Organizational Culture:
Sailing Between
Evangelism
and Complexity.

A Bibliographic essay
for Human Relations

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A bibliographic essay

Introduction

This essay has a dual focus. Firstly, to take stock of the current state of the field of organisational culture, both in research and how it is being applied in the practice of organisational change. Secondly, it includes a review of a number of key books that have been published in this area in the last few years. The range of books is extremely varied both in style and approach. Only two of the books attempt a comprehensive perspective on cultural change in organisations. The first of these, Schneider, W. E. (1994) "The re-engineering alternative: a plan for making your current culture work", provides a framework for diagnosing different types of organisational culture. In contrast, "Strategies for cultural change", by Paul Bate (1994) is far more interested in the complex process of managing cultural change.

Three of the books are studies of various aspects of organisational communication. Each of the writers bringing a radically different perspective but each of them viewing communication as rooted in, and framed by the organisations culture. (Kapferer, J. (1990), Manning, P. K. (1992) and Mohan, M. L. (1993)).

The final two books (Wright, S. (1994) and Heald, S. and Deluz, A. (1994) both have produced edited volumes of papers by anthropologists who are studying organisational cultures. Many writers and consultants in the area of organisational culture in the last 25 years have borrowed heavily from anthropology for the underpinning framework of their thinking. It is therefore both appropriate and useful that these two volumes bring a current anthropological challenge to how the concepts of organisational culture are currently being used. Wright's volume challenges the search for the "unitary culture", as well as providing a socio-political critique. Heald and Deluz provide an introduction of psychoanalytical thinking into cultural analysis.

The History of Organizational Culture

The last thirty years has seen a revolution in ways of viewing organisations and thinking about the roles of managers and company leaders. Central to this revolution has been the shift away from the mechanistic perceptions of organizations that dominated "scientific management" in the first half of this century. This perspective emphasised the efficient working of the system, fixing parts that were not fully effective and often reduced the individual to a replaceable small cog in a big machine. In the post war years the Tavistock Institute's development of socio-technical approaches and the American human relations school showed the complexities of the human aspects of organizations and the centrality of work-force motivation to ensuring effective development of an enterprise.

In the 1970s a whole new school of organizational thinking began to develop on both sides of the Atlantic. It saw organisations as cultures rather than as machines, and drew heavily on the discipline of anthropology for both its methodology and its intellectual framework.

Anthropologists provided definitional frames for analysing cultures. Herskowitz (1948) viewed culture as:

> "a construct describing the total body of belief, behaviour, knowledge, sanctions, values, and goals that make up the way of life of a people."

Geertz (1973) added to this in his description of culture as:

> "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life."

The combination of these definitions provides a framework that brings together the external enactments and behaviour of a tribe or organization as well as the internal cognitive constructs and values of the collective group.

The 1970s saw the gradual development of the academic field of organizational culture, but it was in the 1980s that the field became popularised and entered the language and constructs of organisational managers. The pivotal event in this movement was the publication of the best-selling "In Search of Excellence" by Peters and Waterman (1982), which linked the status of being an excellent company with the organisation's ability to create a strong unifying culture with a "shared vision". Many books, articles and organisational development initiatives followed in the wake. Chief Executives were anxious to become as excellent as the quoted exemplars and wanted to know how they could manage the dimension of "culture" in their organisation. The term became a buzz word, and culture initiatives the flavour of the month. This led to a number of books of recipes for "taking charge of the corporate culture", which were full of Petersesque homilies and commandments. Inevitably this led to an oversimplification of the approach. Even now the most often used definition of culture in organisations is Ouchi and Johnson's (1978) reductive and simplistic definition "how things are done around here", which is fine at the behavioural level but which ignores the deeper levels of culture - mindset, emotional ground and motivational roots.

In the midst of this popularisation another seminal book was published in 1986 called "Images of Organisation" by Gareth Morgan. This book looked at organisation through a number of metaphorical lenses, which included machines, cultures, organisms, brains, political systems, and psychic prisons. He showed how each lens showed different elements of the organisation's life and hid others. He therefore argued that any organizational analysis, whether by a chief executive, by a consultant or by an academic researcher needed to use a number of different perspectives and not be stuck with what the poet William Blake termed "single-eyed vision". Not only did Morgan provide one of the clearest accounts of the culture perspective on organizations, but his demonstrations of the importance of the metaphorical frame through which we view reality and also his advocacy of polyocularity (using multiple lenses to view reality) have had an important impact on the field. The concept of organisational culture has indeed become more polyocular and holistic, viewing many different but related aspects of organisational life. It encompasses the dimensions, from rituals to reward systems, from formal communication to daily enactments, and from organisational symbols to the shared belief systems across work groups. This development has opened up rich veins of organisational analysis, but it has also led to a plethora of competing models. The multitude of new books considered in this essay are of course a sign of this development.

The Current Field of Organisational Culture

Reichers and Schneider (1990) argue that there are three phases in the development of a theoretical perspective:

> 1) Introduction and elaboration
> 2) Evaluation and augmentation
> 3) Consolidation and accommodation.

If we apply this model to the field of organisational culture we can posit that the phase of introduction was in the 1970s and elaboration in the 1980s. Since then, to judge by the books and papers that have emerged we have had plenty of augmentation, but with relatively little evaluation. Certainly the phase of "consolidation and accommodation" has not yet arrived. Many writers, mostly from the world of consultancy, fall into the camp of the evangelical, while others, mostly from academia, suffer from taxonomitus, a term I have coined to describe those addicted to taxonomies and dividing the world up into lists and models. In this paper I am setting out to argue the case for a fuller integration of the various approaches to organisational culture. However, this integration should avoid the danger of reductively simplifying the depth and richness of the culture perspective of organisations. At the same time there is a great interest in many organisations in acquiring accessible and usable concepts about organisational culture that can really make a difference to how they manage change more sensitively and successfully. Later in this paper I have included our own attempts at providing such a working synthesis alongside the more specialised perspectives from the books under consideration.

The most extreme case of taxonomitus is Diane Pheysey's book "Organisational Culture" that not only provides numerous models culled from the field of organisational culture but also pulls in models from such subjects as general approaches to change, types of behavioural research science and "inquiring systems". We have models from sociology, psychology, epistemology as well as anthropology. The difficulty for the reader is that if you cut the cake in so many different ways you will be left with crumbs. The book's style is at times both pedantic and patronising. The chapters begin by telling the reader what they will be able to do by the end of the chapter. So chapter one begins:

> "By the end of the chapter you will be able to:
>
> 1) name Hofstede's four measures of national cultures
> 2) explain the Skinner and Winckler model
> 3) show how change could be related to values
> 4) examine the argument that cyclical conflict occurs in British industrial relations
> 5) name Harrison's four organizational cultures
> 6) do the recommended exercise and study the case"

I was left with the sense that this book is really a crammer for the MBA student having to "do" organizational culture, with some of Pheysey's other interest in sociological research methods thrown in for good measure.

Mary Leslie Mohan's book "Organizational Communication and Cultural Vision" while also attempting to summarise the field is less patronising and easier to read. In her preface she introduces her work as "a modest step in the understanding of interrelationships among existing

approaches, in order to create more holistic models of organizational culture." The writer's survey of the literature is both more focused than Pheysey, but more comprehensive in dealing with the writings on culture. The task of synthesis is undertaken in a way that neither forces too many linkages nor reduces the different approaches into an all encompassing new meta-model. She does, however, introduce a simple new model that she calls a "Multi-frame approach to Organizational Culture". In this she suggests that researchers tend to focus on culture through one of three overlapping frames. Some use a **systemic frame** that focuses most on the structure and function of the organisation. Others use a **cognitive frame** that focuses on the mental maps and constructs of those within the organisation. Others use a **symbolic frame** that looks at root metaphors, stories, rituals and visual images and the meaning making processes in an organization. While the first of the frames relies more heavily on quantitative research methods and external analysis by researchers, the last of these frames uses more qualitative research with the elicitation of the accounts of the culture by those within in it. The cognitive frame, Mohan suggests, uses a mixture of external/internal perspectives and quantitative/qualitative approaches. She argues that for a holistic cultural portrait a "triangulation" of these three approaches is necessary. This ensures that one can test the alignment and validity of the data across the three different perspectives.

Unfortunately Mohan's two studies of universities in North America, while interesting in themselves, do not live up to the promise of the earlier theoretical synthesis. The case studies illustrate more about the differences between a university in crisis and one that is making graded changes on a stable, successful organizational base.

Types of Organizational Culture

Whereas Pheysey and Mohan spend a lot of time trying to look at the nature of culture and its complex levels, Bill Schneider's book "The Re-engineering Alternative: A plan for making your current culture work", focuses on types of organizational cultures. He aims to provide a classification system for the personality of the organization in a parallel way to that done by Myers-Biggs for the individual personality. He argues that the reason for the failure of many Business Process Re-engineering projects is that they treat all organisations as if they had the same personality or culture. His thesis, which builds on the earlier work of Roger Harrison, (1972 and 1994) and Handy (1976), is that there are four basic organisation culture types:

- control
- collaboration
- competence
- cultivation

No one culture type is intrinsically better than the others, but different cultures are more suitable to different enterprises and environments. Control cultures are best suited to large production companies or financial institutions. The control culture is:

> "an actuality-impersonal culture. What it pays attention to most is concrete, tangible reality; actual experience; and matters of practicality and utility. Its decision-making process is analytically detached, formula oriented, and prescriptive." :115

The collaboration culture on the other hand is:

"is an actuality-personal culture. Like the control culture, it pays a great deal of attention to concrete, tangible reality; actual experience; and matters of practicality and utility. However, its decision-making process is people driven, organic, and informal." :117

It is more suited to some of the helping professions, or companies that are highly people focused.

The competence culture is:

"is a possibility-impersonal culture. It pays most attention to potentiality, imagined alternatives, creative options, and theoretical concepts. Its decision-making process is analytically detached, formula oriented, scientific, and prescriptive." :119

It thrives in research organisations, advertising agencies, partnerships and consultancies in organizations where there is a strong emphasis on achievement and there is a competitive meritocracy.

The cultivation culture is:

"a possibility-personal culture. It pays attention chiefly to potentiality, ideals and beliefs, aspirations and inspirations, and creative options. Its decision-making method is people driven, organic, open-minded, and subjective." :121

It flourishes in religious and therapeutic organizations where there is a strong emphasis on personal development.

Having outlined the various styles, Schneider presents an organizational development process based on the typology. It consists of five steps:

Step 1: Determine your core culture
Step 2: Capture your culture's strengths
Step 3: Determine your core culture's level of integration
Step 4: Determine your core culture's degree of wholeness
Step 5: Determine your core culture's degree of balance

:131 - 137

This approach, like Peters and Waterman, emphasises the importance of a strong unitary culture that is integrated throughout all parts and levels of the organization and is in danger of becoming an over-determined approach, that in its classifying and striving, can kill the butterfly.

Schneider's work follows a number of mainly American writers, consultants and researchers who have developed classification systems for organisations. He himself shows the links between his own model and that of the other writers and I have put these into a table in figure one - a taxonomy of taxonomies!

A Comparison of Organisational Culture Typologies

O'Toole 1985	Quinn & McGrath 1985	Hirsh 1985	Schneider 1994	Deal & Kennedy 1982	Harrison 1972 (Handy 1976)	Bennis & Nanus 1985
Meritocracy	Rational	Intuition Thinking (NT)	Competence	Tough-Guy Macho	Task	Collegial
Egalitarian	Consensual	Sensation Feeling (SF)	Collaboration	Work Hard Play Hard		Collegial
Humanism	Ideological	Intuition Feeling (NF)	Cultivation		Person (Dionysus)	Personalistic
Behaviourism	Hierarchical	Sensation Thinking (ST)	Control	Bet your company ——————— Process	Role (Appollo) ——————— Power (Zeus)	Formalistic

Figure 1

I find Schneider's classification the most useful and well documented of all the taxonomies, the taxonomic approach itself, however, raises fundamental questions about whether such classifications are nominalising a dynamic concept and seeing culture as something an organization has, rather than an integral part of what an organization is.

Critique of Organizational Culture

We need to turn back to the anthropologists for a critical consideration of some of the fundamental issues. Two recent collections of papers are "Anthropology of Organizations" edited by Susan Wright, and the other "Anthropology and Psychoanalysis" edited by Suzette Heald and Ariane Deluz. Both provide introductions with fascinating explorations of many challenging issues.

Susan Wright's paper is a key text that deserves to be widely read, particularly by the many popularisers of the use of culture in the organizational development field. Unfortunately its appearance in a collection of academic papers, many on the minutiae of very specific organizational situations, make it unlikely that it will reach a wide audience. Wright follows Smircich and paraphrases her classic paper in 1983 in arguing that:

> "Culture is a process - it cannot be fixed into a checklist of attributes of a delineated group: that would be to treat culture as a thing."

Wright reasserts the radical, problematizing role of the cultural perspective on organizations.

> "Organisation as culture is used to question assumptions in both the scientific management and organism schools that organizations have an existence which is objective, material and unproblematic. For these writers, organization as culture problematizes the very concept of organization: When culture is a root metaphor, the researcher's attention shifts from concerns about what do organizations accomplish and how may they accomplish it more efficiently, to how is organization accomplished and what does it mean to be organized."
>
> (Smircich 1983:353)

Instead of presuming a thing called an organization with a boundary against its environment, the emphasis is on a continuous process of organizing (Pondy and Mitroff 1979). In this perspective, even the most material aspects of organizations are only made real by being given meaning. This meaning-making is seen as a continuous process; these authors try to dispel the idea of an organisation as static, in homeostasis or equilibrium. An examination of how people negotiate the meaning of their everyday routines is involved, and of the way they generate symbols through which organized activity is mobilized - including the construction of boundaries (Young 1989).

Culture is seen as the on-going process of "organizing and negotiating meaning.". Within this approach there is a difference between those who see the organization as having a unified system of meaning - making which; "has the function of rendering the structure of cultural experience and of political action isomorphic", as argued by Douglas (1987), and those like Geertz (1978) who argue that there is a continuous relationship, dialogue and struggle between different meaning making processes in any culture.

This approach reintroduces a political perspective into analysis of organizational cultures. This is taken up by Linstead and Grafton and Small (1992) who distinguish between corporate culture and organization culture.

> "The former they attribute to management - who devise it and impose it on organization through rites, rituals and values. Organization culture they associate with workers, and unfortunately describe as 'organic' (1992:332). Their aim is to explain that workers are not just passive consumers of Corporate Culture. This approach accepts *a priori* that there is a dominant group." (Wright 24)

It is also central to the writings of Asad (1979) who explores how in particular social and economic conditions, certain forms of discourse become authoritative.

Many of the papers in Wright's edited volume take up this politico-cultural analysis with its study of conflicting sub-cultures and mindsets. The first section has three studies on "indigenous management" in third world settings. The second section looks at gender issues in organizational change. The final group of papers looks at clients and empowerment in three different helping agencies (community care, divorce courts and a local housing aid office).

The socio-political analysis of many of the anthropologists in Wright's book, contrasts to the political naiveté of many of the organisational consultants who have followed in the wake of Peters and Waterman. In the attempt of these consultants to help organizations develop "a strong unitary culture", they often fail to wait long enough to look at the richness of the culture as it already is, with its multiple and complex meaning making processes. In one recent piece of work with a large international company in Europe, we were faced with the complex criss-crossing of national cultures (an American company coming to terms with the many different European cultures), professional cultures (sales, production, research etc.); departmental cultures linked to products and the cultures of different client channels (selling into government agencies, hospital systems, large production companies and many other diverse systems).

Consultants can fail to see the socio-political dimensions which can lead to a culture change programme being an attempted instrument of power and control by the dominant leadership group, which if unilateral and insensitive to the cultural complexity, will inevitably lead to a reaction and often rejection by those on the receiving end of the new wave of cultural imperialism.

The Bath Model

Bath Consultancy Group, in its work over the past eleven years, and its academic research prior to that, has attempted to develop a methodology of culture change that honours the richness and depth of the organisations culture and the complexity of the change process. Building on the work of Geetz (1973) and Schein (1985) it has developed a model of the 5 levels of organizational culture. It has developed an image of the water-lily (originally used by Schein 1985) to illustrate the model.

Five Levels of Culture

Level 1 - Artefacts
- Policy Statements. Mission statements
- Dress codes, furnishings, buildings, PR, etc

Level 2 - Behaviour
- What people do and say. What is rewarded
- How conflict is resolved.
- How mistakes are treated, etc.

Level 3 - Mindset
- Organisational "world view" - ways of thinking that constrains behaviour.
- Organisational values-in-use, basic assumptions, etc.
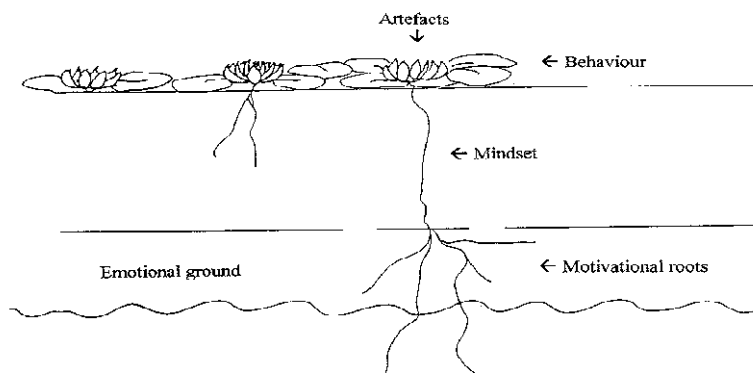
Level 4 - Emotional Ground
- Mostly unconscious emotional states and needs that create a context within which events are perceived.

Level 5 - Motivational Roots
- Underlying sense of purpose that links the organisation and the individuals.

Figure 2

Five levels of culture

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Figure 3

The water-lily illustrates what is most noticeable about a culture is the 'artefacts', the building, logo, mission statement, annual report etc. which equates with the flower of the lily. Above the surface of the water are the typical 'behaviours' of the culture. If the artefacts demonstrate the espoused values, the behaviours show the values in action. Many organisations have run into difficulties when there has been a rift between their rhetoric (what they say) and the reality of what they do.

Beneath the surface are the 'mind sets', which hold in place the belief systems of a culture. These in turn are enacted in the 'emotional ground' or climate of the organisation. The 'motivational roots' are about the alignment of individual purpose and motivations with those of the collective organisation.

We do not believe that positive culture change can only happen in an organic and democratic process, for organisational leaders have a clear role in shaping both the direction and the process of culture change. To be effective in this role we encourage leaders to be sensitive to the needs of the various stakeholders and confront discrepancies between the current dominant culture of the organization and the demands of those at the environmental boundary, be they customers, clients, competitors, stakeholders or political agencies. Leaders we believe must also represent the needs of the future, but in a way that deeply knows the integrity and value of the past as it is contained in the present living culture. This culture change has to be a double dialogue process across the boundary of the organization between insiders and outsiders, and across the time boundary of the present, between past and future. It must involve leadership that both receptively listens and actively challenges, as well as allowing space for creative evolutionary change up through the organization.

Culture and Epistemology

If Wright's volume has helped to focus the socio-political aspects of culture, then the collection of papers by Heald and Deluz puts epistemological issues back into the forefront of the debate.

Like Wright, Suzette Heald also challenges the positivistic approach that views culture as something an organization has. She quotes Rabinow (1977):

> "The very strength of anthropology - its experiential, reflective, and critical activity - has been eliminated as a valid area of enquiry by an attachment to a positivistic view of science." :9

She then goes on to show how the earlier anthropological debates polarised between " the Scylla of pure objectivism and the Charybdis of "going native". This dialectic was resolved in the synthesis provided by the writers on reflexivity in anthropology, chiefly George Devereaux. Reflexivity is an approach built on the belief that anthropology is always contextualised within the relationship of the anthropologist with their cultural frames and the culture they are studying within. Lévi-Strauss (1966) wrote that anthropologists do not study villages, but study within villages. Their writings are as much about themselves and their cultural ways of perceiving, as they are about that which they are studying outside themselves.

Devereaux (1967) is one of the leading writings on reflexivity and drew heavily on his dual career in psychotherapy and in particular on the concepts of transference and counter-transference:

"that is, the way the subjective projections of the anthropologist influence his understanding and the way, likewise, they interact with the unconscious projections of his informants. These reciprocities between the observer and the observed make the fieldwork situation fundamentally problematic, shot through with ambivalence, distortions, defence mechanisms and the trauma of the observer."

Making the transferential process central to the anthropological process means that:

"Like Alice, the anthropologist is in constant motion in a tunnel that links the conscious and unconscious and is the conduit from our world to theirs. This may also be said to be the means by which experience is transformed into knowledge, and 'Anxiety into Method'."

Devereaux's writings preceded the more recent writings in psycho-analysis (Searles 1976, Casement 1985) which have developed the notions of counter-transference and projective identification beyond seeing them as processes that occlude the objective meaning of the patient by the analyst, to seeing them as a positive form of communication between the unconscious of the patient and the unconscious of the analyst. What the patient can not verbalise they communicate unconsciously by making the analyst feel a parallel feeling.

This notion has been further developed by Bollas (1987) in his exploration of "the unthought known" - that which we are aware of in our pre-reflective and pre-verbal consciousness, but have not yet thought. The unthought known cannot be verbalised, but can be communicated through projective identification and a transference - counter transference communication.

The Second Bath Model

In our own work on culture at Bath, we are developing the notion of "the unthought known" in organizational cultures. Alongside the 5 level model, we suggest that culture is experienced and expressed through three levels of consciousness:

- **Espoused Culture** - the public presentation of the collective self. The organizational persona

- **Enacted conscious culture** - the lived culture that is noticed and can be verbalised

- **Unconscious culture** - the unthought known that is collectively experienced but unnoticed by conscious reflection and not able to be verbalised.

Stolorow and Attwood (1992) divide the unconscious into 3 realms:

" (1) *the prereflective unconscious* - the organizing principles that unconsciously shape and thematize a person's experiences; (2) *the dynamic unconscious* experiences that were denied articulation because they were perceived to threaten needed ties; and (3) *the invalidated unconscious* - experiences that could not be articulated because they never evoked the requisite validating experience from the surround."

We believe that these have parallels in organisational culture. The *pre-reflective unconscious* can be seen as the unconscious aspect of mind sets, where we see not the frames with which we

are seeing, which we have absorbed from constant interaction with the culture. The cultural parallel of the *dynamic unconscious* contains the experiences that are collectively repressed because they are too threatening or difficult. Repression can be defined as forgetting, and then forgetting that you have forgot.   The *invalidated unconscious* in the organisation contains those collective experiences and feelings that resonate, but are not verbalised, because there is no language, in words or actions that reflect or validate them.

All three types of unconscious can form parts of the "unthought known", although the dynamic unconscious would more correctly be termed the "once but no longer thought known".
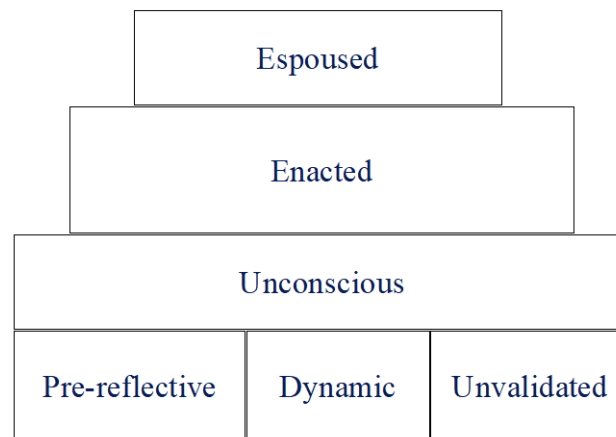
Figure 4

These three levels of culture (espoused, enacted and unconscious), with the tripartite division of the unconscious level, provide a different dimension to the Bath culture model. They do not equate directly with the 5 levels. However, where as the level of artefacts is mostly part of the espoused culture and the emotional ground mostly unconscious; there may be unconscious elements in the organizational staged rituals and there will be areas of emotional ground that are conscious and espoused.

This new dimension is particularly useful in refining the methodological approach to inquiry into culture. The espoused culture can be studied by reading and observing the public face of the organization, its formal communication its meetings and by interview or questionnaire. To access enacted conscious culture different approaches need to be developed. At Bath (Hawkins, 1995) we have developed a cultural inquiry approach that builds on the traditions of collaborative enquiry (Reason and Rowan 1981, Reason 1989, 1995) and humanistic psychology and the methods of discourse and storytelling (Reason and Hawkins 1989). In this approach we set up inquiry workshops jointly with cultural insiders and facilitate them in exploring their own lived culture. We outline methods, such as:

- Inviting them to produce "the unofficial induction programme - everything you need to know to thrive in the organization, but which nobody tells you officially";

- Collecting stories of heroes, villains and fools which carry implicit messages of what is admired, sanctioned and ridiculed within the culture;

- We also use a number of drawing methods (Tight 1996) and organizational simulations which capture elements of the culture through its re-enactment in different frames.

The main approach we have developed for inquiry into the pre-reflective unconscious culture is to attend carefully to the feelings, thoughts and images that emerge in the consultant while working with or reflecting on a particular organizational culture. This data provides simultaneously information about the reactions of the consultant to the organizations including restimulation of their own personal material, and also possible data about the pre-reflective organizational culture communicated through countertransference and projective identification processes. The difficult task is to sift out the separate elements. A full separation is impossible, but with a rigorous, reflective discipline with colleagues external to the culture, a very useful partial separation can be achieved, which yields illuminating understanding.

This methodology has been developed by us and a number of colleagues (Hawkins 1994, Harrison 1994, Casey 1993) under the title of Shadow Consultancy. This was defined by Marjan Schroder (1974):

> "The term shadow consultant denotes a consultant who, at the request of a colleague and by means of a series of mutual discussions in which he uses a socio-scientific approach, helps evaluate and, if necessary, change the diagnosis, tactics, or role adopted in a certain assignment."

This work parallels the work in Anthropology by Obeyenskere (1990) Heald writes that:

> "Obeyesekere (1990) distinguishes the three intersubjectivities 'at the cross-roads where the cultural anthropologist must meet Freud if he is to undertake any kind of serious psychoethnography' (1990:xxi). These are, firstly those of the cultural group studied, secondly, those involved in the anthropologist's relationship and reactions to that group and, lastly, his relationship with other audiences, most particularly his follow anthropologists." :12

I believe that like Obeyeskere we must view organisational culture as an inter-subjective inquiry, which involves the constant interplay of meaning making between the various constituencies of the organisation, as well as the interplay of meaning making between the organisational anthropologist or consultant and the culture they are engaged with and the consultant/anthropologist and their professional community. We can not be engaged in an exact, positivistic science but we can develop a rigorous methodology that is constantly acquiring greater validity, not through empiricism but through critical inter-subjectivity, triangulation of data (Mohan 1993) and other inquiry disciplines (Heron 1989).

Culture: An Inter-Subjective Science

One of the most exciting parallel developments between anthropology and psychotherapy, in relation to organisational culture is in this area of inter-subjectivity. Unfortunately the collection by Heald and Deluz has no mention of the innovative work on inter-subjectivity in psychotherapy that has been developed in recent years by Stolorow and Attwood (1992). By bringing together psycho-analytic and phenomenological approaches they have taken forward the development of inter subjective methodologies and their body of writing has much to offer the explorer of organizational culture. The "inter-subjective" approach holds that objective study of the inner world of the other is impossible and that mean and understanding emerges in, the dialogical relationship between at least two parties. This being so, the study of the deeper aspects of culture can only be carried out by consultants and researchers who can also reflect on their own culture and personal mindsets, emotional ground and motivations.

Culture is a multi-faceted phenomenon that frames our meaning making, influences our behaviour, is enacted in our organizational rituals and evolves through the gradual shifts in enacted emotional and verbal discourse. A rich source of data about culture can be gleaned from those phenomena that reside at the edges of the conscious verbal exchanges such as metaphors (Gunn 1995; Lackoff and Johnson 1980), images (Tight 1996) and rumours. Kapferer (1990) in his book "Rumours: uses, interpretations and Images" provides us with an engaging exploration of this cultural by-way.

He avoids the political naiveté mentioned above, by questioning the traditional academic definitions of rumour as:

> "a specific (or topical) proposition for belief, passed along from person to person, usually by word of mouth, without secure standards of evidence being present." (Knapp 1944)

He questions the equation of official verification with truth and gives a number of core examples where rumours have, in retrospect, been more valid than the official channel of communication.

> "What characterises a rumour's content is not its correctness or incorrectness but rather its unofficial source." (Kapferer :13)

Rumours flourish in the rift between the rhetoric and reality of an organisation. The larger the gap between the espoused and enacted culture, then the larger the mismatch between the official communication and the content of the rumours. Rumours also flourish in times of ambiguity and uncertainty. Most people can not bear to live with an unstable reality and need to fill the information vacuum with rumour. At times of take over or company mergers, I have found that company members would rather believe the worst than live with not knowing. In one company the rumours were that the senior leaders were conspiring to withhold information, because the staff found it even harder to accept the truth that their leaders were also in the dark about whether a take over was going to happen or not.

Kapferer usefully summarises the previous literature that has often seen rumour as a negative force, to be limited by better management of the company communication processes. He does illustrate the many positive roles that rumour can play.

I have used the concept of rumour in my own attempts to illustrate how the organisational unthought known can step by step emerge into the public domain. I suggested that powerful felt experiences in the collective pre-reflective subconscious would first be thought about by individuals but remain unspoken. Next they would be spoken about in gossip circles (the

domain of rumours) before being discussed in public but in encoded form. The meeting might discuss the problem in democratic decision making as a way of bringing the gossip about the dictatorial behaviour of the manager into the edges of the public domain. I developed my model *(figure 5)* to explain the importance of each stage and to help consultants realise the dangers of taking information directly from the realm of the pre-reflective unconscious into direct attention and the importance of developing facilitative methods that respect the natural flow of the emergence of data from pre-reflective unconscious, through the enacted conscious culture, into the area of the publicly espoused culture.

Learning Emerging Upwards Through The Culture

Artefacts	8. Enshrined in procedures, policies and artefacts
	7. Enters the enacted behaviour
Behaviour	6. Enters the embodied behaviour
	5. Publicly referred to directly
Mind Sets	4. Publicly referred to in encoded form
	3. Speakable in gossip groups
	2. The unspoken thought known
Emotional Ground	1. The unthought known: experienced but not thought

Realms of Ambiguity and Contradiction

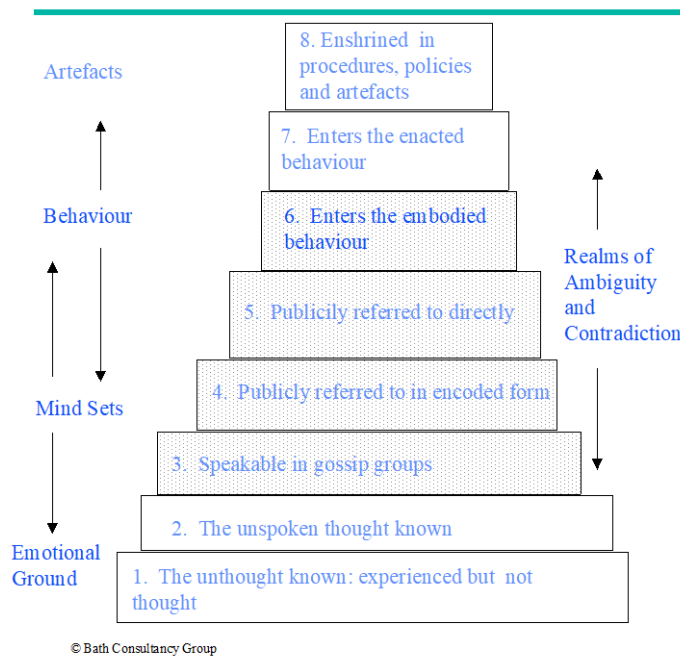© Bath Consultancy Group

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Figure 5

This way of viewing culture also acts as a balance to cultural change methods that are predominantly top-down approaches. In the wake of Peters and Waterman many writers and practitioners have advocated change initiatives that work top down; they recommend starting by changing the organizational artefacts such as mission, vision or core value statements and then align the behaviour of all parts of the organisation behind these. In time they believe the mind sets, emotional ground and motivational roots, will also move behind the new direction and new culture.

We believe that this heroic school of management development, while at times a critical aspect of organizational development, has illuminated only one aspect of the change process. It focuses on the discrepancies and tensions between the environmental demands and the organizational performance. However, there is also another dynamic tension in the body of the culture between the enacted culture and the felt experience of its members. Thus in parallel to working in forming the new vision to respond to the environmental demands, create the new future and aligning the organization behind this; it is also essential for change programmes to work with the internal dynamic, and help the experience and action move towards greater integration.

As individuals we are at our most creative, productive and energised when our root motivation and sense of purpose, our feelings and emotions and our mental frames are all in relationship to each other. Likewise in the collective field of culture, such relationship between cultural levels is at the heart of synergistic team work and organisational performance.

Daniel Goleman (1995) in his ground breaking book "Emotional Intelligence" has attempted to show the neurological and hormonal communications between feelings and mental states. In the social domain of culture there is much still to be discovered about the connected flows of felt experiences, purpose and mental states, particularly at the level of pre-reflective unconscious experience. I have suggested above how we can make more use of the rich psychotherapeutic concepts of transference and counter-transference; projective identification and parallel process.

Another field that is providing some exciting possible avenues for further exploration is that of sub-atomic physics and new biology. Margaret Wheatley (1992) in her ground-breaking book "Leadership and the New Science" draws parallels between "dynamic connectedness" among sub-atomic particles and the hidden organizing principles that order the complexity of organizational life. Rupert Sheldrake's (1981) research on morphogenetic fields shows that there are many unknown ways that human and animal communication takes place. To work effectively with culture change we need to better understand the complex web of connections between all aspects of a culture.

Culture and Postmodernism:

In a recent article by Omid Nodoushani (1996) on "The problems and prospects of post-modern management discourse" he argues that growth of the interest in organizational culture is in itself a post-modern phenomena, for:

> "post-modern science is defined primarily as advocacy for holistic thinking through a relational interpretation of the world."

However, he goes on to argue that the postmodernist view of corporate culture is not of a strong unitary meta-narrative mediated by such artefacts as vision statements, but one which:

> "celebrates ambiguities and multiplicity of conflicting views due to the logic of difference."

Manning's study of communication "Organizational Communication" certainly shows how a post-modern perspective can uncover the complex multiplicity of organisational communication, but like most post-modern writers including myself in this paper, he struggles with making this approach readable and accessible to other than the specialist academic.

Despite its title, this book is about organizational culture and particularly depth culture. He describes two types of communication:

> "The first is the processing of information in message form into, through, and out of organizations. However, organizational communication also entails the analysis of all the nonmessage and noninformational matters and the performing of communication that shapes such 'processing' of communicational transactions and gives them rganizationally valid meaning. Thus, organizational research should explicate the social climate, social context, and formal structure within which organizational communication as performance takes place." :9

Later he adds:

> "Communication involves interpretation of actions and thoughts, and even imagined ideas and intentions" :12

To study the second type of communication he adopts a dramaturgical analysis which:

> "seeks to understand the process by which communication expresses meaning and how this meaning is structured and orders social relations" :5

He also explores a post-modern perspective with its:

> "preoccupation not with surface manifestations of features of what is taken to be the social, but with identifying the structures of principles that under lie or order these 'surface features': (Culler 1975)" :22

Back to earth

Postmodernism, I believe provides an over-arching philosophy and epistemology within which we can understand the complexities of culture. But for many of us our jobs are not to be philosophers of theory, but enables and facilitators of the culture change process in the heat of modern organizational life. Fortunately my last book in this bibliographic review, provides a route back to earth, for Paul Bate (1994) *Strategies for Cultural Change* steers a masterful middle course between the twin dangers of abstract theorising and reductive recipes. He is an avowed post-modernist who states quite boldly that:

> "An organization culture, implying a single, unified entity, is pure myth." 136
> "The idea of changing the 'whole' organization culture must be abandoned. Such an ambition is silly and misguided." 136

>"Cultures are not physical entities. They are complex social phenomena produced interactively not biologically." 137

He then goes on to show how cultural analysis does equip a change agent with a depth understanding of both the organization and the change process, which can inform choice and intervention strategies. The analysis must begin with a full understanding of the present culture:

>"if you want to know where you want to be, begin by finding out where you are."

This must be followed by an understanding of the history of the culture, "the origins and trajectory of the organisations" and the historical pattern of recurrence, that reappears regularly in new form. Only having understood the present and the past can one find a culture change strategy that builds on the internal dynamics and natural pattern of change. He explores the basic patterns for change in any culture, utilising such concepts as wave patterns, first and second order change, and the difference between cultural development and cultural transformation.

I was also heartened to find his emphasis on the interface between culture change within the organisation and culture change in the wider environment. His main case example, that of British Railways in the period prior to privatisation, clearly shows how organisational culture change and wider societal and political change can not be separated. Indeed I would go further and say that culture is as much created at the boundaries of an organisation as it is within its core operations.

The second half of his book analyses different culture change approaches, which he divides into four:

Aggressive   -   the 'decree-approach', impose
Conciliative -   the 'joint approach', collaborative
Corrosive   -   the 'informal approach', unplanned, evolutionary
Indoctrinative -   the 'training approach', normative-reeducative.

He avoids becoming over-determined with his own model and like Mintzberg asks "do they really exist". He concludes no but quotes Mintzberg (1979) in saying:

>"there are times, when we need to caricature, or stereotype, reality in order to sharpen differences and so to better understand it."

He then proceeds to argue for a relative morphogenetic orientation which allows different change approaches to be used at different stages in the cultural cycle and looks at the type of leadership that is required at each stage in the process.

My main reservation about this very valuable text is its over cognitive orientation, which sees organizational culture as about competing 'isms' and belief systems. He lacks the interest in or the understanding of the emotional, motivational and unconscious realms and over-emphasises the socio-political dimensions. In working with organisational culture, I believe we ignore the irrational aspects of the organisation at our peril. Shifting the mindsets and perceptions prevalent in an organisation is a fundamental process in cultural change. However, if we do not address the emotional climate and deeply held motivations of the organisational members then newly acquired perceptions and understandings will be short-lived.

The Challenge Ahead

Organizational culture is both a fascinating field and a discipline fraught with academic and methodological complexity. Pettigrew (1990) wrote about some of the challenges in this area, which are summarized by Mohan (1993:152):

> " the fact that culture is a multilevel construct that may be approached at a highly abstract, metamorphic layer or a more tangible artefactual level....
> ....organizational levels may complicate an analysis of an entire organization in terms of shared conceptualizations. Most investigations are capable of only a partical analysis that captures cultural snapshots of a distinct workplace group
> ... political issues and ethical implications, affecting both the perpetuation of corporate culture and the maintenance of distinct work unit cultures also contribute to analytical complexity."

To these challenges I would add others. Researchers and consultants of organizational cultures need to be able to draw upon a range of academic disciplines, including anthropology, ethnography, sociology, psychotherapy, psychology and organizational behaviour. The researchers should adapt a collaborative inquiry process that works with members of the culture as co-researchers, as a culture can not be fully discovered by participant observation. This inquiry process should be based on a reflexive epistemology that moves between an analysis of the complexities in the studied culture; to the use of one's own self as a receptive device for deeper levels of communication; to the phenomenological critical questioning of the very frames which we are using to perceive that which we are studying.

Researchers on culture also need to embrace a post-modernist perspective that eschews any hope of a neat cultural meta-narrative, but embraces the richness of conflicting, complex sense making both within the organization and those working with it. Cultures are not distinct, but criss-cross each other to form a rich inter-locking tapestry. Consultants need to have a rich menu of cultural change styles and approaches, so that they can be matched to the needs of the particular culture and the current phase of change.

It is clear from my review of the current literature that consultants and academics can not retreat back into an objectifying simplicity, with its heroic efforts to build a unitary culture and pedal taxonomies, models and recipes. Instead we must embrace a post-modern perspective, with its acceptance of the complex, pluralistic, inter-subjective and relational nature of organisational culture. However, how do we avoid getting lost in this pluralistic complexity, and this world of relativism and uncertainty and find a way of helping those who have the difficult jobs of leading managing, enabling or working in the modern organisations with their perpetual change processes. Instead of the recipes, formulas and over-determined classifications, we need to increase our ability to ask quality questions, with adept timing. Questions that are grounded in a rich understanding of the nature of cultural inter-play and change processes, that draw on the varied worlds of anthropology, ethnography, psychology, psychotherapy, sociology and organisation behaviour, but is contained by none of these. We need to ask questions that:

> - enable more of the unconscious culture to become available for reflection and dialogue
> - expose the rifts between the rhetoric and reality; the espoused and enacted cultures
> - facilitate a more fluid discourse between the various centres of meaning making.

The ability to ask such questions can not be learnt by academic study alone, no matter how diverse. It requires the development of a rigorous discipline that comprises at least the following elements.

- Phenomenological awareness and bracketing of some of our own cultural assumptions, beliefs, prejudices, framing processes, emotional ground and motivational roots.

- The ability to attend with sensation rich receptivity. To observe the artefacts and behaviour; listen to the stories, metaphors and images; feel and register the communicated emotions.

- The ability to focus on the transitional spaces and the relational dynamics and patterns and not just on the individuals and processes. To see the waves of the culture and not just the particles.

- Reflection and analysis of the framing processes used by the individuals in a culture and the collective mind sets that underpin such framing.

- Experiential methodologies for enabling the hidden culture to become partially uncovered.

- Collaborative inquiry processes that work towards validity of understanding in the inter-subjective space between those inside and those on the boundary of the culture.

- A discipled reflexivity such as Shadow Consultancy.

Organisational culture needs to further develop itself as an action science that bridges the academic world of reflection and understanding and the consultancy world of enabling complex change and development.

There is much still to be done.

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