

**ORGANIZATIONAL AND  
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION:  
AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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## **Abstract**

Professional technical communication often takes place within a larger organizational structure, a structure defined and constrained by both external (national or disciplinary) and internal (organizational) cultures. Thus, theories that help technical communicators analyze and understand organizations can be of especial importance. This bibliography overviews theories of organizations from the viewpoint of culture, using five themes of organizational research as a framework. Based on this framework, each section introduces specific theories of international, intercultural, or organizational communication, building upon them through a series of related articles, and showing how they can be applied in the field of technical communication.

## Introduction

Traditionally, technical communication has focused on the ability to plan and design rhetorically effective documents (theoretical knowledge) as well as hone the writing and editing processes (communication skills) needed to produce clear and efficient documents. But professional technical communication often takes place within a larger organizational structure—one that inevitably impacts the kinds of documents produced—and to be effective a communicator must have an understanding of that structure. Therefore, theories that can help communicators analyze and understand organizations can be of great importance to our field.

Theories of organization proliferate, not only in technical communication but in other fields as well, some of which have implications for our own field. The following bibliography introduces several theories of organization from other fields, relating them to technical communication and suggesting ways in which they can be used by both researchers and teachers. These theories offer additional paths for research and alternative methods of analysis; in addition, they provide the understanding necessary for applying theoretical knowledge and communication skills in specific organizational contexts. The incorporation and application of these theories in the field of technical communication can help scholars and instructors find new ways to approach, analyze, and teach various communication situations.

Today, understanding organizational structures often requires an understanding of an equally complex component—national culture. Scholars such as Iris Varner and Linda Beamer have noted that different cultures can have different values and beliefs that help cultural members rank what is important—a ranking system that could influence how individuals from a particular culture perceive both the function of a particular organization and the roles of individuals within that organization. Similarly, Nancy Hoft has reviewed how the theories of Edward T. Hall, David A. Victor, Geert Hofstede, and Fons Trompenaars can help technical communicators understand that individuals from different cultures might have different communication expectations in similar organizational settings. And Natasha Artemeva's essay on the cultural presentation differences of Canadian and Russian engineers over the purposes of and approaches to in-house interim reports serves as an example of how individuals from different cultures working within the same type of organizational framework can have different expectations regarding the same kind of document. Moreover, as Jan Ulijn and Judith Strother, Hofstede, and Linda Driskill (to name a few) have noted, as more and more professional organizations become part of a global corporate entity or vie for a place on the international market, an understanding of intercultural communication factors becomes increasingly important for functioning effectively. Ulijn and Strother, for example, note how expectations related to sentence length can affect how different cultures evaluate the credibility of various kinds of communication—including international marketing materials. Hofstede has noted how

expectations of information presentation can vary along particular cultural categories, or dimensions within the context of the same international business organization, IBM, and Driskill has noted that while certain cultures expect a particular kind of introductory statement to accompany most kinds of professional presentations, other cultures do not. For these reasons, technical communicators need to increase their understanding of how culture affects communication if they are to succeed in this new global age of business and communication.

This bibliography surveys a series of essays devoted to both communication within an organizational structure and the effects of culture on communication expectations within that structure. While the scope of the literature devoted to organizational communication and its relation to intercultural communication is vast, this article overviews certain key essays that can provide a starting point for exploring various concepts of organizational structure and intercultural communication.

### **The Structure of This Bibliography**

This bibliography is designed to help familiarize readers with theories of organizations from the viewpoint of culture. Although intercultural communication is commonly assumed to be that related to national culture, in recent years it has expanded to include organizational culture as well (as evidenced by the work of Artemeva, Mary Flanigan and Laverne Wilson, Victoria Mikelonis, Diane Hanson, etc.). Therefore, organizations are defined and constrained by both external (national or disciplinary) and internal (organizational) cultures. Accordingly, this bibliography is organized into six sections, the first of which introduces five themes in organizational research as identified by Linda Smircich (“Concepts of Culture”). Using Smircich’s five themes as a framework, the first two of the remaining sections focus on national culture, and the last three address disciplinary or internal organizational cultures. These sections discuss specific theories of international, intercultural, or organizational communication, building upon them through a series of related articles, and showing how they can be applied in the field of technical communication.

The first section (“Framework for Understanding Organizational Structures”) summarizes the work of Smircich, an organizational theorist who has identified five themes that have been applied to the study of culture. Her five-part model is especially useful because of its differentiation between definitions of culture and their corresponding assumptions and research agendas. Smircich’s model thus serves as an effective foundation for organizing different theories of organizational culture, and the remaining sections of the bibliography use her themes as entry points for examining organizational culture. The

second section (“Cross-cultural or Comparative Management”) focuses on the dimensions along which different cultures differ and how these dimensions affect interaction between members of different cultures within the same organizational structure. The third section (“Corporate Culture”) discusses the application of prototype theory to the process of intercultural collaboration. The fourth section (“Organizational Cognition”) addresses cognitive theories of organizational culture, focusing on the analysis of organizational rules and the cognitive maps of organizational members. The fifth section (“Organizational Symbolism”) examines the symbolic nature of disciplinary cultures and how discourse is used to demarcate symbolic boundaries. The final section (“Unconscious Processes and Organization”) views organizational culture as an expression of unconscious processes and focuses on ways of ordering that legitimize behavior. Using Smircich’s model as a framework allows readers to understand the corresponding relationships between the common themes of organizational research and the theories discussed and between the themes and the technical communication practices suggested.

## Framework for Understanding Theories of Organizational Culture

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**Smircich, Linda. “Concepts of Culture and Organizational Analysis.” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 28 (1983): 339-58.**

Smircich asserts that the term organization itself is a metaphor for order: “if...we see organization theory as dominated by the concern for the problem of social order, the current interest in the concept of culture is no surprise” (341). By diagramming the intersection between concepts of culture from anthropology and concepts of organization from organization theory, Smircich identifies five common thematic concerns: cross-cultural or comparative management, corporate culture, organizational cognition, organizational symbolism, and unconscious processes and organization. She distinguishes between these themes based on their treatment of the concept of culture. In the first two themes, culture is treated as a variable—an organization *has* a culture (342). In the last three themes, culture is treated as a root metaphor—an organization *is* a culture.

### **Culture as a Variable—An organization *has* a culture**

Both of these themes view organizations as organisms existing within an environment. Both study patterns of relationships between cultural elements as well as across and

within boundaries. Ultimately, both are concerned with identifying means of organizational control and management (347).

Theme	Culture is...	Variable	External/Internal	Research Agenda
Cross-cultural or comparative management	Determining force upon organization (347)	Independent variable	External environment	To compare and contrast cultures and identify implications for organizational effectiveness (343)
Corporate culture	Result of human enactment (347)	Dependent variable	Internal to organization	To determine how to shape and change culture pursuant to managerial goals (346)

### **Culture as Root Metaphor—An organization *is* a culture**

The metaphor of culture “promotes a view of organizations as expressive forms, manifestations of human consciousness” (347). All three themes share a mode of thought—the study of organization as social phenomenon (353). These themes are concerned with understanding organization as subjective experience and investigating the patterns that make organizational action possible (348).

Theme	Culture is...	Underlying Assumption	Research Agenda
Organizational cognition	A system of shared knowledge and beliefs (349)	Thought is linked to action (350)	To determine the structures of knowledge and the rules of action (350)
Organizational symbolism	A system of shared symbols and meanings (350)	Organization is a pattern of symbolic discourse (350)	To interpret the underlying themes that enable a sense of organization (351)
Unconscious processes and organization	An expression of unconscious psychological processes (351)	Existence of a deep underlying structure built into the ordering capacities of the mind (351)	To uncover the objective foundations of social arrangements (352)

## **Cross-Cultural or Comparative Management**

The first theme in which culture is viewed as a variable is *cross-cultural or comparative management*. In this theme, individual organizational members import culture into the organization, and the researcher is concerned with variations in practices and attitudes across countries (Smircich 343). As Smircich emphasizes, the practical worth of this type of research is most obvious with respect to multinational corporations.

The books in this section discuss intercultural communication in terms of cultural dimensions and show how these dimensions apply to communication in multinational business settings, at the personal level, in interpersonal interaction, and at the national level. The first two readings introduce a theoretical

framework for understanding cultural differences and give concrete examples of how these differences can manifest themselves in a multinational organization. In the first, Geert Hofstede provides a dimensional theory of culture, which begins the dialogue of charting differences. In the second, Nancy Adler applies Hofstede's cultural dimensions to management in the multinational organization. The next two authors discuss how cultural frameworks affect individuals at the level of interpersonal interaction. Michael Paige compiles writings from several experts in intercultural communication, demonstrating and discussing cross-cultural effects at the personal level. Craig Storti gives concrete examples of miscommunications that commonly occur in cross-cultural conversations, and shows how these can be comprehended and analyzed through an understanding of cultural differences and dimensions. Finally, in the last book, Martin Gannon offers a unique view of cultures based on the use of metaphors, explaining cultural dimensions within the context of history, traditions, and expected communication patterns.

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**Hofstede, Geert. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997.**

Drawing on his research in different offices of a multinational firm, Hofstede provides a framework of cultural dimensions for understanding cultural differences. Based on the data he collected, Hofstede shows how individuals from different national cultures compare to one another according to four main dimensions: individualism/collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity/femininity.

Individualism/collectivism refers to the way in which members of a culture view themselves, as either individuals or as group members. Power distance addresses high versus low power distance and describes the distribution of power in an organization. Uncertainty avoidance refers to the degree of ambiguity with which cultural members feel comfortable. Masculinity/femininity refers to the value a culture places on assertiveness and material success versus relationship maintenance and high quality of life.

Hofstede also explores other frameworks for understanding cultural differences in Eastern cultures. His book is rich in theory and provides a framework for understanding the complexities of intercultural interaction and some of the underlying causes of intercultural conflict such as differences in the meaning of time, the use of physical space, and the acknowledgment of power. In particular, these concepts are useful for employees in international corporations.

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**Adler, Nancy. *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior*. Cincinnati, OH: South Western College Publishing, 1997.**

Adler applies Hofstede's theory to practical business interactions that occur in international and multinational corporations. She begins with a discussion of variations in cultural orientation along six dimensions—individual, world, human relations, activity, time, and space—and the impact of this variation on organizations. Adler then turns to the issue of management in global organizations, addressing cross-cultural problem solving, multicultural team dynamics, leadership and decision making, and conflict and negotiation. And lastly, she discusses issues germane to those who work in international corporations, such as culture shock, adjustment to a foreign country, and reentry into a home country; global transition from the spouse's perspective; and advancement in and the advantages and disadvantages of a global career.

Adler gives concrete examples of both business interactions that have gone wrong and business interactions that have gone right, while explaining the underlying cultural ideas in terms of Hofstede's dimensions of culture. She also analyzes common business problems across cultures, and makes recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of cross-cultural teams. Adler differs from Hofstede in her emphasis on intercultural situations in the business world and specifically on cross-cultural management.

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**Paige, Michael. *Education for the Intercultural Experience*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1994.**

In this edited collection, Paige compiles articles and essays from the field of intercultural communication. These articles address the ways in which individuals are affected by and react to the different cultural dimensions encountered in international and intercultural immersion experiences. They discuss in more depth many of the issues raised by Adler with respect to cross-cultural managers, such as culture shock, intercultural adjustment, and reentry. However, the articles also address other topics such as Milton Bennett's model of intercultural sensitivity, the effects of intercultural experience on the individual, methods and content for preparing individuals to live in another culture, and ways to recognize and deal with the stress inherent in intercultural communication.

In contrast to Adler, the articles in this book focus exclusively on the personal aspects of and preparation for intercultural experiences. As such, they are useful for helping individuals develop empathy for people from other cultures, people whom they may

encounter as co-workers, audiences, and clients in international business contexts. These essays also can help global employees prepare for assignments that immerse them in different cultures.

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**Storti, Craig. *Cross-Cultural Dialogues: 74 Brief Encounters With Cultural Differences*.  
Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1994.**

Storti gives examples of intercultural miscommunication for the reader to think about, and then offers an “answer key” that explains the underlying cultural dimensions at work in each of the situations. The dialogues are short, yet they lead the reader to a better understanding of what cultural misunderstandings look and feel like. Each dialogue takes place between an American and someone from another culture, such as the Middle East, Britain, China, France, Germany, Spain, India, Japan, the Mediterranean, and Russia. Storti also frames the dialogues in different settings, either social, workplace, or business. The usefulness of this book lies in its concrete examples of cross-cultural communication, examples that illustrate differences in communication needs, meanings, and styles that result from individuals approaching communication with different cultural dimensions.

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**Gannon, Martin J., and associates. *Understanding Global Cultures: Metaphorical Journeys through 17 countries*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994.**

In this collection, Gannon describes national cultures using metaphors of cultural artifacts specific to seventeen different countries. He applies Hofstede’s framework of cultural dimensions to the metaphors, illustrating how cultural dimensions can manifest themselves with concrete examples of traditions. For instance, Gannon describes Britain using the metaphor The Traditional British House, or as possessing a culture with strong and deep foundations, reliant on tradition and unchanging over time (19). Based on this metaphor, he discusses British history and political and economic climate, “growing up British,” and British cultural patterns in business. Gannon identifies the British need for privacy as an example of a definitive cultural dimension (26).

Other examples of cultural metaphors used by Gannon include The Italian Opera, in which Italy is characterized by features such as spectacle and pageantry, the importance of the voice, emotional expressiveness, and the unity of the “chorus”; French Wine, the

principal elements of which—purity, classification, composition, suitability, maturation—describe French culture; The Nigerian Marketplace, a metaphor that emphasizes the important role played by trade in Nigerian history; and The Chinese Family Altar, which stresses the importance of family and kinship groups in Chinese culture. This metaphorical approach situates concrete examples of cultural dimensions in the context of history and tradition. Gannon’s approach compliments those of Storti, Paige, and Adler by giving a more contextualized view of culture at the national level.

## Corporate Culture

The second theme in which culture is a variable is *corporate culture*, in which culture is viewed as an internal variable. Corporate culture reflects the standards of a given industry, yet these organizational norms arise out of a cultural context. Therefore, the same business might have different styles of communication depending on the ethnic or national discursive norms of the countries in which it exists. While facts might be culturally neutral, the way in which they should be presented in a given professional context can vary from culture to culture. Failing to recognize and address these differences in stylistic or rhetorical expectations and information presentation can lead to miscommunication, or even offense, in certain intercultural discourse situations. Many of these culturally-based expectations relate to the idea of prototypes, or culture-based expectations of traits that a given object should possess in order to be identified as part of a larger class of objects (e.g., what characteristics does a document need to have in order to be classified as a “progress report” rather than a “grant proposal”).

This section discusses how prototypes can affect corporate culture at an intercultural level. In the first article, Jean Aitchison defines prototype theory, a theory that explores how and why members of different cultures can have different expectations within the same communication context, for individuals could unknowingly be using the same term to refer to different ideas. The next two articles apply prototype theory to international corporate culture. First, Ulijn and Strother discuss culturally-based communication ideals or preferences (information prototypes). And next, Ulijn examines the different expectations of French and Dutch students with respect to information presentation. In the fourth article, Linda Driskill discusses various cultural expectations and possible collaborative strategies, including convergence and code switching. Finally, Deborah Andrews discusses the strategy of code switching in more detail.

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**Aitchison, Jean. "Bad Birds and Better Birds: Prototype Theories." *Language: Introductory Readings*. Ed. Virginia Clark, Paul A. Eschholz, and Alfred F. Rosa. 5th ed. New York: St. Martin's, 1994. 445-57.**

All cultures have different perceptions of the world around them, perceptions reflected in the way they use language. These different perceptions mean that two individuals can have drastically different ideas in mind when discussing the same topic. Prototype theory examines these differences in terms of "ideals" and "characteristics." All speakers associate a particular "ideal" or "prototype" with a given word, and each ideal is comprised of certain "characteristics." Upon encountering an object, an individual accesses a mental database of prototypes to which he or she compares the characteristics of the new object. Objects not sharing enough characteristics with the prototype are deemed "not a part of that prototype class," while objects sharing characteristics are considered part of the class.

Aitchison explains that the ideals we have for words come from exposure. For instance, if constantly exposed to robins, an individual will consider a "robin" to be the prototype bird. Objects that share enough characteristics with a robin will be classified as birds; objects that do not will be deemed "non-birds." This exposure explains why Westerners would have to reflect on whether an ostrich or a kiwi is a bird.

While Aitchison does not delve into the application of prototype theory to international communication, the implications are obvious. Because individuals from different geographic areas and cultures have been exposed to different stimuli, the prototype they associate with the same word can be drastically different (e.g., Hawaiians and Inuits discussing "cold"). Thus, different prototype distinctions can explain certain intercultural communication failures by revealing how individuals from different cultures could be using the same term or expression but be talking about two very different things (prototypes).

Because it is both highly readable and informative, Aitchison's article can be a valuable resource for researchers who want to use prototype theory as an evaluative lens, as well as for instructors who wish to introduce students to the idea that different cultures can have various expectations of how the same item (or kind of item) should appear.

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**Ulijn, Jan M. and Judith B. Strother. "Native and Foreign Language Reading and Writing: Translation and Other Cross-Linguistic and Cross-Cultural**

***Aspects." Communicating in Business and Technology: From Psycholinguistic Theory to Interatioanl Practice. Frankfurt: Lang, 1995. 181-248.***

Ulijn and Strother overview how prototype theory relates to international corporate cultures. Within corporate culture, credibility is essential for success, and individuals who are not credible fail to have their ideas heard. To succeed, an individual must understand the communication styles and strategies expected by a given corporate culture and then use this understanding to present information appropriately. Corporate cultures use prototypes to judge the value or credibility of information; thus cultural differences in prototypes can affect international business success.

While the notion of corporate acculturation as essential for success is not new, Ulijn and Strother link it to communication ideals and methods (both being prototypes) found within a given ethnic or national culture. The authors explain that corporate models of "acceptable discourse" can vary from culture to culture according to specific communication patterns, and that "this [cultural preference] might explain why Southern European clients expect longer sentences which include more details in technical writing. . . . Technical documentation written with short sentences might not meet the expectations of a Southern-European client" (203).

Thus, these "information prototypes" can affect "credibility" within the context of different corporate cultures. These differences in turn affect how the members of various corporate cultures view and interact with one another. Correspondingly, success within an international corporate culture involves understanding the "prototypes" or stylistic and rhetorical expectations that a culture associates with professional credibility. Once the outsider has identified these prototypes, he or she can restructure information in a way that meets the credibility requirements of the other culture.

This essay takes a psycholinguistics approach to culture and communication, thus offering an excellent explanation of how the inner workings of the human mind can be influenced by culture, and how this influence, in turn, can produce different cultural expectations for similar kinds of documents. The link between psychology and communication practice provided in this essay can be futher explored via a review of Ulijn and Strother's bibliography.

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**Ulijn, Jan M. "Translating the Culture of Technical Documents: Some Experimental Evidence." *International Dimensions of Technical Communication*. Ed. Deborah C. Andrews. Arlington, VA: STC, 1996. 69-86.**

In this later essay, Ulijn reports on an experiment that examined the differing information presentation expectations of Germanic and Romance language speakers. In the experiment, Ulijn had a group of Dutch engineering students translate a set of operating instructions from Dutch into French (the language of the other group). At the same time, a group of French engineering students translated the same instructions from French into Dutch, and both groups then evaluated the two sets of instructions (one set generated by native speakers, the other by non-native speakers).

In the case of the translated instructions, the French students created Dutch-language instructions written with French expectations concerning technical presentations (i.e., longer sentences beginning with generalities and moving to specifics). Similarly, the Dutch students produced French-language instructions reflecting Dutch stylistic expectations (i.e., shorter sentences that began with specifics and moved to generalities). Consequently, it was not surprising that reviewers preferred instructions written both in their native language and according to their cultural prototypes for presentation style.

This experiment reinforces the fact that cultural prototypes or expectations of style influence how those individuals viewed documents written in their own language. The results of the study indicate that stylistic prototypes do exist in technical documentation and that these prototypes are tied more to distinctions in national culture (French vs. Dutch) than to professional culture (all students involved were engineers).

In addition to its meticulous presentation of information and thorough overview and explanation of experimental factors, this article provides empirical evidence of the far-reaching impact of cultural communication expectations on rhetorical preferences across cultural lines (namely those of language).

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**Driskill, Linda. "Collaboration Across National and Cultural Borders."**  
*International Dimensions of Technical Communication*. Ed. Deborah C.  
Andrews. Arlington, VA: STC, 1996. 23-44.

As Driskill notes, intercultural collaboration has become indispensable in the global age, and that collaboration can be affected by cultural differences. She explains that different cultures have distinct preferences concerning the organization of information: "Latin or Japanese cultures may recommend sections of polite, solicitous comments at the beginning of a document, even a technical marketing letter, which U.S. writers would consider unnecessary" (28). Thus, different cultures have differing stylistic prototypes (patterns) for organizing information. Moreover, these prototype preferences seem to be connected more to culture than to language. U.S. writers, for example, "used fewer appeals to data and warrants, less passive voice, and more informal syntactic constructions [than their British or New Zealander colleagues did]" (28).

While these prototype-based problems can be a difficult aspect of intercultural communication, certain collaborative models can facilitate the process. The Harvard Negotiation Project, for example, examined the Camp David negotiation process and developed four key precepts:

1. Separate people from the problem.
2. Focus on interests and goals.
3. Invent options for mutual gain.
4. Insist on using objective criteria. (30)

While this process is not a panacea, Driskill explains that it establishes a baseline upon which intercultural collaborators can begin to forge ties and interact. The key is that all members must approach collaboration with the same goal (or prototype representation of the goal) in mind, and focus on that goal throughout the process.

Intercultural collaborators can also employ strategies of *convergence* (in which all collaborators change their prototype expectations so that group conversations become more similar) or *code switching* (in which collaborators from one culture learn and use the prototypes preferred by their fellow collaborators).

This essay's most valuable aspect is its approach to communication from the perspective of cross-cultural discourse. By using this approach, Driskill provides readers with both a

valuable introduction to certain cultural communication expectations as well as a framework for solving potential culturally-based problems in intercultural communication situations.

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**Andrews, Deborah C. "Persuasion and Proving." *Technical Communication in the Global Community*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice, 1998. 269-93.**

Andrews advocates using the "code switching" strategy of intercultural interaction. She advises first learning about an audience by looking for meta-patterns of behavior in a given culture, and then determining the underlying cultural or historical reason to anticipate the stylistics or rhetorical expectations (prototypes) of a given audience.

The writer should use these prototypes first to establish his or her "authority" and then to persuade the audience by providing information in conformance with those patterns. The author needs to know the cultural norms for asserting facts versus voicing opinions (e.g., degree of directness). The author must also use "good" or "legitimate" reasons according to the cultural context and know how to identify key points for the audience (e.g., in Arab cultures, the audience expects important points to be stated repeatedly; failure to do so makes the point seem inconsequential) (274).

Andrews also cautions the writer against relying on assumptions and generalizations about foreign audiences, for different cultures have different world views that lead to differing assumptions about reality. These varying world views mean that what one culture might consider a self-obvious fact another might consider new information.

Andrews concludes her chapter by explaining that persuasion is an art. By learning about other cultures, writers can create an argument that is logical and aesthetically pleasing, both of which characteristics can be essential to winning over an international audience, or as she puts it, "The aesthetics of the argument may be as persuasive as its logic" (291).

This essay is useful in that Andrews expands on the code-switching strategy mentioned in the previous entry. Because it appears in what seems to be an introductory (undergraduate) textbook, it is very easy to read and apply; however, it probably should be paired with another more substantive theoretical piece in order to provide a more comprehensive perspective.

## Organizational Cognition

The first theme in which culture is a root metaphor for organization is *organizational cognition*, in which culture is seen as a “system of shared cognitions or a system of knowledge and beliefs” functioning in a rule-like manner (Smircich 348-49). In this theme, the researcher attempts to identify the rules of the organization and the cognitive map of the organizational members. As Maryan Schall explains, the culture shared by organizational members allows them “to explain, coordinate, and evaluate behavior and to ascribe common meanings to stimuli” (557). By revealing these organizational rules, researchers can show how organizations both constrain and are constrained by individual behavior.

This section begins with an early article in which Maryan Schall studies the communication rules circumscribing appropriate social behavior in an organization. The next four entries come from the field of small group research. In the first article, Kim Langfield-Smith attempts to elicit a shared cognitive map from a group of co-workers. In the next article, James Walsh and Liam Fahey propose four types of negotiated belief structures. The next two entries focus on theories of group memory, which explain how individuals reduce cognitive load by pooling information. In the first, Daniel Wegner proposes a model of group memory analogous to a computer network. In the second, Vikas Anand, Charles Manz, and William Glick adapt Wegner’s theory to organizations as a whole.

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**Schall, Maryan S. “Communication-Rules Approach to Organizational Culture.”**  
*Administrative Science Quarterly* 28 (1983): 557-81.

Schall defines communication rules as “tacit understandings” that are choices not laws; however they function normatively and communicators are often unaware of their options (560-61). Schall’s interest in communication rules lies in whether they can be identified and synthesized in order to describe organizational cultures (563). To test the feasibility of this approach, Schall conducted an ethnographical study of a large corporation, focusing on behavioral rules for exerting power and influence (564). Using data collection methods such as questionnaires, content analysis, interviews, participant-observation, and card sorts, she identified communication rules and used them to create cultural descriptions of two separate work groups (563).

Schall distinguished between two types of communication rules: operative rules and formal rules. The operative rules were those that group members agreed were “happening here,” for example, “[the ‘rule’ here is for people to] develop workgroup alliances made up of the same people they socialize with off the job”; formal rules were those described

in the corporate documents, for example, “admit mistakes and remedy them promptly” (579). Schall synthesized these two sets of rules to produce a rules questionnaire consisting of 60 rule statements. The group members then responded to the 60 statements, indicating whether they were operative (in force) and whether they fit the members’ values (ethics). Based on the questionnaire responses and the formal rules, Schall developed five cultural descriptions that the group members then ranked. Schall concluded that there were status-based subcultures as well as cultural differences between the two work groups; in addition, she was able to identify potential areas of communicative conflict. This type of analysis may be useful for identifying and addressing the informal rules by which individuals operate, thereby circumventing possible communicative conflicts.

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**Langfield-Smith, Kim. “Exploring the Need for a Shared Cognitive Map.”**

***Journal of Management Studies* 29.3 (1992): 349–68.**

Like Schall, Langfield-Smith refers to organizational subcultures in her attempt to elicit the shared cognitive map of a group of fire protection officers. According to Langfield-Smith, individuals may have several cognitive maps, each of which is domain specific. For instance, organizations have cultures, which encompass ideational systems. Organizational cultures may be shared across the organization, or subcultures may exist. Both organizational cultures and subcultures possess stocks of knowledge which include recipe knowledge—standard operating procedures—and social typifications—shared understandings constructed through interaction (353). Members of cultures and subcultures also share belief systems that enable them to function collectively. Langfield-Smith asserts that the study of group decision making must focus on these collective belief systems as well as on individual beliefs.

In her study, Langfield-Smith attempted to elicit the cognitive map corresponding to the organizational subculture of the firemen. Her experiment consisted of two stages: an individual cognitive mapping session and a group workshop. Based on a series of three interviews, each individual articulated the themes defining the Fire Protection Department. Members of the group were then paired and asked to categorize the themes as agreed upon, disputed, or discarded. However, the experiment prematurely ended because group members could not agree on the meaning of the themes. Langfield-Smith explains this disagreement by speculating that cognitive maps may be transitory. Thus,

Langfield-Smith's study suggests that the operative rules and subcultures described by Schall may in fact be temporally or situationally dependent, dependencies that should be considered in organizational research.

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**Walsh, James P., and Fahey, Liam. "The Role of Negotiated Belief Structures in Strategy Making." *Journal of Management* 12.3 (1986): 325–38.**

Walsh and Fahey implicitly assume that cognitive maps are transitory, emphasizing the aspect of negotiation present in any process of decision making. They describe two perspectives used by researchers to study decision making. In the first, the strategic decision-making process is constrained by the information-processing abilities of key decision makers. In the second, strategic decision making is viewed as a political process. Walsh and Fahey argue, "To simply assert that some configuration of individual beliefs underscores a strategic decision belies the complexity of the political processes that produce such a configuration" (327). In this essay, Walsh and Fahey attempt to integrate these two perspectives.

Walsh and Fahey state that the content of strategic decisions is grounded in both the information relating to the decision and the politics between the decision makers. A negotiated belief structure is the configuration of power and beliefs that establish the decision premise (327). Walsh and Fahey identify four types of negotiated belief structures: limited, contested, contextual, and dialectical. These structures are defined along the dimensions of power and beliefs: power can either be concentrated in one individual or dispersed, and beliefs may range from complete disagreement to complete agreement. Walsh and Fahey recommend circling between dialectical structures—reached by compromise and highly flexible—and contextual structures—also reached consensually but relatively inflexible—in order to maintain adaptive decision-making systems. Walsh and Fahey's four belief structures relate cognitive maps to power, providing a useful heuristic for both making and interpreting organizational decision making.

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**Wegner, Daniel M. "A Computer Network Model of Human Transactive Memory." *Social Cognition* 13.3 (1995): 319–39.**

The theory of transactive memory Wegner proposes in this article explicitly models the concept of shared cognitive maps explored by Schall, Langfield-Smith, and Walsh and

Fahey. Wegner proposes a model of group memory in which group members resemble networked computers. Unlike computers, however, they cannot share memory and must communicate to access each other's individual memory. Wegner proposes a transactive memory system in which group members are able to access a virtual shared memory. This system is comprised of several processors—group members—each of whom possesses individual memory as well as a directory representation of the shared memory. To access information, an individual first checks the 'directory,' then sends a message to the appropriate individual.

Wegner identifies three issues that must be addressed in a transactive memory system: directory updating, information allocation, and retrieval coordination. Each group member's information directory must be constantly updated to accurately reflect the information stored in the other members' memories. In addition, when new information is perceived, it must be allocated to an appropriate group member, for instance the expert on a certain subject. Lastly, members must retrieve information from the group memory in an efficient manner by following certain query rules.

Wegner defines four levels of directory entries: default, negotiated, expertise, and access. Individuals create default entries based on stereotypes. These default entries are then updated through conversation and interaction between group members. Expertise entries are created based on the perceived knowledge or interest of a specific individual. Finally, members create access entries based on who has access to specific information. This theory provides a useful perspective on audience analysis, which in organizations depends on the accurate identification of experts or leaders.

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**Anand, Vikas, Manz, Charles C., and Glick, William H. "An Organizational Memory Approach to Information Management." *Academy of Management Review* 23.4 (1998): 796–807.**

Anand, Manz, and Glick adapt Wegner's theory of transactive memory to organizations. They contend that for organizations to effectively manage information, they must focus on managing "soft knowledge," which includes tacit knowledge, belief structures, judgment, and intuition. Anand et al. distinguish between internal and external components of information. The internal component consists of information known by group members; the external component consists of information that group members can access from files, electronic storage, or other individuals. Organizational information

consists of various domains of knowledge. An employee's expertise is typically concentrated in a few domains; however, the employee also maintains a directory of information held by other employees.

Anand et al. identify several distinctions between small groups and organizations. First, organizations may contain many subgroups and correspondingly many different transactive memories. Anand et al. term organizational information as a whole systemic memory and information associated with subgroups group memory. Both systemic and group memories may traverse organizational boundaries and include information held by outsiders or other organizations. Second, organizations have access to advanced technologies such as computer networks, search engines, and e-mail that facilitate information retrieval. Third, organizations provide many choices of communication media, including electronic communication, telephone and video conferencing, and group decision support systems (GDSSs). Lastly, Anand et al. add the concept of soft knowledge to Wegner's transactive memory model. This essay is useful in that it extends Wegner's theory to the organizational level, thus facilitating studies of subcultures and the ways in which organizations manage their soft knowledge across and within groups.

## **Organizational Symbolism**

The second theme in which culture is viewed as a root metaphor for organization is *organizational symbolism*. In this theme, cultures are viewed as "systems of shared symbols and meanings" and an organization is viewed as "a pattern of symbolic discourse" (Smircich 350). To determine the relationships between meaning and social activity, the researcher must interpret the symbols. The main focus of this area is on how organizational members interpret their experience and how these interpretations are related to action (351).

The articles in this section address the use of discourse to demarcate symbolic boundaries. As discussed in the previous section, organizations contain subcultures, one example of which is a disciplinary subculture. Correspondingly, the first four articles focus on the use of discourse to establish and maintain the symbolic boundaries of science, an analysis that can be applied to the boundaries between other disciplines such as engineering and accounting. In the first article, Thomas Gieryn introduces the concept of boundary-work, a rhetorical strategy by which scientists demarcate science from non-science. Next, Lawrence Prelli identifies the various *topoi* that scientists use to reinforce certain scientific values. James McOmber also analyzes boundary-work, but with respect to an early attempt by Freud to legitimize psychoanalysis as a medical science. John Lyne and Henry Howe extend the concept of boundary-work to

attempts to demarcate between scientific disciplines and between science and the public. And lastly, although he also addresses demarcation, Christopher Ansell augments this concept through his discussion of two boundary-crossing mechanisms.

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**Gieryn, Thomas F. "Boundary-Work and the Demarcation of Science from Non-Science: Strains and Interests in Professional Ideologies of Scientists." *American Sociological Review* 48 (1983): 781-95.**

Gieryn describes "the problem of demarcation" as "how to identify unique and essential characteristics of science that distinguish it from other kinds of intellectual activities" (781). Scientists accomplish demarcation by boundary-work, defined by Gieryn as the "attribution of selected characteristics to the institution of science" (782). However, Gieryn claims that demarcation is an ideological effort on the part of scientists (782). According to Gieryn, sociological studies of ideology have used one of two theoretical orientations: strain theory or interest theory (782). In strain theory, ideologies provide integration of conflicting norms. In interest theory, ideologies are used as leverage to further political or economic interests (782). Gieryn notes that Clifford Geertz has proposed that these theories are not incompatible: ideologies may serve both to integrate in the face of conflicts and to promote interests (782).

In this essay, Gieryn analyzes the rhetoric of the Superintendent at the Royal Institution in Victorian England, phrenologists in the early 19th century, and the 1982 report of the NAS (National Academy of Sciences) Panel on Scientific Communication and National Security. Based on this analysis, Gieryn defines several "cultural repertoires" that scientists use for boundary-work. Each case study offered by Gieryn illustrates a different situation in which boundary-work is useful: expansion of authority into other domains, monopolization of professional authority and resources, and protection of autonomy over professional activities (791-92). Although Gieryn's application is scientific, the concept of boundary-work is sufficiently abstract to be useful in analyses of organizational boundaries such as those between departments.

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**Prelli, Lawrence J. *A Rhetoric of Science: Inventing Scientific Discourse*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1989.**

Prelli takes the same approach as Gieryn. By studying the discourse of scientists engaged in disputes over the validity of scientific claims, Prelli identifies the arguments that are

used to reinforce certain scientific values. He distinguishes four major classes of special *topoi* for science: problem solution, evaluative, exemplary, and scientific ethos.

Problem-solution *topoi* include the logical arguments used in scientific inquiry to establish connections between observational or theoretical claims and data or theory (186). Evaluative *topoi* refer to arguments regarding the value of experimental, theoretical, or methodological claims (199). Prelli bases these *topoi* on values proposed by Kuhn such as accuracy, internal consistency, external consistency, scope, simplicity, elegance, and fruitfulness, values that are not resolvable in terms of truth or falsity, but rather with respect to other claims (203). Exemplary *topoi* include examples, analogies, and metaphors, discursive strategies comparable to Kuhn's notion of exemplars in science (205, 206). Prelli claims that scientists choose exemplars that reflect a particular scientific community's interests as well as ones that will arouse a specific audience's interests (207). Lastly, *topoi* addressing the scientist's ethos are based on the sociologist Robert Merton's normative conditions of science: universalism, communality, disinterestedness, and organized skepticism.

Prelli concludes that there are lines of thought used repeatedly by scientists, that these lines of thought legitimize claims because they are based on the values of scientific communities, and that the *topoi* identify structures of thought that scientists find reasonable (216). Prelli shows that one way in which boundaries are maintained is through the use of specific *topoi*. Researchers can deploy this idea when analyzing organizational discourse, focusing on the specific *topoi* used by different groups and whether those outside the groups use the appropriate *topoi* for communicating with group members.

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**McOmbler, James B. "Silencing the Patient: Freud, Sexual Abuse, and 'The Etiology of Hysteria.'" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 82 (1996): 343-63.**

McOmbler draws on Gieryn's concept of boundary-work to analyze Freud's "The Etiology of Hysteria" as an example of the demarcation of science from non-science. The centrality of discourse to psychoanalysis makes this example of boundary-work particularly interesting; specifically, one of the symbolic boundaries discussed lies between persuasive and scientific discourse. According to McOmbler, Freud was faced with the problem of legitimizing psychoanalysis as a medical science. This legitimization is often achieved by appealing to a foil, or by defining science by what it is not (345).

McOmbler claims that Freud used two foils: he constituted the hysterical patient as an object of study and showed that the verbal interaction between the analyst and the patient was not persuasive (345-46). McOmbler notes, however, that these foils failed.

According to McOmbler, Freud's paper was unsuccessful because it violated several views held by the psychiatric profession. First, the emerging field of psychiatry based its claim to medical expertise on the treatment of hysteria (347). Hysteria had been medicalized as a product of heredity treatable by hypnosis; however, Freud claimed that it was a result of childhood sexual trauma, a claim that was viewed as regressive (347). Second, sexual perversion was also viewed as hereditary; therefore, Freud's theory of acquired hysteria directly contradicted the dominant theory (348). Lastly, Freud's use of discourse was viewed as non-scientific, challenging medical authority by ascribing rationality to the patient (356-57, 350). Like Prelli, McOmbler shows that discourse forms a boundary, and that crossing that boundary entails bridging the views held by the two sides. This essay thus provides a useful perspective for relating the use of specific topoi to attempts to bridge opposing views in organizations.

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**Lyne, John, and Henry F. Howe. "Punctuated Equilibria': Rhetorical Dynamics of a Scientific Controversy." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 72 (1986): 132-47.**

Lyne and Howe examine boundary-work between scientific disciplines and between science and the public, thereby providing a different perspective on demarcation than Gieryn, Prelli, and McOmbler. Lyne and Howe focus on how rhetoric was used to advance the theory of "punctuated equilibria," a theory that challenges natural selection by suggesting that the gaps in the fossil record are results of "jumps" in evolution. Lyne and Howe focus on three different audiences engaged in this controversy: paleontologists, geneticists/biologists, and the public. They conclude that rhetoric affects scientific discourse along four dimensions: the persona of the scientific writer, the changing audience, the use of picturing strategies, and the use of strategies of contrast.

First, as a writer, the scientist creates a persona that does not lie completely within his/her control and that affects the shape of the scientific discourse itself. Second, scientific theories proposed in one field can cause repercussions in other fields. The inclusion of scientists from different fields leads to misunderstanding due to different interpretative frameworks. Third, the use of picturing strategies such as metaphors and imagery connect

scientific discourse and common-sense knowledge. And lastly, one way in which scientists engage audiences' attention when proposing new theories is by contrasting the new theory with current theories. Most informative in Lyne and Howe's discussion is their analysis of the misunderstandings that can occur when crossing boundaries, especially when the two sides use the same terms differently.

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**Ansell, Christopher K. "Symbolic Networks: The Realignment of the French Working Class, 1887-1894." *American Journal of Sociology* 103:2 (1989): 359-90.**

Like the previous authors, Ansell studies demarcation; however, he applies this concept to social movements rather than science. Ansell focuses on the interplay between organizing symbols—"particular representations of meaning"—and inter-organizational networks—"particular patterns of relationships," an interplay through which organizational cohesion emerges (360). Ansell claims that these concepts are bridged by Basil Bernstein's notion of linguistic code, or the "regulative principle which underlies various message systems" (361). Linguistic codes are classified by Bernstein as either restricted or elaborated. Restricted codes are exclusionary; they demarcate communities as well as reinforce status differences. Elaborated codes are more flexible and encourage individuation and universal principles.

Ansell also distinguishes two mechanisms that allow influence, communication, and resources to flow through social networks: proximity and position. Proximity allows the flow of communication through direct interaction; position allows the flow of communication between people in the same structural position through a third party. Ansell relates the proximity mechanism to the idea of a restricted code and the position mechanism to the idea of an elaborated code (363). According to Ansell, the combination of these mechanisms can lead to large-scale organizational cohesion "because it simultaneously exploits the social solidarity of local community with the scale of modern organization" (364). Ansell illustrates these concepts with an analysis of the French working class; however, it is his integration of Bernstein's linguistic codes with proximity and position that may prove fruitful for research in organizational communication. Specifically, proximity and position are mechanisms by which organizational members can communicate across the symbolic boundaries delimited by

linguistic codes and thus may be powerful concepts for researchers to use when analyzing communication.

## Unconscious Processes and Organizations

The third theme in which culture is viewed as a root metaphor for organization is *unconscious processes and organizations*, in which culture is viewed as an “expression of unconscious psychological processes” (Smircich 351). In this theme, researchers analyze the interplay between unconscious processes and their conscious manifestations—organizational forms and practices (351). According to Smircich, organizational research typically focuses on “elements of the conscious models shared by organization participants and analysts” (352), in which the formal structure of the organization serves to legitimize behavior.

The articles in this section focus on the use of discourse as a way of ordering or legitimating underlying power structures. In the first article, Stephen Turner applies Claude Levi-Strauss’ structuralism to organizations, illustrating how a structuralist explanation can transcend organizational political fictions. The next two articles both discuss the use of narrative in organizations. In the first, Dennis Mumby discusses the use of narrative for legitimating dominant ideologies in an organization. In the second, Douglas Ezzy proposes a theory of narrative-identity in which workers re-appropriate the power of narrative. The last two articles provide methods for analyzing the discourse that orders organizations. Gale Miller proposes an ethnographic method for studying institutional discourse based on Foucauldian discourse analysis. And Wanda Orlikowski and JoAnne Yates discuss the role of genre in organizing social action.

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**Turner, Stephen P. “Complex Organizations as Savage Tribes.” *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* (1977): 99-125.**

Turner applies Claude Levi-Strauss’ structuralism to organizations. Levi-Strauss’ theory rests on the assumption that cultural phenomena have an underlying inherent structure (Turner 100). In particular, Levi-Strauss emphasizes the unconscious character of these structures, which are circumscribed by the ordering capacity of the human mind. Turner’s incarnation of structuralism claims that sociologists have been misled by their preconceptions about organizations and can only analyze the underlying structure of social life by ‘getting beyond’ these preconceptions (99, 100). For example, he claims that formal organizational structure and organizational boundaries are “accidental

consequences of the literary conventions that govern the way in which organizational political fictions are contrived” (105).

As an example, Turner provides a Levi-Straussian analysis of the relations between bureaucracy and industry and professional groups and labor unions respectively. According to his structural analysis, the latter associations—professional groups and labor unions—redress the imbalances of the former organizational structures—bureaucratic subordination and industrial subordination. The claim to authority of bureaucratic superiors is justified by regulations or a certain status; the claim of industrial superiors, on the basis of superior ability. In contrast, professional groups exclude individuals on the basis of ability; labor unions on the basis of status. In other words, the autonomy denied to industrial laborers is recaptured in the labor unions; the autonomy denied to professionals is recaptured in professional groups (116). Structuralism thus provides one method for analyzing the hidden patterns underlying formal organizational structures, or more specifically, the hidden balance of power.

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**Mumby, Dennis K. “The Political Function of Narrative in Organizations.”**

***Communication Monographs* 54 (1987): 113-27.**

Like Turner, Mumby studies political fictions in organizations, focusing on the function of narrative as a legitimating device (113). Narrative in his sense is a myth that serves to reify power structures. Mumby approaches the study of narrative from a political viewpoint, in which story-telling is “a politically motivated production of a certain way of perceiving the world which privileges certain interests over others” (114). The tension that interests Mumby is that between what is ‘present,’ the dominant reading, and what is ‘absent,’ the reading constructed by the reader (114). He states that the central issue in theories of ideology is “the production and domination of consciousness” (117). Narrative can function in this capacity because it is “a material instantiation of ideology” (118). Specifically, narrative can blur the distinction between fiction and reality, articulating a specific version of reality and thereby constituting the organizational consciousness of employees (122, 125).

Mumby illustrates his theory by analyzing a study of organizational story-telling with respect to Anthony Giddens’ three principal ideological functions: (1) representing specific interests as universal; (2) denying contradictions; and (3) naturalizing the present through reification (118). He also adds a fourth principle in which ideology serves as a

means of control (119). By demonstrating that an example narrative fulfills these four principals, Mumby asserts the connection between power, ideology, and organizational narrative. However, Mumby does acknowledge that narratives can also de-legitimize dominant ideologies (114). In the next entry, Ezzy expands on the potential of narrative as a means of delegitimation.

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**Ezzy, Douglas. "Subjectivity and the Labour Process: Conceptualizing 'Good Work.'" *Sociology* 31.3 (1997): 427-44.**

Like both Turner and Mumby, Ezzy discusses narrative; however, he differs in his emphasis on the narratives of workers rather than on the political narratives perpetuated by organizations. Ezzy focuses on two problems: the conflict between structure and agency and the problem of evaluating good work. The first problem concerns the frequent neglect of workers' subjective experiences by labor theorists (428). According to Ezzy, labor theory tends to depict workers as either passive reflections of social structures or active subjects resisting oppressive social forces (428). The integration of existentialist and phenomenological ideas redresses this imbalance by considering the way individuals "construct a stable sense of subjective security" (429). The second problem, work valuation, is inextricably connected to the structure/agency problem because the extent of alienation has been measured through subjective self-assessment (429).

Ezzy states that the problem of subjectivity has become more visible recently due to changes in managerial views. These changes are exemplified by the shift from instrumental control (financial rewards and threats) to normative control (worker's self-conception or fulfillment), in which employees internalize company goals (429-30, 431). Ezzy's solution is a hermeneutic theory of narrative-identity, in which individuals construct concepts of self by telling stories that draw from their previous experiences, social location, and cultural discourses (432, 440). This theory thus balances the tension between structure and agency by recognizing the interplay between social context and individual creation. This theory also solves the problem of work valuation since it allows individuals to interpret the meaning of work based on their ability to fulfill commitments to others (438-39). Ezzy's idea of narrative-identity therefore re-appropriates narrative as a tool for workers instead of as a tool of political control. Mumby's and Ezzy's articles emphasize the way in which narrative is used to legitimate organizational power

structures; it is by recognizing and appropriating narrative's political aspect that individuals can subvert its effect.

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**Miller, Gale. "Toward Ethnographies of Institutional Discourse: Proposal and Suggestions." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 23.3 (1994): 280-306.**

Miller proposes an ethnographic method for studying institutional discourse, or the discourse that organizes interactions, constrains responses, and defines accountability in socially organized settings (280, 283). According to Miller, specific social settings and their related institutional discourses facilitate certain reality claims and inhibit others (283). Miller develops an analytic framework for studying these settings and discourses by reconciling the in-depth observations of social settings from ethnography, the analysis of everyday talk from conversation analysis, and the study of the formulation, dispersion, and uses of knowledge from Foucauldian discourse analysis (281). This reconciliation facilitates the analysis of organizational interests, power, and dominance (283-84). Specifically, organizational members may be studied to determine how they direct activities and produce social conditions within the organization.

Whereas the Foucauldian approach allows the analysis of conditions of possibilities for speech, conversation and ethnomethodological analysis focus on how these possibilities are organized and how reality claims are determined to be true and linked to action (286-87). According to Miller, ethnographers are more sensitive to the use organizational members make of available interactional and interpretive conventions. In contrast, conversation analysts are more likely to focus on how the organizational members use those conventions to act upon social relationships and settings (289-90). By integrating Foucauldian discourse analysis with ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, Miller extends Foucauldian discourse analysis to include the stance of the participant-observer and the detailed analyses of talk (304). Miller thus provides a method for analyzing the way in which organizational discourse facilitates and reifies power structures, and accordingly a method for interpreting and resisting those structures.

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**Orlikowski, Wanda J., and Yates, JoAnne. "Genre Repertoire: The Structuring of Communicative Practices in Organizations." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 39 (1994): 541-74.**

Orlikowski and Yates define genre as an institutionalized template or organizing structure that shapes social action (542). They state that organizations typically use multiple genres, or a "genre repertoire" (542). According to Orlikowski and Yates, information about communicative practices, organizing activities, and an organization's work can be obtained by studying the organization's genre repertoire (542-43). A genre has two principal characteristics: it consists of a typified response to a recurrent situation and it has common features (544). Furthermore, genres interact in two ways: they may overlap or they may be interdependent (544). Genres also change over time as a result of organizational members' deliberate or inadvertent action (545).

Orlikowski and Yates study a group of computer language designers interacting electronically, analyzing their set of genres and their use of specific genres over time. Orlikowski and Yates identify three genres—memo, proposal, and dialogue—and one genre system—ballot. They note that no formal discussion took place between the designers regarding their interaction or organization. Instead, the designers adapted paper genres to their electronic environment, adopting norms and practices based on their shared knowledge. Orlikowski and Yates also study their use of the different genres over time. By analyzing the frequency of use, they are able to correlate the course of the designers' work with the type of genre in use. Based on their analysis, Orlikowski and Yates conclude that genres may be used to examine communicative practices (570). Therefore, genre is useful not only as a means of organizing but also as a means of exploring the relationship between organizational discourse and social action.

## **Conclusion**

This bibliography has used Linda Smircich's five themes in organizational research to discuss different theories and suggest how they can be related to technical communication practices. In the sections "Cross-Cultural or Comparative Management" and "Corporate Culture," technical communication practices were discussed in terms of national culture. The books summarized in "Cross-Cultural or Comparative Management" discussed intercultural communication in terms of dimensions of culture. These books provide essential tools for technical communicators working in international organizations, helping them to better understand culture and its effects on interaction at the business, personal,

interpersonal, and national levels. The articles in the “Corporate Culture” section focused on prototype theory and its implications for stylistic and rhetorical expectations and information presentation. Prototype theory can help technical communicators become more aware of culturally-based stylistic differences, understand how these differences can affect the ways in which readers from different cultures will perceive a document, and analyze readers’ communicative expectations in order to create more effective documents for a particular culture.

The remaining sections, “Organizational Cognition,” “Organizational Symbolism,” and “Unconscious Processes and Organization,” focused on theories that address communication from a disciplinary or internal organizational standpoint. The articles in the “Organizational Cognition” section discussed cognitive maps and communication rules, the analysis of which reveal how organizational members are both constrained by and re-inscribe the culture of an organization. In terms of technical communication, cognitive maps and communication rules have implications for organizational interaction, communicative conflict, and audience analysis. In “Organizational Symbolism,” the articles addressed symbolic boundaries and the centrality of discourse to both establishing and maintaining those boundaries. The most relevant application of this idea may be to studies of disciplinary or departmental boundaries that divide organizational members, such as those between managers and technical communicators. In particular, linguistic codes and the proximity and position mechanisms suggest how those boundaries are constructed and how communicators can interact across them. And lastly, the articles in “Unconscious Processes and Organization” focused on the use of discourse to order, both as a means of legitimating underlying power structures and as a means of empowering workers to resist those structures. This section ended with two articles suggesting methodologies for analyzing these discursive ways of ordering.

Communication, especially professional communication, never takes place in a vacuum and is rarely an isolated event. Rather, the organization in which a communicator works will greatly influence how he or she creates a given technical document. And as corporations are increasingly becoming global entities, their organizational structures are becoming increasingly global in design. David Whitwam, Chairman and CEO of Whirlpool Corporation, has noted when discussing the management at his company, “whenever we think about filling an important slot [job position], we look for people from all around the world” (Taylor and Webber 26). Thus, mechanisms that help technical communicators work more effectively in organizations, and particularly in these new global organizations, can mean the difference between a successful career and an unfulfilling one. Hopefully, this bibliography has provided some new theoretical foundations for both educators, who can draw from these theories when teaching organizational or international communication, and researchers, who can use these theories to generate

new research questions—questions that could lead to new understandings of practices in the field and methods in the classroom.

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