# The Contradictions of Communicative Labor in Service Work

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**Abstract:**
Boundaries dividing communication and culture from economy are fluid. The US services economy, with broad and deep growth, illustrates this fluidity. This paper applies theorizations of the relationship between communication and capitalism to a customer service job-training course for dislocated workers. A site of communication education, the course teaches students to be successful customer service representatives. Customer service communicative labor bridges production and consumption and, thus, is contradictory. The communicative labor translates the communication commonplace of mutuality into a self-other technology to affirm customers, and also requires a technology that objectifies customers. Job-training students resist this contradiction.
**Keywords:** Communication Commonplaces; Communicative Labor; Job Training; Resistance; Service Work

**Article:**
Arbitrary boundaries dividing culture from economy are fluid.[1] Business people speak of corporate cultures, product manufacturers engage in identity branding, and work, friendships, and play merge at knowledge-intensive companies.[2] The "soft" sphere of values, ideas, and meaning and the "hard" domain of labor, wages, and profit seem to draw nearer to one another.

One place to examine the increased intimacy between our forms of life and our forms of work is in the US services economy, where growth has been broad and deep.[3] Though "services" is a catchall,[4] a thread running through the variety of services is the close, direct interpersonal interaction between customers and service providers. Interactive service work is a site of cultural and economic activity where the spheres and logics of production and consumption meet and blur. Beyond strictly economic outcomes, service interactions shape meanings and identities.

Hence, consideration of interactive service work as a cultural and economic phenomenon transcends narrower organizational matters, particularly when set within enduring concerns for the place of communication in a democratic, civil society.[5] A robust tradition of scholarship has analyzed the interaction between corporate-oriented communication and the public sphere. A colonization model generally considers the impact of managerial or organizational rhetoric on the public sphere.[6] The key issue in these works is colonization of the lifeworld by the system,[7] of the public sphere by the corporation,[8] or of a value logos by an instrumental logos.[9] A mutual constitution model uses "the increasing collapse of boundaries between the culture of organization and the organization of culture" to examine how culture and economy mutually constitute one another.[10] For example, cultural foundations animate new work practices, with these practices subsequently serving as models for corporations throughout US society.[11] My general purpose in this study is to aid understanding of how developments in the world of work exist in a reflexive relation with the contours of culture and society.[12]

I pursue this goal by applying recent theorizations of the relationship between communication and capitalism to a customer service job-training course for dislocated workers. I situate the course as a site of communication education where students learn to be successful customer service representatives. Success lies in bridging the spheres and logics of production and consumption. This bridging requires, first, translating the communication commonplace of mutuality into a technology of self and other to affirm customers and, second, objectifying

customers through a communication technology of power. Students resist what they see as contradictory technologies and goals, particularly as these interact with their own experience of economic dislocation.

I begin the paper by turning to communication commonplaces to grasp the communicative and cultural foundations of customer service work. Next, I use the concept of communicative labor to discuss how communication may create capitalist value. After outlining the study setting and methods, I demonstrate the contradicting technologies of self/other and of power at the heart of customer service work and portray how job-training students reject the ethical fashioning required by this work. Finally, I consider the implications of the analysis.

## Communication, Labor, and the Service Economy
### *Communication Commonplace of Mutuality*

"Communication" is of enduring and pervasive concern in the US.[13] Indeed, US culture provides a rich resource for talking about communication in our private and public lives. Across diverse topics, from civil society to romantic relationships, US citizens routinely see communication as a problem and solution. Commonplace beliefs about what communication is and does, as in appeals to "honesty" or "clarity," underwrite discussions of how we do and should communicate.

Communication commonplaces have been seen to serve two crucial functions. First, they serve as basic assumptions, resources, and guidelines for talking about everyday communication practice. For Talbot Taylor, communication commonplaces animate practical metadiscourse, "our ordinary, everyday practices of talking about what we say and do with language.'' Practical metadiscourse allows us to talk about our talk and to "enforce regularity and conformity" in the communication of community members. [14] Second, communication commonplaces serve as starting points for constructing communication theory. As Craig puts it, communication theory "derives from and theorizes practical metadiscourse." In doing so, communication theories appeal to some commonplaces while simultaneously questioning or challenging others. For example, rhetorical theories build upon the belief in the power of words to challenge the pervasive idea that "actions speak louder than words.''[15]

I add a third function for communication commonplaces; they authorize many new economy industries, organizations, and jobs. Of direct interest is work with human interaction at the core of the performance of that work, such as sales and customer service. Such labor makes great use of communication commonplaces, indeed often using them in innovative, even contradictory, ways. Importantly, then, just as communication theory reflects and shapes beliefs about and practices of communication, some forms of economic activity do the same. In this paper I aim to sort out some of the implications of the contemporary articulation[16] of communicative and economic practice.[17]

One culturally vital communication commonplace is our ongoing faith in mutuality, or the power of communication to allow people to share experience, come together, and craft an interdependent future.[18] In many venues, including classrooms, newspaper op/ed pages, and talk shows, people routinely link con-temporary social problems to deficiencies in communication, thought of as mutuality. This particular dream for communication has a long, rich history. In Phaedrus, Plato develops communication as dialogue, and as leading to love, wholeness, and the saving of souls. He uses his dialogic version of communication to critique forms of communication, such as writing, that fail to follow the prescription "that good and just relations among people require a knowledge of and care for souls.'' Communication that does not foster symmetrical and tight relationships moves humans away from an ideal form of connection.[19] Other more recent and varied treatments of communication strike a similar chord. For example, James Carey recovers a rather moribund "ritual view" of communication in US culture. Derived originally from religious sources, a ritual view emphasizes people participating together in the ongoing maintenance of community by continually recreating meaning and values.[20]

Like all communication commonplaces, mutuality provides a set of norms and criteria for good communication. Viewed through the lens of mutuality, communication is at its best when people reciprocally share sentiments and create an interdependent, positive future for themselves. As Plato's preference for dialogue and Carey's use of ceremony suggest, the mutuality lens foregrounds immediate, often face-to-face, engagement with another. The mutuality commonplace directs attention to communication as interpersonal, symmetrical and reciprocal, and non-manipulative. Even when people may expect disagreement or conflict in their relations, they expect that their conversational partner(s) will afford them respect and honesty.

To summarize, as a commonplace, mutuality offers a perspective that foregrounds certain features of communication. These features, such as symmetry, honesty, and interdependence, may lead academic and lay theorists of communication to develop and promote specific practices or technologies[21] of communication that embody mutuality. For instance, practices of active listening or mirroring may help comprise technologies of dialogue, or of collaboration. Finally, such communication technologies, many hope, will result in certain outcomes, such as cooperation, understanding, or community. Mutuality provides a perspective on communication that manifests communication practices that, in turn, translate that perspective toward the accomplishment of specific outcomes.

Talking about communication in the language of mutuality brings to attention a particular normative base for engaging in society. Certainly, other communication commonplaces exist, many also with great historical and cultural purchase.[22] I do not claim that mutuality is or should be the standard for judging communication. To be sure, there are good reasons not to treat mutuality as the norm .[23] Still, mutuality is a communication commonplace with great resonance in US culture. Not surprisingly, a mutuality perspective on communication appears often in the service economy, guiding the communication of sales people, retail clerks, and customer service representatives. Before I demonstrate this use of mutuality in customer service work, I outline the general relation between communication and labor within capitalism.

## Communication and Labor
Communication and communication commonplaces, by their very nature, have long been a part of economic activity. Today, however, communication has begun to assume a more central role in producing economic value,[24] through creativity,[25] new commodity forms,[26] branding,[27] and so on. The cultural terrain of communication offers a resource for the production of capitalist value.

Frequently, employed labor uses communication to produce intangible effects or commodities, such as subjectivity, affect, or image. Maurizio Lazzarato captures this development with the concept of immaterial labor, "labor that produces the informational and cultural content of the commodity." Information-oriented immaterial labor uses information and communication technologies to enhance production processes, as in just-in-time manufacturing or quality control programs. Culturally oriented immaterial labor "involves a series of activities that are not normally recognized as 'work'*in other words, the kinds of activities involved in defining and fixing cultural and artistic standards, fashions, tastes, consumer norms, and, more strategically, public opinion."[28] Brand management exemplifies the cultural form of immaterial labor. Through various avenues, then, communication enters and aids capitalism.

To produce economic value, immaterial labor draws upon "the general intellect," the general storehouse of knowledge of a culture and society, as "a direct force of production. "[29] As with value that stems from manual labor, creating wealth through immaterial labor relies upon an appropriation of a general capacity possessed by workers; immaterial labor exploits the knowledge, attitudes, and skills acquired through their participation in society, their social-ness.[30]

As a central component of the general intellect, communication commonplaces represent a vital force of production. In fact, the general intellect, Virno writes, "includes the epistemic models that structure social communication."[31] Communication commonplaces, already highly valued for their cultural and social productivity, now also animate numerous forms and sites of economic activity. Indeed, Virno and Lazzarato's

heavy emphasis on communication, modeled as information and cooperation, within immaterial labor prompts Greene to coin the term, "communicative labor." Communicative labor refers to a specific kind of immaterial labor and brings into relief "changes in the sphere of production and the role that [communication] plays as a practice, process, and product of economic, political, ideological, and cultural value."[32]

In this context, communication education has an important role, as it may cultivate, enhance, and direct the relevant portion of the general intellect toward communicative labor. Following Greene and Hicks' investigation of debate as a cultural technology for the ethical self-fashioning of liberal citizens, I see communication education and training as a technology for the creation of communicative laborers. Understanding communication as a technology: reveals how power works productively by augmenting the human capacity for speech/communication. [T]he productive power of cultural governance resides in the generation of subjects who come to understand themselves as speaking subjects willing to regulate and transform their political, economic, cultural and affective relationships. [33]

In the case of customer service training analyzed below, the communication component of the course provides "specific techniques that beings use to understand themselves."[34]

Lazzarato, too, recognizes a place for such training in that the capacity for immaterial labor is both generally available and already more or less developed in different groups of workers, due to experiences of socialization and education.

> In the highly skilled, qualified worker, the "communicational model" is already given, already constituted, and ... its potentialities ... already defined. In the young worker, however, the "precarious" worker, and the unemployed youth, we are dealing with a pure virtuality, a capacity that is as yet undetermined but that already shares all the characteristics of postindustrial productive subjectivity.[35]

Communication education may usefully shape and direct the general intellect for communicative labor. To perform customer service work, for instance, the mutuality commonplace must be foregrounded, cultivated through practice, and directed toward the customer. Job training programs, and communication education more generally, intervene in the general intellect, channeling it toward the production of economic value. In this way, communication and culture invigorate capitalism. In the next section, I describe the study setting and methods before analyzing a job-training customer service course.

## Method
### New Skill Job-Training Program
This analysis stems from a larger naturalistic study of the cultural manifestations and implications of the shifts from the old, manufacturing-based economy, to the new services and knowledge-based economy. The setting for this larger study is a locally designed and implemented job-training program in a Southeastern metropolitan area that has undergone a deep and rapid economic transformation, with tens of thousands of people having lost manufacturing and related jobs since 2000.

In late 2003, sparked by serious and persistent layoffs in the region's manufacturing sector, a coalition of public and non-profit agency leaders announced their intention to help the community and individuals respond to the changing economy. [36] The assistance took the form of New Skill,[37] a job-training program offered through a local community college. Coalition members provided the start up funds to develop curriculum, hire instructors, and promote the program.

Three features distinguish New Skill from more traditional job-training programs. First, it is designed specifically for those who have lost their jobs in traditional industries and who must quickly re-enter the workforce, presumably in a new industry. Second, the program retrains participants in no more than 90 days. Third, the training is for jobs in growing industries in the local economy. New Skill staff members develop

courses by monitoring local economic and industry trends to identify employment opportunities and consulting industry representatives about desired learning outcomes. For these reasons, New Skill has come to be seen as a national model for re-training dislocated workers.

## Data Collection and Analysis

For several reasons, this analysis focuses on a New Skill customer service representative (CSR) training course. First, CSR work illustrates well the communication assumptions within and demands of communicative labor in the service economy. 38 Second, the course illuminated the ideal CSR and customer service call [39] and how dislocated workers—as prospective CSRs—responded to these ideals. Third, the CSR job-training course offered access to the responses of a range of students, some of whom seemed unlikely to pursue a CSR job, often because of what they learned in the course. Given these reasons and the interest in interactive service work as a cultural and economic phenomenon, I studied the CSR course with an eye toward the meanings students, teachers, and others attached to customer service work, particularly since the work is ostensibly "new" when compared to manufacturing-oriented work.

Data reviewed in this analysis include observations, interviews, and documents. I spent approximately 60 hours over 12 weeks observing two offerings of the naturally occurring practices of the customer service representative course. Seven students enrolled in the first course, ten in the second. Each course offered about 55 hours of instruction in the abilities and attitudes of a successful CSR, and about 40 hours of instruction in keyboarding. CSR instruction included lectures, discussions of actual, tape-recorded customer service phone calls, mock phone calls, visits by potential employers, and various short activities and exercises. Throughout each course, the instructor drew upon her ten years in the customer service and call-center industries to illustrate practical implications of course material.

Ethnographic interviews with the course instructor and fourteen students responded to the naturally occurring conversations, activities, and breaks of the classroom setting. This contact strategy helped address the impacted lives of the course participants due to their un- or under-employment. When possible, more formal respondent interviews added further depth to the data .40 Documents collected and analyzed for this project include class handouts, exams, course textbooks, New Skill promotional materials, and recruiting materials provided by potential CSR employers who visited the course. These documents totaled approximately 300 pages.

In collecting and analyzing these data, I examined the CSR course as a site for transitioning dislocated manufacturing workers into service work. In monitoring this transition, I attended to student reactions to course content, service work, and their dislocation. Students commonly voiced concern about the need to engage authentically with customers while never allowing the customer to gain the upper hand. Within only a few class meetings of each course, a number of students voiced uncertainty about how to be "fair" to customers. I came to see that this tension formed the heart of customer service work and indexed many students' experiences of and expectations for changing economic conditions. Concern for this tension, grounded in students' reactions, served as the analytic focal point.

Data analysis occurred iteratively with data collection so that each informed the other. For example, as the concern for fairness emerged in fieldnotes, I followed up on this through further observation and interviews. I paid particular attention to the treatment of communication in relation to successful customer service. This strategy focused tensions between the official industry perspective and student meanings of this perspective. I synthesized these places of tension into data excerpts that represent course dialogue and events as closely as possible.

## Communicative Labor of Customer Service Work

In the analysis I first attend to the nature of the communication that supports customer service work, demonstrating the prominence of mutuality alongside the presence of customer objectification. Second, I discuss students' reluctance to embrace this work due to the contradiction of mutuality. This reluctance, in turn, interacts with students' experiences of economic dislocation to produce a more general attitude of cynicism.

*Mutuality and Technologies of Self and Other*

Not surprisingly, the job-training course began by making the CSR central to business success. Since a product's value derives less from the product, and more from the service attached to the product, it is the CSR that has direct, value-able contact with customers. The course textbook, "Call Center Success," characterized the CSR as "the voice of the organization" and the "primary contact" for customers. CSRs "project the company's image" and build and maintain relationships with the customer.[41] Good CSRs draw the customer into a personal and organizational relationship and, then, provide them "a wonderful experience" to maintain the relationship over time.

Students learned various attitudes and strategies to achieve this goal.[42] One course text, The Customer, taught students that being a good CSR rests on "the deep conviction [that we should recognize] the Customer [sic] as a human being and a Valued Asset [sic] to our business." To be successful, CSRs must know the essentials of their job and "quickly tune into people and [be] sensitive to their needs.'' For Ann, the course instructor and a CSR trainer at a credit card call center, communication knowledge and skill were most essential to the work of a CSR. Lacking the ability to acknowledge customers and their needs, "you will be like so many people ... thinking that only job knowledge will make them successful." The customer "needs to feel important and appreciated, needs the approval of others to support his/her self-approval, and fundamentally welcomes contact." A list of attitudes and strategies demonstrated the vitality and complexity of CSR work. Successful CSRs "treat every problem with respect, keep calm, cool and pleasant while avoiding all arguments, agree as often as possible, avoid placing blame, use reflective responses, exchange mutual feedback, agree on a solution that will build trust and loyalty, and recognize different communication styles." Perhaps most importantly, all communicative performances require authenticity, a "genuine smile in the voice" of the CSR. Such personal attention "provides a moment of truth" for each customer.

Through testimony, Ann underscored the crucial role of the CSR. One story valued the CSR by enumerating the effects of losing a customer who annually charged $100,000. "We need to get 68 new customers to replace that one lost customer." To avoid that situation, she continued, "Your job is to make the customer feel that your company is the best." Aside from the cautionary note, she regaled the students with stories of customers who showed their appreciation of her wonderful service with gifts, such as a Louis Vuitton bag. She also spoke of callers in need, including suicidal callers and elderly callers, who may seek assistance from a CSR. Elderly callers, for example, often call simply to talk to someone; frequently these callers do not carry the credit card the call center services.

This condensed tour of communication in customer service work may be usefully examined through the lenses of mutuality and communicative labor. As formulated in this job-training course, customer service work rests upon a particular vision of communication, communication as caring, authentic, and reciprocal. This vision is embodied in specific communicative techniques, such as putting a smile in one's voice, avoiding blame, and providing mutual feedback. Through these techniques, job-training students learn to monitor themselves so that they may perform appropriate behaviors. In other words, the communication commonplace of mutuality provides a philosophy and corresponding set of technologies for customer service work.

Customer service, then, possesses a moral dimension. Course content suggests that wonderful and authentic relations are uncommon and that good customer service may actually elevate the daily communication experiences of the customer and CSR. Authenticity and reciprocity in the customer service interaction improve the human condition; moments of truth and wonder offer possibilities of transcendence.[43]

CSR philosophy and techniques revolve around a variety of "soft skills" not often (easily) counted as work .[44] Customer service representatives may provide information to and resolve problems for customers. But, these tasks are subordinate to the creation and maintenance of an authentic, caring relationship with customers. The communicative labor that counts most, that creates value, is affective and aesthetic in nature .[45] Putting a smile in one's voice is done for the well-being of the caller and to provide that caller a "wonderful," "happy" experience.

These goals and technologies asked students to monitor themselves so that they may appropriately engage with others in the communicative labor of a CSR. In the context of the job-training course, students took steps toward recognizing themselves as "speaking subjects" able and willing to regulate their communicative behaviors.[46] Seen from the angle of mutuality, the communicative labor of a CSR is a technology of self and other.[47] CSRs speak with conviction and sincerity, expressing themselves and satisfying the needs of others (customers).

However, even as customer service work involves a deep conviction toward others as valuable humans, it also objectifies these same others as economic assets.

## Technologies of Objectification

Customer service interactions combine elements of production and consumption, with CSRs spanning the boundary between the constraint of the former and the freedom of the latter. CSRs must "manage the cultural contradiction" that arises when the customer and CSR encounter one another in this context.[48] Even as much of the communicative labor training occurred in the language of mutuality, the economic context of customer service—really credit servicing, given instructor experience and testimony—circumscribed the application of mutuality norms and technologies. To put it bluntly, CSRs must ensure that customers follow their credit agreements and pay their bills.

Thus, in addition to authentically communicating with customers, good CSRs retain control over customers and customer service calls at all times. A course text stated that successful CSRs actively manage the quality and quantity (number and length) of their calls to provide value to their employers. Ann told students to "always stay in control of the call and customer. Never lose that control." In the preferred method of managing the contradiction, CSRs link communication technologies of self and other to technologies of power, of objectification.

Students learned various techniques for controlling their calls and customers. Primary strategies rested upon the earlier techniques derived from the mutuality commonplace. For instance, a CSR might influence a customer by trading on the trust and relation maintenance that accompany customer rapport. Other strategies called for maintaining some distance from the customer. Ann repeatedly advised students to "never take things personal, that's the first step in maintaining control ... It's personal for the customer, business for you." Becoming close while remaining distant created another possibility, in which the CSR could "kill 'em with kindness," or be overly nice and pleasant to defuse any conflict or disagreement.

If these interactional techniques failed, a good CSR would "know the business," meaning they would fall back on employer policy to respond to a customer. However, the use of policy as a first strategy with customers, to Ann, was often the choice of an unskilled or immature CSR. "As new reps you will use your policies a lot. But, as you improve, you'll need those a lot less, and your other skills much more."

These communication technologies intersect those informed by mutuality. On the one hand, good customer service diminishes the distance between the customer and the service provider. The customer becomes known, close, and immediate. On the other hand, this immediacy may enable or enhance strategies that objectify the customer; positive relations that stem from personally knowing the customer may help the CSR guide the customer to the desired outcome. Customer service work may rely upon sincerity. But, at the same time, an insincere sincerity[49] may help CSRs manage their calls. A technology of self and other operates alongside a technology of power, or objectification.

Serving a customer, oneself, and the firm leads to a simultaneously enhanced and diminished moral agency. It is not that a CSR has no convictions or allegiances. Rather, they has competing convictions and allegiances, with those of the employer bumping against those of the customer. Strangely, the communicative labor in this service work seeks to be, simultaneously, aesthetic and anaesthetic.[50]

In an age of the sovereign customer, the dual technologies of self/other and of objectification illustrate that a customer cannot always be right if a producer wishes to generate revenue and, better, profit.[51] Producers must "demand cash for [their] service of love."[52] Customer service interactions, then, attempt to offer a mutual and reciprocal freedom to the customer and CSR, yet in a context in which the CSR (producer) controls the customer. Subsequently, customer service interactions must contain the "danger" of the customer piercing the illusion of customer sovereignty, lest the recognition of the sovereign producer disenchant the customer.[53] Over-whelming kindness toward the customer becomes an appropriate strategy for doing so.

Throughout the observed courses the dual communication technologies of CSR labor were never foregrounded as an explicit topic of concern. Course instruction portrayed customer service work as socially, culturally, and economically valuable. CSR labor presented a chance, as Deborah Cameron and Wendy Ford have separately argued, to provide care, concern, counseling, and therapy for others.[54] Student reactions, though, continually pointed to the problematic nature of the dual technologies. In the following section I draw upon student reactions to their CSR training to grasp the meanings and implications of customer service work.

### *Resisting Customer Service Work*

I argue that students reacted against the communicative labor of customer service work because the economic context of customer service perverted communication technologies derived from mutuality and directed them toward the management of customers. Translating the mutuality commonplace into practice positioned the CSR and customer as outside the economic context, as equal partners in collectively determining a mutually beneficial future. Such positioning hid the "true" purpose of the customer service call. Students objected to this strategy. First, the combination violated the norms provided by the mutuality commonplace. Second, the violation intersected their personal experiences of economic dislocation and surfaced unease around honesty and fairness.

### Norms of Mutuality As a Source of Resistance

Using mutuality as a perspective on and technology for communication, customer service work is culturally meaningful and economically vital. As CSRs create sociocultural and capitalist value through their communicative labor, customer service work offers an element of transcendence. However, course participants questioned this elevation of customer service. In one exchange, a student responded to Ann's query about how the skills and attitudes required of a CSR overlapped with his previous work as a police officer.

> Oh, [police work] involves life or death situations. Not credit. That's very different from the corporate world. You can't compare these. In law enforcement, if you don't treat fellow officers well they may not come when you need them. You have to know they will be there when you need them. That doesn't apply here. [Police work] isn't about something going badly on the phone. It's more than that.

This response illustrates two aspects of the subsumption of the general intellect by capital. First, the use of the mutuality commonplace in the context of customer service trivialized the student's prior experience of mutuality, which occurred in a context of "life or death" stakes. Customer service work, and the corporate world generally, is simply instrumental and economic, not personally or culturally meaningful. Second, the comments situate the real value of mutuality outside of the corporate world, outside of capitalism. In its ability to produce and sustain life, the communicative labor associated with mutuality is "beyond measure."[55]

Inserting communicative labor informed by mutuality into the context of customer service work posed a central concern for many students. In the above response the student refuses the call to be open to others, to communication, [56] because the context does not suit the call. CSR communicative labor represents the economic exploitation of possibilities offered by cultural knowledge and practice, or, in other words, by life.[57] Customer service seeks to exploit labor that affirms and produces life itself—mutuality, or the co-creation of an interdependent future. Capitalism attempts to incorporate within valorization, or the production of surplus value

through labor, a process of self-valorization, or the organic and collective production of value that meets the needs of a community. [58]

Customer service, as evidenced in this job-training course, places at cross purposes two technologies of communication. One technology stems from and remains true to the mutuality commonplace and may be thought of as a technology for the ethical fashioning of self and other. But, in the economic context of customer service, practices of mutuality may be perverted and directed toward the control of the customer by a CSR. Objectifying the other requires a second technology, a technology of power.[59] Hardt and Negri claim that the capitalist appropriation of communication does not cheapen communication, but enhances production to the level of complexity and richness present in social relations. [60] Student meanings of customer service work—of the communicative labor that requires us "to speak, communicate, cooperate[61]—render an alternative claim.

The disjunction between identifying with and objectifying the other/customer became apparent in other ways. Ann often calculated the relation among customers, value, and labor. One story measured loyalty, reciprocity, and interdependence in terms of money.

> If you have a customer that's been loyal ten, fifteen years, never had an issue paying their bill, always everything is perfect with them and if they get into a tight spot— let's say they normally charge $10,000 a month and this one particular time they're not able to pay that—I would go out of my way to find a solution for that card member. On the other hand, if you have a customer who pays you late every other month and always needs this or always needs that, when they're actually in a tough spot I would try to find a solution, but I wouldn't go out of my way like I would with my other customer.

Students quickly calculated the annual expenditure, puzzled aloud over how anyone might charge $120,000 a year, and, finally, wondered if their own spending habits— rather more constrained—explained their frequent enduring of poor customer service.[62] At this, Ann sought to allay their suspicions.

> When [the dependable customer] needs me and I don't [help], they're going to take business elsewhere. They're going to say, "I've been loyal to you and the time I needed you, you weren't there for me.'' That's the worst thing that you want. I would prefer to continue to do business with a loyal customer even if they only spent $2000. I know that's a guaranteed $2000. Whereas I have this customer and they spend 10 [thousand], but I don't know how long it's going to take them to pay me back. Loyalty is a very big key. That's our business, our loyal customers. And when they do need us, we need to be there.

From the perspective of the mutuality commonplace, communication practices and outcomes of loyalty, care, and interdependence are valuable in and of themselves. In Ann's illustrations, though, mutuality practices and outcomes acquire economic value, and relations with some customers are more economically valuable than relations with others. Within each customer service interaction, a good CSR weighs the costs and benefits of loyalty, care, and so on, simultaneously using a technology of self/other and a technology of power.

Pricing customer loyalty and care led to a particular view of customers. According to one student:

> You have a general distrust for the people on the other end of the line. They say, "Oh, the check's in the mail," or "I haven't gotten the bill yet," and you just distrust them as a general rule. You can trust these people [classmates] around you. You can trust your co-workers. But the guy on the end of the line, don't trust him, cause you've got a job to do, which involves getting the money back. That was the gist I got [from the course]. Relate to the customers and that you can't always trust what they're saying cause they're trying to get what they want and you're trying to get what you want. The job involves a level of skepticism for the people on the other end of the line. It's a clash of wanting to help the guy and making sure he gets the money in.

This student's comments draw into relief a "clash" between communicating along an axis of care and concern for the customer and along an axis of objectification of the customer.

These competing technologies of self/other and power engendered concern for fairness toward others, as well as the self. One student worried about the effects of customer service work on personal integrity:

> I don't see it so much as being honest work, because what you are representing to your customer is just not necessarily your personality. It's a front. You are putting on a mask to present to the customers. And I believe when you're working honestly, you're working as yourself. Is it me that's making the money or just this person I'm pretending to be?

The student also characterized good conversation as involving intensity, duration, and exploration. Such conversation surfaces "people's back stories" and limits stereotyping. This sort of interaction with classmates had taught him that "The guy next to me [in class] isn't trying to shoot down my ambitions or do something to hurt me. He's just trying to do his own thing. He's trying to get by, basically just trying to survive. In the class I learned to be more respectful of the people around me.''

On the one hand, students appreciated the self-valorization possible within the course, often using the technology of self/other to fashion interdependent relations with classmates. On the other hand, students portrayed a wariness and weariness about objectifying others for valorization (surplus value), not wanting to "shoot down" others' ambitions. In short, students accepted the communicative labor that ethically fashioned self and other. They resisted the communicative labor that objectified the other as an economic asset to be controlled.

Students' own experiences of work conditioned and animated their reactions to technologies of self/other and of objectification. I discuss this in the next section.

### *Economic Dislocation As a Source of Resistance*

In understanding customer service communicative labor, students drew not only upon general knowledge about good communication. Their work biographies also became important and generated further opposition to customer service work. Unemployment and underemployment drove most of the students to enroll in the course. Some had lost jobs in mass layoffs, and some held jobs they did not like or that paid poorly. Some had suffered workplace injuries and saw CSR work as less demanding on the body. Though the precise paths into the course varied, on the whole students spoke of the contemporary world of work as having let them down. Hence, communicative labor connected to mutuality philosophy, technologies, and outcomes held appeal; communicative labor that objectified customers and focused on narrow economic concerns was offensive.

Toward the end of each course, students performed mock customer service calls to develop their skill. Ann set up the basic facts of the call, asked for a volunteer caller and call taker, and then turned the call over to students. In the call detailed below, the customer wanted a 60-day account payment window instead of a 30-day window. According to Accounting, played by Ann, the customer had been violating the existing agreement by consistently paying late, after 45 days rather than 30. For this reason, Accounting did not want to change the credit agreement.

In the first role-play of the call, Mary acted as CSR. After Accounting refused to change the credit terms, Mary asked the caller, in turn, if he wanted to speak to Accounting, her supervisor, and, finally, her office manager. When Ann interrupted, "Mary, why offer that?" Mary sighed, "I don't want to argue with him. I want him off my phone." Ann admonished, "Don't pass along the call if you know the answer." Tom, another student, interjected. I recount the event here:

Tom. I'd fight for the customer. Let's get him that extension. We don't want him to walk away from us. He's been with us for fourteen years. [Eric, the caller, had added this information in the exchange with Mary.] He may be experiencing a little strife, but let's help him. Why does he need the extension?

> Ann. Let's role play it from the call to Accounting,
> Tom. Ann, he needs an extension to help him out.
> Ann. His financial situation looks pretty unfavorable to me, so no.
> Tom. He's been with us for fourteen years. I don't want to lose him. Can we offer him a temporary extension?
> Ann. How much money is he generating each month?
> Tom. About $2,000 a month. (To Eric), I'm sorry to keep you waiting. I'm talking with Accounting to see if we might work something out.
> Eric. I need those 60 days. I'm paying you slowly because my customers are paying me slowly. I need 60 days for 6 months.
> Tom. I appreciate that. Let me take that back to Accounting.
> Tom. (To Ann) Will you grant him 60 days for 6 months? He's having problems with his customers.
> Ann. I can do 50 days for 6 months. And only because you're going to bat for him. Tom. I'm only doing that due to his fourteen years with us. I'd hate to lose this customer. Who knows what he might do in the future.

Communicative labor in this call operated along two tracks. On one track, students adopted a long-term time horizon, emphasizing a fourteen-year relationship with the customer and a hopeful, though open and unknown, future in which the customer relationship continues and the customer's situation improves. Students privileged a technology of self/other and drew upon a mutually beneficial past to chart a course into the future. Mutuality provided a desired outcome and communication technologies to achieve that outcome.

On another track, Ann preferred a short-term, contractually guided relationship in which late and present payments defined the customer. She invoked his current "financial situation" to deny the extension request and, when pressed for an accommodation, judged the request based on how much "money he generated each month." In this labor, Ann relied upon a communication technology that objectified the caller as a cost/benefit and focused narrowly on the immediate extraction of payment. This response foreclosed the creation of a mutually defined future.

Given students' experiences of the contemporary economy, it is not surprising that they embraced long-term and mutually beneficial relationships. Their dislocations and under-employment stressed short-term demands and, often, social isolation. For example, Mary confided that she had grown tired of customers, friends, and family looking down on her for working in low-end retail jobs. Throughout his course, Tom raised questions of fairness, articulating his experience of losing his IBM job after twenty-five years of employment. After IBM, he moved in and out of work and spent the two years previous to enrolling in the CSR course living "as a recluse."[63] Tom lamented the lack of clear demarcations of right and wrong in work and society, which he saw exemplified in the case of Terri Schiavo. As he searched for clarity and certainty, he often recalled his time in the military: "They knew how to run an operation. We don't have that too often today. We'd be better off if more people knew that. And if they knew how to treat people." Tom also found clarity and certainty in the Book of Revelation and believed the "end times" had begun. In contrast to the grim and pre-determined future depicted there, Tom spoke admiringly of his time with IBM, where "we were creating the future."

As the mock call illustrates, the course offered two forms of communicative labor, each with a differing ethical orientation. Thus, students had to negotiate how to care for customers while distancing themselves so that they might judge the merits of customers' requests. This ethical self-fashioning foregrounds the relations among judgment, conviction, and class in customer service work. Members of the knowledge class secure their interests by separating their convictions from their judgments, a sign of professionalism. [64] Observing, in the 1950s, the intersection of the masses and new communication technologies and industries, Raymond Williams

worried that "any practical denial of the relation between conviction and communication, between experience and expression, is morally damaging alike to the individual and to the common language."[65] As Greene and Hicks put it, by separating speech and conviction "the new symbolic workers of the cultural industry turn into sources of communication while losing their status as moral agents.' '[66]

Interestingly, students in this job-training course did not readily separate judgment and conviction. Mary refused to judge the case at all, seeking help in a succession of colleagues and supervisors. Because Tom identified with the caller, he placed his judgment and conviction squarely on the side of the caller. Maintaining the unity of judgment and conviction responds to the contemporary economy and preserves a moral agency through which an interdependent future is crafted with others. [67] The "new economy" take-up of communicative labor, at least in customer service work, asks for authenticity, reciprocity, and interdependence. Yet, these operate alongside, and as, instrumental tools. It is this intersection of self-other fashioning and other objectification that resonated with students' work biographies and made the separation of judgment and conviction difficult, if not inappropriate.

For many course participants, a job in the customer service field seemed bitterly contradictory. Working as a CSR, they could provide customers what they themselves had at times given and received at work: trust, fairness, and interdependence. But, CSR work also asked them to treat customers as they had often been treated, as economic objects. Their experience of the contemporary economy and the CSR course accentuated instrumental features of work.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I have examined a customer service job-training course as a site of communication education, where dislocated workers are taught to fashion themselves and others through specific communication technologies. I have argued that customer service relies upon a particular configuration of communicative labor. Customer service draws from the general intellect the communication commonplace of mutuality. This commonplace provides communication technologies for and outcomes of successful customer service, and asks customer service representatives to cultivate an interdependent and mutually beneficial relationship with customers. However, this technology of self and other functions within a capitalist context. Hence, CSRs must also objectify the customer through a technology of power to extract payment and adherence to service agreements. The communicative labor of customer service transforms dreams and relations of mutuality into tools of asymmetry. Course participants recognized and resisted the contradictory uses and combinations of mutuality. Student resistance stemmed from the mutuality commonplace and their experiences of the contemporary economy. For critical/ cultural scholars of communication, this work holds several lessons.

First, communicative labor may shape and be shaped by specific contexts, such as institutions and processes of capitalism. [68] In the particular case of customer service, the meeting of production and consumption in the service interaction necessitated communicative labor that both satisfied and controlled the customer. A communication technology of self and other sought to place the CSR and customer in an equal and mutually beneficial relation. Simultaneously, a communication technology of power sought to objectify the customer as an economic asset. And, some objectification strategies derived from the techniques of self-other fashioning. Communicative labor, then, is malleable before, during, and after its appropriation by capitalism.

Attending to such embeddedness of communicative labor may help augment and correct those discussions of communicative capitalism, especially those from outside the discipline of communication, which operate at a large remove from actual sites of communicative labor.[69] Such analyses, for example, often overlook communication variety, instead treating communication as a singular entity, often as networked information flow, sometimes as cooperation. Thus, Jodi Dean claims that communication now takes place without communicability, without the ability for dialogue, connection, or community: "Communication has detached itself from political ideals of belonging and connection to function as itself an economic form. "[70]

The analysis in this paper, though, illustrates a struggle over whether and in what form communication will or will not be included in capitalism. Student reactions captured in this study clearly demonstrate Dean's position to be an overstatement. At least some forms of communicative labor, a form of life producing and affirming labor,[71] fit only uncomfortably within capitalism,[72] as the attempt to capture and instrumentalize communicative labor derived from the mutuality commonplace shows. Communication ideals, technologies, and outcomes of belonging, connection, and mutually beneficial interdependence retain agency even as they (may) form a productive force within capitalism.

This suggests a second implication. Irritation caused when communicative labor meets capitalist relations may prompt resistance. [73] Wariness about harnessing mutuality to economic exchange led the job-training participants in this project to resist the self- (and other-) fashioning required of a successful customer service representative. Or, to put it differently, students embraced the technologies and outcomes derived from mutuality and rejected the technologies and outcomes related to objectification. Importantly, this resistance came directly from the communicative labor of mutuality. In other words, using mutuality as a base for customer service work inserts a moral criterion into and reveals the social relations of capitalist production. Because communicative labor produces life, the "subjugation" of such labor by capitalism need not limit "the radical autonomy of its productive synergies," nor "take away the autonomy of the constitution and meaning" of this labor. [74] As capitalism exploits the general intellect to produce economic value, it simultaneously assumes various other cultural and political values. Communication may infect capitalism just as capitalism may infect communication. [75]

Third, cultural, political, and economic experiences may incite or inhibit forms of communicative labor. A context of economic disinvestment, political cynicism, and destabilized cultural authority[76] seems likely to condition communicative labor in certain ways. In the case presented here, students' reactions toward customer service work interacted with their own experiences of economic dislocation to yield seeds of hope and despair. While the mutuality commonplace allowed students to critique customer service, the experience of job loss, injury, underemployment, and labor force withdrawal (together with the perceived perversion of mutuality) prompted frustration, fatigue, resignation and, at times, cynicism. Performance of and reactions to communicative labor must be crafted and articulated to politics; [77] they must "be made to matter."[78] Forms of communicative labor might usefully serve as a point of organizing for collective action, potentially capturing those in occupations (and those affected by occupations) that fall outside of typical labor movements. And, just as capitalism may cultivate the general intellect through communication technologies, so, too, may a political movement.

Fourth, managing the relations among speech, conviction, and moral agency form a centerpiece of CSR subjectivity. Customer service work articulated a technology of self and other to a technology of objectification and sought to sever the unity of speech and conviction. In rejecting the articulation of the former, students retained the unity of the latter. A key trait underwriting the knowledge class is the separation of speech and conviction. [79] Foregoing this separation positioned the job-training students as not of the knowledge class. As well, in foregoing separation they illustrated a unique normative stance toward communicative labor. Their resistance raises the possibility that it is precisely their class positioning and relative distance from communication education that enables their particular assessment of customer service work. In other words, a different program of communication education, perhaps one that more closely resembles a university-based program, might make communicative labor more attractive. Communication scholars especially should consider that programs of communication education have much to say about the implications of communicative labor and the formations of class groupings and processes.[80]

Ultimately, I locate hope in the students' reactions. The commonplace of mutuality guided them, indicating a desire for mutual interdependence and fairness, and revealing the often contradictory social relations inherent in capitalism. All of these can help provide a foundation for democratic and collective action.

## Notes

[1]     David Carlone and Bryan Taylor, "Organizational Communication and Cultural Studies: A Review Essay,'' Communication Theory 8 (1998): 33767; Paul du Gay and Michael Pryke, "Cultural Economy: An Introduction," in Cultural Economy (London: Sage, 2002), 1-19; Andrew Sayer and Richard Walker, The New Social Economy: Reworking the Division of Labor (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1992).

[2]     David Vise and Mark Malseed, The Google Story (New York: Delacorte Press, 2005).

[3]     Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Projections," US Department of Labor (December 12, 2005), http://www.bls.gov/emp/emptab3.htm (accessed 5 March 2008). The US Department of Labor predicts that service-providing industries will account for approximately 18.7 million of the 18.9 million new wage and salary jobs generated by 2014.

[4]     Terry Flew, "Creativity, Cultural Studies, and Services Industries,'' Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies 1 (2004): 17693.

[5]     Jurgen Habermas, Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1990/1983); Michael Schudson, "Why Conversation is not the Soul of Democracy,'' Critical Studies in Mass Communication 14 (1997): 297309; John Durham Peters, Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999); and Rudolf P. Gaudio, "Coffeetalk: Starbucks[TM] and the Commercialization of Casual Conversation,'' Language in Society 32 (2003): 659-91.

[6]     J. Michael Sproule, "The New Managerial Rhetoric and the Old Criticism,'' Quarterly Journal of Speech 74 (1988): 46886; J. Michael Sproule, "Organizational Rhetoric and the Public Sphere,'' Communication Studies 40 (1989): 25865; and J. Michael Sproule, "Organizational Rhetoric and the Rational-Democratic Society,'' Journal of Applied Communication Research 18 (1990): 129~40.

[7]     Jurgen Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 2: Lifeworld and System (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987); Stanley Deetz, Democracy in an Age of Corporate Colonization: Developments in Communication and the Politics of Everyday Life (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992); and Stanley Deetz, Transforming Communication, Transforming Business: Building Responsive and Responsible Workplaces (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton, 1995).

[8]     Sproule, "The New Managerial Rhetoric''; Sproule, "Organizational Rhetoric and the Public Sphere''; Sproule, "Organizational Rhetoric and the Rational-Democratic Society.''

[9]     Phillip K. Tompkins, Apollo, Challenger, Columbia: The Decline of the Space Program (Los Angeles: Roxbury, 2005); and Andrew Sayer, "Valuing Culture and Economy,'' in Culture and Economy After the Cultural Turn, ed. Larry Ray and Andrew Sayer (London: Sage, 1999), 53- 75.

[ 10] Carlone and Taylor, "Organizational Communication.''

[11] Bryan C. Taylor and David Carlone, "Silicon Communication: A Reply and Case Study,'' Management Communication Quarterly 15 (2001): 289-300.

[ 12]   Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose, "Production, Identity, Democracy,'' Theory and Society 24 (1995): 427~67; Paul du Gay, Consumption and Identity at Work (London: Sage, 1996); Nikolas Rose, Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self (London: Free Association Books, 1999); and Jack Z. Bratich, Jeremy Packer, and Cameron McCarthy, Foucault, Cultural Studies, and Governmentality (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003).

[ 13]   Robert T. Craig, "Communication Theory as a Field,'' Communication Theory 9 (1999): 119- 61.

[ 14]   Talbot J. Taylor, Mutual Misunderstanding: Scepticism and the Theorizing of Language and Interpretation (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 10, 12; and Craig, "Communication Theory.''

[ 15]   Taylor, Mutual Misunderstanding; and Craig, "Communication Theory,'' 131.

[ 16]   Stuart Hall, "Signification, Representation, Ideology: Althusser and the Post-Structuralist Debates,'' Critical Studies in Mass Communication 2 (1985): 91-114.

[ 17]   du Gay and Pryke, "Cultural Economy: An Introduction.''

[ 18]   Raymond Williams, Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society, revised edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); and David Morley, "Communication,'' in New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society, ed. Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meaghan Morris (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 47-50.

[ 19]    Peters, Speaking Into the Air, 47; and David Depew and John Durham Peters, "Community and Communication: The Conceptual Background,'' in Communication and Community, ed. Gregory J. Shepherd and Eric W. Rothenbuhler (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2001), 3-21.

[20]    James W. Carey, "A Cultural Approach to Communication,'' in Communication as Culture (New York: Routledge, 1989), 13-36.

[21]    Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self,'' in Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault, ed. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 16~49; Ronald Walter Greene and Darrin Hicks, "Lost Convictions: Debating Both Sides and the Ethical Self-Fashioning of Liberal Citizens,'' Cultural Studies 19 (2005): 10026.

[22] Carey, "A Cultural Approach"; Peters, Speaking Into the Air; and Craig, "Communication Theory as a Field." [23] John Durham Peters, "Communication as Dissemination,'' in Communication as ... Perspectives on Theory, ed. Gregory J. Shepherd, Jeffrey St. John, and Ted Striphas (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006), 21122.

[24]    Maurizio Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labor,'' in Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics, ed. Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 133~47; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Empire (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

[25]    Chris Bilton and Ruth Leary, "What Can Managers Do for Creativity? Brokering Creativity in the Creative Industries,'' International Journal of Cultural Policy 8 (2002): 49-64.

[26]    Nigel Thrift, "Re-inventing Invention: New Tendencies in Capitalist Commodification," Economy and Society 35 (2006): 279-306.

[27]    Adam Arvidsson, Brands: Meaning and Value in Media Culture (London: Routledge, 2006).

[28]    Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labor,'' 133.

[29]    Karl Marx, Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy, trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Random House, 1973), 706.

[30]    Paolo Virno, "The Ambivalence of Disenchantment,'' in Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics, ed. Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 13-34; and Paolo Virno, "Virtuosity and Revolution: The Political Theory of Exodus,'' in Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics, ed. Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 189-210.

[31]    Virno, "Ambivalence of Disenchantment,'' 22.

[32]    Ronald Walter Greene, "Rhetoric and Capitalism: Rhetorical Agency as Communicative Labor,'' Philosophy and Rhetoric 37 (2004): 202.

[33]    Greene and Hicks, "Lost Convictions,'' 101.

[34]    Foucault, "Technologies of the Self." [35] Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labor,'' 136.

[36]    Between 2000 and 2003, the region lost approximately 25,000 manufacturing and related jobs. Average unemployment rose to 6.2 percent in mid-2003. Some counties reported an average unemployment rate of more than 8.0 percent at the end of 2004. The quasi-official long-term strategy in responding to this grim economic news is to make the region into an attractive place for what Richard Florida has termed "the creative class.''

[37]    To protect confidentiality, all names are pseudonyms.

[38]    Deborah Cameron, "Styling the Worker: Gender and the Commodification of Language in the Globalized Service Economy,'' Journal of Sociolinguistics 4 (2000): 32347.

[39]    This course trained students for handling incoming phone calls*those made by customers*but not for making outgoing, or telemarketing, calls.

[40]    Thomas R. Lindlof and Bryan C. Taylor, Qualitative Communication Research Methods, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002).

[41]    Lloyd C. Finch, Call Center Success: Essential Skills for CSRs (Menlo Park, CA: Crisp Publications, 2000).

[42]    For recent discussion of the role of interactional strategies in demonstrating commitment to the customer and exceeding their expectations for service, see Leonard L. Berry, Eileen A. Wall, and Lewis P. Carbone, "Service Clues and Customer Assessment of the Service Experience: Lessons from Marketing,'' The Academy of Management Perspectives 20 (2006): 43-57.

[43]    This suggestion of transcendence also positions customer service work as a calling. See Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

[44]    Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labor.''

[45]    Gaudio, "Coffeetalk"; Hardt, ''Affective Labor.''

[46]    Greene and Hicks, "Lost Convictions.''

[47]    Foucault, "Technologies of the Self." [48] Marek Korczynski and Ursula Ott, "When Production and Consumption Meet: Cultural

Contradictions and the Enchanting Myth of Customer Sovereignty,'' Journal of Management Studies 41 (2004): 579.

[49]    Lawrence Grossberg, We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture (New York: Routledge, 1992). Indeed, an informant with call center supervisory experience told me that the most successful CSRs are those who treat each call as a game.

[50]    Contrary to prevailing wisdom, the labor employed to achieve this effect is highly skilled, not routinized or de-skilled.

[51]    Paul du Gay and Graeme Salaman, "The Cult[ure] of the Customer,'' Journal of [Management Studies 29 (1992): 61533; Korczynski and Ott, "When Production and Consumption Meet"; and Marek Korczynski, "The Point of Selling: Capitalism, Consumption, and Contradictions,'' Organization 12 (2005): 69-88.

[52]    Karl Marx, "The Meaning of Human Requirements,'' in The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 (New York: International Publishers, 1964), 148.

[53]    Korczynski, "The Point of Selling.''

[54]    Cameron, "Styling the Worker"; and Wendy S. Zabava Ford, "Customer Expectations for Interactions with Service Providers: Relationship Versus Encounter Orientation and Personalized Service Communication," Journal of Applied Communication Research 29 (2001): 1-29.

[55]    Hardt and Negri, Empire.

[56]    Ronald Walter Greene, "John Dewey's Eloquent Citizen: Communication, Judgment, and Postmodern Capitalism,'' Argumentation and Advocacy 39 (2003): 189-200.

[57]    Hardt and Negri, Empire; and Greene, "John Dewey's Eloquent Citizen.''

[58]    Hardt and Negri, Empire.

[59]    Foucault, "Technologies of the Self." I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for assistance on this point.

[60]    Hardt and Negri, Empire.

[61]    Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labor,'' 135.

[62]    It is reasonable to assume that this fictional customer represents a small-business owner. However, the course instructor and students never stated this. Rather, discussions seemed to assume that the customer was an individual with formidable spending power.

[63]    Other dislocated students I have spoken with in the course of this project have also described themselves as "recluses" or "hermits.''

[64]    Greene and Hicks, "Lost Convictions." In addition to resisting the separation of judgment and conviction, students also resisted blaming themselves for their failures, another key cultural symbol and ideological feature of professionalism. See Stanley Aronowitz and William DiFazio, The Jobless Future: Sci-Tech and the Dogma of Work (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

[65]    Raymond Williams, Culture & Society: 1780-1950 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 304.

[66]    Greene and Hicks, "Lost Convictions,'' 119.

[67]    Of course, not separating judgment and conviction marks the students as not part of the knowledge class and may place them in a precarious position within the new international division of cultural labor. See Toby Miller, Nitin Govil, John McMurria, Richard Maxwell, and Ting Wang, Global Hollywood 2 (London: British Film Institute, 2005).

[68]    Ronald Walter Greene, "Orator Communist,'' Philosophy and Rhetoric 39 (2006): 85-95; Gaudio, "Coffeetalk"; and Cameron, "Styling the Worker.''

[69]    Hardt and Negri, Empire; and Paul A. Passavant and Jodi Dean, ed., Empire's New Clothes: Reading Hardt and Negri (New York: Routledge, 2004).

[70]    Jodi Dean, "The Networked Empire: Communicative Capitalism and the Hope for Politics,'' in Empire's New Clothes: Reading Hardt and Negri, ed. Paul A. Passavant and Jodi Dean (New York: Routledge, 2004), 273.

[71]    Greene, "Rhetoric and Capitalism.''

[72]    Greene, "Orator Communist."

[73]    Andrew W. Jones, "Caring Labor and Class Consciousness: The Class Dynamics of Gendered Work,"
Sociological Forum 16 (2001): 281-99. Those who perform paid caring labor are more likely to be class
conscious due to the conflicting goals of caring laborers and managers.

[74]    Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labor," 145.

[75]    J. K. Gibson-Graham, The End of Capitalism (as We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy
(Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1996).

[76]    Lawrence Grossberg, Caught in the Crossfire: Kids, Politics, and America's Future (Boulder, CO:
Paradigm, 2005).

[ 77] Ernesto Laclau, "Can Immanence Explain Social Struggles," in Empire's New Clothes: Reading Hardt
and Negri, ed. Paul A. Passavant and Jodi Dean (New York: Routledge, 2004), 21-30.

[78]    Dean, "The Networked Empire," 284.

[79]    Greene and Hicks, "Lost Convictions."

[80]    J. K. Gibson-Graham, Stephen A. Resnick, and Richard D. Wolff (eds.), "Introduction: Class in a
Poststructuralist Frame," in Class and Its Others (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 1-22.