From Binarism back to Hybridity: A Postcolonial Reading of Management and Organization Studies

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Abstract

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Drawing on recent theoretical developments in postcolonial research, we examine the effect of the colonial encounter on the canonization of management and organization studies (MOS) as well as the field's epistemological boundaries. In contrast to Orientalism, which is founded on a neat, binary, division between West and East, we offer (following Latour) a hybrid epistemology, which recognizes that the history of management and organizations should include the fusion between the colonizer and the colonized and their mutual effects on each other. Thus, while we discern the Orientalist assumptions embedded in the writing of management scholars, we also show that certain texts and practices that emerged during the colonial, as well as neo-colonial, encounter were excluded from the field, resulting in a 'purified canon'. We conclude by arguing that hybridization between the metropole and colonies, and between western and non-western organizational entities, needs to be acknowledged by students of cultural diversity, and of critical management.

Keywords: postcolonialism, Orientalism, hybridity, purification, imperial bureaucracy, culture, management and organization studies, critical management studies

Rooted in North American and European epistemology, management and organization studies (MOS) are overwhelmingly western. In recent years, postcolonial theory has made significant progress in deconstructing and critiquing the western canon, be it in literature, law, anthropology, film, art, or politics. Two perspectives dominate the postcolonial literature: Orientalism, associated with the work of Edward Said (1978), and hybridity as a third space, associated with the work of Homi Bhabha (1994). Orientalism is founded on a binary epistemology that necessitates a sharp distinction between colonizers and the colonized, whereas Bhabha's work represents a hybrid epistemology, taking into consideration the fusion and the mutual effects of colonizers and the colonized. Orientalism and hybridity are often described as mutually exclusive: either as two consecutive phases in postcolonial theory or as two competing epistemologies.

Recently, MOS has made a gradual attempt to incorporate insights from postcolonial literature into its corpus. Most noticeably, in a recent edited volume, Prasad and his colleagues (Prasad 2003a) made a significant contribution in demonstrating the relevance of the colonial encounter to organizational processes such as organizational control, labor resistance,

organizational accounting, and globalization. In a similar vein, Cooke (2003a) shows that early signs of managerial identity evolved out of the slave plantations in southern USA, and that British indirect rule in India had important ramifications for participatory management in the West (Cooke 2003c). Most of these attempts to incorporate postcolonial insights into the organizational literature revolve around the relationships between Orientalism and organizations (see Erney 2004), with a minority of studies introducing hybridity as a central concept (mainly Prasad 2003b). Furthermore, only a handful of studies have examined the effect of the colonial encounter on the canonization of management and organization studies head on (mainly Cooke 1999, 2003a,b,c; Kwek 2003; Prasad and Prasad 2003).

This paper aims to make two contributions in this direction: at the historiographic level, to examine the effect of the colonial encounter on the canonization of MOS as well as on the canon's boundaries; and, at the theoretical level, to show that 'Orientalism' and 'hybridity' are neither competing nor mutually exclusive concepts, but rather two complementary aspects of the same process.

Importing Latour's (1993) theoretical framework of modernity into the discussion, we propose that the canonization of MOS follows two contradictory principles that are at work simultaneously: hybridization and purification. By hybridization, we refer to the mixing of practices between colonizers and the colonized, to the translation of texts and practices from the colonies to the metropole, and vice versa. By purification, we refer to the mechanisms that construct the colonizers and the colonized as two distinct, and incommensurable, ontological zones. Examined from this point of view, the encounter between the metropole and the colonies is always hybrid. Thus, Orientalism can be seen as a hybrid discourse (and practice) that was purified (that is,: masks its own hybrid roots) to result in a binary perspective of West versus non-West. We will argue that, while management theory needs to recognize the Orientalist assumptions embedded in its texts, at the same time it needs to acknowledge the hybrid nature of the colonial encounter, the fusion between colonizers and the colonized, and the mutual effects between them.

In accordance with the proposed contributions, our paper is structured around two dimensions: historiographic and theoretical. The historiographic dimension singles out critical moments in the canonization of the field of MOS. We demonstrate that the canon's self-identification as western is clearly based on a system of omissions and exclusions (Calas and Smircich 1999: 661). These omissions disguise the (hybrid) colonial history of the field and perpetuate an orientalized (western/white) canon. At the theoretical level we argue that the use of a binary perspective (Orientalism) alone ('purified', in Latour's terms) denies the relevance of the colonial encounter for management and organization history. We suggest that the depiction of binary perspectives (e.g. Orientalism, or for that matter: Occidentalism, Venn 2000) should concomitantly be supplemented (not replaced) with a thick description of the hybrid nature ('western' and 'non-western' combined) of its history. We begin with a brief introduction that lays out the postcolonial theoretical concepts used in this paper and Latour's (1993) contribution to theorizing the relationship between binarism and hybridity.

Postcolonial Theory: From 'Binarism' back to 'Hybridity'

In its widest sense, 'postcolonial theory involves a studied engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and present effects, both at the level of ex-colonial societies as well as the level of more general global developments thought to be the aftereffects of empire' (Quayson 2000: 2). At the risk of oversimplification, postcolonial thought is currently structured around an epistemological divide between binary perspectives, associated with Said's study of Orientalism (or with Venn's notion of Occidentalism 2000), and hybridity, associated with Bhabha's work on third space, resistance and mimicry. In the following, we briefly present this divide and argue, following Latour (1993), that they should not be conceptualized as mutually exclusive, but rather as two complementary aspects of the same phenomenon.

Orientalism as a Binary Perspective

The study of Orientalism examines the bodies of knowledge that developed in the West about cultures external to it, and the manner in which they simultaneously create both the Orient and the ostensibly homogeneous identity of the West. In Said's words:

'Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient — dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.' (Said 1978: 3)

It also tries to show that European culture gained its strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self.

Pursuant to Said's work (1978, 1993), postcolonial theory focused on the analysis of the western bodies of knowledge that developed in the light of the colonial encounter. Studies of 'Orientalism' (and Orientalism may be substituted by Africanism, primitivism, Islamism or tropicalism) repeatedly expose the static, limited description of the 'Orient' as an inferior, exotic, degenerative culture that requires acculturation and modernization, and also the supposedly 'objective' differences between the westerner and the 'other', which accord the former the right to rule and ultimately to civilize and even represent the latter.

The emphasis, placed by these studies, on analyzing bodies of knowledge that deal with the 'Orient' may perhaps explain why research attention to date has only rarely been directed at the colonial features of organization theory. According to the canonic historiography, the roots of organization theory are embedded in North American and European history (Locke 1996; Shenhav 1999, 2003a), and as a result it rarely addresses non-western contexts. Furthermore, when it does so, the core of the theory remains intact (see, for example, Banerjee 2002, 2003).

Over the last decade, there has been much criticism of the binarism embraced by Orientalism (see Loomba 1998). It has been argued that, while

it is politically important to consolidate and essentialize the struggle against colonialism and its aftermath, the use of a binary perspective masks the hybrid nature of both the colonial encounter and the postcolonial condition. Accordingly, while it is true that the colonizers used binary distinctions to describe the differences between colonizer and colonized (the logic of the observed), it is essential that we do not perpetuate this binarism in our conceptual schema (the logic of the observer). Furthermore, the use of a binary perspective was inherent to the formation of the identity of management as a western project. Therefore, while we outline the Orientalist assumptions embedded in the writings of leading management scholars, we also aim to show that the history of the field is structurally and historically hybrid. As it becomes clearer below, we will argue that Orientalism itself is a purified discourse that compartmentalizes the West and the non-West as two separate ontological zones, masking the hybrid nature of the colonial experience.

From Binarism Back to Demonstrating Hybridity

Since Said's path-breaking work, empirical observations have shown that colonial discourses were, in fact, never stable or homogenous (McLeod 2000; Porter 1994). Homi Bhabha has taken the argument one step further, showing that the construction of racial identity does not always conform to a binary distinction between 'western' and 'non-western', or between 'the Orient' and 'the Occident', but instead takes place in a third space — or 'in between', to use Bhabha's term (1994, 1998). What Bhabha suggests is that 'the construction of colonial subject in discourse, and the exercise of colonial power through discourse, demands an articulation of forms of difference', which does not necessarily result in a binary form (Bhabha 1990: 72). This 'difference' blurs categorical distinctions and creates continuity and a permanent ambivalence. He suggests that even though the West and non-West have come to be radically opposed in colonial discourse (and the struggle against it), the boundary between them is a site with broad shoulders (Shenhav 2003b). To be sure, Bhabha's notion of hybridity does not nullify the asymmetrical power relations between the colonizer and the colonized and should not be equated with the simple mixing of cocktails as in syncretism (Gilroy 1993). On the contrary, hybridity is embedded in power and often poses a threat to the colonizer's stability (Stoler 1995).

   In order to theorize the relationship between 'hybridity' and 'binarism', we import Latour's analysis of modernity to the postcolonial as well as MOS literatures. Latour emphasizes two sets of entirely different principles, which must remain distinct in order to define the 'modern'. The first set, known as 'hybridization', creates mixtures and translates between entirely different phenomena with no continuity between them: nature and culture, humans and non-humans, secularity and religion. The second, known as 'purification', creates two entirely distinct ontological zones: that of culture and that of nature; that of human and that of non-human; that of religion and that of secularity. Here lies Latour's entire modern paradox. There is a total separation between the work of hybridization and the work of purification. On an

everyday level, we are confronted with networks, actors, experiences and practices that represent hybrid reality. At the epistemological level of society, however, these hybrids do not challenge the absolute separation between categories. They simply disappear. As Latour frames it: 'the modern constitution allows the expanded proliferation of hybrids whose existence, whose very possibility, it denies' (1993: 34).

The success of 'modernity' as a project stems, according to Latour, from the ability to mix objects and categories without ruling out any combination (genetic engineering is a telling example). Yet, while modern narratives give lavish credit to purification, they deny the practices of hybridization. According to Latour, it is the concurrent effect of hybridization and purification that constitutes the code of 'modernity'; the proliferation of hybrids has saturated our reality, but 'purification' does not allow us to acknowledge it (1993: 50).

Following Latour, we argue that the sole adoption of a binary perspective facilitated both the self-identification of MOS as western, and the denial of the hybrid colonial encounter. A non-binary epistemology suggests collapsing the boundary between West and non-West and allowing for hybridity to filter in, without denying the asymmetrical power relations between them. From a non-binary perspective, we therefore need to show how western and non-western experiences (and representations) are inseparable; and how binary perspectives may purify the colonial practice and mask its hybrid history. We submit that the binary distinction between the West and the Orient employed by organization and management theorists often masks the hybridity of their origins. They disguise the fact that management and organization texts are not distinctively western — as Peter Drucker (1954) and others have suggested — but rather a hybrid product of the colonial encounter.

The following sections present two aspects of the mechanisms through which MOS were canonized and purified. We first show how certain administrative theories and practices that emerged throughout the colonial encounter were edited out of MOS canon and its historiography (a purifying mechanism). We then show how management texts that emerged throughout the colonial and neo-colonial encounter and were included in the canon conceal the Orientalist assumptions within which they are embedded, thus creating another version of a purified 'western' canon.

Before we proceed, a methodological note is in order. Our study focuses on exclusionary and inclusionary processes, which are known methodologically as 'selectivity bias'. Naturally, there is an asymmetry between the two: it is harder to discover omissions (from the canon) than to examine inclusions (into the canon). Hence our research strategy is twofold: we first look for first-hand exemplary organizational texts that were edited out of management history; and second, we look for colonial influences on texts that did make it into the canon. Our empirical materials are thus based on fragmented primary texts and on scattered secondary materials discovered by historians. Indeed, postcolonial theory suggests that the study of silenced voices, and of omitted practices, is always scattered and fragmented, and this is naturally the case here too. We advise the readers to view them as exemplars for future work rather than definitive statements about the field.

The (Hybrid) Colonial Encounter and the Foundations of MOS

In this section, we focus on the early stages in the study of organization and management. We start by arguing that early management and bureaucratic practices were embedded in the colonial encounter (see also Cooke 2003c). Second, we argue that in the attempt to form its identity as western (binarism), the canon excluded residues of the colonial experience, such as Lord Cromer's theory of bureaucracy (hybridity). Third, we identify remnants of Orientalism in the early writings of two scholars that have made it to the canon: Guillaume Ferrero and Elton Mayo.

These examples represent two mechanisms by which MOS as a body of knowledge becomes purified. The example of Cromer represents purification by exclusion of knowledge that was explicitly colonial. The latter examples, of scholars who have been included in the canon, represent purification through the concealment of their own colonial roots. These colonial roots are to be identified through examination of their underpinning Orientalist assumptions.

Early Bureaucratic and Administrative Apparatuses in the Colonies

Initial managerial techniques took shape through the colonial experience of administering large-scale military and civilian systems across broad geographical areas, even before the rise of the large corporations in the West (Mintz 1985). At one point, western colonies occupied some 85% of the world's territory (Fieldhouse 1967). It is not surprising, therefore, that the earliest instances of a joint stock company and a joint venture were colonial: the former was set up by Genoan merchants to run plantations, and the latter was a venture between the Queen of England and a slave trader (Mir et al. 2003). The managerial systems that were developed in the colonies were conducive both to the political and economic goals of colonialism, as well as to the cultural goals defined by the civilizing mission.

Mintz (1985) traces early industrial management practices back to the sugar plantations initially run by Spanish colonialists in the late 16th century and subsequently by the British in the 17th and 18th centuries. British plantations signified a qualitative change in the scale and techniques of plantation management. Many of them employed 150–200 slaves, and some possessed as many as 500. Operations in the mill and the boiling houses, or between cane and subsistence crops, needed to be coordinated. Skill and job specialization, the division of labor according to age and gender, and the stress on punctuality and discipline were among the main features of plantation management. Mintz persuasively argues that such industrial practices were found in the colonial plantations before they were implemented in the homelands (1985: 48).

Likewise, Cooke (2003a) shows that a modern managerial identity emerged in the cotton plantations in the USA at the same time that modern management practices started to surface in the railroads (Chandler 1977). By 1860, 38,000 managers were managing 4 million slaves in the USA, using what

would later come to be known as the principles of classical management (Campbell 1978; Cooke 2003a), including division of labor, span of control, time management, and harmonious coordination between parts (Cooke 2003a).

However, while bureaucratic practices and theories prevailed in the colonies, they were never acknowledged in the purified canon of MOS. Canonical texts (e. g. Daft 2004; Scott 2003; Shafritz and Ott 2001) never mentioned such practices even when explicit theories of management were articulated during the colonial encounter. Lord Cromer's colonial theory of bureaucracy is a case in point.

The Road Not Taken: Lord Cromer's Colonial Theory of Bureaucracy

When Lord Cromer became the British Consul General in Egypt in 1883, the future of colonial rule in Egypt was still uncertain, and at first he advocated a temporary government and a policy of evacuation. However, as it turned out, Cromer governed Egypt for no less than a quarter of a century and, when he realized that the occupation was enduring, he put forward a set of principles for bureaucratic management, which were later published in his essay 'The government of subject races' (Cromer 1908a) and, in part, in his *Modern Egypt* (1908b). Cromer devised a form of bureaucracy for the governance of 'the subject races' in societies that, allegedly, could not be mapped into the catalogue of modern nation states, endeavoring to 'ensure the harmonious working of the different parts of the machine' (1908a: 18). His model — which was in accordance with the British philosophy of indirect rule and diverged from Weber's ideal type of bureaucracy — was conducive to imperial expansion as well as to the denial of national aspirations among the so called 'subject races'. It was based on a secretive decision-making-process and capricious bureaucratic decrees, and allowed for substantial degrees of freedom, which were perceived as crucial for the functioning of imperial bureaucrats who operate in remote distance from the metropole. Cromer believed that imperial bureaucrats needed to be able to deal with flexible structures, and needed significant freedom, and liberty on the spot.

In conceptualizing the British bureaucratic model, Cromer criticized what he called 'the Continental school of bureaucracy' (1908a: 15), meaning the French system. In particular, he criticized the centralized structure, which 'allows no discretionary power whatever to his subordinate' (1908a: 15). To corroborate his argument, Cromer referred to the administrative system that had been developed in another British colony, India, and suggested that 'this portion of the Indian system is deserving of reproduction' (1908a: 16), thus perpetuating the administrative form that had been found most suitable elsewhere in the colonial encounter. Needless to say, Cromer's administrative theory was imbued with Orientalist assumptions, which in turn necessitated and legitimized the role of British bureaucracy.

In his two-volume work, *Modern Egypt*, he proposes to accomplish the mission of civilizing the natives — the white man's burden — through bureaucratic apparatuses:

'It is for the civilized Englishmen to extend to them the hand of fellowship and encouragement, and to raise them, morally and materially, from the abject state in which he finds them. And the Englishman looks towards the scene of other administrative triumphs of world-wide fame, which his progenitors have accomplished. He looks towards India, and he says to himself with all the confidence of the imperial race — I can perform this task.' (Cromer 1908b, Vol. 2: 130)

The rationale and legitimation for Cromer's bureaucratic structure rests upon what was perceived as the low level of the oriental worker: 'In fact, the Englishman will soon find that the Egyptian, whom he wishes to mould into something really useful with a view to his becoming eventually autonomous, is merely the rawest of raw material' (1908b, Vol. 2: 131). Cromer believed that 'so long as British supervision is maintained, the Egyptian will readily copy the practices and procedures of his English teachers' (1908b, Vol. 2: 155), and consequently the 'intellect' of the oriental worker will 'be developed', and 'his moral being elevated under British auspices' (1908b, Vol. 2: 143).

Thus, in parallel with the efforts of those recognized as being the first scholars of management — writers such as Weber, Fayol and Taylor — Lord Cromer established the justification for a rational bureaucracy based on the inferiority of the subject races. However, despite its direct relevance and original contribution to organization theory, Cromer's theory of bureaucracy did not make it into management books. In the process of building the identity of the discipline, MOS scholars denied any residues of the colonial encounter and any form of hybridization between West and non-West.

At the peak of the colonial period, towards the end of the 19th century, western scholars from various disciplines — such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, or engineering — started to apply their disciplinary frameworks to the study of management and organizations. The colonial encounter was pivotal to these efforts, as it offered a laboratory in which researchers could examine their hypotheses concerning the nature of working men and the modes by which they were supervised. In the rest of this section, we present two examples of men who were germane to the inception of study of work organizations and management theory. The first, Ferrero, was central in the European scene, and his work exemplified blatant Orientalism. The second, Mayo, was central in the US scene, though his Orientalist assumptions, which are more hidden, never appeared in the official historiography of MOS.

Front-stage Orientalism: Guillaume Ferrero and Work Management

One of the earliest and the most striking markers of Orientalism in the study of work organizations can be found in texts of the well-known anthropologist and psychologist, Guillaume Ferrero. Based on ethnographic studies, Ferrero formulated the 'law of least effort' in work management (Ferrero 1886). Both mental and physical labor, he argued, are universally subordinate to the force of inertia, and most people will not engage in productive work unless they are placed under restrictions or supervision. Western civilization diminishes this 'natural' negative trait and thus makes its offspring, who are civilized, more productive:

'Those who have not internalized the values of Western civilization … the criminal population, thieves, nomads, and prostitutes, who are driven only by the desire to avoid work, and the savage barbarian in the colonies, who views work as an evil second only to death — effectively preserve the inclination toward laziness and non-productivity.' (Ferraro 1896, quoted in Rabinbach 1990: 174)

This comparison between the basic characteristics of the criminal elements in the 'western' world and the barbarian savage is not an accidental feature of Ferrero's work. Indeed, it is a central element in his writings and is cited to explain the West's superiority over the primitive world beyond it. Like many of his contemporaries, Ferrero believed that the biological traits of the different races can account for the type of work they do. In his terms, the distinction lies in the different 'natural rhythms' of the various races, which render them fit for diverse types of activity. Thus, according to Ferrero, 'The productive work of civilized man is regular and methodological, [whereas] the sport [or rituals] of savages is irregular and intermittent' (Ferrero 1896, quoted in Rabinbach, 1991: 174), a situation that perforce makes the savage an undesirable worker.

Ferrero sums up the contrast between the savage and the productive worker as follows: 'Productive work demands an enormous volitional effort, while the activity of primitives is almost automatic.' The 'repugnance' that savages display towards work derives from their 'horror of mental and volitional effort without which methodological and productive work is impossible' (Ferrero 1896, quoted in Rabinbach, 1991:174). Ferrero's studies, which contrasted the stereotypical image of the lazy barbarian with that of the self-controlled, industrious and civilized European, were accorded scientific credence and were instrumental in shaping the worldview of important theoreticians of organization and management vis-a-vis the non-western 'other'.

The impact of such blatant Orientalist consciousness on shaping labor and management studies is also visible in the development of scientific management and human relations in the USA. *Engineering Magazine*, one of the two major platforms in which the scientific management discourse took form during the Progressive era, equated organizational position and efficiency with race. For example, in an article entitled 'Negroes a source of industrial labor', efficiency engineer Dwight Thompson Farnham (1918) suggested that the work of 'the negroes' must be rigorously supervised, and that managing them is difficult because 'someone must think for the Negro'. According to Farnham:

'There seems to be something about the regular Irish 'boss' which is exactly what the Negro needs. A lieutenant commander in the Navy — an engineer officer whose ships had held the efficiency pennant time and again — told me that an engine room full of Negroes under an Irish boss would do quite as good work as a room full of German square-heads.' (1918: 123–129)

Efficiency management therefore constructed a direct link between a worker's racial origins and his or her skills. Surprisingly, nearly a hundred years later, and after more than three decades of equal-opportunities efforts in the USA, the employers interviewed by Moss and Tilly seem to tell a very similar story about their minority employees, attributing to them characteristics such as laziness and lack of discipline (Moss and Tilly 2001).

We now move on to Elton Mayo, the progenitor of the 'human relations' school, and a management guru in his own right. It is essential to notice that blunt (or front-stage) Orientalist assumptions did not make it to the heart of Mayo's work. It is also notable that Mayo's Orientalist assumptions about racial differences were completely omitted from the purified MOS canon. Instead, the literature focused on his psychological perspective and his psychoanalytic bias.

Backstage Orientalism: Elton Mayo and Human Relations

Mayo was influenced by the early studies of work in Europe and Australia, though he also had first-hand colonial experience. In 1903, prior to his career as an industrial psychologist, Mayo found a position with a gold mining company in Obuassi, West Africa. When he started to develop his ideas on psychology and anthropology, he relied on his West African experience to illustrate similarities between the primitive mind of natives, the mental processes in childhood, the thoughts of neurotic adults, and the superstitions and irrationalities in everyday life (Trahair 1984: 40). Furthermore, Mayo worshiped Bronislaw Malinowsky and was inspired by his anthropological work on exotic tribes, and even supported his studies in the German colony of Papua (Mayo 1928). Following Malinowsky, Mayo perceived mental health as an achievement of civilization and a precondition for order and stability, as well as a panacea for social ills. He emphasized that a society, like an individual, can suffer from a nervous breakdown, but that psychology can bring irrationality under rational control. Later in his career, Mayo attracted another anthropologist — W. Lloyd Warner, who had studied the aborigines in Australia — to join him and his associates in their work at Western Electric.

A close examination of Mayo's original writings during these years reveals their underlying Orientalist assumptions. In an article from 1923, for instance, he laments the lack of the racial factor in analyzing work conditions:

'Some years ago the colored Kanaka laborer was abolished in deference to the 'White Australia' policy. White laborers took the place of the colored man in the sugar fields — without any investigation of the physiological or psychological effect upon the white man of work beneath the tropical sun. Since that time the sugar industry has been incessantly disorganized by strikes' (1923a: 119).

The 'White Australia' policy, a plan for excluding all non-Europeans from the Australian continent during the period 1890–1950, did not bother Mayo. Instead, what concerned him was the frequency of strikes in Australian industry. His intention was to use presumed differences between the races to create the justification for the use of physiology and psychology in industry. Mayo makes similar statements elsewhere (e.g. Mayo 1923b: 482). He argues that success and mental capacities 'are originally racial' and that 'racial capacities force themselves into expression … develop themselves in revery or daydream and express themselves in nervous breakdown' (1923a: 122). Mayo also invokes the distinction between the 'most enlightened' people and

the savage/primitive mind. Examples are ample: 'the savage belief in magic and tabu [sic] explains itself as the product of revery and unreason'; 'primitive man tends to retain his childish outlook. Faced with a world which he does not understand, the savage dimly realizes his impotence' (1923a: 123). Condemning workers who he defines as 'night-minded', he attributes this to magic, superstition and witchcraft. For example, 'the savage does not regard death in any circumstances as natural. Guided only by his night-mind reveries, he believes that death is always the result of sorcery' (1923a: 123). Mayo refers explicitly to his West African experience to produce such observations: 'In West Africa when a white man dies, his negro valet always disappears for at least a week … the savage attributes all his troubles to the incantations of a hostile sorcerer' (1923a: 124).

Mayo's work, then, is marked by strong Orientalist distinctions and epistemology. This epistemology, which portrays the natives as childish and irrational, constituted the foundation for his work in the realm of managing 'human relations' (see Mayo 1928). Note, however, that these Orientalist assumptions never explicitly entered the canon of management and organization texts, and Mayo is included without reference to his impressions of the colonial encounter. The canon was purified of these remnants.

In the 1940s and 1950s Mayo's work was extended into various sub-fields in MOS such as participatory management, informal groups, sensitivity training and democratic management (Waring 1991). For example, the department of anthropology and sociology at Manchester University, in collaboration with the business school there, embarked on a series of studies to explain 'output norms' and their relation to informal group structure. As it turned out, Max Gluckman informed these studies with models that were developed in Africa, particularly in Zululand, to conceptualize behaviour and rituals (Wright 1994: 12). Yet, whereas the African context was pivotal in establishing their observations, the managerial discourse was purified to exclude these influences. In particular, there was a sharp compartmentalization during the 1960s between classical anthropology and organization studies, to create two incommensurable ontological zones (see Czarniawska-Joerges 1992).

Similarly, another post-Mayo management scholar, Kurt Lewin, is considered father of change management, action research, group dynamics, and participatory management (Waring 1991). However, Cooke (1999, 2003b,c) points to the colonial roots of these practices, mainly associated with John Collier, the Commissioner at the US Bureau of Indian Affairs, and with British indirect rule in Africa and Asia (2003c). Omitted from the canonized MOS, such direct links between the colonial encounter and classic management theories are usually difficult to trace. In Latourian terms, the canon was purified, while omitting the hybrid colonial experience.

The outcome of such purification mechanisms is clearly expressed in Peter Drucker's depiction of management history. Despite the many examples described above, in his seminal book, *The practice of management,* Drucker states that management was 'distinctly Western' (Drucker 1954: 1). Management, according to Drucker, is not only a salient product of western

thought, it is also one of the factors that distinguishes the West from other civilizations and accounts for its economic and social superiority.

Drucker's Orientalist view reflects the binary perception, which masks the hybridity of management and organization practices. Drucker sees 'other' cultures as exotic and inferior, and at the same time he views management as solely western, and as worthy of imitation in other parts of the world. Drucker's statement does not reflect his personal viewpoint; only. classic management writers, such as Henry Fayol (1949) and other 'one best way' theorists, have identified universalism with westernization.

This distortion became even more acute in the era of neocolonialism, when control over the colonized was transferred from military commanders and state bureaucrats to the hands of the managers of multinational corporations. In the age of business empires, MOS could no longer edit the 'others' out of its canon. The theoretical approaches emerging, in order to cope with this new challenge, provide exceptionally rich examples of the importance of hybridity and the centrality of purification in constructing the boundaries of MOS.

Contemporary International and Cross-cultural Management and the Management of Cultural Differences

Unlike the earlier management theories discussed above, the encounter between the 'West' and other parts of the world stands at the center of international management. The situation in which 'western' managers supervise South American, African, and Asian workers makes the multinational firm a hybrid space by definition. However, while recognizing the potential conflict inherent in this hybrid encounter, early researchers of international management made an exceptional effort to purify their theories. Denying the possibility of an alternative professional management emerging in contexts outside the USA and Europe, Harbison and Myres (1959) argued that, only by adopting 'western' management methods could third world economies develop. Paradoxically, to make their point, they had to immerse themselves in studying and theorizing the 'other'. The cross-national differences they underlined were later articulated by their successors in cultural terms, thus introducing, for the first time, the concept of 'culture' as part of the core body of MOS (Smircich 1983).[1] Wheras earlier critical accounts of international management pointed to the Orientalist assumptions underlining this body of literature (Wong-MingJi and Mir 1997; Kwek 2003), the following analysis demonstrates that the interplay between hybridity and purification better depicts the reality of the field.

Harbison and Myers: The Purification of International Management

Harbison and Myers' book *Management in the industrial world; An international analysis* (1959) laid the foundation for the field of international management as we know it today. A joint project by the industrial relations

sections of Princeton University and MIT, it was one of the first to put forward a comparative model for studying professional management in 23 countries, many of them outside the 'West', and to empirically establish the link between industrial development and the institutionalization of management as a discipline. The book well reflects the task of acculturation that western managers and international management researchers had taken upon themselves in the era of decolonization.

Despite Harbison and Myers' interest in management outside the 'West', their work is founded on Orientalism, it capitalizes on a binary distinction between western and non-western managers, and it applies different tools to each context. For example, the authors make a sharp distinction between professional management (good management) and patrimonial management (bad management), where professional management is solely identified with 'wwestern' societies, such as the USA, England, and France, and patrimonial management is associated with formerly colonized societies, such as India, Brazil, and modern Egypt. Consider the following depictions of management in India: '

'The top management of India's private enterprises is essentially patrimonial …' (Harbison and Myers 1959: 140)

'there are some family enterprises in which sons have been sent *abroad* for special training in engineering, science, and business administration and have returned to become competent managers and innovators. But on the whole, these are the exceptions rather than the general pattern.' (Harbison and Myers 1959: 148)

At the same time, the authors treat the case of German patrimony with completely different tools, suggesting that, 'if the key members of the family dynasty are competent, well educated, and diligent, patrimonial management may be quite dynamic' (1959: 70). A similar case in which a highly successful Indian millionaire was training his nephew to follow in his footsteps was not considered to constitute a proper professional education.

Similarly, in the case of Egypt, Harbison and Myers make a sharp distinction between enterprises that were run by colonial administrators and indigenous ones:

'In Egypt, as in most other industrializing countries, there are examples of both *progressive* and *primitive* management. The most advanced are the large enterprises which were until recently under foreign management. In these enterprises, one finds a rational organization structure with clear cut lines of authority, position descriptions.' (1959: 158)

No wonder that, according to Harbison and Myers, in the Egyptian case 'the shortage of competent administrative and managerial manpower … may be more acute than in most other countries following … the departure of practically all the British and French managers ' (1959: 158). Thus, Harbison and Myres provide legitimation for the control of western corporations over Egypt's natural resources.

Put crudely, Harbison and Myers' argument can be seen as an effort to purify management theory by recourse to binarism (West versus the rest) in a context

in which the adulteration and hybridity of these practices cannot be denied. As the next section shows, their work has paved the way for the neocolonial experience to filter, albeit in a purified form, into the canon of MOS. The comparative methodology that Harbison and Myers introduced forced their successors to highlight the importance of 'culture' in increasing management efficiency, a concept that they themselves did not employ. Although culture was presented in a purifying manner, it is the Trojan horse through which the interplay between hybridity and purification can be traced and deciphered.

Hybridity and the Management of Cultural Differences

In the decade following the publication of Harbison and Myers' volume, the field of international management rapidly flourished and over 300 works were published (Ajiferuke and Boddewyn 1970: 153). A survey conducted by Ajiferuke and Boddewyn shows that cultural explanations predominated the field. However, the (neo)colonial context within which this concept emerged has deeply affected the way cultures were conceptualized and discussed in this literature.

A prominent example is Richman and Copen's *International management and economic development* (1972). Based on the experience of western managers in the local branches of multinationals in developing countries, the authors put forward a distinctly Orientalist description of the cultural differences between the West and other cultures. Indian society, the book's main case study, is represented as exotic and irrational, something that is purportedly holding up its development. Consider the following description of the Indian manager:

'Many Indian business men, government officials, and educators, many of whom have been educated in Western countries, including the United States, appear to have Western values on the surface, and initially give the impression that they think like Americans, and even speak about business and managerial matters much like Americans. But most are still imbued with a good deal of traditional Hindu culture and tradition, and they live and act by it, e.g. placing considerable faith in astrology and various other mystical forces in arriving at their decisions, and consulting frequently with astrologers to discover auspicious dates or courses of action.' (Richman and Copen 1972: 102)

Similar Orientalist descriptions are scattered throughout the book. They represent Indian managers, even those who studied and were educated in western societies, as inferior to the western manager. To be sure, such cultural perspectives accompany popular international management literature till the present day. In the fifth edition of their bestseller *Managing cultural differences* (2000), Harris and Moran still describe non-western societies in distinctly Orientalist terms. For instance: 'Mexicans are relaxed, hospitable, and warm people who may relate more to their Indian than Spanish heritage. They are proud, patriotic, family oriented, and hard working' (Harris and Moran 2000: 260; see also description of Malay management at p. 314).

Thus, like the Orientalists described by Said (1978) — such as anthropologists, authors, and colonial bureaucrats — international managers and

researchers, such as Richman and Copen, display binary thinking that represents the 'other' as exotic and inferior, and creates a seemingly coherent western culture organized around rational management. Like the subjects in Said's work, international management researchers also seek to impose their concepts on members of the culture they are studying. More than Harbison and Myers, Richman and Copen reinforce the claim that, in order to attain the goal of industrialization, Indian and other workers have to be civilized.

However, from the point of view suggested by the hybridization perspective, one could argue that the encounter, rooted in an attempt to impose 'western' management practices on the 'other', replete with resistance and opposition, forced researchers to recognize and theorize the importance of cultural differences. Thus, the literature on cross-cultural management itself should be seen as a hybrid product that was purified to become part of MOS.

Yet, in paving its way into the core of the MOS canon, the concept of culture went through one more transformation. This time, it was translated when moving from the national context, in which differences are automatically presented as those between 'us' and the 'other', to the organizational one (i.e. 'organizational culture'), ostensibly free of the colonial encounter. Organizational culture was not about culture writ large, but rather a circumscribed and purified version that tamed the use of 'culture'.

Once again, this translation was embedded in a neocolonial context, this time the encounter between the USA and Japan. The ambivalence toward Japan — a former 'colony', a successful economic competitor, and, in US eyes, the ultimate 'other' — is reflected in two of the earliest works in the field of organizational culture, Ouchi's *Theory Z* (1981) and Pascale and Athos' *The art of Japanese management* (1981). As we shall see in the following section, these studies are epitomes of hybridization and purification. On the one hand, they represent a fusion of Japanese and US management knowledge (hybridization). On the other hand, however, they essentialize the cultural differences between Japan and the USA, and argue that it is a specific version of 'organizational culture' (that was developed in the USA as well), rather than the culture of the 'other' (Japanese), that should be introduced in corporations to ensure organizational effectiveness (purification).

Hybridity and Purification: From Japanese Management to Organizational Culture

The Japanese case constitutes a fascinating challenge for postcolonial thought because Japan, of course, was never formally colonized. On the contrary, throughout long stretches of modern history, Japan was a key imperialist bastion in Southeast Asia, endeavoring to acculturate other Asian nations. However, from the point of view of the contemporary 'West', Japanese culture represents the perfect 'other' — an 'other' that is far more meaningful in shaping the image of the West today than the traditional Orient to which Said refers (Said 1978). The apparent adoption in Japan of 'western' canonic management knowledge in the 19th century (Westney 1987), its translation in the Japanese context, and its absorption of local content before being

exported afresh to western countries in the 1980s, provide us with an important example of management knowledge as a product of a long hybrid history. However, for a long time, both 'western' and Japanese writers strove to purify this product, presenting Japanese and western management as binary oppositions.

William Ouchi (1978) was one of the first and foremost cultural mediators of the Japanese management model. In the early 1970s, he argues, US managers blamed obsolete equipment and Japanese emulation of the 'West' for their failure to compete successfully with the Japanese. However, towards the end of the 1970s, for a brief historical moment, the argument that the foundations of Japanese management rested on a *distinct culture* that was significantly different from western culture, and might challenge its supremacy, gained ground (e.g. Pascale and Athos 1981). Values such as obedience, loyalty, devotion, harmony, and identifying the good of the nation with the good of the individual, were all said to be characteristics of Japanese culture that derived from Confucianism, and brought about the development of alternative managerial methods to those of the West.

Paradoxically, this discussion, although appearing to challenge the assumption of western cultural superiority, was binary in character. It accepted the assumption of essentialist and static differences between the 'West' and the 'East' (this time, the Far East). Ouchi himself presents this rationale, invoking Rudyard Kipling's famous Orientalist observation about the Indian context: 'How do we explain this relationship between a company and its employees so radically different from that present in the West? … Is it simply that East is East and West is West?' (Ouchi 1981: 11–12).

One of the questions that Ouchi and his colleagues had to address was whether the West should adopt Japanese values and customs. Could the West change, in this way, in order to regain its competitive edge? Ouchi offers a complex response, which effectively overturns the binary contrast between the 'West' and the 'rest'. As Ouchi commented:

'We cannot educate workers in old work values … we do not want to become second in technology so that we can borrow from elsewhere out of necessity, and we cannot dramatically change our national values if indeed they need repair.' (Ouchi 1981: 12–13)

Ouchi here is disdainful of US organizations' need to adopt elements of Japanese culture. The ambivalent attitude toward the possible contribution of Japanese culture to US firms has led Ouchi to reconceptualize 'culture' in MOS. Instead of using culture in the broader sense, a usage that forces one to accept hybridity, he introduces the purified notion of 'organizational culture'. This term funnels the discussion to organizational characteristics, ignoring the broad cultural context. It enabled researchers, such as Edgar Schein (1985), Ouchi himself, Peters and Waterman (1982), and Collins and Porras (1997), to use the term 'culture' without serious commitment to the hybrid culture of the societies in which the organizations operated. The concept of 'organizational culture' is thus a product of hybridity and purification in a neocolonial context. As we argued earlier, following Latour,

hybridization refers to the mixing of practices between colonizers and the colonized, as well as to the translation of texts and practices from one context to another; Purification refers to the separation between colonizers and the colonized into two distinct ontological zones. In Ouchi's text they coexist. He treats Japanese management as a hybrid product that contributes to the development of managerial practices, but at the same time develops a decontextualized concept of 'organizational culture' that denies the importance of the colonial encounter in the construction of management knowledge. Ultimately, he seems to argue that an organizational culture of excellence has evolved in the USA with no necessary relation to Japanese management.

Concluding Remarks

In recent years, critical management scholars have begun to draw on post-colonial theories and concepts in their studies of various management practices (e.g. Calas and Smircich 1999; Frenkel and Shenhav 2003; Prasad 2003a). These researchers have pointed out the ethnocentric and Orientalist foundations of management practices that were shaped in the West and used to control the 'others'.

From a different perspective, other influential studies in the organizational literature stressed the saliency of race in organizations. Thus, Nkomo has argued that, although 'a perusal of much of our research would lead one to believe that organizations are race neutral … race has been present all along in organizations, even if silenced or suppressed (Nkomo 1992: 487). Nkomo's work is anchored in the US context, without reference to the broader colonial context. We argue that the concomitant adoption of hybridity and Orientalism in examining the colonial encounter provides a useful epistemological perspective to introducing race and racialization into organizational analysis.

The colonial aspect of the management viewpoint, which views the 'other' as inferior while seeing 'western' culture as a universal model, made management into the spearhead of neocolonialism in the age of decolonization. Furthermore, it assisted in the reproduction of the West's control of the global economy and culture, while at the same time increasing management's ostensibly scientific legitimacy.

It is important to note that the binary epistemology grounded in management theory is not only a matter for analytical critique; theories that define the desired worker or manager in terms of his identification with the central values of western culture directly influence the ethnic and racial global division of labor. Armed with assumptions that define management as western, managers do not easily allow the promotion of 'others' into management positions in industrialized, so-called multicultural countries, and in multinationals in developing countries. Positions filled by members of 'other' countries within the framework of the global division of labor are defined as requiring inferior skills, and so they are poorly paid in accordance with rational considerations of job evaluations. In that sense, the colonial epistemology of MOS is directly related to Nkomo's claim that 'race has been present all along in

organizations', not only in the US context, in which, as she argues, ' race has been a profound determinant of one's political rights, one's location in the labor market … And one's sense of self identity' (Nkomo 1992: 487), but across the postcolonial world.

The international management literature addresses the western manager as he sets off to manage 'local' workers, who needs to be aware of their irrational peculiarities. An equivalent literature for managers from developing countries traveling to the West in order to manage is virtually nonexistent, and has certainly not been canonized. This asymmetry represents the 'western' person as the natural candidate for management. Not only are the abstract managers formulated in canonical management and organization studies men, as Joan Acker persuasively argued (1990), but they are also 'white'.

However, analysis of the management canon from a binary perspective that exposes its Orientalist aspects does not reflect the full picture. Even though the Orientalist perspective led to the imposition of western management models throughout the world, the resistance of members of 'other' cultures, which disrupted and distorted the models' purity, reflected back on the way that management researchers dealt with the assumptions of their own discipline, and created hybrid management models that undermine the binary world view. This process started with the acknowledgement of the importance of 'culture' in 'international management', which questioned, even if only slightly, the Eurocentric assumptions of management. Later on, the hybrid model of Japanese management, perceived for a certain period by many western countries as worthy of imitation, challenged the identity of management as exclusively western.

As our analysis of the Japanese model showed, the consequences of its institutionalization as part of the management canon are dialectic. They simultaneously testify to the threat, posed by the binary model, to the discipline's western identity, as well as to the cracks created in this identity, which could explain the increasing willingness of management researchers to study successful non-western models and see them as worthy of imitation.

The postcolonial perspective does not offer a single, better alternative to existing management theories steeped in the colonial worldview. Raising the subaltern voice does not imply that it represents an alternative truth to that represented by hegemonic culture. However, it does encourage a multiplicity of voices and possibilities, which might challenge the assumptions upon which our perspective of the world is built.

Notes

1   This is not to say that before the emergence of international management MOS ignored cultural aspects altogether. (For a comprehensive genealogy of culture in MOS, see Chan and Clegg 2002). However, it was not until the emergence of international management as a sub-discipline of MOS that 'culture' became an explicit explanatory variable (Smircich 1983).

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