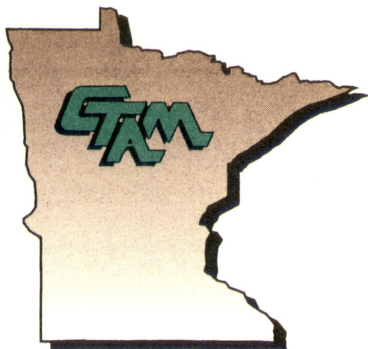


VOLUME 23
1996



**Women in British Broadcasting:
An Examination of Perceived
Opportunities and Constraints**

**"That Darn Arne:"
Humorous and Nostalgic Themes
in Attack Political Advertising**

**A Case Study in Method:
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Toward Advanced Television Services**

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Exploring Chaotic Elements
of Narrative Performance**

**Using *Children of a Lesser God*
to Teach Intercultural Communication**

COMMUNICATION & THEATER ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA
JOURNAL

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**COMMUNICATION AND THEATER
ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA JOURNAL**

Volume 23

Summer 1996

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COMMUNICATION AND THEATER
ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA JOURNAL

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

I am extremely proud to report that 1996 has been another year of accomplishment for CTAM and for your Journal. We were very fortunate to receive, for the second time, the CSCA State Journal Award honoring excellence in state journals. Additionally, Gerald Pepper also received a Top Manuscript award for his lead article in the 1995 issue. Congratulations to Jerry and to all who assisted with the journal.

This year's journal continues several traditions, including competitive articles, book reviews, essays on teaching, and a spotlight article on "orality" in the communication classroom. Work continues on updating the journal index, which I hope to have ready for the 1997 convention. Other goals include getting the journal into libraries, and exploring the possibility of an on-line edition.

Again, I would like to thank the following people for their help: all of the Associate Editors and CTAM officers listed on the first page, my assistants Erica and Martha, office manager Donna Podratz and her crew, Carley Cutler who worked with mailings, and of course Cindy Carver and all of the SCTA faculty at Concordia. My thanks to the contributors via advertising, donations, and dues. Special thanks to Dennis Ringdahl at Richtman's Printing, who did a fine job again this year. There are many others who work with the journal, and my thanks goes out to all of you for your support and ideas. Finally, I would like to thank my wife and family for putting up with manuscripts and disks strung all over the house.

CTAM JOURNAL MISSION STATEMENT

[The mission statement was written by Jerry Pepper and adopted by the CTAM Board of Governors.]

The *Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota Journal* (CTAMJ) is the scholarly journal of the Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota. It is also an outlet for innovative teaching methods as well as issues of discipline-related importance. All theoretical and methodological approaches are welcome. The CTAMJ encourages contributions from scholars and practitioners who comprise all segments of the journal's readership, including K-12 educators, graduate school, community college, college and university groups. The journal welcomes theoretical and applied articles and teaching suggestions from both the theater and communication disciplines. All general articles will be blindly reviewed by capable scholars in the appropriate field.

No work will be accepted or rejected purely on the basis of its methodology and/or subject and/or the geographical location of the author(s) and/or the work affiliation (secondary/college level, department, etc.) of the author(s). Author sex, race, ethnic background, etc., are never considered in making editorial judgments. The demands of the disciplines of Speech Communication and Theater are key factors in the editorial judgments made.

But, when making editorial decisions, all attempts are made to balance these demands with the needs and interests of the journal's readers.

The journal is guided by three key principles:

- * TO PROVIDE AN OUTLET FOR THE EXPRESSION OF DIVERSE IDEAS.

- * TO PUBLISH HIGH QUALITY SCHOLARSHIP IN THE DISCIPLINES OF SPEECH COMMUNICATION AND THEATER

- * TO MEET THE JOURNAL-RELATED NEEDS OF CTAM AND ITS MEMBERS

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Call for Manuscripts goes out in the fall of the year and the deadline for submissions is in February of the following year. Details of how to submit are given in the Call which is sent to all members, departments, and announced in SPECTRA. Book review ideas should be queried with the editor in advance of the submission date. Articles are read anonymously by two Associate Editors. All author identification markings are removed from the articles and no editor reads the work of a colleague. Associate Editors may submit articles to the journal, but their work must go through the process of blind review, just as any other submitter. The Journal Editor facilitates the process and makes final decisions based on the Associate Editors' recommendations and comments. If there are any questions about the process, please direct them to the Journal Editor.

Women in British Broadcasting: An Examination of Perceived Opportunities and Constraints

Rebecca Ann Lind, University of Illinois at Chicago
(currently at the University of Minnesota)

Introduction

The British broadcasting industry has often been held up as a model to which other broadcasting systems might aspire. But how well are the BBC and the independent (i.e., commercial) broadcasters doing in the difficult process of integrating women into an industry that has traditionally been a male stronghold?

This research investigates perceived opportunities and constraints facing women in British broadcasting. It is important for three reasons. First, it adds to an established body of research on equal opportunities for women and other minorities (I consider women a minority, even though they are a numerical majority of the British population [Cashmore, 1989], because they are a minority in terms of power, industry, politics, etc.). Second, declining birth rates, particularly among the upper and middle classes, are expected to result in a shortage of the "white, anglo-saxon, 'Oxbridge'-educated male" who has traditionally held positions of power. Many people fear that unless non-traditional labor pools are tapped, there will not be a sufficient talent base from which to fill key positions in British industry. (This is a widespread phenomenon; see Lethbridge, 1989; McRae, 1990a; McRae, 1990b; Bergmann, 1986.) Finally, this research encourages evaluation of programs intended to increase female involvement in broadcasting. By studying perceived opportunities and constraints, we can infer the degree to which such programs have been effective. An investigation of these programs is important at this time since efforts are now underway to provide equal opportunities for racial, ethnic, and other minorities. If the same or similar techniques are to be utilized, a study of their overall effectiveness is certainly in order.

Literature Review

The literature on women in media has generally taken one of two paths: addressing either the portrayal or the employment of women. Some works, such as the two *Window Dressing on the Set* Reports (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1979; 1977) have attempted to do both. However, these reports deal with U.S. media, and I have discovered no comparable British sources.

According to Gallagher, it is important to study both the depiction of women and the patterns of their employment. In 1981, Gallagher contrasted the small amount of information about women's employment to the "fast-growing body of research into the portrayal of women in the media" (p. 86). In her work, Gallagher provides much information on the role of women

in a world-wide broadcasting industry. In a study for UNESCO (1981), she discussed societal patterns of female employment in general, as well as media-specific patterns. She found that there was occupational, vertical, and horizontal segregation of women in media occupations. In a later study for the Commission of the European Communities (1987), the proportion of women in the television workforce again was broken down horizontally and vertically. She also discussed training, policies, and positive action programs, which spoke directly to the possibility for creating opportunities for women to enter and advance within the television industry.

The ACTT (1975) study of employment patterns of women in British media was one of the first to study the lack of opportunities for female technicians in broadcasting. Neylin (1988) provides a concise history of the events following the ACTT report, profiling female television technicians in London, and addressing both the number of women employees and the programs designed to encourage female participation in this area. Additionally, a series of efforts by various researchers (Fogarty et al, 1981; Fogarty et al, 1971; Robarts, 1981, Sims, 1985) indicate "there are certain jobs which are dominated by women, and certain jobs filled only by men" (Robarts, 1981, p. iii). Males dominated technical/production categories and upper management. Females dominated secretarial/clerical positions, and production assistant, costuming, and makeup artist classifications.

Using more qualitative techniques, Baehr and colleagues (Baehr, 1981; 1980; Baehr & Ryan, 1984; Baehr & Dyer, 1987) have provided useful analyses of women's employment in British broadcasting. Baehr & Ryan (1984) chronicled the experiences of a female radio producer. They discussed the station's history, and some of the problems and successes that were encountered while attempting to provide "positive action" for women.

Overall, there have been a limited number of studies investigating women's employment in British broadcasting, and many of these tend to provide numerical descriptions of the distribution of women within a broadcasting organization. This study supplements the existing literature by providing a qualitative description of the working environment in which women find themselves.

Methodology

In-depth interviews were conducted with 21 individuals representing broadcasting industry employees, broadcasting regulators, and unions. The interviews utilized a standard list of questions, but probes and follow-up questions differed. The interviews, conducted June-July 1990, averaged 45 minutes and ranged from 25 minutes to two hours. All were conducted at the individual's workplace, audio-taped and transcribed.

The research utilized the snowball sampling technique. According to Sudman (1976), this method, often used in the study of elite populations, is typified by the sample in which additional respondents are "obtained from

information provided by initial respondents" (p. 210). In this study, initial contacts were made on the basis of personal recommendation, informal introduction, or written correspondence. In all cases, contacts were asked to provide a list of potential interviewees. These individuals were contacted with requests for an interview and the names of other likely sources, and the process continued. The snowball sampling technique does not provide a representative sample, but this study's goals are exploratory and descriptive. The sample contained 19 women and 2 men; of these, 6 were employed by the BBC, 12 by independent broadcasters, sector, 2 by Ireland's RTE, and 1 by ACTT. Five were radio workers, 7 were television workers, 7 worked at a corporate level, and 2 worked for the regulatory agency (the IBA, which has since been replaced with separate radio and television regulatory agencies). The sample contained 2 news editors, 2 program officers, 4 department heads/managers, 3 reporter/presenters, 3 equality officers, 3 personnel controller/directors, 1 technician trainee, 1 head of training, 1 producer and 1 critic.

Results

Before specifying the opportunities and constraints noted by interviewees, I will introduce the general themes that arose in the interviews. The use of what I call "levels" of opportunities and constraints is an organizing scheme, not a formalized coding scheme; it is a means of making sense of, and acknowledging the similarities in, a broad group of interviewees' perceptions. The reported opportunities and constraints appear to be of five general types. Briefly, these are: *societal* (e.g., the potential impact of "the women's movement" on perceptions of appropriate gender roles versus the still-strong traditional perception of such roles), *institutional* (e.g. formalized committees, or educational programs that encourage girls to study math and science versus those that steer girls away from such subjects), *organizational* (e.g., programs which improve the status and range of opportunities for women versus gender-based job classifications open only to men), *physical* (e.g., reduced size and weight of cameras, etc., versus the belief that women are not physically capable of carrying equipment), or *individual* (e.g., a woman's assertiveness or goal-directedness versus "the timid woman" or the woman who works "for pin money" rather than having a career). The results are organized around these five levels, with opportunities presented before constraints.

Perceived Opportunities

Societal Level. One of the most clear-cut factors that may help women enter and advance in British broadcasting is the fact that the birthrate in Britain, particularly among the white middle class, is declining. A

broadcasting regulator compared these circumstances to World War II. "The most important thing is that there's going to be a big need for women's skills, certainly in the next decade, anyway, with the demographic shortage of young people coming into the work force. And it's going to be just like the Wars, you know, in that 'get women on the buses and in the factories' and in the offices, and in places where men wouldn't usually wish to see them. Because there's going to be an economic need to get women in there." Thus, if for no reason more lofty than that of basic staffing needs, there may soon be marked opportunities for women in British broadcasting.

Institutional Level. The British play a major role in the Commission of the European Communities' Steering Committee for Equal Opportunities in Broadcasting, which is concerned with equality for all underrepresented groups. Formed in 1986, the Steering Committee has three main functions: "(1) Exchange of ideas and information on ways to overcome obstacles to equal opportunities, leading to a series of recommendations on basic mechanisms to promote equal opportunities, training and career development, working conditions, attitudes and awareness, recruitment and selection; (2) Establishment of projects, with the financial support of the European Commission, aimed at promoting equal opportunities; (3) Statistical monitoring of employment patterns in broadcasting" (Steering Committee, 1990, p. 3-4). The Steering Committee should become an important resource for research and recommendations which will help gender equality in the British and European broadcasting industries.

Organizational Level. One tactic to promote gender equality in an organization is to appoint an equality officer. Following the Roberts Report (1981), Thames Television was the first British broadcaster to do so, and the BBC followed five years later. Other broadcasters also have or will soon have equality officers. Another tactic is to create an organizational goal, action plan, or strategy to create a balanced gender mix. The best of these are both specific and realistic. For example, the BBC's strategy for reaching its goal of reflecting the gender composition of the U.K. concludes, "To claim that we will do this by the year 2000--that is of 3,900 secretaries and clerks ensure that 2,400 are *men* (there are currently 11) and of 230 AMP's [the top management grade] ensure that 97 are *women* (there are currently 22) is unrealistic. As a first step, therefore, our intermediate aim should be to ensure that we achieve the ratios for [three key groups]. These are achievable within the aims which Directorates have set themselves, and will be reviewed in 1996" (BBC, 1990, p. 4).

The equality officers mentioned economic and pragmatic reasons for implementing equality goals. One said that programs designed to provide opportunities for women will actually bring the company good feedback and good publicity. Another said that companies can't afford *not* to implement such policies: "we're not just talking about some woolly liberal notion, we're actually talking about working in a way which is non-discriminatory so that we don't end up in an industrial tribunal. All right, OK, so there are fines, the fines are modest, but the reputation of [the broadcaster] is impaired. Most people

don't know that they could end up in court on their own, if [the broadcaster] could show that it had done all it could to educate and train and manage that particular individual."

Other organizational practices that may foster equal opportunities for women include short- and long-term training programs. These vary, but their overall impact is highly positive. There are training programs for journalists, technicians, secretaries, clerks, managers, etc. Each has a different goal: to provide practical experience to complement college or other training, to enable a clerical worker to gain skills required for transition to a technical position, to encourage workers' personal development, or to create a greater awareness of equality or other issues. Other training opportunities include "attachments," in which workers can be temporarily assigned to a different department, learn new skills, and perhaps prove themselves in non-traditional jobs.

There are also opportunities for members of the general public to be trained in radio production, presentation, reporting, etc. At least one independent local radio station in England provides courses designed to meet the needs of industry "outsiders" as well as members of the Independent Radio Network.

The success of the training schemes, particularly the longer-term ones, cannot be ignored. Several women I spoke with had joined their respective organizations as trainees, and have had quite successful careers. One joined the BBC 20 years ago, in the first batch of trainee journalists. She now leads a staff of about 100. Another interviewee also got her start on the news scheme, and after 10 years is now responsible for all domestic (i.e., not international) news coverage on BBC TV. A woman in a technical training scheme at Thames Television said: "I don't think I would have been able to get into television in any other way. I could not have just applied for a job."

Besides training programs, many broadcasters are also affording women greater opportunities by creating a flexible working environment, through jobshare, flex-time, day-care facilities, maternity/paternity leaves, etc. To the extent that such flexible arrangements are available, they act as opportunities to encourage women to remain in the industry.

Physical Level. Science is responsible for the two main physical opportunities for women in broadcasting: reliable birth control, and the miniaturization of equipment. (Child-bearing is distinct from child-rearing, which will be discussed later.) It is interesting that these physical level opportunities actually represent the removal of long-standing physical constraints. "Some things have changed forever," one woman said; "If you have the capacity to control your biology, so that you don't need to bear children in a random way, then you own your own destiny. And that has changed the role and status of women forever." Another physical opportunity for women is that, given the development of lightweight equipment, the myth that women cannot haul heavy gear is no longer a logical argument. According to one editor, that "one great excuse is rapidly being eradicated by clever men . . . on the outskirts of Tokyo."

Individual Level. Two main types of individual-level opportunities for women are encouragement from a supportive superior, and the utilization of "a different set of rules". One woman I spoke with described being "pushed" by her boss: "She suggested that I go for my present job, which I would never have applied for, because I thought I had insufficient experience in that area. . . . I would never have put myself forward." An editor said, "A lot of [my success] was because I worked for at least three very good male bosses who pushed me, unwillingly, to the next stage." Second, some women see opportunities just because they are women. As one department head said, "The advantages are huge! I'm not expected to work by the same rules because I'm not expected to know the rules. Because I didn't go to those schools, I don't talk like that, I don't go to the male lavatories. I don't have to wear the same clothes, I don't have to have the uniform. The rules of behavior, I'm not expected to know them. . . . I'm not trapped in the tradition, because there hasn't been a tradition of a lot of senior women around."

Perceived Constraints

Societal Level. There are several types of constraints operating at a societal level. First, there are constraints that relate to perceptions and treatment on a societal level; second, there are constraints that relate to raising children. Some constraints involving the perception and treatment of women result from women's own attitudes. As one woman said, "The danger for women is that they sell themselves too cheap. They're so glad to be accepted that they will work harder and for less money than men."

Constraints of child-rearing take several forms. Some women delay embarking on a career until their children reach a certain age. As one department head put it, it is very difficult for someone entering the job market at age 30, who had children when she was 18 and hadn't worked since. Entering the job market without a work record is not easy, and the skills involved in coordinating a household and raising a family are not valued. Alternatively, women who begin careers before having children--or who don't want children--may find themselves being passed over by employers who don't want to "take any chances" on an employee who might leave, even temporarily. As one equality officer said, "By the time a woman is old enough to have gained sufficient working experience to be getting into a position where she's credible and will be started to be considered for progression, she's entering those childbearing years. And whilst to some extent it tends to go underground, in that men don't say 'this is the reason I'm not selecting this particular one,' it is a consideration to them."

Third, there are those to whom the constraints mean not having children that otherwise would be desired. One department head said, "I would love another child. If I had another child it would probably be the last one we would have, and I have a secret fantasy that I would have one last baby and actually stay at home for two years with the child, maybe until he or she was going to

kindergarten, and I would absolutely love that." However, this woman feels that to do so would be to relinquish her position. "I don't think I could do that, stay home, and then come back as a senior manager. Because I think you get on a ladder, and that ladder works like an escalator. It progresses up. And if you step off, you can't go back in at the same level." Fourth, there are those who argue that women with children are faced with responsibilities that men with children are not. "A man does not have the problem of children," said one presenter, "He does not have the problem of running a family because generally there is a woman to do that." Finally, women with children find it difficult to attend business-related social gatherings. As a department head, "I am asked to so many functions. And they're always at 5:00 or 5:30 in the evening. They're clearly designed for the busy male executive who will leave the office a bit early, drop in for a drink, be seen, and go home. And the dinner is on the table when he gets in at 7:00 or 7:30. I can't do that. I mostly refuse to go to those things. And I'm sure that goes against me."

Institutional Level. Both formal and informal "institutions" operate as constraints. One formal institution is the educational system. Several women said the traditional nature of British education, which distinguishes between appropriate careers for boys and girls, holds back both sexes from realizing their full potential. One interviewee, asking for career guidance at Oxford University, was told not to pursue a broadcasting career because of her gender. This can make it very difficult for broadcasters who wish to hire women. As one equality officer said, "There's still very few women entering into engineering and technical areas of work, and there's a big problem for us." It also makes it difficult for young women who wish non-traditional careers. A broadcasting regulator said, "Your career advice is, 'well, you're not clever enough to go to University, so how about teaching.' I mean, those were the options that I got. 'Yeah, well, you can always go back to teaching, you might not like it that much, but it's always a good standby.' Well, what kind of career advice is that? Nobody said to me, 'well, how about broadcasting policy regulation?'"

A more informal constraining "institution" is the very strong male network in the industry. Many people have acknowledged how much like a "men's club" the industry is, and have noted that women cannot easily become a part of that club. One woman stressed how alone she felt when she began her career as the only woman on staff. "One of the things I found really isolating was the fact that I tend not to go to the pub as a recreational thing. I'd probably go into town for coffee. And so, I continued to do that, when I was first employed at a radio station. And I just found that I just didn't find anybody to relate to, at all, and, oh, I felt terribly isolated. And I suddenly twigged that everybody was going out to the pub at lunchtime, and that's where they were doing the feedback, that's where they were doing the chat about thing. And I was left out. I mean, as a woman, I never thought about that. But there was no doubt about it at all. And I was not happy. I found I took a long time to learn the trade. And it all changed when another woman joined us." Many women I spoke with lamented the lack of a strong peer group. And many felt they had

suffered as a result. Another way in which informal (male) networks constrain women is the word-of-mouth form of recruitment used to fill many vacancies. If women are not active within the networks, it is less likely a woman's name will spring to mind when a position needs to be filled. One personnel controller considered this one of the biggest hurdles for women in the industry.

Another form of institutional constraint resulted from the uncertainty of the broadcasting environment in Britain. At the time of the interviews, a broadcasting bill was being debated in Parliament. All independent television broadcasters would face open competition for their licenses, with the licensing decision based in part on a monetary bid accompanying each application. Broadcasters did not know at the time of the interviews whether or not they would be broadcasting in a year's time. Clearly, when economic survival is at stake, attention to more "lofty" goals such as equal opportunities is somewhat diminished. One woman said, "It's been a very difficult time, really, I mean from the point of view of just the company surviving, and in what shape or form, equal opps has obviously not had that high of a priority in the last couple of years." (As it turned out, both Thames Television and TV-am, who were extremely helpful in this research, failed to retain their broadcasting franchises.) This uncertainty affected all British broadcasters; the BBC also faced major funding and staff cuts.

Organizational cutbacks can present serious setbacks for equality. If layoffs are based on seniority, recent hires, including many women hired due to new opportunities, would be the hardest hit. Seniority is easily applied and eliminates unfair dismissals. However, even though it is widely supported by unions, at least one union officer would like to see it changed. She favors consultations between management and union regarding layoffs, and argues that if layoffs were spread across all levels of seniority, some incoming talent would be protected while at the same time some of the more senior people would remain and could continue to serve as mentors.

Organizational Level. Organizational level constraints are seen as either the lack of some desirable attribute, or the presence of some undesirable attribute. Interviewees mentioned the lack of career guidance, the lack of management sensitivity, the lack of qualified women to fill certain positions, and the lack of role models. The lack of career guidance contributed to a haphazard, non-productive series of job transfers, as opposed to job transfers that were motivated by the desire to reach a certain post and attain a certain level within the company. One woman said that although there is career counseling for neither men nor women, women suffer more. The lack of management sensitivity is most problematic when women are trying to enter a predominantly male stronghold. One department head said that when women enter non-traditional areas, "If they come into a department which is totally male, there are still difficulties, there's no question about that." The lack of qualified women makes it difficult for those who wish to appoint them. Another department head said, "I have only one woman correspondent. I would like to have more women correspondents. It hasn't been possible to

appoint them. Because there really haven't been any suitable candidates at all. And I arrived here saying, 'right, I am determined to appoint as many women as I can'. And it just wasn't available." Additionally, many women felt the lack of strong role models. One woman said, "You can count them on the fingers of one hand."

The organizational aspects that women feel serve as constraints due to their presence are the need for women to work harder than men and the perception that part-time workers are only partly committed to their jobs. The feeling that women need to work much harder than men is not unique to broadcasting. Still, it is seen as a powerful constraint. As a reporter put it, women must be twice as good as their male colleagues; however, you can't whine about it, you just have to do it.

In addition, many of the positions within the industry are highly demanding, and there is a perception that unless one is a full-time worker, one is not fully committed to the organization. Leaving full-time status "can be seen as a lesser commitment. If you're going to go off and have a baby, and maybe consider taking a career break, what sort of degree of dedication have you got to the area you're working in and the people you're working with?" While equality officers would like to see this perception altered, many managers do not. A male personnel director said that it's hard to perceive a person as wanting to work as much as a promotion needs, when they're only willing to work part time. A female editor said that job-sharing "might be done, but on the whole, I would have thought someone who wanted to be a correspondent would want to do it as a full time job."

Finally, one practice which acts as a constraint is actually meant as an opportunity. Organizational goals and action plans for equality are not without controversy. Opponents raise two main points: first, they feel it doesn't make sense to pass up a well-qualified man for a less qualified woman, because they would rather base the hiring decision on who was the best person for the job at the time; and second, they feel it would encourage doubts about the women's performance--namely, that they were hired on the basis of positive discrimination programs rather than their own talents. This might even cause a woman to wonder about her own qualifications and talents, thereby setting up a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Physical Level. Two main physical constraints have already been mentioned, and to a certain extent have been counteracted by scientific advances. However, the very process of bearing children does constrain those women who wish to do so, and the perception that women can't haul heavy equipment persists in spite of technological advances. The latter of these concerns is self-evident; regarding the former, an equality officer reluctantly acknowledged that female contract workers might be well-advised to hide their pregnancies.

Individual Level. The main types of individual qualities that can constrain women from reaching their full potential in broadcasting are feelings of intimidation, lack of motivation, and lack of assertiveness. Several people mentioned that women, who must accept some of the responsibility for

creating their own opportunities, can be intimidated in the face of the status quo. An equality officer said that women must actually push their way through the door. However, she acknowledged that "If what you're pushing open reveals a sea of men, this can be a little intimidating." Overall, a lack of confidence makes it difficult for women to compete effectively with men in a male-dominated industry. One woman described the lack of women's motivation as the "Wow" factor: "As a woman you apply for, and you get, a job as a BBC producer. And you go, 'Wow! Wow, I'm a BBC producer!' And you spend the next five or six years saying that. And if you're a man, and you apply for a job as a BBC producer and you get it you say, 'fine, I'm a BBC producer--What am I going to do next?'"

Discussion and Conclusions

While the opportunities currently in place are indeed helping women enter and advance within the British broadcasting industry, there are many significant forces which counteract those opportunities. Certainly, important progress has been made, and that should not be discounted. But until it is no longer possible to rattle off the names of the women in a certain department, or at a certain senior level, or filling certain technical positions, women in broadcasting will remain unique, somehow special, and in a sense separated from the rest of the industry. Women in broadcasting, when they are truly integrated, will cease to be obvious.

This research investigated the perception of opportunities and constraints for women in British broadcasting. The open-ended interview was designed to allow workers to consider and speak from their own experiences. Interestingly, many of the interviewees echoed similar concerns--concerns which had long been noted in studies of women in the workplace (see, for example, Bergmann, 1986; Bird, 1979; Bird, 1968). There is, obviously, still a strong ideology in the workplace which makes it difficult for women to succeed.

The interviews on which this study are based reveal that problems for women in broadcasting have not yet been solved. It may be tempting for broadcasters to look upon the advances that have been made, consider them indicators of at least partial success, and then move on to the next "problem." In fact, while conducting the interviews on which this study is based, I got a strong sense that equal opportunities for women was almost passe--it was equal opportunities for the disabled that was on everybody's mind! However, more advances for women are required, and the issues need continued attention. As one equality officer said, part of her job is to find new ways to keep the debates going, so that people don't get bored with them and with the underlying issues. Discussion must continue, "because it is the business of talking through the issues that is the real learning experience."

Future research efforts could supplement in-depth interviews with survey questionnaires. A useful survey instrument could tap into a wider range of respondents' experiences, attitudes, and perceptions. A larger, representative

sample would allow results to be generalized. Ultimately, the use of a multi-method research technique could facilitate numerous comparisons (based on market size, region, ownership, country, etc.) of broadcasters' success in integrating women into all levels of the workforce. We may think that certain areas/groups are more or less successful than others, based upon numerical descriptions, but by using multiple methodologies (interview and survey) we may discover why such differences exist, how serious they are perceived to be, how likely it is for any imbalances to be redressed, and how best to go about the process of gender integration. Future research could use a similar methodology to address the factors affecting the degree to which ethnic minorities, the disabled, etc., have been integrated into the broadcasting workforce.

Research into the patterns of employment of women in broadcasting is at least as important as research into media portrayal of women. Even after years of effort, women are not progressing through all levels of management. This was particularly disheartening to the senior women interviewed. As one said, "I'm looking at the women coming up behind me, and actually there are relatively few of them." In general, the interviewees in this study believed that while some valuable progress has been made, there is still a long way to go. As one equality officer said when pondering whether the year 2000 would bring true gender equality to British broadcasting, "I just somehow can't see it. There's just a gut feeling that -- I don't know, I just feel it won't happen."

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"That Darn Arne": Humorous and Nostalgic Themes in Attack Political Advertising

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John Marty's 1994 gubernatorial campaign in Minnesota inspired many comparisons to Paul Wellstone's race for the U.S. Senate in 1990. Like Wellstone, Marty was a progressive from the liberal wing of the DFL party. Both faced popular incumbent opponents who enjoyed job approval ratings in the seventy-percent range, and each was limited by insufficient campaign funding and self-imposed prohibitions against "negative" political advertising.

It is not surprising, therefore, that when the time came for Marty to attack Republican Governor Arne Carlson, he turned to the same group of advisors who had devised Wellstone's innovative comic media style. For Marty, however, the strategy would prove disastrous. Where Wellstone had been highly praised for turning to humor to get his message across, Marty would be blasted for running "the worst gubernatorial campaign in Minnesota history" (Smith 1994, A1).

This paper explores the Marty campaign as a cautionary note in a recent trend toward the use of humor in political attack messages. We do not argue that Marty's use of humor cost him the election. In fact, his campaign demonstrated ineptness in a number of areas that obviously contributed to his downfall. Our purpose is to examine the rhetorical functions of humorous and nostalgic themes in political discourse. After examining the role of humor and nostalgia in campaign advertising, we turn our attention to John Marty's ad "That Darn Arne." While it is impossible to prove that the successful use of humorous or nostalgic appeals would have salvaged Marty's ill-fated attempt, we conclude that his loss is nonetheless instructive for other political campaign practitioners, and highlights the importance of adapting humorous messages to the unique confines of individual races.

Humor and Nostalgia in Political Advertisements

The use of humor in debates and political campaigns is not a new development. A wide variety of social and political figures have been credited with using humor effectively against their opponents (Duden 1962; Harris 1964), and more recently, scholars have identified Ronald Reagan's use of humor as a key ingredient of his "great communicator" style (Meyer 1990). "Political humor," writes Morris Udall, "leavens the public dialogue; it invigorates the body politic; it uplifts the national spirit . . . it is a bridge between the citizens and their government (Udall 1998, xiii)." A savvy politician, he argues, "can use humor to disarm his enemies, to rally his allies, to inform, to rebut, to educate, console and conceive (xv)."

Candidates obviously use humor differently, and humor itself is difficult to precisely define. In a broad sense, however, two prominent humorous media styles have emerged. The first, "disparagement media style" achieves its effect by making the opponent the butt of the joke-- demonstrating the superiority of both the source and the audience (Leak 1974; Koller 1988). Although it was not part of a televised advertisement, Lloyd Bentsen's "Senator, You're no JFK" remark during the 1988 Vice Presidential debates is perhaps the most memorable recent example of disparagement humor (Endicott 1988, A1). Frequently, the humor employed is sufficiently negative in tone and substance that it is not described as "funny" by journalists who cover the campaign.

Although it has not been widely studied in political contexts, preliminary research indicates that disparagement humor functions much like standard negative messages. It fails when the source is not viewed as credible, when the object of ridicule is held in high esteem (Zillman & Cantor 1972; Zillman & Cantor 1976), or when the humor is viewed as either too harsh or inappropriate (Zillman 1983; Cartee-Johnson & Copeland 1991; Priest 1966). Failure involves a greater degree of risk than mere non-acceptance, and like most negative messages, the possibility exists that political disparagement humor will boomerang back on the source, and actually aid the opposing candidate.

A second humorous media style employs a gentler, less strident form of humor that mildly chides the opposition. As part of a well-conducted campaign, candidates who employ a comic media style use humor to mask their attacks on opponents and avoid being perceived as negative. In doing so, they maximize the advantage of the "attack-politics" model of political campaigning while avoiding voter backlash (Pfau & Kenski 1990). In an age of increasing public skepticism towards politicians, and a pronounced disdain for negative campaign tactics, campaigns employing a comic media style have attacked, leveled, and ridiculed their opponents while attracting applause for "sticking to the issues," and "running clean campaigns" (McGrath 1994, B3; Wellstone 1995, A17). Viewed from the perspective of media-strategy, these styles provide an alternative to normative campaign practices. Humor can be used to define a candidate's character, articulate his or her political agenda, attack the record of an opponent, and attract favorable attention and media commentary.

Certain forms of humor are particularly well-suited for use in political advertisements. Satire, for example, is inevitably rhetorical in the sense that it seeks to persuade its audience, and the evaluation of satire necessarily involves rhetorical criticism. "Rhetorical devices serve to win the reader and to soften the impact of the writer's destructive or vengeful sentiments," notes David Worcester. "Such devices are all important for the study of satire, and the skill with which they are employed serves as a criterion between good and bad satire" (1960, 14). Because it poses an argument, satire cannot be judged a success if it merely entertains its audience, or succeeds in demolishing its object of ridicule. For satiric purposes, abuse has to be both funny and purposeful, and the audience must be provided with a corrective lesson that

can be drawn from the satirist's text (Johnson 1961).

The advocacy burden inherent to satire provides a bright-line distinction between it and other forms of humor. "To the extent that satire presents, and so represents, its 'object,' it is related to other mimetic forms," says literary critic Ronald Paulson. "But to the extent that satire attacks, it is rhetorical," and unlike other forms of comedy, "there is a persuasive end in sight" (1967, 3).

The use of nostalgic themes in advertising has also increased in recent years. In some cases, such as Ronald Reagan's celebrated "Morning in America" spots, nostalgic themes have been linked with political discourse. Most often, however, nostalgia has been used to sell products. Kentucky Fried Chicken's new and improved Colonel Sanders and Shaquille O'Neal's parade through re-runs of "I Love Lucy" and "The Honeymooners" are two current examples (Brown 1995; Taylor 1995).

Several theories have been advanced in the popular press and advertising literature to explain the increasing prevalence of nostalgic themes. The first is the "future's faltering stock" (Kamp 1993, 84). Because, arguably, the current generation of American young adults may be the first to fail to achieve the level of material prosperity of their baby-boomer parents, consumers may be more vulnerable to nostalgic appeals. Rising crime and poverty rates, increasing disaffection with government and a generalized perception of malaise have also contributed to the effectiveness of these appeals in political advertisements. "A nation that is fearful of its future reflexively turns to its past," writes David Kamp, "which if not new and exciting, is at least comfortably familiar" (84).

A second possibility is the *fin de siecle* effect (Stern 1992). This describes the longing for the past that frequently accompanies the end of an historical era. Confronting discernable anxiety about the loss of continuity as a new millennium approaches, nostalgic appeals target middle-aged constituents. "At the very same time that the millennium is approaching," notes Barbara Stern, "the largest group in the population -- the baby boomers, is beginning to face its own mortality" (13). This demographic coincidence "seems destined to exacerbate the yearning for the past" (Davis 1979, 13). Baby boomers are not only those most prone to nostalgic appeals (Wallendorf & Arnold 1988), but also the most likely target of John Marty's political advertisements (*Minneapolis Star Tribune* 1994, B1).

A final explanation may be the prevalence of "classic" programming on television, and its ability to establish a unified frame of reference. As Fred Davis observed, contemporary nostalgia in the "movie, radio or TV image from the past" forms a common background experience for audiences (131). Reruns have been resurrected on cable stations such as Nickelodeon. In what was originally a financial decision, Nickelodeon has succeeded in becoming the third largest cable network by running classics such as the Donna Reed Show and Mr. Ed (Justin). The network's success has popularized the genre, and most viewers associate media images from a time period with strong nostalgic sentiments (Davis). Furthermore, the Nickelodeon's promotional

style has been widely imitated by other advertisers, and viewers are readily familiar with the needle-drop music, fifties-style graphics, and clever jingles that characterize its intentionally nostalgic advertisements.

Although humorous nostalgic appeals have not been extensively employed in political advertisements, there are several theoretical reasons to suspect that they would be successful. Like humor, the use of nostalgia is attention getting, and politicians could exploit the "curiosity based attention" associated with nostalgic programming (Unger, McConcha & Faier). At the level of viewer affect, nostalgia also coincides with the objectives of a comic media style. "The nostalgic feeling is infused with imputations of past beauty, pleasure, joy, satisfaction, goodness, happiness, love and the like," writes Fred Davis. "Nostalgic feeling is almost never infused with those sentiments we commonly think of as negative" (14).

By definition, nostalgia also attempts to temporally dislocate the audience. Forging a symbolic association between the present and a sanitized version of the past, nostalgia offers a collective social memory with the pain removed. Nostalgia provides viewers with an opportunity to escape the present, and those ads that are "novel or interesting enough are likely to be discussed with others, and such rehearsal further enhances memorability" (Unger, McConcha & Faier, 347). This type of "word-of-mouth" advertising is especially beneficial to a poorly funded or largely unknown candidate.

One final synergy between nostalgia and the use of humor in political advertising is that they each tend to insulate the sponsor from counter-argument. Nostalgia and humor appeal to viewers emotionally. The positive affect produced by the message is transferred into a positive estimation of the sponsor. "The appeal to empathy seems able to forestall counter-argument," notes David Stern, "insofar as non-cognitive claims . . . may deflect consumers from recourse to rational argument" (16).

In summary, the use of humor and nostalgia in mediated political discourse offers candidates a variety of tactical advantages that are unobtainable within the traditional *attack politics* model of campaigning. Those candidates who elect to employ a comic media style, a nostalgic media style, or some combination of each may anticipate favorable media coverage of their campaigns, increased memorability of their individual advertisements, improved levels of viewer identification with the candidate on affect-measures, and a degree of insulation from counter-argument.

The Evolution of John Marty's Videostyle

Although John Marty was a liberal progressive who supported abortion rights, he won the primary only after abortion opponents decided to back his candidacy. Their decision was motivated primarily by the fact that Mike Freeman, a pro-choice candidate and the front runner at the nominating convention, had promised not to run against the party's endorsed candidate in the primary. Figuring that Marty would present an easier challenge for an abortion rights opponent in the primary, antiabortion delegates decided to

back "the weakest candidate" (Whereatt 1994, B1; Kloboucher 1994B, B3).

To make matters worse, Marty faced incumbent Governor Arne Carlson in the general election. Having soundly turned back a conservative challenge within his own party, the Governor had successfully defined himself as a moderate; in fact, on many "hot button issues" such as abortion, gay rights and the death penalty, he was as liberal as Marty. The Governor had a reputation as a maverick campaigner, and enjoyed excellent job approval ratings. Even party insiders felt he would be difficult to defeat. "Think about it," observed DFL Senate Majority Leader Roger Moe, "You've got an incumbent governor with a Scandinavian name in a state with a very good economy" (Whereatt & Smith 1994, A1).

One of Marty's main issues was political reform, and he had made a name for himself as a "good government crusader." This complicated Marty's emerging media style in several respects. First, Marty's self-imposed limit on campaign contributions and assistance from political action committees effectively guaranteed that he would be outspent by his opponent (Whereatt 1994B, B1). In addition, Marty was a purist who eschewed any hint of compromise on what he considered ethical matters. When President Clinton came to the Twin Cities for a major DFL fund raiser, Marty boycotted the affair. "When big money controls the process," he argued, "we don't get real tax reform. We can't even talk about fair tax policies" (Smith 1994C, A1).

Marty's moralizing angered party leaders and a variety of interest groups that were traditionally supportive of DFL candidates. Some openly called for Marty to adjust his campaign practices. "A candidate for governor has to assume the responsibility of leadership that comes with the office," noted State Auditor and department store magnate Mark Dayton (Smith 1994C, A1). The candidate, however, refused to make any concessions on what he considered to be a core political principle. "I like being popular. I like getting along with my colleagues, but I didn't get elected to be everybody's best buddy at the Capitol," Marty cautioned reporters (Whereatt 1994B, B1).

Marty's rigid stance on campaign reform and his frequent crusades against negative campaign tactics placed him on record as a candidate that would never resort to 'dirty tricks' to win (Smith 1994B, A1).¹ Early in the campaign, he promised that he would not run any "negative advertisements," and this, coupled with his complicated proposal to increase taxes on the wealthy, made Marty an easy target for Carlson attack spots that claimed he was a tax and spend liberal. With little ability to respond with rebuttal messages, Marty soon fell badly behind in the polls.

In addition to his slipping opinion poll ratings, Marty's campaign was under-funded and badly disorganized. In just two months, he went through three campaign managers. The first left after Marty walked out of a television studio and refused to tape a series of campaign commercials that had been scripted for him. Calling the ads to be "negative" and "distracting," Marty chose to part company with his media team and campaign manager rather than compromise on a matter of ethics. The continual turnover in his campaign staff obscured his campaign message and distracted press coverage of the race. For

the verse was sung.

For the refrain, the figure of the governor reappeared against a yellow background. This time, the singers repeated the refrain three times, as the veto stamp repeatedly marked the word "veto" in bright red lettering all around the governor. As the music ended, the governor's face was stamped "Veto," and the entire graphic spun-off into the background. A blue screen with the words "Vote for John Marty on November 8th," appeared underneath a black and white picture of the candidate, as a male voice-over reminded voters to vote for the DFL candidate.

The advertisement contained no evidence to substantiate the three charges that it raised. It presupposed that viewers were familiar with Carlson's positions on taxation, education and campaign finance reform. It also did not directly mention Marty's position on these issues. Consequently, the advertisement was of little value in drawing sharp distinctions among the two candidates.

Perhaps the content-based departures from campaign advertising norms were part of a conscious effort to maximize the attention-generating potential of the spot. Its use of bright colors, animation, and a musical jungle were effective methods of producing curiosity-based attention. Although it disparaged the Governor, it did so in a mild, almost chiding way, and avoided the negative tone that frequently accompanies attack messages. "That Darn Arne" cleverly blended humorous and nostalgic themes. Visually, it was reminiscent of Nick-at-Nite promotional spots; but because it avoided direct references to the past, the advertisement wasn't self-consciously nostalgic.

Reaction to the advertisement was not complimentary. Dane Smith, the *Star Tribune's* primary political reporter, devoted only one sentence of his column to the ad, and framed it within the context of Marty's desperate attempt to stave off defeat. "Hundreds of thousands of calls are being made, literature is stacked up to the ceiling. . . . and the creative 'That Darn Arne' ads hit television last weekend," he observed, "There's still the smallest glimmer of hope (for Marty)" (Smith 1994E, A19). He did not mention the themes that had been raised in the advertisement, nor did he compliment Marty on moving toward a more aggressive media strategy.

Few articles even mentioned the advertisement. A feature entitled, "Ad Antics," described "That Darn Arne" as "visually memorable," but again failed to mention the charges that were raised in the ad (*Minneapolis Star Tribune* 1994B, A20). A short "Campaign Monitor" column described the jingle and noted that the advertisement would receive significant air-time in outstate markets, but did not discuss the humorous or nostalgic elements of the ad (*Minneapolis Star Tribune* 1994C, B2).

Summary and Conclusion

Humorous and nostalgic themes are attractive to candidates because they provide an alternative means of delivering attack messages. Although

candidates who employ a disparagement media style are frequently charged with negative campaigning, candidates who use milder, more affect oriented humorous or nostalgic advertisements can attack their opponents while avoiding negative media coverage. A comic or nostalgic media style also reduces the effectiveness of counter-arguments, and limits the range of rebuttal options available to opponents.

John Marty's experience serves as a cautionary note for political campaign practitioners. Marty failed to quiet his critics, capture the attention of the news media, or generate favorable coverage as a result of airing the advertisement. Why had his advertisement failed when similar ads had received such overwhelming notoriety just two years before? The obvious answer is that his candidacy was no longer viable. As a result of the tremendous turmoil within his campaign organization, his poorly articulated message, and his persistent inability to define his own candidacy, and also as a result of the Governor's popularity, the outcome of the race seemed apparent months before the ad was produced.

The fact that Marty's candidacy seemed doomed, however, only partially resolves the question. His mishaps as a candidate do not explain the lack of coverage of the advertisement or the luke-warm treatment that it received in media circles. Even though he was unlikely to win the election, he was, after all, the endorsed DFL candidate in a state with a strong Democratic tradition. Although little was said about his media style, Marty's campaign continued to generate a substantial amount of media coverage.

The explanation for this inconsistency lies in the advertisement's deeply flawed thematic design. Although it relied upon nostalgic music and graphics to convey its message, the advertisement was a poor representative of the use of nostalgia in political advertisements. Unlike Ronald Reagan's "Morning in America" spots, "That Darn Arne" did not contain realistic visual scenes or compelling historic images.

Marty's advertising team apparently hoped to forge a connection between his candidacy and a simpler time in American politics. The upbeat, quick tempo jingle is reminiscent of the "I Like Ike" advertisements of the nineteen-fifties, and hearkens back to a time when the rules of decorum for political candidates were more pronounced and restrictive. This stance was consistent with Marty's persistent characterization of himself as an "old fashioned" candidate who was uncomfortable with modern political advisors and "handlers," and who had difficulty adapting his message to the realities of "mass-mediated politics" (Blake 1994, B1).

Viewed from a theoretical vantage-point, it is not difficult to see why Marty's attempt failed. His use of nostalgia was unfocused and poorly targeted. Even though he positioned himself as a reform candidate, he did not directly link his opponent with the "future's declining stock," and hence was unable to capitalize on voter dissatisfaction with sagging relative incomes and job insecurity. Ironically, these themes formed the core of Marty's campaign message in stump speeches.

Marty also did not attempt to cast himself as the logical candidate to

address the generalized anxiety and malaise that accompanies the *fin de siècle*. Marty missed the opportunity to cast himself as the inheritor of the liberal Democratic tradition within the state, and failed to tie his candidacy with the heritage of Hubert Humphrey, Eugene McCarthy, and other historic figures with whom he shared common ideological roots. Presumably, baby-boomers may have been vulnerable to a 'past-as-future' appeal at the close of a millennium. Carlson's reputation as a maverick, and sometimes erratic candidate might have also contributed to the effectiveness of this type of nostalgia.³ These themes were also consistent with Marty's reputation, and even his critics admitted that he was an even-tempered, stable and thoughtful politician.

The advertisement failed to establish a shared frame of reference. Although it clearly resembled a Nick-at-Nite promotional spot, the ad merely attacked Carlson without simultaneously defining a role for the viewer. For nostalgia based upon shared cultural experiences to succeed, viewers must be encouraged to reminisce about particular programs, personalities and so forth. Pepsi's popular Shaquille O'Niel advertisement is a good example of this effect. By linking the product with "I Love Lucy," "The Honeymooners," and "Woody Woodpecker," the advertisement self-consciously forced viewers to recall their own shared cultural frame of reference. Marty's advertisement, on the other hand, did not forge a connection with any particular historical image.

"That Darn Arne" was also a poor example of the use of a comic media style to cloak political attack messages. Affectively, humor has a tremendous ability to disguise messages that might otherwise be described as negative. Marty's zealous avoidance of anything that seemed even remotely like an attack spot severely constrained his ability to use humor to define his opponent. In a large measure, the attack message was disconnected from the visual image that had accompanied it. The spot also delivered three separate policy attacks in just thirty seconds. Obviously, none of these themes were well developed.

The advertisement was devoid of satire. In an argumentative sense, it simply asserted the charges against Carlson without proof. For voters that might have been skeptical about Marty's candidacy, the advertisement failed to provide a template through which competing claims could be evaluated. Unlike Paul Wellstone's advertisements, Marty's use of humor was haphazard and unfocused. Describing Wellstone's style during the 1990 U.S. Senate race in Minnesota, Michael Pfau, Roxanne Parrott and Bridgett Lindquist observed:

All of the Wellstone television spots could be classified as attack messages, in that they were based on contrasts. Each spot simultaneously communicated negative information about Boschwitz and positive information about Wellstone . . . Each of the spots was subtle. They featured humor, and were packaged using an unorthodox style. But, they were also hard hitting. (246)

"That Darn Arne," in contrast, could hardly be described as hard hitting. At best, the attacks amounted to one line epithets, and because they were

delivered in the form of an upbeat jingle, voters may have missed them completely.

Although voters disparage negative campaigns, it is well known that attack messages are successful. This effect is more powerful when the attacks are not answered (Pfau and Kenski 1990, 3), and the comic media style works best when advertisements are structured so as to prevent counter argument. This may be accomplished by focusing the attack on a single content theme, fusing the verbal text of the message with the visual that accompanies it, and presenting the information in such a way that a direct rebuttal would imply that the opposing candidate has no sense of humor. In each of these areas, Marty's advertisement was ineffective.

Although voters profess a distaste for attack messages, they clearly prefer comparative advertisements. Marty's failure to even mention his own campaign priorities while attacking Carlson contributed to the impression that he was "too decent" to serve as Governor, and he ultimately lost the election by the widest margin in Minnesota history (Wheareatt 1994B, B3). Bob Meek, Marty's second campaign manager argued that one of the lessons of the campaign was that candidates should "attack, attack, attack." He claimed after the election that attack spots were more newsworthy, memorable and persuasive (Meek 1994, A15). Political advertising consultant Jim Miller agreed with Meek's estimation. "I write rotten, low-down, dirty (but always true) ads," he claimed, "because the voters give me no option. It is all they seem to hear" (Miller 1994, A19).

While we endorse the notion that voters require comparative information to make meaningful distinctions between candidates, we disagree with those who argue that Marty failed because he did not engage in campaign practices that would have been perceived as negative. Like disparagement messages, comic or nostalgic advertisements can convey comparative, attack-oriented information about candidates. Advertisements of this sort need not be viewed as negative to be effective in persuading voters. John Marty's loss was primarily a function of his dysfunctional campaign and poorly conceptualized advertising strategy. His experience may serve as a useful example of the limitations of a comic media style, but his loss should not be treated as a broad indictment of the effectiveness of humorous or nostalgic themes in mediated political discourse.

Notes

¹Marty was portrayed in the press as a "do-gooder," a "white-knight," and a "choir-boy." Although it was, no doubt, reassuring that reporters rarely missed an opportunity to point out his high ethical principles, these pronouncements eventually paralyzed Marty's ability to mount an effective campaign.

²Marty implicitly attacked Sasse and reiterated his pledge to keep the campaign positive. "I'm not going to do negative attacks -- period," he told reporters, "I'm not going to talk about personal issues" (Smith, Whereatt and

Lopez, A1).

³Carlson won in 1990 in the most unusual Governor's race in Minnesota history. After losing the primary election, he mounted a write-in campaign to have his name placed on the ballot. When his opponent in the primary was forced out of the campaign as a result of a sex scandal, Carlson was officially placed on the ballot, and he defeated a three-term incumbent in a campaign that lasted only six days.

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organizational action as if it is a living document; language is action; and the members of an organization create their organizational reality through the language they share. In order to illustrate these claims, this analysis proceeds as follows. First, research efforts designed to describe and analyze the language in and of organizations are summarized. Second, a method for analyzing the language used by organizational actors to "create and sustain social reality" (Putnam, 1982, p. 200) is explained through a field study application. Finally, a discussion is offered regarding the value of this method for analyzing organizational rhetoric.

Language in and of Organizations

Organizational communication research focusing on language can be consolidated into the following function-based typology: the role of language in organizational culture (Frost, Moore, Louis, Lundberg, & Martin, 1985; Kilmann, Saxton, & Serpa, 1985; Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1982, 1983; Pondy, Frost, Morgan, & Dandridge, 1983; Schein, 1985; Triandis, 1980; Triandis & Albert, 1987), the role of language in developing organizational subcultures (Tompkins, 1987), the role of language in organizational power and control (Conrad, 1983; Czarniawska-Joerges & Joerges, 1988; Deetz & Kersten, 1983; Frost, 1987; Mumby, 1984; Pondy & Huff, 1984; Salvador & Markham, 1995), conversational forms that leaders employ (Barge, Downs, & Johnson, 1989; Pondy, 1978; Watson, 1982), the role of language in portraying organizational image (Cheney, 1983, 1985, 1991; Euske & Roberts, 1987; Martin & Powers, 1983), the role of language in shaping organizational reality (Bittner, 1965; Evered, 1983; Hummel, 1977; Silverman & Jones, 1976; Weick, 1979), the role of language in bargaining (Neu, 1988; Putnam & Poole, 1987; Trice & Beyer, 1984), and rhetorical response in times of organizational crisis (see for example Johnson & Sellnow, 1995). The investigation described in this article broadens existing research by following an assumption that organizational actors create the structure of an organization when individual perceptions are transformed into shared interpretations through consubstantial discourse.

Indexing

According to Thompson (1985, p. 23), "as a work of discourse, the text preserves the properties of the sentence, but presents them in a new constellation, which calls for its own type of interpretation." Cheney and Tompkins (1987) have suggested that Burke's technique of indexing is an insightful method for discerning the constellation(s) of meaning in a given context. According to these theorists:

In "Fact, Inference, and Proof in the Analysis of Literary Symbolism", Burke (1954, 1964) cleverly outdoes positivism,

points to a route toward validity and reliability in interpretation, and advances a strategy for analysis with applicability to any research 'text' (p. 464).

Cheney and Tompkins have explained this strategy by "moving through a progression of propositions" based on, and adding to, Burke's description of indexing.

Propositions of Indexing

The first proposition (or assumption) that characterizes this strategy is that "all social inquiry yields texts" (p. 465). This proposition is based on the extension of text to include spoken as well as written words, and an acceptance of action as text. Additionally, this proposition reminds us that texts are constructed (through the continuous interpretations of those enacting them) and that these acts of creation warrant consideration. In essence, Cheney and Tompkins (p. 465) are asserting that "the role of language in lay and theoretical accounts of social phenomena must be acknowledged completely." This assertion supports Burke's belief that "much of what we take as observations of reality may be but the spinning out of possibilities implicit in our particular choice of terms" (1966, p. 46).

Second, Cheney and Tompkins believe that "what is fundamentally true and verifiable for Burke is that words are facts" (p. 465). Beginning with Burke's idea of "atomic facts" (words) and expanding these facts to include the constellations in which they are embedded, this study sought to reveal the meanings conveyed by the language used by organizational actors. This meaning was discerned partly through the third, fourth, and fifth propositions discussed by Cheney and Tompkins (pp. 466-467).

The third proposition advises researchers to recognize that "the presence, absence, and arrangement of words in a text is a publicly accessible means of grounding analysis and interpretation" (p. 466). Thus, the selection of language is, in itself, an indicator of meaning.

The fourth proposition states that "the specific associations or relationships between the terms of a text are of three general types: equations, implications, and transformations" (p. 466). In order to discern meanings based on the relationships between and among words, we should look for equations or oppositions which "bear most directly on what equals what or what is opposed to what" (p. 499). Further, we should seek out implications which are "the suggestive radiation's of a term." Finally, we should be aware of transformations, which "suggest 'from what,' 'through what,' [and/or] 'to what' developments."

The fifth proposition of this technique is that "we make inferences when we comment on 'what goes with what' in a text, considering 'the company a word keeps'" (p. 466). Sixth, Cheney and Tompkins (p. 467) demonstrate how "from the 'facts' of a text we make inferences, and from those inferences we construct 'proofs.'" According to these authors:

For Burke, 'proof' is of two types. First, while grounding itself in reference to the textual 'facts,' it must seek to make clear all elements of inference or interpretation it adds to these facts, and [second], it must offer a rationale for its selections and interpretations (Burke, 1954/1964, p. 147).

The final proposition discussed by Cheney and Tompkins (pp.467-468) offers a summary of Burke's comments about what to look for in discourse and what facts to select:

First, it is important to consider terms which recur in changing contexts should note operational synonyms of a word. Third, 'names' and 'titles' are important as condensed symbols for 'things' essences. Fourth, the researcher should pay attention to beginnings and endings of sections. . . . Fifth, terms of order are noteworthy because of the human eighth], one should observe all striking terms for [scenes], acts, attitudes, ideas penchant for hierarchy. Sixth [seventh and eighth], one should observe all striking terms for [scenes], acts, attitudes, ideas, images, relationships, [and] secrecy, privacy mystery, marvel. . . . Ninth, it is useful to note opposition. Tenth, one should identify the mathematical center of a text. Eleventh, . . . be sensitive to stylistic continuity and breakpoint . . . Twelfth . . . isolate . . . points at which ambiguities are fostered. Finally, it is helpful to note the absence of key terms . . .

Using these propositions as the initial indices of meaning for an analysis of organizational discourse, an analysis of transcribed spoken texts collected during interviews with the members of an information-management firm ("EAI") was conducted.

Indexing is useful for studying the meaning of organizational discourse for several reasons. First, this technique recognizes discourse as both the use of verbal symbols in an attempt to structure meaning and as actions based on this meaning (for an example of organizational discourse studies that focus on the structuring of meaning, see Barge et al., 1989). Second, this method recognizes that words are facts and that the meaning of these facts can be determined by analyzing the constellations in which they are embedded. In accepting Heidegger's assertion that "interpretation is already at work in the delivery of facts" (1972, p. 190), the researcher becomes actively involved in the organizational actor's portrayal of what is meaningful. Following Cheney and Tompkins' (1987) application of this idea, a researcher may assume that when a subject offers a "text" for interpretation, this text is really an interruption of the continuous intertextual/interpretive processes in which all participants are involved. Finally, this method provides an excellent cornerstone on which to reconstruct individual perceptions into shared interpretations of organizational life.

Media

The work reported here is part of a larger three-phase interpretive study that focuses on the development of organizational "folk theories" through an analysis of storytelling and language behavior. The data included in this analysis have been extracted from the data collected during the initial phase of that investigation. The purpose of this stage of the research is to analyze individual perceptions of the history, current situation, and future of the organization. The subsequent phases invited the subjects' feedback on the author's interpretations. The purpose of these later phases was to discern shared themes and common emphases in order to illustrate how individual perceptions become shared interpretations of organizational life. However, in keeping with the focus of this article, the following discussion is limited to a review of the method of analysis used in the initial phase of the study.

Subjects

All of the members of an information-management firm in Washington, D.C. participated in the research. EAI (a pseudonym for the organization) was founded in 1984 to provide information-management services, training, product offerings, and installation services. The fifteen subjects include 13 full-time members of the organization and two of the founders of EAI who currently serve on the Board of Directors and support the organization on a part-time basis.

Procedures

Permission to conduct the research was obtained by submitting a letter of proposal to the president of EAI. Once permission had been granted, a memorandum explaining the project was circulated to all employees. One week later, the subjects were contacted to arrange dates and times for interviews.

During the semi-structured interviews, each participant was asked to describe his or her perceptions of the history of EAI, the organization as it exists today, and his or her visions for the future. These general questions were followed up with probes that asked for specific illustrations (stories and/or anecdotes) or enhancement of a particular point.

All of the participants agreed to have the interviews audio-taped and the recordings were transcribed. The interviews ranged in length from thirty minutes to two hours; the transcripts from individual interviews ranged from seven to forty-one pages. The transcripts were analyzed according to the method of indexing described in the following section.

The Process of Indexing

There are essentially six steps involved in the method of indexing used in the investigation. First, the transcribed interviews were word indexed, using Burke's suggested indices of meaning as a guide (facts, names and titles, terms for order and hierarchy, terms for scenes, acts, attitudes, ideas, images, relationships, secrecy, mystery, privacy, power, and guilt). Additional indices emerged from the data and are reported in the following section of this article.

The second step was to discern the emphases that emerged in each category. For example, one of Burke's suggested indices of meaning is "names." Reviewing the analyses of the transcripts revealed certain emphases in this category (e.g., the current president of EAL, "Joseph Smith," was the most frequently mentioned name). Emphases were determined on the basis of frequency within each transcript.

Third, the words or atomic facts in each category were indexed in order to trace the operational synonyms of each of the emphases discerned in the previous step. For example, in the category of "time" (this was one of the indices that emerged from the data and was added to Burke's original scheme), the atomic fact "history" was frequently reported within and across transcripts. Therefore, the category of "time" was indexed in order to discern the operational synonyms of "history." Tracing this term revealed eight operational synonyms: "beginning," "gestation," "original," "past," "background," "before," "conception," and "genesis." This process of diachronic indexing was repeated within each transcript analysis.

The fourth step in this method involved repeating the above process across transcripts. This process of synchronic indexing was conducted in order to identify common emphases. At least three of the transcript analyses had to share an emphasis of a term (e.g., history) or common operational synonyms of that term (e.g., "past," "background") in order for the tracing to continue. There are two reasons for this cut off point. First, tracing the individual emphases found in each transcript analysis would have resulted in an enormous amount of possibly unrelated data. Also, requiring a majority of transcript analyses to share common emphases may have been misleading because a moderate sample size was used; the exclusion of a common emphasis shared by only three subjects may have resulted in an oversight of important data. Second, this cut-off point provided an indication that the atomic facts themselves are in circulation. This evidence led to the identification of triadic relationships among subjects and words. Therefore, all terms (or operational synonyms) that were emphasized in at least three of the transcript analyses were labeled "thematic terms" and were included in the next step.

The fifth step involved going back to the individual transcripts in order to trace the thematic terms and their operational synonyms that had been identified in the previous steps. Returning to the example, recall that the term "history" was identified as an emphasized term. The operational synonyms of this term were also identified. When these terms were traced across transcript

analyses, it was discovered that all of the subjects emphasized either the term "history" or one or more of its operational synonyms. Thus, this term was interpreted as a "thematic term." This term and all of its synonyms were traced in the individual transcripts. The results indicated 17 "spin-offs" or "radiations" of these terms. This process was repeated for each thematic term.

The final step in the indexing process involved once again tracing the thematic terms throughout the transcripts in order to discern their equations, implications, and/or transformations.

Results

Meaning Indices

As established in the preceding discussion, the actual indexing of the transcripts involved six stages of analysis. In the first stage, all of the atomic facts in each transcript were placed into the meaning indices suggested by Burke; those that emerged after a careful reading of the data were added to Burke's original list. A total of seven additional indices were added to the original clusters.

The first additional indice that emerged from the data was "terms for movement." All of the transcripts include descriptions such as "up," "down," "toward," "across," "under," and "through." These terms could not be placed appropriately in any of the initial groupings, therefore, this category was added to accommodate the data.

Second, all of the transcripts included references to "time" such as "originally," "subsequently," "eventually," "now," and "recently." Because these terms offer a sense of continuity and change, this category was also added to the initial list of indices.

The third grouping that emerged included terms for the "direction of action." For example, positive descriptions such as "can," "will," "do," and "would" outnumbered their negative counterparts by three to one throughout the transcripts. Because this sense of direction was considered important, this indice was also added to the original list.

Fourth (and fifth), all of the transcripts included terms that describe the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the organization. For example, terms such as "problems," "complaints," "good," "bad," and "asset" were included in these atomic fact clusters.

Sixth, a category emerged that included terms for "materials." All of the participants offered terms such as "manuals," "data bases," "records," and "computers" that describe the types of tools they use in the process of doing their jobs.

Finally, all of the transcripts included terms that illustrate possession or common identity. For example, terms such as "my," "mine," "theirs," "ours," "his," and "hers" were used by the participants to indicate ownership or

jurisdiction over issues and events. Because these congregations and segregations appeared to be important to the analysis, this category was also added to the list of original indices of meaning.

While it would be inappropriate to include a discussion of the results from the second and third stages of the indexing process, as these stages generated a large quantity of data, the fourth, fifth, and sixth stages are briefly reviewed in order to illustrate the method.

Discerned Language Emphases

In the fourth stage of the indexing process "thematic terms" were identified and used to guide the rest of the analysis. The results of this identification process revealed 14 thematic terms: "history," "present," "future," "work," "Joseph Smith" (the president of EAI), "8(a) legislation" (the Small Business Administration awards 8(a) certification to small, minority owned and controlled organizations; EAI was awarded certification in September, 1987), "strengths," "weaknesses," "behavior," "scenes," "issues," "relationships," "nucleus" or "working core" (these terms were used to describe the four founders of EAI), and "dates."

In the fifth stage of the indexing process, these thematic terms were traced in order to identify all of the spin-offs or radiations of the terms. For example, in tracing the term "history," 17 spin-offs emerged: "Calcom Technologies" (the company where all of the founders were employed before creating EAI), "Chapter 11" (as a result of Calcom filing for bankruptcy, EAI was created), "(quasi) mom and pop," "two-story walk-up" (a description of EAI's first "real" office), "pooled resources," "undercapitalized," "tough/rough," "difficult," "friction," "(lack of) privacy," "dealership," "piece-matching," "disadvantages," "shorthanded," "struggle," "informal," and "Friday afternoons" (the four founders used to "relax" on Friday afternoons and "share their dreams" for the organization). These were the terms used by the members of EAI to describe the organization's historical situation.

Although the remaining 12 categories of thematic terms and their spin-offs may be interpreted as descriptions of the organization's current situation (with the exception of the term "future"), the results of the indexing revealed terms that describe what EAI is like at the "present" time: "young," "(time of) reorganization," "(time of) scary growth," "difficult," "anxiety," "small," "solvent," "peaks and valleys," "tremendous change," "shorthanded," "loosely-knit," "(time of) transition," "exciting," and "entrepreneurship."

In tracing the term "future," nine spin-offs were identified: "tactical (focus)," "strategic (focus)," "(increased) turnover," "(more) organized," "(time of) managed growth," "meaningful work," "diversification," "successful," and "(more) formalized." These were terms used by the members of EAI to describe their visions for the future of the organization.

The sixth stage in the process of indexing involved tracing the thematic terms throughout the transcripts in order to discern their equations,

implications, and/or transformations (to reveal the constellations in which these terms were embedded). For example, tracing the terms "nucleus and working core" revealed four equations and one opposition: "the public sector operations department at Calcom is now the working core of EAI," "there is a strong desire to keep the nucleus unsplintered," "the core members of EAI were trained by the best" (three of the four founders worked for IBM), and "the members of EAI who were not part of the original nucleus do not know a lot about the history and development of the company." Additionally, this identification process revealed two implications of this term: "the most important thing about EAI is the people who have struggled to make it work" and "the principle shareholders have different ideas about what they want from the company," and one transformation: "originally, the working core fed off the reputation they had earned at Calcom; now they're on their own." In total, the indexing revealed 14 thematic terms, 175 radiations of these terms, and 79 inferences that illustrate the constellations or contexts of the terms.

Constellations of Meaning

The language offered by the members of EAI was presented in two forms: organizational stories (specific illustrations or examples of organizational life) and conversational descriptions of the participants' individual interpretations of organizational life. The extraction of the organizational stories from the remaining conversational text (after the indexing had been completed) provided an opportunity to compare the two forms of discourse.

For example, throughout this phase of the analysis, it became obvious that the organizational stories told by the participants were triggered by key terms (e.g., "difficult") that in turn had been triggered by the theme of the conversion (e.g., "the history of EAI"). Therefore, the participants appeared to match a particular story to the theme that was being discussed at the time. This cycle (theme--key term(s)--story) occurred throughout the interviews and revealed the interdependence of organizational stories and conversational descriptions.

Additionally, because the interviews were only moderately structured, the participants were offered an opportunity to talk about what is meaningful for them. Without significant prompting, the participants weaved their way through the interviews, moving from personal interpretation to organizational story and back again (in some cases, the participants would begin with a story and then explain the meaning of the story, which would then lead to a new theme). Either way, the participants worked through their interpretations and tested them with the researcher through their "intradialectic" (prompted monologuing) method of responding to the broad questions they were asked.

In the spirit of these two insights, the following comparisons offer examples of the language used in the context of organizational stories about the history, current situation, and future of EAI and the language used by the participants to describe their interpretations of organizational life. The

examples provide evidence or "Burkean proofs" regarding the context of key terms and the constellations that helped to reveal their meanings.

The History of EAI

While there are interesting associations between and among the terms used in the stories and those included in the conversational descriptions of organizational life, the most interesting example of language use is reflected in the terms the participants use to initiate and/or summarize their individual descriptions of EAI.

For example, the founders who are still full-time members of the organization describe the history of EAI using the term "conception." The stories they share are focused on how EAI began, how it was "conceived." Further, their stories and descriptions regarding the history of the organization reflect the collaboration of ideas (a transformation of the term "conception") and effort that was needed in order to "give birth" to EAI.

The founders who support EAI on a part-time basis use the term "gestation" in their descriptions of the early days of the organization. The use of this term is an elaboration of the description used by the other founders. In talking about the "gestation" of EAI, these participants emphasize the "conception" and early development of EAI. This terminology is consistent with the themes emphasized by these participants. The founders are proud of their contributions to the creation and early development of EAI. In fact, these members expressed their concern regarding the lack of effort exhibited by the other members of the organization to keep their legacies alive. The stories they told and their conversational descriptions are focused on the "early days" of EAI and their language is consistent with this focus.

In contrast, Joseph Smith uses the term "genesis" to describe the history of EAI. Interestingly, Joseph describes himself as a Christian and the stories and descriptions that he offered often included Biblical references. However, there seemed to be more behind his use of this term than religiosity. The term "genesis" connotes the origin or the onset of something, a coming-into-being. It was obvious from the stories Joseph told and the interpretations he shared that he prefers to focus on his takeover of the organization and the way in which he is trying to make EAI successful. Although the organization was in existence before Joseph "came on board," he (and the other members of EAI) believe that he is "helping the organization to carve out and maintain its niche." His use of the term "genesis" sparked illustrations of the "new" origin or coming-into-being of the organization.

The other full-time members of EAI spoke of the "evolution" of the organization and how it "grew from nothing into something." The stories and descriptions they share are focused on change; how the organization is "evolving" toward a positive or successful future. The use of this term is consistent with the tone of immediacy regarding the stories and the interpretations offered. These participants did not emphasize the

"conception," "gestation," or "genesis" of EAI. Rather, they focus on their sphere of identification with the organization, which is based on the current status of EAI.

Only two of the aforementioned key terms ("genesis" and "gestation") were included in the organizational stories told by the participants. The other two terms ("conception" and "evolution") were used in conversational descriptions. However, these descriptions are considered key or pivotal terms because they invited stories that confirmed the reason for their selection. In other words, these terms are actually summations of a theme focused on the different events that occurred throughout the creation and the early development of the organization. As previously mentioned, the meaning an individual ascribes to a particular term or story may be discerned through an identification of its association with the theme that it is used to illustrate.

The Current Situation of EAI

The founders told stories about the current situation of the organization that focus on the "tremendous change" that is occurring and the imminent "reorganization" and "growth" that is frightening them. These participants offered their organizational stories and conversational descriptions in a comparative spirit; the present is often compared with the past and envisioned in light of the future. As one participant explained, "our fear is growing, but so is our confidence; we know where we came from and we're happier where we are and where we're headed."

Joseph Smith shares this comparative emphasis, however, he also emphasizes the need to be realistic about "where we stand." As he explained (by quoting Poco), "we've discovered the enemy and the enemy are us." Further, he summarized the current status of the organization as "a time of scary, scary growth." This theme (the current situation of EAI) evoked stories and descriptions from Joseph that are focused on the "shorthanded" situation in which they are operating, the "difficult" decisions and tasks with which they are faced, and the "tremendous change" that is "right around the corner."

The other participants of EAI appear to interpret this theme on the basis of their identification with more "immediate" terms (those that did not imply a link with the past or the future). For example, the stories and descriptions shared by these participants focus on key terms such as "loosely-knit," "small," and "shorthanded." As one participant commented, "I think that we are a small organization that is relatively disorganized." The key terms "small" and "disorganized" triggered descriptions about the impact of these characteristics. As this member explained:

This is a small organization and I see it as one that hasn't quite found its niche yet. It's an organization that has a number of people that have individual strengths; some of these strengths work together and some work against each other. If you took the

principle shareholders in the firm, they'd each have a little different idea of what they want to get out of it. As far as -- not only a financial return, but perhaps a professional return too. And I think that fluctuates by opportunity. Whoever at the time brings in the best opportunity, that's the focus of the company. And then if something else looks good, it sort of changes, so they haven't quite found their niche. The contracts till this point have been small and the focus of the company comes from the changing of these contracts.

The key terms used to describe the historical situation of EAI encouraged spin-offs into terms used to describe the present and future situations of the organization. Further, several of the terms used to describe the present condition of the organization are carry-over terms from descriptions of the history of EAI. For example, the term "difficult" is used in stories and descriptions about the historical and current situations of the organization.

The Future of EAI

The language used to describe the future of EAI is obviously speculative because there are no specific illustrations of the future, only stories that illustrate the visions of the participants. Additionally, these visions of the future are often based on comparisons with the past and present.

For example, one participant commented:

EAI just doesn't have enough staff; they never have had enough staff. Nor do they have enough resources to support that staff; they never have had that either. You know, you can't put the cart before the horse. And that's what they're doing right now. It's a lovely organization and if people don't get too excited about numbers right away, and make good decisions, the company really has more strengths than weaknesses and can keep going.

The participants claim to be counting on the future; they perceive the future of their organization as the culmination of their efforts. As one of the founders explained, "the only thing that has kept me going is the idea of what is going to be; otherwise, I would have been tempted to abandon ship a long time ago."

As reported previously, there are nine radiations of the term "future" used to describe what the participants envision. Most of these terms are emphasized by the participants in the language they use to describe their visions for the future. For example, one of the members of EAI stated, "I think the future will be scary because we'll have to grow to do all we want to do." The futuristic theme of the discussion triggered the key terms "scary" and "grow," which in turn triggered stories or descriptions that are used to emphasize this individual's vision for the future:

The problem we have to face is that we're on the heels of some major growth opportunities. This organization is probably getting

ready to triple in size fairly quickly. That's scary. You worry about the kind of people that you bring into the organization and how much they will exhibit or possess the loyalty and the spirit that you want.

The language used by the participants to describe their visions for the future is for the most part, positive and anticipatory. The futuristic theme evoked key terms that in turn triggered organizational stories and descriptions that are illustrations or elaborations of the terms.

Summary

The preceding discussions described the first phase of a three-phase investigation designed to discern how language serves as a structuring process for meaning and to develop a strategy for synthesizing the levels of interpretation that emerge during the research process. It is important to clarify that after each phase of analysis, the researcher's interpretations were brought back to the participants for their acceptance, rejection, or qualification. For example, in the second phase of the project, the participants were asked to assess how representative of their perceptions of the organization the 175 terms and 79 inferences discerned throughout the indexing are. Further, this review cycle provided an opportunity for the participants to extend the realm of meaning they ascribe to these terms and to "fine tune" my interpretations. Each of the three phases was necessary to exhaust the participants' interpretations of the themes they offered as integral to organizational life. Therefore, working inductively, the task of interpretation is placed on the organizational actors, as they are asked to guide and direct the analysis through their reviews of evolving interpretations (therefore grounding the Burkean proofs included in the analyses). With this in mind, the value of indexing as a method for analyzing organizational discourse is described below.

Discussion

According to Cheney and Tompkins (1987, p. 7), "... no rhetorical critic other than Burke has offered a method that can better account for [communicative] process than treating the text as symbolic action." As a method for guiding "critical textualism" (p. 464), indexing encourages an action orientation in analyses of rhetorical and literary texts. As a result of this orientation, spoken texts and action texts can be as validly analyzed as historical and written texts. Therefore, social action (e.g., organizational rhetoric) can be viewed as reliably interpretable.

The potential of this method has been recognized and documented. Cheney (1985) and Cheney and Tompkins (1987) have illustrated how indexing can merge the humanistic and scientific approaches to human

communication. Further, these authors claim that this method "seems ideally suited for deriving key terms and thematic categories for content analyses" and "for correlating organizational variables by seeking out places in the discourse of [organizational actors] where such terms and their 'operational synonyms' co-occur" (p. 478). Additionally, indexing can be used as a supplement to primary data (for an example, see Cheney, 1985) and as an entry into further analysis (see Breidenstein, 1988). This essay illustrates how Burke's method can be used to "break down" individual interpretations to discern what is common among them in order to "build" them back up again. However, the primary emphasis of this method is on revealing textual construction, not encouraging deconstruction.

While the method of indexing described in this article, began with a word by word analysis of transcribed texts, and followed Burke's contention that words are "atomic facts," this description is not intended to imply an atomistic orientation for the research. Rather, "words" were used as the initial unit of analysis for this study. A methodological decision was made to begin the analysis with words; the researcher used words as atomic facts as a way into an analysis of the text. In selecting words as atomic facts, the researcher did not mean to imply that words are irreducible or that they alone constitute meaningful discourse.

Indeed, "you can't get to meaning by heaping atomic fact upon atomic fact, building upward from decontextualized elemental units . . . the meaning and reference of our discourse come into being within the holistic and contextualized space of our social practices" (C. O. Schrag, personal communication, February 22, 1988). If the purpose and process of indexing concluded with an identification of terms, this method would be an illustration of decontextualization. However, indexing simply begins with words; the researcher must then trace these "facts" to discern the constellations in which they are embedded. Researchers can avoid logical atomism by contextualizing the "atomic facts" and by inviting the participants to transform or recontextualize meaning in subsequent data-gathering cycles.

The method of indexing offered by Burke (1954/1964) and expanded by Cheney and Tompkins (1987) offers a reliable alternative for the analysis of organizational discourse. According to Burke (1935/1954, p. 162), "meaning or symbolism becomes a central concern precisely at that state when a given system of meanings is falling into decay . . . in periods of firmly established meanings, one does not study, them, one uses them; one frames his [sic] acts in accordance with them" (emphases added). Indexing offers an opportunity to discern what is meaningful for the members of an organization by analyzing organizational discourse. Through such an analysis, it is possible to uncover firmly established guidelines for organizational action, thus lending support for the claim that language creates the social structure of organizational life. Further, this method provides an appropriate means for an "exhaustive analysis of internal [organizational] rhetoric" (Stohl & Redding, 1987) which has been relatively absent in the development of this facet of our discipline.

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A Pre-Diffusion Comparison of Urban and Rural Minnesota Attitudes Toward Advanced Television Services

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In November, 1995, the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Advisory Committee on Advanced Television Service recommended a new television standard be adopted to replace the old 525-line "NTSC" system of television used in the U.S. since the 1940s. The proposed all-digital high definition television (HDTV) system, featuring twice the picture resolution as the present system, a wide screen format, and six channel CD-quality sound is likely to be combined with a variety of expanded and interactive television options. Still, consumer interest in advanced television (ATV) services is difficult to gauge because mass-mediated or interpersonal information about advanced television services such as HDTV cannot adequately describe a technology that must be seen and heard to be appreciated. Due in part to the proprietary motives of the companies involved, there is a paucity of consumer-based research available, and skeptics abound.

For instance, in August 1994, Eddie Fritz, President/CEO of the U.S. National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) wrote to Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee Chairman Ernest Hollings that HDTV is a technology "that no one else has any idea consumers will want to buy" (McConnell, 1994, p. 40). Likewise, a 1995 report by EDS Management Consulting Services (1995) stated that "there is no substantive evidence that the consumer wants HDTV." The report stated that although HDTV standards are likely to be approved in the U.S. in 1996, "HDTV may never see the airwaves" and "may fall to the same technological obsolescence its creation unleashed on both the Japanese and European HDTV systems."

This paper investigates how location of residence interacts with age and education as predictors of consumers' knowledge of, and attitudes toward, HDTV. It explores differences between rural and urban residents' exposure to information, and the accuracy of their understandings of information about the technology. Theoretically grounded in the extensive diffusion literature, especially the geography school, this study contributes to a growing body of consumer-based pre-diffusion research by focusing on Ormrod's (1990) concept of "spatial receptiveness." Further, because of HDTV's expected integration with other technologies and services, the study examines levels of interest in expanded programming or interactive services and compares them with interest in HDTV alone. The differences and similarities between the responses of the urban and rural samples provide predictive information concerning how diffusion of HDTV to consumers in these spatial environments may occur.

Theoretical Overview and Review of Literature

Ormrod (1990) detailed the differences between overall societal receptiveness and local context; building on the work of Torsten Hagerstrand, a physical determinist who viewed the diffusion of innovations as inextricably linked to spatial processes. Hagerstrand held that "an uneven distribution of willingness and opportunity to accept innovations contributes to the situation where acceptance takes place more rapidly in certain areas than in others. . . ." (1953/1967, p. 149) Arguing that even in today's "well-connected" world the concept of local receptiveness is important, Ormrod noted that "acceptance decisions may be made by individuals, but those individuals are operating under constraints, most of which are products of their geographic setting" (1990, pp. 111-112).

The present study will operationalize setting primarily as a function of an urban/rural dichotomy, and "receptiveness" will be operationalized as "looking forward" to owning the innovation. The urban/rural dichotomy is based on the work of Karlsson (1988), Gillespie & Robins (1989), and others (Abbott, 1989; Thompson 1965, 1968; McNeill, 1963; Malecki, 1981, Pred, 1966) who argued that inventions tend to generate in the large metropolitan areas of high technology regions.

While rural subjects tend to be less well off economically, to be older, less educated, and less likely to be exposed to new technologies through their schools or workplaces (several factors that would seem to discourage adoption) they nonetheless are as likely as their nonrural counterparts to use and view favorably new information technologies (LaRose and Mettler, 1989). Although early research has shown that there is high consumer interest in interactive television (Jessell, 1994), other reports indicate a relatively low ratio of subscription subscribers to homes passed (Berniker, 1995).

Rogers observed that "Knowing about an innovation is often quite different from using the idea. Attitudes toward an innovation, therefore, frequently intervene between the knowledge and decision functions. In other words, the individual's attitudes or beliefs about the innovation have much to say about his [sic] passage through the innovation decision process" (1983, p. 169). For this reason, the present study goes beyond simply investigating early knowing, and explores the respondents' attitudes toward the innovation as well.

In attempting to predict the general pattern likely in the first stage of ATV diffusion (the innovation stage, defined as having a threshold of 1% penetration of households), Darby (1988, pp. 14-22) identified six consumer electronics innovations that share common characteristics with HDTV, and reported that these products diffused to 1% of U.S. households in the following number of years: both home PCs and "backyard" satellite TVROs, six to seven years; VCRs, seven to eight years; color TV, eight years; large screen/projection TV, 12-14 years; and stereo audio component systems, 20 years. Based upon these figures, and his analysis of the second stage (growth

and imitation) of diffusion for these six innovations, Darby constructed two scenarios for ATV/HDTV diffusion. A "sluggish diffusion" scenario would result from spectrum and standard uncertainty, R&D/system/product delays, slow macroeconomic growth, substantial government deficit reduction, slow consumer spending patterns, high/rigid product prices and weak household preference for ATV products. Darby's second scenario, that of rapid product diffusion was predicated on timely and decisive FCC action in setting standards and allocating spectrum, accelerated R&D programs marked by diversity and price competition, sufficient sales to allow producers to exploit economies of scale and learning in the first ten years, and rapid development of moderately priced, high quality, compatible program supply programs.

Like nearly all "replacement" innovations in consumer electronics, HDTV will have a slow initial takeoff due in part to initial high prices and the increasingly rugged nature of existing apparatus in the hands of consumers. Carey asserted that, "in order for a new technology or service to achieve mass-market penetration, price has to come down sharply from the price levels at introduction." (1993, p. 33). Carey suggests that "in a 1990s context, a major electronic product--even if highly desirable--would probably have to drop to \$500 or less in order to achieve a 50 percent penetration" (p. 34). Nonetheless, he also predicted that "initial prices for high-definition television (HDTV) and similar services will be higher than an average household can afford to pay" (p. 38). Darby predicted a \$3,000 introductory price in the U.S., with a high and low price range of \$800 and \$400 once the price had dropped and stabilized, after about 10 years (1988, p. 37). Zenith Corporation has predicted that HDTV sets will cost "no more than" \$500 more than today's color NTSC television sets (Farrell & Shapiro, 1992, p. 74). Results of the North American High Definition Television Demonstrations to the Public in 1988 and of an unpublished MIT survey indicated that while most people preferred HDTV, many said they would not spend more than a few hundred dollars extra for the service (Farrell & Shapiro, 1992, p. 74, note 104; citing Rice, 1990, p. 172).

Methodology

The independent variables studied here are "respondent characteristics" such as place of residence, age, occupation, education, and gender. The dependent variables are knowledge of HDTV, source of information about the innovation, ability to accurately define the innovation, anticipation of HDTV, adoption intentions (such as early versus late adoption and market price expectations), and preferences for expanded services such as interactive television or video on demand.

The data were gathered in late April and early May of 1994 using telephone survey methods. The sampling frame was all residential listings in two telephone directories, described below. The sample (N=200) was stratified by geographical location, so that 100 respondents were selected

from a frame of published telephone numbers in the Saint Paul Minnesota metropolitan area, while the other 100 respondents were selected from a frame of published telephone numbers in a wide area directory covering sixty one communities in the "Limestone Valley" area of south-central Minnesota. The calls were made by two trained research assistants, working primarily between the hours of 7:00 and 9:00 p.m., Monday through Fridays. The questionnaire was administered to the first adult answering the telephone, not necessarily to the person whose name was listed with the number. If a child answered the telephone, the person whose name was listed in the directory was requested. Independent variable (demographic) characteristics were coded nominally as follows:

Place of residence was operationalized as "urban" (Saint Paul metropolitan area) and "rural" (south-central Minnesota);

Age was tabulated in four categories: (1) Under 25 year, (2) 25 to 44 years, (3) 45 to 64 years, and (4) over 64 years;

Occupation was recorded, but ultimately not categorized.

Education was coded in four categories: (1) high school or less, (2) high school plus additional college or vocational education, but not a four year degree, (3) four year college degree, (4) four year college degree plus additional graduate or professional degree.

Respondents were asked if they had heard of HDTV, where they had heard about the innovation, and were asked to define HDTV. The respondents were asked if they looked forward to owning HDTV; and if they anticipated adopting early or waiting until later and if so, their reasons for waiting. Desired price thresholds were investigated among those who said they looked forward to the innovation. Dependent variable characteristics were coded nominally as follows:

Channel of information was coded as (1) interpersonal and (2) mass media; the latter was further sub-coded as (1) broadcast and (2) print channels.

Accuracy of subject's definition of HDTV was independently coded post hoc on a three point Likert-type scale; (1) incorrect, (2) partially correct, (3) correct) by the two principal researchers; intercoder reliability was calculated using Scott's pi (1955) and any disagreements were resolved by conference. The accuracy of the subject's definition of HDTV was judged based upon the inclusion of key concepts such as "improved picture quality," "more lines/higher resolution," "digital," "improved-digital-or CD quality sound," etc. In addition, incorrect definitional components such as "3-D" or "already in stores locally" were considered to reduce the correctness of the definition. Intercoder reliability (π) was calculated at .84 using Scott's formula for pi (1955).

Anticipation of the innovation was coded as "yes" or "no" according to the subjects self report as to whether or not they were

"looking forward to" the innovation.

Reasons for waiting were coded as anticipation of waiting for (1) price to drop, (2) technology to improve, (3) current set to break, (4) opportunity to observe, and (5) other.

Desired price was operationalized as the price the subject reported as "willing to pay" for HDTV. Responses were categorized as (1) \$500 or less, (2) \$501 - \$1,000, (3) over \$1,000. In addition, the respondents were asked if they would be willing to pay a hypothetical introductory price of \$4,000.

Finally, the survey administrator read a description of some of the "expanded services" that are likely to accompany the advent of digital television. Respondents were asked if they would look forward to having these types of expanded services and what would be the relative importance of improved picture/sound versus expanded services.

Data analysis was conducted by examining frequency distributions and conducting a contingency table analysis utilizing the chi square (with continuity correction where necessary), Phi, and Cramer's V statistics.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

This first section of data are the "pooled" rural and urban descriptive totals. Following this section is a report of the comparative statistics using chi square analysis to measure the rural and urban responses against each other. The gender distribution was nearly even, with 102 males (51.5%) and 96 females (48.5%). The age of the respondents was distributed as follows: those under 25 years, $n=22$ (11%); from 25 to 44 years, $n=95$, (47.5%); in the category of 45 to 64 years, $n=49$, (24.5%) and 65 years and up, $n=34$, (17%). The variable "location" was, due to the stratified sampling procedure, an even split; with 100 urban and 100 rural-area respondents. The variable "education" was distributed as follows: high school graduate or less than 12 years of schooling, $n=62$, (31%); high school plus additional vocational or college courses, but not a four year degree, $n=52$, (26%); four year college graduates, $n=63$, (31.5%); and finally, those with graduate school coursework or degree, $n=23$, (11.5%).

In terms of survey items relating to HDTV, 64 of the 200 respondents (32%) reported having heard of HDTV previous to our inquiry, the remaining 136 (68%) had not heard of the innovation. Of the 64 respondents who had knowledge of HDTV before our call, only 7 subjects (12%) reported having heard about the innovation through interpersonal channels, while 50 (88%) reported mass media channels. Of these media sources, 35 were "codable"--that is, responses were other than simply the phrase "media" or "mass media." There was a fairly even distribution among these 35, with 16 (46%) respondents reporting broadcast (television or radio) channels, while 19

improved picture versus expanded television services. The percentages for these variables are found in Table 4.

Table 2
Comparative statistics: technology variables and location.

		Rural	Urban
Accuracy (of definition)	Incorrect	18%	11%
	Partially correct	64%	42%
	Correct	18%	47%
Anticipation	Look forward to HDTV	59%	77%
	Don't look forward to HDTV	41%	23%
Exp. Services	Look forward to E.S.	53%	74%
	Don't look forward to E.S.	47%	26%
Accuracy of definition, total chi-square = 6.023 (2, N= 64) p = .0492, Cramer's V = .307; Anticipation, total chi-square = 7--with continuity correction = 6.215 (1, N= 197) p = .0081, with continuity correction = .0127, Phi = .189; Interest in expanded services, total chi-square = 9.878--with continuity correction = 8.975 (1, N= 199) p = .0017, with continuity correction = .0027, Phi = .223.			

Table 3
Comparative statistics among those who said they looked forward to HDTV.

		Rural	Urban
Desired Price	\$500 or less	56%	22%
	\$501 to \$1000	25%	41%
	Over \$1000	18%	36%
Preference	Improved Picture (HDTV)	31%	36%
	Expanded Services	58%	64%
	Both	11%	0%
Price: Total chi-square = 16.079, df=2, N= 131, p = .0003, Cramer's V = .35; Preference: Total chi-square = 8.955, df=2, N= 128, p = .0114, Cramer's V = .265.			

Table 4
Comparative statistics among those who looked forward to expanded television services.

		Rural	Urban
Preference	Improved Picture (HDTV)	27%	22%
	Expanded Services	62%	78%
	Both	11%	0%
Total chi-square = 9.907, df=2, N= 125, p = .0071, Cramer's V = .282			

Discussion and Conclusions

A summary of the more significant findings and their implications are reported here, especially as they relate to the concept of spatial receptiveness. In general, as education increased, so did the likelihood that a respondent had heard of the innovation. Overall, the percentage of respondents who correctly defined HDTV was much greater for the urban sample ($r=18\%$, $u=47\%$), as was the ratio of those who looked forward to the innovation ($r=59\%$, $u=77\%$). In regard to price, over half of the respondents who looked forward to adoption of HDTV were willing to spend more for the innovation than the under-\$500 price commonly charged for color NTSC receivers today. About one-third were willing to pay between \$500 and \$1000 for HDTV and just under one-quarter were willing to pay over \$1000. This finding indicates that there is a willingness to spend more for this innovation than was anticipated by Carey (1993). The correlation between price and location showed that the rural sample was much less willing to pay higher prices for the technology. Even among just those who looked forward to HDTV, the percentages of those who wanted to pay just \$500 or less for the receiver was much greater for the rural sample, while those willing to pay between \$500 and \$1000, and over \$1000, were more likely to be urbanites. Although this finding could be an artifact of lower rural incomes, income information was not gathered for this study.

The results of this study also demonstrate that those willing to pay higher prices for HDTV sets also had a greater interest in expanded services; although among those respondents with prior knowledge of HDTV there appeared to be no predictive association between such knowledge and the desire for expanded services. If there is a greater desire for such services over the enhanced reception of HDTV, it may be related to the more tangible nature of interactive services, movies on demand, home shopping, etc., in contrast to the less tangible nature of enhanced reception. Of course, it is not clear if consumers feel the need for HDTV. Even those who have seen televised reports on the technology have not actually seen and heard it. Experiencing the benefits of HDTV is only possible during a "live" demonstration. This may also be why many of those who have heard about the technology cannot accurately describe it, nor do they eagerly anticipate its adoption. A laboratory study that includes such a demonstration may be a much better gauge of consumer interest than a telephone survey.

While most of the respondents would wait for the price to drop before adopting the technology, others would wait for public opinion to guide them or for their sets to wear out. Some would wait for the technology to improve. Interestingly, no one mentioned waiting for increased availability of programming, even though this variable seemed closely tied to the adoption of color television in the 1950s and '60s.

Finally, it is interesting to note that some variables did not vary significantly with rural versus urban location. Factors that did not produce statistically significant correlations included previous knowledge of the

innovation (reporting having "heard of" it), looking forward to adoption of the innovation, reasons anticipated for waiting to adopt, and willingness to pay a high introductory price. Future studies should investigate why the urban sample was almost three times as likely to be able to correctly define the innovation. We would speculate that this was tied to level of education, which of course is related to geographical demographics.

In conclusion, the data presented here shows that knowledge of HDTV has not diffused to a majority of the population. Fewer than one third of the 200 respondents ($r=28$, $u=36$) had even heard of HDTV. As exposure increases through the media and as people begin to encounter the technology first-hand, continuing study of changing attitudes and perceptions will give researchers and marketers further insight into the diffusion process. Eventually, observability and trialability in the form of live demonstrations might generate greater knowledge of and increase levels of enthusiasm for HDTV. Still, this study paves the way for greater understanding of how location will play a role in the diffusion of new television services in the U.S.

It is becoming increasingly evident that HDTV in the U.S. will probably be part of a bundle of digital television services, including multicasting, available on the soon-to-be-allocated second channel (Stern, 1995). When this occurs, two scenarios seem likely. It may be that the indifference toward HDTV detected in the present study will lessen as the innovation is perceived not as "merely" an entertainment medium, but as part of a valuable expanded digital television information service. In this case, HDTV should diffuse successfully in both rural and urban areas, with a great level of early adoption in the economically advanced urban markets. The rural diffusion of HDTV is likely, in this case, to be tied to DBS diffusion (Viggiano, 1994).

Other factors may stimulate the diffusion process as well. Just as with earlier television innovations, initial exposure to HDTV may take place in bars and other venues where large-screen television systems are already commonplace. Advertising will whet the appetites of consumers as retailers market high definition VCRs and large-screen HDTV monitors. These factors, combined with increasing availability of movies for rent or purchase in HDTV formats, may also stimulate sales among economically advantaged consumers, leading to increased diffusion among less wealthy urban and rural consumers as prices fall. However, if the second scenario plays out, and HDTV continues to be viewed as an unnecessary frill by rural consumers, there may be less of a push by rural retailers and rural television stations. In this case, the information gap between differences between rural and urban communities may widen. Should this occur, policy makers may want to consider ways to stimulate the diffusion of advanced television services among rural consumers and broadcasters.

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Emerson on Rhetoric, Identity and the Transformation of the American Audience

Jon Paulson, Bethany College

"If the Allwise should give me light" wrote Emerson in his journal on July 29, 1837, "I should write for the Cambridge men a theory of the scholar's office."¹ A month before, he had been invited to deliver the Phi Beta Kappa address on August 31. The light apparently came, and the theory was presented in what was certainly the most significant of Emerson's speeches, "The American Scholar."

Traditionally, "The American Scholar" has been read primarily as a plea for literary nationalism in the manner of Oliver Wendell Holmes, who called it "our literary Declaration of Independence."² No doubt many interpreted it this way because nationalism was a salient topic in the Early National Period. Indeed, literary nationalism had been a common topic of the Phi Beta Kappa address for a number of years.³

But literary nationalism as such occupied a relatively small portion of the speech. Many other themes are developed in the course of "The American Scholar" that are more significant to the rhetorical critic and theorist. This paper will examine how in this speech Emerson both enacts and explores tensions between speakers and their audiences that provide the basis of a distinctly American rhetoric. Specifically, Emerson's concern with identity and dependency reflect basic ideological tensions growing out of the unique material circumstances of American life. These tensions subsequently influence the ways both rhetors and auditors relate to each other.

Although Emerson seemed to be most interested in developing a "theory of the scholar's office," this office serves as a representative anecdote for an exploration of the nature and functions of humankind. The significance of such explorations as central to an understanding of rhetoric was argued by Black in his discussion of the "second persona."⁴ The second persona is the auditor implied in any discourse, "a model of what the rhetor would have his [or her] audience become."⁵ The concept of the second persona is significant in rhetorical practice in that "each one of us defines himself [or herself] by what he [or she] is and what he [or she] does . . . And we should look to one another for hints as to whom we should become."⁶ This is significant to the rhetorical critic because "what the critic can find projected by the discourse is the image of a [hu]man . . . [and] We know how to make appraisals of men [and women]."⁷ Thus, Black's theory allows an examination of the rhetor/audience relationship as one concerned with the building of identities. Then, rhetorical judgments may be made based upon the character of the possible identities proposed by the rhetor for the auditor.

Clearly, a judgment of Emerson's speech could be developed by examining the nature of the human he asks his auditors to become, but such an approach would reveal little that is new about Emerson or the second persona. What is

more significant to an understanding of rhetorical processes is that Emerson's speech allows for an exploration of the historical emergence of the second persona and the problem of identity in American rhetoric.

The essential feature of the second persona is that it assumes that the auditor is free to choose his or her own identity, and looks to rhetors for guidance. Black did not assert that the rhetor/audience relationship has always been this way:

Few of us are born into an identity that was incipiently structured before our births. That was, centuries ago, the way with men, but it certainly not with us. The quest for identity is the modern pilgrimage.⁸

Black dated this "modern pilgrimage" as having begun with the Reformation. Prior to this,

men living in the tribal warmth of the polis had the essential nature of the world determined for them in their communal heritage of the mythopoesis, and they were able to assess the probity of utterance by reference to its mimetic relationship to the stable reality that undergirded their consciousness. . . .⁹

That is, rhetors and auditors alike were constrained by these prior identities, and invention was based more on imitation. Since then, people have tried to discover meaning in their lives among what Black called "the rending of change and the clamor of competing fictions" that came with the new ideas of both the Renaissance and the Reformation."¹⁰

By Emerson's time, the rending and clamor had resulted in a variety of civil and revolutionary wars, great awakenings and revelations. Such changes in the political and social world had profound effects on individuals, and how they could respond to competing and often contradictory messages. An examination of both the era and the material conditions under which Emerson spoke reveals insight into the rhetorical significance of "The American Scholar." This speech not only provided an illuminating moment in the life of the nation, but reflected a fundamental change in the role of the auditor in public address. By examining the relationships between identity and independence as they are articulated by Emerson, an understanding of a unique rhetorical ethos of American democracy emerges.

The Early National Period

The first key to unlocking the rhetorical significance of "The American Scholar" is to understand the conditions of the United States during the early national period. In the years following the Revolution and the adoption of the Constitution, the United States began to grow and prosper at a fast rate. Military and diplomatic victories abroad combined with rapid economic and technological development at home to give Americans confidence and pride not only about their domestic life, but also about their position in the larger world community. The feelings of the period were ably expressed by Daniel

Webster in the peroration to his 1826 eulogy for Adams and Jefferson:

It cannot be denied, but by those who would dispute against the sun, that with America and in America, a new era commences in human affairs. This era is distinguished by free representative governments, by entire religious liberty, by improved systems of national intercourse, by a newly awakened and unconquerable spirit of free inquiry, and by diffusion of knowledge through the community such as has been before altogether unknown and unheard of.¹¹

Although these words were uttered eleven years before "The American Scholar," they articulate many of the feelings that affected the social exigencies to which Emerson spoke. Emerson himself appreciated the speech (he was in the audience at Faneuil Hall), writing in his journal that "The oration of Mr. Webster was worthy of his fame & what is more was worthy of the august occasion."¹² But the entry for this day after the speech contained a long reflection on the many problems of empty patriotism, and the difficulties citizens had in understanding their roles in a rapidly changing social environment.

Americans were indeed facing some rather fundamental changes in the early national period. The rapid economic growth of the era was tied to changes in the basic economic structures. The new emphasis on individualism was connected the decline of the self-sufficient and polycultural home as the basic socio-economic unit. Wage labor and specialty (monocultural) agriculture transformed the United States into a market capitalist society. In this new society, young people could no longer assume that their vocation and permanent home would be determined by family status and location. Dependence on the market brought new kinds of uncertainty into their lives: especially in the boom and bust cycles that characterized the twenties and thirties. At the time of Emerson's speech, the nation was in a bust cycle, and Emerson himself was in a gloomier than usual mood over the "Panic of '37."¹³

Not only was this a period of rapid socio-economic change, it was a period of religious change and upheaval as well. Puritanism had given way to Unitarianism, and younger generations were beginning to feel disenchantment with the dryness and limitations of the Unitarians. Many people flocked to the "Second Great Awakening," and the depression of 1837 gave rise to such phenomena as the Advent movement. The intellectual elite, as represented by those who would have attended Emerson's speech, found answers in transcendentalism, and it would perhaps not be going too far to say that "The American Scholar" introduced transcendental philosophy to those outside of Emerson's immediate circle.

The thirties was a decade in which people faced an identity crisis. As a nation, people did not see the condition of the economy as a sign to support the confidence and patriotic vigor of years past. As individuals, they struggled to find their own vocation in changing structures and roles. People were independent, and had the liberty to choose and build new identities, but the prospect was daunting to many and frightening to others. Emerson spoke to

try to help his audience find vocational and moral direction, and "The American Scholar" is both an explanation and an enactment of the relationship between rhetorical auditors and problems of identity.

Rhetoric and Identity

The basic problem that Emerson was addressing in this speech was the problem of how humans are to discover and live out their identity in the modern world. His focus on the various specific topics of the speech, especially the scholar's office and literary nationalism, were basically applications of a more fundamental principle. It was the fundamental principle of transcendentalism: humans need to seek the truth by intuitively discovering their relationship with God. The self is manifest as consciousness, or awareness, while God is manifest as Nature. When an individual is seeing truly, the separation between the self and nature disappears, and the oneness that is truth is perceived.

In discussing the nature and duties of the American scholar, Emerson described the basic barrier to oneness. He based this on a fable, which served as the basic text for the speech.¹⁴ This fable proposes a definition of human, identified by Emerson as Man. The fable told that all men were originally one Man, whose various functions were parceled out to individuals "[i]n the social state."¹⁵ The current state of man, however, is one in which individuals have become so engrossed with their functions that the unified state of Man had been lost: "The state of society is one in which the members have suffered amputation from the trunk, and strut about so many living monsters,—a good finger, a neck, a stomach, an elbow, but never a man."¹⁶ Not only did this passage imply the right state of man as unified, but it also articulates the savagery of man's separation from Man. Emerson's terms not only come from different parts of the body, but from different systems. This is no careful separation based on rational analysis, but a random hacking. If people feel an essential separation from their essential being, it is not necessarily the result of any coherent plan, but of carelessness. Only by learning to be a careful and self-reliant observer of nature can one hope to regain oneness and truth.

What is the role of the rhetor in the act of becoming transcendently aware? It would appear that there is no need for a rhetor as each individual is capable of self-reliance in discovering truth. But Emerson viewed communication between humans as part of the essential search for identity:

The law of communication is this: here am I a complex human being-- Welcome to me all creatures; Welcome each of you to your part in me: St. Paul to his, the eagle to his; the horse and the bat to theirs.¹⁷

Therefore, the rhetor stands as one who seeks oneness with his or her audience, even though this may feel awkward or presumptuous:

The orator distrusts at first the fitness of his frank confessions, his want of knowledge of the persons he addresses, until he finds that

he is the complement of his hearers;--that they drink his words because he fulfills for them their own nature; the deeper he dives into his privatest, secretest presentiment, to his wonder he finds this is the most acceptable, most public, and universally true. The people delight in it; the better part of every man feels, This is my music, this is myself.¹⁸

Thus, the orator is able to show identity to the audience not merely by reflecting what is already there, but by "infusing his soul into them."¹⁹ The rhetor and the auditor work together to discover the transcendent identity. It is up to the orator to be a self-trusting individual who is forging ahead in his or her own search for identity:

The orator must ever stand with a forward foot, in the attitude of advancing. His speech must be just ahead of the assembly, ahead of the whole human race, or it is superfluous. His speech is not to be distinguished from action.²⁰

In summary, Emerson sees the role of the orator as not only someone capable of showing the audience how to find identity, but as one who accepts this as a duty. In fulfilling this duty, the rhetor is able to provide an appropriate ideological response to any exigency. In the case of Emerson and his times, these exigencies included the notion of independence.

The Problem of Independence

"The American Scholar" is certainly a speech that develops important issues concerning independence. The most striking example of this are Emerson's arguments about literary nationalism. In addition to Holmes's comment about the intellectual declaration of independence, James Russell Lowell commented thirty years later that

[T]he puritan revolt made us ecclesiastically and the revolution made us politically independent, but we were socially and intellectually moored to English thought, till Emerson cut the cable and gave us a chance at the dangers and glories of blue waters.²¹

It is certainly true that there is a significant difference between political and literary independence. In 1788, Philip Freneau noted that "a political and a literary independence of [a] nation [are] two different things-- the first was accomplished in about seven years, the latter will not be completely effected, perhaps in as many centuries."²²

Whatever one makes of the fervor for literary nationalism, it is certainly a reflection of not only a desire for sources of national pride, but a need to develop a rhetorical ethos for Americans in line with changing social and economic structures. By arguing for literary nationalism, Emerson reinforced the value of independence from Europe, and the possibility of people thinking for themselves. But such argument went beyond simple political boundaries: Emerson wanted people to develop the self-reliance through observation and

intuition as they are expressed in transcendentalism, but at the same time he implies that truth is not whatever one wants it to be. There is an objective and knowable truth, and one needs to find it. The danger lies in independence leading to people being cut off from their true being. Literary nationalism was one example of a positive kind of independence:

Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands draws to a close. The millions that are around us rushing into life, cannot always be fed on the sere remains of foreign harvests.²³

The problems that result from the lack of independent thinking can be partially solved by literary independence, and Emerson did see problems for Americans:

The spirit of the American freeman is already suspected to be timid, imitative, tame. Public and private avarice make the air we breath thick and fat. The scholar is decent, indolent and complacent.²⁴

Here, Emerson indicted the economic and social changes felt by members of his audience. Wild speculation and risky investments (avarice) harmed the moral fibre of the nation and its people not only on economic grounds but on moral grounds as well. The focus of identity became worldly, and people maintained dependence on worldly possessions for their identity, despite other feelings of independence.

The problem of identity is closely related to the disjunction implied by the word independence. When an auditor freely seeks an identity from a rhetor, the very act of auditing become both a rhetorical and a political act. It is rhetorical in that it is the act of discovering the available means of persuasion, and then choosing whether or not to allow that persuasion to occur. It is political in that in seeking to accept an identity from another, or from trivial pursuits, one risks his or her liberty, or independence. The need to look to each other at all implies dependence.

Herein lies the problem for auditors. Choosing an identity is difficult in a world where people feel disconnected from their core being. Vocation becomes a matter of careers as people seek livelihood in a market economy, and career and vocation reflect one's function in the world, and devalues one's being in the world. Thus, Emerson argued that the person becomes indistinguishable from the job:

Man is thus metamorphosed into a thing, into many things. The planter, who is man sent out into the field to gather food, is seldom cheered by any idea of the true dignity of his ministry. He sees his bushel and his cart, and nothing beyond, and sinks into the farmer instead of man on the farm. The tradesman scarcely ever gives the ideal worth to his work, but is ridden by the routine of his craft, and his soul is subject to dollars. The priest becomes a form; the attorney a statute-book; mechanic a machine; the sailor the rope of a ship.²⁵

It is an obvious criticism to ask if humans ever existed in the ideal unified

state that Emerson desired, but it is certainly a state where one transcends optional identities, and seeks the true unity with being. And it gives a transcendent role to the auditor as well: the auditor is not merely one who chooses to accept one of a variety of identities, but is rather one who seeks to go beyond the myriad identities of a culture that is fragmenting.

Implications

The conflict between identity and independence is best understood if contrasted as envisioned in Black's theory of the second persona and Emerson's transcendentalism. At a basic level, they are not incompatible: both would seem to agree that in order to teach the audience the truth, one needs to discover the appropriate stylistic devices that best excite the audience. Where they differ is with regard to the degree of freedom one has in the discovery of an identity. In Black's theory, the discovery is a matter of choice: various rhetors hold out a variety of identities from which auditors may choose. This is a basic notion to any concept of democracy that seeks absolute liberty and freedom, and a "free marketplace of ideas."

Emerson, however, implied a darker side to this ability to choose. This seemingly discordant plethora of identities and ideologies is one element that makes life difficult in the modern world. The concept of choosing a particular identity is the very disjunction that Emerson introduced in his fable of the dismembered Man. The material conditions of the emerging monoculture compelled citizens to choose one identity over another and thus excluded other possible identities, including a unified transcendent identity; and here came Emerson's walking monsters. Thus, the possibility of distinguishing between personae was the very fragmentation Emerson saw in the suffering of young people of his day.

This idea was hinted at by Wander, who postulated the existence of a third persona as a demonstration of an ideological turn in rhetorical criticism.²⁶ Wander claimed that implicit in the speech is the persona that is excluded and/or negated by the establishment of the idealized second persona. Therefore, any judgment of a speech needs to not only be based on discovering and describing this third persona, but should be an active response to the resulting evils. Thus the line between rhetorical action and rhetorical criticism is blurred.

In this case, however, what appears to be an ideological turning in rhetorical criticism is a sign of ideological reeling in the larger social arena. Black called the search for identity the modern pilgrimage, but the term pilgrimage brings too serene an image for what many experience. Social critics today have commented on the fact that people change identity (sometimes literally) like they change their clothes, that people are more concerned with their lifestyle than they are with their life. Emerson's time sees the first twists and gyrations, and his advocacy of transcendentalism is a response to these. He argued that identity is not something that one is given in

the materiel world; it is a spiritual connectedness to truth. Rather than having to identify the personae implied by a speaker, one needs to identify the person that exists in transcendent truth. One needs to focus on the possibility of unity rather than disunity.

This is not to say that Black himself advocated disunity through his theory of the second persona: quite the opposite. Black demonstrated the potentially dysfunctional nature of extremist rhetoric by showing how certain metaphors can lead people to identify with a given ideology. What is problematic is that the theory reflects the basic disjunction that Emerson decried: that there is no universal core that people can depend on or use as a touchstone to ground their judgments. Individuals become self-reliant to a point beyond what Emerson argued for: instead of trusting their own intuition to lead them to universal truth, they trust nothing and rely on nothing but the self. they do not see themselves as part of something larger. If the search for identity is the modern pilgrimage, it is a journey in the dark, a journey where the pilgrims hear the shrieking nothingness of the postmodern world drown out the still small voice that calls them over the tumult, calling them to know that they already have the very being they seek.

Notes

¹ Ralph Waldo Emerson. Journal entry of 29 July, 1837. *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Vol. 5, 1835-1838, ed. M.M. Shealts (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1965) 347.

² Quoted in G.W. Allen, *Waldo Emerson: A Biography*. (New York: Viking Press, 1981) 300.

³ Bliss Perry, "Emerson's Most Famous Speech" *The Praise of Folly and Other Papers*. (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1923)

⁴ Edwin Black. "The Second Persona." *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56 (1970) 109-119.

⁵ Black, p. 113.

⁶ Black, p. 113.

⁷ Black, p. 113.

⁸ Black, p. 113.

⁹ Black, p. 112.

¹⁰ Black, p. 112.

¹¹ Daniel Webster, "A Discourse in Commemoration of the Lives of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson." ed. Edwin P. Whipple *The Great Speeches and Orations of Daniel Webster as a Master of English Style*, (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1897) 178.

¹² Ralph Waldo Emerson. Journal entry of August 3, 1826. eds W.H. Gilman & A.R. Ferguson, . *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Vol. 3, 1826-1832. (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press 1970.)

¹³ Allen 296

¹⁴ The fable on which Emerson bases his speech if generally assumed to be from Plato. However, Bercovitch argues that Emerson is drawing more directly on a fable from Empedocles, and that the focus is much more on the divine nature of humans than one might expect from Plato. See Sacvan Bercovitch, "The Philosophical background to the Fable in Emerson's American Scholar." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 28:123-128.

¹⁵ Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar" in *Nature, Addresses and Essays, The Complete Works, Volume 1*. (1903; New York: AMS Press 1968)

¹⁶ Emerson, "The American Scholar" paragraph 4.

¹⁷ Emerson, May 4, 1837, Journal, Vol. 5. This passage later appeared in his lecture titled "The Heart."

¹⁸ Emerson, "The American Scholar," paragraph 31.

¹⁹ Emerson, "Eloquence" in *Letters and Social Aims; Complete Works, Vol. VIII*, (1903; New York: AMS Press 1968) 114.

²⁰ Emerson, "Eloquence," 115.

²¹ Perry, 96.

²² Philip Freneau, "Advice to Authors By the late Mr. Robert Slender." ed P.M. Marsh, *The Prose of Philip Freneau*. (New Brunswick, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1965.)

²³ Emerson, "The American Scholar," paragraph 1.

²⁴ Emerson, "The American Scholar" paragraph 36.

²⁵ Emerson, "The American Scholar," paragraph 5.

²⁶ Philip Wander. "The Third Persona: An Ideological Turn in Rhetorical Theory." *Central States Speech Journal*, 35, (Winter, 1984) 197-216.

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Channel Surfing as Enigmatic Narrative:
Exploring Chaotic Elements of Narrative Performance

Daniel D. Gross, Montana State University, Billings
Victoria Tait Coffman, Montana State University, Billings

We have no right to assume that any physical laws exists, or if they have existed up to now, that they will continue to exist in a similar manner in the future.--Max Planck, *The Universe in Light of Modern Physics* (1931)

The Plurality of times presupposed by the special theory of relativity must be construed as illusion or, rather, as the effects of perspective.--Henri Bergson, *Durée et Simultanéité*

The pond is plenteous, The land is lush, And having turned off the news I am for the moment mellow. With my book in one hand And my drink in the other What more could I want But fame, Better health, And ten million dollars?--Kenneth Burke, *Collected Poems* (1915-1967)

Rationale

The statements, two by physicists and one by a narrative lyricist, may seem to have little in common. Yet, they represent a growing development in contemporary speculation that the operation of the natural and that of creative-performative expression are interdependent. So Planck, who speculates that physical reality actually may be an uncertain flux; Bergson, who struggles with illusion and the effect of perspective on time, and Burke whose narrative poem reveals how he seeks contentment by switching from one form of distraction to another, may well exemplify a merging in the contemporary scene of two formally distinct perspectives--physics and narrative or storytelling.

A blending can occur because of the notion from subatomic physics that the observer somehow creates the observed. Thus, poets who, until recent days, were given license to wander harmlessly into other worlds and invite participants to travel along with them into their narrative creations, may somehow be creating actual worlds that may or may not be harmless. In other words, the whole notion that communication creates reality may be reality (Steward, 1986).

Blending physics and narrative with a third technical factor--multimedia technology and especially wide-ranging network television--opens up puzzling and formerly unimagined communication events along with their implications and impacts. We believe that such a situation has emerged in the case of a performance phenomenon called *channel surfing*. We intend to explore this performance event via perspectives afforded us from both

physics--particularly chaos theory--and narrative theory.

By studying the artifacts of the cultural performance of channel surfing, we hope to contribute to knowledge about how humans assign content meaning to ambiguous stimuli, how they arrange these signs in a particular configuration, how they use language and emblems to encode their interpretations, and how they participate in a process of invention, selecting symbolic cues from a complex cultural data base. The paper's hypothesis is that cultural visions and revisions are constructed through narrative texts. These performed narrative texts are in turn composed from an array of discursive and nondiscursive symbols that afford insight into how meaning is assigned with broad cultural significance.

By identifying the steps of signification involved in this process, we intend to provide insight into the mechanisms by which text is transformed into cultural memory. The assumption is that this example will shed light not just on the artifact selected for analysis, but will help scholars generate knowledge about the symbols involved in creating and enacting enigmatic texts in contemporary society. Specifically, the purpose of this paper is to analyze the system of codes through which people produce, perform, and interpret enigmatic narratives--in this case *channel-surfing-confessional* narratives.

Chaos Theory

In recent years, chaos theory has been discussed from several perspectives. Theoretical physicists talk of "chaotic boundaries" (Hawking, 1988, p. 123) and "chaotic systems" (Barrow, 1991, p. 41 & 1994, p. 39). Psychologists write of chaos as "an omen of transcendence in the psychotherapy process" (Bütz, 1990, p. 1) and "circumplex attractors" within family units (Robinson, 1994, p. 1). Meteorologists write of "nonperiodic flow" (Lorenz et al. p. 130), while those who study literature refer to the "emplotment of chaos" and "instability" in order (Knoespel, 1991, p. 100).

In addition, others present notions that "fractals" are the "record" or patterns of chaos (Briggs, 1992, p. 13). These patterns become points of interest for artists. Furthermore, rhetorical scholars claim an alignment exists between "contingency" issues and chaos theory (Leslie, 1993, p. 3; Ono & Sloop, 1993, p. 5). Thus, interest in the concept of chaos abounds for scholars and others who investigate complex, "unpredictable and apparently random behavior in dynamic systems" (Coveney & Highfield, 1990, p. 361).

The term *chaos* is a misnomer (Bütz, 1990, p. 3). Instead of suggesting a state of supreme chance or confused unorganized form, the term *chaos* as used in chaos theory is better understood as a constrained randomness (Master, 1990). Thus, in chaos theory, a complex, dynamic phenomenon may appear chaotic; however, perspectives that utilize unorthodox methodologies may provide insight into formally undetected patterns and relationships. The complex systems are only apparently random, and a state that may appear confusing is so "locally" but not "globally" (Bütz, 1990, p. 6)

Channel surfing fits well into the perimeters of a communication event that would suggest the approach of chaos theory. On the surface, it appears to be a random performance; yet, from the perspective of chaos theory, a pattern exists. Channel surfing as a human-performance narrative will then naturally align with a methodology that focuses on narrative performance in conjunction with a perspective that is sensitive to chaos-theory issues. Blending chaos theory with narrative theory provides a rich mechanism for the analysis of an enigmatic performance such as channel surfing.

Narrative Theory

Although historically scholars have relegated narrative to a status inferior to that of logic (O'Banion, p. xi, 1992), more recently narrative has been lauded as the preeminent mode of communication and the human being has been labeled *Homo narrans* (Fisher, 1989, p. 5, 62). Although the debate surrounding the centrality of narration continues (Rowland, 1989; Warrnick, 1987), it does so on the most abstract levels of narrative theory. However, researchers concerned with mid-level theoretical concerns have been busy scrutinizing a variety of communication events via the narrative perspective.

These mid-level theorists, building on dramatic theories like those developed by Burke (1969); Bormann (1972) and Goffman (1959); have utilized narrative theory to study memory retention (Royce, 1986); to analyze psychotherapy techniques (Schafer, 1981; Heming, 1987); as a tool for biblical interpretation (Alter, 1981; Noel, 1986); and to interpret Memphis furniture (Foss, 1987).

More recently, scholars have demonstrated how narrative plays a vital role in institutional rhetoric (Smith, 1990), in persuasive potency (Carlson, 1989), in testifying to the sincerity of life-changing experiences (Griffins, 1990), and in exploring tension between the scientific community and the public in general (Taylor, 1992). Such scholars' efforts have revealed the pervasiveness, practicality, and heuristic value of story to theorist and critic in a vast variety of contexts.

The heuristic value of narrative research may be credited to Fisher and others (Fisher, 1989; MacIntyre, 1984; White, 1981), who have claimed that narrative is a paradigmatic mode of human consciousness. As such, scholars have tested narrative claims in an ever-widening circle of theoretical development. Following their lead, we attempt to enlarge the circle of narrative theory's utility by blending chaos theory and narrative theory in order to explore the particular enigmatic performances of channel surfing. Specifically, we explore the confessional narratives shared by actual channel surfers.

Blending two theoretical perspectives for the study of channel surfing narratives is necessary because although useful maps for understanding the form and content of narratives have been provided by others (e.g., Hollihan & Riley, 1987), the designs may cause certain dynamics to be ignored (Allen,

1995). Earlier designs outlined the structure of narrative in such a way that divergent forces present in the system or discordant voices are ignored as nonintegral (Allen, 1995). For example, Foss (1989) suggests that "[s]atellites are not crucial to the narrative and can be deleted without disturbing the main story line of the narrative" (p. 231). In addition, Rybacki and Rybacki (1991) also argue that if the narrative does not fit into a scheme, the critic should seek a universal story line thus "taming discordant strands of discourse" (Allen, 1995).

Brummett (1994) is one critic who expresses interest in the unexplained in narratives. He expresses sensitivity for what he calls "diffuse" texts that are "complex," "many-layered" and "may even be self-contradictory" (p. 81). In addition, he claims that we "no longer communicate within a single, or even a few, received cultural systems" (1993, p. 3). Several messages can be merged as, for example, with

the peripatetic camera, looping, jumping, moving, never content to see anything from the same angle for more than a moment. This same experience may be found in lots of television, in magazines geared to teenagers, and perhaps increasingly periods while our computer searchers for a file or directory. (p. 4)

Though Brummett does not specifically mention channel surfing, it seems natural to include channel surfing in his list. Brummett alludes to notions that are those of chaos theory, though he does not explicitly refer to chaos theory. In other words, of all the critical theorists, he approaches most nearly a framework for the study of enigmatic performance narratives. As such, he opens a reasonable link for our blending narrative and chaos theory assumptions.

Method

Members of a university class were presented the following statement: Assuming you channel surf, would you share your story concerning this activity? Seven members submitted narratives relating their experience. The activity known as channel surfing involves a person positioned before a television set with a remote control in hand clicking through channels. The performers who surf through channels appear to be doing so in a random fashion. The assumption is that the performers' narratives constitute their performance as surfers, just as all communication "constitutes" world and is more than mere representation (Steward, 1986). In other words, the surfers' narratives contain both in form and content the essence of their performance. A narrative performance is recognized as a "way of ordering and presenting a view of the world through a description of a situation involving characters, actions, and settings" (Foss, 1996, p. 400). Several steps follow from these preliminary considerations.

First, the data were analyzed via two theoretical perspectives--grounded theory and narrative criticism (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory

was selected because it allowed the data to suggest categories of analysis. However, because we could not analyze everything, we began our inquiry by investigating those aspects of the data that constitute basic elements of a narrative.

Second, we identified in each narrative the basic characteristics of narrative in two categories: the content--what the story was about and the form/expression--how the story was told. Within the content aspect, we looked for features of each story concerned with events, characters, setting, temporal relations, causal relations, theme(s), and narrator. We looked at the form/expression of the story by identifying the *means* by which the above elements were communicated. Therefore, our approach involved analysis of both the narrative and how it was told. These elements were used simply as a starting point for our analysis--we did not confine our analysis to these categories and allowed others to emerge from the data.

Third, guided by the categories suggested in our data analysis, we categorized the narrative characteristics labeling them regarding form and content. With these categories before us we ascertained in what way, if any, the narrative categories were unique and if so how they functioned within the enigmatic narratives.

Fourth, if the narratives and their categories were unique and did not suggest traditional narrative analysis, we conducted narrative criticism from the perspective that chaos theory suggests. We gleaned from chaos theory a perspective on narrative that features four notions: (1) underlying order known as a *strange attractor*; (2) seemingly random behavior; (3) sensitivity to initial conditions; and (3) mixing in finite time and space (Allen, 1995). Any words or phrases in the next two sections within quotations or in a blocked quote that are not otherwise referenced are direct quotes from the surfers' narratives (Gross, 1995). In addition, all the quotes from the narratives were used as they were given, including grammatical variations.

The Surfing Narratives' Characteristics

The analysis of the seven narratives revealed that they functioned rhetorically as confessions and/or apologies. In other words, the narrator's shared their reasons for channel surfing in the form of a defense. Therefore, the underlying assumption of their narratives was that channel surfing was somehow a suspect behavior. In fact, several of the narrators referred to it as an "addiction" or "obsession." "As the myriad of electronic images flash upon the screen, the surfer enters a hypnotic state similar to that of a bird mesmerized off his branch by a hungry cat." Yet, it would be a mistake to think that the narrators' confessions were as simple as their metaphor of addiction may indicate. Because other times, the narrators shared that the emphasis in the phrase "remote control" belongs on the word "control." With the remote control in hand, they were in control of the "world."

In addition to the world, they confessed to being in control of

"commercials," "entertain[ment]," "interruptions," "boredom," "disgust," "action," "good time[s]," and even "peace" and hope." As one narrator shared, Anytime I find myself being insulted, robbed, raped, murdered, seduced, or abused or lied to. . . I change the channel. Anytime I feel that I am being educated, lullabyed, amused or uplifted . . . I stay and rest awhile.

The style was another distinguishing characteristic of the confessional surfers narrative. Generally, the narrative style was similar to the ever-changing action as with the clicking of the remote control. In other words, the sentences were short and snappy. For example, one narrator writes, "As the World Turns' CLICK! . . . Bizarre music, images, tongue sucking. MTV CLICK!" Another writes uses sentence fragments. For example, "So giggle if you wish . . . you have myself as a friend, as we watch me together." Finally, one writes adding cute little asides or quips or perhaps interpretative commercials. For example, "[n]ot to be ignored are the laymen and professionals who view (excuse the pun) channel surfing as a addition."

The narrators are the only characters in the narratives, the setting is simply referred to as "couch" or "beach," and the action is referred to as "CLICK" or "flip." So aside from the confessional content and the style, the narratives as such appear flat. And left with these traditional narrative characteristics alone, we believe the dynamic and uniqueness of the narratives is allowed to escape analysis. Thus, a blending of narrative with chaos theory can result in richer critical rewards, especially regarding the enigmatic narratives of the channelsurfer.

Interpreting Enigmatic Narratives

As stated earlier, chaos theory provides four criteria applicable to narrative analysis.

Underlying Order or Strange Attractor

If the confessional narratives are read within the confines and narrow perspective of the words of the text alone, then what these words imply may be ignored. Thus, if the critic stands back from the narratives and looks for a center(s) around which most of the activity is circulating, perhaps a chart of the seeming complexity will emerge. In the words of chaos theory, there may be a strange attractor that explains most of the activity. Argyros (1992) suggests that "[I]t is perhaps interesting to speculate that chaotic attractors are simple visual metaphors for the global coherence of chaotic systems" (p. 666). Thus, a chaos template may be

a kind of information processing strategy characterized by an overall causal frame, the general plot, which is itself composed of a frequently tangled hierarchy of nested plots and subplots. The

identifying feature of traditional narrative . . . is that it respects the necessity of an overarching causal frame supporting and stabilizing a hierarchical and heterarchical arrangement of subordinate causal networks. (p. 662)

In the case of the surfers' confessional narratives, the strange attractor that gives the narratives an underlying order and explains the apparent random flow of both the narratives and the narrator's behavior is the remote-control unit. The remote control is the strange attractor in the narratives. When it is viewed as a controlling element in the confessional narrative(s), the puzzling or enigmatic nature of the narratives and the performance of the narrators is understood.

Seemingly Random Behavior

If someone is watching another person acting out the performance of channel surfing, the surfer may appear to be randomly clicking through channels with no apparent pattern to the selections. However, if the performance of surfing is viewed as part of a larger textual performance, then the randomness disappears. In other words, viewing the confessional narratives as a whole reveals a mosaic of patterns and textures. For example, the narrators describe the patterns and textures of their surfing as looking for "enticement," "entertainment," patterns of control over "commercials," "interruptions," "boredom," "disgust," and movement from "hurt and trouble" to "hope and peace." Thus, the clicking only appears random; the narrators confessed that their clicking is governed by a myriad of patterns of which the earlier list is only a sample.

Sensitivity to Initial Conditions

Chaos theory emphasizes that complex systems are sensitive to initial conditions. For example, two leaves that enter a stream's flow together will tend to remain close over a given distance. Or on the other hand, a butterfly's fluttering wings off the Hawaiian coast may be the prelude to a storm that hits the coast of Alaska. The point is that in chaos theory scrutinizes initial conditions. Careful attention should be given to any small changes from that initial condition least important cues are ignored or disregarded. In like manner, given the initial condition of a surfer, we would suspect that the conditions throughout the performance and near the end are probability related in some way. Brummett (1994) states, "Every text appears or is constructed during some first moment or range of moments in time and space" (p. 84).

For example, one narrator states, "I'm not sure if I qualify as a channel surfer or not, but the analogy of my own peculiarities are always fascinating." In this first moment, the narrator is distracted by numerous other details and

descriptors and the expression of self-doubt fades in the force of seemingly more important issues of the confessional narrative. Nonetheless, at the end of the narrative, the narrator asks to be excuse[d], "I think I'm gonna call my therapist!" This statement, and those in the other narratives, would be disregarded without a sensitivity to the initial conditions of the narrative performance.

Mixing in Finite Time and Space

Traditional narrative criticism monitors the time sequences and intervals to map the predictive horizon of the plot (Allen, 1995). Simultaneous and sequential time patterns are the focus of such a critique. Alternately, the focus in chaos theory is how plots stretch and fold beyond their original perimeters, creating a structure (Allen, 1995).

For example, one narrator wrote, "Baseball CLICK! Old black and white movie CLICK! Another movie CLICK!" When read aloud, the reader can mimic the sound of the remote and more importantly experience the actual *time* spent in channel surfing. Thus, carefully mixing phrases with the word "click" immerses the reader in the finite time and space of the narrative. Therefore, a concept from chaos theory reveals how the reader can become a participant in the finite time and space of a narrative. The observer (reader) and the observed (the narrative) are merged or interdependent.

Discussion

The results of the critique raise issues and implications that merit discussion. We shall discuss them within two broad categories--issues related to both theory and culture.

First, theories of symbolic inducement (Burke, 1969; Bormann, 1972) explain certain aspects of the surfing performance narratives in that the surfers assign meaning to their performances. Yet, these theories, powerful in their own right, are further empowered by coupling them or incorporating them into a broader scheme in order to understand the implications of complex events. In other words, although the surfers' confessional narrative texts offer rational defense for the surfing behavior, and thereby reveal the importance of symbolic inducement, they are only partially satisfying. Though valid as far as they go, they leave unexplained other aspects of the larger event. Chaos theory blended with narrative expands the sphere of inducement as in the following explanation:

William Gibson, author of the cyberpunk novel *Necromancer*, remarked in an interview that a teenager playing an arcade video game illustrates how an informational feedback loop connects human and machine Photons leave the screen, enter the teenager's eyes, and trigger neural responses that coordinate with

hand movements, which in turn cause the electronic circuitry of the machine to produce more photons. When such experiences are everyday events, a context is created that makes information flow seem as real as the matter and energy that carries it--or more real.

Channel surfers have created for themselves such a world as well. Only theories or combinations of theories like those highlighted in this study can unlock the enigma of such human-machine performances.

Therefore, blending narrative and chaos theory affords a method of critique for a puzzling performance known as channel surfing. The blending reveals elements of narrative performance previously ignored or discarded as irrelevant. In the channel surfing narratives, chaos theory draws attention to broader issues of the narratives that can help explain apparently strange occurrences within the text. For example, the remote control becomes a strange attractor that acts like a main character around which most of the performance circulates. The content of the narrator's confessional narrative functions as a director giving purpose to the flow of the action.

Also, the television functions as a repertoire of possible settings, supporting characters, and subplots in an ever changing narrative performance. Other metaphoric combinations are also possible given the elements and perspective of chaos theory. In other words, chaos theory informs us that enigmatic- performative narratives, like channel surfing, are self-organizing (Hayles, 1991, p. 12). A channel surfing critique can unlock the principles of self organization. Channel surfing performances are, therefore, new kinds of stories, with a new set of topic and taxonomic elements (Assad, 1991; Brummett, 1993). Second, along with these theoretical issues, some concerns that are cultural in nature merit attention. While the theoretical sophistication may exist to explain the enigma of a channel surfer's performance, a performance that merges human and machine raises questions of value. Such a merger may alter culture in a detrimental fashion. In the beginning of this paper, we said that we were interested in studying how cultural performances like channel surfing assigned meaning from an array of discursive and nondiscursive symbols. Though it is apparent that meaning is assigned and mechanisms like remote controls and mass media programming alter the relationship of the signified and signifier, the implications on cultural memory merit examination.

In order to gather a perspective on cultural memory and perhaps any changes that may be occurring, we will compare theatre and artistic performance to channel-surfing performance. Some claim that cultural memory is affected in six ways.

(1) Pavis (1992) implicitly claims that television has affected cultural attention faculties:

[T]he television set occupies a central place in the home; it is magnetic point and the umbilical cord connected to a "somewhere else" that is difficult to locate. Voluntary or involuntary interruptions of the broadcast are possible and TV viewers, wooed

by a number of other programs, are judgmentally unstable beings hence the difficulty of fixing them to their seats and interesting them in a performance that is more rapid than the stage version which lasts three hours or more. The "mise in scène" of a performance made for TV must never be boring or lose its narrative power. (p. 111)

Concurring, Gronbeck (1994) states that because of television news and its narrative assumptions "politics [has turned] into not only stories but sociodramas" because the stories are "short and emotion-laden" (p. 9). Thus, given that humans are storytellers, surfing may be influencing our cultural stories to become more entertaining and shorter.

(2) In addition, Pavis (1992) suggests that surfing affects our cultural acceptance of the divergent. He writes,

TV drama sticks to stories along safe lines, with unhappy heroes, unstable destinies. Television drama is consumed the same way as television news, weather or commercials. News takes on the appearance of a show on a large scale, with blood, deaths and marriages as in soap opera. (p. 109)

On the other hand, theatre often majors on drawing attention to that which is out of the ordinary. A steady surfing diet will narrow a cultural identity.

(3) Christofferson (1993) states that "[t]he actor's driving force is the empty space which must be filled" (p. 199). The surfer is also filling up an empty or "boring" space. Yet, space is being filled with culturally loaded messages that impact cultural memory.

(4) Channel surfing may fracture the self. At the recent Claude Monet exhibit at The Art Institute of Chicago it was noted that the figures in the paintings appeared almost to dissolve into the background of the painting, becoming one with their environment (Monet, 1995). Monet painted the same subject over and over by continually returning to the same scene. He disregarded the something to pay attention to the nothing. At one point, he had one hundred canvases in process, trying to capture just the right light. Monet was attempting to bring a totalness, truth and wholeness to one image.

In contracts, the channel surfer uses the surfing performance to revolt against the concept of wholeness. In the process, perhaps the surfer is fracturing the self. Our earlier analysis, drawn from the confessional narratives, indicated that the surfers revealed patterns of focus, yet it may be only a localized focus. On the broader cultural or universal contexts, the impact of surfing may result in a fragmentation and disconnectedness within community.

(5) Channel surfing limits creative potential by limiting the performance to the channels and their programs. Boal (1989) asked a group of teenagers what they thought of theatre, though their only previous experience of drama was with television. They stated that "[t]heatre is being able to invent life instead of just being carried away by it . . . and seeing everything on a bigger scale" (p. 81). Thus, with an ever-increasing exposure to one mode of drama, a culture ultimately is narrowed. The statements by the students also contain

the phrase, "just being carried away by it." In the confessional narratives, the narrators mentioned being "addicted" to and "hypnotized" while surfing. Evidently, instead of the surfing performance becoming a creative, inventive process, it functions as a controlling, manipulative experience. Over time, such performance may breed an abundance of automatic behavior and manipulatable citizenry as a culture loses its spectrum of alternatives.

(6) Channel surfing may remove the cultural awareness of illusion. Phelan (1993) states that

[h]alf way between seduction which removes the visible apparatus of desire and production which displays it, theatre operates in a curious psychic space. The secret of theater's power is dependent upon the truth of its illusion. Infolded within fiction, theatre needs to display the between visible and invisible power. (p. 12)

Regarding channel surfing, the surfer loses contact with the sense of illusion in multiple layers of illusion. In other words, the line between what is real and what is not fades because the whole performance and all the elements that go into the experience are made up. Thus, a culture loses the mirror of art for self-correction. The mirror and its reflectants have become one through layers of refraction.

These reflections on culture call into question the value of surfing. They are negative in tone. Yet, the intent is to heighten awareness regarding the impact of a performance on mind and ultimately culture. Boals (1995) believes that "no individual consciousness can remain unmarked by societal values" (p. xx) and that there are "cops . . . in our heads, . . . [t]he task [is] to discover how these cops got into our heads" (p. 8). He claims that we are not passive recipients but directors of our own processes and make choices and these choices either liberate or oppress (p. xxii). His observations imply a question regarding performances of all kinds and, in particular, regarding channel surfing. Does channel surfing liberate or does it oppress? Does the searching, darting from one event to another in life and on television, bring temporary or long-term meaning and richness to culture? Wholeness or fragmentation? Sensitive cultural awareness heeds those "cops" that warn of oppression and loss of cultural richness.

Further inquiry is suggested by this study. The interface between theories of nature and those more human raise many questions. When a physical theory is found useful in the human sciences, what does the parallel signify? How do they explain existence (Hayles, 1991)? What does their blending signify? What separates the two realms? In addition to these questions, which have an epistemological bent, there are others that are contextually specific, for example what other constructions beside confessional narratives might occur given alternate questions of inquiry? And, what other methodologies might be applied to the channel surfing performance that may highlight yet unemphasized dimensions?

In conclusion, the word *chaos* in chaos theory is a misnomer because it focuses on hidden order. Yet, even in chaos theory's power to reveal hiddenness, other secrets attract. In fact, perhaps the appeal of the theory is

indeed the word chaos and not explanation. Some claim that the culturally popular television series *Northern Exposure* with its propensity for the odd, weird, and strange, appealed to our cultural hunger for the untamed (Hopkins, 1993). The allure of the enigmatic or mysterious, therefore, is not only for the theorists, but for a complex and dynamic culture as well.

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Using *Children of a Lesser God* to Teach Communication

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The use of feature films as case studies for illustrating communication concepts has been popular in our field's journals (e.g., Adler, 1995; Griffin, 1995; Hodak, 1995; Johnson & Iacobucci, 1995; McGowan, 1993; Proctor, 1993, 1995; Proctor & Adler, 1991; Siddens, 1992) and textbooks (e.g., Adler & Rodman, 1994; Adler, Rosenfeld, & Towne, 1995; Canary & Cody, 1994; Griffin, 1994; Proctor, 1996; Stewart & Logan, 1993). One feature film widely recommended as an instructional resource is *Children of a Lesser God*, the 1986 movie starring Marlee Matlin and William Hurt. Proctor and Adler (1991) suggest that *Children* "provides a virtual survey of topics covered in most interpersonal communication classes" (p. 395). Griffin (1994) details how *Children* illustrates relational dialectics, while Hodak (1995) describes the movie's utility as a case study of relational stages. This paper will discuss how the movie can also be used to illustrate concepts and issues of intercultural communication.

Film Synopsis

In the film version of *Children of a Lesser God*, Hurt plays James Leeds, a talented young teacher who accepts a position at a school for the deaf. Leeds uses a variety of creative methods to teach his deaf students to speak. He soon falls in love with Sarah Norman (Matlin), a graduate of the school who serves as its custodian. Sarah clearly is capable of a more challenging occupation. Leeds decides she is held back only by her inability (or unwillingness) to engage in oral communication. He offers to teach Sarah to speak, but she refuses. As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that their differences are as much cultural as they are personal. James believes deaf people are less than normal unless they speak, so he tries to make Sarah join his culture--the culture of the spoken word. Sarah is more comfortable in the Deaf culture, where speech is not deemed necessary for interaction or success. Her role model is Marian Loesser (pronounced "Lesser"), a member of the Deaf community who does not speak and holds two doctoral degrees. Viewed as an intercultural story, the movie raises difficult questions regarding value judgments about cultural differences. At film's end, James and Sarah realize that the success of their relationship will depend on their ability to bridge the cultural gap that separates them.

Deafness as Culture

The notion of Deafness¹ as culture is a relatively recent departure from the traditional view of deafness as pathology. The cultural approach suggests "it makes more sense to understand deafness not as a handicapping condition, let alone as a deficit, but rather, as a cultural condition" (Reagan & Wilson, 1994, p. 1070). From this perspective, the Deaf "are simply a linguistic minority (speaking American Sign Language) and are no more in need of a cure for their condition than are Haitians or Hispanics" (Dolnick, 1993, p. 37). Deafness as culture has been espoused by a growing number of Deaf and hearing linguists, sociologists, and anthropologists (see Reagan & Wilson, 1994, for an extensive bibliography).

The American Deaf community has many characteristics that typically define a culture or subculture, such as:

a distinctive language (American Sign Language), endogamous marital patterns, behavioral norms that differ from those of the dominant society, cultural artifacts such as telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD), teletypewriters (TTY), television decoders, and so on, a sense of the history of the Deaf community, and an awareness of cultural identity. (Reagan & Wilson, 1994, pp. 1070-71)

This "awareness of cultural identity" was noted by Solomon (1994) after extended interaction with the Deaf community:

I have heard Deaf people talk about how their 'family' is the Deaf community. Rejected in so many instances by parents with whom they cannot communicate, united by their struggle with a world that is seldom understanding of them, they have formed inviolable bonds of love of a kind that are rare in hearing culture. (p. 45)

Despite these "inviolable bonds," there is controversy within the Deaf community. ASL is generally understood within the American Deaf culture as the shared language that creates their shared identity (Dolnick, 1993), but there is disagreement about whether the Deaf should learn oral communication skills. For some, speaking and lipreading are seen as concessions to a pathological approach to deafness, as identified by Reagan and Wilson (1994): "If one accepts the pathological view of deafness, then the only reasonable approach to dealing with deafness is to attempt to remediate the problem--which is, of course, precisely what is done when one focuses on the teaching of speech and lipreading in education" (pp. 1069-70). Some among the Deaf believe the teaching of speech (also known as "oralism") suggests that ASL is an inadequate or inferior form of communication; thus, they vehemently oppose such training. Others recommend learning both ASL and spoken English (although some in this camp advocate ASL as the *primary* language of the Deaf, written English as a secondary language, and oralism simply as an option). Opinions about oralism among the Deaf range from strong endorsement to fervent abstention.

The oralism controversy is a central issue in *Children of a Lesser God*. It

is also at the heart of recent debates about Heather Whitestone, 1995's Miss America. "I feel caught between the hearing and deaf worlds," says Whitestone (Anders, 1995, p. 4), who is deaf and speaks. Rather than holding Whitestone in esteem, some in the Deaf community believe she has sold out to the hearing culture. "Among the deaf," says Sherry Cuhon of Gallaudet University, a liberal arts university for the deaf, "status comes from using American Sign Language, attending (deaf) schools and coming from a deaf family. That's our culture . . . that's why there's this disappointment in Heather" (p. 5). One administrator at Gallaudet reflects, "A lot of us feel she shouldn't represent us to the mainstream world," while another Gallaudet administrator applauds Whitestone for "demonstrating that deaf people can succeed in reaching their goals in ways that work best for them" (p. 4). The debate has been painful for Whitestone, who says, "I've never advocated one communication method over another. It hurts me to be misunderstood" (p. 5). *Children of a Lesser God* star Marlee Matlin, who was criticized for speaking at the 1987 Oscar ceremony, empathizes with Whitestone: "This is the same thing that happened to me" (p. 5).

These controversies about culture, language, and identity make excellent topics for discussion in communication courses. *Children of a Lesser God* serves as a rich case study, introducing students to some of the delicate and difficult issues in this complicated debate.

Case Study: Children of a Lesser God

In *Children of a Lesser God*, James Leeds views deafness as pathological and regards oralism as a means for deaf people to better themselves. His job is to teach speech to students at a school for the deaf. Leeds is dismayed to find that Sarah Norman, a bright graduate of the school, cannot speak and works as a janitor. In their first interaction, James informs Sarah, "If you let me, I bet I could teach you to speak." A few scenes later, his feelings about the importance of oralism are revealed: "You should let me help you. Don't you want to get along in the world?" Sarah responds, "I don't do anything I can't do well." By this point, battle lines are already drawn for the characters--and the audience. Some will see Sarah as a stubborn, ungrateful person who refuses to learn (from someone who loves her) a skill that might help her advance in the "real world." Others will see James as an insensitive, controlling teacher who refuses to acknowledge both the legitimacy of the Deaf culture (which includes success stories such as Marian Loesser's) and the embarrassment Sarah feels when she attempts oralism.

The existence (and potential) of the Deaf culture is not introduced until late in the movie. The prevailing sentiment of the characters early in the film is that deafness is an unfortunate problem that can be offset (but not cured) through education and oralism. Mr. Franklin, the school's principal, tells James that his goal is simply "to help a few deaf kids get along a little better." He informs James that Sarah is "content" with her janitorial job because, "We educated her--she's productive" (similar to a message that, according to

Solomon, 1994, is often given to non-hearing children: "You're deaf; don't shoot too high").

Wanting more for Sarah, and wanting to know more about her, James visits Sarah's mother (Piper Laurie). Mrs. Norman's ethnocentric frame for understanding deafness is revealed when she tells James how Sarah hid her deafness well as a child: "If you didn't know there was a problem, you would have thought she was perfectly normal." Sarah exposed her deafness only when she attempted to speak, at which point she "looked awful, she sounded awful--people made fun of her." Mrs. Norman also admits to James that she never learned to sign; thus, she and Sarah "don't communicate very well," for reasons similar to those outlined by Dolnick (1993):

Many people never meet a deaf person unless one is born to them. Then parent and child belong to different cultures, as they would in an adoption across racial lines. . . . The crucial issue is that hearing parent and deaf child don't share a means of communication. Deaf children cannot grasp their parents' spoken language, and hearing parents are unlikely to know sign language. (p. 38)

Mrs. Norman is not the only person caught between cultures; Sarah and James face a similar dilemma. Their differing competencies in cross-cultural situations can be seen in their behaviors at the parties they attend together. When Sarah goes to a poker party in James's culture (at Mr. Franklin's home), she adapts her communication to fit the context. She uses sign language sparingly and slowly, making sure she is understood by all in the room. Sarah prepares for the party by studying poker rules; thus, she does quite well at the game. Unfortunately, her success is attributed to James's teaching ("You're really doing great with her, Jim" and "Did you teach her that trick?"). James, on the other hand, is a fish out of water at a party with Sarah's deaf friends. Although he is familiar with sign language, he is unnerved by their speedy and silent signing ("I just feel like everyone's talking in some foreign Northern Hungarian dialect"). As a result, he retreats (sulks?) in another room. He appears unimpressed by (jealous of?) Marian Loesser, a successful member of the Deaf culture whom Sarah reveres.

The Deaf party leads to a fight when Sarah and James return home. James's contempt for Sarah's refusal to speak surfaces in phrases such as, "I think it's pride that keeps you from speaking right" and "If you want to talk to me, learn my language" (a phrase reminiscent of a disclosure Sarah makes to James earlier in the movie, when she tells him that adolescent boys wanted her body but "they never learned to speak my language"). Her disdain for the way James talks to her comes out when she tells him he treats her "like an idiot" and "pities" her; she then declares, "No one's ever going to speak for me again." Sarah explains to James that she will not forsake autonomy for connection. She touches her forefingers to her thumbs (creating two circular "okay" signs) and says, "This sign--to connect. Simple, but it means so much more when I do this." Sarah then links the two circles together and describes the difficulty of merging their worlds:

It means to be joined in a relationship--separate, but one. That's what I want. But you think for me--think for Sarah--as though there was no 'I.' "She will be with me, quit her job, learn how to play poker, leave Orin's party, learn how to speak." That's all you, not me. Until you let me be an 'I' the way you are, you can never come inside my silence and know me, and I won't let myself know you. Until that time, we can't be like this: joined.

James and Sarah's difficulty in being "joined" stems in part from their stubbornness regarding their cultural beliefs. Sarah refuses to learn to read lips, which could assist her communication with the speaking culture. James refuses to stop pressuring Sarah to speak, even after he promises to drop the subject. Sarah leaves James after their post-party fight, believing their cultural differences are too great. At film's end, they reunite and conclude that the success of their relationship will depend on their ability to bridge the cultural gap that separates them. Like Tony and Maria in *West Side Story*, they are intercultural lovers in search of a "somewhere"--or, as James puts it, a "place where we can meet not in silence, and not in sound."

Instructional Suggestions

Proctor and Adler (1991) offer general instructions for using feature films as instructional resources. Specific recommendations for using *Children of a Lesser God* include having students read selected articles (e.g., Anders, 1995; Dolnick, 1993; Solomon, 1994) prior to or after viewing the film, then posing questions in class discussions, outside assignments, and/or exam essays, such as:

1. Do deaf people fit the definition of a culture/subculture as discussed in (a) lecture, (b) the course textbook, (c) the assigned readings?
2. Who do you think is more stubborn: James or Sarah?
3. Who do you think is more ethnocentric: James or Sarah?
4. Who do you think is more interculturally competent: James or Sarah?
5. Should deaf people learn to speak? Should hearing people learn to sign?
6. What comments/issues from the readings are illustrated in *Children of a Lesser God*?

Conclusion

Children of A Lesser God provides an excellent case study of interpersonal topics such as relational stages/dialectics, power and control, and nonverbal communication. This paper suggests that the film can also be a valuable tool for introducing students to cultural issues involving the Deaf community. By exposing students to worlds and issues with which they might be unfamiliar, *Children* can be a powerful educational resource in the communication classroom.

Note

¹Following the lead of Reagan and Wilson (1994), "In writing about deafness and the Deaf from a sociocultural perspective, the common convention is to use 'Deaf' to refer to the cultural condition of deafness, and 'deaf' to refer to the audiological condition of deafness" (p. 1070).

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TEACHER'S WORKBOOK

Spotlight on Teaching Method

[This year's Spotlight article focuses on "orality" in the communication classroom. The author points out that the use of oral assignments and oral responses may not be as prevalent in our classrooms as one might think. Julie Belle White-Newman argues for a 50/50 proposition to increase our use of the oral mode. The editor invites responses to this essay for next year's journal, and also wishes to draw your attention to Proctor and Rock's essay on *Children of a Lesser God* and to Shelton's Teacher's Workbook article on debate, elsewhere in this issue. Both writings also feature orality as a central theme.]

Talking the Talk: A Fifty-Fifty Proposition for Assessing Speech Communication in the 21st Century

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Lack of Credibility Threatens Speech Communication Education

Dismayed by the diminishment, even dismantlement, of many Speech Communication programs in the state and throughout the country, I have pondered our discipline's evident lack of credibility. For despite overwhelming evidence that "[o]ral communication competence is essential for personal and vocational success as well as to foster intellectual and reasoning abilities" (Vgotsky, cited in Berko and Brooks, 1994, p. 46) all too often the education we offer is undervalued. While many historical and current factors contribute to this situation, my concern is with the responsibility those of us teaching Speech bear for our status. We cannot control budget allocations or the perceptions of administrators, but we do control what and how we teach. I believe our teaching gives a mixed message about the importance of our very subject matter--oral communication--because most frequently we use non-oral means to evaluate students. Therefore, I call for more "talking the talk" in what and how we assess in our programs.

In this opinion piece, I outline what I see as the inconsistencies plaguing oral communication education, frame alternatives based on assessments, describe a 50/50 proposition I am incorporating into my classes, and conclude with a call for adopting it in Minnesota. I advocate this approach as a way to improve our teaching and hence our credibility as we enter the next century. Throughout I rely primarily on my own experiences and bluntly state my opinions in hopes of sparking dialogue with colleagues.

Written Communication Dominates Speech Communication

Over the years I have participated in many discussions with Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota (CTAM) colleagues about the precedence of English over Speech. The common theme is that English programs and writing fare far better in Minnesota's educational institutions. Obvious pieces of evidence are: 1. Most high school Speech courses and teachers are in Communication Arts departments dominated by English faculty/courses and 2. Most Minnesota colleges and universities require English courses/competencies, but few, if any, in Speech Communication. We can trace the historical roots of this prejudice back to Greece. However, I believe Speech educators unwittingly reinforce the prevalence of English by using more written than oral assignments.

A current case in point is the proposal for changing Minnesota High School graduation standards. Based on public recognition of the competencies needed for the next century, students will be expected to prove their abilities in speaking and listening, as well as writing and reading. This is the good news! The bad news is that students are to prove their oral communication competencies through paper and pencil tests! The primary reason given during several sessions I attended about implementing these outcomes is fear of legal action if other means are used. Many underlying assumptions exasperate me including: 1. "Objective" testing is the only reliable and valid form of assessment; 2. Legal concerns take precedence over educational ones; and 3. All competencies regardless of their nature can and should be assessed the same way. This is just one more indicator of our discipline's dilemma: appreciating the significance of speech communication competencies does not correlate with recognizing the importance of using oral means to assess them.

The Need for Authentic Assessments that Recognize and Reward Oral Communication

Speech Communication educators can obviate this predicament by increasing the quantity and quality of oral assessments in our own teaching. Starting here makes sense because of the fundamental role of assessments in the classroom and the national trend toward utilizing assessments to improve teaching.

Assessments, in the form of graded assignments, set the tangible recognition and reward system in education. Assignments signal to students what a teacher values most, where to put their efforts, and how their learning is to be evaluated. Thus grading standards and graded assignments are required components of a syllabus which serves as the learning contract between instructor and students. To redress the inconsistency of letting written communication dominate oral communication studies, it seems logical

to start with assessments.

Doing so is consistent with the national movement toward: "Accountability. Evaluation. Assessments" (Christ, 1994, p. ix) [N7] This opening statement sets the stage for an invaluable resource: *Assessing Communication Education: A Handbook for Media, Speech and Theatre Educators*. I relied on it for defining "assessment" and establishing standards for implementation.

The initial chapter provides an overview of the assessment movement and the debate over its value (Rosenbaum, 1994, pp. 3-29). He describes "authentic assessment" as one response to criticisms. It occurs when "we directly examine student performance on worthy intellectual tasks" and get at real-life abilities (Wiggins, 1990, p. 3). Both students and teachers benefit from such an approach.

A move toward more authentic tasks and outcomes thus improves teaching and learning: students have greater clarity about their obligations (and are asked to master more engaging tasks), and teachers can come to believe that assessment results are both meaningful and useful for improving instruction (Wiggins, 1990, p.4.).

Embracing authentic assessments as a goal for improving instruction is insufficient without standards for implementation. Recognizing such a need the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) sponsored a series of assessment forums. The experts attending agreed that, "There is no one best way of conducting an assessment à but effective practices do have features in common" (Hutchings, 1993, p. 6). From these they developed the following nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning.

1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.
2. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.
3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.
4. Assessments require attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to them.
5. Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.
6. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.
7. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.
8. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.
9. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.

Throughout the rest of this essay I cross-check my ideas for increasing the quantity and quality of oral assessments against these principles.

A 50/50 Proposition for Oral Assessments

My proposal is that Speech Communication programs require at least 50% graded oral assignments and provide at least 50% oral feedback. Underlying this proposition is the "education value" of studying, applying, and assessing oral communication (*Principle 1*) through ways that are "multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time" (*Principle 2*). The "explicitly stated purpose" (*Principle 3*) is achieving consistency between the study and assessment of oral communication. Setting 50/50 "outcomes" (*Principle 4*) allows for measurable accountability.

This proposal recognizes the distinct nature of Speech as a performance, as well as a knowledge-based, discipline.

For many academic areas traditional testing methods made a lot of sense. (There are however, academic areas that should be assessed using methods that tap competence directly, rather than indirectly. Oral communication is one of these areas.) It does not make as much sense to assess students' knowledge about how they should communicate as it does to assess students' communication performance in real situations (Backlund, 1994, p. 204).

In offering this proposal for Speech Communication programs as a whole, I do not deny the validity of written assessments; nor I do not believe oral assessment should be confined to performance activities or assume that the proposal is appropriate for each particular course or unit. I do appreciate the difficulty of the task as evidenced in my journey which I describe in the next section.

Implementing 50/50 Outcomes in my Coursework

My journey began several years ago when I came to a painful realization. By examining my own syllabi in light of the question: "Am I practicing what I preach about the importance of oral communication?" I discovered that I was asking students to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities primarily through writing, e.g. written exams, essays, and research projects. Certainly I had students engage in many oral activities, such as summarizing their reports and participating in small group discussions. However, most of these were less structured and ungraded as compared to the written assignments which were more carefully structured and graded. I realized I was sending students a mixed message. Oral communication is worthy of your study; oral communication is not worthy for evaluating that study.

I had to acknowledge that my teaching contributed to the dominance of written over oral communication. How could I have taught this way for so many years without even questioning these practices? A review of my own education provided the answer. In none of the my Speech Communication classes, including Public Speaking, did oral assignments outnumber written

ones. Generally I produced written work and was given written feedback. Surely my experiences as a Speech Communication student were not atypical!

This background meant that when I set myself the goal of increasing the quantity and quality of graded oral assignments I faced a difficult task. I had limited experience with systematically creating meaningful oral assignments, setting clear outcomes for those assignments, providing adequate preparation for students to succeed, and giving them concrete evaluation on such work.

Thinking about evaluation brought another unpleasant insight. I was not modeling the oral interaction I expected my students to learn. In the classroom I made general comments about a presentation, but reverted to written feedback for more extensive, formal assessment. Yet I believed Speech Communication graduates should excel at verbally giving and getting feedback, dealing with differences, coaching, conflict management, etc. After looking back on my own education, I understood how little direct, verbal assessment I received. Since participating in a writing-across-the-curriculum workshop in the early 1980's I had used peer coaching teams to help students improve their writing and speaking. Slowly it dawned on me I could also serve as a coach-evaluator. I admit, though, to being intimidated by the process of giving face-to-face evaluations. Seeking advice from colleagues at the 1994 CTAM conference in Stillwater, I attended a crowded session on assessing performances in Speech classes. Most of the examples presented depended on written formats. Curious as to whether others were struggling with oral feedback, I asked the thirty-forty high school and college teachers attending how many gave private oral feedback/coaching. Not one raised a hand! In the ensuing discussion, we talked about the barriers of having too many students and not enough time. For me, other factors included lack of training, models, and experience.

Despite all these barriers, I was determined to begin "talking the talk" about the importance of oral competencies. The first step was confronting the inconsistencies in my teaching. The second was committing to the 50/50 proposition explained earlier. In doing so I worked on giving equal attention to "outcomes" and "the experiences that lead to them" (*Principle 4*) by incorporating "ongoing, not episodic" (*Principle 5*) oral assessments. Although far from achieving fully these outcomes, I venture to share examples from my courses and the benefits gained through these efforts.

Outcome 1: Requiring at least 50% graded assignments

My commitment to at least 50% oral assignments has taken my courses in new directions. Most major activities now have complementary written and oral components. For example, in a course on Leadership Communication students collect and analyze stories about exercising a courageous conscience in organizations. They begin with oral research by interviewing leaders they admire. They compare the experiences of these subjects with ideas in a textbook and present their findings both in a speech and essay. Because the

final grade is the average of the grades received for the two activities, I work hard to develop clear outcomes for both parts of the assignment and give feedback on each. By video-taping the presentations and returning essays, students have documentation of their written and oral achievements. Coaching groups help students revise their work and set personal goals for their next efforts. The process of going back and forth from writing to speaking reinforces the communication competencies required in the workplace.

Being concerned about using oral assessment for mastery of knowledge as well as skill development has led me to devise other assignments. In the same lower-division course students divide into teams charged with teaching classmates about relevant topics. Each team selects a challenge which leaders frequently face in organizations. A case study is developed to illustrate the challenge and the team prepares materials and exercises to teach their peers research-based ways of dealing with such a situation. The team also devises oral and written methods of collecting feedback. I have discovered that taking on the role of "teacher" increases student creativity and accountability. It also gives me a very concrete way of assessing how well they understand complex materials.

My next goal is assessing knowledge through oral exams. Given that my own experience is limited to the defense of my dissertation at the University of Minnesota, I have a lot to learn. (I will pass on the sage advice of my advisor, Robert L. Scott: "Just because it is called a 'defense' doesn't mean you have to be defensive.")

I readily admit that the goal of 50% graded oral assignments demands more than redesigning a syllabus. It requires fundamental readjustment of teaching. I have given up a lot of "air time" as students spend more of their time speaking. I have to be very selective about content since more time is taken up in application. But I think the results are worth it. This old adage about learning keeps me on track:

What I hear I forget.

What I see I remember.

What I practice I do.

Outcome 2: Providing at least 50% oral feedback.

The struggle to incorporate more oral assignments has been easy compared to providing more oral feedback. To even begin meant abandoning the belief that only the instructor evaluates (or at least that only the instructor's evaluations really count.) Starting with coaching groups, I began to trust more of the evaluation process to students. This process depends on helping students develop their evaluative abilities. My positive experiences correlate with research indicating the use of peers to teach/coach increases student learning (Guskin, 1994, p. 21).

In addition, private coaching sessions are built into Public Speaking

courses. At mid-term I meet with each student for half-an-hour to review a tape of one of their speeches and give them face-to face comments about this and other performances. Although they are time consuming, I believe these sessions are invaluable for me as well as for the students. I am forced to be very direct about their most important strengths and weaknesses. Students have an opportunity to talk privately with me about their work and the class. Ultimately, these conversations allow for a deeper personal connection with the individuals I teach.

The success of private coaching in Public Speaking prompted me to initiate other ways to give feedback orally. Currently I am experimenting with an oral evaluation of the "participation" portion of a student's grade. Even though I believe it is appropriate to assess participation, particularly in a Speech Communication class, I worried about being fair. So now I have the class set standards for participation at the beginning of the term. At the end of the term each student orally defends a self-assigned grade for meeting these norms.

I am eager to try other means for giving oral assessment. For example, I would like to follow the lead of Jerry Pepper, University of Minnesota, Duluth, who gives voice-over comments on video-tapes of group meetings. This direct intervention points students' attention to their specific behaviors.

My voyage to implement the 50/50 proposition is far from finished. Despite rough weather in sketchily charted waters, I am keeping to this course. I know from several years' work just how much effort is involved in revising courses. However, the benefits have justified the work.

For students, the benefits range from the excitement of continually applying what they learn to receiving direct and documented feedback on their particular competencies. As the instructor I benefit from interacting more directly with students, being clearer about my expectations and assessment procedures, and modeling more consistently my chosen field of oral communication. Thus, I will continue to work on achieving the 50/50 goal in my classes.

A Challenge to Lead the Way in Authentic Oral Assessments

Based on my experiences I urge all Speech educators in Minnesota to implement the 50/50 proposition throughout our primary, secondary, and post secondary programs. Attending most CTAM conferences for the last twenty-five years has convinced me of our common commitment to excellent teaching. I firmly believe that together we can make a difference locally and nationally by consistently using oral assessments. The time is right to make such "improvements" because of "a larger set of conditions that promote change" (*Principle 8*) namely the movement toward outcome based education and assessments. Whether in primary, secondary, or post-secondary institutions we face similar "issues of use" and "questions" about measuring students' knowledge and performance (*Principle 7*). Together, with such

common goals, we can realize progress for "[a]ssessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved" (*Principle 6*).

Fortunately, good resources are available to aid in increasing authentic oral assessments. A general handbook filled with creative ideas is Angelo, Thomas and Cross' (1993) *Classroom Assessment Techniques*. Examples of innovative pedagogical techniques abound in *Speech Communication Teacher* which CTAM members receive as part of their membership. The journal *Communication Education* frequently publishes research about assessments. Combining "evaluation" the ERIC descriptor encompassing "assessment" with "communication education" turned up a list of 92 out of 576, that is about 16%, of the articles published in *Communication Education* from 1982 to September, 1995. Many deal with written activities/assessments or evaluations of teachers, however, others do focus on oral assignments and feedback. For me the most useful resource is the handbook to which I have referred extensively: Christ (1994) *Assessing Communication Education*. Its three parts provide background on the assessment movement, general assessment strategies, and context-specific applications for speech, theatre, and media courses.

First and foremost, though, comes the commitment to eliminate the inconsistency of relying on written assessments of oral communication. The 50/50 proposal outlined in this paper is one concrete way of doing so. By implementing the proposal, a Speech Communication program would require that a student do at least 50% graded oral assignments and receive at least 50% oral feedback on their work. By so doing, I believe we better serve our students and continue our leadership role in the national arena of Speech education.

I believe that by infusing authentic oral assessment into our programs we "meet responsibilities to students and to the public" (*Principle 9*) and thereby enhance our credibility. By "talking the talk" we help secure the rightful place of Speech Communication education in the 21st century.

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Assignments and Strategies

Speech Outline Worksheets

Thomas G. Endres, University of St. Thomas

As research and service responsibilities for faculty increase--without a corollary decline in teaching expectations--it seems that today's communication teacher has more to do with less time to do it in. Add to this the high student exposure and turnover that takes place in the basic course on most campuses, and you have a situation where faculty need to deal with a volume of introductory students within a constrained time frame. To compensate for this pressure, faculty members need to develop strategies for managing the time spent in and on their basic course, especially in the area of public speaking, while maintaining the integrity of the educational experience.

My experience has shown that, regarding speech organization, students either "get it" or they don't. In the past, I required full sentence outlines several days prior to a speech. I tried both returning them with comments, or keeping them until speech day. Either strategy was time consuming. I did not grade the outlines separately, finding that the quality of the outline manifest itself in the presentation. I also found that success was most related to a general understanding of structure, and not explicit detailing of supporting materials. To save time, I produced these worksheets which narrow down the assignment to the essential elements needed to produce a coherent presentation.

The speech outline worksheets are single sheet, prefabricated handouts which describe the assignment (e.g. goal, due date, time limit, requirements), and provide spaces for students to "fill in the blanks" and produce an organized speech.

The handouts are distributed approximately two weeks prior to a speaking date. As a class, we cover the General and Specific Purpose statements (note: I recommend Beebe and Beebe strategy of beginning the specific purpose with "At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to . . ."). Remind class that central idea can (should) be a preview statement. Finally, I explain other characteristics of the handout unique to that particular assignment (e.g. bibliography, identification of supplementary aids). The worksheets are collected on the day the student presents their speech.

The advantages to using these worksheets include the following: (1) students have all the information they need regarding the assignment on a single sheet, e.g. videotaping, time limits, due date, sources needed; (2) the worksheets provide the instructor with an easy reference guide to follow during speech; and (3) the worksheet serves as a cover sheet to be returned with written critique.

Several samples of the worksheets follow:

INFORMATIVE SPEECH
TOPIC _____

NAME _____
SPEAKING DATE _____

The goal of the speech is to increase audience knowledge on a clear and specific topic. This is an expository speech (research required), the nature of which may be definition or description. *A minimum of three outside sources must be cited in the speech.*

Time limit is 5-6 minutes. Speech will be videotaped. **DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR VHS VIDEOTAPE TO CLASS.** Hand in this form on the day you give your speech.

GENERAL PURPOSE: _____

SPECIFIC PURPOSE: _____

CENTRAL IDEA (thesis) : _____

INTRODUCTION: (full sentence or key words re: attention-getting and orienting material)

BODY: (key words regarding main headings and supporting materials)

- I.
- II.
- III.
- IV.

CONCLUSION: (full sentence or key words re: summary and closing remarks)

SOURCES USED:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

DEMONSTRATION SPEECH

TOPIC _____

NAME _____

SPEAKING DATE _____

The goal of the speech is to demonstrate to the audience how to perform a process. Review the information on this type of speech in Chapter 14 of your text.

Some form of visual or supplementary aid is required for this speech.

Time limit is 6-8 minutes. Speech will be videotaped and reviewed at a later date with a classmate. **DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR VHS VIDEOTAPE TO CLASS.** Hand in this form on the day you give your speech.

GENERAL PURPOSE: _____

SPECIFIC PURPOSE:

CENTRAL IDEA (thesis) :

INTRODUCTION: (full sentence or key words re: attention-getting and orienting material)

BODY: (key words regarding main headings and supporting materials)

I.

II.

III.

IV.

CONCLUSION: (full sentence or key words re: summary and closing remarks)

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE TYPE OF SUPPLEMENTARY AID USED:

PERSUASIVE SPEECH
TOPIC _____

NAME _____
SPEAKING DATE _____

The goal of the speech is to attempt to change the audience's attitudes or behaviors on a given issue. You must employ an identifiable persuasive speech format, and incorporate ethos, pathos, and logos appeals. *A minimum of three outside sources must be cited in the speech.*

Time limit is 8-10 minutes. Speech will be videotaped. **DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR VHS VIDEOTAPE TO CLASS.** Hand in this form on the day you give your speech.

GENERAL PURPOSE: _____

SPECIFIC PURPOSE (proposition):

CENTRAL IDEA (thesis) :

INTRODUCTION: (full sentence or key words re: attention-getting and orienting material)

BODY: (key words regarding main headings and supporting materials)

- I.
- II.
- III.
- IV.

CONCLUSION: (full sentence or key words re: summary and closing remarks)

TYPE OF SPEECH FORMAT CHOSEN: _____

SOURCES USED:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Theatre "Gamesmanship": Beginning Classroom Performance Approaches to Characterization

Gerald Lee Ratliff, Montana State University, Bozeman

There really is no such person as a "beginning actor." We have been "inventing" or "impersonating" more or less instinctively from early childhood. Our youthful and adolescent games of "let's pretend," "what if," and "make believe" have provided the basic performance ingredients essential to assume imaginary roles, script creative storylines, and voice original dialogue in any contemporary theatrical approach to characterization. Our intrigues, deceptions, and disguises have given us the primary tools to convince an audience of spectators that what "might have been" is, indeed, "what was." And our repeated improvisations, spontaneous actions, and flights of fantasy have also given us the advanced training necessary to sustain theatrical images and illusions.

The art of performance, however, is more than the objective examination of *our* own lives in order to promote a more inspired, individual stage characterization. It also involves an ability to project ourselves into imaginary circumstances, interior psychological states of mind, and complex vocal or physical techniques that reveal how we are "different" from one another as well: and it is this inherent difference that most clearly distinguishes and defines our performance aptitude and ability in fashioning imaginative characterizations. Before proceeding to the performance blueprint of imaginative "gamesmanship" exercises that might be appropriate for classroom approaches to characterization, it is necessary to point out some of the first principles to be aware of in the initial approach to the creation of three-dimensional stage figures.

First, the student actor must be informed. This implies an understanding of basic techniques used in the cultivation of the "mimetic instinct," or the ability to imitate other human beings. Being informed suggests a reservoir of memorable life experiences from which to sketch well-defined character portraits: and the wider the range of experience, the more compels the character portraits are likely to be in classroom performance. Detailed observation, informal discussion, and attentiveness to everyday events helps to inform the student actor and enriches the performer's ability to create the illusion of realistic character portraits. Informed observation of human nature and the environment that surrounds everyday life also presents vivid personalities, experiences, and circumstances that may be imaginatively integrated into the world of classroom exercises and gamesmanship.

Second, the student actor must be disciplined. This implies not only a well-defined and orderly system of initial rehearsal preparation and practice, but also intensive training in scene study, playscript interpretation, and in the use of both the voice and the body to amplify and delineate a character in classroom performance. Being disciplined suggests that the student actor has

planned the performance in some detail, and not relied solely upon improvisation or spontaneous impulse to shape the initial character portrait. Third, the student actor must be free-spirited. This implies a creative and inventive approach to classroom character development that gives an added hint of uninhibited abandon and risk-taking in creating a memorable role in performance. Being free-spirited suggests that the student performer has an indescribable "life-spirit" that promotes spontaneous and imaginative performance responses or reactions that not only simulate the perception of the audience but also enliven the character portrait being drawn. Finally, the free-spirited student actor allows the action of the scene to be shaped by personal, complementary personality traits that are helpful and truthful in completing the outline of the character as roughly sketched by the playwright.

Theoretical Blueprint

An interesting theoretical blueprint to consider in basic classroom approaches to characterization is a detailed exploration of the character's physicality, especially those "physical actions" that help to define a character's basic motivation or intention. The successful discovery of a character's physical life reveals the inherent reason(s) a character acts or reacts in specific instances; and helps to clarify a character's basic impulses and spontaneous outbursts. A careful analysis and assessment of the "given circumstances" of the scene should help the student actor identify and interpret a character's physical actions as well. The given circumstances that help to define a character's bodily actions are derived from an intensive study of the scene and usually entail an objective evaluation of the plot, dialogue, setting (locale), and point of view of the character as revealed in the storyline. In addition to what the character may say about him/herself or what others may say about the character, the playwright indicates the overarching significance of the given circumstances by providing clues that indicate *who* the character is, *what* the character is doing, *where* the character is doing it, *when* the character is doing it, and *why* the character is doing it.

These traditional journalistic "five W's" provide an initial composite of the character; and they may be stated explicitly or implicitly depending upon the playwright's dramatic perspective or writing style. These clues furnish at one level or another the perspective for viewing and understanding the physical actions of the character. Whether as inklings or as clearly articulated beliefs, these clues also provide an inherent "order," or sequence of events, attitudes, and incident, that assist the student actor in recognizing and reconciling a character's subsequent behavior in the selected scene. The accuracy of discovering specific answers to the question(s) "who, what, when, where, and why" constitutes the character portrait seen and heard by the audience--and that is what gives authenticity to the student actor's performance.

Student actor awareness of the theoretical role that the given circumstances and physical actions play in classroom gamesmanship

approaches to characterization should be invaluable when approaching the exercises that follow. In the continued study of the given circumstances and physical actions, the student actor should strive to make classroom responses spontaneous and natural. There should be no hesitation to extend the suggested exercises to include an active response to the five senses; giving added performance flavor to what is touched, heard, smelled, seen, or tasted by the character in the given circumstances or in the physical actions. Using basic gamesmanship impulses in classroom exercises should also promote new interpretation approaches to student actor analysis skills as well; giving not only life but also meaning to classroom character portraits.

Although no simple classroom performance formula exists for predicting the degree of success a student actor might achieve in theatre gamesmanship, the following exercises should lay an excellent foundation to support and reinforce further creative development in basic approaches to characterization. The instructor should approach the exercises in a manner that is comfortable and compatible with an individual style of critical review and disciplined study; and is encouraged to take the creative liberty of adjusting, modifying, or extending the basic gamesmanship techniques suggested to meet the special needs of the classroom. Each exercise is framed as a participatory exploration to stimulate awareness of the basic performance principles of character development based upon observation, mental symbols, and visualization; and the instructor may wish to supplement the exercises with assigned readings of specific literature or playscripts that build on the basic gamesmanship guidelines to promote increasingly complex performance techniques that enrich the development of believable characterization.

The exercises are also intended to promote a classroom atmosphere of relaxed inquiry and "risk-free" exploration so that the student actor may accurately define a more individual style of performance. As random gamesmanship principles emerge in the classroom performance, the instructor is encouraged to translate the general characteristics into meaningful, distinctly personal classroom reading assignments that reveal the student actor's natural ability to convey the thoughts and emotions of stage characters in honest, spontaneous responses that advance a conversational tone of vocal delivery; as well as a heightened degree of sensitivity in characterization as part of an individual performance technique. Continued use of these gamesmanship exercises should also enhance well-disciplined, imaginative approaches to classroom scene study and more easily identify performance clues that lead to three-dimensional characterization.

Extra! Extra! Read all about it!

One of the most important tasks of the student actor is to develop three-dimensional characterization, and to present classroom interpretations that are crisp and fresh. The most memorable characters, of course, are those

rooted in reality in reality; flesh-and-blood men and women who exhibit attitudes and moods that are unique as well as universal. In terms of their temperament, behavior, and even physical appearance these "ideal" characters may actually resemble personalities quite literally ripped from the front page of a daily newspaper. They are the average, workday men and women we witness in our daily lives; and it is only when they are exposed to personal catastrophes or traumas that their true capacity for dramatic character is most clearly revealed.

In approaching documentary character development based on daily news events, it is important to remain unbiased and objective; dealing only with the vital information provided by the potential character you are seeking to discover. Begin this exercise with a random selection of (1) page of a daily newspaper. Scan the headlines of each section of the newspaper, making sure to include a review of editorials, sports, business, and entertainment as well as the more obvious front page headlines. Select a story that has immediate appeal in terms of its potential dramatic plot, interesting character(s), unusual setting, theme, or potential for conflict.

Once you have made your selection of a potential headline story for character development, careful re-read the story with attention to detail. Isolate the basic ingredients that help to clearly define the character(s); making note of ages, occupations, circumstances, and actions that are exhibited by the potential characters. Extract any direct quotations or descriptive references made by the potential character(s), and note if others in the newspaper story provide additional information that helps to crystallize your initial portrait. Now, review all of the material you have been able to gather about the events described in the newspaper account. What are the specific characteristics emerging from the review in terms of physical and vocal qualities being described? Take further creative license and imagine how the potential character might dress, speak, or move in relationship to the circumstances described in the newspaper storyline.

When you are comfortable with the portrait you have drawn from the given circumstances of the newspaper headline and storyline, use the following selection from Sophocles' *Antigone* to give voice to your documentary character. This exercise should encourage you to apply the basic principles of daily observation and contemporary events in visualizing stage characters that are distinctive and robust.

Your edict, King, was strong,
But all your strength is weakness itself against
The immortal unrecorded laws of God.
They are not merely now: they were, and shall be,
Operative for ever, beyond man utterly.

I knew I must die, even without your decree:
I am only mortal. And If I must die
Now, before it is my time to die

Surely this is no hardship; can anyone
Living as I live, with evil all about me,
Think Death less than a friend? This death of mine
Is of no importance; but if I had left my brother
Lying in death unburied, I should have suffered.
Now I do not.

You smile at me. Ah, Creon,
Think me a fool, if you like; but it may well be
That a fool convicts me of folly. (*Antigone*)

The exercise may be extended if the instructor presents the class with a variety of short cuttings from drama, novels, or short stories that include (2) characters engaged in a conversation or in a narrative description that suggests a subtext beneath the surface of the spoken dialogue. Examples useful for this purpose may include the balcony scene from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, the tea scene in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, the holiday celebration in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, the sea chase scene in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, or the confession scene in Joyce Carol Oates' *Bellfleur*. There are also classroom performance opportunities to explore characterization based upon newspaper storylines if the instructor has each student actor reduce their documentary studies to a suggestible portrait that gives definition to the suggestible characters in Robert Benchley's *Family Life in America*, Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*, Terry Siegel's *Fun with Hamlet and His Friends*, Lord Byron's "She Walks in Beauty," Yevtushenko's *Encounter*, or Aldous Huxley's "Young Archimedes."

Star Search!

Classroom scene study should be firmly rooted in the "here and now," and the student actor should include personal observation, immediate experience, and creative invention in an imagination interpretation of the character portrait being drawn. Alertness and attention to detail of events and interesting personalities in all walks of life may provide the gesture, attitude, voice, mood, walk, hand prop, costume, or distinguishing mannerism that gives vitality to classroom characterization. If student actors become sensitive and acutely aware of their immediate surroundings, it may be possible in theatre gamesmanship exercises to discover the creative impulse of transferring what has been overheard or witnessed from everyday life events or real-life situations into viable, believable character portraits that are authentic as well as honest representations of initial observations.

To promote an appreciation and understanding of the role that observation and the immediate experience that daily activities and everyday happenings might play in imaginative classroom performance approaches to

characterization, set aside a period of (2) weeks for a "star search" exercise. Instruct student actors to observe closely, and with a critical eye, the actions of (3) persons with whom they come into contact for the two-week period. Those ripe for observation may include parents, teachers, friends, strangers, or casual acquaintances. Following the period of detailed observation-- and supplemented with a written *character diary* that includes specific notations related to vocal patterns, physical actions, and distinguishing traits--review the mannerisms, gestures, movements, vocal qualities, and personal habits of those observed. Based upon the diary notations and personal recollections, have each student actor sketch an initial character portrait for the person observed. The initial character sketch should include basic physical characteristics like attitude, mood, or point of view.

When confident that the initial character sketches are an accurate, precise reflection of the initial observation, each student actor should give "voice" and "body" to selected classroom literature; transferring what has been overheard or witnessed in the observation period of everyday life situations into realistic character portraits suggested in the classroom literature assignments. It may be of value to the student actors' initial character sketch and the subsequent classroom performance to discover a "metaphor," or implied comparison, between the person observed and the suggested character in the classroom literature. For example, the detailed observation of the vocal quality of the casual acquaintance may suggest the classroom performance metaphor of "scratchy violin"; the personal mannerisms of the friend may suggest the classroom performance metaphor of "winged bird"; or the movement patterns of the stranger may suggest the classroom performance metaphor of a "dance of Death."

The exercise may be extended by having each student actor select other literature for performance that highlights initial character observations; or writing biographical character sketches of initial character observations and presenting them to an invited classroom audience. There are also classroom performance opportunities in this exercise to encourage each student actor to wear to class an outfit which best suggests the character observation; or to explore the role that hand props might play in giving character to the observation. Examples of classroom literature that might be of value in performance of "star search" characterization include Richard Lovelace's "To Althea," James Taylor's "Traffic Jam," Jane Martin's "Twirler," Gordon Lish's *The Merry Chase*, Aesop's Fables, Theresa Carilli's *Big Boy*, Studs Terkel's *Hard Times*, Gail Godwin's *A Sorrowful Woman*, and William Wordsworth's "It Is A Beauteous Evening."

Broadening the Student Audience for Debate Through Curriculum-wide Communication Programs

Michael W. Shelton, University of Kentucky

There is a growing consensus among scholars that training in debate provides an excellent means to enhance critical thinking skills. Debate training stresses analysis, consideration of competing sides of a dispute, efficient research and preparation, as well as other skills that can enhance critical thinking abilities. Colbert (1993) suggests that debate motivates students to develop critical thinking skills. Indeed, Colbert and Biggers (1992) argue that "forensics provides a unique educational experience because of the way it promotes depth of study, complex analysis and focused critical thinking" (p. 2).

Ehninger and Brockriede (1963) have argued that debate and critical thinking are inherently related. They argue that critical thinking is grounded in a careful examination and interpretation of relevant facts and values. It should reflect an awareness of options open, of consequences involved, and of the steps required to put the elected alternative into effect. Each step in this process, they argue, is facilitated by training in debate skills. Ehninger and Brockreide (1963) explain:

The function of debate is to enable men to make collective choices and decisions critically when inferential questions become subjects for dispute . . . when collective choices and decisions require personal judgments as well as facts and figures, debate helps insure that these decisions will be made critically . . . a critical decision is more "human", i.e., rational than an uncritical one. The ability to arrive at decisions critically is the trait that chiefly distinguishes man from animal. (p. 15)

Ehninger and Brockreide obviously value critical thinking as a uniquely human enterprise and debate as a means to engage in that process.

There has also been a large body of research generated which establishes a significant relationship between debate training and critical thinking skills. "The educational benefits of debate seem to be well documented", including the "improvement of critical thinking ability" (Colbert & Biggers, 1992, p. 4). Keefe, Harte and Norten (1982) concluded: "Many researchers over the past four decades have come to the same general conclusions. Critical thinking ability is significantly improved by courses in argumentation and debate and by debate experience" (pp. 33-34). According to Colbert (1993), "50 years of research correlates debate training with the enhancement of critical thinking skills" (p. 206). A brief review of available literature produces a substantial list of references (Beckman, 1957; Brembeck, 1949; Colbert, 1987; Cross, 1971; Howell, 1943; Jackson, 1961; Williams, 1951) which conclude that debate training produces significant gains in critical thinking abilities.

The firmly established relationship between debate training and the

enhancement of critical thinking skills has obvious pedagogical implications. Educational institutions could recognize and employ debate training to improve the critical thinking skills of the students who attend those institutions. Most educational institutions have recognized the relationship between debate training and critical thinking abilities and most have also elected to provide some type of debate training to their students. Two methods predominate as vehicles for debate training in educational institutions. Educational institutions have typically elected to provide debate training through argumentation and debate coursework or practical experience in debate through the establishment of competitive intercollegiate debate programs. There are, however, serious shortcomings associated with these options.

A great many colleges and universities attempt to address the apparent need for debate training through the provision of argumentation and debate coursework. This is a positive response in a number of ways. Argumentation and debate courses offer an institutionalized commitment to debate training in the context of the classroom. Such courses are traditionally taught by instructors versed in argumentation and debate theory and practice, and accompanied by a scholarly text on the subject. As beneficent as this avenue for debate training is, there are several limitations associated with its practical utilization.

There are obviously logistical problems that could befall any element of a college or university curriculum. There are time and resource limitations which may affect the utilization of the argumentation and debate course option. Course scheduling imposes inherent limits upon the number of courses offered as well as upon the ability of students to enroll in and attend any particular course. Such limitations are further complicated by classroom availability and enrollment limits for individual courses.

Although most argumentation and debate courses presently offered are taught by highly qualified members of the faculty, personnel concerns also impose limits upon the ability to utilize argumentation and debate courses as a vehicle for debate training. As with most other subjects that are offered at colleges and universities, there are typically a limited number of individuals sufficiently trained to teach these courses. There are also operational limits on faculty in regard to the number of hours that an individual is able to teach and the total number of courses that can be offered and covered.

A number of colleges and universities have elected to support competitive intercollegiate forensics and debate programs at their respective institutions. This too, is a valuable and promising means of offering debate training as a vehicle for the enhancement of critical thinking skills. Competitive forensics and debate programs are open to students in all disciplines, traditionally directed by highly motivated and knowledgeable individuals, and they provide a highly efficient laboratory experience for debate training. Although the benefits of a competitive debate program cannot be overstated, there are limitations upon the ability of such programs to serve a large audience of students.

Personnel limitations are often intense. Many institutions employ only one individual to direct, manage and coach all of the students who participate in the program. Some institutions provide faculty and graduate assistants, but their numbers are typically small. Personnel associated with intercollegiate debate programs suffer shortages of time and availability. These faculty and graduate personnel are too small in number to facilitate large scale participation in the competitive programs at most educational institutions.

There are serious resource limits which preclude competitive debate programs from serving a larger student audience. The financial costs of competition can be immense. Tournament participation typically entails travel expenses, housing and meal costs, as well as costs for supplies and other items needed to facilitate competition. In a period of budget examination and belt tightening, debate programs cannot be expected to obtain and spend the financial resources to serve a very large student audience.

Competitive debate programs offer a unique environment for debate training. Extensive research, frequent practice, and detailed preparation are inherent features of competitive debate. Many students simply cannot make the time or personal commitment to take part in such an intense process. The nature of the competitive debate experience thus operates as an obstacle to greater student participation.

In recent years, many colleges and universities have initiated programs that might well provide an avenue for debate training which argumentation and debate courses and competitive debate programs cannot. Curriculum-wide oral and written communication programs could provide a highly valuable avenue for the provision of debate training as a means of enhancing critical thinking skills. Such programs could avoid many of the limitations associated with the coursework and competitive program approaches to academic debate.

As a preliminary observation, it should be stressed that the relationship between debate training and communication has been well established. A number of studies (Colbert & Biggers, 1992; Pollack, 1982; and Pearce, 1974) have shown a correlation between debate training and improved communication skills. Semlak and Shields (1977), for example, have concluded that "students with debate experience were significantly better at employing the three communication skills (analysis, delivery, and organization) utilized in this study than students without the experience" (p. 194). Debate training enables students to better understand issues, to better organize their thoughts, and to present those thoughts to an audience. Indeed, Colbert and Biggers (1992) have stated that the "conclusion seems fairly simple, debate training is an excellent way of improving many communication skills" (p. 3).

Some enlightened curriculum-wide oral communication programs have recognized the inherent values associated with debate training. Many of these programs employ a debate component in their efforts to promote both oral communication skills and critical thinking abilities. The utilization of debate in this manner appears to be a simple and logical option. Oral disputes, focused

into debates, can be utilized in many disciplines and in many courses. Political science and sociology faculty, for instance, might structure debates into their course offerings in order to illuminate controversies in society--abortion, gun control, child abuse and so forth--that are frequent issues in such courses. Literary studies, philosophy, and other fields might employ value-oriented debates to provide insight into the process of criticism and critique. Even the "hard" sciences are ripe with possibilities for the utilization of debates. Disputes regarding competing scientific theories, policy implications associated with scientific and technological research and development, and the ethical and moral aspects of such research and development are a few illustrations of areas that might be appropriate for examination and investigation through debate. Most importantly, communication administrators and instructors should find debates a valuable resource. Debates can be focused around theoretical disputes in the communication discipline. Debates can be employed to enhance persuasive skills. And, the inherent relationship between debate and communication can be extended as debates are employed in curriculum-wide programs.

Although debates themselves take place orally, there is substantial opportunity for a written component. The first step in most debates is to acquire research materials. Researching is an inherent ingredient of many forms of writing. Improving research skills through debate training would also improve the ability to research term papers and reports. Many scholars also believe that the construction of arguments is an inherent aspect of formal writing (e.g., McDonald, 1983). Debate obviously facilitates the ability to discover data, analyze issues, and evaluate arguments. The construction of affirmative and negative cases requires writing skills. When students prepare for a debate, the process of constructing the issues and ideas for the final oral presentation all are conducted through writing. It should be apparent that debate provides ample skill enhancement for written as well as oral communication.

Utilizing curriculum-wide oral and written communication programs to promote the benefits of debate would also resolve the limitations associated with the argumentation and debate coursework approach and the competitive debate program option. The logistical obstacles to the argumentation and debate class approach would largely vanish. The provision of a debate option through curriculum-wide oral and written communication programs would utilize time and place resources that have already been established. No new classroom or scheduling concerns would haunt this option.

The personnel problems associated with both the argumentation and debate course and competitive program options would also be diminished. Instructors of classes electing to employ some form of debate in their courses would need to be provided with basic training and information regarding format, process, and the like. Debate training for instructors could be incorporated into the workshops and training sessions which oral and written curriculum-wide communication programs offer faculty members. Videotape and computer sessions (e.g. Scheckels, 1986) also can be employed to

facilitate such basic training. All instructional materials could be mass produced by the curriculum-wide programs. Additionally, as experts in their respective fields, instructors electing to employ a debate option would already be adequately trained to evaluate content-related issues in classroom debates.

There would be very little additional resource burden imposed by utilizing curriculum-wide oral and written communication programs to provide debate training. At those institutions where such programs presently exist the addition of a debate component would demand little in additional resources. The assistance of those who currently teach argumentation and debate courses and those who direct and coach competitive debate programs would be invaluable. These individuals could provide the insight and information necessary to establish a debate component for the programs. Institutions which do not currently have curriculum-wide oral and written communication programs could simply incorporate a debate component into the initial structure and process which they develop.

The utilization of curriculum-wide oral and written communication programs to provide debate training would also ease the demands faced by students. As a component of a larger program, and as part of another course, curriculum-wide programs would provide a somewhat less intense option for students. Since the debate option would be incorporated into pre-existing courses and schedules, students would need not make significant new time, personal, or other commitments.

There would be some burdens generated by the utilization of curriculum-wide oral and written communication programs to provide debate training. These burdens would include debate specific training for instructors wishing to employ debates in their classrooms. As noted, the curriculum-wide programs could provide such training in routine sessions and through the use of multi-media options. Such instruction in basic debate skills would seem far less demanding than attempting to expand argumentation and debate course offerings or competitive programs.

A good deal of printed information regarding structure, format and process could be required. The ready availability of printing and copying services at most colleges and universities makes this a matter of "busy work" that could be easily undertaken after the basic materials have been prepared by individuals working with the oral and written curriculum-wide programs.

Some may question whether instructors outside the communication discipline would respond favorably to a debate option, particularly given the resistance to writing across the curriculum at some institutions. A debate segment for oral and written curriculum-wide programs would merely be an available option. No one would be compelled to employ debates. That option should, however, be packaged as an attractive device which supplements communication skills and significantly improves critical thinking skills. Such values should appeal to a broad faculty audience given the almost universal endorsement of communication and critical thinking skills as desirable goals for a university level education.

It might also be argued that some faculty would resist the employment of

debates because they already have too little time to cover too much material. To the resistant, it is necessary to explain that a debate component is to be employed as a vehicle for instruction in course specific content, not as a replacement for it. Instructors may well find it easier to cover additional material following a debate exercise due to the refined analytic and critical skills which their students gain.

It should also be stressed that a debate option for oral and written curriculum-wide programs would not serve as a substitute for argumentation and debate courses or competitive experience. There are many students who would further benefit from enrollment in argumentation and debate courses. They would be able to gain a wide range of theoretical and practical skills which would be beyond the scope of a debate option in a curriculum-wide program. Additionally, competitive debaters require much more intense training and direction than what such program options could provide.

All of these concerns and burdens seem minimal when compared to the substantial limitations associated with argumentation and debate coursework and competitive debate program options. Additionally, the communication skills and critical thinking abilities correlated with debate training would appear to make a debate component, an attractive feature for the programs.

Enhanced communication skills and improved critical thinking abilities are among the many benefits associated with debate training. All of these benefits can be provided to a larger student audience through the utilization of curriculum-wide oral and written communication programs. Additionally, such an approach is a unique eclectic exercise. It is an exercise that celebrates the best about debate through programs that recognize the holistic nature of oral and written communication skills. Curriculum-wide program directors, department chairs, and others in the communication discipline should consider embracing and promoting this option. Benefits seem to justify that response.

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Performing Family Narratives in Theatre and Communication Classes

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There are many factors that influence how and why we communicate in families, just as there are many types of families. One factor that influences not only how we communicate *within* the family, but also how we communicate *about* the family is narrative. In this instance, family narrative refers to the stories told by family members about the family itself. Family narratives can be funny, tragic, dramatic, silly, or even boring, but they all communicate something about the family and the ways people communicate within and about the family. In this essay, we describe an assignment that we use in our Oral Communication and Oral Interpretation classes--the performance of family narratives. We also suggest ways to use this assignment to teach a variety of topics within the fields of Speech and Theatre.

The Family Narrative Performance Assignment

For this assignment each student selects a family member (in whatever sense s/he uses the term "family") to interview. Because there is a diversity of types of families, each student uses his/her own definition of family to select the subject of his/her performance. During the interview s/he should try to get the family member to tell stories about the family: either some event that stands out as the funniest, the scariest, the most significant bonding experience, or the most tragic event. S/he might also try to collect some story that has circulated in the family for years that may or may not be true but still represents one view of the family history. S/he might collect some story that describes how mundane and ordinary the family is.

We recommend that each student tape record the interview (with the family member's permission) or take notes during the telling or shortly after the telling of the story to make sure s/he accurately recreates the story for the audience. Then s/he transcribes the story in a script form and memorizes it. S/he will assume the role of that family member and perform the story for the class. We stress the importance of using the same words, phrasing, and nonverbal behaviors exhibited by the family member when each student recreates the telling of the story for the class. We also require a copy of the script before each student performs, as well as a brief introduction that sets up the piece for us and tells us a little about the person and the context surrounding the story.

We encourage students to be creative. They are free to use costumes or props if necessary and to set the room up as needed. They may also enlist the help of other students. Additionally, while there is no set time limit, we

encourage students to keep the performances under three minutes. Keeping the performance relatively short focuses the performer's attention on the minute details of the subject, as well as alleviates some of the apprehension associated with memorizing a longer piece. Above all students should try to enjoy themselves. This assignment works best if everyone gets into it, including the teacher.

An Extension of the Assignment

In our Oral Communication course a written assignment accompanies the family narrative performance. We find the following format and directed questions help students focus their performances, and help them see the connections between the way they communicate and the way their families communicate:

- *The paper should be at least **FOUR FULL** pages in length, **TYPED, DOUBLE- SPACED**, grammatically correct;

- *must include an **INTRODUCTION** in which you tell who the person is, his/her relationship to you, why you chose this particular person;

- *the first section should be about the **INTERVIEW** process--describe it in detail, list what questions you asked, note the verbal and nonverbal cues exchanged during the interview (for example, did you look at each other during the interview? how were you arranged spatially? what was the interviewee doing physically during the interview? etc.);

- *the second section should be about the performance process--describe how you went about "becoming" the family member (what physical characteristics did you portray? what about the person's voice? what were the identifiable mannerisms you noticed? etc);

- *the third section should be an analysis of your family communication style with that particular person--how did having to perform that person for others get you to see that person in a different light? did you notice any similarities between the ways you communicate (verbally and nonverbally) and the ways the family member communicates? which of your ideas about how your family communicates did this project confirm? what did this project reveal to you about the way your family communicates that you did not know before?

This written assignment is not used in the Oral Interpretation course. Instead students focus more on the scripting of the performance and on embodying the persona of the family member. Also, this assignment helps demonstrate the concept of "first-person narrator" with a real life example. Oral Interpretation students realize that narrators are people with their own views of the world and their own ways of telling stories that may be different from the performer's way.

Variations on the Assignment

The beauty of this assignment is that it is easily adapted for use in a variety of Speech and Theatre courses. The following variations demonstrate this adaptability and offer suggestions for making this assignment relevant to several areas of study.

Family Communication

Obviously this assignment could be useful in a Family Communication class. The assignment could be expanded to include a more in-depth analysis of family communication patterns. Also, family narratives could be studied comparatively among all students in the class to see if certain patterns of family storytelling emerge. Family narrative performances could also be examined from a content-analytic perspective to see what themes, issues, values, or topics are covered across families.

Acting

A variation of the family narrative assignment for the Acting class might involve students observing and recreating the movements and vocal qualities of their own family members. Such concentrated attention on a person, even one to which the actor may have been exposed on a daily basis, can help actors realize that even the most mundane or trivial gesture, pause, intonation may help more fully round out a character. Students enrolled in acting classes are often called upon to use their past relationships as the basis for character development. Using this assignment affords actors the opportunity to explore the relationships that exist within their families and to see past the taken-for-granted qualities of the family member.

Gender Communication

A variation of this assignment for a Gender Communication class would be to ask students to select a family member of a different gender as the subject of the performance. Stipulating that performances need to transcend stereotypical portrayals might help alleviate a series of potentially embarrassing and offensive performances. Students should focus on which behaviors exhibited by the subject are gendered and which behaviors are nongendered. Class discussions following the performances could address such issues as gendered language, styles of communicating, and how and if the content and plots of the stories varied across gender lines.

Oral History

This assignment might be useful as a beginning assignment in an Oral History class, especially if a student is directed to gather a family history from the family member. The assignment could even be extended into a semester-long project in which the student interviews several family members in order to piece together a more detailed Family History performance.

Interpersonal Communication

By viewing the interview of the family member as an Interpersonal exchange, the student gains practice in eliciting self-disclosure, compliance-gaining, listening, and empathizing with a significant other. Additionally, by showing interest in the stories that chronicle the life of the family, the student potentially strengthens interpersonal bonds within the family, and may help the student to better comprehend the impact family interpersonal communication has on other interpersonal relationships.

Ethnography

In a course in Ethnography, this assignment might be used as an introduction to fieldwork. The student, by interviewing and observing a family member, should try to see the family member as never before. This assignment might serve as the catalyst for estranging the everyday practices an ethnographer needs to learn how to see with a new eye.

Conclusion

The Family Narrative Performance assignment is a versatile tool for teaching a variety of topics in Theater and Speech. Our experiences with this assignment have been very positive. Several students commented that this assignment was their favorite one of the semester partly because it was fun and partly because they learned to see their families in a new light. We believe that students at both the secondary and collegiate levels in Theater and Speech will benefit from such an assignment. Furthermore, as teachers, we enjoy the opportunity to incorporate our students' family experiences into the classroom experience.

Reflection on Learning as an Effective Interpersonal Assessment Technique

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With the current demand for classroom accountability and the need to effectively document student learning, educators wrestle with discovering and developing tools that will provide an accurate means of assessment. I often hear colleagues indicate that it seems much easier to assess public speaking activities than it is to assess interpersonal competency. Reliable and validated check lists such as the SCA Competent Communicator Rating Scale and video portfolios are useful instruments for demonstrating public speaking competency. But, what about tools that adequately measure interpersonal competence? Although some good instruments are available, they are often cumbersome, depending upon using artificial conversations, forced situations, and a trained rater.

I have discovered an assessment technique that is effective in a variety of interpersonal courses, that reinforces student learning, and that gives me an excellent snapshot of what concepts have been retained during the quarter. This technique I call simply "reflection on learning." I have used this technique in both a sophomore-level interviewing course and a junior-level small group course and have found it equally effective in both. It is easy enough to use in almost any speech communication classroom.

The premise of this technique is that reflection on learning helps the student to re-learn what has been taught. Much like a review session summarizes key concepts, reflection on learning (whether it is done orally or in a written form) forces the learner to examine constructs, apply them to his or her experience, and demonstrate knowledge and retention.

In my small group course, for the duration of the quarter students study interaction in their assigned five-person task groups. They are also required to keep a file of focused essays which are assigned two or three times a week. Each essay is a "reflection on learning." After studying group role emergence, students describe what they experienced in their groups. As we learn about effective problem-solving, students reflect on their own ability to contribute to problem-solving efforts. As I collect, read, and respond to these frequent assessments, I am able to determine what learning is occurring, and I can give guidance to those who are having difficulties. When the quarter ends, the students have a portfolio of documented learning of small group theory. I have yet to have a student complain about the amount of writing and reflection they have done.

My interviewing course consists of exposure to seven different types of interviews including surveys, information-gathering, appraisals, employment, persuasive, nonprofessional counseling, and discipline. A videotaping lab allows for one set of interviews to be performed while others are done in front of the class. After students conduct an interview, they prepare a written paper

analyzing their planning, questioning, interviewee motivation, sequencing, and other variables. Those who videotape prepare papers after viewing themselves; those in class may opt to audiotape performances for later review and reflection.

For classroom assessment purposes, I have found that reflection of learning is accomplished very simply by asking students, when we have completed studying a particular type of interviewing, to report briefly on what they intend to carry with them out of the classroom. I have been very pleased with the assessment technique, and have found it helps me see what concepts are retained. I have also discovered that students frequently tell me that they are surprised that they are learning and remembering so much from my class. Excerpts from a request to reflect on their learning about persuasive interviews follow:

"I realized the importance of analyzing interviewee needs and desires. Once these are identified, criteria and solutions become more apparent."

"The ability to probe effectively is dependent on the ability to listen effectively."

"The best defense technique for the interviewee is the ability to question."

"We have to deal with many different types of people. Even if something was your idea, sometimes you must make the interviewee think it was their idea in order to succeed."

One assertive nontraditional student, commenting on a student role play, reported:

"Faced with the task of persuading an authoritative individual who believes in a strict hierarchy among hospital staff, Lois had to effectively confront this bias at every step of the persuasion process. Even before she could get his ear to address her needs, she needed to frame her questions in a deferential manner that stroked his ego. . . . I am coming to realize that in similar situations I have tried to use clearer, stronger and more assertive arguments. Sometimes it doesn't work, and I find myself frustrated and ineffective. Next time, I may consider a more deferential posture and phraseology if the outcome is very important."

As you can see from the excerpts, reflection on learning is a simple-to-use, flexible, and potentially rich form of classroom assessment particularly valuable in the interpersonal classroom. Students discover key concepts that help them improve and that demonstrate communication competence. The educator willing to incorporate the technique of reflection on learning will find it most worthwhile.

BOOK REVIEWS

Benn, David Wedgwood. *Persuasion and Soviet Politics*. Basil Blackwell Ltd: Oxford, U.K., 1989. 243 pp.

Though this book was written in 1989, it is increasingly relevant today because it was published soon before the collapse of the Soviet Union and explains the role of persuasion in Soviet politics at that time. Much has been written about the changing face of communism in the former Soviet Union, eastern Europe, and the People's Republic of China. The sweeping changes have caught experts off-guard and scrambling to produce literature that describes and interprets these changes. Unfortunately, emphasis on speed (at the cost of thoroughness) has frequently occurred as researchers try to keep up with events. I am happy to report Mr. Benn has not fallen into this category. His book reflects insights of a seasoned professional, obviously based upon years of wellgrounded research.

The book is well substantiated (a total of 719 footnotes), easy to read, timely and interesting. He includes 23 photographs that appropriately accent the text.

His overall goal is to explain approaches to propaganda, persuasion, and public opinion used in the former Soviet Union. He does this in seven chapters that focus on reform, persuasion, public opinion & ideology, propaganda under Stalin, developments after Stalin under Gorbachev's accession, a critique of propaganda in the former Soviet Union, and the effects of the aforementioned on East-West relations.

The first chapter provides an introduction for the book's direction. He opens the chapter stating his specific objective is "to examine the Soviet approach, both past and present, to the question of *method* in relation to propaganda, persuasion, and the influencing of public opinion." He closes the chapter with "This book is not primarily concerned with discussing whether the Soviet reformers will succeed...simply to try to make their thinking intelligible." These intentions serve as a helpful guidon for the reader.

In "How to Persuade?", Benn describes problems the Soviet government has had influencing the public (using case study examples dealing with alcoholism, birth-rate, and labour discipline). Shortcomings in this area have been generally attributed to the inability of the propagandists to speak language understandable to the masses.

Chapter Three ("Persuasion, Public Opinion, and Ideology") provides a more detailed analysis of the connections between Soviet approaches with propaganda, public opinion and official ideology. Sub-topics explored in this discussion include the link between propaganda and organization in Soviet thinking, Nazi usage of psychological manipulation, influences of Marx, Lenin, Stalin, & Brezhnev, and traditional Soviet guidelines for propagandists. Primary methods of Soviet propaganda are categorized in

three areas: 1) didactic, repetitive explanation of the party's position, 2) active involvement of individuals in activities of perceived importance to the country's goals, and 3) mobilization of group influence against deviant attitudes or behavior.

Benn discusses propaganda and psychology during the Stalin era in Chapter Four. During the 1950's it was believed in the West that Russian (and Chinese) communists had discovered techniques for mind control but he dismisses this speculation as rumor (probably the result of cold war fears). Benn's findings indicate Stalin used little psychology in propaganda.

Chapter Five covers the period from Stalin's death to Gorbachev's coming to power (1953-1985). Vast improvements in living standards were felt during this period but Benn points out that improvements did not keep up with new issues. Subjects discussed include Krushchev & de-Stalinization, propaganda under Brezhnev, and media research in the 1960's. He concludes psychology and public opinion influenced persuasive techniques in the West much more than in the Soviet Union during this period.

Benn offers a critique of Soviet propaganda in Chapter Six. In this critique he states the family has far more impact on influencing individual values (as opposed to the media) than is generally believed. He frequently stresses Soviet individuality in this discussion. He closes with a brief chapter on East-West relations and the importance of empathy among world leaders.

The chapters are well organized and well written but more cohesive transitions among chapters would be helpful.

Otherwise, the reader will find the book to be enlightening and enjoyable.

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Fiske, John. *Reading the Popular*. Routledge: London and New York, 1992. 228 pp.

-----, *Understanding Popular Culture*. Routledge: London and New York, 1992. 206 pp.

The cover art on Routledge's handsome reprinting of Fiske's companion works on popular culture (originally published 1989) presents impressionistic scenes of beachcombers and blue-jean clad youth. They represent, in artistic form, the author's interest in redefining our conception of the popular by causing us to consider the role of the seemingly mundane aspects of our lives. Seemingly, because it is in the moments of recreation and leisure that contemporary citizens find the roots of the popular, the means of resistance, and the ability to build their own cultural practices.

Understanding Popular Culture is the more theoretical of the two volumes. Or at least, Fiske has designed it to present theory first, then extended examples. However, his early analysis of the "jeaning" of America gives clear insight into the critical power of the theories he reviews, a power that is more fully demonstrated in the other volume. Fiske deftly reviews the work of theorists such as Bakhtin, De Certeau, Barthes, Foucault, and others, without fully ascribing to any of their positions. Building on their work, Fiske's own resistance to dominant modes leads him to (what was at the time) a unique perspective on popular culture, separating it from previous views of mass culture. He rejects pessimistic theories, such as Althusserian overdetermination, in favor of concepts that allow the public the ability, indeed the right, to twist and use cultural messages for their own purposes. One of the most insightful concepts Fiske describes is that of the carnival pleasure. Beginning with Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque, Fiske re-articulates the idea in light of contemporary culture. Carnival is a breach of the status quo, a sanctioned lapse in which participants defy authority and break the rules. The excesses of medieval festivals (Bakhtin's focus) have been replaced by mediated festivals such as all-star wrestling, which Fiske refers to as "television's carnival of bodies." The exaggerated and distorted bodies of the wrestlers provides outlet for viewers who do not see the typical ideal of male attractiveness (Tom Selleck, Pierce Brosnan) as attainable.

Throughout the book, Fiske gradually doles out portions of his theory, taking it one step at a time, and using many examples from a broad array of cultural phenomena. He works through these disparate examples in a way that is very reminiscent of an early Kenneth Burke, who wrote as freely about the popular culture of his day as he did about *Madame Bovary*. In fact, Fiske makes a point of emphasizing the importance of popular culture analysis over and above the traditional study of literature. The seventh and final chapter of the book is titled "Politics," and is a detailed summary of previous arguments as well as showing the complexities of achieving political relevance and action from this understanding of the popular.

Conversely, *Reading the Popular* begins with a compressed version of the theoretical material contained in *Understanding Popular Culture*, then moves

directly to analysis of a far-ranging body of "texts" from the beach to Madonna to the daily news. Chapters on video games and the Sears tower again prove the point that no cultural icons are beyond Fiske's analysis, either due to stature or type.

The beauty of this volume rests in Fiskes' ability to portray the reader of popular culture, and in his dead honesty about his own duality as researcher and consumer. This layering of response mirrors the layering of popular elements (i.e., the cultural message itself, the "accessories" it creates in the form of advertising and products, and the popular response to the message and its accessories). The act of textual criticism provides a context for the theoretical framework and demonstrates the close-knit relationship between theory and practice, between theorizing and analyzing. As Fiske weaves through his chosen texts, the reader begins to understand the process of popular readings and popular resistance. The ability to deviate from the producer's purpose brings us close to Barthes' *jouissance* or primal passion, so well articulated in *Understanding Popular Culture*.

These two volumes, though slightly dated already, represent an important step in our understanding of the cultural realm in which we live. They provide a framework for understanding our time and the mountain of cultural messages we experience on a daily basis. Fiske draws important distinctions from past writers who through snobbishness or despair have rejected the popular. To embrace the popular means to at once understand its commercial nature *and* the possibilities to subvert and recreate that nature. Fiske gives his reader the classic "positive" moment without trivializing the issues. For those of us searching for our own understandings of the popular, and understandings that can be discussed with our students, these twin texts present a cogent set of arguments and a wonderful place to begin.

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