and dedifferentiations precipitated by postmodern conditions engender a search for fresh grounds for certainty and solidity in relationships and institutions, and trust is invoked to fill the void. Some see a kind of romantic nostalgia in this for the surety that bonds of interpersonal trust were presumed to provide in earlier times. From this perspective, nostalgia – the sickness of late modernity – may be seen as hopeless romanticism, at best; at worst it is a cynical rhetorical exercise designed to paper over the harsh realities of a sociality ineluctably inscribed by fragmentation, dissolution, turbulence, and *ennui*. The disbelief in the power of grand narratives, the end of history and its teleology, the loss of attachment to various certainties postulated through representations of a world of simulacra, the dissolution of identity, these are all features of the postmodern that seem to auger a systemic climate of distrust. This is an age of anxiety, one that would more likely see neurosis in play – for which nostalgia is a symptom – rather than trust.

Kramer (chapter 12a) provides an admirably balanced account of trust. He argues for the "virtues of trust," and supports his account with a careful analysis of the evidence to date, but he is wary of any naivety and urges that the virtues be pursued with prudence. He is suspicious of the blandishments of the abundant populist claims for the achievement and benefits of trust that have been so current in recent years. He outlines the benefits of trust for organizations in terms of its role in reducing transaction costs, generating spontaneous sociability, and facilitating "appropriate forms of deference to authority." He also discusses alternatives to trust, as various "proxies" for personalized knowledge, such as role-based and rule-based trust.

Sievers (chapter 12b) is "distrustful of popularism and supposed attempts at engineering trust. This is unsurprising, given that he generally interprets modern organizations as characterized by "psychotic and perverse dynamics." Organizations are characterized by an absence of trust that is masked and repressed. The current concern with trust is, for him, an indication that something is wrong – that trust is absent from relationships. He traces the etymology of trust to "faith," as well as to risk, but claims this too is repressed. As in his previous work on motivation (Sievers 1986), he sees trust as a pale substitute for the lack of meaning that the world of work presents to most people. He argues that the discourse on trust currently lacks depth in that it does not question assumptions about the nature of people or organizations, or even the concept of trust itself. It also lacks a macro-perspective in terms of wider context: there is too much emphasis on the individual or social psychological level. The emphasis is on a managerial engineering of trust that neglects broader organizational and societal factors that shape and frame it. Finally, he suggests that the methods advocated emphasize rational and behavioral aspects but neglect unconscious dynamics of trust.

# Conclusion: Debatable Evaluation

The book is a success, not only because of the quality of the contributions but also because we draw together diverse perspectives that create a polyphonous and energetically charged space within the covers of one book. In this respect, we have produced – orchestrated – the book we wanted. But we also received more than we assumed we had wanted and we are thankful for that. We received notice that the book is partly flawed because of the format of

debate within which we conceived it. As some of our contributors make quite clear, debate such as is constructed within its covers can be seen to reproduce power relations, particularly those that are gendered, and the debate format fails to engender engagement that is always fruitful. But against such criticisms, which may lead ultimately to abdication and silence, or, in what may be the same effect, to "disengenderment" and disengagement, we are appreciative of the fact that we have produced some engagement that otherwise might not have happened. In fact a number of points of proposed or hinted rapprochement do emerge.

One source of disquiet, which is, perhaps, characteristic of a prolix, complex, and polyphonic field, is the extent of Don Quixotism that has been revealed on almost all sides, with conceptual windmills repeatedly set up for easy – and pyrrhic – victory because the analytic lances, as they pierce, glance back on to the protagonist, revealing mutual ignorance. The critique of positions that are less than wholly comprehended in anything like their own terms seems to be a common characteristic of what passes for engagement in our field. Clearly, there is a continued need for the development of OS as a field of plurality, where, with careful cultivation, not only a thousand flowers might bloom, but also the skills of good husbandry that enable those who tend some crops to see value and worth in other crops, perhaps enriching the quality of their own product through selective cross-pollination.

Whether the type of pragmatic intercourse that we trust the book will engender will be a consequence of its use by students, colleagues, and researchers – and we hope that it will – we think that one fruitful outcome is to have taken us even further away from nostalgia for OS's fall from some earlier state of theoretical grace, a theoretical Eden, where the Tower of Babel was yet to be built. It is a fact that some colleagues, some texts, and some courses, regularly regale those held captive in their thrall to such Creation myths. With such views we would urge our readers to have no truck. We believe that one positive impact the book is likely to make is in its use as a practical resource for exploration and debate of various positions within the actual disposition of the field – rather than being reinforcements for those already arming the barricades of various theoretical dogmas.

Finally, our verdict is that the book achieves much of what we sought: it is open but structured, querulous but designed, and finished but not complete. For that we require you, dear reader.

# NOTES

- 1 Originally published in 1931 as Onward Industry.
- 2 There is no space here for an elaboration of the roots of postmodernism (and readers will no doubt be aware of the foundational impact of various Continental philosophers and social analysts such as Foucault, Derrida, Baudrillard, Jameson, Deleuze, and Lyotard). We could play the game of spotting the genesis of postmodernism what was the role of Nietzsche or de Sade, the impact of Dadaism, situationism and surrealism, the platform construction of Saussure and Wittgenstein? But these intellectual pursuits fascinating as the detective work is do not really help us here. An anthology (Cahoone, 1996) attributes the first use of the term "postmodern" to the German philosopher Pannwitz in 1917. We would refer the reader to that anthology for an extensive orientation to postmodernism others can be found in Best and Kellner (1991), Harvey (1989), Seidman and Wagner (1992), and Turner (1990).

- 3 We are not entirely comfortable with this mode of categorization either.
- 4 Interesting that this quotation is an example of itself!
- 5 The Australian Labor Party (ALP) and the Liberal Party (the latter being, in coalition, the incumbent party in power).
- 6 For example, it would be difficult to locate Weick in mainstream orthodoxy. The radicalness of the Weickean stance is, however, itself debatable.

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