# Organizational Communication and Cultural Studies: A Review Essay

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Carlone, D. & Taylor, B. (1998). Organizational communication and cultural studies: A review essay. *Communication Theory, 8(3)*, 337-367.



## Article:

Recently, we have been struggling to interpret a series of minor yet absurd spectacles that span the industrial and popular-cultural realms. These events have compelled our scholarly interest, but lack a ready-made frame for diagnosing their significance. Consider these examples: In the summer of 1996, vivacious 'TV talk-show cohost Kathie Lee Gifford was criticized by activists who linked her line of Wal-Mart clothing to human-rights abuses and wage violations among factory workers in Honduras and New York City. Tearful and contrite, Gifford quickly adopted a policy of independent monitoring and assigned her husband, celebrity sports-announcer Frank Gifford, to deliver envelopes of compensation for the affected workers. Relatedly, in the fall of 1997, Dilbert cartoonist Scott Adams—famed for his satire of corporate foibles—disguised himself as a management consultant. With the help of a company official, he conducted an executive retreat in a computer firm that produced a tortured "revision" of its mission statement. Additional examples appear in the flickerings of our TV screens: the lithe, androgynous figures of Intel's technicians, clad in hooded, colorful "clean room" suits, energetically installing computer chips to a soundtrack of 1970s funk; and quasi-documentary images of rolling golf carts, filled with visitors to the Saturn car plant in Spring Hill, Tennessee, watching assembly workers at their tasks—and being watched in return.

Collectively, these examples indicate a type of social drama in which the organization of work is aestheticized and commodified for consumption. We do not argue that this discourse is novel. Each of these events may be classified among the familiar genres of modern commerce: publicity, promotion, advertising, marketing and public relations. Nor do we argue that these genres are neglected by communication scholars: Sustained interest in organizational rhetoric and media criticism suggests the opposite. We do believe, however, that analysis of such events might benefit from the tentative integration of two communication fields traditionally regarded as distinct: those of *organizational communication* and *cultural studies.* In proposing this articulation, we follow feminist (Dow, 1997) and rhetorical critics (Rosteck, 1995) who have recently mapped the porous boundaries between their traditions and cultural studies. We believe that this interdisciplinary cartography is motivated by both desire for growth created by the other's difference, and anxiety about disintegration threatened by the other's incursion. In our own careers, we have noted this anxiety in the disdain and realist tropes (e.g., "That research isn't mainstream org. comm.") used by scholars in these fields to defend their boundaries.

Without glossing their important differences,' we wish to reintroduce organizational communication and cultural studies by noting that some of their members increasingly acknowledge a common intellectual fund of feminist, neo-Marxist, poststructuralist, postmodern, and postcolonialist influences. These traditions have been appropriated quite differently, but they have generated lines of inquiry that display a surprising degree of convergence. In our own reading, we have noted a growing list of topics treated in both of these scholarly literatures, including identity, race and ethnicity, the body, ethics, narrative, technology, textuality, representation, gender, professional sports, globalization, hegemony, resistance, performance, space and place, and discourse genres.

In identifying this overlap, we do not seek to create anything so grand as a "new" field of inquiry. These two areas have rarely embraced. Still, their common interests create a space for dialogue, innovation, and

collaboration. We are not the first to note that "de-differentiation" of the post-Fordist economy and postmodern culture has positioned "culture" as an object of desire for the New Managerialism, as a medium for con-trolling subjects in the public and private sectors, and for the human sciences, as a conceptual frame for the dialectic of history, social structure, and expressive practices (Willmott, 1992). The increasing collapse of boundaries between the culture of organization and the organization of culture has created an object that exceeds "flexible specialization" occurring inside the factory gate (i.e., niche-based marketing of commodities produced "just in time" by cross-functional teams of contingent labor oriented to service and quality paradigms). Indeed, the mobility of capital, labor, and information associated with these changes has had enormous consequences for "larger" orders of nationhood, gender, class, and ethnicity (Clarke & Newman, 1993).

One potential benefit of this proposal is to expand the range and sophistication of resources available to communication scholars as they document and engage the volatile struggle between formal control and informal freedom in culture. We model this engagement below by discussing a selection of recent volumes (for list, see note 2) that evoke concerns shared by the evolving projects of organizational communication and cultural studies. These concerns include the relationship between organizational and cultural identities, work and class as cultural discourses, work and workers as objects of media representation, and the intensive dialectic of consumption and production in postmodern culture. We conclude by considering various implications stemming from the intersection of these fields.

First, we define our terms. Here, we engage organizational communication as that field that conceptualizes organization as symbolically achieved cooperation. Although this field is theoretically and methodologically diverse, it has arguably normalized a particular industrial and corporate image of organization as the rational coordination of labor, technology, and resources to produce goods and services for capitalist markets. This normalization has marginalized various forms of organized human activity and constrained the manner of its depiction. Organizational communication draws its roots from pragmatic concern with the use of language to inform and persuade business audiences. The field was institutionalized within the postwar American academy as an apparatus for investigating the practices of influence in corporate and professional settings. Its initial, narrow focus on case studies of managerial effectiveness evolved during the 1960s and 1970s to include more sophisticated use of statistical, anthropological, and literary-critical methods (Redding & Tompkins, 1988). Conventional research topics have included media and message flow, climate, socialization, "external" rhetoric, decision making, networks of information and influence, leadership, innovation, and the adoption of new technologies.

Organizational communication's affiliation with practical (read, managerial) interests (such as profit, efficiency, and control) was severely disrupted during the 1980s by scholars trafficking in a widespread "culture revolution." This paradigm shift redirected attention to the holistic, collaborative, and contested construction of social realities within the work-place. Additional intellectual diversity has developed through the adoption of critical perspectives concerned with control practices that coerce consent, bar competing voices from audition, and negate alternatives for thought and practice. These cultural-critical innovations have opened the possibility for this essay, but we also take inspiration from recent revisions of some of the field's hegemonic elements. These elements include a spatial "container" metaphor that arbitrarily separates organizational "insides" (e.g., distinctive, autonomous work cultures) from the "outsides" of community and place (Cheney & Christensen, in press), a preference for studying private, for-profit, corporate bureaucracies, a presumption of singular, formal rationality, a preference for depicting structure over process (Mumby & Stohl, 1996), intellectual provincial-ism (Poole, Putnam & Seibold, 1997), and a lack of reflexivity about how "bodies of knowledge . . . situate, identify, and subordinate organization members in specific ways" (Mumby, 1993, p. 21).

As communication scholars increase their attention to more global, virtual, and "unofficial" forms of organizing (e.g., gangs, networks, genocide, federations, clans, tribes, colonies, ventures, coalitions, insurgencies, and counterinsurgencies), the organizational is increasingly articulated with the cultural. By this phrase we mean that, as it is conventionally understood, "organizational communication" shimmers and reappears as "cultural communication as and about organization." One example of this conceptual revision is Taylor's (1993a, 1997a)

argument that the nuclear weapons organization is both a material entity and a significant symbol in cultural texts through which post-Cold War audiences have negotiated their relationships to the institutions, technologies, policies, figures, and events constituting the nuclear condition. Another is Giroux and Trend's (1992) argument that educators, artists, and media professionals should be viewed as "cultural workers" engaged in maintaining and transforming hegemonic narratives—for example, through the production of subversive commodities like "critical literacy."

In comparison, we trace cultural studies as an interdisciplinary field engaging the totality of structures and practices that constitute living and feeling in a postmodern world (Grossberg, Nelson & Treichler, 1992). This world is viewed as a site of profound struggle conducted between dominant and marginalized groups through the circulation of textual forms within particular interpretive communities (e.g., the American middle class). These subcultural economies involve complex and shifting relationships between the producers and performers, and consumers and audiences of commodities. The development of these relationships has been influenced by historical conditions such as revolutionary advance in technology, the industrialization of production, dramatic urban and suburban growth, the development of dynamic mass-communication systems, the growth of powerful, bureaucratic nation-states, the rise and decline of Western colonialism, and drastic fluctuation in international commodity markets (Berman, 1982). These traumas have historically registered across various symbol systems (e.g., fashion and architecture) and have influenced the reproduction of communal, relational, and personal identities.'

Cultural studies was loosely formalized in Britain as an anti-elitist, radically contextual, and multimethodological project concerned with expanding the realms of political and economic freedom for the working class. The principal strategies for pursuing this goal involved legitimating the cultural practices of this group and mobilizing them as resources for revolution. Cultural studies typically engage artifacts (e.g., television programs) as complex embodiments of multiple, contradictory ideologies. In this view, over-determined texts are variously interpreted by subjects using their available competencies for situational purposes. Such readings may confirm, adapt, or reject the predominant influences inscribed through form. Current controversies in cultural studies include the consequences for Marxist pedagogy of adapting British cultural studies to a diversity-oriented American academy, and the increasing interrogation of First World cultures and scholarship by postcolonial subjects uniquely concerned with cultural imperialism, diaspora, and the nature of human rights (Saenz, 1997).

Our review is heuristically structured by organizing these volumes according to the choices that they make in depicting two particular relationships. The first relationship involves the site of study conceptualized in a particular work. Here, we take organization and culture to be mutually informing "dialects," such that the discourse of one is always already suffused with the other (e.g., in the vernacular linkage of character to signs of economic status and productivity). *Organization* reflects a volume's concern with actual workplaces and industries in the context of cultural structures and processes. In this pattern, organizations are viewed as nodes through which larger cultural work, such as sexism, is accomplished in interaction among and between the members of various stakeholder groups, such as owners, managers, workers, regulators, investors, customers, and community members. Culture, alternately, refers to a more expansive field of structures and practices in which social meanings are reproduced, contested, and transformed. These processes display patterns suggesting that they have been "organized" according to ideological practices of reification and legitimation. Frequently this expansion is scaled geopolitically to invoke the local, regional, national, and international milieux within and across which particular organizations operate. Volumes displaying this pattern focus on the circulation of discourses that structure experience and interaction in a variety of realms—including the workplace.

The second relationship in our organizing scheme involves the scope and nature of social effects stemming from activities depicted in a particular work's site of study. Here, the term *organizational subjectivities* refers to forms of meaning that are (relatively directly) associated with productive activity, such as class, occupation, and profession. Volumes emphasizing this element depict how these forms of identity are constructed and performed in various settings. The related term, *cultural subjectivities,* encompasses various meanings that

structure both production and consumption practices, enabling a more comprehensive consideration of how leisure and workplace activities implicate each other. Volumes favoring this element may address productive identities, but they also disarticulate them from narrowly instrumental settings, purposes, and moments. Instead, those identities are relativized and decentered through "novelistic" contact with aesthetic and political discourses that clarify their contingencies and total productivity in history and culture (Bakhtin, 1981).

We consider the elements in each of these two relationships to be mutually constitutive, as opposed to exclusive or dialectical. As a result, our scheme reflects how each volume places relative emphasis on these elements, such that some become figure and others serve as ground. Each of these decisions activates in different ways the total set of articulations that surround these elements. It is these articulations that form the ultimate object of this review. The intersection within each volume of these relationships creates four potential patterns of emphasis: organization and organizational subjectivities; organization and cultural subjectivities; culture and organizational subjectivities; and culture and cultural subjectivities. We proceed below by grouping the volumes according to these patterns, and evaluating their arguments.

**Organization and Organizational Subjectivities**

Paul du Gay's *Consumption and Identity at Work* depicts the intersection of organization as a site of study and workplace subjectivities as a social effect of discourse. In this volume, du Gay examines the nature of workplace identities within the retail sector of the British economy. He argues that as new theories and methods of management enter the work-place, the identities of those laboring in that setting also change. Historically, Taylorism has produced one type of workplace subject, and human resources management another. As we change the ways we organize, we also change the meaning of work.

To examine this particular formation of identity, du Gay turns to poststructuralist theories emphasizing the selective orientation of human self-consciousness through ideological discourses. Using Foucault's concept of "government," du Gay maps how "entrepreneurial discourse" dominating Thatcherist Britain governed the working subject: "Particular rationalities of government involve the construction of specific ways for people to be" (p. 54). In other words, as the British retailing industry embraced entrepreneurial forms of management, the identities of its workers were constituted in particular ways. As illustration, du Gay discusses two trends that affect the current makeup of UK retail workers: the management discourse of "excellence," and the "political rationality of 'enterprise" (p. *55).* "Enterprise culture" refers not only to post-Fordist business strategies of downsizing, flattening, outsourcing, and general reengineering, but also to the ways that individuals learn to regulate their actions within these structures. "Excellence" is a central trope in contemporary management discourses that advocate constant worker flexibility and creativity. "'New wave management' is concerned with changing people's values, norms, and attitudes so that they make the 'right' and necessary contribution to the success of the organization for which they work" (pp. 57-58). Subjects caught up in these discourses work intensively to improve themselves and their values as interrelated "projects."

Du Gay shows how this process is constrained by the totemic image of the customer in contemporary organizations. These constraints emerge from recognition that to be successful in ferociously competitive environments, retailers must "make up" (operationalize) the consumer by "staying close to the customer" (collecting marketing data). Whereas this process sounds remarkably like Weickian (1979) "enactment" of the environment through typification, du Gay goes further to show how this process requires forming employees in certain ways as collectors and registers of consumer desire. This process occurs reflexively as workers consume authoritative texts depicting work as the locus of their personal identity:

> The relationship to self that the employee is expected to develop builds upon and ex-tends the identity he or she is deemed to have as a consumer: both are represented as autonomous, calculating individuals in search of meaning and fulfillment, looking to "add value" to themselves in every sphere of existence, whether at work or at play. (p. 79)

Carlone (1997) explores a similar phenomenon in his analysis of the intersection of self-help and business discourses in the well-known "Seven Habits" franchise of management guru Stephen R. Covey. Such managerial practices are geared toward producing subjects willing to work "habitually" on themselves, striving for perfection without questioning the premise of infinitely attainable improvement. The wide circulation of these discourses leads du Gay to conclude that as an identification target, the customer is no longer a factor in, but a driver of, organizational decisions. In an enterprise culture, the key economic subject is the consumer, not the producer. McMillan and Cheney (1996) and Wendt (1994) have explored the dilemmas surrounding this transformation in their studies of "total quality" university settings. As the perceived needs of student "customers" structure the accountability of university decision-making, important traditions and possibilities are excluded, leading to subcultural resistance and the degradation of noninstrumental quality.

Du Gay's argument offers important insights into the relationship between consumption and production. These insights stem from his claim that beyond their official manufacture of goods and services, organizations produce discourses of identity. Consumption, subsequently, is a practice that occurs within organizations (and exceeds the use of unit services marketed and provided to "internal customers"). Ergo, employees are also consumers. It is important to note that this argument supports Knights and Morgan's (1993) claim that consumers (of whichever form) collaborate with organizations to construct their use of commodities as meaningful performances of the self (i.e., "identity value" ). These influential and often-contested meanings, such as "Gen-X Slacker" in U.S. culture, exceed the "use value" (price) and "exchange value" (needs satisfaction) traditionally ascribed to commodities. Du Gay's argument challenges conventional wisdom, however, that this process is the consequence of external marketing directed to consumers located in the home, or "the street." His argument shifts the physical site of analysis back to the organization, where the discourses of enterprise and excellence are consumed by workplace subjects as resources for their meaningful engagement with the relations of production.

Within organizational communication, du Gay's work may be tied to studies of identification and concertive control (Tompkins & Cheney, 1983, 1985). Both these bodies of work address how organization members adopt managerially favored premises as guides for their behavior and encourage similar commitments from others. Tompkins and Cheney focus, however, on organizational attempts to foster identification by inculcating organizational decision-premises. Du Gay operates more broadly, suggesting that attempts to foster identification (or to use any management method) will structure the identity of workplace subjects as they come to know themselves within a particular system of management. The distance between these two perspectives, however, is decreased in recent studies, such as Barker and Cheney's (1994) analysis of concertive control in team-based management. Further integration would seem to involve reconciling Edwards's (1978) history of control systems, which identification researchers have used to situate "concertive control" as a successor to simple, technical, and bureaucratic systems, with the history of particular management discourses.

In conducting this analysis du Gay demonstrates some of the primary assumptions of cultural studies. For example, in linking the culture of enterprise to the rise of the social and political New Right, du Gay demonstrates how analyses of organizational communication might be adequately contextualized. In following this lead, organizational communication scholars could place greater emphasis on how political, economic, and cultural shifts influence the nature of the phenomena they study. In this process they might rethink how and where they draw boundaries around organizations. If conditions external to the organization create the possibility of managerial strategies such as "staying close to the customer," then these should be centrally addressed. As different conditions of possibility emerge, different organizational relations and practices should arise as well.

**Organization and Cultural Subjectivities**

Our second pattern involves the analysis of organization that nonetheless implicates the communicative reproduction of cultural identities.

One enduring site for this type of analysis is the famous, omnicultural surround recognizable by the surname of its corporate founder: "Disney." In its current incarnation as Disney/Capital Cities, this organization directly owns, or holds substantial interest in, several companies in industries that create and deliver cultural programming, including multimedia, home video, book publishing, music, professional sports, retail, radio, magazines, TV and cable, newspapers . . . and, of course, theme parks and resorts.

This concentration of capital, and the embeddedness of Disney products in cultural socialization, have been well scrutinized by organizational and communication scholars. These studies have varied in their punctuation of Disney as an organizational object. In studies of single units, for example, Smith and Eisenberg (1987) analyzed the root metaphors ("drama" and "family") of Disneyland's culture that ultimately contributed to labor-management conflict during a period of downsizing. In a wry memoir, Van Maanen (1991) reflected on his failed career as a Disneyland ride-operator and its total environment of emotion management, corporate surveillance, subcultural solidarity (e.g., in disciplining problematic guests), and employee status-competition. In a sequel, Van Maanen (1992) extended this analysis to show how expansion of its theme-park operations into new regions (Florida) and nations (France and Japan) forced Disney to adapt its mythical narratives. Boje (1995), alternately, adopted a historical perspective in deconstructing the "official" romantic narrative of the early Disney corporation to reveal multiple, conflicting layers of employee stories involving failure, oppression, and pathology.

Although consumption is never far away in these studies, they may be read. As favoring—in very different ways—the domain of production: the ways in which Disney authorities have managed turbulent environments and problematic labor, and the ways that employees have responded to this control. A contrasting, political-economic perspective is supplied by Zukin (1990), who analyzes Orlando's Disney World (DW). For Zukin, DW is an awesome, seemingly autonomous, and "palpably unreal ... fantasy landscape constructed around an entirely fictive nexus [of] . . . highly selective historical memory, mediated by mass consumption" (p. 42). Her analysis focuses on how DW constructs new forms of consumption characterized by greater investment of the self and "rising expectations about the intensity and rewards of the consumption process" (p. 47). DW represents a new kind of circuit for capital in which the linkages among finance, labor, commodities, and commercial real estate constitute a powerful and expanding organization of public space and cultural meanings.

Several of these themes are taken up in a recent volume by a collective of artists and critics who examine DW. *Inside the Mouse: Work and Play at Disney World* contains a series of individually authored chapters reflecting a variety of methods ranging from photography to textual analysis. These methods are used to interpret DW's multiple sites (e.g., hotel architecture and garbage-collection systems) and overlapping constituencies (e.g., guests and employees, past and present). These chapters provocatively trace the interpenetration of organization and culture at these sites. DW's total apparatus, the authors conclude, promotes an apolitical, utopian, ethnocentric, and infantilized experience by creating a sanitized and contrived "hyperculture" for visitors. This culture is manifest in images of patriarchal protection, nationalist unity, and imperialist nostalgia that create a welcome respite from the perceived threats of urban culture.

Much is masked and distorted by this narrative. EPCOT's corporate-sponsored pavilions, for example, depict history as "the evolution of machines" and are haunted by "the sound of commodities talking to each other" (p. 58). DW's shopping plaza contains artifacts that evoke the extermination of indigenous economies by global capitalism and the annexation of remaining workers in overseas enterprise zones and production platforms. Subsequently, "the middle classes of the advanced capitalist nations find themselves harking back with nostalgia for those decimated peoples and their cultures" (p. 44). This organization of un-reflective consumption, capsulized in official advice to "sit back and enjoy the ride," contradicts DW's simultaneous promotion of a patriotic narrative emphasizing civic participation and democracy.

As cultural studies scholars, the authors display characteristic concern with how consumption is organized: 'Since the site of surveillance and control is no longer production but consumption, we should look for oppositional social practices in how people actually use the culture they're given, ignore what of it they don't or

can't get, and remake the balance" (p. *77).* This site is rich with opportunities: One chapter focuses on the strategies by which DW maximizes revenue by sequestering tourist families as aggregates of continuous consumption. These consumers, however, are far from dupes: Many engage DW as an elaborate game, using advice texts to maximize the value and efficiency of their tours (e.g., through rules of thumb for assessing the fastest moving line on a ride). DW's saccharine coercion inevitably generates "alternative rides" involving unauthorized fulfillment. One example involves the practice of cost-conscious parents who bring Disney merchandise bought less expensively off-site into the park, and dispense it to their children as if they were gifts purchased on-site. Whereas these subjects demonstrate crafty agency, the authors also sympathize with their glassy-eyed counterparts:

> The willing suspension of disbelief by . . . guests is neither simple nor simple-minded, but the partial result of a complex negotiation of the increasingly foreshortened list of options available to citizens in a culture that is both commodity-driven and global in reach, a world for which Disney's world is an apt homologue. (p. 111)

What about work, though? Jane Kuenz's chapter, "Working at the Rat" offers the richest convergence of organizational communication and cultural studies themes. Her account of worker identities and performances partially echoes Van Maanen's. Gone, however, is the cavalier tone of successful maturity reviewing colorful youth. In its place emerge more poignant portraits of daily struggles for meaning and dignity: employees with troubled pasts accepting the "clean slate and some-thing to write on it" (p. 140) offered by DW's intensive socialization; part-timers negotiating the politics of cliques and favoritism to acquire desperately needed, full-time "cast-membership"; costumed performers fainting and vomiting in Orlando's oppressive heat; and rumors of organizational scandal that self-seal because to question authorities about their reliability is to risk dismissal.

These performances can also be ironic and resistant. Illicit drug use on the job offers employees temporary escape from—and enhancement of—their conformity. Theft offers the promise of compensation for corporate injustice. DW's lesbian and gay subcultures appropriate the official rhetoric of family in decidedly nonbourgeois style, "cross-costuming" and vamping for unknowing tourists. Accustomed to continuous surveillance, DW employees are unable to avoid evaluating their own and each other's performances, even when they return to the park on their days off as guests. Furthermore, the implosion of simulation at DW occasionally approaches absurdity: A memorable character in one venue is an aspiring Hollywood starlet whose name winks at the aesthetic of facade: "Vanessa Veneer." This character is played by an employee who is in real life herself an aspiring Hollywood actress.

Each of these identities and performances indicates the dialectic of production and consumption that pervades DW. This portrait displaces the conventional image of tourists as the sole or primary consumers at this site. Instead, similar to du Gay's conclusion about retail workers, it is the employees who have, to varying degrees, internalized their colonizing work identities, as these have been scripted and staged by DW. This complication of the boundary between work and leisure resonates with studies from communication scholars who have analyzed organizations as cultural agencies. Examples include Trujillo's (1992) study of a baseball park as shifting moments of theater, community, and capitalist labor, Lont's (1990) study of a recording company that embodied struggle among and between feminist subcultures and mainstream American culture, and Taylor's (in press) analysis of a bookstore owned by the LDS Church that served as a theatre for the performance of Mormon habitus (see Bourdieu, 1984). In viewing culture as suffusing organization, these studies differ from political-economic analyses of the production of culture within and by media industries. Those studies view culture more economically as a set of market conditions and outcomes of commodity consumption that create unique labor processes (Ryan, 1993).

**Culture and Organizational Subjectivities**

This pattern forms out of the intersection of culture as a site of study and the analysis of workplace subjectivities. Exemplary texts include Stanley Aronowitz's *False Promises,* Paul Willis's classic *Learning to Labor,* Aronowitz and William DiFazio's *The Jobless Future,* and Roy Jacques's *Manufacturing the Employee.*

These texts examine a variety of cultural influences on the formation of subjectivities that are primarily, but not exclusively, associated with the workplace.

We begin with Aronowitz's central claim in *False Promises* that working-class consciousness in the U.S. cannot be "read off" from economic conditions. Rather, Aronowitz believes that history and culture play important roles in the (de)formation of progressive labor politics. As a result, those waiting primarily for economic conditions to create a working-class revolution will be disappointed. Aronowitz reads the history of the working class, labor unions, and industrialization in the U.S. and concludes that the working class is often its own worst enemy. Unions have divided their structures and cultures by ethnicity, race, skill, and industry, often pitting workers against one another. Unions have be-come highly bureaucratized, corporatist, and deradicalized (see also Offe, 1985). The postwar rise of the white-collar professional class, a group with little tendency to unionize, has eroded the power of counterorganized labor. Finally, the educational system and mass media offer conservative visions of capitalism and U.S. politics. These factors—and others—convince Aronowitz that the formation of a radical working class relies strongly on political organizing that acknowledges the importance of cultural products and identity formation.

In focusing on unions and their role in shaping labor consciousness, this volume offers fruitful avenues for organizational communication research. For example, Aronowitz highlights the struggle between unions and management for control of the work process. This could be tied to recent research on self-disciplining work teams by Barker (1993), or workplace democracy by Cheney (1995). Due to their historical affiliation with management interests and their emphasis on symbolic processes over material conditions, organizational communication scholars have shown what may be charitably described as an ambivalent and intermittent interest in class. Alternately, they might consider more intensively the role of unions when theorizing the functions of management. In discussing these issues, Aronowitz focuses attention on the contested production of both managerial identities and management theory.

Aronowitz also emphasizes the role of culture in forming class consciousness. As workers enter into work and work settings, they are already largely prepared and educated for what awaits them. This argument holds implications for research in organizational socialization, identification, and control. For example, Jablin (1987) has discussed "anticipatory socialization" as a process whereby future employees gain initial information about performance expectations in certain industries and positions. Clair's (1996) study of the colloquialism "a real job" indicates that this process is extraorganizational and constituted in the vernacular discourse of particular subcultures, such as college students. Aronowitz and other authors discussed within this section add to our understanding of socialization as an historical and cultural process by which workers come to inhabit specific work-related subject positions. The common knowledge that many of us know instinctively how to organize and manage well before we enter the workplace is itself uncommonly analyzed, marginalized as the stuff of anecdote and autobiography. The implications of this reorientation for organizational communication are significant, and Aronowitz offers insights regarding how researchers should proceed. If cultural socialization simultaneously accomplishes organizational presocialization, then scholars may need to study more intensively sites such as the family, education, religion, popular artifacts (such as children's literature; Ingersoll & Adams, 1984), politics, and other elements to fully understand the cultural construction of organization. The revision of culture as the site of organizational "programming" broadens the domain of organizational communication research and blurs disciplinary boundaries.

Finally, Aronowitz emphasizes the importance of viewing class as a process of social contestation, and not a stable preexisting object. In this view, there is no direct, exclusive, or necessary connection between a worker's material situation and her or his class interests and identification. Indeed, the performance of class in organizational contexts is significantly mediated by the articulation of gender and ethnic identities (Holmer-Nadesan, 1996). Foregrounding issues of class might problematize recent conceptualizations by organizational communication scholars of "the knowledge worker" (Deetz, 1996). Just who is the knowledge worker, anyway? Is it possible that organizational scholars study this group based on identification with their alternately privileged and precarious positions? More generally, how should we include class—as the structure of access to

the means of production and to the distribution of economic surplus (Garnham, 1995)—in the study of organizational communication?

Willis's *Learning to Labor* serves as one potential model for class-sensitive analysis of organizational communication. In this study of the relationship between British educational and occupational systems, Willis argues that "working-class kids get working-class jobs" due in part to the cultural milieu in which they come of age. The colorful and cynical youth (also known as "lads") that he studied wound up in traditional jobs largely because their cultural groups valued manual craft labor, and because the schools that provided them with formal education valued the opposite, working with one's intellect. Ironically, despite the best intentions of officials seeking to expand their options, the "lads" rebelled against the structures placed on their bodies, thoughts, and movements in space. This often meant that they performed poorly in school, as defined by traditional standards of academic success, and were un-able to acquire competencies enabling them to increase their economic status. As a result, they appeared to have no choice but to end up in blue-collar work.

Although this story initially appears to be tragedy or irony, there is an important twist. Willis also argues that the lads' rebellion in school equipped them with the means of preserving their freedom and dignity in the face of corporate and shop-floor discipline. Specifically, they learned how to have fun amid boring and monotonous conditions, how to subvert authority, and how to frustrate official demands placed on their bodies. In short, although the "lads" were likely not fully conscious of this process, their negotiation of structural influences directed them to particular occupational destinations, and presocialized them in the informal subcultural codes that cohered their educational and organizational careers. This presocialization was in fact recognized and preferred by shop-floor supervisors because it helped workers to reduce tension, and enabled organizational members to predict each other's behavior. Here, again, communication scholars may find reasons to include class, and other influences traditionally considered external, to their studies of organization.

Willis's focus on economic determination, however, potentially grates against the rhetorical and social-constructionist tendencies of some organizational communication scholars. Specifically, he mounts a complex argument about an "asymetrical" (p. 125) cultural realm that exists over and apart from language. This argument frames much of the resistance practiced by working-class youth as an attempt to privilege their distinctive subcultural patterns of thought and speech. Because the dominant discourse of literate culture is individualistic and abstract, and because it does not privilege the immediate, embodied, and agonistic experience of their oral culture, "for the working class the cultural is in a battle with language" (p. 124). As a result, working-class culture develops "physical and stylistic practices" (p. 125) of fashion, appearance, and gesture that compensate for discursive disqualification.

> Language is no less rich in the counter-school culture than in the conformist one — indeed it is a great deal more incisive and lively — but it cannot express, and is therefore not used in that mode, those mental insights which are anyway too much for the received language." (p. 125)

How should communication scholars respond to this argument, which falsely divides the cultural from the linguistic? Willis appears to want to have it both ways—subcultural dialect is integral to working-class identity, but it is not (mainstream) "cultural." Despite this conceptual difficulty, which evokes linguistic controversy about "restricted" and "elaborated" codes of class speech, the argument raises interesting questions about the semiotic distribution of resources for subcultural reproduction across verbal and nonverbal codes. In attempting to engage this argument, scholars can likely advance their understanding of the relationships among organization, communication, and culture. Willis's work resonates with recent communication studies depicting school as a multifunctional site where youths negotiate their relationships to significant spheres of social life, including the domestic, the corporate, and the "the street" (Novek, 1995). Indeed, in many schools, currently, the concerns of Willis and du Gay are converging as educational curricula are scripted by corporate interests to "train" young consumers in brand preference (Giroux, 1994, pp. 47-66) and young workers in "Enterprising" pro-grams of self-discipline, such as time-management (Kohl, 1996).

In *The Jobless Future,* Aronowitz and DiFazio return our focus to work and class in the U.S. economy. They conclude that post-Fordist technological and financial conditions have reduced, and will continue to reduce, the amount and quality of paid work available, and, hence, some people will be unable to find work that pays adequately. Whereas this summary sounds quite economic, the authors do not rest in this frame. Instead, they believe that

> To raise the question of the partial eclipse and decentering of paid work is to ask crucial questions concerning the purpose of education, the character of economic and social distribution, and, perhaps more profoundly, what it means to be human. (p. 33)

One argument in this volume demands particular attention. Aronowitz and DiFazio consistently emphasize that many key assumptions held by workers and scholars about work are socially constructed. Although this should surprise few in communication, the key for innovative research appears to involve applying this insight to denaturalize our taken-for-granted assumptions. For example, Aronowitz and DiFazio interrogate the "dogma of work," arguing that within U.S. society we need to redefine the notion that work provides the foundation of one's morality and identity. Alternately, as witnessed among followers of the current "voluntary simplicity" movement who have abandoned high-paying careers, and their associated consumer identities, for more rewarding pursuits, morality and identity might be seen as stemming from cultural ideology and social practices—and thus subject to revision. To what extent do communication scholars problematize work as a key category in theorizing the workplace? Answering this question would clarify ethical and political commitments to, alternately, "functionalist" traditions conceptualizing work as the achievement of official goals, "interpretive" paradigms focusing on the performance of cultural meaning-systems, and "critical" theories focusing on the alienated reproduction of power-in-equalities (Putnam, 1983). These paradigms vary widely in their assumptions about the nature and consequences of work, and the legitimacy of control systems through which it is accomplished. In this light, close connections may be drawn between this volume and Deetz's (1992) analysis of how corporate colonization shapes antidemocratic conditions in society and the contemporary workplace.

Finally, we come to Jacques's *Manufacturing the Employee,* a discursive history of the term *employee.* Beginning in the 1700s in the colonial U.S., Jacques traces the formation of the employee—a fairly sacred concept in organizational theorizing—through the broader cultural and discursive influences that have shaped industrial organization and the broader economy. For example, rather than viewing the modern corporation as an economic "cause" of the employee, Jacques shows how this identity was influenced by the religious and political institutions of the New World. These influences included Puritan images of perfectible men of character and Federalist visions of "free, self-determining citizens" (p. 22). As Jacques traces the evolution of workplace subjectivities within particular symbolic oppositions of "owner-worker," "capitalabor," and "management-employee," he also provides a cultural history of the U.S. What passes for common sense in organizational and management theorizing, we learn, is actually the performance of highly contingent knowledge.

Whereas Jacques and du Gay (reviewed above) are equally concerned with workplace subjectivities, they differ in conceptualizing the site of their genesis. Essentially, Jacques casts a broader net in mapping the production of workplace subjects. For example, he sees colonists' desire to occupy the New Frontier as one of the conditions that helped make "the employee" possible. This symbol promised colonists the possibility of transcending their limitations and encouraged Americans to view them-selves as entitled—a condition that informed their expectations for treatment in the workplace. Jacques's work is thus of value to organizational communication scholars in denaturalizing the identity schema through which members co-orient and cooperate. Additionally Jacques demonstrates how cultural influences normally thought to be external to the organization are, in fact, quite central to the process of organizing. As with the other authors analyzed in this section, Jacques demonstrates that workplace identity is generated by a multitude of forces. Collectively, these volumes indicate that, at the very least, it is an oversimplification to view shifts in management strategies as if internally authored phenomena. Such a view ignores related shifts in religion, economics, race relationships, and politics that

alternately register and influence these changes. As Jacques notes, organizational scholars must look for the various conditions of possibility giving rise to a particular meaning or idea asserted as organizational innovation. Such analysis helps to deconstruct our assumptions about the spatial discreteness of organizations, and the ontology of organizational members as self-contained individuals.

**Culture and Cultural Subjectivities**

Our fourth pattern involves volumes that investigate discourses circulating throughout society and trace their role in constituting various identities—including those associated with production and consumption. Here, we discuss three volumes: du Gay et al.'s *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman;* Martha Banta's *Taylored Lives: Narrative Productions in the Age of Taylor, Veblen, and Ford;* and Barbara Czarniawska-Joerges and Pierre Guillet de Monthoux's edited volume, *Good Novels, Better Management: Reading Organizational Realities in Fiction.* Each of these volumes engages organizations and images of work, but places these phenomena into dialogue with other cultural discourses that relativize their naturalized meanings.

*Doing Cultural Studies* is a concise introduction to the field's theoretical commitments through their application in a case study of the Sony Walkman. The volume tracks the different lives and moments of this artifact across a comprehensive "circuit of culture" involving five interrelated spheres. The first, *representation,* involves the discourses and practices of signification that endow objects with meaning. *Identity* involves the articulation of symbols with existing images of individuals and groups to produce particular meanings. Sony advertisements, for example, systematically associated the Walkman with positive meanings of " [urban] mobility, sport, activity, leisure, and youth, youth, youth" (p. 39). These associations do not so much conduct meanings as appropriate them, such that the Walkman over time became an emblem for youth subculture. *Production* involves the "inscription" of meaning accomplished in the design, manufacture, and marketing of commodities. The authors argue that organizations produce "surplus" cultural meanings and transformations in these processes. The Walkman embodies Sony's strategy for competing in the global culture industry by producing both the hardware of reception technologies and the software of cultural programming. *Consumption* addresses how inscribed meanings are negotiated by cultural subjects in the contexts of everyday life. The final sphere, *regulation,* involves the disciplining of consumption by cultural authorities.

The volume's treatments of production and consumption are most relevant here. In reviewing the former, the authors destabilize the Walkman by examining contingencies that pervade its manufacture. Multiple stories surrounding its invention, for example, render the "authorship" of this product undecidable. The naming of the Walkman, we learn, is embedded in the history of postwar Japanese occupation and reconstruction, which involved ambivalent appropriation of American slang, and in the corporation's global strategy to create "place-less" brand names devoid of problematic associations. Popular Walkman narratives emphasizing consumer freedom and heroic, fatherly inventors are belied by the reality of monotonous work carried out by female workers on Asian assembly lines. In addition to providing these details, the authors mount a provocative argument about the role of product designers. These professionals, they claim, form a dense link between the organizational and cultural realms because they are uniquely concerned with scanning trendy lifestyle discourses and culling them for ideas about product innovation, such as rugged, waterproof Walkmans used for outdoor recreation. This idea that organizations value employees for their cultural competencies and capital breathes new life into the traditional concept of "boundary spanner" by problematizing the nature of information that travels through this channel. Sony's privileging of the designer, we learn, is tied to its extensive surveillance of consumer behavior (e.g., through product showrooms that function like research laboratories), such that the production of commodities is intensively tied to the evolution of meaningful consumption practices. Sony has created a corporate structure and culture enabling rapid, flexible response to consumer desires.

Related treatment of consumption reviews three theories and their relative strengths. The production-of-consumption view grounded in Frankfurt School pessimism about mass culture and instrumental rationality is rejected as objectivist, elitist, and nostalgic. Bourdieu's socio-cultural perspective emphasizing the differentiation of consumption is judged to be limited because of its static conceptualization of class. A third perspective of appropriation and resistance, grounded in de Certeau's work, is upheld because it shows how

consumers' unpredictable use of commodities creates new meanings that producers then seek to appropriate as conditions for further commodification. The danger in this tradition, the authors emphasize, lies in its romanticizing of tactical consumption as potentially subversive. Instead, this volume demonstrates, innovative scholarship should engage how particular practices of production structure, and are structured by, particular practices of consumption. Public controversy over the seemingly alienated, and alienating, use of the Walkman in public, for example, led Sony to de-sign more inconspicuous headphones with reduced sound leakage. In sum, this volume provides a compelling model for innovative communication scholarship and resonates with the study of "informance" (Burns, Dishman, Johnson, 8c Verplank, 1995) as a method for collecting and presenting embodied consumer data to high-technology designers. Its focus on consumption, further, resonates with recent communication scholarship addressing the institutions of "shopping" (Gumpert 8c Drucker, 1992) and a multiteam ethnographic collaboration currently investigating consumption practices ("Ethnographic Reflections," 1998).

Banta's (1993) *Taylored Lives,* alternately, treats a topic familiar to organizational communication scholars. Textbooks in the field have institutionalized Fredrick Taylor as a colorful and ironic protagonist in their historical reviews of management theory. These reviews typically focus on the "crisis in control" (Beniger, 1986) created by large-scale changes associated with the Industrial Revolution. With Henry Ford, Taylor appears as an architect of technical control (Edwards, 1978) systems designed to exploit the potential benefits of new technologies and to discipline unreliable workers. As a result, "every schoolboy knows" that Taylor's obsessive and grandiose "Cult of the Expert," which measured work processes "objectively" to maximize their efficiency, foundered as workers correctly mistrusted management's willingness to share increased profits and to ethically regulate the acceleration of labor.4

Banta makes this topic fresh by treating Taylorism as a cultural site — a system of ambitious, truth-making discourses circulating in multiple genres: autobiography, journalism, military and political history, advertising, psychology, and industrial sociology. In this view, Taylorism formed a turn-of-the-century "conversation" about the relationship between "efficient" order and "wasteful" chaos, conducted among historical figures such as Weber, Marx, Veblen, Lenin, Ford, Henry Adams, Henry and William James, Gramsci, Dos Passos, Teddy Roosevelt, and Upton Sinclair. Banta's principal move is to decenter Fredrick Taylor as the sole or even principal author of Taylorism. Instead, she presents it as a "symptomatic" project that appropriated cultural discourses, and that evoked in turn a range of affiliative and oppositional voices. This symbolic traffic created an "intertextual economy" in which speakers articulated various relationships between significant symbols of technology, capitalism, imperialism, the body, gender, and ethnicity. The effects of this conversation spilled across the public and private spheres.

Banta focuses on the structures and strategies of these narratives, and on their productive tensions. Generally, she detects a characteristic "squinting" by their authors at the incompatibility experienced in this historical period between "archaic passions and dispassionate modern calculation" (p. 37). Many advocates of jingoistic expansionism and predatory capitalism, for example, demonized "sentimentality" as weak and feminine, while remaining blind to the romance of their own patriotism. This trail leads Banta to explore the ambivalent, shadowy relationship between war and organization. The conflicts of 1812 and 1862, she discovers, were crucibles of masculinist organization that produced important by-products of manufacturing innovations and ubiquitous military metaphors. These wars, however, also involved botched military operations producing the barbaric horror of exploded bodies. Fearful memories of these consequences energized managerial compulsion to reform ineptitude, and surfaced ironically in template systems that standardized bodily measurements of organizational members and consumers for ergonomic and mass-production purposes. Taylor's own narratives, we learn, were tortured by contradictions between statistical facts and value-laden stories, and by unexamined premises about labor-management relations. Banta also gives significant attention to women and ethnic minorities as problematic subjects of "difference" for Taylorism. The disadvantaged position of women in the workforce, she argues, created a rhetorical dilemma in which they could not protest their vulnerability to "improved" work processes without endangering their viability. Immigrant workers exposed the ethnocentric values underwriting Taylorism as a discourse concerned with homogenizing cultural diversity. A surprising

chapter on the design and marketing of ready-made houses shows how Taylorism gendered expectations for the inhabitation of residential space, and negotiated cultural ambivalence about the effects of encroaching rationality on the sacred, domestic sphere.

Banta's volume suggests several areas of intersection for organizational communication and cultural studies. Most obviously, it demonstrates that the historical significance of corporate leaders, capitalist institutions, and business practices is negotiated by speakers and audiences through a variety of evolving discourses that articulate and contest hegemonic meanings for their representation (Hoover, 1997). This process, which is energized by the expansionistic tendencies of managerial discourse (e.g., in Steven R. Covey's recent recommendation that individual families develop "mission statements"), reconfigures the symbolic site of organizational studies, and interrogates the premises by which historical and public figures, such as Lilian Gilbreth (Graham, 1992), are included or excluded by this field. Additionally, *Taylored Lives* implicitly denaturalizes the frequent marginalization of domestic issues in organizational communication study (e.g., in brief references to historical cottage industries). Like Banta, communication scholars have recently argued that gendered images of the private sphere dialectically influence images of the corporate world and create the need for ongoing, practical management of associated meanings. Their research restores this neglected element in a variety of ways. Corbett (1998) and Ellison (1998), for example, examine how telecommuters negotiate paradoxes and dilemmas created by their disorganized, liminal status. Clair and Thompson (1996) analyze organizational compensation as a discourse symbolizing cultural beliefs about the value of gendered identities and practices, such as women's "extended housework" in organizations. Taylor (1997b) reviews the construction of professional fields over sites haunted by the suppressed traces of sacred, domestic "home" (Taylor, 1997b).

Our final volume, *Good Novels, Better Management,* engages the role of media "fictions" in shaping cultural understandings of organization. We feel that this is a strong area of potential intersection between organizational communication and cultural studies. A useful point of departure here is Phillips's (1995) argument for the theoretical value of fiction in illuminating the subjective experience of organization. Here, Phillips complains that he is "not aware of even one article investigating the representation of organizational topics in film or television" (p. 639). He should have looked harder. In the communication literature, he could have found studies of topics such as the following: the use of media by members to dramatize their activities, and typify objects in their environment (Pacanowsky and Anderson, 1982); the depiction of organizational culture (Van de Berg & Trujillo, 1989), of labor-management conflict (Taylor, 1993b), and of sports figures as capitalist workers (Trujillo, 1991); the influence of lobbying by professional associations on the depiction of professional authority and legitimacy (Turow, 1989); the role of country music in ideologically positioning working-class audiences (Conrad, 1988); and the "education" of viewers by television game shows about the relationship among personality, education, work, luck, and wealth (Fiske, 1991).

Generally, these studies share a number of themes and conclusions. According to Hassard and Holliday (1998), the representation of organization displays three patterns. "Workplace drama and comedies" focus on personal and emotional relationships between workers that form minicommunities characterized by tolerance and diversity, and that contrast with (but do not decisively subvert) the rigidity of surrounding bureaucracy. "Entrepreneurial success" stories focus on naive but ethical individuals struggling to innovate oppressive and corrupt institutions. "Futuristic organizations"—such as those depicted in the science-fiction films, *Blade Runner* and *Aliens—appear* greedy, malevolent, and technologically omnipotent and "eliminate" any human life that impedes corporate profit.

Within these patterns, organizations and industries form recurring "characters" in media texts (such as urban police departments in producer Steven Bochco's television programs and factories in Italian literature; Manoukian, 1994). Additionally, media texts distort the actual complexities of organizational communication. They reflect cultural "dreaming" about what organization is and should be like, rather than material conditions such as the relative distribution of occupations. As such, media texts are inscribed with ideologies that alternately support and oppose capitalist economics. The complex interaction between these ideologies creates

textual spaces where producers arbitrarily "resolve" contradictions and consumers engage dominant meanings. Media texts, additionally, provide symbolic resources for members' anticipation and ongoing performance of "actual" organizational roles.

Despite a current plethora of workplace-based television programs, there is surprisingly little "work"—as the organized performance of labor power—depicted in the mass media. Instead, plots routinely focus on the individualistic traits of heroic, foolish, and villainous characters, and on interpersonal relationships characterized by romance, intrigue, conflict, and misunderstanding. These generic elements activate the frames of situation comedy and melodrama. Fiske (1991) provides one explanation for this asymptotic relationship between entertainment and organization: Capitalist ideology promotes the myth that wealth is acquired largely through personality, luck, and social position—not exploitation. Depicting the organizational contexts and practices through which profit is actually generated by the commodification and extraction of labor's surplus value might destabilize popular consent to economic conditions. Aronowitz (1989) and Lipsitz (1989, pp. 39-75) make similar arguments regarding the virtual disappearance of authentic images of the working class from television during the 1960s. They found that net-work programmers of the period feared that explicit depictions of the hierarchical labor process would depress viewers, and believed that authentic images were unnecessary because postwar immigrants had successfully transitioned from urban kinship networks to suburban consumerism. This transition, of course, was assisted by normative articulation in the period's working-class programs of gender and ethnic identities with consumer capitalism.

This brief review suggests that communication scholars have primarily focused on televisual and cinematic depictions of organization, but they have not completely neglected fiction.' In organizational communication, this treatment has generally emphasized the aesthetic of fiction over particular genres and has debated the validity, ethics, and politics of writing as a medium for representation of organizational realities (Strine & Pacanowsky, 1985). Here, the focus has been on strategies used by narrators to establish authority for their accounts through depicting various levels of involvement in their relationships with organizational subjects and readers. Pacanowsky (1983,1988) has experimented with realist and reflexive forms of fiction that illuminate the practical and ethical dilemmas created in organizational cultures, and Goodall (1991) has used the film noir "detective" as a persona for the "mysterious" work of organizational consulting and scholarship.

This fledgling disciplinary concern with fiction, and the recognition that multiple forms of cultural identity are potentially invoked when subjects engage organizational fictions, lead us to treat *Good Novels, Better Management* in this final section. As a collection of studies written by organizational scholars of "naturalistic" novels from (generally) the 19th and early 20th centuries, this volume intersects with several concerns of organizational communication and cultural studies—notably globalization and representation.

In the first concern, these novels depict the wrenching transformations for business and society accompanying the Industrial Revolution in nations throughout Europe and the U.S. and in their colonies abroad. These transformations involved the decline of specialized, family-owned firms employing holistic craft sensibilities to produce small batches of commodities within local Gemeinschaft economies of loyalty and kinship. In their place rose economically determined forms of life suffering from a litany of ills: bureaucratic administration, machine technology, instrumental rationality, specialized division of labor, urban mass-markets, the antidemocratic promotion of self-interest, and transplanted, contingent labor forces producing profit for absentee owners and investors. Several of the contributors to this volume express a sense of deja vu in comparing these conditions to those now occurring as postsocialist and postcommunist nations attempt to develop entrepeneurial, free-market economies. Recent journalistic accounts have focused on the effects of this transformation on labor markets (e.g., new career opportunities in prostitution and bodyguarding), cultural discourses (e.g., the appearance of advertising, etiquette, and business training), consumption practices (e.g., involving Western-style urban nightlife and luxury goods), unofficial economies (e.g., corruption, crime cartels, plutonium smuggling, and executive kidnapping), and the mythological struggle between forces of chaos (e.g., ethnic insurgency) and order (e.g., government regulation and religious revivalism) in these countries. Recent studies indicate that this struggle between folkways and rationalization is organizationally manifest in

subcultural conflict over the legitimacy of marketing discourses (James, 1995) and in the relationship between local firms and central planning agencies (Cheney, 1995).

This historicizing is valuable in a number of ways. It demystifies what Stohl (1993, p. 380) calls "Globaloney"—the breathless and uncritical discourse of futurism that celebrates the "interconnectedness" created by post-Fordist organization and technology. This discourse is strategically urgent and posits a "totally" new and "suddenly" different world of large-scale enterprise, unstable markets, and strong competition. In this world, the rules are now in permanent, continuous change. Often behind this panic rhetoric lurks a commodified solution in the form of a particular innovative technology, discipline, or program.

The restoration of recurrence to business historiography, alternately, interrupts the linear narrative of progress and decenters the warrants through which organizational authority and legitimacy are often asserted (e.g., in management demands for concessions from labor). One example involves Richard Boland's analysis of an 1885 American novel, *The Rise of Silas Lapham,* which depicts, prior to the development of computing and telecommunications technologies, a 19th-century manager overseeing the international operations of his paint company. Boland's reading emphasizes the disintegration and paralysis experienced by managers of this era as they were forced to conceptualize increasingly complex sequences of causality and the unpredictable effects of system intervention. These new interconnections "stretch[ed] the self to extremes, financially and morally" (p. 129), and demanded psychological solutions such as the "economy of pain" by which Silas Lapham rationalized the distribution of suffering and rewards among his employees, family, and business partners. Boland implies that, as producers and consumers of potentially decentering narratives that extend subjectivity in space and time, organizational members have always been "on the Net."

This historicizing is also valuable because it shows how globalization is assimilated locally and asynchronously (Spain and Italy, we learn, are "developmentally delayed" cases), such that different cultures negotiate their influences at different times, with different resources, under unique conditions of freedom and constraint, and with unpredictable outcomes. Geert Hofstede's reading of a thinly disguised memoir of a Dutch colonial administrator, for example, shows how that culture's international business operations have been configured by the tension between two dominant identities: a thrifty, egalitarian, and peaceful "merchant" concerned with maintaining open markets, and a meddlesome, paternalistic "preacher" who alternately soothes the merchant's conscience (by equating business interests with God's plan) and disrupts operations by asserting higher spiritual purposes.

The second concern evoked in these readings, representation, involves issues of how realist fictions reflect and constitute organizational life, how they shape cultural understandings, and to what uses they may be put by scholars. Here the authors provide a number of reasons for using fiction in teaching and theorizing the process of organization. Novels exemplify the interpretive enterprise, they argue, by depicting the significance of organizational structures for members. In using thick and vivid description, novels restore the concrete, sensual, and emotional dimensions of experience that are commonly effaced by objectivist science. Whereas fiction is not literally "true," it displays the commonly held frames for interpreting conditions, figures, and events that constitute the cultural experience of organizing. Additionally, fiction provides finely nuanced portraits of power and depicts the absurdity and paradox that suffuse "rational" organization. Perhaps most importantly for communication scholars, the authors argue that novels are formal acts of rhetoric and narration that are inherently concerned with displaying the symbolic processes by which meaning is constituted. As a result, they continually draw focused attention to "talk at work." This last argument is nicely condensed by Franca Manoukian:

> What acquires special significance in the eyes of the novelists is exactly that what is considered improper or irrelevant by the classical theories of organization . . . Companies do not produce so much goods and services as stratified procedures, styles of action and interaction, processes of positive and negative identification and, above all discourses, denominations, linguistic products which allow [members] to consolidate and maintain the organizational order. ... The life and the

> vitality of the companies [depicted] appear to be concentrated not on technologies or any aspect of the concrete processes of production, but on conversations, talks, interviews, alliances, mission, resignations, nominations. *Production, if production there is, appears to be only a production of words* [emphasis added]. (p. 228)

Although the scholars in this volume do not display a familiarity with the work of Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), their arguments often resonate with his conclusion that as a genre of discourse, the novel functions to clarify and interrogate "the dominant word" in culture. It does this principally by juxtaposing hegemonic discourses with subcultural dialects that relativize and subvert their authority. One humorous example is the sharp dialogue exchanged in David Lodge's (1989) novel, *Nice Work*, between a feminist literary scholar and the industrial manager she is assigned, as an involuntary act of institutional outreach, to "shadow." The characters' initial dislike for each other evolves over the course of the novel into a reflective, mutual accounting for the consequences of their professional commitments.' Organizational communication and cultural studies scholars might use this insight to view the novel as a "diagnostic" register (Percy, 1986) of the symbolic forms through which culture objectifies and negotiates its experience of organization. Alternately, they might consider together how fiction *"intervenes* in the life of society by organizing and interpreting experiences which have previously been subjected only to partial reflection [emphasis in original (Pawling, 1984, p. 4). The actual uses to which fiction is put by organizational members, for example, as a catalyst of personal and professional change, is unexplored terrain. Yet a third opportunity involves comparing and contrasting the intertextuality of performative personae, such as "leadership" (Trujillo, 1985), across mediated and actual organizational texts, in an effort to understand how fiction shapes our understanding and action in corporate worlds. A final opportunity demonstrated by this volume involves the exploration of organizational fictions across cultures, such as the Japanese "business novel" that alternately laments and rationalizes the existence of its beleaguered-yet-noble corporate hero, "Salaryman" (Sawhill, 1996).

**Conclusion: Disciplining the Study of Organizational and Cultural Communication**

In opening this essay, we proposed a working relationship between organizational communication and cultural studies that would allow each field's strengths to complement the other's limitations, as these elements are defined in the context of particular purposes. This integrated project would look more closely at the culture of organization and the organization of culture. We hope that we have conveyed our understanding that this integration is not simple: Instead, we envision joint operations that are collaborative, negotiated, and tactical in nature. Those who undertake these projects will likely extend this review of issues into the realms of theory, methodology, and pedagogy.

Who might those scholars (or activists) be? Whereas we believe our comments potentially inform many areas of organizational communication research, we also realize that cultural studies' preference for the restructuring of power relationships will be most attractive to those scholars currently affiliated with interpretive and critical paradigms. As mentioned earlier, members of these fields already share many theoretical legacies, methodological practices, and ethical commitments. Organizational communication scholars will likely struggle, however, to bracket the conventional, empiricist ontology of organization (e.g., the container metaphor) described in this essay. Additionally, cultural studies has a related-but-separate vocabulary of terms, such as "inscription," that invoke "different" theories of ideology and representation, and that defy simple translation or substitution. Whereas organizational communication has been "cultural" for over a decade now, cultural studies challenges this field to think about issues of symbolism and history in new ways. This involves keeping one's "glimpse wide" to discover evidence of organization in a wide range of artifacts, sites, and practices. Mumby's revisionist (1997) reading of hegemony, for example, which moves across a wide range of literatures to restore the dialectical relationships between domination and resistance, and between organizations and civil society, demonstrates the potential nature of an integrated theoretical project. The nature of more empirical projects, however, remains largely an open question. Two possibilities include the application of Hall's (1980) model of reading strategies to employee interpretation of "official" organizational texts, and ongoing efforts to adequately theorize the dialectic of agency and constraint characterizing the labor of *auteurs* in media organizations (Murdock, 1992).

Cultural studies, alternately, is hampered by its lingering aversion to contexts productive, and to deterministic discourses that frustrate its commitment to empowering cultural subjectivity. In modeling the mutually constitutive relationship between production and consumption, however, du Gay et al.'s holistic case-study of the Walkman represents a major step forward in linking the two fields. We note, additionally, the potential benefit for cultural studies scholars of viewing the organization as lying at the intersection of the economic and the cultural, as well as other spheres. This positioning creates an opportunity to explore the codetermination of these two spheres, within a variety of conditions. Here, cultural studies might give itself greater permission to explore how organizational members articulate their experience of work in relation to other structures of their life world. This focus on nonnecessary relations between symbolic elements and performances would preserve the role of history, representation, and agency in shaping these relationships.

In closing, the volumes reviewed in this essay decenter our common sense of organizing, and demonstrate how the situational integration of these two fields might usefully continue this process. We are excited by the possibilities raised by this integration for understanding and trans-forming the organization of lives. Two fields working this closely, we feel, ought to look each other in the eye and—without necessarily talking "marriage" (Grossberg, 1995)—at least learn how to dance.

## Notes

[1] The relationship between these two fields is marked by a history of conflict between cultural studies and a third field, political economy, over the nature and extent of economic determination of cultural practices. This history, characterized by Murdock (1995) as "the great divide," affects how each of the three fields defines its preferred object of study. Political economy has convention-ally privileged social structure as a powerful (if not determining) constraint on the potential form and content of communication. In this view, access to and performance of the resources for cultural expression are subject to the regulatory logics of a capitalist economic system (e.g., commodification and accumulation; Garnham, 1995). Political economy intersects with organizational communication in challenging OC's explanatory emphasis on bureaucratic control over the capitalist mode of production, and in valuing its empirical studies of situated production, whose details are often glossed in claims of economic determination (Mosco, 1996, pp. 157-161). In opposition, cultural studies has argued that the determination, or "articulation," of cultural practices by or with material conditions is more complex, contingent, and unstable (Grossberg, 1995). One legacy of this conflict is that cultural studies, in an effort to foreground the potentially liberatory agency of consuming subjects, has largely avoided studies of production as an organized activity. Organizational communication is uniquely situated as a potential Camp David where the macrofocus of political economy and the microfocus of cultural studies might meet at its mesofocus. One potential topic of negotiation is the organization of media professionals (see Ettema & Whitney, 1982; "Journalism Practice," 1990; Turow, 1985).

[2] Stanley Aronowitz (1992). *False promises: The shaping of American working class consciousness.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press. xii + 470 pp. $18.95 paper.
Stanley Aronowitz and William DiFazio (1994). *The jobless future: Sci-Tech and the dogma of work.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. xiii + 392 pp. $17.95 paper.
Martha Banta (1993). *Taylored lives: Narrative productions in the age of Taylor, Veblen, and* Ford. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. viii + 431 pp. $37.50.
Barbara Czarniawska-Joerges and Pierre Guillet de Monthoux (Eds.). (1994). *Good novels, better management: reading organizational realities in fiction.* Newark: Gordon & Breach. xi + 330 pp. $48.00.
Paul du Gay (1996). *Consumption and identity at work.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. vi + 213 pp. $69.95; $22.95 paper.
Paul du Gay, Stuart Hall, Linda Janes, Hugh Mackay, and Keith Negus (1997). *Doing cultural studies: The story of the* Sony *Walkman.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 150 pp. $21.50.
Roy Jacques (1996). *Manufacturing the employee: Management knowledge from the 19th to the 21st centuries.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. xx + 218 pp. $75.00; $24.00 paper.

The Project on Disney (1995). *Inside the mouse: Work and play at Disney World.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press. vii + 251 pp. $16 .95 paper.
Paul Willis (1977). *Learning to labor: How working class kids get working class jobs.* New York: Columbia University Press. x + 226 pp. $18.95 paper.

[3] As a relevant example, we cite the recent institution of "Casual Friday," an ironically formalized day of (relative) informality among corporate professionals and their support staff that has revitalized the men's fashion industry through new lines of "business casual" clothing. This institution quickly followed the commencement of massive layoffs in the late 1980s, and is arguably one strategy by which power inequalities between decision makers and vulnerable "overhead" have been temporarily camouflaged. This practice of class camouflage is itself disguised by official rationalization of Casual Friday as a means of improving morale among shell-shocked survivors.

[4] A recent news story depicted Taylorism's persistence in the workplace through the disciplinary practices of the U.S. Postal Service, which fired a female letter-carrier for failing to consistently maintain optimal foot-speed and pace-length (precisely calculated in steps per minute and inches) during her residential rounds, which unofficially included brief checks on the health and welfare of homebound customers.

[5] The historical connection between literary criticism and cultural studies as humanistic enterprises has produced a body of structuralist analyses concerned with the encoding of ideology in fiction (e.g., Cawelti, 1976) and a growing body of ethnographic work focused on the "interpretive communities" in which fiction genres are made meaningful (e.g., Radway, 1984).

[6] This volume privileges novels that are primarily progressive and radical in their anti-industrial politics. It is important to remember, however, that the dialogic impulse is relatively apolitical and can skewer a variety of ideologies. Banta identifies a melodramatic, boosterist genre of business fiction, for example, which made heroes of engineers and managers at the turn of the century (see also Tichi, 1987, pp. 97-170), and the novels of Ayn Rand are virtual political manifestos in which heroic characters endorse individualist self-determination and free-market competition.

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