

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Considering “The Professional” in Communication Studies: Implications for Theory and Research Within and Beyond the Boundaries of Organizational Communication

George Cheney & Karen Lee Ashcraft

Department of Communication, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT 84112

*This essay positions contemporary “professionalism” as a contested term and a nexus of important theoretical and practical concerns for communication scholars, including, for example, those engaged in the empirical, interpretive, and critical examinations of culture and the self. We advance communication-based understandings of the meanings and practices of professionalism as a complement to the predominantly sociological conceptions of the rise and place of the professional in modern industrialized societies. We are deliberately playful with the term professionalism in demonstrating the power of its ambiguity for reflecting, shaping, and indexing particular kinds of social relations and expectations for them. Part of our argument concerns the complex interplay of symbolism and materiality in the domains of interaction and artifacts surrounding “the professional,” and especially its embodiment in work and other settings. This brings us directly to an examination of the “intersectionality” of aspects of difference in the world of the professional (and by implication, the nonprofessional), including race, gender, and class, and to observe a broad-based cultural dialectic of the civilized and the primitive. Finally, we briefly consider extensions as relevant to domains of communication studies beyond the accustomed domain of organizational communication.*

doi:10.1111/j.1468-2885.2007.00290.x

## What is in and around a term?

In popular and academic parlance, *professional* has been a taken-for-granted term—widely invoked and readily recognized but rarely interrogated or deeply understood. In spheres ranging from popular culture to the home to the workplace, we refer and react to the professional like a social reflex. Despite the term’s varied connotations,

---

Corresponding author: George Cheney or Karen Lee Ashcraft; e-mail: george.cheney@utah.edu (G.C.) or k.ashcraft@m.cc.utah.edu (K.L.A.)

we apply it decisively in everyday talk—as if it were a neutral, self-evident descriptor. Yet, to invoke the professional is to put into conversational play a set of unacknowledged cultural assumptions. We thus observe, first, that lay people tend to miss the multiple, ambiguous, and often-conflicted meanings of the term, even as they regularly employ it. Discussions and performances of professionalism surround us; yet, we seldom pause to question the matter.

In fact, scholars of communication have also contributed to the transparency of professionalism in contemporary (post)industrial society. Certainly, organizational communication scholars have investigated professional spheres of activity (as in work-home studies, such as Cheney, Zorn, Planalp, & Lair, in press; Edley, 2001, 2003; Gill, 2004; Kirby, Golden, Medved, Jorgenson, & Buzzanell, 2003; Kirby & Krone, 2002; Medved & Kirby, 2005), the interpretive histories of certain professions (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004; Miller, 1998), and the subtle as well as overt expression of professional norms of conduct (e.g., Ashcraft, 2000; Clair, 1996; Tracy & Trethewey, 2005). The long-standing professional and managerial slant of organizational communication research is also well known; only recently has the cultural turn led scholars to "see" other groups of employees, including low-paid service workers, manual laborers (Cloud, 2005), the underemployed, and the unemployed (Gossett, 2002). Still, the relative ease with which we employ professional markers, even in these academic contexts, supports a second observation: Scholars have not been especially reflective about the persuasive dimensions of this deceptively straightforward term; hence, we would do well to examine its implications, particularly in terms of the relationships among language, ideology, and material practice.

Sociologists of organization, work, and occupations have contributed the broadest and deepest analyses of the rise and roles of professionalism in today's society, particularly in terms of chronicling changes in the structure and practice of work. In this way, the study of the professional outside communication is hardly novel. Beginning with the works of Durkheim (1964, 1996), sociologists have charted the appearance of professional classes, the development of professional expertise and legitimacy, the relationship of groups of experts to the state, the socialization of specific types of professionals, and the exclusionary nature of professional networks (cf. Crane, 1972, and Macdonald, 1995, for an extensive review of this research). However, despite the extent of this literature, we observe a decided lack of studies that systematically explore the consequential symbolic functions of the professional, particularly as they relate to the material conditions and expressions of contemporary life.

We argue that a communicative approach to the orbit of meanings, functions, and consequences surrounding professional discourse can usefully challenge unreflective daily practice and complement available sociological and organizational communication perspectives. In particular, we see the professional as a nexus of symbolic activity and material presence where sociological and communication-based understandings can work productively together. Guided by this heuristic purpose, we begin this essay by reviewing relevant research in organizational sociology and allied research areas, with an eye toward (a) how a communicative approach can build on crucial insights

generated by the largely sociological literature and (b) how communication theory can redress a key limitation of this literature, specifically, by articulating a metaposition that problematizes the language and practices of professionalism itself. That is, we argue for a systematic consideration of the *term*. This critique forms the basis for a second major section in which we develop this position by elaborating the complex relations between professional language and embodied practices. Our aim here was to cultivate a communicative theoretical stance attuned to both the symbolic ambiguities of things professional and their deeply material character while acknowledging that there are multiple senses of both symbolism and materiality. In the third section, we extend the promise of this position by sketching the contours of three associated research agendas that span subfields of communication theory: studies of (a) the representation of the professional in public discourse and popular culture; (b) the enactment of the professional in mundane interaction; and (c) the politics of the professional, with particular respect to markers of difference. We illustrate our argument with historical and contemporary examples, drawn primarily from the U.S. context but also with an interest in the broader industrialized world. Throughout, our shifting use of professional and its close associates like *profession*, *professionalism*, and so on is intended to be deliberately playful and expansive, underscoring varied senses of the label. Rather than fixing precise definitions and variants of the term, we mean to invite and model exploration of the dynamic constellation of uses and meanings accompanying it, as well as their pragmatic implications for identity, intersubjectivity, and social behavior. We thus conclude by reviewing the assemblage of meanings and functions examined here and extending the invitation further.

The essay serves a dual purpose meant to enrich "external" and "internal" relations. On the one hand, we seek to bring a missing communicative voice into a predominantly sociological conversation while honoring the enduring insights already generated by that conversation. On the other hand, we aim to challenge common interpretations among those (mostly organizational) communication scholars who have studied the professional. Along the way, we consider the boundaries of "the discursive turn" in organizational communication itself by reintroducing the roles of the body and the material in the domain of professionalism. In addition, we seek to make visible shared interests across specialized areas in the larger field of communication studies. As our research proposals suggest, we see professionalism as an important point of reference at the intersections of organizational communication, interpersonal communication, rhetorical and critical-cultural studies, and health and legal communication. Our overall goal, then, is to articulate specific ways in which (sub)disciplinary agendas can collaborate to contribute to broader conversations about class, work, occupation, organization, career, and market.

### **Key themes in extant research on professionalism: Building on sociological foundations**

To date, sociological perspectives have dominated scholarship about the professional, and this literature has received extensive review elsewhere (e.g., Abbott,

1988; Macdonald, 1995). Our discussion here follows major themes in that line of inquiry and, specifically, identifies what those investigations have revealed about the symbolic and material conditions of modernity and industrialized societies. We therefore argue that sociological approaches provide a vital point of departure for examining the communication-related aspects of professionalism. Our review also includes relevant references from other disciplines, notably management and public administration, which have informed our understanding of professional development on individual and collective levels.

The sociology of work, occupations, and organizations has been explicitly concerned with professionalism at least since Durkheim (1964, 1996) offered his take on the division of labor of modern industrialized society. Durkheim's monumental works *The Division of Labor in Society* and *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals* therefore serve as starting points for our work here, although we find that the latter book has not received the attention it deserves from those who study work, organizations, and culture. That is to say, the implications of Durkheim's analysis for linking concerns about the professional as an individual with broader social trends have been little explored, and the communication field offers an important vantage point from which to develop this connection—particularly in terms of how professional identity is constructed, maintained, and altered.

At the end of the 19th century and the turn of the 20th, Durkheim saw professionalism as an important social phenomenon that distinguished modern societies from preindustrial ones. Taking Durkheim as a point of departure for communication studies of the professional is important for a practical reason as well: His early writings on professionalism highlight the role of socialization not only in terms of organizations and management but also in terms of how it unfolds in broader society, including through the vehicle of popular culture. We thus take *the connection between professionalism and the division of labor in modern society* to be of primary importance in understanding what it means to be marked "professional."

The rise of professionalism has a complex and ambivalent relationship with aristocratic society, in that the former represents both a move toward collective mobility and a displacement of traditional aristocracy with a class privileged by education, expertise, and association (what many would call "meritocracy"; see, e.g., Larson, 1977). By the turn of the 20th century, the credentialing of various professions was well underway, thereby laying the groundwork for Durkheim's (1964, 1996) functional and moral analysis of the roles of professions in modern society, as well as a host of loosely related examinations. For example, public administration scholar Hummel (1994) highlights the ways that professionalism in civil service went hand-in-hand with bureaucratization and how both represented responses to arbitrariness in the organization of work. Communication studies of professional classes and associations are also relevant in this regard. Miller's (1998) study of osteopathy, for instance, reveals the ways that a branch of health care perceived as marginal adopted both proactive and defensive rhetorical strategies. In a similar vein, Sullivan (2007) examines how the emerging profession of massage

therapy positions itself either with or against already established professions: This is in pursuit of public professional recognition as well as to make a clear break from the profession's historical link to prostitution. In such analyses, we find a second crucial sense of professionalism, which we elaborate below: *claims to authoritative expertise for a class of individuals*.

Nevertheless, Marx (1906) predicted the "proletarianization" of the professional classes, whereby at least some of them would be subjected to increased control from without. Weber (1978), who differed from Marx, not so much on the progressive rationalization of society but on the role of material means of production and control, was clearly concerned that any profession, regardless of apparent prestige, could lose sight of overall societal goals and become subject to excessive constraint in the name of efficiency. Indeed, this observation is core to Denhardt's (1981) penetrating critique of the modern organization, particularly in terms of the ways classes of employees and work tasks come to oppress as much as they enable. In part, Denhardt's work concerns the constrained nature of selfhood and interaction at work and, thus, invites a communication-oriented analysis of how the discursive construction of certain labor categories sets parameters around individual action as it produces (as well as reflects) tangible divisions and hierarchies of work.

Foucault (1984) understood well the link between expertise and power for any profession, emphasizing the question of how knowledge is produced, legitimated, and applied, both within a profession such as mental health and toward the larger society. At the broadest level of analysis, then, issues of autonomy, power or control, and knowledge are all implicated by how we treat (i.e., create, elevate, or constrain) professions and professionals. For example, physicians—among the historically most autonomous professions in the United States—are now being challenged on the grounds of values like profit, efficiency, and accompanying strictures on service to patients (Lammers & Geist, 1997). Of course, such concerns are no stranger to academics today and, in fact, suggest the contemporary salience of such communication-related phenomena as rhetorical defensiveness stemming from threats to autonomy at work. That is, trends in the structure and practice of work warrant scrutiny in terms of the effects of shifting labels themselves, as well as how actual behavior and interaction alter over time. Because this is as true for professional groups or classes as it is for the individuals who occupy them, we seek to reunite Durkheim's distinctly social conception of professionalism with the more individualized notions that prevail today.

Professional networks, associations, and communities often act as interest groups, as Macdonald (1995) observes in his comprehensive account entitled *The Sociology of the Professions*. In this sense, professionalization is an organized activity in which "an occupational group deploys its resources in its struggle for collective social mobility" (Macdonald, 1995, p. 51, emphasis deleted). Throughout the 20th century, some professional bodies—notably those in law, medicine, the military, and engineering—sought not only professional certification and recognized status but also legitimacy and protection vis-à-vis the state. For example, consider the case of

chiropractic medicine, where practitioners have faced significant opposition in their quest for certification and legitimacy. At times, as in the case of the American Medical Association, the promotion of professional privilege has approached a monopolistic practice. This has occurred in the most industrialized nations, but the trend has also been evident in comparatively less affluent countries.

In fact, the structuring and behavior of a class of professionals are related not only to their identities as individuals but also to recognition by the state and their access to various avenues of influence in society. In this way, legitimate expertise often implicates privilege, which in turn means public responsibility (cf. du Gay, 1996; Giddens, 1984; Weber, 1978). The idea of professionalism both exalts and regulates the moral performance of individuals who identify with a certain class of practitioners. An excellent example emerges from an extensive body of research on the clash between professional identification and organizational loyalty on the part of scientists in industry (Pelz & Andrews, 1976). Beginning in the early 1970s, this line of inquiry revealed that scientists were less likely to "tow the administrative line" in applying organizational policies than were some other segments of the workforce because their identities *qua* scientists superseded any felt responsibilities to managers. In practice, such tensions carry important implications for issues such as creativity, dissent, and whistle blowing (Perrucci, Anderson, Schendel, & Tractman, 1980). For many of the scientists surveyed in this research, allegiance to profession entailed a moral responsibility to speak out when an employer was in violation of an accepted professional standard (e.g., for quality or safety).

Similarly, professionalism had moral as well as practical force, per community values, in Durkheim's (1996) ethics. In other words, Durkheim saw little value in highlighting the individual specialist or the professional person outside the context of a community of practitioners who saw their work as linked to widely exalted commitments and standards. In that community and its culture, Durkheim saw great potential for both institutionalized moral practice and unnecessary societal division. In this sense, the idea of professional practice was as much prescriptive as descriptive: Durkheim envisioned professionalism as bound up in both culture and ethics (cf. Kultgren, 1988). For him, "being a professional" made little sense when detached from the wider society and normative standards grounded in the values of the community writ large. This is in marked contrast to the rather individualistic ethos of expressions of professionalism that prevail in the contemporary U.S. society.

Although Durkheim was not directly concerned with the process of *expressing* those professional norms, he believed that their ongoing communication was vital for the integrity of modern society. Above all, Durkheim (1964, 1996) perceived a threat to social cohesion wherever individual performance was divorced from social context, whether in professional practice or in intellectual accounts thereof. As he wrote quite forcefully: "There is no form of social activity that can do without the appropriate moral discipline ... [and] each part [of a social group or profession] must behave in a way that enables the whole to survive" (Durkheim, 1996, p. 14).

The emphasis on collective ethical standards is a double-edged sword, however. As Boyton (2002) notes in her analysis of the development of professionalism in public relations, progress may be uneven across areas of ethical performance. Even more importantly, the sheer existence of a code of ethics and related documents may be used as "cover" for lackluster performance in the moral arena. For this reason, compounded by concern for the negative aspects of bureaucratization, some groups with strong social commitments actually fear the professionalization of their work. Galtung (2006), for example, cautioned an assembly that the movement toward professionalizing conflict resolution and peacemaking was not an entirely welcome development for practitioners and scholars in the area.

From a broad-based societal standpoint, professional discipline is also understood to be infused with expectations associated with gender, race, and class (Kondo, 1990). Although we elaborate this point later, we note for now that professional groups may elevate certain ethical commitments such as quality or safety while downplaying others such as open access and democratic participation. Indeed, claims of knowledge and ethical exclusivity are a hallmark of professionalization (Abbott, 1988; Macdonald, 1995); yet, such claims may function, deliberately or unwittingly, to naturalize the exclusion of particular social groups. The *normative-ethical dimension of professionalism* is thus a third principal set of meanings we would draw from sociologically inclined literatures.

As we focus on the professional here, we recognize an array of affiliated terms that similarly attempt to mark classes of work and workers. For example, the label *white collar* emerged in the early 20th century (Ciulla, 2000) and, for decades thereafter, served to distinguish bourgeois, managerial, and owning (i.e., professional) classes from those whose positions were tied to physical labor (see also Lair, 2004). Since about 1970, there have been important attempts to characterize the present age as "information," "postindustrial," "electronic," "knowledge based," and so forth (see, e.g., Roszak, 1986). Analysts as ideologically diverse as Galbraith (1978) and Drucker (1992), for instance, have heralded a knowledge-based revolution, affecting not only how organizations do business but also how employees work and conceive of themselves.

Across these works, history emerges as discontinuous, divided by clear, natural breaking points. Yet, the naming of these monumental shifts is itself a rhetorical process that serves, among other functions, to capture what are widely perceived as rapid changes in economy and employment patterns, to ensure their apparent novelty, and to persuade us of their real and inevitable momentum (May, 2001). Within communication studies, Cloud's (2005) research emphasizes the interplay of such potent labels for socioeconomic trends with the persistent and changing material conditions of work. Her analysis shows how the hype surrounding labels themselves can obscure the actual nature of work; for instance, that the much-heralded "new economy" still involves a great deal of oppressive jobs and worker exploitation. For our purposes, Cloud's work represents an important exception, for it suggests an important communicative voice that is currently absent from the largely sociological

conversation. Such a perspective would take the discursive evolution, persuasive power, practical ambiguities, and material effects of professional jargon as worthy starting points unto themselves. Seen through a communicative lens, the professional becomes less an instantiation of given or established structural categories and more a set of discursive and material processes by which various aspects of social identity and relations are constantly enforced and renegotiated.

To begin to articulate a communicative voice in the discussion of professionalism, we have underscored here three enduring themes from the sociological and allied literatures on professionalism, which are: (a) the professional as division of labor in modern society, (b) the professional as claim-to-expert class, and (c) the professional as normative–ethical obligation. We argue that understanding contemporary cultural constructions from a communication standpoint requires sensitivity to these pivotal historical–cultural developments, in that the term *professional* continues to evoke tangible evidence of status and identity, powerful images of actors and with attendant evaluations of bodies and behaviors, and exclusive networks of relationships. In another way, the dominance of sociological views not only suggests the value of a communicative voice but also makes demands of that voice—namely, that it demonstrates accountability to the embodied, physical, and material dimensions of the professional. Historically, however, (organizational) communication as a field has struggled with such accountability. In an effort to facilitate a communicative voice on professionalism that is both rhetorically and materially conscious, the next section observes and challenges the professional “behavior” of communication studies itself with respect to things material.

### **Responding to sociological imperatives: Overcoming (organizational) communication’s material ambivalence**

Whereas sociological approaches to professionalism have prioritized material matters, communication scholars have overwhelmingly neglected the body, the material environment, and all things physical. If the potential of a communicative voice to inform the professional is to be realized, this disciplined oversight requires attention. To a significant extent, communication’s material neglect is conceivable as an impulse of self-preservation, a form of disciplinary advocacy. When members of the discipline sought to establish and legitimize themselves, especially in the latter half of the 20th century, they became dedicated to the power of the symbolic, which itself had been largely undervalued in both philosophy and the social sciences. The subfield of organizational communication, where professional matters received the most attention, likewise stressed the symbolic, ultimately favoring logical extensions of the organization-as-communication thesis. Perhaps even more in organizational communication than in other areas of the discipline, an implicit cognitivism accompanied the emphasis on symbolism, resulting in a tendency to privilege the rational over the emotional, the systematic over the intuitive, and the abstract over the concrete—habits that have since been roundly criticized from feminist and other



standpoints (see, e.g., Buzzanell, 1994, 2000). In the same subfield, a line of theorizing developed to explain and secure the position of the symbolic as the sine qua non of organizing. Generally speaking, this stream of argument runs from Barnard's (1938/1968) famous definition of organization as system to Hawes' (1974) consideration of collectivities as defined by communication to Putnam and Pacanowsky's (1983) collection on the interpretive turn to the works of Taylor and colleagues (e.g., Cooren, Taylor, & van Every, 2006; Taylor & Van Every, 2000), which demonstrate how an organization arises through discourse in interaction. Such works have profoundly illuminated how the symbolic, once relegated to epiphenomenal status in management as well as in philosophy, is in many ways constitutive of work and organizational life. In doing so, these and other scholars helped demonstrate how the purview of rhetoric and communication more broadly is far greater than commonly understood either in folk formulations of linguistic philosophy or in most scholarly formulations of language and symbolism prior to the middle of the 20th century.

The current rage of interest in discourse among scholars of organization studies (see, e.g., the discussions in Barker, 2006) assumes the function of a *mythos* for the subfield of organizational communication, performing a significant legitimizing service but not without limitations. For example, through an overemphasis on the symbolic (per common, assumed yet often unexplained invocations of the term *discourse*), organizational communication scholars tend to inadvertently downplay the significance of material considerations, including the body at work. We argue that this is the case despite the theoretical advances derived from such varied fields and movements as sociolinguistics, semiotics, speech act theory, critical rhetoric, poststructuralism, and postmodernism. At base, we must acknowledge that material circumstances to a significant degree grant us access to the very spheres of interaction and channels of communication that we call professional, including, for instance, the venue for this essay.

Exceptions to the relative lack of attention to (or reduction of) materiality can be found in some studies of technology (beginning at least as far back as Ellul, 1964; cf., e.g., Rice & Gattiker, 2001) and of gender and sexuality at work (Hearn, Sheppard, Tancred-Sheriff, & Burrell, 1989; Trethewey, 1999, 2000, 2001). Such studies demonstrate how we might maintain a multidimensional understanding of "discourse" while devoting more than lip service to material dimensions of work and without entirely reducing their ontological status to symbolic construction in our characterizations of the construction of social reality (cf. Orr, 1978).

In recent years, poststructuralist and postmodernist turns in communication theorizing have been inappropriately invoked as a rationale for ignoring, downplaying, or subsuming material concerns and perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in organizational communication studies (on this point, see Cloud, 2001, 2005). Although communication-oriented theories of the postmodern condition (e.g., Baudrillard, 1980; McGee, 1990; McKerrow, 1989) have called attention to the problem with presuming a stable and solid "reality" as a reference point, they should not be taken to obviate the importance of any material conditions for symbolizing or

for symbol users. This should not be the "take-away" message from poststructuralist or postmodernist currents of thought.

The tacit and pervasive downgrading of materiality that has come to typify communication studies—from some works in the critical rhetorical project to certain poststructuralist and postmodernist conceptions of organization—are by no means inherent in either poststructuralist or postmodernist theories of language and visual imagery. Rather, such theories reveal how seemingly disconnected from material reference points some symbolizations can be. This we see vividly in the celebrated notions of the information age, the e-economy, and knowledge-based work (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2004). In all these cases, the rhetorical tendency of the terms is actually to divert attention from bodies, sweat, smokestacks, and effluent. Yet, a close examination of the rhetoric and politics of these trends leads us back to the interplay of symbolism and materiality—for example, in multifaceted and dialectically interactive understandings of "class" (Cheney & Cloud, 2006).

From our standpoint, the problem with some appropriations of poststructuralist and postmodernist assumptions in terms of understanding communication itself is that they can unreflectively subsume materiality under discourse by failing to distinguish the *specific senses* in which the material is symbolic and the symbolic is material. "To say that discourse has a type of materiality does not diminish the need to explain how that instance of materiality differs from others or to show how it is that the relationships between the material and the symbolic are in fact mediated." What we advocate, then, is not a return to some sort of strict (and problematic) dualism between symbolic and material but rather a multidimensional interest in their interplay that does not downgrade materiality for the sake of what might be called for purposes of argumentative shorthand "discoursism."

At the same time, we observe that organizational theory has tended to treat "the environment" as consisting largely or exclusively of *other institutions*, thereby reinforcing an excessive abstraction of organization from the material world (Bullis, Cheney, & Kendall, 2007). More than a quarter century ago, organizational communication unquestioningly imported this assumption from the multidisciplinary field of organizational studies, allowing the environment of the organization to be treated as almost wholly symbolic. Although we know that the environment of an organization consists of more than other organizations, even population-ecological views of organizational studies tend to rest comfortably in this narrow role for the environment (Tsoukas & Kundsén, 2003). Here again, there is a prevailing preference for the abstract in both our definitions and our studies of organization (cf. Putnam, Phillips, & Chapman, 1996, and Putnam & Boys, 2006).

Thus, it is not surprising that organizational communication scholars have paid scant attention to the physical aspects of work, workers, factories, offices, and human-machine interaction. Doing so often means risking the charge: "This isn't communication" and "This isn't organization." The resulting question is: how can we craft a communicative lens that is both responsive to this palpable disciplined anxiety *and* accountable to sociological (and in a certain sense,

economic) findings regarding the embodied, physical, and material dimensions of the professional?

### Returning to "work" in (organizational) communication studies: The professional as "the message"

Joining scholars from different traditions and motives, we support the turn from abstract conceptions of work and organization to the study of tangible working bodies and practices, certainly including but not solely defined by their discursive dimensions (Barley & Kunda, 2001). In this regard, sociologists of work, occupations, and organizations, less encumbered by the need to assert symbolism's pre-eminence, have done far better than organizational communication scholars in considering how the actual (and always at least partly physical—even in the case of the so-called "knowledge work") work people do is in part determinant of their symbolizations (see also Kuhn, 2006; Russell, 1996).

This realization is important not only for organizational communication but also for the study of the family, interpersonal relationships, health communication, environmental communication, identity and culture, and war and peace. For example, studies of work-home and work-family relationships need to attend not only to broad relationship concerns but also to the effects of work demands on the body and health. Studies of commuting and telecommuting provide one set of analyses where the potential is clear: In both instances, the boundaries of work and home life relate to physical distance, time, and symbolic boundaries (Diener, 2006). Health communication comes into play not just in obvious ways (through the examination of workplace safety and hygiene) but also in how well-being is related to work structure, conditions, and meanings. Environmental communication is relevant in terms of both production and consumption, as well as in how workers and consumers understand their relationship to the wider material world. As we show in this essay, there are important aspects of identity for the professional person that relate to the physical presence, markers of difference, and behavioral style.

As we return to the term professional itself, we therefore not only highlight its powerful ambiguities but also bring (back) within its grasp the embodied nature of professionalism in contemporary society (Trethewey, 1999). The person is in a sense "the message" when a short, overweight job candidate arrives for a screening interview only to sense that a negative assessment has been made of him within seconds after his entering the room (Averett & Korenman, 1996). But to call the person the message in such a context is to challenge and widen our notion of symbolism with considerations of physicality that are "transmitted" and judged almost instantly (as is demonstrated vividly in the film *Erin Brockovich*, 2000). Thus, the kind of symbolization that takes place is almost immediate in its framing of the person, albeit via an accumulation and crystallization of images and responses from past experience and a repository of cultural expectations. This is not to deny that things like office architecture, clothing, and skin do not "enter discourse" through their being assigned labels and meanings (cf. Cooren, 2004; Latour, 1993); rather, we are stressing that those material and physical

features of a situation have a certain presence that in itself helps shape, constrain, and enable discourse. Also, as Cloud (2001, 2005) has demonstrated so powerfully, the very material resources make certain kinds of rhetorical exercises *possible* while preventing the effective execution of others. Thus, we present an interrelationship of materiality and discourse that is multidimensional, interactive, and dynamic.

In a certain sense, then, we would return to the more robust notion of discourse advanced by Foucault (1984), which allows for the consideration of bodies, adornments, and architecture (among other things) within the range of associations and manifestations of discourse as an arena of knowledge, interaction, and control. At this broad level, discourse refers to assemblages, contexts, and movements of symbols and artifacts that come to cohere around a certain defining idea, principle, or relationship (cf. Barker & Cheney, 1994).

### Encountering the ambiguities of professionalism in language and the material

As indicated by our earlier review, sociological inquiry highlights many material dimensions of the professional, not only bodily but also institutional, economic, and environmental configurations. Although we seek to promote attention to all these dimensions among communication scholars, we have here stressed the sustained consideration of the embodied as well as polysemic character of professionalism as a useful entry point. In other words, sociological inquiry stands to be immediately complemented by communication-based analyses of the processes by which professional categories develop and infuse practice. This is especially the case for studies of the emergence and application of labels (such as *unprofessional*), the dominance of certain metaphors (such as calling employees "reports"), and the power of narratives (e.g., about a board meeting being "out of control"). Professionalism in this way is much more than a trend or set of trends in contemporary society; rather, it becomes a taken-for-granted reference point in a diverse array of interactions that are characterized as much by physical appearance as by spoken or written words. In situations ranging from how one walks down an office corridor to how a customer is greeted, the idea of professionalism lurks as a means of shaping, containing, and legitimizing appearance, decorum, behavior, and attitude.

In this way, professionalism serves as a powerful resource of ambiguity in elevating, guiding, constraining, and sometimes denigrating social performance. Professionalism is therefore an arena where, in Burke's (1945/1969a, 1950/1969b) terms, important "ambiguities necessarily arise." These ambiguities in turn function as resources for scholars just as they do for everyday interactants.

Empson (1947) helps us extend such an analysis of ambiguity by detailing two types that fit well with our analysis of professionalism: the case where two or more alternative meanings are resolved into one and the instance where two apparently unconnected meanings are given simultaneously. In the domain of professionalism broadly conceived, considerations of personal identity and organizational performance are frequently brought together under the same heading. This allows for an easy rhetorical transition from calls for individual behavior of a certain type

("Act like a professional") as well as for expressions of an entire group or organizational posture (e.g., "Our professional opinion"). At the same time, the term professional is highly suggestive of *multiple aspects* of a performance, including achievement, manner, credibility, and so on, even though those aspects in practice may not be well integrated or even interrelated at all. Such is in fact the case where the trappings of the so-called professionalism—such as business cards, a PowerPoint presentation, or a Web site—may have persuasive effects far beyond any single expression or facet of commonly understood professionalism.

We argue that professionalism and things professional is one such "resource of ambiguity" for communication scholars, given the enormous practical and rhetorical power of the terms in everyday as well as in formal interaction, in popular culture as well as in the boardroom. Professionalism is used both to suppress individuals and groups (e.g., "You're not professional enough") and to elevate them ("We are now among the professionals of our field"). In fact, we would expand the application of ambiguity, as an inherent characteristic of language, to apply also to the material. For it is in the expression of bodily presence, movement, gesture, adornment, and so on that we find not only material instantiations of meanings of professionalism but also (re)combinations and new assertions of identity. For instance, an outfit formerly considered to be "unprofessional" (such as a tight-fitting skirt or an untucked shirt) can emerge as chic or even in style through its assertive presentation and adoption by an individual or a subgroup. In such a situation, the interplay of the material and symbolic may not be recognized by all the actors, although one or more may well be conscious of the potential strategic employment of the situation for personal–professional advantage.

Given its multiple dimensions, professionalism offers a strikingly relevant context within which to explore the interplay of the symbolic and material as well as the universal and particular. Although the dynamics of language (and, by extension, visual imagery) may be understood to some degree across situations, persons, and cultures, it is the local and often the particular embodiment of an identity—such as that of a professional—that challenges not only the abstraction of the symbolization from a material context but also the presumed universality of the theorizing. Following the "ideographic" or locally oriented (as opposed to the "nomothetic" or generalization inclined) impulse (Brown, 1977) of many studies of gender and feminism, we would argue for a serious engagement of the concrete physicality of any particular work situation and experience of a worker. These situations constrain and influence discourse as much as they are reflected and in certain ways translated or transformed by it. Such engagement should stand unapologetically alongside the insights about the symbolic that communication scholars are well poised to offer the broader conversation about professionalism.

### **A multidimensional communicative approach to professionalism**

In this section of the essay, we seek to develop the promise of the communicative approach outlined above by sketching three fruitful directions for research: studies of

the professional (a) in popular culture (i.e., "representing the professional"), (b) in mundane interactions (i.e., "doing the professional"), and (c) as a political-rhetorical device that can orchestrate and obscure intersectionality (i.e., "politicizing the professional"). Of course, we intend this agenda to serve a heuristic function, usefully suggestive but by no means exhaustive. By dividing this part of our discussion in three parts, we mean to highlight meaningful differences in levels and sites of communication about the professional as well as important nuances characterizing each area of focus. As indicated earlier, we also mean to provoke projects that span the often-isolated subdisciplines of our field, toward a more innovative, interdisciplinary communicative lens on the professional. Moreover, as we argue above, we believe that professionalism provides an exceptionally rich and nuanced context for an examination of interdependence of the symbolic and the material. With our sketches below, we do *not* intend to depict disconnected research endeavors. Rather, we see potential overlap across these areas; and as many of our examples will illustrate, we advocate interplay among them.

#### **Representing the professional: Studies of the professional in popular culture**

As conceptualized in this essay, the professional is a constellation of concepts, meanings, and practices that span domains of communication, including home, work, and broader public life. In fact, the professional and its relationship to various life arenas is a subject of significant attention in a particular domain of public life: popular culture. The classic film *The Great Santini* (1979) depicts the interrelation of work and home when a kind of professional manner (in this case, a hypermasculine, ultrabureaucratic military style) spills over into family life. Even more recently, we find "lessons" about professionalism, teamwork, and market competition in the so-called reality television shows such as *Survivor* (Burnett & Parsons, 2000–2007; see Thackaberry, 2003). Of course, these are just two of countless examples of professional representations to be found in film, literature, video games, news coverage, and so forth. At least in part due to "disciplined" tendencies, however, scholars in communication subfields have remained fairly silent about the relationship between organizational life and larger public realms of communication. For instance, organizational and interpersonal communication scholars have taken interest in the professional but have scarcely examined popular culture, whereas scholars of rhetoric and cultural studies have emphasized popular culture but have rarely shown concern for constructions of work *per se*.

Here, we wish to underscore the broad utility of scholars from various subdisciplines studying representations of the professional in popular culture. To a significant extent, others have already made the supporting case. Advocating the meeting of organizational communication and cultural studies, for example, Carlone and Taylor (1998) argue that organizational scholars have overwhelmingly approached culture as a phenomenon located in physical sites of work—for example, the culture of National Aeronautics and Space Administration or The Body Shop. They suggest expanding the usual scope to include multiple articulations of culture and

organization, such as how organizational discourse influences larger cultural trends, or perhaps more pertinent to our point here, how popular discourse organizes work identities and relations.

Sociological, economic, and family and consumer studies have already begun to call our attention to the professional in popular culture by addressing such specific themes as cultural perceptions and uses of time, the public devaluing of domestic life relative to work, the associated "second shift" experienced by many women and some men (see especially Hochschild, 1983, 1989, 1997, 2003), and the effects of rampant images of professional and material success on families and individuals (e.g., the documentary film *Affluenza*, 1997). Notions of success and achievement are negotiated by individuals and groups amid powerful cultural images. In principle, this is nothing new, in that the Horatio Alger stories of the 19th century imprinted on the public mind an enduring tale of individual possibility and responsibility. Today, however, the mass communicative space is replete with images—many imbued with strong class, race, and gender implications, as elaborated below—of how professional people should look, act, and market themselves to get ahead.

Within organizational communication studies, some scholars teach and conduct research on quality of work life, work-home relationships, and related cultural trends (e.g., Buzzanell, 1997; Edley, 2001; Kirby & Krone, 2002; Sias & Cahill, 1997; Zorn, 1995). Such projects range from considerations of specific organizational policies to the impact of workplace restructuring on friendships to broader cultural understandings of work-home relationships. Although popular culture often occupies a peripheral place in these investigations (see Medved & Kirby, 2005, for an exception), many of them grapple to some degree with popular notions of careers, work relationships, and success. A few organizational communication scholars have commenced more direct study of popular culture, examining representations of work and professionalism in self-help and popular management literatures (Holmer-Nadesan & Trethewey, 2000; Zorn, Page, & Cheney, 2000), museum exhibits (Taylor, 1997), historical mail-order magazines (Triece, 1999), currently popular magazines and Web sites (Cheney, Ritz, & Lair, in press), films (Ashcraft & Flores, 2003), and television programs (Lair, 2007). Such studies provide useful precedent in bridging particular workplace manifestations of professionalism and broader cultural currents. In some cases, we may even find traceable popular influences on professional norms and practices in the workplace, as when films, television programs, and books become points of reference in formal training programs, informal member conversations, and in blogs by various professional groups (Lair, 2007).

In a particularly inventive project, Holmer-Nadesan and Trethewey (2000) merge an analysis of the professional self-help literature for women with in-depth interviews, exploring how actual women internalize and resist popular messages as they fashion their own professional identities. This study is exemplary in its reach across levels and domains of communication—macro- and microdiscourse, popular culture, and interpersonal performance. Another promising move entails a reach across time to track historical transformations in discourses of professionalism amid

shifting political economies and labor arrangements (e.g., Bederman, 1995; Jacques, 1996; Kimmel, 1996; Rotundo, 1993). Together, these studies remind us not only of the need to cross disciplinary, spatial, and temporal boundaries in researching the representation of the professional but also to consider how diverse influences (from popular culture and family socialization, peer groups, trade education, employers, professional associations, and so on) interact to shape what is normative and acceptable. Importantly, these studies also reveal how the study of representation in popular culture is not relegated to the world of symbol and myth but rather can contribute to the materially conscious communicative approach developed in the preceding section. Many of the works reviewed here, for example, demonstrate how popular images (a) arise in response to historical, cultural, political, and economic exigencies; (b) use corporeal substance as their primary materials; and (c) offer up frameworks and vocabularies by which actual people craft "work-able" selves and find substantial comfort, anxiety, pride, and shame (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004). We urge studies that deepen our understanding of these connections rather than analyzing representations in a material vacuum.

#### **"Doing" professional: Studies of the enactment of the professional in mundane interaction**

In addition to studying mediated representations of popular culture, we propose the sustained study of the professional in mundane motion—that is, how "real" people navigate the cultural codes of professionalism in everyday life or how they respond in daily interaction across various contexts to institutionalized expectations for professional demeanor. We can envision diverse sites of performance emerging as relevant here: the usual professional workplaces, of course, but also work sites and jobs not typically deemed professional, wherein members nonetheless strive for professional conduct and status. Consider also relations among family and friends, as well as other, less predictable settings of organizing (think, for instance, of self-presentation in "singles" forums, from online dating services to bar scenes designed to facilitate romantic pairings among professionals). We recognize that varied sites are likely to reflect specific cultural twists on larger social discourses of the professional; hence, this line of inquiry requires particular sensitivity to institutional and contextual variation. In this sense, we are suggesting an ethnomethodology of sorts—the study of how people "do" professional in light of situated norms (e.g., West & Zimmerman, 1987). Again, scholars from multiple subdisciplines could productively contribute to such research; interpersonal, organizational, and health communication scholars, as well as many rhetoricians, seem especially well suited to the effort.

This branch of research stems from a neo-Weberian (Weber, 1978) take on professionalism, which emphasizes organizational member roles vis-à-vis developing institutional structures, not only those of bureaucratic contexts (and all their pros and cons) but also more broadly in terms of how individuals become linked to the attainment of socially sanctioned expertise or "expert" status. This notion of expertise largely rules out intuition, emotion, and individual idiosyncrasy. Crafted as



serious business, the role of such an expert inspires confidence when it is clearly defined, ritually upheld, and divorced from the personal whims that could cast suspicion on the expert's "rational" performance. Such a conception of professional expertise carries further, and into social aspects of performance, Weber's idea of the office holder who faithfully fulfills his duties and grounds decisions not only in training and education but also in clear regard for the broadest values of the organization and publics being served (du Gay, 1996). As Hochschild (1983) documented so well, the rationalization of work in this way requires a general proscription against the strong show of emotion while allowing for certain, usually mild emotional performances directly linked to job performance (the latter she terms "emotion labor"; see also, Planalp, 1999; Tracy, 2000). In their formulation of "bounded emotionality" as an alternative mode of organizing, Mumby and Putnam (1992) showed how organization theory, particularly the timeless construct of bounded rationality, bolsters the common model of professional expertise by disregarding emotionality as a legitimate basis for forming organizational relations and making decisions.

What we wish to underscore here is that—whether one is a marked expert or a layperson, part of a professional, semiprofessional, or nonprofessional class—the professional nevertheless indexes a set of communicative and stylistic expectations, and the term is frequently invoked in conversation in just this way. The imperative to "be professional" is often expressed by a superior to a subordinate or by a meeting facilitator, but it may be communicated as well between peers. In a manner parallel to the injunction "be rational," the insistence on professional comportment immediately (re)frames the interaction, and any attendant decisions or actions, as ones where spontaneity, emotionality, and individuality are to be suppressed. Indeed, the invocation of professional behavior is used to control the behaviors of many persons who would not otherwise be coded as professionals, as in the case of customer service representatives required to be warm and pleasant, yet cool, calm, collected, and above all, detached.

On a wider societal level, this style has been called by one social historian "American cool" (Stearns, 1994). It can also entail an apolitical stance, as Schmidt (2000) argued, for part of acting professionally can become *de facto* support for the status quo and a desire to avoid dissent or even the appearance of questioning. Importantly, these expectations often apply to the growing ranks of temporary workers, even in cases where job attachment and identification with the employing organization are understandably low (Gossett, 2002). In his powerful and controversial work comparing U.S. work relationships in the 1990s and 1970s, Sennett (1998) argued that the general aura of workforce contingency had come to mean that individuals were less committed not only to their employing organizations but also to each other, as manifested in weaker social bonds, passing nods to ethics at work, and increased superficiality in interaction. What is often seen as "mere style," then, has important political implications in terms of social reproduction, both symbolically and in relation to materiality, and more specifically, in terms of race, class, and gender relations.

In sum, the professional operates colloquially to reference a mode of communication thought applicable to all kinds of labor activity. It appears that one can behave more and less professionally (and therefore more or less legitimately) in the conduct of all work, regardless of formal occupational status. Arguably, this articulation of professionalism dominates the popular mind (Maister, 1997). We see the power of this sense of professionalism in many venues, ranging from popular culture to everyday interaction to social structure. For example, *The Apprentice* (2004–2007) television series with billionaire Donald Trump prescribes a model of professional success through aggressive and strategic issue management, yet minimizes or compartmentalizes ethics with catchy slogans and stereotypical snippets of interaction (cf. Cheney et al., in press; Lair, 2007; and Lair, Sullivan, & Cheney, 2005). In the previous section, we called for the concentrated investigation of such popular representations. Here, we have stressed the focused study of how real people (as opposed to fictional, mediated, or otherwise manipulated characters) interpret and respond to such images as they maneuver their bodies through the complex situations of everyday life. Of course, scholars may find creative ways to combine these levels and sites of study while also engaging a third line of inquiry, to which we now turn our attention (as in Holmer-Nadesan & Trethewey, 2000).

### **Politicizing professional: Critical studies of professional bodies, practices, and symbolism**

A third research trajectory entails studies that critically read the political subtexts of professional subjects, with an eye for relations of power and, specifically, intersections among gender, race, class, and other discourses of difference (hereafter referenced as intersectionality). We contend that studying the dynamics of intersectionality "at work" in professional discourse offers an especially powerful means of empirically developing the materially conscious communicative approach theorized here while redressing common criticisms of the abstract and/or the disembodied texture of much critical (organization) theory (see Tsoukas & Kundsén, 2003). Moreover, because so many critical communication scholars declare increasing interest in intersectionality, we find this third line of inquiry especially promising as a means of traversing the usual boundaries of subfields in our discipline.

We begin by arguing that the professional is in many respects constituted by intersecting discourses of difference; yet, the professional label functions to suppress or deny such political influences and thus serves as a carrier of organizational, occupational, and social inequalities. In other words, despite its often-apolitical appearance, the professional is a deeply political formation that can simultaneously coordinate and deny divisions and hierarchies of labor based on gender, sexuality, race, nation, class, and their complex intermingling. Three key claims ground this proposal. First, we argue that categories of labor and laboring bodies are generally configured—coded and evaluated—in terms of discourses of difference. For illustration purposes, our initial examples highlight gender and sexuality discourses. As suggested in our earlier formulation of the relationship between language and

materiality, the body performing labor is salient to the cultural perception and appraisal of work—a point foreshadowed by the classic analysis of “sex and skill” by Phillips and Taylor (1980). Consider the entrenched social construction of white- and blue-collar work as mental and manual labor, respectively. Scholars have explored how working-class subjects are aligned with a kind of raw, primal masculinity—with hard, hands-on work performed by dirty, sweaty, muscled bodies, exuding an unabashed brand of heterosexuality (e.g., Collinson, 1988; Gherardi, 1995; Gibson & Papa, 2000; Willis, 1977). Against this traditionally masculine backdrop, professional figures tend to emerge as refined masculine subjects who reign in bodily excess to perform the higher order work of the mind (Ashcraft & Flores, 2003).

Moreover, the masculine coding of labor classes plays off the feminization of certain jobs. For instance, the professions are often construed in contrast to the natural skills involved in “women’s work,” whereas jobs that are feminized and/or dominated by women are more likely to remain nonprofessional or, at best, to achieve the status of “semiprofessional” labor (Hearn, 1982). Many service jobs fall into this category, including, for example, administrative assistants. Put simply, collars come in assorted colors, and the devaluing of “pink-collar” work serves to shore up the worth of both white- and blue-collar labor. As Acker (1990) insightfully observed, “Individual men and particular groups of men do not always win in these processes, but masculinity always seems to symbolize self-respect for men at the bottom and power for men at the top, while confirming for both their gender’s superiority.” Remarkable over time is the persistent and apparently global coding of many jobs by gender, as well as the predictable (though also variable) correlation of these markers with disparities in social status, material reward, and political influence. Abundant scholarships document the gender segregation of jobs, key symbolic and material consequences, and the experience of token members who dare to cross gendered occupational lines (for an extensive review, see Ashcraft, 2006).

Importantly, cultural images of worker bodies do not implicate only class and gender; these images are profoundly raced as well (Ashcraft & Flores, 2003), often mirroring the pervasive racial segregation of labor. Although people of color have long been concentrated in jobs deemed menial and invisible (e.g., Rogers & Henson, 1997; Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993), communication scholars have only begun to consider the intersection of race and work (Ashcraft & Allen, 2003). We believe the systematic study of how claims to professionalism rest on overt contrast with and tacit support from feminized and racialized semi- or nonprofessional labor is a crucial component of politicizing the professional.

The second central claim of this section goes a bit further to say that discourses of differences are often key players in the *production*, not merely maintenance, of occupational identity (Ashcraft, 2007a). Here, we bring a critical communicative spin to the sociological research reviewed earlier: namely, the study of how occupational groups vie to construct and secure their own interests. We (re)frame professionalization as a fundamentally rhetorical process because the identity and status

of any job is not given or determined but is rather a precarious, contested formation constantly negotiated through discursive activity (e.g., Witz, 1990, 1992). The gendered and raced segregation of labor classes noted above sparks the question of *how* occupations come to assume particular profiles in the first place, as well as whether and how gender and race become players in that process over time. The second author's current research agenda addresses precisely these questions, for example, tracing how various U.S. aviation industry stakeholders in the 1920s and 1930s strategically and effectively manipulated gender and race discourse to craft commercial airline pilots as a new class of elite professionals (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004; Ashcraft, 2007b). Such case studies demonstrate what early theories of job segregation (e.g., Hearn, 1982; Phillips & Taylor, 1980) hinted: that gender and race function as central mechanisms for defining and achieving professional privilege, not merely as an antecedent or byproduct of professionalization.

Davies (1996) makes this point from a different angle in her recent call for theorizing the relation between gender and profession. Drawing on insights from gendered critiques of bureaucracy (e.g., Acker, 1990; Savage & Witz, 1992), she proposes an alternative to the usual scholarly focus on women struggling to enter and gain legitimacy in the professions. At issue, she claims, is much more than the exclusion of women from certain areas of work and levels of reward. Inclusion is of equal importance, for women have long served as silent partners in professionalism, "a conceptual frame that requires, but denies it requires, the Other." Davies contends that professional practice has always depended on feminized adjunct labor in ill-defined, non- or semiprofessional support roles. In this sense, professionalization is a gendered notion and process, entailing "a specific historical and cultural construction of masculinity" (p. 661) and, we would add, of other differences as well. Seen in this light, for instance, it is noteworthy that race appears in the organizational communication literature primarily in terms of the struggles of people of color to succeed in professional work (Ashcraft & Allen, 2003). The parallel to Davies' (1996) argument is striking: The focus on professional racial exclusion ignores the matter of silent inclusion. In short, people of color have long occupied a strong presence in the labor force, although they are often concentrated in jobs classified as low skill and low wage (e.g., Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993). Professional work—in actual practice and popular representation—is (re)produced in contrast with these jobs, and professional encounters and images simultaneously depend on and yet obscure the performance of the so-called menial tasks. Extending Davies' work, we suspect that claims to masculinity and whiteness remain crucial in persuading the public of professional entitlement, even as the racial codes have become more difficult to trace.

This discussion leads to our third key point: As hinted in the preceding two sections, we contend that dominant cultural, institutional codes of professional demeanor reflect gendered, raced, classed, and heterosexual visions of national identity. Many authors have noted the class and gender biases of professional norms (e.g., Deetz & Mumby, 1990; Marshall, 1989, 1993; Murphy & Zorn, 1996). From their

review of organizational communication texts, Ashcraft and Allen (2003) derive the following common profile of professional interaction:

acts with restrained civility and decorum; wears a convincing shell of calmness, objectivity, and impersonality; thinks in abstract, linear, strategic—in a word, “rational”—terms; covers the body in conservative, mainstream attire; keeps bodied processes (e.g., emotionality, spontaneity, sexuality) in check; has promising, upwardly mobile career track; derives primary identity and fulfillment from occupation and work accomplishments; speaks standard English; and so on. (p. 27)

Although this characterization is undoubtedly the product of an array of influences, it captures a common image that carries strong normative force in the United States and some other industrialized societies. Ashcraft and Allen add that this profile is commonly described as an “American” way of doing business, which implies that there are few “Americans” who do not speak this monolithic code. Yet, a brief glance at the profile suggests that “doing” professional is at least as much (if not more) about performing whiteness as it is about enacting gender or national identity. Ashcraft and Allen point to work such as that of Brookhiser (1997), who traces the ideal of an industrious, goal-oriented, instrumental, and ever-driven self to the evolution of U.S. White, middle-class culture.

To be clear, it is not our claim that gender, race, class, and other political dimensions are always or equally relevant to cultural or national expressions of the professional. Instead, we mean to say that they are often entangled in predictable as well as unpredictable ways and that close study of when, how, why, and to what ends these discourses interact is a vital collaborative endeavor for critical scholars across areas of communication research. Ultimately, then, we argue that the professional is a productive nexus, or organizing construct, around which to deepen our understanding of intersectionality at work.

In particular, we find that the contrast of professional with unprofessional parallels the social construction of “civilized” against “primitive.” Historically, the primitive–civilized dialectic has supplied a symbolic underpinning for constructions of difference and privilege along various lines, yielding “natural” logics for relations of colonization (e.g., Bederman, 1995; Torgovnik, 1990). To develop and summarize the proposal of this section, we thus conclude by suggesting that the civilized–primitive dialectic serves (a) as a primary way in which many so-called developed societies distinguish types of work, workers, and behaviors and, simultaneously, (b) as a means of interweaving labor hierarchies based on class, race, sexuality, gender, and nation. Hence, we suggest that the dialectic can also serve as an analytic guide to exposing and strategically transforming intersectionality in the arena of labor identities and relations. For example, analyzing a surge of films portraying angst among professional men, Ashcraft and Flores (2003) demonstrate how the dialectic of civilized and primitive can yield useful insight into political relations latent in professional discourse, especially as the dialectic functions to organize work and workers

simultaneously and flexibly in terms of race, class, gender, and sexuality, yet maintain deniability of those terms. In fact, extending the dialectic to the earlier part of this section, we can begin to see how the civilized refinement of the professions is often achieved by way of contrast with the "natural" (i.e., instinctual and unsophisticated) skills of the so-called women's work or the "primitive" (i.e., uneducated and physically potent) bodies of some lower-class Whites and many people of color. Similarly, the restrained tenor of professional deportment is achieved through contrast with the "irrational," "excessive," and "emotional" (i.e., primal) modes of communication often aligned with White women and people of color. If tangible forms of professional exclusion rest on shifting discursive contrasts cloaked as appropriate civilized-primitive relations, critical scholars might do well to consider how tangible inclusion may require discursive savvy in reconfiguring the dialectic (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004). Thus, untangling social constructions and material manifestations of the relations among primitive, civilized, and professional may prove an especially promising path toward understanding and transforming intersectionality at work (Allen, 2004; Ashcraft & Allen, 2003; Cheney, 2000).

In this way, critical studies of the professional can inform not only organizational but also interpersonal group and health communication research, as well as rhetorical and critical-cultural studies. For instance, the decidedly apolitical nature of most interpersonal and group research can be challenged by attention to the ways in which professional style patterns are bound up with history, culture, and power. Usually framed in localized terms, models of interpersonal and group interaction at work (e.g., superior-subordinate relations, friendships, and teams) can be couched in terms of broader societal formations. Health communication scholars routinely examine tensions among physicians, nurses, and administrators, yet rarely weigh the political and cultural subtext of these dynamics. Legal communication scholars, including those interested in alternative dispute resolution, are obviously interested in issues of professionalism and perceived legitimacy of persons, processes, and outcomes—often influenced by aspects of difference. There can be little doubt that rhetorical and critical-cultural communication scholars have led the way in studying intersectionality to date; yet, scholars in these areas have largely neglected the professional, despite its prominent presence in cultural representation. Finally, we see great potential in the rising work on communication and globalization across subdisciplines, particularly in comparative political analyses of the development of professional networks and identities across national and regional contexts.

### **Conclusion: The "discipline" of the professional**

It has been our aim in this essay to outline a fresh, timely, and promising area of inquiry for communication analysis. First, we showed how a traditionally sociological area of study calls for a complementary investigation from the standpoint of communication. Drawing on sociological lessons, we articulated a communicative stance enriched by attention to the symbolic-material relationship. Finally, we

outlined three research directions that we find especially promising for investigating the symbolic–material relationship and for developing a fertile communication literature on the professional that summons scholars across often-divided subfields.

Of course, ironic readings of our efforts in this essay are also possible. For instance, parallel to an ongoing debate in critical whiteness and masculinity studies (e.g., Flores & Moon, 2002; Projansky & Ono, 1999; Robinson, 2000), some critics may rightly question whether this essay functions to recenter professional, managerial, and administrative subjects at a time when matters long sidelined by this bias are finally finding a significant presence in the literature, manifest in such recent projects as the examination of work pride and inner determination (*sisu*, as used by Finnish coal miners in the upper midwestern United States) in marginalized narratives of occupational experience by Lucas and Buzzanell (2004). In fact, it is *because* we perceive the reification of professionalism and the professional colonization of other kinds of work and workers as a legitimate danger—in current lay, occupational, and scholarly practices—that we have sought to foster a sustained critical consciousness about the professional. We therefore accept the risk of reification and underscore this point: Crucial to our agenda is an insistent spirit of curiosity that interrogates when, where, how, and with what consequences the professional is taken for granted; communicative inquiry that dulls this critical edge will not likely contribute the sort of novel, provocative voice called for here.

Throughout the essay, we have played with “the professional” and its many variants, arguing that in its rich ambiguities are the grounds for understanding a great deal about contemporary identity and interaction, in and beyond the bounds of work. Although sociological studies of the professional have emphasized the three historical, political, and institutional developments noted earlier—the division of labor in modern society, legitimized classes or networks of experts, and communal ties of ethical obligation—a communication-oriented analysis brings to light the fundamentally rhetorical character of these ongoing formations, as well as other consequential meanings and functions of the professional: inventing or coding a kind of activity and work or worker; indexing, expressing, and evoking modes of performance; producing, maintaining, and (de)valuing occupational networks; and facilitating, yet obscuring intersectionality at work. With its rich awareness of the structural, material, and bodily conditions of work, sociology can hold communication accountable to phenomena it has long neglected. Simultaneously, communication’s insights regarding the power of the symbolic can challenge sociological approaches to consider how classes and relations of labor emerge in discourse—how “mere” labels, metaphors, and narratives evolve and function persuasively and consequentially in everyday practice and scholarship.

Ultimately, our goal is to set a stage for further studies of professionalism within communication studies, including reflexivity about the application of an analysis of professionalism to our own activities, relationships, and academic selves. As organizational communication scholars, we in fact belong to a professional community at once preoccupied with professional subjects, yet largely unconscious about the

ironies associated with our own studies and conduct. Indeed, the behavioral constraints as well as the prevailing images of discipline-as-scholarly community are bound up with the constraints and images of discipline as a broader feature of industrialized society, in the Foucault (1984) sense of the term. At our own conferences, professional rituals have certain implicit models of dress, decorum, conversation, and hierarchical standards—which are best seen when violated (Pacanowsky, 1988). Although some of these norms have “loosened up” in recent years, they still circumscribe a great deal of interaction within communication and the academy, and a notable example is the standard of being cool under fire, which applies not only to situations of professional challenge (like exchanges following paper presentations) but also to the downplaying of personal trauma for colleagues during difficult periods in one’s life. Nevertheless, professionalism has been almost universally valenced as positive, without recognition of its blind spots and associated forms of suppression. We thus find the ambiguity and multiple meanings surrounding professionalism to be productive for the study of the professional as a subject within our work as well as a subject of our work.

### Acknowledgments

An earlier draft of this article was presented at the Annual Conference of the National Communicational Association, Miami Beach, November 2003. We are grateful to the anonymous reviewers and especially to former Associate Editor Katherine Miller and Editor François Cooren for guidance in reformulating this essay.

### References

- Abbott, A. (1988). *The system of professions: An essay on the division of expert labor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. *Gender & Society*, 4, 139–158.
- Allen, B. J. (2004). *Difference matters: Communicating social identity*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Ashcraft, K. L. (2000). Empowering “professional” relationships: Organizational communication meets feminist practice. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 13, 347–392.
- Ashcraft, K. L. (2006). Back to work: Sights/sites of difference in gender and organizational communication studies. In B. J. Dow & J. T. Wood (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of gender and communication* (pp. 97–122). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ashcraft, K. L. (2007a). Appreciating the “work” of discourse: Occupational identity and difference as organizing mechanisms in the case of commercial airline pilots. *Discourse & Communication*, 1, 9–36.
- Ashcraft, K. L. (2007b). *Cockpit character: Discourse, difference, and the development of occupational identity*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.
- Ashcraft, K. L., & Allen, B. J. (2003). The racial foundation of organizational communication. *Communication Theory*, 13, 5–38.



- Ashcraft, K. L., & Flores, L. A. (2003). "Slaves with white collars": Persistent performances of masculinity in crisis. *Text & Performance Quarterly*, 23, 1–29.
- Ashcraft, K. L., & Mumby, D. K. (2004). *Reworking gender: A feminist communicology of organization*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Averett, S., & Korenman, S. (1996). The economic reality of the beauty myth. *Journal of Human Resources*, 31, 304–330.
- Barker, J. R. (Ed.). (2006). Forum on organizational discourse. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 19, 635–666.
- Barker, J. R., & Cheney, G. (1994). The concept and practices of discipline in contemporary organizational life. *Communication Monographs*, 61, 19–43.
- Barley, S. R., & Kunda, G. K. (2001). Bringing work back in. *Organization Science*, 12, 76–95.
- Barnard, C. I. (1968). *The functions of the executive* (30th anniversary ed.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Original work published 1938)
- Baudrillard, J. (1980). *For a critique of the political economy of the sign*. London: Telos Press.
- Bederman, G. (1995). *Manliness & civilization: A cultural history of gender and race in the United States, 1880–1917*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Boyton, L. A. (2002). Professionalism and social responsibility: Foundations of public relations ethics. In W. B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 26* (pp. 230–265). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Brookhiser, R. (1997). The way of the WASP. In R. Delgado & J. Stefancic (Eds.), *Critical white studies* (pp. 16–23). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Brown, R. H. (1977). *A poetic for sociology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bullis, C., Cheney, G., & Kendall, B. E. (2007). *Taking the environment seriously in organizational communication*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Utah.
- Burke, K. (1969a). *A grammar of motives*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Original work published 1945)
- Burke, K. (1969b). *A rhetoric of motives*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Original work published 1950)
- Burnett, M., & Parsons, C. (Producers). (2000–2007). *Survivor* [Television series]. New York: CBS.
- Burnett, M., & Trump, D. (Producers). (2004–2007). *The Apprentice* [Television series]. New York: NBC.
- Buzzanell, P. (1994). Gaining a voice: Feminist organizational communication theorizing. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 7, 339–383.
- Buzzanell, P. (1997). Toward an emotion-based feminist framework for research on dual career couples. *Women and Language*, 20(2), 40–48.
- Buzzanell, P. M. (Ed.). (2000). *Rethinking organizational and managerial communication from feminist perspectives*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Carlone, D., & Taylor, B. C. (1998). Organizational communication and cultural studies: A review essay. *Communication Theory*, 8, 337–367.
- Cheney, G. (2000). Thinking "differently" about organizational communication: Why, how and where? [Forum]. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 14, 132–141.
- Cheney, G., Christensen, L. T., Zorn, T. E., Jr., & Ganesh, S. (2004). *Organizational communication in an age of globalization: Issues, reflections and practices*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

- Cheney, G., & Cloud, D. L. (2006). Doing democracy, engaging the material: Employee participation and labor activity in an age of market globalization. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *19*, 501–540.
- Cheney, G., Ritz, D., & Lair, D. J. (in press). *Just a job? Communication, ethics, and professional life*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cheney, G., Zorn, T. E., Jr., Planalp, S., & Lair, D. J. (in press). Organizational communication engages the meaning of work. In C. Beck (Ed.), *Communication yearbook* 32. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ciulla, J. (2000). *The working life*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Clair, R. P. (1996). The political nature of the colloquialism, "a real job": Implications for organizational socialization. *Communication Monographs*, *63*, 249–267.
- Cloud, D. L. (2001). Laboring under the sign of the new: Cultural studies, organizational communication, and the fallacy of the new economy. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *15*, 268–278.
- Cloud, D. L. (2005). Fighting words: Labor and the limits of communication at Staley, 1993 to 1996. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *18*, 509–542.
- Collinson, D. L. (1988). "Engineering humour": Masculinity, joking, and conflict in shop-floor relations. *Organization Studies*, *9*, 181–199.
- Cooren, F. (2004). Textual agency: How texts do things in organizational settings. *Organization*, *11*, 373–393.
- Cooren, F., Taylor, J.R., & van Every, E. (Eds.). (2006). *Communication and organizing: Empirical and theoretical approaches to the dynamic of text and conversation*. Cresskill, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Crane, D. (1972). *Invisible colleges*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Davies, C. (1996). The sociology of professions and the profession of gender. *Journal of the British Sociological Association*, *30*, 661–678.
- Deetz, S., & Mumby, D. K. (1990). Power, discourse, and the workplace: Reclaiming the critical tradition. *Communication Yearbook*, *13*, 18–47.
- De Graaf, J., & Boe, V. (Producers). (1997). *Affluenza* [Television documentary]. Seattle, OR: KCTS and Oregon Public Broadcasting.
- Denhardt, R. B. (1981). *In the shadow of organization*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Diener, E. (2006, November 2). *The causes and consequences of happiness*. Lecture at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City.
- Drucker, P. (1992). The new society of organizations. *Harvard Business Review*, 95–104.
- du Gay, P. (1996). Organizing identity: Entrepreneurial governance and public management. In S. Hall & P. du Gay (Eds.), *Questions of cultural identity* (pp. 151–169). London: Sage.
- Durkheim, E. (1964). *The division of labor in society*. New York: The Free Press.
- Durkheim, E. (1996). *Professional ethics and civic morals*. London: Routledge.
- Edley, P. (2001). Technology, employed mothers, and corporate colonization of the lifeworld: A gendered paradox of work and family balance. *Women and Language*, *24*, 28–35.
- Edley, P. (2003). Entrepreneurial mothers' balance of work and family: Discursive constructions of time, mothering, and identity. In P. M. Buzzanell, H. Sterk, & L. Turner (Eds.), *Gender in applied communication contexts* (pp. 255–275). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ellul, J. (1964). *The technological society*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Empson, W. (1947). *The 7 types of ambiguity*. New York: New Directions.

- Flores, L. A., & Moon, D. G. (2002). Rethinking race, revealing dilemmas: Imagining a new racial subject in *Race Traitor*. *Western Journal of Communication*, *66*, 181–207.
- Foucault, M. (1984). P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault reader*. New York: Pantheon.
- Galbraith, J. K. (1978). *The new industrial state* (3rd ed.). Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Galtung, J. (2006, June). Keynote address to the International Peace Research Association, Calgary, Canada.
- Gherardi, S. (1995). *Gender, symbolism, and organizational cultures*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Gibson, M. K., & Papa, M. J. (2000). The mud, the blood, and the beer guys: Organizational osmosis in blue-collar work groups. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *28*, 66–86.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gill, R. E. (2004). *Metaphors for work and "non-work."* Unpublished manuscript, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.
- Gossett, L. M. (2002). Kept at arm's length: Questioning the organizational desirability of member identification. *Communication Monographs*, *69*, 385–404.
- Hawes, L. C. (1974). Social collectivities as communication. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *60*, 497–502.
- Hearn, J. (1982). Notes on patriarchy: Professionalization and the semi-professions. *Sociology*, *16*, 184–202.
- Hearn, J., Sheppard, D., Tancred-Sheriff, P., & Burrell, G. (Eds.). (1989). *The sexuality of organization*. London: Sage.
- Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The managed heart*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hochschild, A. R. (1989). *The second shift*. New York: Avon Books.
- Hochschild, A. R. (1997). *The time bind: When work becomes home and home becomes work*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Hochschild, A. R. (2003). *The commercialization of intimate life: Notes from home and work*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Holmer-Nadesan, M., & Trethewey, A. (2000). Performing the enterprising subject: Gendered strategies for success (?). *Text and Performance Quarterly*, *20*, 223–250.
- Hummel, R. G. (1994). *The bureaucratic experience: A critique of life in the modern organization* (4th ed.). New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Jacques, R. (1996). *Manufacturing the employee: Management knowledge from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries*. London: Sage.
- Kimmel, M. (1996). *Manhood in America: A cultural history*. New York: Free Press.
- Kirby, E., Golden, A., Medved, C., Jorgensen, J., & Buzzanell, P. (2003). An organizational communication challenge to the discourse of work and family research: From problematics to empowerment. *Communication Yearbook*, *27*, 1–44.
- Kirby, E. L., & Krone, K. J. (2002). "The policy exists but you can't really use it": Communication and the structuration of work-family policies. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *30*(1), 50–77.
- Kondo, D. (1990). *Crafting selves: Power, gender, and discourse in a Japanese workplace*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kuhn, T. R. (2006). A "demented work ethic" and a "lifestyle firm": Discourse, identity, and workplace time commitments. *Organization Studies*, *27*, 1339–1358.

- Kultgren, J. (1988). *Ethics and professionalism*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Lair, D. (2004, May). *A rhetorical history of the term "white collar."* Unpublished manuscript, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.
- Lair, D. (2007). "Survivor for business people": *A critical-rhetorical engagement of The Apprentice as popular management discourse*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.
- Lair, D. J., Sullivan, K., & Cheney, G. (2005). Marketization and the recasting of the professional self: The rhetoric and ethics of personal branding. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 18, 307–343.
- Lammers, J. C., & Geist, P. (1997). The transformation of caring in the light and shadow of "managed care." *Health Communication*, 9, 45–60.
- Larson, M. S. (1977). *The rise of professionalism: A sociological analysis*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Latour, B. (1993). *We have never been modern*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lucas, K., & Buzzanell, P. M. (2004). Blue-collar work, career, and success: Occupational narratives of *sisu*. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 32, 273–292.
- Macdonald, K. M. (1995). *The sociology of the professions*. London: Sage.
- Maister, D. H. (1997). *True professionalism*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Marshall, J. (1989). Re-visioning career concepts: A feminist invitation. In M. B. Arthur, D. T. Hall, & B. S. Lawrence (Eds.), *Handbook of career theory* (pp. 275–291). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Marshall, J. (1993). Viewing organizational communication from a feminist perspective: A critique and some offerings. In S. A. Deetz (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 16* (pp. 122–143). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Marx, K. (1977). *Capital, Vol. 1* (B. Fowkes, Trans.) New York: Vintage. (Original work published 1887).
- May, W. F. (2001). *Beleaguered rulers*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Know Press.
- McGee, M. C. (1990). Text, context, and the fragmentation of contemporary culture. *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, 54, 274–289.
- McKerrow, R. R. (1989). Critical rhetoric: Theory and praxis. *Communication Monographs*, 56, 91–111.
- Medved, C. E., & Kirby, E. L. (2005). Family CEOs: A feminist analysis of corporate mothering discourses. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 18, 435–478.
- Miller, D. L., & Joe, J. R. (1993). Employment barriers and work motivation for Navajo rehabilitation clients. *International Journal of Rehabilitation Research*, 16, 107–117.
- Miller, K. I. (1998). The evolution of professional identity: The case of osteopathic medicine. *Social Science and Medicine*, 47, 1739–1748.
- Mumby, D. K., & Putnam, L. L. (1992). The politics of emotion: A feminist reading of bounded rationality. *Academy of Management Review*, 17, 465–486.
- Murphy, B. O., & Zorn, T. (1996). Gendered interaction in professional relationships. In J. T. Wood (Ed.), *Gendered relationships* (pp. 213–232). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.
- Orr, C. J. (1978). How shall we say: "Reality is socially constructed through communication?" *Communication Studies*, 29, 263–274.
- Pacanowsky, M. E. (1988). Slouching towards Chicago. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 74, 453–467.

- Pelz, D. C., & Andrews, F. M. (1976). *Scientists in organizations* (Rev. ed.). Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan.
- Perrucci, R., Anderson, R. M., Schendel, D. E., & Tractman, L. E. (1980). Whistle-blowing: Professionals' resistance to organizational authority. *Social Problems*, 28, 149–167.
- Phillips, A., & Taylor, B. (1980). Sex and skill: Notes toward a feminist economics. *Feminist Review*, 6, 79–88.
- Planalp, S. (1999). *Communicating emotion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Pratt, C. A. (Producer). (1979). *The Great Santini* [Motion picture]. United States: Warner Brothers.
- Projansky, S., & Ono, K. A. (1999). Strategic whiteness as cinematic racial politics. In T. K. Nakayama & J. N. Martin (Eds.), *Whiteness: The communication of social identity* (pp. 149–174). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Putnam, L. L., & Boys, S. (2006). Revisiting metaphors of organizational communication. In S. Clegg, C. Hardy, T. B. Lawrence, & W. R. Nord (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of organizational studies* (pp. 541–576). London: Sage.
- Putnam, L. L., & Pacanowsky, M. E. (1983). *Organizational communication: An interpretive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Putnam, L. L., Phillips, N., & Chapman, P. (1996). Metaphors of communication and organization. In S. R. Clegg, C. Hardy, & W. R. Nord (Eds.), *Handbook of organization studies* (pp. 375–408). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rice, R. E., & Gattiker, U. E. (2001). New media and organizational structuring. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication* (pp. 544–584). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Robinson, S. (2000). *Marked men: White masculinity in crisis*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Rogers, J. K., & Henson, K. D. (1997). "Hey, why don't you wear a shorter skirt?" Structural vulnerability and the organization of sexual harassment in temporary clerical employment. *Gender & Society*, 11, 215–237.
- Roszak, T. (1986). *The cult of information*. New York: Pantheon.
- Rotundo, E. A. (1993). *American manhood: Transformations in masculinity from the revolution to the modern era*. New York: Basic Books.
- Russell, R. (1996, November). *On participation in organizations*. Keynote at a preconference on organizational democracy, annual meeting of the National Communication Association, San Diego, CA.
- Savage, M., & Witz, A. (Eds.). (1992). *Gender and bureaucracy*. Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell/The Sociological Review.
- Schmidt, J. (2000). *Disciplined minds*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Sennett, R. (1998). *The corrosion of character*. New York: Norton.
- Sher, S. (Producer). (2000). *Erin Brockovich* [Motion picture]. United States: Universal Pictures.
- Sias, P. M., & Cahill, D. J. (1997). From coworkers to friends: The development of peer friendships in the workplace. *Western Journal of Communication*, 62, 273–299.
- Stearns, P. (1994). *American cool*. New York: New York University Press.
- Sullivan, K. R. (2007). *Touching a nerve: Navigating the contours of sexuality at work*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Utah.

- Taylor, B. C. (1997). Revis(it)ing nuclear history: Narrative conflict at the Bradbury Science Museum. *Studies in Cultures, Organizations, & Societies*, 3, 119–145.
- Taylor, J. R., & Van Every, E. (2000). *The emergent organization*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Thackaberry, J. A. (2003). Mutual metaphors of *Survivor* and office politics: Images of work in popular *Survivor* criticism. In M. J. Smith & A. F. Wood (Eds.), *Survivor lessons: Essays on communication and reality television* (pp. 153–181). New York: McFarland.
- Tomaskovic-Devey, D. (1993). *Gender and racial inequality at work: The sources and consequences of job segregation*. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press.
- Torgovnik, M. (1990). *Gone primitive: Savage intellects, modern lives*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tracy, S. J. (2000). Becoming a character for commerce: Emotion labor, self-subordination, and discursive construction of identity in a total institution. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 14, 790–827.
- Tracy, S. J., & Trethewey, A. (2005). Fracturing the real-self/fake-self dichotomy: Moving toward "crystallized" organizational discourses and identities. *Communication Theory*, 15, 168–195.
- Trethewey, A. (1999). Disciplined bodies. *Organization Studies*, 20, 423–450.
- Trethewey, A. (2000). Revisioning control: A feminist critique of disciplined bodies. In P. M. Buzzanell (Ed.), *Rethinking organizational and managerial communication from feminist perspectives* (pp. 107–127). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Trethewey, A. (2001). Reproducing and resisting the master narrative of decline: Midlife professional women's experiences of aging. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 15, 183–226.
- Triece, M. E. (1999). The practical true woman: Reconciling women and work in popular mail-order magazines, 1900–1920. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 16, 42–62.
- Tsoukas, H., & Kundsén, C. (2003). *The Oxford handbook of organizational theory*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Weber, M. (1978). *Economy and society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender & Society*, 1, 125–151.
- Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labor: How working class kids get working class jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Witz, A. (1990). Patriarchy and professions: The gendered politics of occupational closure. *Sociology*, 24, 675–690.
- Witz, A. (1992). *Professions and patriarchy*. London: Routledge.
- Zorn, T. E. (1995). Bosses and buddies: A constructive/dramaturgical analysis of simultaneously close and hierarchical relationships in organizations. In J. T. Wood & S. Duck (Eds.), *Under-studied relationships: Off the beaten track* (pp. 122–147). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Zorn, T. E., Jr., Page, D., & Cheney, G. (2000). NUTS! About change: Multiple perspectives on change-oriented communication in a public sector organization. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 13, 515–566.