

2 Twisting the Familiar: Philosophical Underpinnings in Management Research

As indicated in the introduction, every research effort inevitably builds on a set of basic assumptions.⁵⁰ These assumptions shall be discussed and rendered visible in this chapter in order for readers to understand the worldviews of the traditional and the practice-based discourse as well as the author's course of writing. This is considered especially valuable in this particular piece of work which, maybe somewhat unusual when compared to mainstream OMT dissertations, does not aim for preaching solutions but rather tries to challenge (or at least open up for discussion in a deconstructivist sense) some contemporary preconceptions.⁵¹ In this sense, it is not about a search for definitive answers but rather aims at evoking further questions in the reader.⁵² Says Wittgenstein (1953) in the introduction to his *Philosophical Investigations*:

“I should not like my writing to spare other people the trouble of thinking. But, if possible, to stimulate someone to thoughts of his own.” (Wittgenstein, 1953, p. x)

According to Tsoukas and Chia (2011a), there are, in general, three ways in which philosophical reflection is useful to contributions in OMT theorizing: ontologically, epistemologically, and praxeologically.⁵³ Following their assertion, this chapter thus provides an overview on philosophical issues of *ontology* (subchapter 2.1), *epistemology* (subchapter 2.2), and *praxeology* (subchapter 2.3) in organization and management theory (OMT) and, eventually, elaborates on the ‘lens’ guiding this particular dissertation project: Building on the three prior parts, in subchapter 2.4 the connections be-

⁵⁰ Following the arguments made by Kuhn (1970), this leads to the implication that one's own thinking is based on a choice of a specific paradigm, as he calls it, or worldview that in turn has specific implications on what is taken for granted, how perceive the nature of knowledge is understood, what is perceived as scientific, etc. (cf. also Astley and Zammuto, 1992, p. 455 arguing that paradigms convey implicit assumptions) See in this context also Anacker (2012), p. 223f. on pragmatist philosopher C. I. Lewis' (1923) idea of ‘a priori (necessary) truths’ in research efforts.

⁵¹ Feyerabend (2011), p. vii. Cf. also Mumby and May (2005) arguing that “good scholarship upsets our commonsense views of how things work, undermining the apparent naturalness of ‘the way things are.’” (p. 2)

⁵² Mumby and May (2005), p. 12. According to Franck et al. (2013), “process thinking [the metaphysical worldview that this dissertation's arguments will be based on] allows us to rethink mainstream concepts such as institutions, routines, or strategy from a processual perspective, raising new questions, dissolving existing problems, or even creating new ones, in order to unsettle the fixity of our explanations.”

tween process thought, constructivism, pragmatism, and symbolic interactionism will become evident, which is both a central achievement of this dissertation with reference to the second and third goal formulated in the previous chapter and eventually constitutes the newly-developed paradigm that serves the first goal of transliterating the use of strategy tools in organizational decision-making situations into process vocabulary in chapter 3. Subchapter 2.5 finally summarizes this chapter and reflects on its overall contribution.

2.1 Ontology: From Metaphysics of Substance to Process-Metaphysics

Ontological questions are central in the philosophical discipline of metaphysics⁵⁴ which is concerned with questions of being and knowing and the enduring debate on whether reality shall be perceived as permanent, stable and unchanging or, instead, can be characterized by a continuous flux and transformation.⁵⁵ The metaphysical roots of Western thought are thereby traced back to ancient Greece and the two opposing traditions of the *Parmenidean ontology of being* and the *Heraclitean ontology of becoming*.⁵⁶

2.1.1 On Parmenides' Static Ontology of Being

Parmenides of ancient Greece perceived the world as inherently stable and “made up of atomistic and clearly formed entities with identifiable properties and characteristics” (Chia, 2003, p. 5). In essence, he argues for a reality that is given independently of the mind of the observer in terms of both its very existence and its perceived structure and regularities.⁵⁷ His worldview further assumes the existence of “universal patterns of order underlying the presentation of reality” (Chia, 2003, p. 5). Consequently, it perceives change and motion as secondary phenomena (i.e., epiphenomena) of actually stable entities,⁵⁸ and focuses on the notion of causality as a concept that links other-

⁵³ Tsoukas and Chia (2011a), p. 7ff. For a similar argumentation cf. also Tsoukas and Knudsen (2002), p. 412.

⁵⁴ According to Benton and Craib (2001), p. 1, the term metaphysics refers to philosophers trying to explain the nature and the functioning of the universe and the world they live in.

⁵⁵ Chia (2003), p. 2.

⁵⁶ Chia (2003), p. 5; Hernes (2008), p. 24ff.; cf. also Rescher (1996), p. 2f.

⁵⁷ Cf. also the following section.

⁵⁸ Chia (1999); Feyerabend (1987), p. 116; Feyerabend (2011), p. 38f.; Rescher (1996), p. 21.

wise isolated entities thus forming a coherent system of explanation.⁵⁹ In this atomistic view, there is always change or movement *of* something.⁶⁰ This basic ‘something’ is perceived as a static substance:

“By ‘substances’ I have in mind the objects that surround us all the time – tables and chairs, rocks and sticks, plants and animals, planets and stars. These objects remain the same through considerable periods of time, although in detail they change. When changing objects are analyzed philosophically, it can be said that there are changes in their attributes, but that what underlies the attributes, what the attributes are attributes *of*, remains strictly the same. The color of the table may fade, or the table may be repainted, but it is the same table.” (Cobb, 1993, p. 170)

It is this perspective, referred to as *ontology of being* or *metaphysics of substance* (as opposed to the metaphysics of change proposed by Heraclites)⁶¹, that has dominated Western thought and mindset.⁶² As will be outlined in subchapter 2.2, adopting Parmenides’ worldview bears specific implications for the respective epistemological stance and approach as well as methodological preferences in carrying out research efforts – i.e., constructing knowledge, if you will – in general. Prior to turning to the implications, however, Heraclites’ ontology of becoming shall be discussed in the following section. As this perspective constitutes a less common philosophical ground to start from in management studies (at least when the vast majority of research contributions are taken into consideration), a little more space will be devoted for discussing the process perspective that has its roots in the thinking of Parmenides’ predecessor and has considerably been developed and influenced by philosophers like Alfred North Whitehead, Henri Bergson, Jacques Derrida, William James and others.

⁵⁹ In a similar vein, Cobb (2007) argued that “Much of modern science, and indeed modern thought generally, [...] concluded that the world is made up of atoms in changing positions relative to each other” (p. 569).

⁶⁰ Cf. also Popper and Petersen (2001), p. 45.

⁶¹ Cf., for example, Chia (1999), p. 210 and Rescher (1996).

⁶² Chia (1999), p. 214; Chia (2003), p. 5; Dibben and Munro (2003), p. 189; Rescher (1996), pp. 29, 51. Cf. also Tsoukas’ (1994) notion of “‘hard’ formism” (p. 764) in referring to Pepper’s (1942) four world hypotheses. Hard formism is argued to be the prevailing underpinning in management studies. It assumes that formulated typologies introduced by researchers reflect the world ‘as it is’ and that relationships between actors and certain phenomena are instrumental. Likewise, mechanistic thinking in contingent terms using operationalizations of constructs and employing methods from natural sciences such as statistical correlations has long dominated management studies despite serious doubts in its success (p. 766).

2.1.2 *On Heraclites' Processual Ontology of Becoming*

Heraclites viewed reality as inclusively processual and a social construction drawing on sense impressions that abstract from and interpret lived experience which finds itself in a constant flux and motion ('panta rhei'). He thus emphasized the changeable and emergent nature of reality. According to this perspective, "Change is all there is" (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002, p. 576). In contrast to Parmenides' conception, this world-view is referred to as *ontology of becoming* or *process metaphysics*. Here,

"reality is at bottom not a constellation of *things* at all but one of *processes*. [...] Process is fundamental: The river is not an *object* but an ever-changing flow; the sun is not a *thing*, but a flaming fire. Everything in nature is a matter of process, of activity, of change." (Rescher, 1996, p. 10)

Talking about *process*, now, invites for an a priori elaboration on what is meant by this term after all.⁶³ This will be the topic of the following subsections.

2.1.2.1 *'Process' in Organization and Management Theory – A General Comment*

As with any other word (or concept, label or idea) in organization studies, there is no one single definition that everybody agrees on.⁶⁴ Rather, different research communities have different understandings of what process means to them, which in turn leads to a variety of conceptual distinctions that shall briefly be reviewed below.

⁶³ One would assume that at least a short indicative discussion can be taken for granted in process-related work. Yet, this is unfortunately not always the case: In a special issue titled 'Reflections on Conducting Processual Research on Management and Organizations' in the *Scandinavian Journal of Management* published in 1997, Pettigrew (1997) talks about a workshop held at the University of Tampere where participants were asked about their associations with the word 'process'. According to Pettigrew (1997), the following terms were used in the discussion: "flow of events, chronology, mechanism, unfolding, two forces interacting, time, language, context, outcomes, linking things together, individuals and collectivities, history, consistent story, change and long period." (p. 338). Nevertheless, this did not stimulate the author to explore process thought into more detail as he stated: "Interesting as that question is, it is not a direction to pursue now." (p. 338) Rather, he goes on by citing van de Ven (1992) and unreflectively adopting this author's static conception of process in his own work. One may ask where, if not in a special issue explicitly devoted to process research, the very notion of process may be critically assessed or at least reflected on in depth – especially given the fact that Pettigrew (1997) himself realizes the interest in such a discussion (see also Dibben and Munro, 2003, p. 186) as outlined in section 1.4.2.

⁶⁴ Cf. also Langley (2007), p. 271f. This would be too much to ask for and not possible anyway. In this regard, Chia (1996), p. 62 reminds of the call for the development of a universal, unified vocabulary in management studies made by Warriner et al. (1981) (cf. also Chia and King, 2001, p. 324 for a further elaboration). Cf. also, for example, the discussion in Reiter (2007) (citation found in Rustemeyer and Buchmann, 2010, p. 166, footnote 1) on the currently popular phenomenon in OMT called 'work life balance' and its wide variety of different definitions (cf. similarly Kaiser et al., 2010, p. 68f. as well as Schobert, 2007, p. 19f.).

2.1.2.2 *Strategy Content vs. Strategy Process*

The most intuitive and at the same time most basic idea of process in organization studies⁶⁵ and strategy research has built on the traditional distinction between *strategy content* and *strategy process* research. This distinction can be traced back to the above (i.e., in the introduction) mentioned classic contributions of Andrews (1971), Ansoff (1965), and Chandler (1962).⁶⁶ In contrast to strategy content research, which is primarily concerned with the causal implications of specific strategies on firm performance,⁶⁷ strategy process research focuses on the processes, i.e., sequential steps, of the very formulation of strategies. Typical questions in strategy process research include the following:⁶⁸ What are strategies and how do they come about in organizational practice? What role do deliberate decision processes play in the formulation of strategies? What do strategic decision processes look like in practice, and what should they look like? What antagonisms can be anticipated within strategy realization? Is the organization confronted with an arbitrarily evolving field or can it control those developments? Is the organization's culture and value system changeable?⁶⁹ The domain statement of the strategy process interest group says the following:⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Referring to 'organization studies' seems to invoke the idea of there being one (in a somewhat static sense) discipline or community of scholars studying organizations or processes of organizing while agreeing upon at least some central ideas, concepts, methods, etc. That this is not the case will be clear to any reader involved in the academic endeavor called research or science (as Feyerabend, 2011, p. 55 notes, there is no such 'monster' called science that would constantly repeat a single coherent message). Hence, organization studies, here, is rather viewed as a label of interest to a wide variety of contributors. These contributors appear and disappear. They may contribute to more than one scientific discourse (i.e., not only to organization studies). They may have different educational, cultural or philosophical backgrounds. And, most importantly, they certainly all have their own ideas as to what constitutes a scientific discipline. As such, organization studies is understood as a lived and living idea of all scholars (temporarily or permanently) interested in topics discussed in this (self-defined and self-defining) field whose boundaries may be seen as fluid rather than fixed.

⁶⁶ Huff and Reger (1987), p. 211; Kirsch (1997), p. 60.

⁶⁷ Today, what could once be called strategy content research is split into a wide variety of sub-groups as can be seen by the diverse interest groups represented at the Strategic Management Society (SMS) like Competitive Strategy, Global Strategy, Corporate Strategy and Governance, Stakeholder Strategy, etc. (see Strategic Management Society, 2012a). It is worth noting, however, that at present – at least when the SMS is concerned – the Strategy Process theme is still represented by one single interest group although, as will be shown in this section, there are several different and sometimes very distinct streams within the community in terms of the understanding of the concept of 'process'.

⁶⁸ Kirsch (1997), p. 61.

⁶⁹ This is not to say that strategy process research is entirely limited to providing normative accounts of how strategies should be formed as may be suggested by these questions stated by Kirsch (1997). In contrast, taking into account the seminal work by Henry Mintzberg (see, for example, Mintzberg, 1987, 2003; Mintzberg and Lampel, 2003), process research has dealt with the idea of emergent strategies and managerial work as

The Interest Group focuses on the factors that govern the formation of strategies at the group, functional, business, corporate, and network levels of analysis. The area draws on diverse theories including intra-organizational evolution, bounded rationality, power/politics, organizational learning, socio-cognitive theory, organizational contingency theory, and others. Research streams encompass a broad range of phenomena, including strategic planning, strategic decision-making, strategy implementation, strategic change & renewal, consensus, politics and power in strategy-making, the role of organizational actors in strategy-making (e.g. CEO's, top management teams, boards of directors, middle-level and operational managers), and the development of comprehensive models of strategy formation.

Emerging research streams include: the micro-practices of strategy making, the development of strategic initiatives, idea generation and creativity in strategy, the role of chance events, capability development and the role of emotions in strategy. A major role of the strategy process research area is to act as an integrative mechanism in the wider strategic management domain for the dynamics of strategic elements over time.

Figure 2-1: Strategy Process Interest Group Domain Statement
(Source: Strategic Management Society, 2012b)

A quite similar – and also widely referred to – distinction (in terms of its content) was introduced by Mohr (1982) who distinguished between variance-oriented and process-oriented research.⁷¹

art. This shall neither be neglected nor downplayed but for the purpose of discussing the idea of process it has been subsumed under the classic strategy process research, which has been, arguably, a much wider area of study than – for the sake of brevity – can be indicated here. Yet, as argued above, early process scholars have predominantly adopted a static view of process as can be seen in the work of Pettigrew (1997) or van de Ven (1992).

⁷⁰ Note particularly the association of the strategy process interest group with contingency theory, organizational learning, and the practice-based discourse. These topics will come across in later discussions again which will reveal that all three topics are rooted in substantialist thinking. For example, footnote 372 will elaborate on the association between contingency theory and positivism while subsection 2.3.1.1 will associate contingent thinking with the traditional, substantialist idea of instrumental praxeology. The assumptions of the practice-based discourse will be discussed in this very chapter. Footnote 167 discusses the substantialist understanding of the concept of knowledge in the traditional discourse on organizational learning while footnote 532 elaborates on the latter's problem-driven style of thought which subsection 2.2.3.4 associates with the substantialist paradigm.

⁷¹ Cf., for example, van de Ven and Poole (2005), p. 1381.

2.1.2.3 *Variance- vs. Process-Oriented Management Research*

While “variance theories provide explanations of phenomena in terms of relationships among dependent and independent variables, process theories provide explanations in terms of patterns in events, activities, and choices over time” (Langley and Tsoukas, 2010, p. 6). Unlike variance models, process models deal with final states as opposed to efficient causes and retrospectively explain those final states in diachronic patterns that have led to the final state (arguably not in an entirely nomothetic manner though as the efficient cause principle in variance-oriented research suggests).⁷² They thus take time and sequencing into account by explicitly focusing on the different steps that have led to an outcome. Recalling the arguments above, the distinction between *variance-oriented* and *process-oriented* theories can be seen as similar to the classic distinction in strategy research between strategy content and strategy process research where content research formulates questions in an if-then manner in order to explore connections between dependent and independent variables while process research looks at the steps involved in the development of a particular strategy. Another somewhat more fundamental distinction⁷³ has been mentioned by Langley (2009) and other contemporary process scholars in distinguishing between a weak process view and a strong process perspective.⁷⁴

2.1.2.4 *Strong vs. Weak Process Perspective*

While the author herself subscribes to a *weak process view* where “emphasis is placed on the change and development of existing entities” and “adherents [...] look at change in terms of movement from one state to another” (Langley, 2009, p. 410),⁷⁵ a *strong process view* relates to process metaphysics and sees process as fundamental

⁷² Langley (2009), p. 409f.; Langley and Tsoukas (2010), p. 6.

⁷³ Mohr's (1982) understanding of process prevails ideas of generative mechanisms which is why, for example, Tsoukas and Knudsen (2002) refer to his view as “the ‘process/mechanism approach’” (p. 414).

⁷⁴ Langley (2009), p. 410. Cf. also Bakken and Hernes (2006), p. 1600 and, for a more detailed elaboration, van de Ven and Poole (2005) and the reference to the strong process view made by Dibben (2008), p. 128. See also the similar distinction between distal and proximal thinking as advocated by Cooper (1992).

⁷⁵ Cf. in this context also Dibben and Munro (2003) on business process re-engineering and the mainstream process understanding in management writings (p. 185). Recall also the remarks above on the ‘final states’ in what has been termed ‘strategy process’ and ‘process-oriented’ research in the subsections 2.1.2.2 and 2.1.2.3.

and prior to substances or entifications like organizations, strategies and the like.⁷⁶ Van de Ven and Poole (2005) cite the 2004 Call for Papers for the First Organization Studies Summer Workshop published by Chia and Langley (2004):

“The ‘weak’ view treats processes as important but ultimately reducible to the action of things, while the ‘strong’ view deems actions and things to be instantiations of process-complexes. The first perspective appears dominant in much of organizational and social scientific research [...]. The latter perspective has been primarily conceptual, strongly informed by strands of process philosophy, theology and the humanities at large, following especially the lead of philosophers such as James, Whitehead, Bergson, and Deleuze. For example, in organizational research, even when it is accepted that processes are critical to the understanding of organizational life, it is very tempting to reduce them to ‘things’ that can be described as variables (e.g. decision processes are more or less ‘rational’, more or less ‘political’, more or less ‘bureaucratic’), or as static states that can be compared (before and after; phase 1, 2, 3, etc.). By contrast, for those adhering to the ‘strong’ view, processes are thought real, whilst substances, entities, and things are secondary conceptual abstractions. According to such a perspective, movement, change, and becoming need to be construed not as secondary, but as the *sine qua non* of organizational life. While the first perspective helps us observe and empirically research process, the latter enables us to appreciate the *sui generis* nature of process.” (van de Ven and Poole, 2005, p. 1379)

According to the latter perspective, thus, “the world *is* process” (Hernes, 2008, p. 23). This is a much more fundamental assertion in that it touches on the ontological primacy of process over substance and not only on the conceptual understanding of strategy content vs. strategy process where the latter is modelled in static, substantialist terms by referring to step-wise change⁷⁷ thus implying a synoptic⁷⁸ understanding of process.

⁷⁶ Hernes (2008), p. 23.

⁷⁷ Cf. also the traditional view on change in OMT as defined by Luhman and Cunliffe (2013) as “the process by which an organization moves from its present condition to a desired state” (p. 111). See also the discussion in Whipp (2006), p. 741ff. on what the author understands as the ‘process view’ on change (note particularly the ideas of ‘implementation’ of and ‘resistance’ to change which reveal his substantialist underpinnings conceiving of change as a secondary phenomenon to be brought about). Cf. also Dibben and Munro (2003), p. 185 on the Newtonian ontological approach describing only event sequences and the narrow understanding of process in the mainstream management literature.

⁷⁸ Clegg and Hardy (2006), p. 428.

Another important onto-epistemological premise which is usually implicitly made and rarely explicated is the one of a given reality ‘out there’. This premise shall be critically discussed in the following subsection.

2.1.2.5 *The World ‘Out-There’ and Its Radical Alternative*

“‘Reality is merely an illusion, although a very persistent one.’” (Einstein as cited in Maartens, 2006, p. 10)

“There is no absolute world of things.” (Mead, 1938/1967, p. 331)

“my observation is itself a thinking, and my thinking is a way of observation.” (Goethe as cited in Brady, 1998, p. 97; citation found in Shotter, 2008, p. 181)

“the common-sense conception of an external world is itself dependent upon our thinking” (Harris, 1970, p. 372)

Naïve/Trivial Constructivism. The aforementioned synoptic view of process is clearly the most prevalent one in organization studies.⁷⁹ While, as shown above, many authors refer to the distinction between the weak and the strong process perspective, not all of them necessarily take into account (or, to say the least, do not consequently adhere to) another important distinction: the one between an objectively given (i.e., independently pre-existing) and an (inter)subjectively constructed reality that is always in the making.⁸⁰ Many conceptual arguments of process scholars take one thing for granted: the assumption that reality is essentially given to us.⁸¹ A feature of what was termed the weak process view (grounded in substantialist thinking)⁸², this assumption can be found in many strong process writings as well.⁸³ For example, Cronshaw (2011), in his

⁷⁹ Chia (2003); Dibben (2008); Dibben and Munro (2003).

⁸⁰ This issue essentially involves both ontological and epistemological considerations. Therefore, it will remain a discussion point in the following subchapter on epistemology (i.e., subchapter 2.2) as well.

⁸¹ Cf. zu Knyphausen (1988), p. 17 on the identity principle in classic (mathematical; p. 18f.) logic which sets the ground for the idea of reality as something to be ‘discovered’.

⁸² For example, Langley (2009) argues that the weak process view puts emphasis on “the change and development of existing entities” and looks at “change in terms of movement from one state to another” (p. 410) thus assuming the objective existence of entities and understanding change as a mere epiphenomenon of the latter. Cf. also Chia and Langley (2004) as cited in van de Ven and Poole (2005), p. 1379.

⁸³ Note, for example, Rescher (1996) arguing that processes have three phases or stages and that they standardly exhibit a pattern of sequential order (p. 134). Note also his notion of information as a transmittable entity in communicative interactions (p. 135). Especially the latter idea can be seen as grounded in a world-view where reality is assumed to be given and questioned only in terms of its structuring (i.e., process vs. entities). Similarly, a lot of current process organization research takes on the form of empirical studies aiming

Whiteheadian article, refers to a “real world, but one of process” (p. 5). Law (2004), in his refreshing discussion of the concept of ‘method’ speaks of the world “as a ‘generative flux’ that produces realities” (italics removed) but at the same time explicitly states that everything he argues “assumes that there is a world out there and that knowledge and our other activities need to respond to its ‘out-thereness’.” (p. 7)⁸⁴ Thus, he seems to follow Abbott’s (2004) irritating but quite representative recommendation that “When you make a constructionist move, always go on to make a realist turn.” (p. 189) In a similar sense, Chia (1999) makes a distinction between being-realism and becoming-realism⁸⁵ and argues that his metaphysical position, which gives primacy to change, “accepts ontological realism, but rejects epistemological realism in favour of constructivism” (p. 210).⁸⁶ Here, constructivism is seen as a generative mechanism that can be used to (objectively) interpret the seemingly repetitive process of reality construction – from this perspective, reality construction is a matter of ‘adequate’ sociological explanation.⁸⁷ Thus, reality is considered from an outsider standpoint and the researcher is considered as not part of the world he/she observes:

“there have been many who have adopted a constructivist label on a package whose contents are still defined by ‘objectivist’ inquiry. Here we find those who take as an ‘object’ of study other persons’ constructions of reality as some things

at providing evidence for their assertions (cf., for example the contributions by Barrett et al., 2011, Bruns, 2011, Marshall and Sandberg, 2011, Newell et al., 2011 or Wiebe et al., 2011, all of which were presented as working papers at the 3rd International Symposium on Process Organization Studies in 2011).

⁸⁴ In a similar vein, Tsoukas and Knudsen (2002), p. 412f. criticize positivist thinking only to make a case for methodological realism which, according to Chia (2003), in turn rests on a substantialist worldview – although they explicitly express their sympathy with constructivist thinking on the very same page. To be precise, they say “that strategy research will become more relevant, encompassing, and subtle if it moves closer toward a process-oriented view of the firm and lets itself open to a constructivist view of strategy making” and criticize researchers’ persistence “in merely recording ‘social regularities’ or discovering allegedly ‘invariant laws’ by which firms’ strategic behaviour may be explained and predicted” (p. 412) thus criticizing the positivist approach. A dynamic account of strategy, they argue, “should aim to outline the processes or *generative mechanisms* that produce specific empirical events [...]” (p. 412, emphases added) This latter proposition clearly makes a case for realist methodology as discussed and subsumed under the substantialist paradigm by Chia (2003).

⁸⁵ The same distinction has more recently been used by Nayak (2008).

⁸⁶ A further development of the argument is provided in Chia (1995, 1996). Consequently, the author elaborates on his notion of a constructivist epistemology in Chia (2003) where he brings his ideas in close connection to postmodern arguments (cf. also subsection 2.2.1.2). However, as Woolgar (1988) notes, “a major thrust of post-modern critiques of science is to suggest the essential equivalence of ontology and epistemology: how we know *is* what exists.” (p. 54) Subsection 2.2.1.2 will elaborate in more detail on the association of process thought with post- and premodernism.

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