

SELLING CLASS: CONSTRUCTING THE PROFESSIONAL
MIDDLE CLASS IN AMERICA

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SELLING CLASS: CONSTRUCTING THE PROFESSIONAL
MIDDLE CLASS IN AMERICA

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This dissertation is dedicated to my children, Haley, Morgan, and Mia, who tolerated me through this experience. They have sacrificed too much.

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ABSTRACT

In an effort to understand the role of mediated messages in organizational socialization, this study analyzes the ideological constructions of class and gender in popular business advice books (BABs). The books are used as training tools in many American organizations, so to understand the role of BABs in indoctrinating employees into organizational culture, this study asks the following research questions. What are the ideological messages regarding work and organizing within BABs? What do the ideological messages of BABs reveal about power in organizing? In what ways to BABs gender the workplace?

Structurally BABs are produced and tacitly endorsed by corporate institutions. Consequently one function of BABs is to articulate norms that institutionally reproduce capitalist modes of work. Thus BABs serve as tools for both organizational indoctrination and larger scale social control. Analysis of the texts finds that these particular BABs construct ideal, submissive, and compliant employees by diagnosing unruly employees as psychologically dysfunctional and subsequently prescribing therapeutic cures that align individual interests with those of the organization. By focusing the reader on the inner psychological-self, the books diffuse resentment towards executive class privilege.

This study concludes that BABs serve to sell readers on socio-economic class stratification by constructing professional middle class norms for work and personal life. Specifically the books construct perceptions of choice, norms of success and failure, attitudes towards education and money, and a spiritual faith in American corporations. Consequently, the books de-politicize by feminizing the professional middle class.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Throughout the last decade advice books have been topping best-seller lists across the country. It seems that people are increasingly seeking advice on everything from romance and marriage to decorating and dieting. While the sales of these books suggests something about reader interests in contemporary American society, media studies research suggests such mediated messages also have an impact on shaping American culture (Bandura, 1994).

One particularly popular category of self-help books is the business advice genre. Books such as *Rich Dad Poor Dad*, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, and *Who Moved my Cheese* have topped multiple best-seller lists since their release dates and remain on those lists today. But why have these books been so popular? The massive sales of these books may indicate an increasing degree of frustration with the contemporary working milieu. As the wage gap between working and upper classes increases (Scott & Leonhardt, 2005), individuals find themselves working harder with decreasing economic and social rewards (Hochschild, 1997). At the same time there are limited opportunities for individuals to learn about work and money prior to entering the workplace, and the resources that do exist (such as parents, peers, schools etc.) convey only peripheral information regarding the political nature of workplace communication (Jablin, 2001). Alternatively, business advice books afford direct yet safe alternatives to “learning the ropes” (Allen, 1996) the hard way.

The research on organizational socialization indicates that children indirectly learn various communication skills that might impact their later work experiences. For example, interactions with peers shape perceptions of desirable careers (Peterson &

Peters, 1983) and teach initial skills for functioning in task groups (Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995). Family and household work may shape the ability to negotiate work tasks (Goodnow, 1988). Schools provide limited vocational information (Jablin, 1985). Part-time employment offers limited opportunities to learn relational communication skills (Phillips & Sandstrom, 1990), and the media influence how children view occupational roles (Signorielli & Lears, 1992) by depicting largely distorted portrayals of work behaviors and communication (Ingersoll & Adams, 1992). Unfortunately, each of these sources either *indirectly* implies information about the work place, provides information that is only *loosely* related to actual work, or provides direct but *distorted* views of the workplace. For this reason, best selling business advice books offer individuals a unique opportunity to learn more explicitly about organizing apart from or in addition to actual workplace experience.

In addition to offering more direct and focused information about work communication, business advice books also represent a unique socializing agent in that their use overlaps traditional conceptions of socialization phases. In other words, scholars have typically looked at socialization as occurring in a fairly linear pattern starting with prior to entry experiences, initial contact, assimilation into and leaving an organization (e.g. Jablin, 1987). However advice books are used during any of these phases thus have the potential to inform scholarly understanding of how assimilation occurs by lending insight into the organizational socialization process and articulating the particular ways organizing is rhetorically constructed in American culture.

Organizational socialization is inherently linked to communication and power. Organizing, communication, and power are intricately intertwined concepts since one

cannot exist without the other so that a discussion of one warrants a discussion of each of the others. At the same time, socialization, as it is used in organizational communication research, is a sub-concept of power in that it involves influencing individuals to embrace favored work norms and values while reflexively influencing work cultures to fit individual needs and values (Jablin, 2001).

In the following I will provide working definitions of communication, socialization, organizing, and power by synthesizing how each concept is linked. Throughout this chapter I will describe the rationale for conducting this particular line of research. In chapter two I will review the literature accumulated on power and organizational socialization thus far. Chapter three will describe the methods for understanding socialization of power by rhetorically analyzing self-help books. Chapter four will contextualize each book by reviewing their production and use as training tools within organizations. The fifth chapter will analyze some popular and influential organizational discourses, best selling business advice books, for underlying values and ideologies that shape work in this culture. The final chapter will discuss the implications of these values and ideologies on organizational socialization, gender and power, and society as a whole.

Communication, Socialization and Organizing

In the most basic sense, communication is “a systemic process in which individuals interact with and through symbols to create and interpret meanings” (Wood, 1997, p. 17). It exists as systems of meaning and ongoing processes of shaping and reflecting the social world where culture influences communication systems while

communication constitutes the social world. Deetz (2001) describes the process in the following way:

Language does not name objects in the world; it is core to the process of constituting the indeterminate and ambiguous external world into specific objects. The appearance of labeling or categorizing existing objects is derived from this more fundamental act of object constitution through language. The world thus can be constituted in many ways depending on alternative systems of valuing. (p. 6)

In other words naming, the symbolic part of the communication process, is more than just an act of attaching labels to phenomena but is also a process of attaching meaning and values to that phenomena. Thus communication is a primary organizing and socializing process.

As a primary process, communication enables organizing. In contrast to some definitions, organizational communication is not necessarily about the communication that occurs within organizations. Yet, many of our textbooks and a great deal of research continue to define it this way. For example, Conrad and Poole (2002) state “the simplest definition of organizational communication is that it is communication that occurs within organizations” (p. 4) and Miller (2003) explains that the study of organizational communication thus “involves understanding how the context of the organization influences communication processes and how the symbolic nature of communication differentiates it from other forms of organizational behavior” (p. 1). In both definitions locations are key factors that distinguish organizational communication from other types of communication research. I would suggest however that organizational communication is not communication that occurs within particular locals but rather is communication that occurs for a particular reason - to coordinate individuals for particular goals.

Organizations are then “complex discursive formations where discursive practices are both ‘in’ organizations and productive of them” (Deetz, 2001, p. 6). Deetz’s definition reflects a decisive conceptual shift which transforms organizations from a physical location to a process where communication is fundamental and central. “Assume that there are processes which create, maintain, and dissolve social collectivities, that these processes constitute the work of organizing, and that the ways in which these processes are continuously executed *are* the organization” (Weick, 1969, p.1). Consequently organizing, as Weick describes it, is a communication construct.

If organizations are communication, then organizational communication research is about exploring the communication that is the foundation of the organizing process (Deetz, 2001). Highlighting this difference is essential for expanding the boundaries of what we have conventionally thought of as organizational research. In the conventional conception of organizations, research takes place within a physical/material location that exists with borders and boundaries and such a focus limits the scope of organizational research to within those boundaries. However reconceptualizing the organization as an organic process opens the door to greater understanding of discursively constructed organizing practices. Specifically, we can begin to study organizing through communication that occurs both within and without some physical location. It can and should be understood in relation to dominant ideology which “consists of the ideas, forms, and values of the ruling class that circulate through all the cultural spheres” (Leitch, et al. 2001, p.14). If organizations are primarily organic communication processes, then as such they should be studied through all of the influences that impact their discursive formation.

Now thinking of organizational communication as the study of organizing rather than the study of communication that occurs within some organization is unlikely to be all that controversial since a number of scholars have already taken this position (Deetz, 2001, Weick, 1969). Yet a great deal of our literature continues to embrace a line of research that seemingly views the organization simply as a physical location and therefore approaches the study of organizational communication as the communication that occurs within those walls, and organizational socialization is a prime example of this. Feminist scholars have, in recent years, critiqued traditional discussions of organizational socialization for positioning organizations as merely containers for groups of individuals (see Bullis & Stout, 2000) although scholars argue this characterization misrepresents contemporary socialization research (Kramer & Miller, 1999). Critics argue the primary function of individuals within these containers is to systematically pass through internal boundaries as they climb to the top of these inverted-cone shaped containers.

Organizational assimilation, or the process by which individuals become socialized into and simultaneously impact organizations (Jablin, 1987), has been a prime area of study for organizational scholars concerned with this process of passing through boundaries and almost by definition defines the organization as a physical locale with boundaries. For example, the socialization process has been articulated a bit differently by various scholars (Feldman, 1976; Porter, Lawler & Hackman, 1975; Van Maanen, 1975; and Jablin, 1987), yet each describes it as occurring in several phases beginning with initial expectations of organizations that develop prior to any actual encounter with that organization to the processes involved in withdrawing or exiting the organization.

Jablin (1987) developed the most recent and widely used model of organizational socialization which consists of four phases: anticipatory, encounter, metamorphosis (although throughout this study I will often refer to the encounter and metamorphosis phases jointly as assimilation whenever making a distinction between the two phases is unnecessary), and exit. During the anticipatory phase individuals form expectations about organizations and careers that lead to particular occupational/organizational decisions. Encounter occurs when individuals actually enter the organization as a newcomer. Metamorphosis begins when individuals finally assimilate into the culture becoming insiders. From here they either transfer or are promoted, leaving the exit phase to occur when individuals withdraw from a particular organizational setting.

While the traditional line of research has contributed a great deal to our understanding of how and how well individuals enter and assimilate into organizations, and in this sense is functionally important, it does not necessarily conceptualize the organization as a communication process and consequently does not necessarily explore how communication functions as the primary process in organizing. Thus there are some things traditional socialization research overlooks.

One line of research overlooked by socialization is the element of power. Primarily, while most studies define socialization in line with definitions of power, they ignore the role of power on the socialization process as well as the role of socializing on creating and maintaining power structures, which is of particular concern to feminist scholars. In fact, one of the greatest contributions of feminist standpoint research is the connection it highlights between socialization and power. By identifying those who are systematically marginalized by typical socialization processes and exposing the

alternative organizational realities of these groups and individuals, feminist standpoint research also exposes the power relationships that fuel particular organizational socialization norms. Specifically, feminist standpoint research reveals how socialization practices marginalize and centralize particular individuals by constructing masculine communication styles as normative and preferred. For this reason feminist standpoint theory has successfully illustrated the link between organizations, socialization, and power.

Socialization as Power

Feminist standpoint theory assumes that the real relations of humans with each other and with the natural world are not readily visible but that this reality is *most* clear to those standing at the periphery of society. Therefore marginal lives ground socially situated knowledge (Harding, 1993). Specifically, Hartsock (1983) states five claims central to the standpoint contention. First, material life not only structures but also sets limits on the understanding of social relations. Second, the vision of the ruling (the power bloc) is both partial and perverse. Third, everybody is forced to participate in this vision and therefore it must be acknowledged. Fourth, a more clear vision is available only to the oppressed group through a process of struggle. And finally, once the vision (in this case the true understanding of oppression) is achieved, the real relations of human beings as inhuman carries a historically liberatory role. In sum, feminist standpoint theory states that marginalized individuals are privileged to particular unique vantage points because they are privy to a dual perspective from both inside and outside the dominant cultural structure (Dougherty & Krone, 2000; Harding, 1993; O'Brien Hallstein, 2000). This dual positioning offers a unique insight into socialization experiences because “standpoint

feminism encourages a lens that focuses on the patterned discourse (or discursive formations), institutions, and institutional arrangements (relationships between home and work) through which power relations maintain dominant–subordinate relationships” (Bullis & Stout, 2000, p. 62).

While feminist standpoint theory is founded on the assumption of shared experiences, it also recognizes differences. O’Brien Hallstein (2000) describes feminist standpoint theory as an attempt to recognize both the commonality and difference among women. She still argues that women have a unique perspective because of their position both inside and outside of the dominant culture and that this position allows them access to a unique standpoint, which is not merely a perspective but rather a position achieved through a process of struggle and dialogue. However she also argues that while standpoints may be shared, they differ with experiences. This approach creates space for both commonality and individuality and is exemplified by researchers like Allen (1998) who uses a black feminist standpoint approach. This emphasis on multiple standpoints helps feminist researchers to incorporate a focus on diversity by acknowledging their particular standpoint as one possibility rather than the only possibility.

Based on the assumptions of feminist standpoint theory and Jablin’s (1987) description of socialization, many scholars have concluded that marginalized individuals experience socialization differently (Allen, 1996; Allen 2000; Bullis, 1993; Bullis & Stout, 2000; Clair 1996; Deetz, 1992; Smith & Turner 1995). Yet, as the feminist standpoint scholars critique, traditional socialization research does little to address the impact of marginal lives on the experiences of socialization (Bullis & Stout, 2000). In fact, many have argued that traditional socialization assumes a universal experience by

focusing on insiders at the expense of outsiders, focuses on outcomes over processes, fails to include the experiences of marginalized individuals, continues to be biased towards organizations, and finally ignores the hegemonic nature of both organizational and socialization processes (Bullis & Stout, 2000; Buzzanell, 1994; Clair, 1996; Smith & Turner, 1995).

While some of these criticisms may be debatable (see Kramer & Miller, 1999), they nonetheless contend that traditional socialization research assumes a universal experience of the socialization model because it does not take into consideration the experiences of individuals who never become “insiders”. Bullis and Stout (2000) found that traditional models of socialization research define socialization as “a set of communicative processes that produce and reproduce relationships through which domination, subordination and marginalization occur” (p. 59). Defined this way, socialization is fundamentally a power process, or more precisely it functions as an ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1971/2001) that perpetuates dominant ideology. In other words, the way we traditionally define socialization serves to systematically resubordinate and marginalize those who are already disadvantaged by the organizational structure and discourse because while traditional models of socialization structure organizations as containers with both insiders and outsiders, past research has overwhelmingly focused on those who successfully make the transition to organizational insider, essentially ignoring “the people, discourses, and institutional arrangements that produce and sustain the ‘outsider’” (Bullis & Stout, 2000, p. 61). Consequently, feminist standpoint criticism points out the value of looking at the experiences of outsiders and thus begins to contribute to the body of literature.

Not only are “outsiders” positioned as the other in socialization research, but research has also shown that these outsiders are frequently women. Buzzanell (1994) argues that women are frequently excluded from certain socializing practices, as well as advancement opportunities, through the discourse that sustains the organizational culture. She therefore calls for a deeper understanding of the gendered relationships that permeate organizational life. Feminist standpoint theory provides a lens through which we can begin to understand the political nature of women’s experiences within organizations based on the development of gendered expectations prior to entry.

Further, traditional phase model research continues to be biased toward organizations in that the primary goal is to reveal the best way for organizations to find, hire, and indoctrinate workers into the corporate culture in a way that most effectively facilitates the corporate goals (see Allen, 2000; Allen, 1996; Bullis and Stout, 2000; Clair, 1996; McPhee, 1986; Smith & Turner, 1995.). While the advantages of this approach for the organization are obvious, there is little benefit to the oppressed worker (see Braverman, 1974).

Finally, traditional literature is biased towards dominant cultural constructions of reality by ignoring the inherent hegemonic nature of the socialization process (Allen, 1996; Allen, 2000; McPhee, 1986). In other words, “rarely do researchers seem to recognize that organizational settings usually reflect the dominant culture’s norms, attitudes, and values” (Allen, 2000, p. 182). Organizations embrace masculine style as the most valued communication pattern (Wood, 2001). Therefore, what is deemed appropriate behavior in mainstream organizations is typically based on white, male standards. The result of the white, male norm is that women and minorities must either

change their learned communication behaviors, a feat even more difficult than it may seem, or accept their positions as second-class employees.

Additionally, with the exception of research that focuses on predominantly feminine workplaces (i.e. workplaces that characterize feminine values such as caring for others), most socialization research focuses on the mainstream, dominant (male) voice (Bullis & Stout, 2000) while continuing to ignore those who are systematically marginalized within the mainstream (i.e. male dominated) organizational culture. This approach to research implies two equally concerning myths about women and work. First, by only looking at women in “feminine” work roles, researchers minimize women’s unique experiences within male dominated organizations. Second, it implies that women belong in feminine (primarily care giving) roles thus perpetuating the stereotype of women’s work. Unfortunately, by not recognizing the unique experiences and thus the value of women in mainstream organizations, we also dismiss alternative (feminine), yet equally effective, modes of production and organizing.

Further, many people who assume new roles in organizations experience organizational socialization as we typically think of it. In fact, Jablin (1987) uses this as the justification for his stage model research, which is still the most widely embraced model of organizational socialization today. Yet many individuals do not fit this model. Standpoint theory tells us that attitudes, opinions and behaviors are experienced differently by marginalized individuals (Allen, 1998; Collins, 1991; Harding, 1993; Hartsock, 1983; Hekman, 1997). Many of those marginalized individuals not only do not fit but also will never fully assimilate into organizations (Marshall, 1993). In fact Bullis

(2000) writes that these marginalized individuals never assimilate into organizations but rather learn to cope with their “outsider within” positions.

It is important to make a distinction here between simply being a newcomer who does not yet know how to fit into the organization and being a marginalized individual who will never be *allowed* to fit into the organization. Women are frequently left out of events that are crucial to real bonding such as golf outings (Wood, 2001) and are not allowed to participate in social activities in the same way as male employees even when they are invited. For example, Pfafman (2001) found that women faced different standards than men at activities such as consuming alcohol at work related events. If female employees drank with their male counterparts’ they were either disciplined by having caseloads reduced or failed to have contracts renewed at all. Yet if they abstained they were perceived as standoffish and not a team player.

In terms of gender, marginalization is typically, but not necessarily, the location of women. Yet, while women are most frequently marginalized in mainstream organizations, Clair (1998) points out that men may have similar experiences of marginalization, particularly when they work in primarily feminine jobs. In these instances of marginalization, gender still seems to be the primary difference between insider and outsider status. Yet there are many foundations for marginalization such as race (Allen, 1998) and social and economic status. Therefore the critical question in regards to power and inequalities is what gendered, racial, social and economic positions are privileged and how.

Because experiences of marginalized individuals, whether male or female, are socialized positions, the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors that contribute to the situated

position of outsider are best explored through a holistic, nonlinear (or stacked) approach to organizational socialization. Feminist standpoint scholars have attempted to explore the systemic nature of organizing by looking at those who experience socialization differently (i.e. women). Yet this shift in focus may not be enough to counter their own criticisms. By only looking at marginalized individuals and outsiders, they still continue to embrace the container metaphor because in fact, marginalization describes a position in physical relationship to the organizational container. Outsiders and marginalized individuals can only exist if organizational boundaries also exist.

Also, standpoint scholars focus a great deal of attention on where socialization occurs by looking at the boundaries individuals cross as well as the processes of moving from “outsider” to “insider” and back again. Again, this approach continues to embrace the image of a container separating the individual from the organization itself (see Smith & Turner, 1995).

While I do not want to make the claim that the work standpoint scholars do is fundamentally flawed, I do not believe it is, I do want to point out that it is incomplete. To truly alter the container metaphor that seems to be so problematic, researchers must address the *way* socialization research is being done. In other words, instead of looking at dominant groups versus marginalized groups (concepts that perpetuate the container metaphor), organizational socialization research might also look more closely at the environmental and social factors of organizing. To do this scholars might look more closely at how messages are constructed and consumed both inside and outside traditional corporate boundaries. We might study the meta-discourses of organizing in addition to singular texts. We might seek to expose ideologies contained in micro and meta-

discourses of organizing in order to expose normalized modes of organizing that occur at the cultural level. Finally, scholars might conceptualize socializing agents in a way that includes discourses that span socialization phases.

Understanding environmental influences on organizing, particularly by studying cultural-level discourses on organizing, sheds particular insight not only on the experiences of the marginalized but also on the processes that construct the notion of marginalization to begin with. Thus, a more systemic approach to socialization research may reveal the hidden power structures that are in place. So if we want to study organizing, we must also explore concepts such as how work, money, and leisure are constructed in Western culture. In looking at organizing from the point of socially constructed beliefs, values, and norms we actually move beyond physical boundaries, and thus necessarily beyond containers to a holistic view of organizing as a communication process.

One approach to escaping the container metaphor for organizations through our research is to embrace external sources as significant influences on organizational life. Organizations are systems of interdependent components with permeable boundaries that must exchange information with the environment (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Thompson, 1967). Organizations are not only influenced by but also influence the societies within which they exist. In other words, organizations are situated within a greater social context and must therefore be studied through that lens, or at what I refer to as the socio-organizational level of organizing.

At the same time, research also needs to move beyond the phase or stage models of socialization, which implies linearity to the socialization process, to one where

influences on organizational socialization occur simultaneously and constantly, much like a power process. If communication is an ongoing, systemic, organic process then so too is organizational socialization. Thus anticipation, encounter, assimilation, metamorphosis, and exit occur constantly and simultaneously. And as discourse about socialization evolves to reflect a messier picture of the process, it is important that our applied research does the same.

However, based on the criticism articulate above, traditional and contemporary socialization research tends to situate organizational communication as communication within organizations rather than the study of symbolic interactions that discursively construct social collectivities. At the same time these discussions of socialization imply a container metaphor which actually constructs insiders and outsiders and further perpetuates the illusion of organizations as locations thus limiting insights into organizing by excluding cultural context. Finally, thinking of socialization linearly inaccurately oversimplifies the process, which by nature is ongoing, systemic, and organic, thus again oversimplifying our understanding of socialization.

Analyzing socialization influences that permeate traditional boundaries of insider and outsider and transgress traditional socialization phases is a potential solution to the critiques rendered above. Business advice books reflect both organizational rhetoric in that they often function as training manuals within the workplace and environmental influences on organizing in that they function outside of traditional workplace boundaries. In this sense, BABs permeate traditional boundaries of insiders and outsiders. At the same time, BABs are consumed throughout any of the traditional socialization phases such that they also transgress traditional phase models. In these ways and because

all cultural artifacts reflect dominant ideology in that even artifacts functioning as resistance must reference that which they oppose (Althusser, 1971/2001), analyzing popular advice books affords scholars a unique opportunity to incorporate social/cultural context as a factor in organizing while overcoming some of the critiques of traditional socialization research. Analyzing BABs has the potential to delineate the traditional image of socialization phases illustrating a messier, layered picture of socializing, while it exposes ideologies that permeate organizing in the United States thus serving a potentially liberatory role in social research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

While understanding the organic nature of organizing, as well as the social/cultural context within which it occurs, is critical to a complete understanding of organizational socialization, and business advice books present a unique opportunity to explore these new questions, this study also offers a unique opportunity to reconceptualize socialization in terms of power. The following will explore the connection between power and socializing as their relationship lends insight into organizing.

Power is everywhere and in everything and is particularly inherent in organizing.

Mumby (1994) writes:

Power is not simply a part of organizational structure; rather, it is both medium and outcome; it is both enabling and constraining. Power, in essence, is both a product of organizational activity *and* the process by which activity becomes institutionally legitimated. Organizational interaction is therefore not something that takes place *within* the (power) structure of an organization, but is rather the process through which structure is created, reproduced, and changed. (p. 63)

Organizations are, according to Mumby, at their essence institutions of power.

Because organizations are institutions of power, socialization is the mechanism for teaching us the ropes. Throughout our lives, including early childhood, we are socialized into work roles (Barling, Dupre, & Hepburn, 1998; Goodnow, 1988; Goodnow & Warton, 1991; Mortimer, Finch, Owens, Shanahan, 1990; Vangelisti, 1988). From socially constructed gender roles (Wood, 2001) to work beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and goals (Barling, Dupre, & Hepburn, 1998), we learn to structure our identities around who and what we are professionally. This socialization process impacts not only how we

organize but also how we live and experience the world around us. Further, how we learn to value work and work related behaviors is reflective of the underlying values of the dominant ideology (Braverman, 1974). In Western culture, this ideology is based on both capitalism and patriarchy.

If organizations are institutions of power and socialization teaches us the ropes, then organizational socialization is a power process which reproduces the dominant, patriarchal ideology. It “is a set of processes that produce and reproduce relationships through which domination, subordination, and marginalization occur” (Bullis & Stout, 2000, p. 59). Therefore, analyzing work socialization may reveal the underlying power structure that defines work in our culture.

Unfortunately, few studies look at organizational socialization as a power process. In fact, a great deal of socialization research only looks to explore organizational socialization strategies, newcomers’ experiences and strategies, communication processes, and socialization relationships (Bullis & Stout, 2000). Feminist standpoint scholars have gotten the closest when they look at power as an element of socialization (Allen, 1996; Allen, 2000; Bullis & Stout, 2000; Buzzanell, 1993). I would like to expand this notion to theorize socialization as a power process in and of itself and thus apply feminist perspectives as well as theories of power to explicate the ideologies that ground organizational socialization. To fulfill this goal I will first take a closer look at the nature of power as both ideological and material followed by a description of the socialization process as we understand it today.

Power

Power is the ability to “manage and to manipulate the consent of men” (Mills, 1963, p. 23) but how this consent is achieved has been a question of debate among scholars who study it. A functionalist paradigm embraces power as an attribute of an individual or group (Banks, 1990) and therefore power is understood through the various bases through which it is obtained (French & Raven, 1959). For example, a number of scholars view power in organizations as resources (Aguinis, 1998; Pfeffer & Cialdini, 1998; Vredenburg & Brender, 1998) or as symbolic conditions of both people and social arrangements (Banks, 1990; Conrad, 1983) often visible through material structures (Brenner & Laslett, 1996). Finally, postmodern constructions of power examine the intersection of power, knowledge, and discourse as the ideological structures that serve to oppress particular members of society (Foucault, 1984; Huspek, 1993; Rabinow, 1984; Tracy, 2000) and these ideological structures are hegemonically sustained through material social structures.

The nature of the conflict between these competing theories of power can be characterized as a debate over the nature of the individual (i.e. subjectivity versus agency) (Fiske, 1993). Those who favor subjectivity focus attention on forces of domination, which is usually explained by theories of ideology, commodity or psychoanalysis. These theories also tend to focus on what is common to individuals of a given order, primarily consciousness (Fiske, 1993). On the other hand, those who emphasize agency focus greater attention on how people respond to these forces and, since material structures vary, tend to stress diversity (Fiske, 1993).

While there has been a great deal of debate over the real nature of power, each of these perspectives offers insight into its practical nature and is therefore valuable to any study of power. Feminist standpoint theory has, to an extent, taken this integrated approach by describing power as both socially constructed and materially situated experiences (Hartsock, 1983). Fiske (1986) provides additional support for this contention when he describes both material and ideological structures at play. In this sense, both arguments have in fact paved the way for an integrated theory of power that considers both the constructed ideological and material structures of power.

An integrated theory of power is not only possible, but is also necessary to develop a more complete understanding of power and its functions. Therefore this section explores the material and ideological descriptions of power that will be useful in developing a theory of power and socialization. Namely, I will describe perceptions of power as ideology and hegemony followed by a discussion of the material structures that sustain dominant ideology, and the intersections of each.

Ideology, Hegemony, and Control

The effect of power is the ability to “manage and to manipulate the consent of men” (Mills, 1963, p. 23) but how does one accomplish such manipulation and what exactly is the nature of such a force? According to Foucault (1976, 1979, 1988) power is to be conceived as ubiquitous, unstable, and amorphous, beyond institution or structure. Envisioned as an interconnected construct, Foucault (1976) points out that power should not be considered a possession of a given individual or group to lord over another.

Instead it is:

Something that circulates...it is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as commodity...Power is employed

and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. (Foucault, 1976, p. 98)

Given Foucault's premise that power is not contained within structures but flows via a "chain" of interconnection, human relationships are paramount to its creation and sustainability. The individual, as conceived by Foucault (1976) is no longer just a site of power's effects but also its conduit. Played out in the day-to-day activity of negotiating the social networks of our lives, power in this productive form (neither negative or positive) is conducted between relational partners on various levels of interactions.

Postmodern definitions of power place a particular emphasis on the relationship between power and knowledge. In fact, Fiske (1993) writes that they are actually two sides of the same coin in that each

entails the other and neither can exist without the other. Both are coherent systems of production, repression and distribution: both impose disciplined ways of thinking and behaving which offer rewards of efficiency and effectivity as compensations for their disciplinarity and repression. (p. 17)

Knowledge is selective and therefore exclusionary of both what is known as well as ways of knowing. Recognized knowledges therefore serve the interests of the dominant by repressing alternative ways of knowing and truths. Following this line of reasoning, it stands that "what knowledge produces is not truth, but power, or rather power disguised as truth" (Fiske, 1993, p. 15).

Power is sustained through relationships but is produced through discourse known as discourse producing knowledge (Fiske, 1993).

What is accepted as reality in any social formation is the product of discourse. Discourse produces a knowledge of the real which it then

presents and re-presents to us in constant circulation and usage. Events do occur, physical reality does exist, but we can know neither until they are put into discourse. (Fiske, 1993, p. 15)

Therefore the real power of knowledge “lies in its continuous and reciprocal flow between the social and the real, and in the way it constructs each in terms of the other” (p. 16-17).

While discourse produces knowledge, knowledge is legitimized by discourse (Fiske, 1993). For example, Conrad (1990) argues that narrative, myth and metaphorical discourse strategically create and maintain norms. Further, Mumby (1988) says narratives, myths, and metaphors have “the potential to function ideologically to sustain certain meaning systems and power structures, and thus to reproduce relations of domination” (p. 102) because they act as “cognitive shortcuts,” providing “members with accounts of the process of organizing” (Mumby, 1987, pp. 103, 113). Thus narratives create understanding and enable members to easily identify with the organization and make sense of ambiguity. In other words, dominant systems are able to strategically manipulate meaning systems through ambiguity (Mumby, 1988) such that narratives enable dominant groups to exert power by reifying dominant interests while disguising those interests through strategic ambiguity. However, it is important to note that narratives can challenge dominant ideology in the same way thus can serve both as domination and as resistance depending on who gets to construct the narrative (Mumby, 1987).

Barge and Keyton (1994) provide another example of the relationship between power and discourse in focusing on the interrelationship between context, social influence, and group discourse, which produces two specific types of power. The first is

commonly used, power-in-action (Frost 1987), which consists of overt attempts to influence their target through reasoning and argumentation. The second is power-in-conception, which frames “the interpretation of the discourse to achieve one’s own goals and to legitimize the actions taken by organizational members” (p. 87). Both use or modify the deep group structures including myths, rules, and assumptions.

Just as discourse produces and sustains knowledge, control is the application of power in particular contexts. Hence control is to power as discourse is to knowledge in that “control is localized, applied power at work, just as discourse is localized, applied knowledge at work” (Fiske, 1993, p. 17). In this sense, discourse (as it produces and reproduces knowledge) and control are the domains of power for dominant and subordinated groups. Thus, elements of discourse, knowledge and control are fundamental components of power.

Further, Fiske (1993) argues that control operates on three different levels: control of consciousness, or what goes on inside our heads; control of relationships or what goes on between people; and control of bodies, or the physical presence of individuals. The first two, consciousness and relationships, are of particular relevance to discussions of ideology because they are shaped by ideological power structures constructed by the interaction of discourse and knowledge. Therefore I will spend some time addressing control of consciousness and relationships in this next section. Control of bodies is a bit more complex because it requires material structures to sustain the dominant ideology in order to minimize dissent. This concept will be discussed later in the material structures section.

Ideology

Ideology involves

the process of symbolically creating systems of meaning through which social actors' identities are constructed and situated within relations of power. The ideological struggle entails the attempts of various groups to "fix" and "naturalize" their worldview over others. (Mumby, 2001, p. 589)

By shaping ideology, dominant groups control the ways social actors experience the world thus shaping social relations.

As ideology shapes worldviews it both institutionalizes and obscures systems of domination and subordination (Clair, 1998; Deetz and Mumby, 1990; Mumby, 1988). In an ideological sense, domination is not coercion, but rather is "represented by freely given consent" or hegemony, as we are subjugated by ideology. In other words, it is not coercion that subordinates individuals but rather it is "the ability of one class or group to link the interests and worldviews of other groups with its own" (Mumby, 2001, p. 587) such that subordinated groups actually buy into and thus reinforce the very ideological structures that dominate them. In this sense, true large-scale resistance is subverted.

According to Marxist theory and particularly the work of Althusser (1971), dominant ideology is created by and serves the interests of the ruling class. According to Marx (1867/1976) those who control the means of production exploit workers to extract labor but "the class which has the means of material production at its disposal consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it" (Marx & Engles, 1932/1968/2000, p. 21). Gramsci (1971) adds that the ruling elite retains power by strictly regulating the information received and processed by the oppressed. Aune (2003) further explains that the ruling control common sense by using motivational appeals to

naturalize the social order and its conditions. He concludes, "'Ideology,' then from a historical materialist standpoint takes the form of social fallacies: limited social perspective, 'occupational psychosis,' intellectual prostitution, and superstition" (p. 4). Domination and class conflict are inherent in a capitalist system. The capitalist class is motivated to exploit and oppress other classes by the drive to accumulate material wealth; thus the nature of classes in a capitalist society is inherently antagonistic. This is the foundation of class conflict and organizational contradictions. Again, conflict, in the Marxist sense, is rooted in specific features of the modes of production. This conflict may or may not result in eruptions, which are merely visible manifestations of latent antagonisms. In fact, Miliband (1977) writes,

members of one class may well feel no antagonism towards members of other classes; and there may be mobility between classes. But classes nevertheless remain irreconcilably divided. Eruptions, outbursts, revolts, revolutions, are only the most visible manifestations of permanent alienation and conflict. (p. 18)

As conflict inherently exists in the form of antagonisms between the classes whether blatant conflict erupts or not, the focus of a Marxist ideological study then is necessarily one of class antagonism and conflict. These antagonisms are exposed through the explication of dominant discourse which necessarily carries within it dominant ideology.

Aune (2003) further argues that every social process has contradictory tendencies and that these tendencies must be rhetorically mediated in order for the process to be sustained. Specifically, organizational contradictions, often referred to as organizational paradoxes, always exist as "routine features of organizational life" (Trethewey & Ashcraft, 2004, p. 83). Trethewey and Ashcraft (2004) write of organizing,

Any semblance of rationality, seamlessness, or fixedness is simply an effect of discourse, a product of a particular power or knowledge regime . . .

. Such irrationality – an outgrowth of the simultaneous presence of presumed opposites – is pervasive precisely because organizational logics and the language and talk that constitute them are never transparent; that is, they do not simply reflect already fixed meanings. Instead, communication is a site where organizational members struggle for the primacy of various meanings of truth and identity, as well as their material manifestations. (p. 83)

Mediating organizational contradictions occurs through identification which compensates for the divisions (Aune, 2003). In other words, discourse that facilitates identification of the audience with the rhetor mediates or obscures contradictions and divisions.

Accordingly, organizational rhetoric can be viewed as the tool through which organizations attempt to create and fix meanings by mediating contradictions according to organizational goals and preferred outcomes.

(Re)producing and sustaining the above conditions of capitalism is necessary in order for any capitalist social formation to exist, and these conditions are reproduced through instruments of the state which are themselves controlled by the ruling class (Althusser, 1971/2001). The state, according to the Marxist tradition,

is explicitly conceived as a repressive apparatus. The State is a ‘machine’ of repression which enables the ruling classes . . . to ensure their domination over the working class, thus enabling the former to subject the latter to the process of surplus-value extortion (i.e. to capitalist exploitation). (Althusser, 1971/2001, p. 92)

Necessarily then repressive state apparatuses (RSAs) (which include the government, administration, military, police, courts, and prisons) and ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) function as appendages of the State. Althusser (1971/2001) writes,

I shall call Ideological State Apparatuses a certain number of realities, which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions . . . we can for the moment regard the following institutions as Ideological State Apparatuses (the order in which I have listed them has no particular significance): the religious ISA (the

system of the Churches), the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private ‘Schools’), the family ISA, the legal ISA, the political ISA (the political system, including the different Parties), the trade union ISA, the communications ISA (press, radio, and television, etc.), the cultural ISA (Literature, the Arts, sports, etc.). (p. 96)

Repressive state apparatuses (RSAs) are therefore institutions that function primarily by violence while Ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) function primarily by ideology to reproduce conditions of the State.

Business advice books (BABs) function as ISAs in that they reproduce the modes of production by mediating organizational contradictions. BABs are produced and tacitly endorsed by corporate institutions. Each book’s author owns the corporation that produces the book. Thus the books are products of those corporate ideologies. At the same time the books are consumed by various corporations as part of formal training and development programs and are sanctioned by organizations as desirable reading material in their more informal efforts to socialize employees. In this sense, BABs both reflect and shape organizational ideology constituting them a form of organizational rhetoric.

As a form of organizational rhetoric, one function of BABs is to construct versions of reality that institutionally reproduce and thus control conditions of capitalist society. So as an ISA, BABs are designed to privilege organizational goals over individual needs, conceal tensions between capitalist and labor, and obscure internal contradictions within dominant ideology through the regulation of public discourses concerning work.

Private ownership of outlets for public discourse, accomplished through the commodification and privatization of public places including mediated discourse, enables

the inclusion and exclusion of particular voices from political and social debate.

According to Habermas (1962/2001), the public sphere

may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor. (p. 1745)

While he recognizes complications in simplifying the complex dichotomy between public and private spheres, Habermas presents a schema of social realms as a general guide to understanding. Here he identifies the *private* realm as civil society including the realm of commodity exchange and social labor (in a capitalist society where commodity exchange and social labor are privatized) and the “conjugal family’s internal space” (p. 1748). The *public* sphere, on the other hand, is the State including police and the courts.

According to Habermas, the public sphere is shaped by rational argument and the strength of one’s argument rather than one’s identity. Thus all individuals who participate in the public sphere have voice and democratic participation resulting in equal opportunity to influence state decisions of policy. But with modernization, media has become increasingly commodified rather than a tool for public discourse, and media being privately own leads to greater private discourse of politics.

With the privatization of media in a society where genuine participatory democracy is idealistic and political discourse must be mediated, access to public sphere can be and is controlled by the elite who own the media outlets. In this sense, true public sphere discourse is not possible in modern Western societies of capitalism and democracy.

Private political, social, and public discourse as it exists is exclusive and shaped more by one’s identity than the strength of reasonable arguments. Thus access to public

discourse, and consequently decisions that influence the State, are regulated meaning the few, the ruling elite, control political and social discourse and consequently decisions that influence the State (society). In other words, routinized political parties and interests groups replace participatory democracy because structurally speaking, political discourse can only exist through private institutions that allow, control, and regulate citizens' access to debates of public interest.

In addition to moderating access to public discourse and thus social influence, Heidegger (1927/1962) argues engagement in public discourse (because humans are fundamentally social) is necessary for true "Dasein" (existence). Thus exclusion from public discourse not only limits influence on the State and public interests matters but also denies one true existence. Individuals without access to the public sphere become invisible and marginalized non-members of society who are denied voice with which to debate public interest issues that directly impact them (See Sedgweg, 1990).

While ideology in terms of power is often described as something enacted upon individuals, Foucault (1976) says individuals have the ability to both exercise and experience power in a bottom to top/top to bottom flow. So in terms of ideology, the interests of the ruling class may be obscured but responses of the working class while constrained are negotiable and contingent on class-consciousness. When the proletariat becomes aware, through a process of struggle, of class conditions and interests, they gain a revolutionary consciousness with the potential to act accordingly. Fiske (1993) explains this as having agency within a system of constraints and calls the phenomena localizing as opposed to imperializing power.

Localizing power, the power exercised by subordinated groups, is distinct from imperializing power in goal and process. Whereas “the aim of imperializing power is to extend its reach as far as possible over physical reality, over human societies, over history, over consciousness”(Fiske, 1993, p. 11), localizing power seeks to control immediate social conditions. Localizing power is therefore

interested in strengthening its control over the immediate conditions of everyday life . . . [T]he function of this power is to produce and hold onto a space that can . . . be controlled by the subordinates who live in it.
(Fiske, p. 12)

For example, Leidner’s (1993) study of service workers at McDonalds reveals employees of routinized service work actually use routines to exert localizing power since the routines themselves serve to protect the worker from customer harassment and complaints.

Group research illustrates how individuals might experience localizing power in organizations. Meyers and Brashers (1999) point out,

coalitions are created and maintained as a mechanism for influencing group members in a variety of situations, including those in which there are power or resource inequities, ambiguous resource distribution rules, or particular attractive forces between subgroups. (p. 300)

In this sense, the formation of small groups within organizations and the relationships that emerge can be conceived of as a means of exerting power in general and as a way of exerting localizing power in particular. For example, while organizational socialization is inherently an imperializing process of transforming newcomers into prescribed organizational roles, group bonding and differentiation is an inherently localizing process where newcomers join together to exert some control over their daily organizational experiences (Pfafman, Drumheller, & Dixon, 2002). By acting collectively, groups can

often exercise more influence than individuals (Moreland & Levine, 1989), and since setting itself apart from the others not only strengthens the bonds between ingroup members but also strengthens the group, differentiation itself is one enactment of localizing power (Pfafman et al., 2002).

The group example also illustrates the distinction between localizing power and resistance. Localizing power includes but is not limited to resistance. Resistance, as described by Clair (1998) occurs along side power in everyday practices. While some may freely consent to the dominant ideology, others resist it in a variety of ways such as through silence (Clair, 1998). Localizing power, on the other hand, occurs not in response to domination but in its own right. It is not a reaction, but rather is its own unique form of power. In the group example, localizing power is not resistance because it does not undermine the dominant ideology.

Further, localizing power may be exerted in ways that are not only consistent with dominant ideological structures, but in fact reify those structures. For example, the creation and strengthening of ingroups not only empowers the group members to be successful (localizing power) but also reifies patriarchal norms of competition (ideology power) while working to fulfill the organizational goals (imperializing power).

Kunda (1992) found that localizing power not only reifies dominant ideology but also the material structures that serve to maintain it. For example, organizational structures may control the ways individuals are allowed to resist such that the formal structures actually shape the ability of individuals to exert localizing power while creating a sense of control. In Kunda's study employees are encouraged to submit complaints but are limited to particular forms of critique. So while individuals may exert

localizing power by making formal suggestions, the process itself has been absorbed by the corporate culture such that resistance is minimized and dissent actually perpetuates the corporate ideology.

In regards to organizational socialization and business advice books, dominant ideology permeates all cultural artifacts (Althusser, 1966/2001) so that the books themselves reflect the ideology. As they are used for socializing individuals into work culture, they become tools of ideological indoctrination not only into work but also into capitalist society. As tools of the dominant ideology, they serve as ISAs. In this sense, socialization is not only a power process but also its tools are in themselves ISA which teach dominant ideology and thus revealing ideology within the texts also exposes the ideological nature of organizing.

Material Structures

The debate over the nature of reality, particularly over the existence of material reality has long divided scholars. But ideology does not negate materialism and in fact the two do and must co-exist structurally. Ideology is key to power precisely because it controls consciousness but also precisely because of its relations to materialism. Ideology has a material existence but the nature of this existence is only ever interpreted within ideology and thus is only ever known in the sense of hermeneutical interpretation. Thus, ideology is “an imaginary relation to real relations” (Althusser, 1971,2001, p. 113).

Braverman (1974) further develops the material components of Marxist theory on ideology through a discussion of labor power and the division of labor resulting in deskilling and subsequent degradation of work. These structural forms of workplace control exist as a part of dominant ideology. According to Althusser 1971/2001), “an

ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. This existence is material” (p. 112). But this material existence of the ideology “does not have the same modality as the material existence of a paving stone or a rifle” (p. 112). Instead, ideology is a “determinate representation of the world whose imaginary distortion depends on their imaginary relation to their conditions of existence, in other words, in the last instance, to the relations of production and to class relations” (p. 113).

Illustrating Althusser’s description of ideological relations, Braverman defines work as something unique to human beings. Our unique ability to use symbols also makes us uniquely capable of modifying the tool using experience. These modifications also enable us to create continuity in the tool-using experience which in turn leads to what one might call higher order labor. However, with the growth of capitalism and the industrial age in particular, labor has become increasingly fragmented. With the division of labor separating brain work from hand work, (hence the deskilling of labor) workers are also separated from that which makes them uniquely human – higher order labor. With workers engaging in more routinized forms of labor, managers are able to separate workers from the fragmented elements of their work. In this way they are able to control that which they previously had no control over, labor power, thus deskilling workers and increasing management control over worker’s bodies.

The impact of material structures on controlling bodies in factories is fairly obvious from the example above. However, the routinization of the labor process also commodifies more intangible elements of the worker thus reinforcing the ideology that governs work life. In this way, material structures control bodies in service work as well. For example, Hochschild (1997) looks at emotional labor as a form of management

control over workers. In this particular study, she examines emotions as a commodity detached from the workers' identities and therefore a management controlled division of labor. In fragmenting the identity of individuals into commodifiable parts, emotions become commodities controlled by managers. According to Smith (2001) this commodification process transforms structural control from something previously concerned with producing things, such as with factory work, to a process more concerned with serving and interacting with people. Smith (2001) calls this subjective control.

In another example, Leidner (1993) looks at routines as one form of structural control. She finds that routinization of interactive service work is, in many ways, similar to the routinization of factory work since both depend on predictability and stability for control (Milkman, 1997). However the successful routinization of service work is also dependent on standardizing service employees as well as service recipients. The key to controlling workers through routinization is that individuals are always replaceable and therefore individually not very valuable. But the benefits of this predictability outweigh the problems that result, namely high turnover. Management and customers can count on consistent and efficient treatment and service and this consistency is valued over employee retention.

The companies in Leidner's (1993) study gain control over workers' bodies by controlling the labor process in some pretty specific ways. For instance, at McDonalds, decision-making responsibilities are minimal at best. Technical control limits the choices employees can make at the registers and bureaucratic control regulates the specific ways the job gets done. All the while, service recipients (the customers) are complicit with management in the control of workers in that they learn and reinforce the routine.

Customers know where and how to place orders as well as the limited menu selections that are appropriate. Indeed, a great deal of compliance gaining from service recipients depends on customers knowing the routine before entering the interaction.

Material and ideological structures do not exist or function in isolation because in fact, each depends upon and enables the other. Material/formal structures not only serve to control bodies but also serve to reify ideology that shapes consciousness and relationships, and ideology maintains material structures. Therefore, material structures and ideology are interrelated. By both constructing and supporting one another, research shows that material structures and ideology actually work together to commodify and control workers' bodies, consciousness, and relationships by shaping personalities, minds, and even their senses of themselves (Hochschild, 1997; Kunda, 1992; Leidner, 1993; Pierce, 1995; Smith, 2001). For example, in contemporary, service oriented workplaces, material/structural controls such as policies, procedures and alternative work norms interact with ideology to engineer the work culture (Kunda, 1992; Hochschild, 1997), to gender the workplace (by privileging masculine communication styles over more feminine styles thus controlling who can and cannot be fully assimilated into the organization) (Pierce, 1995), and shifting the responsibility for risk from corporations to workers (Smith, 2001).

The first example of this more subtle and pervasive control is the use of formal policies to construct corporate culture. In one company, family friendly policies were used to create a culture of caring and commitment. Hochschild (1997) found that families fail to take advantage of formal family-friendly work policies such as job share, part time, and flex space/ flex time because the existence of the policies themselves engineer a

sense of caring and support that constructs a “work as family” metaphor. This creates a culture where work indeed feels more like home than home itself. As a result of this cultural engineering, Hochschild finds that most employees express a desire for more time at home to get things done, yet they feel that life at home is so rushed and unpleasant that when faced with a choice between spending time at home or time at work, most employees choose work despite the awareness of “family-friendly” policies.

In terms of ideology, the family friendly policies contribute to a growing sense of obligation to the organization in several ways. First, the effectiveness of the family friendly policies are evaluated according to a reduction of lost work time, i.e. with the policies in place, people actually miss less work time and therefore the policies are effective in increasing productivity. This not only indicates that the policies were never intended to create family balance, but also that they actually construct a culture of greater commitment to the organization.

Second, after generating an increased sense of commitment to the organization, the company eats up so much of the employees’ time that employees literally do not have enough hours to do the work of home. Of course this makes home feel more like work since the task to time ratio is actually greater than the task to time ratio at work. In other words, the second shift at home is made up of more tasks but fewer hours to complete them in than the first shift at work. When work quite literally gets a larger and more adequate percentage of time, the office naturally feels more relaxed while home feels increasingly hectic. Time in the workplace is less frantic and therefore more pleasant. In this way the policies serve as structures that shape the ideology governing work and home.

In another example corporate culture is shaped by controlling channels of dissent (Kunda, 1992). A key component of Kunda's argument is that individuals only have an ability to act within the constraints of corporately controlled resistance – much like Fisk's description of localizing power. When workers attempt to question their place within the organizational structure (resistance), the organization controls the resistance by limiting and shaping the channels of dissent, for example, by offering employees company funded expert advice. However, since these experts are affiliated with the corporation, the advice they give is filtered through the corporate ideology such that any grievances workers express can be diluted and controlled by the company itself. In other words, the complaints are once again made to fit within the organizational constraints and thus reinforce dominant ideology.

Kunda's (1992) research also illustrates the relationship between material structures, ideology, and the hegemonic process of cultural reproduction. By indoctrinating individuals into work culture, mechanisms of control are obscured and further perpetuated by the employees own involvement in the process. In fact, workers willingly participate in their own domination by internalizing the organizational goals, rules, and norms as their own. Therefore, the workers themselves become complicit in the process of their own domination and control. For example, often an individual's own drive to achieve, combined with peer pressure, serve as motivators for workers to work harder. Control is further hegemonically reproduced as senior managers discursively construct perceptions of reality by regulating the expression of beliefs and emotions, thus actually enticing workers themselves to reify the corporate interests. Organizational control at Tech is consensual because it embraces individualism. Yet the self and the

collective are linked in that there is no distinction between them when the individual's self-worth becomes defined in relation to how s/he fits within the organization.

The concept of teamwork further illustrates the relationship between structures, ideology and hegemony. Barker (1993) and Sennett (1998) argue that teamwork, as the focus of modern work, does not really exist but instead is merely another form of control over workers where authority disappears from power and disorients employees. This superficiality of the teamwork concept is demeaning to the workers who participate in it and merely empowers the authority leader by granting him/her the opportunity and just cause to ignore the legitimate needs and desires of employees which are displaced by team needs and benefits.

Since the formation of work teams obscures power and authority, it also serves to transfer risk from the capitalist to the worker. In the United States throughout the mid twentieth century, the company's role was to support and take care of the workers financially by ensuring lifetime employment, growth opportunities, decent wages, and excellent company benefits (see Milkman, 1997; Sennett, 1998). However, profitability and security offered by the company was undercut by Fordism which governed factory operations and thus shifted the social contract from one where companies were concerned for workers to one where companies are concerned with profits and shareholders and at the same time strengthened individualism as dominant ideological value.

With the shift in the social contract, employment in the United States became more tenuous. Lifetime employment is no longer guaranteed or even expected and the burden of control and profitability are now placed on individual workers rather than the companies. Smith (2001) describes this shift in the social contract when she argues that

the American work culture has shifted away from one where organizations assumed the risk of a fluctuating economy and the individual worker was relatively protected from such risks. This period of relative security is contrasted to an era of greater uncertainty and instability for the individual workers. Smith charges that companies have neglected their responsibility of assuming risk and therefore place the burden of a fluctuating economy on the shoulders of individual workers and this shift is again consistent with the dominant ideological focus on individualism, hard work and getting ahead.

One way organizations have passed the burden onto individuals is with what Smith (2001) calls temporary work. Temporary work includes not only those employed as temporaries but also those who perform contract work, those who engage in self-management, and those who are unemployed/underemployed and using a re-employment service. Her point here is that each group assumes greater risk than other types of work environments because the employees themselves shoulder the burden of an economic downturn, as well as sole responsibility for the cost of their own health care and retirement funds, and this increased risk also increases the control companies have over workers. Smith (2001) thus supports Sennet's conclusions reporting that the new social contract includes the demise of any sense of corporate responsibility to the worker and that this new relationship is located in the demise of stable, productive, and meaningful economic employment.

Further, subjective control not only describes fundamental changes in corporate control but also illustrates the powerful connection between organizational norms and dominant social ideology in that these changes have also shaped the social and personal lives of employees. The result is an ideology that maintains corporate domination over

both work and social life. As an example, Sennett (1998) argues that under what he calls new capitalism, individuals have the ability to let go of the past because there is no longer a narrative connection to it. In other words, the dominant discourse has shifted and the new narrative increasingly promotes fragmentation and routinization leading workers to embrace flexibility to the extent that risk is not only normalized but is a new standard test of character. Further, these work place norms have culturally produced a social environment of instant gratification and short-term goals. With the demise of delayed gratification and self-discipline in favor of short-term goals the most critical ideological value in western capitalistic society, namely consumption, is maintained and reproduced in an even more effective and efficient form.

From Organizational Power to Social Organization: Constructing Class

According to classical Marxism distinct classes are formed through the division of labor creating the bourgeois (capitalist) who own the means and modes of production and the proletariat who are alienated from the modes of production resulting in the production of surplus value for the capitalists (Marx & Engels, 1888). It follows then that understanding class reveals, “how class structure and class struggle influence the nature and amount of surplus labor extracted from the exploited classes” (Walker, 1979, p.xxii). In other words, class analysis has the potential to reveal the most exploited or oppressed groups, the groups most critical to sustaining a functioning society, and those most likely to develop a revolutionary consciousness.

More recent cultural critics have explained that in order “For workers to keep working, all of society must work within the general contours of capitalism” (Walker, 1979, p. xviii), meaning that all members of a society participate in some way and that

this participation shapes not only work life but social life as well. Thus members of a given class share not only economics but also “share a common social identity, have common forms of cultural expression, shared traditions, languages” (p. xxiv) i.e. social cohesion. Thus class distinctions in fact result in shared social, cultural, and educational experiences as well as shared work, consumption, life style, and network patterns (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 1979; hooks, 1984). So in modern society, social class appears with a much deeper and more complex hierarchy than Marx’s economic divisions of labor.

Historically America’s class stratification was marked by essential freedom rooted in an “independent means of livelihood” (Mills, 2002, p. 14). After the centralization of property decreased individual ownership of work, the nature of class divisions changed as well making social markers as pivotal as economic.

Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich (1979) in a foundational work on the professional middle class argue there has been a shift in ownership of property and work creating a necessary middle component of the labor process. When handwork became increasingly distanced from brainwork, a new need for process managers emerged leading to the creation of a new professional middle class (PMC). “Like the working class, the PMC is forced to sell its labor to capital. But like the capitalist, the PMC engages in planning, managing and rationalizing capitalist institutions and ideology” (Carter, 1979, p. 100). Thus the PMC has, in economic terms, a unique relationship to the modes of production in that they are both employed by capital but also manage, control, and have authority over the labor process (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 1979).

The unique relationship between social and technical divisions of labor resulted in the construction of an entirely unique class identity. For example, when “people within the firm become specialized to the extent that they form part of the broad social division of labor, e.g., when engineers start their own engineering firms, and when in addition they develop firms whose function is the management of mass consumption and culture, e.g., advertising agencies” (p. xvii), the result is an entirely new class of workers who defy any of the old class categories. This new class is the professional middle class (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 1979).

If the relationship between technical and social divisions of labor results in the construction of class categories, then the cultural reproduction of capitalism and class calls into question the ideas, values, and norms reproduced within specific class strata as these values, ideas, and norms constitute markers of contemporary class stratum. Scholars refer to these new social markers of PMC status as class affect. “Affect is how we embody our class position, and in a sense generates our class position” (Williams, 2004, p. 173). At the emergence of the new class division, consumption and type of work were markers of middle class status. Yet while middle class values of permissiveness, conspicuous consumption, and generous leisure time were achievable through hard work and education, inflationary economic conditions of the 1980’s made it difficult to sustain this climate of instant gratification without compromising one’s financial stability (Ehrenreich, 1989). In particular, middle class individuals with the right education and occupation were increasingly hard pressed to sustain their economic markers of status.

The potential for growing economic strain on the PMC to lead to discontented employees, yet a growing dependence on the PMC’s technical expertise (see Mills,

2002), created a need for more sustainable and ambiguous markers of class privilege achievable primarily through social rather than economic means. Williams (2004) says these newest markers of class status include the ways we feel, experience, and act out professional life, education, type of work, autonomy, control of hours, tastes, and salaries. Consequently, modern organizations not only shape the work life of individuals but define their social lives as well in that the dominant ideological values of work are reflective of and reproduced within society. Thus work organization and social organization are linked in a symbiotic relationship of social (or cultural) reproduction and diffusion (Walker, 1979).

Domination and conflict are inherent elements of socio-economic class relations and thus serve as a foundation of understanding power at the socio-organizational level. Individuals instinctually define themselves through social categorization, or a process of identifying groups to which they and others belong (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In the process of group identification, oppositions among people are emphasized and these oppositions form the dividing points of social organization.

Intergroup conflict, or the conflict that exists between opposing groups, serves to solidify group identity and enables group differentiation. Group differentiation, or the polarization between groups, in turn leads to an increase in in-group identification and loyalty. As distinct groups become increasingly fixed, intergroup ideologies emerge as organized belief systems to reinforce and perpetuate the cohesion within and differentiation between groups. The outcome, known in Marxism as class conflict, is the foundation of class systems in capitalistic economic societies (Althusser, 1971/2001).

Further, social dominance theory asserts there is a basic desire for group-based inequality which is justified through ideologies that are “motivated by a common desire to assert the superiority of the in-group over relevant out-groups, and they justify such group superiority in terms that appear both morally and intellectually justifiable” (Sidanius, Prato, Bobo, 1996, p. 477). Social dominance then constitutes class conflict, which, according to Marxist theory, is rooted in specific features of the modes of production. This conflict may or may not result in eruptions, which are merely visible manifestations of latent antagonisms. In fact, Miliband (1977) argues that classes may not even feel antagonisms towards other classes but classes none-the-less remain "irreconcilably divided" (p. 18). So whether it is blatant or not, latent class conflict always exists, these divisions that create class conflict are borne out of the basic desire for social dominance, and the specific antagonisms that result serve as markers of class strata within a given culture.

Class antagonisms are manifest in many forms. Mills (1951/2002) writes “For the character of any stratum consists in large part of its relations, or lack of them, with the strata above and below it; its peculiarities can best be defined by noting its differences from other strata.” (p. xx). Thus we can conclude that both social conditions and life style are characteristic markers of class stratum. And specifically Mills (1951/2002) suggests that through a rhetoric of competition antagonisms arise between the classes over the meaning of work, status and prestige, definitions of success, and the ways of power in general. These class antagonisms serve to construct social class stratification in American culture.

Cultural reproduction of class antagonisms impacts at least five aspects of work and society: “the technical division of labor in the firm, the social division of labor in society, the educational system, the state, and the family” (Walker, 1979, p xv). Particularly relevant to this study is the relationship between technical and social divisions of labor in that the two function in collaboration with one another to reproduce capitalism. The technical division of labor results in a hierarchy of employees within any given organization based on technical knowledge, skill, and expertise. The social division of labor refers to the organizing of work in such a way that social and economic hierarchies are established among the people within society as a whole resulting in the classification of people into working class, blue collar, and white collar categories. Effectively, technical division of labor divides and classifies individuals through specialization while social reproduction insures the current system because it produces passive workers and minimizes resistance.

Effectively, power is constructed by both ideological and material structures working together to normalize values of the ruling class within the greater society. Organizations are thus structures that produce and reproduce dominant ideology so the study of organizing at the socio-organizational level is essential to developing a fuller picture of organizing in general and the social impact of organizing in particular. Further, the transmission or diffusion of dominant ideology occurs rhetorically through texts. And as they are used for socializing individuals into work culture, business advice books become tools of ideological and social indoctrination thus requiring closer critical examination.

Organizations as Gendered Power Blocs

The structural and ideological control of workers does not always impact employees equally. In fact, it frequently disadvantages some employees to the benefit of others. Pierce (1995) describes how the commodification of emotions and gendering of the workplace serves to disadvantage women. She postulates that the gendered structure of firms shapes the experiences of attorneys, paralegals, and legal assistants by fixing emotional tasks to particular job responsibilities. This production/reproduction of gender relations disadvantages the women that work in law firms regardless of their position.

Further, female attorneys confront a double bind that suggests non-assertive women are too soft to be good litigators while assertive women are too difficult to get along with and non-feminine because the role of litigation is not gendered as a feminine task (Pierce, 1995). Female paralegals are constructed as mothering and therefore must tolerate often-abusive treatment from attorneys to fulfill their roles as the emotional caregivers. In this way, the women are disadvantaged over their male counterparts whose prescribed gender roles fit nicely into the gendered structure of the organization.

While questions regarding socialization and power are driving a great deal of this study in general, the idea of organizations as specifically male gendered locals, or locations where male communication norms are privileged, is a particularly problematic element of power. Therefore, the following section will explore the role of gender in power and organizing.

Mumby (2000) describes gender as one of the mundane tasks workers carry out on a daily basis. He writes,

organization members do gender in the course of their mundane, everyday organizational practices . . . social actors are constantly engaged in the

process of enacting systems of meaning that construct identities in a gendered manner. In this sense, gender is not an individual characteristic of discrete organization members but is both a medium and an outcome of structured organizational practices. (p. 4)

According to Mumby, doing gender is part of everyday organizational practice. It is social, beyond the control of any single individual, and inescapable.

The foundation of feminist research has been that experience is not gender neutral (Bar On, 1993) and the gendered experience of organizing is socially constructed. The impact of the gendered workplace has been of concern to feminist scholars because the gendering of the workplace creates inherent inequalities (Wood, 2001). For example, power-as-domination (a practice consistent with masculine norms) tends to be prominent in western organizations, yet there are indications that power-as-domination is not a “natural” feature of contemporary organizations. Instead, power is a social construction, with multiple alternative possible outcomes (Pierce & Dougherty, 2002). It stands to reason that this construction of power as domination best serves those who identify with the gendered nature of the organization – primarily men.

The differences in male and female organizational experiences, and consequently definitions of power, become problematic for women in organizations in that organizations tend to embrace the more masculine definitions (hierarchies and boundaries) as productive and efficient (Bullis & Stout, 2000; Wood, 1992). Indeed, within the organizational context, masculine definitions of power dominate (Mumby, 1988) thus infusing themselves to the idea of professionalism (see Pfafman, 2001). Consequently women tend to be perceived as incompetent (childlike or sexualized), only valuable in support positions (motherly), or too unfeminine (the iron maiden) (Wood, 1997). Yet they continue to struggle to fit into a patriarchal professional world. They, in

fact, operate within what Wood and Conrad (1983) describe as the paradox of the professional woman where women are either “too female” to be professional or “too professional” to be feminine.

Power is an integral component of the professional paradox and has been of particular interest to feminist scholars (Allen, 1998; Bullis & Stout, 2000; Buzzanell, 1995; Collins, 1986; Dougherty, 2001, 2002; Dougherty & Krone, 2002; Harding, 1993; Hartsock, 1983; Hekman, 1997; Parker, 2001). Buzzanell (1995) writes that the glass ceiling, which is borne out of the professional paradox, is grounded in power imbalances that are maintained through gender in organizations. And Dougherty (2001) argues that inconsistencies might serve to marginalize women in organizations by creating “untenable and uncomfortable situations” thus “reinforcing the professional paradox” (p. 7).

Double binds, as described by Wood and Conrad (1983), occur when participants respond to a paradox in ways that are seemingly appropriate yet serve to perpetuate the paradox. Double binds only exist when there is a power relationship between two or more parties, when the discourse involved is paradoxical, and when the responses by the less powerful participants serve to reinforce the paradox. In other words, paradox, power, and responses are all central to the construction and maintenance of a double bind.

Wood and Conrad (1983) find that there is a fundamental paradox at play within organizations. It is the paradox of “professional women.” This fundamental paradox pits the notion of professional, which is highly charged with masculine characteristics, against the socially constructed notion of what it means to be female. In this case, women are

either feminine or professional, but the contradiction or inconsistencies between the two concepts prevent women from being both.

Based on this fundamental paradox, Wood and Conrad (1983) have revealed several more specific paradoxes at play. While there are six defined within their research, I will only describe the first three since they relate most specifically to this current study. First Wood and Conrad (1983) describe the paradox of powerlessness which involves the inconsistencies between women in formally powerful positions and the informal dynamics that define women as powerless. Second, the paradox of marginality is comprised of women's token status within the organization. Here the token is regarded formally as a part of the executive professional group yet informally as an outsider because of her gender. Finally, the paradox of self-definition is perhaps the greatest and most problematic inconsistency for women in the workplace. The paradox of self-definition implies women must choose between femininity and professionalism because the two cannot co-exist. Complicating things further, the paradox of self-definition interacts with the paradox of powerlessness to construct a power paradox where the women never define themselves as powerful in relation to others in the workplace regardless of how they define power itself (Pfafman & Dougherty, 2003).

The consequence of the double bind, the professional paradox, and the power paradox is that throughout their careers, women must grapple with the question of who they are, consequently prioritizing one part of their identity over the others. For example, is one a female doctor or a doctor who is female? Frequently one of these identity constructs must be minimized to accommodate the other since the constructs of female and professional are socially defined as diametrically oppositional. Again, because of the

fundamental professional paradox, this constitutes a double bind in which one cannot win.

Because the professional paradox is partially a consequence of the gendered power dynamics within organizations, the discursive construction of gendered workplaces is of particular concern. In conceptualizing organizations as gendered locals, or places where one gender is particularly privileged over the other, several lines of research have emerged. First, feminist scholars have looked specifically at the differences between male and female definitions of power finding that female definitions tend to embrace more collaborative work environments. The second line of research finds that organizations tend to embrace different standards for male and female communication in regards to assertiveness. Finally, a third line of research has explored gendered differences in the use of emotions in the workplace. In the next section I will explore each of these areas more thoroughly.

Gender and Collaboration

Of specific importance to this study are the differences between men and women's definitions of power because it is these differences that construct the foundation of gendered work environments. Feminist standpoint theory suggests that women experience organizations in unique ways (Allen, 1996; Bullis & Stout, 2000; Dougherty & Krone, 2000), and thus experience organizational power in unique ways (Dougherty, 2002; Fine, 1993; Marshall, 1993; Parker, 2001). Power as domination is a concept that recent studies have found to be primarily masculine (Dougherty, 2002). Instead, Dougherty (2002), Fine (1993), Marshall (1993), and Parker (2001) all suggest that women may conceptualize power as a relationally shared or negotiated experience (i.e.

power with) as opposed to the hierarchy and domination described by their male counterparts. Marshall (1993) notes that men tend to value both boundaries and hierarchy while women on the other hand tend to value networking and more personalized, flowing communities. Dougherty (2002) expands on these differences in her study on sexual harassment and gendered constructions of power. Here she describes men viewing power as a product of authority and therefore constructing it as hierarchical. Women, on the other hand, experienced power as a negotiated process. For the women, "Power was not something that people had; it was something people negotiated through a complex interaction of perceptions" (Dougherty, 2002, p. 15).

Research indicates the women tend to define power as power with others (negotiated) or power over selves (Pierce & Dougherty, 2002; Marshall, 1993). Therefore when women are confronted with the professional paradox, one question they must answer for themselves is whether or not they will indeed embrace the more masculine notions of power and hierarchy at the expense of their own preferred arrangements of cooperation (Marshall, 1993). Based on what we currently know of paradoxes, we might assume that embracing one conception of power (hierarchy) would necessitate the denial of the alternative (more collaborative, negotiated, relational). Therefore the construction of organizational environments where hierarchical power structures are favored over power-with relationships positions women within the double bind where they must either sacrifice their positions as professionals or their femininity.

Gender and Assertive Communication

The ability, or inability, to be assertive within the organizational context is one communication expectation all newcomers bring to the table. Assertive communication,

or the ability to communicate ones own feelings, opinions and desires openly, while allowing others to do the same, is not typically associated with feminine communication styles; however it does appear to be a valued characteristic in our culture. Pearson (1995) reported that non-assertive people are viewed as pathetic and rarely achieve their goals, while assertive people tend to do better at work and experience greater job satisfaction (Rabin & Zelner, 1992). Since assertiveness continues to be perceived as a masculine characteristic yet has been shown to have an impact on professional success, the issue of assertiveness again creates a double bind for many women. If women use assertive communication they are perceived as over bearing. If they use more passive communication, they are perceived as too powerless to be taken seriously (Wood, 2003).

The privileging of masculine assertiveness norms limits women's ability to be seen as powerful reducing the likelihood they will advance in the workplace. Thus articulating the masculine assertiveness norms has potentially libratory consequences.

Gender and Emotions

Emotions in organizations have traditionally been viewed as negative and irrational - something that interferes with organizational functioning and hence must be controlled (Domagalski, 1999). The study of emotions in organizations up to this point focuses primarily on either one of two areas: the relationship between rationality and emotionality (Putnam & Mumby, 1993) or organizational control over emotional displays often called emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983; Shuler & Sypher, 2000). While these two concerns have typically been studied separately, it is the intersection of both rationality and control that inform this study.

This distinction between emotion displayed and emotion felt is the crux of both rationality and control research. It is too often the assumption that high emotional display equals irrationality and therefore necessitates the need for organizational control over such displays. “In Western tradition, . . . reason, cognition, and thinking (i.e. ‘rationality’) have been theoretically set in opposition to passion, affect, and feeling (i.e. ‘emotionality’)” (Clark & Sline, 1995, p. 202).

While scholars have typically recognized the distinction between felt and displayed emotion, this distinction is blurred within actual organizational practices. “All the world’s a stage,” Shakespeare wrote. “All the men and women merely players.” This metaphor for the production of life lends insight into understanding the display of emotion. Emotional display is an action – a role. You can play sad when you are happy, satisfied when you are angry, or interested when you are disinterested. In other words, displayed emotions are choices that can be made to mask a true feeling, to evoke a particular reaction, or to exaggerate the actual. Consequently, choosing to display false emotions is often a rational and deliberate act, and therefore choosing to display genuine emotions can also be just as rational and deliberate (Solomon, 1976; Toda, 1980).

Domagalski (1999) wrote, “in the public realm of organizations, emotions are expected to be suppressed, particularly strong or negative emotions, and when they do surface, they are pathologized” (p. 836). While this is true for all employees, it has a particular impact on women in organizations since socially constructed appropriate behavior regarding emotions is divided along gender lines. What is constructed as masculine behavior (the suppression of emotional display) is consistent with organizational rationality while feminine expression of emotion is viewed as

inappropriate despite the fact that emotions are central to the organizational experience for both men and women (Putnam and Mumby, 1993).

This logic of emotional labor serves to marginalize women within the patriarchal order. Putnam and Mumby (1993) wrote, “Bureaucratic rationality also constructs a particular gender relationship, one that favors patriarchal forms and reproduces organizational power along gender lines” (p. 41). It is this bureaucratic marginalization of the outsider (women) through anticipatory expectations of emotional display that concerns many feminist scholars.

At the same time, Pierce (1995) describes findings that are a bit contradictory to Putnam and Mumby’s (1993) conclusions. She finds instead that male legal professionals do indeed, and in fact quite deliberately, utilize strong emotional displays in quite rational and productive ways. The distinction Pierce finds is that men and women are expected to display emotions differently with women having a much more limited range of what is deemed appropriate emotional display.

In sum, power structures do not impact individuals equally. Gender influences how individuals use emotions, assertiveness, and collaboration, all of which are values contained within dominant ideology and reproduced by ISAs. As ISAs of organizing, business advice books also reflect the ideological normalization of gender. To expose these texts to ideological critique highlights what are as of yet invisible messages of gendered work.

Anticipatory Socialization

Power shapes organizing (Weick, 1969) while gender impacts how power is experienced; socialization teaches us how to participate in the process. Therefore the next

section of this chapter will explore anticipatory socialization in an attempt to move toward understanding the construction of organizational ideology.

Power, as an ideological and material structure, does not exist as an entity in isolation but rather as a constructed relationship that flows between people. Thus communicating dominant ideas to individuals becomes a critical part of the process and rhetorically constructing, reifying, and defending the dominant ideology is crucial to maintaining its dominance (Foss, 1996). While there are many structures that reify dominant ideology, including popular culture, some of the most potent are formal institutions such as schools, the legal system and work organizations. And if communicating/normalizing dominant ideas about organizing is integral, then organizational socialization and power are intricately intertwined.

Social learning theory asserts that new thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviors are learned through a process of evaluation and verification of symbolically modeled behaviors (Bandura, 1994). Applied to an organizational context, this theory of social learning describes how individuals learn about organizing through a process of evaluation and verification of symbolically modeled behavior ranging from profound interactions with individuals to mundane mediated images. Bandura (1994) also wrote that “modeling influences serve diverse functions – as tutors, inhibitors, disinhibitors, social prompters, emotion arousers, and shapers of values and conceptions of reality” (p. 77). In other words, what we gain from interacting with these symbolically modeled behaviors is an understanding of who and what we are within society including what we value and how we interact with others. Specifically, these symbols teach us how to exist

and participate in the dominant ideology regardless of whether or not we benefit from such participation.

Organizational socialization practices are a function of power in that they are institutionalized, and often subtle, attempts at teaching and normalizing dominant practices. Socialization is the process “by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 211). It has also been conceived of by Louis (1980) as the process where individuals come to appreciate the values, abilities, expected behaviors, and social knowledge necessary to effectively participate as a member of the organization.

Research in this area started largely with a managerial and organizational focus and sought to answer the question, “how can the organization or manager mold individuals into ideal workers” (Bullis 1993; Deetz, 1992; Jablin, 1987; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), and therefore this traditional research has looked at the socialization process through the lens of two assumptions, which are most succinctly summarized by Bullis and Stout (2000). First, organizations have boundaries people must cross to become insiders. Since these boundaries exist both internally and externally, they can be studied at multiple levels within the organization. As a result, it should be the goal of organizational socialization theorists to look at how individuals cross those boundaries. Second, people are both socialized by and individualized within the organization. While this assumption asserts that the organization acts upon the individual, it is also believed that individuals play an active role in the process and that relationships impact the success of the socialization process.

Based on these assumptions, Jablin (1987) developed the most recent and widely used model of organizational socialization which consists of four phases: anticipatory, encounter, metamorphosis, and exit. During the anticipatory phase individuals form expectations about organizations and careers prior to actual entry that lead to particular occupational/organizational decisions. Encounter is a phase where individuals actually enter the organization as a newcomer. Metamorphosis occurs when individuals finally begin to assimilate into the organizational culture to become insiders and progress in their careers, and exit occurs when individuals leave a particular organizational setting.

While socialization has been described as a four-phase model, assimilation, made up of the encounter and metamorphosis phase, is the most valuable in addressing the process of learning and adopting dominant ideology. Assimilation as defined by Jablin (1987) refers to both socialization (the organization's attempt to influence individuals) and individualization (individual attempts to modify work roles for greater satisfaction) and thus fits nicely into Fiske's (1993) model of imperializing and localizing power.

Assimilation research has focused on a variety of aspects of the process including employment interviewing (Behling, 1998; Engler-Parish & Millar, 1989; Harris, 1989; and Ralston & Kirkwood, 1995), occupational choices (Allen, 1996; Gibson & Papa, 2000; Goodnow, 1988; Ingersoll & Adams, 1992; Lee, 1998; and Steele & Barling, 1996), initial contact (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Louis, 1980) and information exchange and feedback during assimilation (Downs, Johnson, & Barge, 1984; Jablin, 1984; Mignerey, Rubin, & Gorden, 1995; Morrison, 1993) in order to determine the impact of each on outcomes.

While these studies assume that all employees experience socialization in one way or another, they conclude that it occurs differently for every newcomer. It may be a “relatively quick, self-guided, trial-and-error process to a far more elaborate one requiring a lengthy preparation period of education and training followed by an equally drawn-out period of official apprenticeship” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 211). The differences in how individuals are socialized are dependant on a number of things such as training practices (Ashforth & Saks, 1996) and individual expectations. As feminist standpoint theory points out, race, class and gender work together to place groups of individuals within particular standpoints and that these unique locations also shape our socialization experiences (Fiske, (1996) has a similar concept he calls axiality).

One theme that seems to have emerged is the role of individual expectations on organizational outcomes. Jablin (1984) reinforces the importance of this issue when he examines the impact of career expectations on organizational outcomes concluding that there is a strong correlation between new employees initial expectations about job duties and the work environment to later job satisfaction and overall job survival. Jablin (1984) found that the participants of his study held unrealistic pre-entry expectations while Wanous (1992) confirmed that these early expectations are important to successful entry and assimilation. Later Paulson and Baker (1999) reinforced the value of expectations by building their research on what they call “entry shock” or “feelings of anxiety, helplessness and surprise” based on unmet and unrealistic anticipatory expectations (Paulson & Baker, 1999, p. 365). This evidence indicates the inseparability of anticipatory expectations and successful assimilation.

Organizational expectations are developed through the anticipatory socialization process which is frequently looked at as a time when career and occupational choices are made (Clair, 1996; Gibson & Papa, 2000). These career choices and expectations are critical because they influence both success and satisfaction with the organizational experience (Mignerey et al, 1995), yet they are choices often made with limited and peripherally relevant information. Thus research on anticipatory socialization emphasizes the role of outside influences in socializing individuals.

Anticipatory research indicates there are five external sources that socialize individuals: interactions with family, schools, part-time jobs, peers and friends, and the media (Jablin, 2001). Bush, Smith, and Martin (1999) support this assumption stating that a socialization agent may be any person, institution or organization including parents, school, peers, and television. While research is limited, there is support for the claim that each impacts the socialization process in some way.

Family is the most extensively studied anticipatory influence. Gibson and Papa (2000), Goodnow (1988), and Steele and Barling (1996) have looked at the family as factors in vocational interests. Young and Friesen (1992) conclude that parents are a significant influence on children's career choices yet most studies that have explored the role of family on work socialization have looked most specifically at the role of children in household work and much of this research comes primarily from the child development field. These studies often look at the impact of parental conversations about work on children's perceptions of the workplace (Piotrkowski & Stark, 1987), the construction of work through household chores (Bowes & Goodnow, 1996; Goodnow,

1988) and how the meaning of household work is constructed and reconstructed through daily discourse (Ahlander & Bahr, 1995).

While the family research is valuable, it also has limited application because the way we communicate in public contexts such as work often differs from the ways we communicate with family in our homes (Wood, 1997). Further, what we do know about conversations between parents and children regarding work indicates a propensity for relaying more dysfunctional communication patterns. For example, Piotrkowski and Stark (1987) found that parents talk to children about jobs and work but that these discussions are primarily limited to discussions of people and interpersonal relationships. Despite this, children's descriptions of parents' work were only accurate in regards to the physical environment.

The role of peers and friends in socializing individuals into work has not been studied directly but there is evidence that these early relationships teach children about communicating in organizational contexts (Jablin, 2001). However, the relationship between schools and socialization is a bit clearer, yet again, seriously understudied. We primarily know that schools are the first socializing institution children encounter (Jablin, 2001). Jablin (2001) summarizes the impact of schools on organizational socialization as a) socializing status differences and hierarchical divisions of labor b) transitioning individuals from childhood to full-time work c) providing standards for developing realistic career goals d) providing formal opportunities for organizing through classroom and extracurricular activities e) and practicing uncertainty reduction skills.

Part-time employment is even more understudied as an area of anticipatory socialization and the findings that exist do not seem to indicate part-time jobs are

particularly useful in teaching about full-time work. A series of studies found that, because of the nature of many part-time jobs, teens' work experiences might not generalize to other work contexts (Greenberger & Steinberg, 1986; Greenberger, Steinberg, & Ruggiero, 1982; Greenberger, Steinberg, Vaux, & McAuliffe, 1980). Yet the early part-time work experiences may have some influence on how adolescents deal with relationships (Greenberger, Steinberg, Vaux, & McAuliffe, 1980).

Media is the final influence that has been described as an anticipatory factor. While social learning was initially offered as an explanation of learning from enacted behaviors, it has since been expanded to include vicarious models such as the media. Bandura (1994) writes, "media influences create personal attributes as well as alter preexisting ones" (pg. 78). Signorielli and Kahlenberg (2001) write that the media "is one of the primary socialization agents in society. Television cultivates, like parents, peers, the clergy, and teachers, through its stories, common world views, common values, and common perspectives on how men and women should think, behave, and act" (p. 4). Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that social learning occurs by internalizing mediated behaviors and the interpreted consequences on others.

Because of its unique nature, media is a particularly important source of information regarding work and organizational life because they offer messages that are more directly relevant to and seemingly representative of organizing and work. Ingersoll and Adams (1992) found images of work in children's books and Signorielli (1993) found explicit images of work on television. Both studies found stereotypical images of work roles and while these images may be a distorted vision, they serve to provide a window into work life that is not available from any other anticipatory influence. Because

media actually expose viewers/readers to images of organizational experiences, whether or not they accurately reflect those situations, they provide a foundation for individuals to form expectations regarding actual organizing. Therefore media may be a particularly productive arena for studying anticipatory socialization.

The media also offers a unique area of study because its influence spans many life stages and therefore allows anticipatory socialization to be studied as a lifelong process. The research that exists on anticipatory socialization looks almost exclusively at children. In focusing on children the research continues to situate anticipatory socialization as the first stage of socialization; i.e. it occurs before employment. Yet socialization does not necessarily occur in a patterned sequence (see Bullis & Stout, 2000; Clair, 1996). Instead “Organizational socialization is ubiquitous, persistent, and forever problematic” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 213) and is therefore a process that occurs constantly throughout peoples’ careers meaning that anticipatory socialization occurs both during childhood and adulthood. Thus studying the media allows researchers to get at the ubiquitous nature of socialization.

In sum, we know from traditional organizational research that some individuals pass through organizational boundaries to assimilate (in the generally accepted sense) into work life. However, feminist standpoint theory tells us that not every individual experiences successful assimilation but rather functions as a chronic outsider within. Further, we know that organizational socialization serves not only to control workers but also impacts family life as well as the entire social landscape in regards to organizing. We know that we must look outside of the discourse that occurs within organizations to the

discourses about organizations to get a greater sense of the organizing process as well as the role of socialization in continuing to gender organizations.

Research Questions

Books are particularly intriguing media because unlike television, they require individuals to more actively interpret symbolic images. In most cases, they do not just arrive in people's homes each night as with television or radio. Instead individuals must seek out and often spend money to get the information inside the books and this says something about the value of the book to the individual. At the same time, the selection and sales of particular books and themes suggests the demand for and popularity of those themes.

Further, while self-help books of all types have dominated reading lists for some time now, business advice books have been particularly popular in the last decade. They top a variety of best-seller lists and represent not only business but also mainstream reading material. Since these books contain messages that speak so directly about work and organizing, they are important to understanding how organizing, work and power are constructed. Yet we know virtually nothing about the role these books play in socializing individuals and societies into work life. Therefore the first two questions this study will seek to answer are as follows:

RQ1: What are the ideological messages regarding work and organizing within
BABs?

RQ2: What do the ideological messages of BABs reveal about power in
organizing?

At the same time, the plethora of gender and workplace research indicates that workplaces are unequal environments for men and women. As I have also argued, socialization is a tool of the power bloc thus teaching gendered power dynamics, and media, specifically business advice books, are particularly powerful influences. Thus the following research question has also emerged:

RQ3: In what ways do business advice books gender the workplace?

In conclusion, we know from traditional organizational research that some individuals pass through organizational boundaries to assimilate (in the generally accepted sense) into work life. We know that we must look outside of the discourse that occurs within organizations to the discourses about organizations to get a greater sense of the organizing process as well as the role of socialization in continuing to gender organizations. Finally, we know that media plays a big role in the socialization process despite its neglect in most of the traditional socialization research, and that in regards to work-life, business advice books are a popular venue for organizational discourse. Thus the following study seeks to address the above research questions in order to further explore sources, ideological content, and implications of organizational socialization.

CHAPTER 3: A CRITICAL-RHETORICAL METHOD

Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore the search of meaning. It is explication I am after, construing social expressions on their surface enigmatical. (Geertz, 1973, p. 38)

Social constructionists posit that there is no direct access to reality that is unadulterated by discourse. This is not necessarily an ontological commentary on the nature of reality – how and what things actually exist – but rather the epistemological assertion that we cannot know the nature of things in a pure sense because language always shapes our understanding of it (Schwandt, 2000). So to understand the nature of any phenomena, one must first identify and understand the language constructing it. For example, the meaning of power may vary by culture and context and these variations are not only reflected in but also shaped by the discourse. In other words, to know power is to know the language that constructs it.

Rhetorical criticism is a means of knowing discourse. Foss (1996) defines rhetoric as “the action humans perform when they use symbols for the purpose of communicating with one another” (p. 4) and rhetorical criticism as “the everyday activity we can use to understand our responses to symbols of all kinds in our environment, to reject those with negative impacts, and to create symbols of our own that generate the kinds of responses we intend” (p xiii). While the relationship between words and meaning is abstract, ambiguous and arbitrary, meaning that it exists beyond any direct connection between the signifier and the signified, words are chosen with some degree of intention and thus layers of meaning are always attached. In this way, all language, even the most mundane,

is rhetorical, and rhetorical criticism is the process of exposing the layers of meaning underlying language. More specifically, rhetorical criticism is a process of unpacking layers of meaning by exposing discourse to interpretation. This interpretation is intended to reveal something about the rhetor's perception of reality, the receivers' potential interpretations of that perception, and the critics interpretation of both, all of which reflect and (re)construct socially negotiated meanings (described as truths with a small t).

Rhetorical criticism is both a creative and systematic process. According to the synthesized work of Campbell (1972) and Foss (1996), the process of rhetorical criticism can be accomplished through a series of five steps. These steps are (a) the encounter with the rhetorical impulse (b) selection of representative texts (c) textual and contextual description (d) selecting theory and method and (e) analyzing the text. Each is described in detailed below.

Step 1: The Rhetorical Impulse

The first step to rhetorical criticism always starts with some kind of rhetorical impulse, which is often a fluid process of questioning and reacting to texts. Foss (1996) describes this process as occurring in one of three ways.

“(1) the critic discovers the artifact and research question simultaneously; (2) the critic formulates a research question first and then searches for data or a rhetorical artifact that will answer it; or (3) the critic encounters a rhetorical artifact of interest and then formulates a research question to ask about it.” (p. 12)

In this study, the rhetorical impulse occurred much like that described in (1). Theory guides the author to texts, which in turn triggers rhetorical questions. In this case I began asking theoretical questions about power and organizing, which includes questions of how individuals learn and support power structures. At the same time, my epistemological assumptions tell me the media plays a large role in constructing social

reality, so when I happened across a best seller list of books I was intrigued by the preponderance of business advice books. Assuming these books contain some of the most direct conversations regarding organizing, I hypothesized that they would also reveal a great deal about how organizing and power are taught and practiced in Western culture. Thus the rhetorical impulse to explore business advice books for ideological and feminist implications came at the intersection of theoretical questioning and discovering artifacts. At the same time, the rhetorical situation (Bitzer, 1968) is signaled by questions regarding the "existence of harm, who is to blame for the harm, how to resolve it, and how much it will cost to appear again" (Aune, 2003, p. 9). In this same way, as the big picture questions of power and organizing in relation to BABs emerged for me, other more specific questions emerged as well. These more specific questions centered on concerns with who might benefit from business advice book, who is potentially harmed or oppressed by the books. These questions also constructed the rhetoric impulse that initiated this study.

Step 2: Representative Texts

The second step to doing rhetorical criticism is to select specific representative texts. In this case the texts were selected systematically to generate a representative sample of business advice books. This systematic approach is detailed below.

The selection of particular texts impacts the outcome of any critical study. Representativeness, while typically associated with quantitative research and generalizability, is important to rhetorical criticism because the texts chosen for critique are always only fragments of the greater rhetorical context (McGee, 1999). In fact, because of their intertextual nature, texts, much like words, only make meaning in their

relationship to one another. In this case the rhetorical texts need to be reflective of the critical phenomena and representative of the body of discourse reflecting that phenomena. For example, the research questions for this study are related to the construction of work cultures and power structures through mediated discourse. Business advice books then are representative of publicly mediated organizational rhetoric.

An initial list of books was taken from the *New York Times* and *Business Week* best sellers lists from 2001, 2002, and 2003. The *New York Times* list was considered reflective of mainstream reading preferences and *Business Week* was considered reflective of business professional's reading preferences. Any business advice book (defined as any book written to assist individuals with improving their relationships to business, work, or financial security) appearing on these two lists during the specified time period was included resulting in a list of sixteen books. Once these books were identified, they were clustered into like categories which were determined by the books targeted area of improvement. These content categories were determined according to research themes in organizational communication research. In other words, some books focus on improving career choices, personal attitudes and behaviors, management style or overall attitudes towards work. The clustering resulted in seven topical categories: (a) career choice, (b) work attitude and ethics (c) task related job performance (d) transformation and change (e) management (f) professional and financial success and (g) overall company success stories. Because the organizational success books focused primarily on one corporation's overall performance and not on individuals' organizational behaviors, these books were eliminated from the study.

The list of representative texts was further narrowed using the following criteria. First, at least one book from each topical category was included in the study. Next, each book had to appear on both the *New York Times* and *Business Week* reading lists for at least two years to indicate the public's sustained interest in the material. Finally, no two books by the same author were included. Instead, when one author had two books meeting the previous criteria, the earliest publication (thus the original work) was selected for the study based on the assumption that the main ideas and underlying ideologies remain consistent across revisions.

While these criteria are believed to be valuable in determining representative texts, one exception was made. The final list did not include any texts from the first category, career choice so in order for this topical category to be represented in the study, *What Should I Do With My Life* by Po Bronson was included since it appeared on both the *New York Times* and *Business Week* lists but had not been in publication long enough to appear for more than two years. This book was the only exception to the above criteria.

The final reduction of representative texts resulted in a list of six books. Thus the following books were selected to answer the research questions: *What Should I do with my Life* by Po Bronson (career choice), *Fish! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results* by Stephen Lundin, Harry Paul and John Christensen (work attitude and ethics), *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* by Stephen Covey (task related job performance), *Who Moved my Cheese* by Spencer Johnson (transformation and change), *Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done* by Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan (management), and *Rich Dad Poor Dad* by Robert Kiyosaki (professional and financial success).

Step 3: Textual Description / Contextual Understanding

The third step to rhetorical criticism is to describe the texts and the context of the rhetorical situation. This is often a large part of the rhetorical essay and is crucial to applying a theoretical lens later on. The process involves describing the tone of the text, the supporting materials, the rhetor, the arguments being made, the audience, and anything else that helps one get a feel for what the text is doing and how it is doing it (Campbell, 1971).

At the same time it is also important to describe the context of any rhetorical act including tone, language, and intended audience. Texts do not exist in a vacuum. Rather, they are shaped by and evaluated in relation to the context of the “rhetorical situation”. Bitzer (1968) describes the rhetorical situation as, “A complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigency which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigency” (p. 6). According to Bitzer, the rhetorical context is central to the rhetorical process and understanding this rhetorical situation is critical to understanding how the text works.

More specifically, the rhetorical situation contains inherent and predictable points of contention that must be addressed for the discourse to be persuasive. "Any persuasive case must learn to incorporate objections based on the stases inherent in the field of argument in which controversy occurs" (Aune, 2003, p. 9). These points of stases are revealed through the rhetorical context; thus evaluating the rhetorical strategies used to mediate contradictions is contingent on first identifying the predictable objections by defining and analyzing the rhetorical situation.

To describe the rhetorical situation, this analysis of business advice books began by gathering materials that describe the current business environment, book reviews, and information on the authors. This step also included newspaper articles, historical documents or anything that lends insight into the rhetorical situation. These findings are described in detail throughout chapter four.

Step 4: Theory and Method

The fourth step to rhetorical criticism is to select and apply a theoretical framework through which to interpret the text. This is the interpretive part of the rhetorical criticism process where theory and method come together to guide the critic's interpretation of texts. For the rhetorical critic, the relationship between theory and method is not as clear-cut as it might be for the social scientist. Instead the relationship between theory and method is reflexive in that one calls forth the other (Foss, 1996). For example ideology (as a theoretical perspective) suggests that units and process of analysis must involve instances where ideology is exposed – thus ideological criticism as a method.

The interrelated and often times inseparable epistemological assumptions underlying both theory and method further confounds the distinction between the two. For example, the theoretical assumptions that the critic subscribes to tends to shape the way he/she sees the world and therefore impacts the formulation of rhetorical questions. This is not to say that critics are or should be inherently methods in search of a text but rather that critics are guided by their theoretical assumptions. So if the critic believes that power underlies all human relationships and thus is the root of social life, he/she will likely see power relationships within rhetorical texts, and further attempts to answer these

questions through methods that embrace his/her particular theoretical assumptions of power. Thus it is quite possible a critic's rhetorical impulses are shaped by elements of power reflected in texts and artifacts. Essentially, the theoretical framework frames the rhetorical text in a particular and useful (to the critic) way. In this sense, the theory not only calls forth the question but also the method.

While theory and method feed one another and are often times hard to distinguish, they are not one and the same. Theory, as was just described, shapes the way the critic sees the world while the method is how the critic accomplishes the task of interpretation and evaluation. The theory's assumptions call forth a method that requires the critic to look for some elements and ignore others. The methodological framework should come from the questions being asked so it too is linked to the rhetorical impulse.

In this study the rhetorical impulse is driven primarily by Marxist and feminist theories of power. Thus there is a natural link to both ideological and feminist criticism so both was used to answer the previously stated research questions. In the following section, I will describe the processes of ideological and feminist criticism more thoroughly.

Ideological Criticism

Ideology "consists of the ideas, beliefs, forms, and values of the ruling class that circulate through all the cultural spheres" (Leitch et. al., 2001, p. 12) while "*Hegemony* designates the continuous ideological domination of all classes by the ruling class through such nonviolent stabilizing and consensus-building institutions as church, school, family, the media, the mainstream arts, trade unions, business interests, and technoscientific establishments" (p. 14). In other words, cultural artifacts and rhetorical

texts not only influence but also reflect social values and meanings. Indeed, ideology permeates a given culture's rhetorical artifacts and therefore the underlying assumptions, beliefs and values revealed in the texts also embody, construct, and sustain the dominant ideology. "In other words, one ideology comes to constitute a hegemony in the culture" (Foss, 1996, p. 294). Newbold (1997) describes the relationship between ideology and hegemony as:

Ideology is not simply dominant, it is hegemonic, which is to say that the concept allows for the dimension of struggle and opposition, of confrontation between differing cultures, where hegemony has to be negotiated and won . . . The central question [in relation to media] was the degree to which mass media output reflects and communicates a dominant version of culture as though it were the only culture, through which the structure of competing elites is made to appear as part of a "natural" order of things, obliterating other possible versions or, rather other possible visions of the world as it might be. (p. 329)

Thus dominant ideology serves the interest of the most powerful groups in society and marginalizes the needs and desires of others. It controls what participants see as natural or obvious by establishing the norm. Normal discourse, then, maintains the ideology, and challenges to it seem abnormal. A hegemonic ideology provides a sense that things are the way they have to be as it asserts that its meanings are the real, natural ones (Foss, 1996).

Despite the clear privileging of particular worldviews, hegemony is not achieved through force. Instead, it is constructed through a subtle process in which "a variety of groups forge an accord with one another or tacitly give their consent that one perspective will be allowed to dominate" (Foss, p. 294). Aune (2003) argues such an accord is at least in part forged by rhetorically mediating contradictions through identification. In essence, hegemonic ideology is an ultimate and limitless form of control and influence within

society in that rhetorically constructing a sense of identification obscures contradictions and thus alternatives.

While the primary goal of the ideological critic is to expose hegemonic power structures in the hopes of a more emancipatory discourse, care must be taken in achieving this goal. If power and inequalities are constructed through discourse then it seems probable that scientific discourse intended to “empower the powerless” actually reifies the position of powerlessness. Krippendorff (1989) writes,

The aim of critical scholars to “empower the powerless” stays entirely within the power metaphor and therefore affects at best a shift in the “balance of power.” . . . I am suggesting that objective descriptions of social relationships in terms of power, from Marx to Foucault, only breeds power, empowers the powerful (by reifying the power they allegedly possess) and continues to disable the powerless whoever they may be. (p. 189)

In effect, to describe one as powerless is to deny personal agency. “The consequences of denying oneself this autonomy is a structural determinism whose lack of choice denies the possibility of invention, denies the creation of experiences for others, and renders ethical concerns meaningless” (Krippendorff, 1989, p. 192). Thus the goal of critics who truly embrace emancipation should not be to dictate desired changes in social reality but rather to describe social reality in such a way that individuals can make choices.

The strategies one group employs to shape the worldviews of others while obscuring their interests from public view is especially important in explicating and exposing dominant ideology. Specifically exposing dominant ideology means revealing the discourse that sustains it. Therefore this study seeks to expose dominant ideology and hegemonic power structures that sustain it by explicating underlying motives, values, and beliefs contained within organizational rhetoric. Such a critical reading of organizational

discourse enables actors to participate in organizing with “conscious [as opposed to unconscious] consent” (Markham, 1996, p. 394) making ideological rhetorical criticism an ideal method for meeting the goals of critical research.

Further, Marxist ideological criticism is rooted in class systems of domination and subordination. As conflict inevitably exists in the form of antagonisms between the classes, the focus of a Marxist ideological study is always on class antagonism and class conflict. One purpose of this ideological study of business advice books then is to identify rhetorically constructed antagonisms that serve to maintain class boundaries, limit class mobility, sustain dominate/subordinate relationships, and obscure systems of oppression.

Social cohesion is an important part of Marx’s definition of class. Community of activity and way of life is thus a necessary but insufficient condition for the construction of a social class. But there must also be a consciousness of unity within class as well as differentiation between social classes. So the question of class construction through business advice books must be addressed at least in part by identifying how the books rhetorically function to assimilate and differentiate social classes since the perception of shared ideological values creates tension between competing class-based value systems that serve to sustain social class stratification in America.

Marx writes that class-consciousness is crucial in political terms but that consciousness does not necessarily mean full awareness of class interests. Rather, the ruling class exists in a state of false consciousness where it not only proclaims but also believes its interests are universal. In *The German Ideology* (1846) Marx and Engels write,

each new class which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim, to represent its interests as the common interest of all the members of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones. (p. 63)

Therefore the system of classist exploitation is maintained when the interests of the ruling class are obscured through dominant ideology.

Further, to produce class tensions and thus stratification, class identities must be positioned as antagonistic to one another. Thus differentiation is just as important to stratification as cohesion building. Class antagonisms are manifest in many forms. Mills (1951/2002) writes “For the character of any stratum consists in large part of its relations, or lack of them, with the strata above and below it; its peculiarities can best be defined by noting its differences from other strata.” (p. xx). Thus differences in both social conditions and life style are characteristic markers of class stratum but also defining characteristics of discrete classes in the United States. Further Mills (1951/2002) suggests that through a rhetoric of competition antagonisms arise between the classes over the meaning of work, status and prestige, definitions of success, and the ways of power in general.

Feminist Criticism

One element of dominant ideology that is particularly relevant to organizing is the relationship between gender norms and experience, and feminist rhetorical criticism seeks to explain how patriarchy is discursively reinforced and resisted within texts that construct and support dominant ideology (Dow, 1995). Identifying gender constructions is important in revealing how the patriarchy is hegemonically reinforced within society

and works to expose the underlying layers of meaning that create and support inequalities.

Feminist criticism means many different things to many different kinds of feminist critics (see Foss, 1996 or Steeves, 1987) but most forms of feminism are united in some general assumptions. First and foremost, feminist criticism assumes there are inequalities in social life and that these inequalities are often delineated by gender. In other words, gender constitutes experience (Bar On, 1993). In general, feminist criticism embraces the assumptions that social life is a series of power relationships and power differences. Now, feminist criticism does not and should not claim that inequalities are founded solely on gender but rather that there is a tendency to prioritize gender as the basis for discriminatory practices in many institutions.

If feminist criticism assumes that patriarchy, the system in which masculine ideals are established as normal and then used to subordinate and marginalize the feminine, is at the root of women's marginalization in society, then patriarchy is also hegemonically reinforced through dominant ideological gender constructions (Mumby, 2000). Therefore, feminist rhetorical criticism seeks to identify the gender constructions that support or resist the patriarchal dominant ideology. The feminist theoretical lens therefore assumes that gender construction and patriarchy are complicit in creating inequalities among men and women (Steeves, 1987) and calls the critic to explore both gender constructions and the ways these constructions reinforce or resist the patriarchy.

While gender inequalities are described differently by various feminisms (i.e. biological differences, social differences, psychological differences, etc.), and the shared experiences of those differences is often a point of contention among feminists, it is

generally agreed that women's experiences are different than men's (Bullis & Stout, 2000; Foss, 1996; Harding, 1993; Hartsock, 1983; Mumby, 2000; Trethewey, 2000). The result is that men's and women's experiences in schools, at home, and in the workplace are unique (Wood, 2001) which impacts their communication styles as well as their equal participation in organizing (Pfafman, 2001). Therefore, to expose how gender differences are prioritized and sustained through discourse, I looked for instances where socially constructed gender communication norms, either masculine or feminine, are privileged and disadvantaged as well as the implications of this privileging on shaping participation in the organizing process.

Step 5: Analyzing the Texts

Analyzing rhetorical texts is a creative process that is dependent on the particular theory/method being utilized. Ideological and feminist criticisms were used to analyze the texts simultaneously, and are indeed related. The processes are described separately below.

The unit of analysis in ideological criticism is any dimension of a text that reveals its ideology. Thus the first step in ideological criticism is to identify the nature of a text's dominant ideology. Foss (1996) a simple but useful summary of the ideological criticism process in providing several questions that are useful in accomplishing this goal including a) what is the preferred reading of the text? b) what is the reader asked to believe, understand, feel, or think about? c) what arguments are being made? d) what ways of seeing are being commended? e) what values are suggested? f) what assumptions are being made? g) what is the audience asked to think about / not think about? and h) what is suggested as undesirable or insignificant? Once these questions are explored, the critic

can then determine whose interests are privileged by the arguments by asking whose voices are heard and whose voices are silenced.

Aune (2003) expounds on Foss's general summary writing, "the practice of rhetoric involves the construction of identifications, themselves rooted in the properties (and property) of persons, groups, and objects" (p. 9). Identification, then, as a rhetorical device functions through stylistic identification, through linking audience's interests with speaker's interests, or "through metaphoric extension of the parent-child relationship" (p. 9). Aune further describes several typical strategies for mediating divisions between speaker and audience, which serve as starting points for doing rhetorical criticism. One strategy is for the rhetor to link a proposed belief or action to socially accepted values, beliefs, and goals (logos). A second strategy is to link belief or action to the audience's mood (pathos). And a final strategy is for the rhetor to establish credibility by presenting the rhetor as a representative of the audience's interests (ethos). Thus invocations of logos, pathos, and/or ethos were used to mark units of analysis for this rhetorical criticism.

While feminist criticism is a form of ideological criticism, the unit of analysis is more specifically defined as any dimension of the text that depicts a construction of gender. Thus invoking gender as a strategy for creating identification also served to define units of analysis throughout this study. The feminist critic must then ask how men and women, masculine and feminine, are defined and portrayed by the particular invocations of gender and how this depiction contributes to patriarchy.

To identify both ideological and gender markers in texts, the critic must first become intensely familiar with them. Therefore I began by reading each text initially to

become familiar with it. I then gave a second, more detailed read to highlight dimensions that suggest gender construction or class positions in order to develop themes that span the books. Additional themes were added as the readings revealed unique dimensions of gender and ideology.

The first valuable discovery in analyzing the texts deserves to be mentioned as it served to influence the consequent direction and process of analysis. Namely, early readings of the books revealed a clear distinction in the targeted audience. While most of the texts were targeted to the same professional middle class reader, which was evidenced by the language and the type of work described within the advice, one text in particular was alternatively written for the executive class audience. Here the language was much more sophisticated and technological, but the most relevant evidence of the unique target audience is again in the actual work/task descriptions that were less focused on managing people and work and more targeted to making rules and decisions that affect the rest of the organization. Discovery of the distinct targets audiences led to analyzing the texts along class dimensions. So class distinctions were noted along the way and I looked specifically at differences in the themes that emerged in the two types of advice books.

At the same time, language that reflected a division of ideas and issues into dichotomous public/private categories emerged. Thus public and private spheres were used as ideological categories by which language was thematically catalogued and analyzed. References or elusions to public and private spheres were noted throughout the readings.

Once the particular themes were identified, I reviewed the highlighted portions of the texts for a third read. This is where the rhetorical method was applied, which, again,

is a creative process of asking questions, interpreting language, and building a justified argument. I began asking and answering many of the questions described in the paragraphs above as well as any additional questions that were inspired by the texts themselves. I noted any gender or class linked ideology as it emerged then grouped those notes into like categories. These categories were then analyzed to reveal common themes across the books. The themes were then described and interpreted in the analysis portion of this study.

In sum, rhetorical criticism is a systematic and creative process that involves identifying a critical problem, selecting representative texts, describing the text and the context, and applying a theoretical framework. In this study ideological and feminist criticisms are combined to deconstruct ideological arguments of values, beliefs, priorities and gender in business advice books. The analysis of these power texts reveal hidden power structures that produce and reproduce dominant ideology as it relates to organizing in this culture.

CHAPTER 4: SITUATING RHETORICAL ANALYSIS: CONTEXTUAL AND TEXTUAL DESCRIPTION

Jackson (2001) argues management consulting has had a tremendous impact on contemporary management thinking. Yet the existence and consequences of what he calls “management gurus” is “symptomatic of much wider social, cultural and political changes” (Jackson, 2001, p. 2). This chapter will explore those social, cultural, and political changes that contextualize the discourse. Specifically I describe contextual factors including the evolution of management thinking, book production, audience consumption patterns, and authorship information. Then, textual descriptions are provided including content and structure of each book. All of this is necessary to contextualize the discourse.

The Evolution of Business and Training

The precise relationship between business advice books and management thinking is unclear. Huczynski (1993) seems to describe a relationship where popular advice is responsive to and reflective of changes in management thinking. He attributes this to the professionalization of management and the belief that a few basic concepts underpin contemporary management skills. Jackson (2001) on the other hand seems to describe an inverse relationship where the gurus influence management thinking. Either way there is an obvious link between guru advice, represented here by business advice books, and management fads (Zeitchik, 2000). This section explores the evolution of management thinking, employee training, and the use of business advice books to fill training demands.

Throughout the last century management theory and consequently management practices have evolved synchronously with popular business and cultural trends. So when scientific management was believed to extract the greatest amount of productivity from each worker and the greatest amount of profit for the capitalist, classical management dominated American workplaces, and soft skills training was unnecessary for both managers and employees. But as scientific management lead to increasingly specialize work tasks and thus the alienation of workers (Braverman, 1974), managers' responsibilities changed significantly, creating the need for more communication based (or soft skills) training.

In the earliest days of management theory, scientific management focused intensely on job design, monetary rewards, and productivity. At the core of this management style are the beliefs that people are generally indolent, lacking ambition, self-centered, resistant to change, and gullible by nature (see McGregor, 1966) Thus these managers spent much of their time observing and coordinating tasks (See Taylor, 1916) and since motivation was believed to come from monetary rewards, very little time concerned with internal motivation.

Since classical management was heavily influenced by efficiency experts, for example time and motion studies and incentive plans (Rush, 1996), socializing employees into a given organization's culture was considered unnecessary. Training focused exclusively on job instruction so that workers could physically perform each task most efficiently. A simple four-step method of show, tell, do, and check was sufficient for this kind of instruction (Miller, 1996) and managers were sufficiently qualified to provide such basic instruction.

A major flaw with classical management is that it fails to recognize the complexity of human nature and thus the complexity of employee motivation (see McGregor, 1966; Rothlisberger & Dickson, 1964). Consequently the repetitive nature of scientific management lost some of its momentum when it failed to continuously motivate workers for increasing profits and as workers found ways to work around and resist the controls of scientific management.

Further, research such as the Hawthorn studies and Lewin's work on group dynamics suggested recognition, involvement, and responsibility were keys to employee motivation, and enabling satisfying workplace relationships was more productive than carefully designed work structure (Rothlisberger & Dickson, 1939). But as managers were required to focus on more human relations principles including employees' needs for socialability, job enlargement, improved flow of communication between superiors and subordinates, and the resulting perception of consultative decision-making, communication skills became a critical component of a manager's job.

With the transition into human relations, managers were largely unprepared to perform the communication related aspects of their jobs. Most were promoted up out of the ranks so their primary skills were in task performance (Huczynski, 1993). Yet their newly defined roles required them to manage relationships rather than simple task coordination. Communication was of increasing importance in that rather than serving as a mere means of control, it was necessary for persuading workers to comply with company objectives, and it served as a means of motivating employees by enabling them to feel more connected to the work processes. Managers were now required to be friendly, listen to workers and allow employees a sense of participation without altering

the traditional models of authority and control. It is at this point that management and training both became professions in and of themselves.

With the changing emphasis on communication and employee relations, often referred to as soft skills, management training became increasingly valuable. It focused primarily on teaching managers to develop friendly relations with employees, but remained relatively limited as an organizational tool in that relational training was provided to only a few key individuals in the organization. Yet its success alluded to a potential relationship between employee satisfaction and productivity, which in turn led to a shift in management theory and consequently training techniques.

As research began to expose employee motivation as an interplay between economic and relational factors, another transition in management theory emerged. The human resource perspective embraced humanistic principles (see Larkin, 1986) emphasizing a balance between productivity and treating workers with dignity, which is achieved in part by granting employees participation in decision-making. At this point soft skills training became a vital part of assimilating employees into corporate culture, and with increasing worker responsibility regarding decision making, was provided to all employees rather than to just a few key players.

Coinciding with the onset of relational approaches to management, training and consulting developed as a profession. Huczynski (1993) describes the problems of management as relatively constant with only the proposed solutions varying. And with managers largely coming from technical specializations to fill roles they are largely untrained to perform, they often lack adequate knowledge or understanding of those problems (Mayer, 1983) “Most don’t have the time, interest, or awareness needed to learn

their new craft” (Huczynski, 1993, p. 452). So in an effort to reduce the discomfort of uncertainty, they seek out prepackaged surface level quick fixes which offer the manager relief from searching for more complicated, complex solutions

At the same time adoption of collectivist solutions reduce ambiguity (Anthony, 1977). So, according to Huczynski (1993), management consultants emerged as a new and unique industry to fill the quick fix need by providing collectivist solutions to organizational problems. Playing on management’s discomfort with ambiguity and relative lack of knowledge regarding more academic management research, consultants easily sold oversimplified and limited tools to needy managers in large part simply because others were also jumping on the same bandwagon.

Finally, a teams-based approach to organizing and the implementation of self-managed work teams further heightened the demand for training that emphasized interpersonal communication skills in terms of conflict management, persuasion and negotiation, and leadership (Eisenberg, Goodall, & Trethewey, 2007). As self-managed teams are inherently dependent on self-motivated employees, instilling commitment to corporate goals has become an essential part of training. Thus corporate ideology seems to have emerged as the core content of contemporary corporate training.

Evolution in management theory, technological advances, and increasing global competition has lead to continuous demand for corporate training. First, investment in employee development has become trendy. Second, adoption of the latest management trends creates a perception of being cutting-edge. Together investment in employee development and adoption of management fads entices not only potential clients but also the most talented labor pool during recruiting efforts. Thus many companies adopt

management fads in an effort to project this cutting edge image and remain competitive within their markets (Huczynski, 1993).

Spencer Johnson, author of *Who Moved my Cheese?* illustrates this demand for training as he references many of his biggest clients in the front matter of his book. He writes, *Who Moved my Cheese* is used

by men and women to deal with change in their lives and in their work in large and small organizations, including: Abbot Labs, Bausch & Lomb, Bell South, Bristol Myers Squibb, Citibank, Chase Manhattan, Eastman Kodak, Exxon, Georgia Pacific, General Motors, Goodyear, Greyhound, Lucent Technologies, Marriott, Mead Johnson, Mobil, Oceanering, Ohio State University, State Farm, Textron, Texaco, Whirlpool, Xerox, Churches and Hospitals, Government Agencies, United States Military. (Johnson, p. 2)

This impressive list legitimizes and lends credibility to Johnson's ideas, but it also indicates the desire for consistent and cutting-edge training among some of the world's biggest corporations.

Commodifying Corporate Ideology

While the demand for organizational solutions seems to perpetuate demand for corporate training, money ultimately drives it. BABs are multi-billion dollar businesses. The most popular books have sold multi-million copies in many different languages around the world. According to the most current data available on each book, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* exists in forty-two languages, has had ninety-two printings and sold over 14 million copies (Covey, 1989); *Fish! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results* has been translated into thirty-four languages and sold more than 3 million copies (Fish Philosophy, 2006); *Who Moved My Cheese?* has sold over 11 million copies in twenty-six languages (Johnson, 1998); *Execution: The*

Discipline of Getting things Done has been translated into seventeen languages and sold over 600,000 copies (World Business Forum, 2006).

The above numbers do not even begin to address the many additional books spawned from some of the authors' original works. There are now *Seven Habits* for teachers and families and complete books created around individual chapters such as *Principle Centered Leadership* and *First Things First*. Covey's own back-matter states Franklin Covey Company is,

A 4,000-member international firm . . . The company's client portfolio includes 82 of the *Fortune* 100 companies, more than two-thirds of the *Fortune* 500 companies, as well as thousands of small and midsize companies, and government entities, educational institutions, communities, families, and millions of individual consumers . . . [Habits training] is carried out through programs conducted at facilities in the Rocky Mountains of Utah, custom consulting services, personal coaching, custom on-site training, and client-facilitated training, as well as through open enrollment workshops offered in over 300 cities in North America and 40 countries worldwide. . . Franklin Covey has more than 12,000 licensed client facilitators teaching its curriculum within their organizations, and it trains in excess of 750,000 participants annually . . . Products are available in more than 117 Franklin Covey 7 Habits Stores. (Covey, p. 359)

Covey's product list includes day planners, audio and video tapes, and computer software.

With business advice books generating so much interest, they are, in fact, an industry in and of themselves. Naturally with so much money and profit at stake, the symbiotic relationship between author and corporation more closely reflects that of producer and consumer than that of student and teacher calling into question the motivations of each author. Specifically, contextualizing motivations highlights the capitalistic underpinnings of the business of business advice.

To both generate and sustain such as demand for training services, the production, packaging, and marketing of business advice books resembles a capitalist corporate model. For starters, the packaging process capitalizes on modern demand for organizational training through production of pre-packaged training products. As is the case with any product, the real profits are always in mass production and continuous consumption, which has been enabled by a shift in management philosophy positioning managers as consumers and consultants as their suppliers (Jackson, 2001). For consultants, this ability to formalize and mass-produce their ideas allows them to package and sell those ideas as a commodity.

But consultants, trainers, and authors are not the only parties who stand to benefit from the commodification of business advice books. In response to costly turnover associated with a shift in the social contract between workers and employers, many companies have been willing to set aside meaningful portions of their annual budgets for corporate training. According to Galvin (2003) large corporations budget anywhere from \$1.3 million to \$19 million for employee development, and in 2003 American companies spent over \$51 billion on training. So for companies, prepackaged training applies standards of efficiency by reducing costs and allowing greater control over both the process and content of employee development. Consequently the books allow companies to provide more training to more employees while controlling costs.

Further, due to low start-up costs and overhead expenses, the number of start-up management consulting firms and independent consultants has exploded. A quick search on any Internet database will pull up hundreds of consulting and training companies across the nation, many of which utilize one or more of the BABs in this study as the

primary curriculum for their own independent courses. In fact much of the high volume of book sales can be attributed to companies and independent consultants stocking them for use as primary tools in their own training toolboxes (Carroll, 2001; McGinn, 2000).

Yet the question of why these particular training services are so popular remains. Jackson (2001) attributes the success of management gurus to their ability to frame organizational problems within powerful motivational language and to summarize more academic research into oversimplified findings that focus on quick fix solutions. For example, the rise in popularity of teams in the last decade coincides with a boom in training and consulting that focuses on team building. Yet teams consist of complimentary parts that rarely exist in corporations. The content of teams based training consists largely of cohesion building strategies applicable to teams but also any small group or unit of employees who work closely enough together to benefit from a degree of cohesion. In other words, teams based training is rarely, if ever, exclusive to team building. Instead team building is a catchy, trendy label, if not a misnomer, that enables authors to capture and retain the attention of managers and employees (Huczynski, 1993). Yet these overly simplistic solutions are easily sold to managers looking for quick fixes to big organizational problems.

With the exception of *Execution*, the almost collusive relationship between book authors and corporations creates a unique and ultimately paradoxical target audience. Unlike many books, or other types of rhetorical acts for that matter, the books are specifically produced for two distinct audiences with incompatible goals (Conrad & Poole, 2005). On one hand the target audience is the professional middle class manager who is in part charged with enforcing the rules and policies of the organization. These are

the employees who are provided corporate training based on the texts described in this study. But the other audience is the executives who approve of and buy training from gurus and consultants.

This second audience is described throughout *Execution* as the real leaders of organizations. Here leaders are not those with vision, attitude, knowledge or charisma. Rather they are the “top dog” (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 24). “*They* are the owners of the processes – not the strategic planners or the human resources (HR) or finance staffs” (p. 23). And “the three core process” they own are “the people process, the strategy process, and the operations process” (p. 22). This description articulates the distinction between the two audiences. Where audience one, the professional middle class, is responsible for designing work (engineers and planners) and enforcing rules and policy, audience two, the executive class, owns the processes. They neither design nor create but rather “exhort” appropriate behaviors from their people.

The two unique audiences also suggest two distinct uses of the books that reflect the ever-present fundamental paradox of organizing. Employees in organizations often seek individual and liberatory goals through self-help business advice books while executives seek resources that unify and indoctrinate their employees into corporate culture. These contradictions between corporate needs and individual needs create a tension Conrad and Poole (2005) call the fundamental paradox of organizing. Hence book authors are at least partially motivated to disseminate advice that advances corporate goals and sustains the status quo through rhetorical strategies that emphasize individual freedom and control.

Another component of BAB success lies in the authors' genius ability to market themselves within the products themselves. Business advice books serve not only as tools for organizations to indoctrinate employees into corporate culture but also as tools to generate and perpetuate demand for the authors and their industry. Thus the content and design of business advice books is fundamentally a marketing strategy intended to continuously generate sales.

Huczynski (1993) describes the symbiotic relationship between corporation and consultant as "the Panacea Conspiracy". This conspiracy consists of the collusion of managers and consultants to find quick fix solutions to long-term problems. But the consultants-as-managers remain in demand through what he calls planned obsolescence and technique searching. Training fads are designed to have only a two to three year life cycle making relaunching new fads a planned part of the industry. In support of this argument we can look at the multiple business advice books produced by each author. For example, Spencer Johnson, the author of *Who Moved my Cheese?* is also the author of *The One Minute Manager*, and *Yes or No: The Guide to Better Decisions* just to name a few. These books are designed and packaged for later redesign and repackaging to continuously perpetuate their own demand.

So why do corporations continue to invest in training that either only temporarily fixes managerial problems or fails altogether? The gurus provide managers with seemingly tangible solutions to enduring management problems (Huczynski, 1993). They enable time-crunched managers to reduce uncertainty by offering quick fixes and eliminating the need to seek out further solutions while pre-packaged training simultaneously takes pressure off managers to develop and implement complex

strategies. Yet the more a quick fix solution fails to provide the desired outcomes, the more likely managers are to go looking for new quick fix tools to once again reduce uncertainty and ambiguity (Huczynski, 1993). So the failure of training programs to satisfy any real need ironically generates greater demand for alternative quick fix solutions and thus newly designed products.

At the same time, newly packaged ideas motivate and reduce boredom for both employees and management. Huczynski (1993) argues the ideas behind management fads and the problems they address are relatively constant while the rhetorical delivery of these ideas constantly changes. In fact, it is the repackaging of ideas as something different but not necessarily better that perpetuates the success of the books for several reasons. First repackaging generates management interest. As Mayo discovered in the 1930's, merely paying attention to employees affects motivation and performance, and new ideas provide the foundation for ongoing training events that keep employees motivated. Second, both managers and workers become bored with inveterate processes over time. Repackaging offers what appears to be a novel approach to organizational processes. The new and unexpected reduces boredom (Dixon, 1987) thus generating new interest and enthusiasm for primarily the same old processes. So essentially, repackaging serves as a major selling point for managers looking to motivate employees.

Also according to Huczynski (1993), the generation of new management trends or "guru theory," and the emergence of new (or newly packaged) guru theory creates a perceived need for (re)training organizational members.

Consultants beget more consulting as they fill the marketplace with new ideas and management fads. The incantations of the necromancers can make managers worry that their rivals have gotten hold of something more

powerfully new – so they had better buy a little corporate juju of their own. (Byrne, 1994, p 62)

Companies wishing to remain cutting-edge, a particular concern in a global market characterized by speedy information flow and quickly changing technology, feel compelled to adopt the motivational ideas developed by management gurus to remain cutting edge and competitive.

Business advice book authors also exist in a somewhat collusive relationship with one another evidenced by the cross-promotion of one another's work and products within the front matter of their texts. Covey's text contains seven pages of front matter praise for the book with the contributions coming largely from quotes from other training and consulting gurus with their own published books on similar topics. For example, Covey's book includes a quotation from Warren Bennis, author of *On Becoming a Leader*, stating, "Covey has written a remarkable book about the human condition . . . so useful for our organizational and personal lives, that it's going to be my gift to everyone I know." Tom Peters, author of *In Search of Excellence*, writes, Covey "offers us an opportunity, not a how-to guide." Ken Blanchard, author of *The One-Minute Manager*, writes, "The equivalent of an entire library of success literature is found in this one volume." And Ron Zemke, coauthor of *The Service Edge* and *Service America*, writes, "Winning is a habit. So is losing . . . seven habits distinguish the happy, healthy, successful from those who fail . . ." Such commentary lends credibility to the books by rhetorically situating them within the ranks of established training gurus but it also serves to promote the works of each commentator.

Covey's is not the only text to utilize this strategy of cross-promotion. Kiyosaki's (1998) book contains praise from Zig Ziglar and includes a list of sixteen suggested

readings by other authors. Not coincidentally, below the list in small print is a disclaimer suggesting each reader should seek his or her own professional, legal, financial, and investment advice. Johnson's (1998) book is dedicated to and includes an introduction by Ken Blanchard while Lundin et. Al.'s (2000) book contains a forward by Ken Blanchard stating, "I have been showing this video at every one of my seminars to illustrate what happens when you create *Gung Ho!* employees – you ignite your work force and create *Raving Fans*" (emphasis in the original). By enhancing the popularity, credibility and thus success of each author, the commentators actually (re)generate the need for ongoing training and the consulting industry as a whole (Jackson, 2001).

In addition to cross promotion of industry cohorts, the books also cross promote the authors' own management products and services, which is further indication of a corporately modeled advice industry. Often the greatest profit for the authors of business advice books is attributed to the motivational presentations and collateral products associated with the books. In fact, Robert Kiyosaki, author of *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*, had only moderate business success before he published his best-selling advice book. The success of the book then served as the foundation of his corporation, Cashflow Technologies, Inc. One source writes of Kiyosaki and his book, "and he grows richer and richer with his new motivational speaking business, the Rich Dad company, which sells books, games, tapes, workshops, financial coaching and club memberships, with the promise of helping clients achieve wealth" (Nazareno, 2004). Now the corporation consists not only of consulting and motivational speaking services but also pricey products including board games, all of which are related to Kiyosaki's original book.

Further the back matter of *Rich Dad* contains a seventh and critically important lesson. Kiyosaki calls this section “take action.” While the first six lessons teach the reader about the differences between the rich and poor essentially constructing desirable values for the PMC, the back matter advises the reader to learn how to implement the earlier lessons by purchasing additional services provided by either the author or his corporation, Cashflow Technologies. Primarily Kiyosaki suggests the reader who is serious about being successful purchase his board games to learn application of his six lessons. These games include *CASHFLOW 101* for \$195.00, *CASHFLOW 202* for \$145, and *CASHFLOW for kids* for \$79.00.

Another example of the collusive nature of BAB production is in the success of *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* which spawned a whole host of additional business endeavors for its author. In fact, Covey has been credited with building a \$100 million empire of books, tapes, and seminars (Business Week, 1999). Most notably was the launch of the publicly traded Franklin Covey, which is the corporate training side of *Seven Habits* providing organizations with what he calls integrated training and consulting solutions.

So not surprisingly we see cross promotion of collateral services and products contained within the front and back matter of the books as well. The back matter of Kiyosaki’s (1997) book even includes purchasing information and order forms for these collateral products. And in several instances, Kiyosaki actually promotes his own and (rather expensive at \$195) financial game within the main text of the book. Consequently the books themselves serve as advertisements for additional products, services, and other consultants.

Is the commodification and cross promotion of business advice problematic?

Some personal finance experts say yes. According to Nazareno's (2004) article, most authors know what they are talking about in their books, but their desire to promote additional products and services creates a conflict of interest. As quoted in Nazareno (2004), one Consumer Reports expert who reviewed many of the books says,

If the person isn't selling anything else, then they're fine guides, but when they tell you to get on the Web and want you to learn about their life insurance plan, and they're trying to sell you something, you have to be careful because there's a bias. When the person giving you information and advice is also selling you something, then you have to watch out. (p. 3)

Consultants are largely motivational speakers who enter organizations to train on chic management trends increasing popularity of the trend and in turn creating even greater demand for their products (business advice books, games, planners and software) and services (motivational speaking) while at the same time reinforcing the need to embrace the management trend that originated with the BAB to begin with.

Readers

While I could find no statistical demographic data directly related to the consumption of BABs, some indirect sources provide insight into who buys and/or reads the books. Major book retailers such as Amazon and Barnes and Noble list the books within the category of human resources / personnel management titles. This suggests the target audience is consumers seeking information on management and personnel related topics. Thus according to the definition of the PMC, these topics are intended for the PMC audience.

Who are these PMC readers? While Ehrenreich (1979) describes structural changes in the American economic system that create the unique material relationship of

the PMC to the means and modes of production, this does little to tell us who these people are in a more qualitative way. Yet a later study conducted by Ehrenreich (1989) does just that so I will look to that research for descriptions of the PMC audience.

Based on the PMC's unique social positioning linked largely to their transition from working class into white-collar jobs, the PMC have unique norms, values, and beliefs compared to other American socio-economic classes. Ehrenreich (1985) writes on the rise of the PMC as "the retreat from liberalism and the rise, in the professional middle class, of a meaner, more selfish outlook, hostile to the aspirations of those less fortunate" (p.3). She continues to write,

We are told, periodically, that 'Americans' are becoming more self-involved, materialistic, spineless, or whatever, when actually only a subgroup of Americans is meant: people who are more likely to be white-collar professionals – lawyers, middle managers, or social workers, for example – than machinists or sales clerks. (p. 3)

This description suggests that at least up through 1985 the PMC were perceived to be more individualistic and financially motivated than individuals in other class stratum.

Ehrenreich (1985) also describes the PMC as people who are well educated, reasonably well paid, and for whom ideas are simply part of their business meaning their jobs are uniquely about creating, shaping, articulating, or critiquing ideas. In fact, the most cohesive elements of the PMC, according to Ehrenreich, are their occupations. They include most professionals and white-collar managers, positions that require a college education and possible even a graduate degree. Some specific professions include teachers, journalists, engineers, professors, government bureaucrats, middle level management, scientists, advertising people, therapists, financial managers, and architects.

Their positions and status are based on education rather than ownership of capital or property.

Author and Textual Description

Another aspect that impacts how BABs function is both the authors' corporate backgrounds and the way the books are further linked to one another through their interrelated themes. This section will briefly describe the authors' backgrounds and their books to illustrate the potential link between the books as well as to lay the foundation for further rhetorical analysis.

Many of the authors are themselves either former or current corporate executives which inherently shapes their perspective. Po Bronson has worked successfully in both sales and journalism and today sits on the board of directors of Consortium Book Sales & Distribution and the editorial board of *Zoetrope*. Robert Kiyosaki made much of his money in real estate and by developing small cap companies. After retiring at age 47, he started Cash Flow Technologies, his international education company. Stephen Covey has an MBS from Harvard and a doctorate from Brigham Young University where he was a professor of organizational behavior and business management, but he now serves as chairman of Franklin Covey Company. Larry Bossidy is the former CEO and chairman of Honeywell International Inc., former CEO of AlliedSignal, and former vice chairman of General Electric. Spencer Johnson, author of *Who Moved My Cheese?* is actually an MD with an educational background in psychology and medicine. He now works as medical director of communications for Medtronic and as a research physician for a major think tank. And Stephen Lundin is a filmmaker, graduate business school professor and professional speaker. Not surprisingly then, the content of BABs reflects both the

authors' and corporate interests.

Identification, consisting of both similarity and distinction, is crucial to persuasion and influence (Campbell, 2003). In this way corporate executives and former corporate executives are ideal conveyors of corporate ideology because in some ways, employees can identify with them. Ehrenreich (1989) writes the modern corporation is a compromise between the classes. The capitalist retains power over labor and profits while executives and the new middle class handle daily decision-making capabilities. This divide between capitalist and labor constitutes a similarity between the PMC and the executive class (EC) that unites the two classes in some meaningful ways. Both are at least potentially exploited by the capitalist, and both have limited ability to control their own daily experiences including influence over job design. For example, engineers influence the production processes and middle managers shape the immediate climate and work norms of their subordinates. Thus the PMC and the EC share some commonalities that allow the PMC to identify with the EC increasing the ECs ability to influence the PMC.

At the same time, even a brief glance at currently popular BABs reveals topics that coincide with changes in management thinking. As companies have shifted their focus to self-managed work teams, *Fish! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results* capitalizes on this fad emphasizing attitude and the team-player mentality. *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* focuses on personal efficiency and self-direction associated with increased autonomy of the human resources movement. Thus *Seven Habits* focuses primarily on the need for employees to independently master self-motivation and personal/professional efficiency while developing interdependence on organizational contemporaries. As job security has diminished and globalization

precipitates rapid market changes, *Who Moved My Cheese?* and *What Should I Do with My Life* emphasize embracing change through proactive decision making while *Execution* focuses extensively on the leadership end of this type of change management.

Not surprisingly then, and consistent with the previously described demand for prepackaged and simplistic training, the books express corporate values in simplistic and catchy ways. They are organized around simplified and catchy sets of rules, which is, in fact, one of the most defining characteristics of each best-selling business advice book. The books make use of an enticing design on the outside and a reductive, oversimplified set of rules on the inside. For example, *The 7 Habits* classifies efficiency strategies into seven neat categories. *Who Moved My Cheese?* has seven tidy rules written accordingly on seven pieces of cheese. *Fish!* reveals the secret to success in four basic principles. *Rich Dad Poor Dad* describes six lessons for accumulating wealth. *What Should I Do with My Life* guides readers through major life changes in only eight themes. And *Execution* describes leadership in six basic rules. The books' simplistic structure makes them easy to read and easy to sell to managers who are not already familiar with more academic management research.

While the general themes of BABs overlap enough to sustain corporate ideology (this is developed further throughout chapter five), the books' objectives are discrete enough that they can be used collectively in corporate training without blatant redundancy. In part this comes from the way the messages are uniquely packaged.

Specifically, in *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* the overall argument is to live a principle centered life by adapting seven essential rules or habits. The first, "Be Proactive," focuses on internal power (empowerment), choice, and personal

responsibility. Habit three, “put first things first,” provides guidelines for setting priorities. The fourth habit, “Think win/win,” describes a state of mind where decisions are made based on mutual benefit. Habit five is to “seek first to understand, then to be understood” and focuses on empathic listening to improve work relationships. And habits six and seven are “synergize” and “sharpen the saw,” which emphasize interdependence and balance.

Who Moved My Cheese? describes a set of basic rules summarized on one large piece of cheese at the end of the story with the cheese rules being: “change happens”, “anticipate change”, “monitor change”, “adapt to change quickly”, “change,” “enjoy change,” “be ready to change quickly and enjoy it again” (Johnson, 1998, p. 74). *Fish! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve* illustrates four basic principles: choose your attitude, make work playful and fun, make someone’s day each and every day, and be fully present. *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* presents the reader with six basic lessons: don’t work for money, develop financial literacy, mind your own business, develop corporations, invent ways to make money, and work to learn.

While *What Should I Do with My Life* seems to be different from the others on the surface, each of its stories illustrates various ways of making occupational choices; it also serves to define personal success through proactive decision-making and risk. For example, the book contains a story of a man who received a letter from the Dali Lama informing him he was the reincarnation of a Bodhisattva. The letter provides the man guidance and instructions for following his predestined path. Yet the story retells how the man proactively analyzes and chooses this path rather than reactively accepting guidance

from the Dali Lama. The lesson here is in the value of proactive decision making over passive reaction and again, reinforces the lessons of the other texts.

Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done is targeted to executive level management, which, as will be argued further in chapter five, is distinct from the professional middle class altogether. Yet the content of the advice reinforces the objectives developed in the other books. The argument is made up of three building blocks, leadership, culture, and people, and seven essential behaviors including know your people and business, insist on honesty from your people, reward producers, develop employees, and know yourself.

In sum, all of the books frame their advice within corporate ideology characterized by oversimplification, faddish catch phrases, self-promotion, and corporately modeled production and marketing strategies. Yet the complimentary and discrete objective of each book eliminates competition between the authors and enables corporate trainers and consultants to utilize them all collectively. This context of BABs lends insight into the authors' motivations for writing the texts, which can be interpreted as (1) promoting corporate interests (financial profit) (2) generating sales of the author's own products (financial profit) and (3) perpetuating demand for the training and consulting industry as a whole (more profit). In other words, money ultimately motivates and drives the production and corporate consumption of these business advice books.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF THEMES

BABs are intended to provide professional development advice to readers. As they are purchased by companies to serve as corporate training tools, they serve as a form of organizational rhetoric and consequently provide organizationally sanctioned advice. The following analysis describes the prominent themes that are developed across the books. Many of the themes are representative of all the books. Others are prominent only in a majority of the books. But taken collectively, these themes represent some of the ideological messages corporations are using to indoctrinate employees. These themes include the following: the reality verses perception problem, authenticity, success and failure, good employee instincts, and organizational spirituality.

The Reality Paradox

BABs position the reader's conception of reality at the core of their advice. Some of the books suggest there is a reality and describe material conditions as a part of this reality. Other BABs suggest that perceptions of material conditions are reality. And finally most of the books imply individuals choose their own realities. This section will develop these three sub-themes.

Objective Reality.

Bossidy and Charan (2002) assert that there is material reality by first establishing the belief there in a singular reality. In fact they designate an entire section of their book subtitled "Insist on Realism" to this topic. They write, "Realism is the heart of execution, but many organizations are full of people who are trying to avoid or shade reality" (p. 67). They add, "Embracing realism means always taking a realistic view of your

company” (p. 67). They also indicate realism is something we can objectively access writing, “How do you make realism a priority? You start by being realistic yourself.” (p. 67). According to Bossidy and Charan, there is an objective and singular reality and effective organizing begins with recognizing it.

Bossidy and Charan further assert the existence of an objective reality through their application of a very functionalist approach and specifically the application of scientific management to their executive advice. Functionalism and classical management both assume an objective and empirical reality that can be both observed and measured. This emphasis on the empirical reality of organizing is expressed throughout *Execution*.

Execution advocates a one best-fit approach consistent with scientific management and again this approach implies a belief in objective reality. Evidence of this is seen throughout *Execution* in statements like “are the right people in charge of getting it done,” “Is their accountability clear,” “Will the reward system motivate them,” and “Organizations don’t execute unless the right people, individual and collectively, focus on the right details at the right time” (p. 33). Each of these statements suggests EC literature embraces classical management strategies but further reveals the objective and measurable belief in one right person for a task and one right way of performing a task rather than more perceptually influenced realities of what constitutes performing a job and getting the job done. There is a clear emphasis on one reality of work seemingly visible only to the EC who are charged throughout the text with organizing work.

An emphasis on measurement is also indicative of a belief in objective reality. Throughout *Execution* both people and culture are operationalized and measured like any other commodity. Bossidy and Charan (2002) write, “When I see companies that don’t

execute, the chances are that they don't measure" (p. 73) because with execution leadership, "You get what you measure for" (p. 92) and "we're measuring the people on how well they perform" (p. 95). The authors also state that creating "performance culture" is to "change people's behavior so that they produce results. First you tell people clearly what results you're looking for. Then you discuss how to get those results. Then you reward people for producing those results" (p. 86). In each quotation the authors express perceiving people processes and organizational culture through a classical management lens.

Even in regards to organizational culture, the authors describe one right culture, performance culture, as if the culture of an organization is completely within the control of a leader's influence. They write, "Only the leader can make execution happen, through his or her deep personal involvement in the substance and even the details of execution" (p. 24). According to the authors, leaders make performance culture happen by choosing the right people, capital, monitoring and measuring effectively. In this sense, the authors imply all organizational processes can be measured objectively again implying a belief in an objective reality of even abstract human interactions.

Advocating an objective reality and scientific approach to management enables executives to operationalize people processes and consequently dehumanize employees in some meaningful ways. For example, they write, "the heart of execution lies in the three core processes: the people process, the strategy process, and the operations process" (p. 22) and the "leaders are the owners of the processes - not the strategic planners or the human resources (HR) or finance staff" (p. 23). The execution method of management "looks for deviation from desired tolerances," "use the process to constantly raise the

bar,” then “use them collaboratively across units to improve how processes work across the organization” (p. 30). Here people are reduced to organizational processes and stripped of any other human qualities. Employees are described as “deviation[s] from desired tolerances” or “non-performers” which linguistically reduces them to human capital, connoting employees are human commodities within the control of the executive class.

At the same time, employees are discussed in a way that implies they are commodities of the organization. Employees are an organizational process and leaders of the organization “are the owners of the processes” (p. 23). In this sense the authors equate people, specifically employees, to commodifiable parts of the organizational machine. Thus *Execution*, which was written for executives with the “real job of running a business” (inside flap), describes employees and their processes as capital within the control of executives.

As commodities, people are easily discarded and replaced. Bossidy and Charan (2002) refer to these commodities as “nonperformers,” and further describe “ranking people” in order to “differentiate ‘A,’ ‘B,’ and ‘C’ players” (p. 93) adding “You should increase the population of A-players, defined as those who are tops in both behavior and performance. You should remove the non-performers. Over time, your people will get stronger and you’ll get better financial results” (p. 94). By commodifying employees people are reduced to replaceable parts and consequently the human aspects of leading organizations are linguistically placed outside the concern of leaders.

Classical management has often been critiqued for reducing people to mere cogs in the organizational machine. According to these criticism organizations are constructed

not as people, but leaders who select and replace parts appropriately by measuring and applying rules, policy, and rewards. This attitude is consistently reflected throughout *Execution*. The authors objectify individuals within organizations through the use of scientific management and by further defining individuals as commodities of the organization and of the executive ruling class. By objectifying reality and consequently dehumanizing employees, EC literature justifies executive decisions regardless of the human impact. In terms of class privilege, positing the EC as owners of organizational commodities and simultaneously as experts charged with measuring and organizing all aspect of work justifies not only striking pay gaps between the PMC and the EC but all the class privileges of belonging to the EC.

By reducing employees to commodities the rhetoric serves to alienate workers from their thinking capacity. With workers engaging in more routinized and regulated forms of labor, and with organizational structures increasingly separating workers from the fragmented elements of their work, the EC is better able to control that which they previously had no control over (labor power), and consequently deskilling workers and increasing EC control over worker's bodies (Braverman, 1974).

Perceptions of Reality

While *Execution*, representing executive class literature, articulates a belief in objective reality, the remaining five books that represent PMC literature persuades their professional middle class readers to feel empowered by emphasizing a belief in constructed reality. They tell the reader perceptions, not material conditions, constitute reality, which I argue is intended to motivate employees towards organizational goals.

BAB authors designate a great deal of their texts to teaching readers to create reality through their perceptions. Lundin et al. refer to perceptions of reality by telling the story of how employee perceptions create a “toxic energy dump” (p. 24). They also suggest the existence of multiple realities writing, “No matter what excuses we offer or what kind of spin we put on it, it doesn’t change how our internal customers feel. That’s the reality as they see it” (p. 91). This quotation suggests customers and employees may not share the same perceptions of reality. Instead each creates his/her own reality.

Covey (1989) also articulates a belief in constructed reality as he emphasizes the power of paradigms to create reality. He writes extensively on “the power of a paradigm shift”(p. 29). He later describes the power of perceptions (which he calls paradigms) to create reality stating, “the way we see the problem is the problem” (p. 40). “Whether a problem is direct, indirect, or no control, we have in our hands the first step to the solution. Changing our habits, changing our methods of influence and changing the way we see our no control problems” (p. 86). He illustrates his argument writing, “We began to realize that if we wanted to change the situation, we first had to change ourselves. And to change ourselves effectively, we first had to change our perceptions” (p. 18). In each of these quotations the author suggests perceptions (paradigms) are reality.

At the same time, BABs seem to imply that a core problem of organizing is not structural but rather interpreting the real. Like Covey, Kiyosaki describes how wrong interpretations of reality are the problem. He provides an extended narrative illustrating this writing,

Rich dad rocked back and laughed heartily. Finally, after his laughing stopped, he said, “You’d best change your point of view. Stop blaming me, thinking I’m the problem. If you think I’m the problem, then you have to change me. If you realize that you’re the problem, then you can change

yourself, learn something and grow wiser. Most people want everyone else in the world to change but themselves. Let me tell you, it's easier to change yourself than everyone else."

"I don't understand," I said.

"Don't blame me for your problems," rich dad said, growing impatient.

"But you're only paying me 10 cents."

"So what are you learning?" rich dad asked, smiling.

"That you're cheap," I said with a sly grin.

"See, you think I'm the problem," said rich dad.

"But you are."

"Well, keep that attitude and you learn nothing. Keep the attitude that I'm the problem and what choices do you have?" (p. 34-35)

Throughout this narrative Kiyosaki asserts incorrect perceptions of problems create even greater problems. At the same time he tells the reader correctly interpreting problems means focusing internally on the self. He suggests one may alter one's working conditions and thus create a sense of self-actualization by merely altering one's perceptions of reality.

Covey (1989) also tells the reader there is a correct perception, or paradigm, of organizational problems and they reside within the self. He writes, "Inside-out means to start first with self; even more fundamentally, to start with the most inside part of self – with your paradigms, your character, and your motives" (p. 43). Covey calls this the "inside/out approach". Because "the way we see the problem is the problem" (p. 40), the reader must seek "a new level of thinking" (p. 42) to see the real problem.

By persuading readers that they can create their realities by merely believing in and imagining it, BABs teach readers to internalize problems. The books argue unpleasantness and dissatisfaction start at the inside of the individual and thus changing these conditions means changing the self. BABs encourage readers to accept responsibility for organizational conditions and problems and focus the reader internally rather than externally on the organization or its leaders. In constructing problems as

internal to the individual, BABs distract readers from critiquing or blaming the organization itself.

Consequently readers learn to see organizational problems as problems with themselves and specifically problems with their thoughts and attitudes. Because problems are constructed as internal and associated with dysfunctions of the reader's thought processes, the reader comes to see the self as psychologically unhealthy. Constructing the reader as psychologically unhealthy not only defines the problem for the reader as the reader, often perpetuating a belief in a psychological problem that may or may not actually exist, but also creates a perception for needed change. This rhetoric of the psychologically unhealthy self primes the reader for the advice that follows which constructs the reader as psychologically unhealthy lends authority to the voice of the authors who are positioned as psychological counselors.

Perceptions Create Material Reality

BABs tell readers that perception is reality suggesting readers have the power to make real, material changes by merely altering their perceptions. There is a particular emphasis on choosing reality that sustains this argument. For example, Covey (1989) writes, "Whether a problem is direct, indirect, or no control, we have in our hands the first step to the solution. Changing our habits, changing our methods of influence and changing the way we see our no control problems" (p. 86) and "The proactive approach is to change from the inside-out: to *be* different, and by being different, to effect positive change in what's out there" (p. 89). Covey suggests the reader can choose even external, material conditions. He refers to the process of making conscious choices as being proactive and thus refers frequently to the proactive choice as the first building block to

effectiveness. In other words, according to Covey, choosing perceptions, whether these perceptions are based on an external reality or a constructed reality, constitutes being proactive and proactivity shapes material conditions. Thus creating real changes is contingent on proactively choosing our conditions.

In *Fish!*, Lundin et al. (2000) tell readers perceptions shape the real conditions of work. They write, “There is always a choice about the way you do your work, even if there is not a choice about the work itself . . . you always have a choice about the attitude you bring to the job” (p. 37). But the authors then go on to write, “Why can’t we choose the work itself” (p. 38). This last quotation suggests even the material conditions of work can be choices as well. Later the authors summarize the moral of the story writing,

Choose your attitude . . . Who do we want to be while we do our work?
 Play – The fish guys have fun while they work, and fun is energizing.
 How could we have more fun and create more energy? Make their day –
 The fish guys include the customers in their good time . . . How could we
 make each other’s day? Be present – The fish guys are fully present at
 work. What can they teach us about being present for each other and our
 customers? (p. 78)

The author implies here that readers have the ability to choose their material conditions.

Similarly Kiyosaki (1997) argues, “We hold the power to choose our future to be rich, poor, or middle class” (p. 167). Kiyosaki suggests the reader has complete control over income and time and develops the rest of his arguments based on this assumption. Johnson (1998) writes, “He knew it was safer to be aware of his real choices” (p. 75) and later writes, “to paint a new picture of cheese. And to do it so clearly and realistically so that I and the other people I worked with could all enjoy changing and succeeding together” (p. 87). The quotations create a sense that their perceptions create material reality.

Johnson (1998) and Lundin et al. (2000) both describe the reader's ability to control working conditions by simply deciding how he/she engages in the work environment. For example, the organization in *Fish!* is described as a "toxic energy dump" (Lundin, et al., 2000, p. 24). The narrator of the story writes,

When I walk among the cubicles it feels like all the oxygen has been sucked right out of the air. I can hardly breathe. Last week I discovered four clerks who were still not using the computer system installed here two years ago . . . I suppose many back room operations are like this. Not much here to get excited about, just lots of transactions which need to be processed. (p. 21-22)

The narrator also describes her boss as "a real SOB. As far as she could tell, his reputation was deserved. He would issue commands, cut you off mid-sentence, and he had an annoying habit of asking about the status of projects in a paternal way" (p. 24). At the same time the work itself is described as,

mundane and repetitious, to say the least. It's important work, however. We never see a customer, but if we make a mistake, the customer is upset and we receive a lot of criticism. If we do our work well, no one notices. In general, the work is boring. (p. 35)

These were the real conditions of working in the organization at the beginning of the *Fish!* story. But as the employees change their perceptions of their jobs, their environment, and their attitudes towards work, the physical environment changes as well. Specifically the employees perceive happiness, playfulness, and enjoyable jobs. These simple perceptions transform the work environment. Lundin et al. describe this newly transformed workplace writing, "Long term employees have the enthusiasm of new hires and what was thought to be routine work has been transformed into value-added activity" (p. 106). The department is no longer considered a toxic energy dump in danger of being

eliminated. In essence, the employees' perceptions and attitudes actually transform the real conditions of work.

All of the above messages suggest choosing attitudes alters the work experience, makes work more pleasurable, and consequently improves one's overall sense of well-being. The authors imply that by choosing their own perceptions, readers have the ability to impact external conditions.

Further Covey (1989) claims creating our material reality is as simple as believing in something. He writes, "I can *be* more resourceful, I can *be* more diligent, I can *be* more creative, I can *be* more cooperative" (p. 89). In another example Covey writes,

if you want to *have* a happy marriage, *be* the kind of person who generates positive energy and sidesteps negative energy rather than empowering it. If you want to *have* a more pleasant, cooperative teenager, *be* a more understanding, empathic, consistent, loving parent. If you want to *have* more freedom, more latitude in your job, *be* more responsible, a more helpful, a more contributing employee. If you want to be trusted, *be* trustworthy. If you want the secondary greatness of recognized talent, focus first on primary greatness of character. (p. 43)

Covey claims believing creates reality. The reader can choose to be that which he/she desires by believing it to be true. In each of the above examples, the authors tell the reader that making choices and believing can create realities that liberate us from undesirable conditions.

Johnson (1998) also suggests believing or imagining creates material reality. For example, Haw writes on the wall of his maze, "imagining myself enjoying new cheese, even before I find it, leads me to it" (p. 58). Thus according to this parable, employees can achieve material success by imagining it.

The argument that perceptions create reality implies that the reader has the ability to not only control their own sense of well being but also more material work and/or life conditions. In many examples throughout the books, those who are dissatisfied or generally unhappy with their work are reactive rather than proactive, misinterpret reality and ultimately psychologically unhealthy. Consequently BABs shift responsibility for unsatisfactory working conditions onto employees rather than more material structures. *Choosing Reality Transcends Conditions.*

BABs tell readers they can choose their reality by choosing their perceptions, and that the process of choosing is in and of itself liberating. In *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*, Kiyosaki (1997) states, “The power of choice. That is the main reason people want to live in a free country. We want the power to choose” and Covey (1989) writes, “Because we are, by nature, proactive, if our lives are a function of conditioning and conditions, it is because we have, by conscious decision or by default, chosen to empower those things to control us” (p. 71). Both authors suggest having choices is a core aspect of the human condition and that choosing is a form of power available to anybody. In this sense making choices is liberating.

Choosing reality is specifically described as a form of employee control. Unlike EC literature that describes executive control over employees, PMC literature describes control over self. For example, Covey (1989) describes the “inside-out” approach to effectiveness and even includes an entire section on knowing the difference between what he calls control and no-control problems. He suggests control problems are those that we have influence over because they reside within us. Johnson (1998) suggests the audience

controls one's own attitude towards tasks, colleagues, and clients. Lundin, Paul, and Christensen (2000) advise the reader to control one's attitude and responses to change.

Bronson (2003) describes occupational choice as a form of agency and personal control. He writes of interrogating and choosing an occupational calling rather than reflexively accepting opportunities. He tells the story of one man who receives a calling from the Dalai Lama very early in life but adds, "If it were me, no matter how cool or great it would be to have a spiritual calling, and to be given this early in life, I'd still have that American notion of needing to discover things myself. I'd need independence - I'd feel controlled" (p. 7). Thus Bronson suggests that, as the character did in this story, by interrogating the calling, we are also choosing it for ourselves. By choosing, we are transcending conditions that have been handed down or placed upon us.

Johnson (1998) also illustrates how choosing is liberating through the Cheese parable. The littlepeople, and particularly Haw, repeatedly fail to find new cheese until Haw becomes proactive and alters how he will think and feel about organizational change. He writes, "When you move beyond your fear, you feel free" (p. 52). For Haw, simply being proactive moved him beyond fear, which consequently liberate him.

BABs also tell readers choosing creates a more meaningful life. For example, Bronson (2003) suggests readers can choose their own life stories writing,

"We are all writing the story of our life. We want to know what it's 'about,' what are its themes and which theme is on the rise. We demand of it something deeper, or richer, or more substantive. We want to know where we're headed – not to spoil our own ending by ruining the surprise, but we want to ensure that when the ending comes, it

won't be shallow. We will have done something. We will not have squandered our time here.” (p. xiii)

Bronson asks the reader to choose his or her own path and encourages the reader to recognize the impact of choice on the depth and meaning of one's lived experiences. He argues that choices allow the reader to transcend an otherwise meaningless existence.

Bronson also suggests individuals can choose to transcend their social class. He describes individuals who free themselves from class limitations by making occupational choices that extend outside their own class stratum. Bronson's second chapter, titled “in another class,” is made up of nine stories of individuals overcoming limitations to find their callings. The primary advice here is that one overcomes obstacles by *choosing* to free oneself from it. Making choices is consistent with our human nature and is again the action that leads to transcendence over class conditions.

By constructing choice as transcendence, BABs place responsibility for job satisfaction, personal and professional success, and overall happiness on individual employees ability to transcend. Again this argument emphasizes the reader's own psychological state as the core of transcendence and the root of all problems.

Consequently by situating problems as being rooted in employees psychological health and creating a sense of empowerment through the rhetoric of agency, flexibility, and proactivity, the texts conceal more external, material constraints. This argument distracts readers from structural limitations or inequalities. In this way the texts conceal material consequences of large scale organizational changes that have occurred throughout American society, which according to several studies include increased working hours,

increased demands on output, increased stress at home, and decreased job security (Hochschild, 1997; Hodson, 2001; Sennett, 1998).

Overall, PMC BABs tell readers to create their own realities. If one is dissatisfied with work or working conditions, if work is unpleasant or even if one hates one's job, the problem is not with the work itself but rather with one's own perceptions, i.e. mental health. BABs persuade readers to change their own perceptions and attitudes towards experiences, particularly organizing experiences, and that changing perceptions will transcend material conditions creating greater overall happiness. The books argue believing in something will bring it to you. Believing in happiness or pleasant and enjoyable work will create those realities. Thus we can create our realities by merely believing in it.

Perception of choice is a precursor to job satisfaction and relational agreements between employer and employee (Rousseau & Parks, 1993), and satisfied employees are assets to organizations. Satisfaction is noted as "a socio-emotional outcome, which has been considered central to personal and interpersonal success" (Hecht & Riley, 1985, p. 180). In this sense creating a sense of satisfaction in employees also generates what constitutes marker of success for the PMC. At the same time, by encouraging employees to enact agency through choice, employees are persuaded to take ownership of outcomes which in turn increases long-term commitment and loyalty (Hecht & Riley).

Consequently, BABs diffuse resentment towards the EC and organizations by creating the perception that readers have choice over everything, even that over which they may have no real control. In fact all the rhetoric regarding choice is focused on choosing things internal to oneself such as attitude, work ethic, or individual behaviors.

Yet as Fiske (1993) reminds us, while we all have agency, none are free agents. He writes localized power (choice) is contained within what he calls imperializing power (dominant ideology) so always serves the interests of social and economic elites, primarily corporations. Since we enact our agency only within a set of constraints, the only real change offered employees is an internal shift in their perceptions and attitudes. Thus the focus on internal changes creates a perception of control that is likely nonexistent. Indeed feeling empowered increases employees' levels of satisfaction, but it fails to bring about any real structural changes. Rather this advice merely creates a sense of change and transcendence that masks external constraints.

Summary Interpretation of the Reality Problem

The foremost concern about BABs and the strategic use of classical management rhetoric results from contrasting EC literature with that of PMC literature. PMC literature consistently emphasizes constructed reality and more humanistic standards of organizing.

In order to provide a sense of meaning to the experiences they have, readers turn to culturally recognized and understood sign systems (Brummett, 1991). These familiar systems allow readers to quickly and efficiently assign meaning and value to new experiences or messages based on what they already know of older ones. Likewise, when communicators wish to convey a message to an audience, they too must turn to familiar sign systems in order to resonate with their audience (Brummett, 1991). Scholars generally refer to this as having a similar frame of reference or language.

Berger (1995) equates the process of positioning an audience to Althusser's notion of interpellation. Berger notes, "Interpellation is the process by which the representations found in a culture coerce, so to speak, individuals into accepting the

ideologies carried by these forms of representation” (p. 57). When responded to by an audience, the individual or audience is given a “subject position” by the message (Brummett & Bowers, 1999; Brummett, 1991; Fiske, 1995; White, 1992). White (1992) argues that a subject position is an ideology-laden implied description of the intended audience within the message itself.

The choice of which sign system to use or adopt by a communicator or an audience, Brummett (1991) argues, “has political and ideological import” (p.79) for those involved. Specifically, the choice of which systems to adopt, and when, can potentially govern the behavioral, emotional, and psychological choices by aligning audience interests with those of dominant ideology. Over time, the choice of which system to adopt can shape, influence, or maintain a culture.

One of the more pronounced sign systems in BABs is the rhetoric of psychological therapy. Despite their implied focus on business and work, BABs provide little discussion of workplace task performance, efficiency, productivity, or leadership skills. Instead the books focus readers on their own unhappiness caused by their own internal, psychological flaws. By framing business advice within the context of therapy and self-help, the reader is advised to focus their attentions internally rather than on more material or environmental concerns which is consistent with earlier descriptions of the individualistic nature of the PMC discussed in chapter four. By focusing attention on the internal psychology of the reader, the books immediately resonate with the self-interest of their target audience.

The rhetoric of healthy versus sick in general is familiar to audiences and focuses the reader’s attention on the need for self-healing rather than skills based, structural, or

social change. But at the same time, the language of psychology and specifically therapy resonates with the reader because it has become an immense part of popular discourse. Contemporary culture is consumed by an unprecedented preoccupation of self (Giddens, 1991) naturally leading to a society preoccupied with therapy, which Rimke (2000) refers to as a “psychologically oriented culture” (p. 63). Rindfleish (2005) contends self-help proliferates in the United States consumerist culture because it is readily packaged and sold to consumers. Johnson and Johnson (1998) referred to the proliferation of religiously inspired self-help as the “bibliotherapy movement”. Thus the language of psychological, therapeutic discourse has become a part of pop culture so is a familiar frame of reference within which to situate readers.

BABs encourage audience identification with executive class interests by positioning the audience as ailing subjects in need of therapeutic healing. Rimke (2000) argues self-help books construct the self as pathological through clear demarcations of what is healthy and unhealthy, normal and abnormal. In fact, BABs actually create a need for self-healing by characterizing the reader as psychologically unhealthy and subsequently articulating the ideal, healthy self.

Throughout BABs readers are told their perceptions shape their reality. They are encouraged to choose positive perceptions. And readers are advised that by harboring right attitudes, the changes in their perceptions will shape their external, material conditions. Thus undesirable conditions are the result of a lack of control over perceptions, not material conditions, and this failure to choose positive perceptions holds the reader back.

Authenticity

While BABs tell readers they have the ability to choose their realities by changing their perceptions, they also tell readers the solutions to the psychologically unhealthy self lie in authenticity and specifically discovery of the authentic self. According to BABs there is a real, or authentic, self. This theme is developed through BABs; thus BABs teach readers there is an authentic self to be discovered and that happiness or success is dependent on the discovery of this authentic self.

In one example, Bronson (2003) includes a book section called “know thyself,” which deals with how individuals come to know their desires through experiences that are ideally *uninfluenced* by society. Bronson advises the reader to ask, “Am I looking through my own eyes, or am I looking through glasses I don’t even realize are there?” (p. 218). This statement implies there is an authentic-self waiting to be discovered and this authentic-self is discrete from the influences of society.

Covey (1989) describes authentic self as rooted in “character ethics” that guide the reader along a path of self-discovery. He says,

The Seven Habits are habits of *Effectiveness*. Because they are based on principles, they bring the maximum long-term beneficial results possible. They become the basis of a person’s character, creating an empowering center of correct maps from which an individual can effectively solve problems, maximize opportunities, and continually learn and integrate other principles in an upward spiral of growth. (p. 52)

Here Covey argues discovery of the authentic self is achieved by adopting principles of the character ethic because the principles form a road map to our selves. Only this principle based living allows the reader to discover authenticity.

Covey also describes the difference between authentic and inauthentic self as the difference between peoples’ “primary greatness or goodness in their character” and their

“secondary greatness – that is, social recognition for their talents” (p. 22). Covey also says primary greatness is “the internalization of correct principles” (p. 23). Covey then proceeds to tell the reader what character ethics of the authentic self are when he writes: “things like integrity, humility, fidelity, temperance, courage, justice, patience, industry, simplicity, modesty, and the Golden Rule” (p. 18). Here Covey has laid out values that are essential to the authentic self, suggesting success is found through characteristics such as integrity, humility, and courage. Covey not only indicates that only these virtues are authentic but also that true success is developing these virtues which he calls character ethics. In other words, authenticity leads to real greatness or success.

Lundin et al. (2000) include an excerpt from *Simple Abundance* in the middle of their text which also describes this notion of an authentic self. It says,

The reason you were born was to leave your own indelible mark on the world. This is your *authenticity* . . . *Respect* your creative urges . . . step out in *faith* . . . you will discover your choice are as authentic as you are. What is more, you will discover that your life is all it was meant to be: a joyous sonnet of thanksgiving (italics and ellipses in the original). (p. 48-49)

This excerpt articulates the existence of an authentic self and asserts that discovering authenticity allows one’s life to be meaningful. Authenticity allows the reader to leave his/her mark on the world.

For Bronson (2003) discovering the authentic self is a journey through which the reader finds the self by answering the question “what should I do with my life,” a question that can only be answered, according to Bronson, by differentiating between one’s true passions and the desires of society. He tells the reader that authentic self knows the difference between his/her own desires versus those of society and identifies his/her desires through an affective (as opposed to economic) lens. For example, Bronson (2003)

includes a book section called “know thyself,” which deals with how individuals come to know their desires through experiences that are ideally *uninfluenced* by society. Bronson suggests the uncertainty of not knowing what to do with one’s life is indicative of inauthenticity and that authenticity means knowing the difference between one’s own desires and socially constructed desires. According to Bronson, the reader will flourish when he or she recognizes the differences and discovers his/her authentic self.

In sum, each of the BABs implies there is an authentic self just waiting to be discovered. The discovery of authentic self requires one to make distinctions between one’s own desires and the influences of society. Discovery of authentic self may come through singular meaningful moments or over the course of a journey, but discovery is fundamental to personal fulfillment and therefore personal success.

Authentic Desire is Connection

An authentic desire, or that which the authentic self craves, is described as connections to others throughout BABs. In fact, connectivity emerges as a prominent theme through a close reading of the texts. BABs not only teach readers there is an authentic self that can be revealed by discovering one’s real desires but that connections are authentic desires and choosing to prioritize genuine connections is another foundation of personal success.

Covey (1989) tells readers to recognize their connectedness to the universe and that one’s only authentic desires are for a sense of connectedness. He particularly uses examples of relationships to illustrate connectivity. In one example, he describes “an inner hunger, a deep need for personal congruency and effectiveness and for healthy, growing relationships with other people” (p. 15). He talks about developing the ability to

connect with others as a form of maturity. He writes, “gradually, over the ensuing months and years, we become more and more independent – physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially – until eventually we can essentially take care of ourselves, becoming inner-directed and self-reliant” (p. 49). In the next paragraph he adds,

As we continue to grow and mature, we become increasingly aware that all of nature is *interdependent*, that there is an ecological system that governs nature, including society. We further discover that the higher reaches of our nature have to do with our relationships with others – that human life also is interdependent. (p. 49)

In these statements, Covey tells the reader that authenticity, or what he refers to as “the higher reaches of our nature,” is mature connections with the universe and others. He establishes connectivity as a primary process of organizing, and establishes the universe as a sort of higher power that connects us to one another and our pasts.

Covey (1989) also develops connectivity as a fundamental principle through his discourse on interdependence which constitutes an entire chapter in the book. He describes the ability to work collaboratively as a form of maturity when he writes,

Independent people who do not have the maturity to think and act interdependently may be good individual producers, but they won’t be good leaders or team players. They’re not coming from the paradigm of interdependence necessary to succeed in marriage, family, or organizational reality. (p. 50-51)

Being a good producer alone is not success. Instead success comes from the ability to collaborate with others in a way that enables the reader to influence how others organize work and relationships. In other words, success comes from interdependence and collaboration but is measured by the ability to lead and be a team player.

In another example, Covey tells the reader personal relationships are more valuable than laboring for a cause. He writes,

It is more noble to give yourself completely to one individual than to labor diligently for the salvation of the masses.’ I take that to mean that I could devote eight, ten, or twelve hours a day, five, six, or seven days a week to the thousands of people and projects ‘out there’ and still not have a deep, meaningful relationship with my own spouse, with my own teenage son, with my closest working associate . . . In twenty-five years of consulting organizations, I have been impressed over and over again by the power of that statement. Many of the problems in organizations stem from relationship difficulties at the very top. (p. 201)

Here Covey defines connectivity and personal relationships as having authentic value, and reinforces the principle of connectivity as primary for successful organizing.

Covey (1989) also tells the reader *how* to connect with others when he writes, “PC [principle centered] work is treating employees as volunteers just as you treat customers, as volunteers, because that’s what they are. They volunteer the best part – their hearts and minds” (Covey, 1989, p. 58). Covey suggests relationships are voluntary. Thus organizing requires connecting with others’ hearts and minds and in this example he speaks specifically of working relationships. Later he writes,

Empathetic listening is so powerful because it gives you accurate data to work with. Instead of projecting your own autobiography and assuming thoughts, feelings, motives and interpretation, you’re dealing with the reality inside another person’s head and heart. You’re listening to understand. You’re focused on receiving the deep communication of another human soul. In addition, Empathetic listening is the key to making deposits in Emotional Bank Accounts, because nothing you do is a deposit unless the other person perceives it as such. You can work your fingers to the bone to make a deposit, only to have it turn into a withdrawal when a person regards your efforts as manipulative, self-serving, intimidating, or condescending because you don’t understand what really matters to him. (p. 241)

In addition to again asserting a belief in perceived reality, Covey’s advice focuses the reader on emotional aspects of success, namely satisfaction and fulfillment. He tells the reader listening with feeling and understanding, and paying attention to another’s heart

and mind enables one to connect to the other's perception of reality. These deep connections enable successful organizing and help fulfill one's own authentic desire.

Bronson (2003) also tells readers we are all connected to the universe through our pasts. In one example, Bronson writes of a man who feels unfulfilled by his career as a civil rights attorney so decides to bake cakes instead. He tells the man's story writing,

He [Warren] was overtaken with emotion and a sense of connectedness to his past. He had a friend, Luke, who had died when Warren was fourteen; Luke had looked out for Warren when he was a boy, teaching him to play basketball and how to talk to girls. Ever since, Warren had an occasional feeling that Luke was still looking out for him, and in that moment with the spiral star on the cake, it was like the Angel of Luke was touching his shoulder, connecting his head to his heart to his soul. "The star pattern was so common, always reappearing. It tied my life together," he remembered. "The feeling I had – it's hard to explain – it was like the cake was saying, I belong to you, Warren." (p. 41-42)

In this example, Bronson describes connections to the past as an almost spiritual connection to the universe.

In other examples Bronson (2003) also articulates the principle of connectivity by linking authentic desire with the fulfillment derived from personal relationships. In one story titled "The Romantic Depressive: Enjoying People" he describes a man who earned a PhD and became a marine biologist yet remained terribly unhappy. When Bronson asks the man why he had been unhappy as a biologist, the man states, "Not enough people! I was lonely! I realized, Fuck biology, I like people. I'd never been without people around. It was terrible (p. 257). In a second story titled, "On Planet Hug: Finding Your People", Bronson writes of one woman's experiences in a church stating,

The culture of this church is infectious; it was like we were on a different planet: Planet Hug. When I looked into their eyes, everybody seemed to have a world of hurt in their past, yet they were the warmest group I've ever met. I'm not a religious person, but I was stirred, and I sang and

clapped and stomped, and when I pictured people in my life I wanted to pray for, my brother, or my step-mom, or an old friend, their image brought tears. (p. 258)

The culture of connectivity within the church moves Bronson and the character in his story in profound and authentic ways. And the man's lack of connections with others in the first example drives the character to leave a successful career. The above examples tell the reader that connections to others are real and fulfilling, and ultimately what makes the reader successful both in terms of illuminating the path to the future and in terms of fulfilling one's innermost desires.

By defining authentic desire, or as Covey describes it, the deep yearning of the authentic self, as connectivity to others, BABs also tell the reader that success is cultivating fulfilling personal relationships. For example, Covey (1989) tells readers they can achieve success through goodness.

If I try to use human influence strategies . . . while my character is fundamentally flawed, marked by duplicity and insincerity – then, in the long run, I cannot be successful. My duplicity will breed distrust . . . and everything I do will be perceived as manipulative. It simply makes no difference how good the rhetoric is or even how good the intentions are; if there is little or no trust, there is no foundation for permanent success. Only basic goodness gives life to technique. (p. 21)

According to Covey, one can never be successful by employing strategic or manipulative means but rather through maintaining genuine, honest relationships with others. These connections, built on trust, are the only basis for enduring success. In another example, Covey writes,

Effectiveness lies in the balance between production, production capability and the “golden egg.” And when we are too focused on the golden egg, we fail. When two people in a marriage are more concerned about getting the golden eggs, the benefits, than they are in preserving the relationship that makes them possible, they often become insensitive and

inconsiderate, neglecting the little kindnesses and courtesies so important to a deep relationship . . . The goose gets sicker day by day. (p. 55)

In both of the above examples Covey privileges relational rewards earned by maintaining connections with others over material rewards and he argues that only these genuine (honest and trusting) connections generate lasting happiness. Each of the BABs describes genuine connections as honesty, goodness, and trustworthiness. They suggest prioritizing authentic connections will sustain us and generate personal fulfillment.

Family connections are particularly important throughout BABs. In fact, several examples suggest healthy family connections create greater professional success such as in Lundin et al. (2000) where the narrator relies heavily on memories of her deceased husband to guide her choices about work. The authors also illustrate how the rules of organizing are comparable to the rules of maintaining personal relationships. Lundin et al. state, “I am in a bad relationship; I need to do something about it. I can see now that reacting and feeling like a victim is not going to solve the problem” (p. 59). Here the actor applies a lesson from work to his personal life in order to manage the relationship more successfully. In this example the authors suggest maintaining personal connections with family can guide the reader’s professional decisions in valuable ways. It also seems to imply there is a relationship between genuine family connections and work.

In another example, Covey (1989) expresses a priority on family connections writing, “Of course there are some relationships where No Deal is not viable. I wouldn’t abandon my child or my spouse and go for No Deal (it would be better, if necessary, to go for compromise – a low form of Win/Win)” (p. 215-1216). In this section of the book Covey argues that in conflict negotiations the reader’s goal should be for a win/win outcome. Because compromise is not, according to Covey, a win/win outcome, the only

alternative is to end negotiations (no deal) in every situation except with family.

Maintaining family connections, as an authentic desire of the authentic self, outweighs the need for a win/win outcome. Because family connections are authentic desires, they take priority over other forms of success, such as winning a negotiation or closing a deal.

Kiyosaki (1997) also emphasizes the relationship between genuine connections, family, and authentic desire through several stories and examples. In one example he writes, “He works hard to be a good provider for his wife and children . . . One day he comes home to an empty house. His wife has left with the kids. He knew he and his wife had problems, but rather than work to make the relationship strong, he stayed busy” (p. 156). In this example, the character has worked hard to support his family but has not worked hard on maintaining the relationships with his family. As a consequence the man loses his family connections and that which fulfills his authentic desires. Again, there is an emphasis on relationship maintenance that seems to privilege the maintenance of personal relationships over more material markers of success. Family connections are thus described as particularly vital aspects of the authentic self. In sum, authentic connections are the essence of the authentic self.

Inauthentic Desire

Money, on the other hand, is often described as a distraction that prevents the reader from discovering his/her authentic-self and thus is an obstacle to personal success. Johnson (1998) tells the reader to view money as a distraction writing, “Cheese (with a capital C) . . . The more important your cheese is to you, the more you want to hold onto it” (p. 36). This metaphor emphasizes how the intensity of inauthentic desire can distract the reader from his/her real desires. Here cheese is a metaphor for material rewards and

desiring these material rewards impedes wise decision-making. This theme parallels Kiyosaki's (1997) first lesson, which states, "the rich don't work for money." Here both authors teach the reader high salaries are merely illusions of success and thus distractions from discovery of the authentic-self.

BABs also tell readers that focusing too intently on material wealth leads to various forms of personal failure. Covey (1989), suggests focusing on material desire diminishes one's personal character resulting in self-centeredness and personal unhappiness. He writes, "Inadvertently we have become so focused on our own building that we have forgotten the foundation that holds it up [i.e. genuine connections]" (p. 21). In other words, Covey argues throughout his text that focusing on material success (also referred to by Covey as secondary greatness), which is based on the desires of society, blocks us from achieving "primary greatness," which is the fulfillment of authentic desire, (i.e. connection). In this sense, desiring material success distracts the reader from his/her real desires.

According to Covey, desiring material rewards leads to long-term failure. In one excerpt he states,

I have had the opportunity to work with many people – wonderful people, talented people. People who deeply want to achieve happiness and success, people who are searching, people who are hurting. I've worked with business executives, college students, church and civic groups, families and marriage partners. And in all of my experience, I have never seen lasting solutions to problems, lasting happiness and success, that came from the outside in. (p. 43)

In this example, Covey describes individuals who desire material rewards as failing to achieve lasting, internal happiness. In another example, Covey He writes,

It's incredibly easy to get caught up in an activity trap, in the busy-ness of life, to work harder and harder at climbing the ladder of success only to

discover it's leaning against the wrong wall . . . People often find themselves achieving victories that are empty, successes that have come at the expense of things they suddenly realize were far more valuable to them. People from every walk of life . . . often struggle to achieve a higher income, more recognition or a certain degree of professional competence, only to find that their drive to achieve their goal blinded them to the things that really mattered most. (p. 98)

In this example Covey tells the reader material rewards fail to fulfill authentic desire. He tells the reader traditional success and drive hinder deeper insights and he seems to imply that the material rewards themselves are the obstacles to fulfillment.

Kiyosaki (1997) reinforces the negative consequences of desiring material rewards, particularly money, by articulating a dichotomous relationship between rich and poor that is rooted in the desire for material wealth. He asserts, the “rich don't work for money,” but the poor get trapped in a cycle of “get up, go to work, pay bills, get up, go to work, pay bills . . .” (p. 42). The implication is that working for money is a characteristic of the poor and therefore a socially undesirable position. By constructing this false dichotomy between the rich and the poor, Kiyosaki positions the desire for money as responsible for maintaining the division between rich and poor classes. Consequently Kiyosaki distracts the reader from more structural inequalities that contribute to the circumstances of the rich and poor.

Bronson (2003) advises the reader to distinguish temptation, such as high salaries, from aspirations because temptations for material rewards are mere illusions of desire. He writes,

Most people jump through life, asking what's next, and choosing based on where can they make the most money, what offers the most upside or opportunity. A conventional 'success' story is one where, with each next, the protagonist has more money, more respect, and more possessions. (p. 239)

He goes on to illustrate how these temptations can distract us from our real aspirations serving as red herrings that guide us off our paths. In most instances money serves as “golden handcuffs” (p. 399) that prevented individuals from achieving their goals. The people in his stories thus leave lucrative careers in pursuit of “their calling.” In this sense, money is constructed as that which holds us back from our true potential. Thus desire for money is a distraction from more authentic desires that construct the healthy self.

Summary Interpretation of Authenticity

By articulating authentic desires for readers, BABs tell readers how to prioritize and ultimately what constitutes a healthy self. Much of the advice in BABs is framed within what resembles New Age Spirituality (NAS), and is specifically framed within the NAS assertion that desire is the cause of suffering. Consequently the reader is to assume psychologically healthy individuals reject material desire. In this way BABs diffuse resentment towards the EC’s structural and material advantages over the PMC by distracting the reader from it. To pacify the reader with the status quo of structural and material inequality, BABs assert that desire is negative because it distorts perceptions of reality, goals, values, and personal satisfaction. Ultimately, according to the BABs, desires distract one from discovering the healthy self.

Constructing the image of an authentic-self that exists discretely from the social-self also primes readers to accept the authors’ interpretations of healthy and unhealthy desires. The healthy-self identifies real desires. Thus the rhetoric of authentic and inauthentic desire distracts the reader from the authors’ own relationship with material success. Accordingly, what follows is a discourse that guides the reader away from material desires. In a practical sense the discourse potentially persuades the reader to

work without regard for his or her own material compensation. Such an argument serves the organization and ultimately helps protect the existing power structure.

BABs overwhelmingly target traditional desires for money and wealth as unhealthy desires that distract the reader from more authentic desires by describing material wealth as false perceptions of reality. More specifically, by positioning desire for material wealth as “golden handcuff” or the thing that confines us, the authors construct money itself as oppressive.

The overarching theme of authenticity serves an important role in persuading the reader to internalize particular goals, behaviors, norms, attitudes, and values that are desirable to the executive elite. While the theme “perception is reality” persuades readers to internalize organizational problems and realities as their own and encourages the reader to choose his/her own destiny, the development of authenticity as a secondary theme actually defines those choices for the reader within organizationally sanctioned norms.

Paradoxically the books all describe authentic desires as if they are unique and internal to the individual, yet the books ultimately describe and define those desires for the reader. They first tell the reader authentic desires are distinct from social desires. Then they tell the reader what the most authentic desires are and are not, particularly emphasizing authentic desires as constituted in genuine connections and personal relationship maintenance. Thus these books define socially desirable goals, norms, behaviors, and attitudes for the reader while simultaneously claiming these goals, norms, behaviors, and attitudes are discrete from external, social, or organizational influences. In doing so, BABs convince the reader that what are really socially desirable attitudes and

behaviors are not necessarily socially desirable at all, but rather are the authentic desires of the internal and healthy self. This makes it appear as if the reader is discovering and choosing attitudes and actions on his/her own rather than in response to outside, or even the authors' influences. However the authentic desires described throughout BABs are really the desires of the books' authors and merely have the appearance of belonging to the reader. In creating this illusion of authentic desire the books obscure tensions or antagonisms between the two classes by aligning the interests of the PMC with the interests of the executive class.

While BABs ask the reader to succeed from the inside out by discovery of one's true self and internalizing the lessons they learn, BABs surreptitiously define the ideal self for the reader. According to the texts, the true, inner self is satisfied rather than competitive, internally rather than externally focused, motivated but not ambitious. But ironically by defining self for the reader, the subject does not actually make his/her own decisions, which ultimately undermines the reader's autonomy and agency. He/she does not actually discover self but rather embraces the guru's definition of self. The reader is not self-regulated but rather regulated by the social rules advocated within the texts. In other words, and paradoxically, the autonomous individual regulates self in accordance with socially sanctioned rules. It's the "liberation/regulation paradox" (Rinke, 2000).

BABs also rhetorically function to create a need for individual change through the rhetoric of self-help and psychological dysfunction. By positioning the reader as psychologically dysfunctional, BABs prime the reader to internalize dominant ideological interests as their own. Rinke (2000) writes of self-help, "By proclaiming what types of self change are deemed 'healthy' and 'best', the self-help experts themselves are

providing social, not psychological, rules of conduct” (p. 70). Similarly, BABs function to align the psychologically healthy self with socially desirable choices. In this sense, defining the healthy and unhealthy self is a form of social control over individuals, which is consistent with Althusser’s notion of media and ISAs.

Success and Failure

BABs spend a good deal of time articulating success and failure for the reader in some rhetorically meaningful ways. They pay particular attention to critiquing traditional models of success and failure and to persuading readers to adopt alternative models of what constitutes personal successes and failures. This next section will explore the rhetorical construction of alternative models of personal success and failure provided by BABs.

Personal Growth

First and foremost, success is personal growth. According to several authors, individuals who adopt the correct perceptions, choose their destinies and focus their internal desires on relationship maintenance will achieve an ultimate state of internal balance (Covey, 1989) and harmony. This state of what sounds comparable to Zen-like enlightenment is the real meaning of success. Covey (1989) in particular equates internal balance and personal growth to personal success throughout his book. He says real success is marked by personal growth and internal balance writing,

I have come in contact with many individuals who have achieved an incredible degree of outward success, but have found themselves struggling with an inner hunger, a deep need for personal congruency and effectiveness and for healthy, growing relationships with other people. (p. 15)

Here Covey describes the growth that results from prioritizes personal connections as the only real and enduring kind of personal success.

Later Covey expands on his vision of personal growth and success by arguing the virtues of emotional investment. He states, “Empathic listening is, in and of itself, a tremendous deposit in the Emotional Bank Account. It’s deeply therapeutic and healing because it gives a person ‘psychological air’” (p. 242). He suggests emotional investments generate mature and enduring connections to others and emphasizes how these emotional attachments contribute to personal growth. Throughout these examples Covey privileges personal growth, which is emotional investment and results in internal congruency, as a marker of success and psychological health.

Covey (1989) reinforces his vision of success by telling the reader “win/win is the habit of interpersonal leadership [which] is fundamental to success in all our interactions, and it embraces five interdependent dimensions of life. It begins with *character*, and moves toward *relationships*, out of which flow *agreements*” (p. 216). In this example, Covey directly describes agreeable relationships as fundamental to successful organizing. Thus here, success is marked by personal growth that comes from mature connections with other people.

Bronson (2003) also describes success as personal growth rather than public success. In all of his stories he describes the ways people achieve success by discovering their authentic passions. In one example he writes,

Most people jump through life, asking what’s next, and choosing based on where can they make the most money, what offers the most upside or opportunity. A conventional ‘success’ story is one where, with each next, the protagonist has more money, more respect, and more possessions. I’d like to suggest an alternative ‘success’ story – one where, with each next, the protagonist is closer to finding that spot where he’s no longer held

back by his heart, and he explodes with talent, and his character blossoms, and the gift he has to offer the world is apparent. (p. 239)

Success comes to each character in Bronson's stories when they discover ways to balance their own passions with their personal relationships and the demands of life. Thus success, according to Bronson, comes from recognizing our passions that lead to personal growth. In this sense, success is achieved through fulfilling passions that lead to internal balance and personal growth.

Finally, Kiyosaki (1997) asks the reader to analyze his / her own financial intelligence and consequently asks the reader to measure success through the accumulation of experiences rather than wealth. As money and possessions are either negatively constructed as society's desires (Covey, 1989; Bronson, 2003) and the desire of the poor (Kiyosaki, 1997), achieving personal growth and thus success means finding personal fulfillment in the absence of wealth. Here again, Kiyosaki suggest financial intelligence and experiences lead to personal growth and that only this growth creates real success.

In another example, Bronson (2003) features a section that deals with appreciating what one has, valuing the journey, and making the best of one's current situation. According to Bronson, valuing change, yet finding satisfaction in the status quo, are two sides of the same journey and valuing both in their rightful place is what leads to fulfillment. Specifically, the characters in these stories may take jobs that, on the surface, seem to be beneath them, for example working at Little Caesars Pizza, because the experiences of menial and negligibly paid work lead to knowledge and growth. In a sense, uncomfortable conditions are somehow therapeutic and teach the reader something about finding contentment and peace.

According to the authors, connections are not only the essence of the authentic self, as described above, but also the outcome of a psychologically healthy self.

Achieving internal balance is then the result of personal growth and only this personal growth is genuine and enduring success.

Psychological Prisons and Failure

BABs tell readers that success is connection, internal balance, and personal growth. But because we have the power to choose perceptions that create material reality and success, we also have the power to choose perceptions that create our own psychological prisons and failure. BABs argue psychological prisons are constructed from poor perceptual choices and are the definition of failure. Because poor perceptual choices come from prioritizing the desires of society rather than the authentic self, they serve as psychological prisons.

BABs suggest people create psychological prisons when they are lazy. Kiyosaki (1997) argues it is “mental laziness” (p. 169) that traps the reader within psychological prison. He states, “Laziness. Busy people are often the most lazy . . . That’s the most common form of laziness. Laziness by staying busy” (p. 156-157). Lundin et al. (2000) also describe the littlepeople in *Cheese* as getting lazy and argue this laziness is a psychological prison that blocks the littlepeople from embracing change.

In another example, Lundin et al. (2000) state, “I don’t believe that companies are necessarily prisons, but sometimes we make prisons of them by the way we choose to work there. I have created a prison and the walls are my own lack of faith in myself” (p. 46). Covey (1989) writes, “What I have seen result from the outside-in paradigm is unhappy people who feel victimized and immobilized, who focus on the weaknesses of

other people and the circumstances they feel are responsible for their own stagnant situation” (p. 43). Johnson (1998) says,

Some people never change and they pay a price for it. I see people like Hem in my medical practice. They feel entitled to their ‘Cheese’ [material rewards]. They feel like victims when it’s taken away and blame others. They get sicker than people who let go [of their cheese] and move on. (p. 85)

In another instance he writes, “When you move beyond your fear you feel free” (p. 56).

In each of these examples, choosing the wrong perceptions, attitudes, desires, and states of mind create psychological prisons that hold us back from achieving real success.

BABs also suggest fear creates a particular type of psychological prison because it holds one back from accepting change. Bronson (2003) suggests the psychological prisons are constructed of uncertainty and fear of change. In a similar vein, Bossidy and Charan (2002) describe inflexibility (resistance to change) as almost narcissistic in writing, “today we need flexible people who are not possessive about ‘the way things are done around here’ ” (p. 15). Johnson (1998) also advocates the desirability of flexibility writing, “We all tried to talk to him about the many opportunities that existed in the company for those who wanted to be flexible” (p. 81). In both examples the characters’ inflexibility prevents him from accepting changes that could ultimately liberate him from his consuming fear. The authors suggest inflexibility keeps one trapped in one way of thinking and acting. It limits opportunities and essentially creates a psychological prison.

BABs also suggest the reader is responsible for his/her own psychological prison. Covey (1989) specifically suggests individuals who feel like prisoners are merely failing to take responsibility for their own perceptions. He uses an example of a Nazi concentration camp survivor to illustrate one’s ability to transcend even physical

conditions of horrendous imprisonment. He writes of Frankl who was imprisoned in a Nazi death camp and experienced numerous atrocities including the loss of his entire family with the exception of his sister. During this experience Frankl,

began to become aware of what he later called “the last of the human freedoms” – the freedom his Nazi captors could not take away. They could control his entire environment, they could do what they wanted to his body, but Viktor Frankl himself was a self-aware being who could look as an observer at his very involvement. His basic identity was intact. *He could decide within himself how all of this was going to affect him.* Between what happened to him, or the stimulus, and his response to it, was his freedom or power to choose that response.

In the midst of his experiences, Frankl would project himself into different circumstances, such as lecturing to his students after his release from the death camps. He would describe himself in the classroom, in his mind’s eye, and give his students the lessons he was learning during his very torture. Through a series of such disciplines – mental, emotional, and moral, principally using memory and imagination – he exercised his small, embryonic freedom until it grew larger and larger, until he had more freedom than his Nazi captors. (p. 69)

In this example Covey describes the most extreme conditions of imprisonment yet asserts the prisoner is responsible for his own sense of liberation. Again this emphasizes how choosing the right perceptions can lead one to either create or transcend one’s own psychological prison and that prisons result from fear and a lack of personal responsibility.

Johnson (1998) also asserts we create our own psychological prisons writing, “He had to admit that the biggest inhibitor to change lies within yourself, and that nothing gets better until *you* change” (p. 71). Covey spends his entire first chapter on identifying the difference between control and “no-control” issues. In both examples, the authors imply we create our own prisons through out thoughts and perceptions. But we also have the

ability to transcend these prisons by taking responsibility for our selves, our thoughts, and our desires.

In sum it can be argued the healthy self in general means shifting one's perception of status and success to internal, affective virtues. The healthy, self-actualized and successful self embraces these affective markers of success and releases more material social markers of achievement. Consequently honoring heart, talent, and personal well-being replace material wealth as markers of middle class status and privilege. And while these alternative standards are personally desirable and generally make us feel good, their primary benefit is to the organization itself because the successful self is submissive, accepting and satisfied, but asks very little in terms of material rewards in return. In this sense the books construct ideal employees by training individuals to internalize the values of ideal employees.

Summary Interpretation of Success and Failure

BABs tell readers we have the power to create or transcend our own psychological prisons through our choices, perceptions, desires, attitudes, and internal psychological health. Specifically desire for material rewards limits one to “secondary greatness” as opposed to more authentic personal success. The reader is encouraged to embrace flexibility, responsibility, and submission to transcend their self-created psychological prisons. The implication is a healthy PMC finds fulfillment internally and without material/external rewards. Thus the discourse pacifies the reader through Zen-like rhetoric of internal peace consequently sustaining a system that needs the consent of labor to maintain the status quo of production.

BABs frame success within the discourse of transcendence and the right state of mind. Consequently BABs actually define what it means to be successful. According to BABs, success is transcendence over external conditions. For each of the authors, success is some form of internal balance based on discovery of the authentic self.

Consistent with the tenets of new age spirituality, BABs tell readers success is internal. Because problems are internal, if the reader has appropriately aligned his/her perceptions, success will occur internally. Throughout the BABs the reader is encouraged to view his/her success at organizing, and life in general, as starting from the inside of self and working out.

As described throughout multiple sections above, images of organizational and personal failures are framed within the rhetoric of ineffective or undisciplined employees (Covey's (1989) emphasis on proactivity) suggesting the unsuccessful employee is lazy (Kiyosaki, 1997), incompetent, inadequate, inefficient, or inept (Bossidy & Charan, 2002), all of which are contradictory to core American values. Thus by framing discourse within the rhetoric of laziness, ineffectiveness, or lack of self-discipline, BABs target values that are deeply held by American society as a whole and thus readers are persuaded of their dysfunctions because the actions defined as dysfunction get at the heart of the American value system. In other words, readers are persuaded of their need for psychological healing by employing the rhetoric of core American values to diagnose the reader's personal dysfunctions.

By targeting personal yet publicly visible dysfunctions, readers are shamed into a heightened desire for healing thus the author actually creates the problem and need for change. For example, Kiyosaki (1997) utilizes the dichotomous language of rich versus

poor to frame the reader's failures as lazy. Considering an expectation of a capitalist society is that each individual has equal opportunity to succeed (Mills, 1963), the implied diagnosis of those who do not succeed according to the author's standards is personal deficiencies in drive, motivation, or ambition. Kiyosaki thus uses the stigma of poor, again a public and visible social identity construct, to shame and heighten the reader's desire for change and healing.

While BABs frame personal, psychological dysfunction within American social values, they also specifically target actions that undermine organizational interests. According to Rimke (2000), individuals are "psychologically healthy inasmuch as they are governable, predictable, calculable, classifiable, self-conscious, responsible, self-regulating and self-determined" (p. 63). Organizations have a fundamental need for some level of continuity, predictability, and control (Conrad & Poole, 2005) so the unregulated, ungovernable, and unpredictable individual constitutes a threat to the order of the organization. By diagnosing unruly employees as psychologically dysfunctional and subsequently prescribing therapeutic cures that align individual interests with those of the organization, BABs simultaneously shape individuals into more ideal employees.

Finally, BABs define success in terms that are non-threatening to the status quo of the EC power structure. Mills (1951/2002) writes about this phenomena stating,

In the last twenty years, a new style in inspirational literature, relevant to a new style of aspiration, has risen in the United States. This literature does not provide its large readership with techniques for cultivating the old middle-class virtues, nor the techniques for selling oneself, although, like other inspirational material, it is concerned with the individual rather than society. It emphasizes peace of mind and various physical and spiritual external and known ambitions. As a literature of resignation, it strives to control goals and ways of life by lowering the level of ambition, and by replacing the older goals with more satisfying internal goals. (p. 282)

Mills goes on to illustrate how inspirational literature primarily serves to lower ambition and consequently eliminate sources of middle class dissatisfaction by obscuring the tensions between PMC and executive ruling class material markers of status and success.

Ultimately BABs produce an attitude of resignation in the reader. Mills (1951/2002) describes “literature of resignation” writing,

It is the spiritual value, even of material poverty, available to everyone, which a *Reader's Digest* or *Peace of Mind* philosophy exemplifies. These are not the old sober virtues of thrift and industry, nor the drive and style of the displayed personality, nor the educated skills of the bureaucratic professions. These are virtues which go with resignation, and the literature of resignation justifies the lowering of ambition and the slackening of the old frenzy. (p. 283)

Likewise, BABs function as part of “the literature of resignation” that “justifies the lowering of ambition” (Mills, 1951/2002, p. 283). The products of alternative measures of success are described throughout the books as personal satisfaction and fulfillment. Yet these outcomes not only constitute new internal virtues for the PMC but also socialize employees to perceive greater satisfaction making them complacent and ideal workers.

Good Employees have Good Instincts

While BABs do little to develop specific tools for professional development, they spend a great deal of time describing what amounts to the ideal employee. Primarily the most desirable employees have the right kind of intelligence and good instincts. This theme is developed throughout BABs.

Good Instincts Are . . .

Bossidy and Charan (2002) write extensively about finding employees who have “the right kind of intelligence and personality” (p. 118) which they illustrate with the

story of Jack Welch, CEO of GE. They write of Welch stating, “Welch was irreverent, blunt, and worked from the gut” (p. 117). The narrative in *Who Moved my Cheese* implies that ideal employees are like mice: instinctual and responsive. When the mice face change they “were prepared for the inevitable and knew instinctively what to do” (p. 32). Consequently the reader is told the right kind of intelligence is instinctual.

The right instinct, according to Bossidy and Charan (2002), is the drive to succeed. They write,

I’m not knocking education or looking for dumb people. But if you have to choose between someone with a staggering IQ and an elite education who’s gliding along, and someone with a lower IQ but who is absolutely determined to succeed, you’ll always be better with the second person. (p. 119)

Bossidy and Charan emphasize the value of instinct and personality, primarily a drive to succeed, in the ideal employees.

According to Johnson (1998), the mice demonstrate the right instincts when, “They do not overanalyze things. And they are not burdened with many complex beliefs” (p. 32). He also writes,

The mice, Sniff and Scurry, possessing only simple rodent brains, but good instinct, searched for the hard nibbling cheese they liked, as mice often do. The two littlepeople, Hem and Haw, used their brains, filled with many beliefs, to search for a very different kind of Cheese – with a capital C – which they believed would make them feel happy and successful. (p. 26)

So according to Johnson, the right instincts are responsive to organizational change and employees with good instincts are not only willing but also excited about change. Thus the reader is told ideal employees have good instincts based on gut level intelligence and a willingness and desire to change.

Furthermore Johnson (1998) implies that too much rational thought and overly critical thinking undermines good instinct. He writes, “The mice did not overanalyze things. And they were not burdened with many complex beliefs. To the mice, the problem and the answer were both simple. The situation at Cheese Station C had changed. So, Sniff and Scurry decided to change.” (p. 32). On the other hand, the littlepeople suffered for questioning and over thinking the changes. When the cheese moves to a new location in the maze, the littlepeople waste valuable time asking why, challenging the decision, and waiting for something to happen. In the process, they nearly starve to death. Alternatively, the mice respond instinctually, unquestioningly, and with enthusiasm that is based on their good instincts and is immediately rewarded. Because the mice do not over think changes, they are open to new experiences and responsive to their own good instincts.

Johnson (1998) is relentless in developing the theme of submissive and responsive instincts throughout the Cheese parable. In addition to the above quotations (the first of which is on the second page of the parable), page 27 states, “The mice, Sniff and Scurry, used the simple but inefficient, trial-and-error method of finding cheese. They ran down one corridor and if it proved empty, they turned and ran down another” while “the two littlepeople, Hem and Haw, used a different method that relied on their ability to think and learn from their past experiences, although, they would sometimes get confused by their beliefs and emotions.” On page 37 it states, “Hem analyzed the situation over and over and eventually his complicated brain with its huge belief system took hold.’ Why did they do this to me?’ he demanded.” Finally, just before the end of the parable, Johnson (1998) writes,

He knew he had learned something useful about moving on from his mice buddies, Sniff and Scurry. They kept life simple. They didn't overanalyze or overcomplicate things . . . He would remember that. Then Haw used his wonderful brain to do what littlepeople do better than mice. He reflected on the mistakes he had made in the past and used them to plan for his future. He knew that you could learn to deal with change: You could be more aware of the need to keep things simple, be flexible, and move quickly. You did not need to overcomplicate matters or confuse yourself with fearful beliefs. (p. 71)

According to the authors, education fosters too many beliefs at the expense of good instincts. Thus too much of the wrong education impedes one's natural instincts. In his parable of cheese, Johnson not only discourages too much critical questioning but also advises the reader to learn from past experiences. These lived experiences are the building blocks of good instincts. Consequently, the books suggest ideal employees with good instincts are submissive and responsive.

Overall, BABs tell readers good instincts are characteristic of good employees. Good instincts are uncluttered with too much rational thought or over thinking. They are responsive, brave and embracing of change. Ultimately, good instincts define professional intelligence, which, according to the texts, is the most essential aspect of valuable employees.

Emotions Interfere with Instincts

In the course of defining good instincts, BABs also suggest that emotions are obstacles to good instincts that should be suppressed or overcome. At times BABs describe emotions as almost irrational and equivalent to a loss of control. Johnson (1998) describes the littlepeople's tantrum over losing their cheese. The littlepeople yell, "Finally, he put his hands on his hips, his face turned red, and he screamed at the top of

his voice, 'It's not fair!'" (1998, p. 33). Thus the expression of emotion is viewed as an irrational loss of control much like a child's tantrum.

At the same time, BABs describe how these emotional responses actually deter the reader from following their good instincts. Johnson (1998) writes, the littlepeople "used a different [than instinct] method that relied on their ability to think and learn from their past experiences, although, they would sometimes get confused by their beliefs and emotions" (p. 27). Here the author implies that emotions are not only irrational, but also obstacles that serve to confuse or distract the reader from more appropriate decision-making strategies. Reacting emotionally, and specifically reacting with negative emotions (anger or fear), is illustrated as confusing while responding instinctually and responsively, as with the mice, to organizational changes, according to Johnson, indicates highly evolved instincts for success.

While emotions in general seem to interfere with good instincts, fear specifically is described as particularly problematic. According to Johnson (1998) fear impedes the success of the little people in his narrative. In one instance, Johnson tells the story of the two littlepeople and two mice who live in the maze. The mice and littlepeople arrive to the same spot in the maze each day to enjoy the cheese they find waiting there. But one day, they realize the cheese supply has been depleted. The mice, "having good instincts" (p. 26) take off immediately to find new cheese. The littlepeople, on the other hand, fail to "go past their fear" (p. 72) and continue to return to the same place each day waiting for the cheese to return. Johnson later writes, "he realized most of his fears were irrational and had kept him from changing when he needed to change" (p. 72). This image suggests fear is an irrational and detrimental response to the unknown.

Fear, according to Kiyosaki (1997), is also a form of unnecessary suffering. Kiyosaki writes, “You spent a life playing it safe, doing the right things. But the truth is, you let life push you into submission. Deep down you were terrified of taking risks. You really wanted to win, but the fear of losing was greater than the excitement of winning.” (p. 33). While the discomfort of life’s lessons is described as an opportunity for personal growth, fear of this process creates unnecessary suffering.

As illustrated in the prior paragraphs, BABs suggests emotions and specifically fear is irrational and an obstacle to good instincts. By constructing fear as irrational, the books imply that unmanaged emotions interfere with good instincts, and ultimately with professional success. Paradoxically, most research suggests fear is indeed instinctual and that the complete lack of fear contributes to a rare but serious personality disorder, psychopathy (see Hare, 2006). Thus the books imply some instincts are valuable, and not surprisingly those favorable instincts consistently are those that align individual with corporate interests. Here again BABs shape the authentic self for the reader by dictating appropriate and inappropriate emotional responses. This argument primes the reader for an ideology of emotional labor.

Experience Over Education

As described above, good instincts are described as professional intelligence. But BABs also cultivate the belief that experience is the primary stimulus for developing professional intelligence. For example, throughout his book Kiyosaki (1997) provides numerous examples supporting the value of experience over education. He writes, “Intelligence solves problems and produces money” (p. 56). Kiyosaki also describes development of good professional intelligence as “mental exercise” and more sustaining

than other forms of professional development. Since real experiences are mental exercise and organizational changes offer opportunities for experiential growth, the author suggests constant change is actually an opportunity for continuous mental exercise. Here Kiyosaki constructs constant change as growth opportunities that are mentally stimulating and help to cultivate good instincts.

Kiyosaki (1997) also suggests good instincts are primarily cultivated through experience (which, incidentally, one can get by playing his financial board game). He advises the reader to, “work to learn - don’t work for money,” arguing the real experiences of work are vital lessons. He illustrates this by describing how the rich take jobs that may initially appear to be the least advantageous options. While the poor may take work with advancement in mind, the rich do not consider things like advancement, benefits, or salaries. Instead the factors that guide working decisions of the rich are exclusively based on what they can learn from each individual experience.

In other examples, Kiyosaki emphasizes how his rich dad taught him his most valuable lesson through application. Early in the book he describes how he goes to work for his rich dad in order to learn how to make money. But throughout this example rich dad refuses to simply give advice. He says, “You work for me, I’ll teach you. You don’t work for me, I won’t teach you. I can teach you faster if you work, and I’m wasting my time if you just want to sit and listen, like you do in school. That’s my offer. Take it or leave it” (p. 29). In this example, rich dad not only emphasizes the need to work and gain experience in order to learn but also explicitly critiques schools and classroom learning as a waste of time.

The cheese parable also cultivates the belief that professional intelligence is developed through genuine experiences. For example, by the end of the Cheese parable, Haw finally opens himself to new experiences, and as a result, he experiences personal growth. Johnson writes that as Haw opens himself to experiences, he “began to regain his strength and confidence” (Johnson, 1998, p. 67). “He had even found a better part of himself” (p. 72). Thus in opening himself to real experiences, Haw cultivates instincts that will contribute to his overall professional intelligence. In this sense, Johnson suggests emotional intelligence and personal growth cultivate instincts paramount to professional intelligence as well.

Covey (1989) also says professional intelligence is cultivated from real experiences and not necessarily through formal education. He writes,

Education - continuing education, continually honing and expanding the mind - is vital mental renewal. Sometimes that involves the external discipline of the classroom or systematized study programs; more often it does not. Proactive people can figure out many, many ways to educate themselves. It is extremely valuable to train the mind to stand apart and examine its own program. That, to me, is the definition of a liberal education – the ability to examine the programs of life against larger questions and purposes and other paradigms. (p. 295)

Here Covey is less critical of formal education than many of the other authors, yet he none-the-less privileges life experience over formal education. Covey seems to argue knowledge derived from formal education diminishes over time and that lived experiences are of the most value. At the same time he also seems to equate reliance on formal education as a form of laziness by indicating proactive people seek out learning experiences rather than waiting for formal classroom opportunities.

In another example, Bronson (2003) says professional intelligence is developed by trying things, making mistakes, and then adjusting to what feels right based on one’s

collection of experiences. Consequently, for Bronson good instincts are having a “sense of ‘rightness’” (p. 1) and developing this sense of rightness happens through a collection of experiences. He develops this idea through an entire section of his book that features stories of individuals who find their place through experiences. The product of these experiences is a satisfying sense of belonging.

While the above references merely imply formal education might not be the most valuable contributor to intelligence, BABs also explicitly critique formal education and classroom learning as ineffective for cultivating the right kind of knowledge. Kiyosaki (1997) writes, “Today the most dangerous advice you can give a child is ‘Go to school, get good grades, and look for a safe, secure job’”(p. 7) because “getting a good education and making good grades no longer ensures success” (p. 2). He adds,

That is why it is foolish to simply say to a child, ‘get a good education,’ . . . it is foolish to assume that the education the school system provides will prepare your children for the world they will face upon graduation. Each child needs more education. Different education. And they need to know the rules. The different sets of rules. There are rules of money that the rich play by, and there are the rules that the other 95 percent of the population plays by . . . and the 95 percent learn those rules at home and in school. (p. 7-8)

In another example, Kiyosaki (1997) writes of his two dads,

Although both men had tremendous respect for education and learning, they disagreed in what they thought was important to learn. One wanted me to study hard, earn a degree and get a good job to work for money . . . The other encouraged me to study to be rich, to understand how money works and to learn how to make it work for me. At the age of 9, I decided to listen to and learn from my rich dad about money. In doing so, I chose not to listen to my poor dad, even though he was the one with all the college degrees. (p. 17)

Here the author tells the reader real intelligence and the right kind of knowledge are always practical, but again they are not honed through formal education. According to

Kiyosaki, education not only fails to impart the kind of knowledge that enables individuals to succeed but also imparts the wrong knowledge that contradicts life's real lessons. Formal education is inadequate because schools "were designed to produce good employees instead of employers" (p. 71). It can be argued then that, according to Kiyosaki, education denies one the benefit of experiential growth and development of professional intelligence.

While Bossidy and Charan (2002) argue education is "an important part of expanding people's capabilities" (p. 77), they go on to suggest educating employees is only valuable "if it's handled right" adding, "Many companies are almost promiscuous about it, offering cornucopias of generic courses in management or leadership and putting far too many people into them" (p. 77). Because the right kind of intelligence and specifically good experiences are more valuable assets than education, providing education to employees, the authors argue, should be limited to a select few.

BABs reinforce the value of experiential intelligence by illustrating its impact throughout the discourse. For example, Kiyosaki (1997) illustrates the negative consequences of getting educated instead of gaining experiences by telling the stories of his rich and his poor dads. Rich dad has only an eighth grade education but a multitude of experiences while poor dad has a PhD but fewer, according to Kiyosaki, genuine experiences. Consequently rich dad develops the professional intelligence that enables him to have complete autonomy and success. Ironically one could argue rich dad merely has enough purchasing power to acquire, not transcend, his desires. Nonetheless Kiyosaki's argument reinforces the value of real experiences and good instincts over formal education.

Poor dad with his advanced education, on the other hand, is described as a slave to his work. In response to his self-contained prison constructed of the wrong kind of knowledge, particularly education, Kiyosaki argues his poor dad tells the “big lies” the poor all tell themselves. Namely, a poor dad says he works because he likes it. Ironically, even though poor dad expresses the same sense of satisfaction with his own unique form of autonomy as rich dad does, Kiyosaki insists these statements are inauthentic, merely justifications for his shortcomings, or down right lies intended to disguise his own failures.

Finally, BABs acknowledge that learning through experience can be brutal and painful but ultimately necessary for success. Kiyosaki (1997) writes, “life is the best teacher of all . . . it just sort of pushes you around . . . if you learn life’s lessons, you will do well” (p. 33). Growth, according to Kiyosaki, comes out of the suffering that results when “life pushes you around”.

Bronson (2003) even describes the physical suffering the can sometimes come from experiences. He tells one story of an intellectual property attorney who experiences several years of kidney failure, dialysis, and transplant before leaving her corporate job and taking up the cause of fund raising for transplant patients. Bronson writes,

It made me wonder – how many of us have been dealt hard times in life, suffered the blows of existence, and rather than be transformed by it – rather than gain from it a purpose that can be so incredibly meaningful because it comes from personal experience – we simply try to get back to normal, get past it? Most people’s purpose comes from experience; it’s not something you choose out of a course catalog. But you only have a transformative experience if you’re open to being changed by it. (p. 17-18)

In the end, the attorney recovers from her kidney problems only after changing careers. He includes stories titled “Even the Destined Struggle”, “It’s Supposed to be Hard”, and

“The Hardest Things are the Most Liberating” in his book as well. According to Bronson, physical suffering can be created by life experiences but is at times a valuable part of developing good instincts and the right knowledge.

In sum, the texts position real knowing as something other than education or specialized knowledge. Instead real knowing is experiential and leads to internal growth. While the process may be painful, primarily because one has yet to free the self from inauthentic desire, the product of real knowing is relief from life’s suffering.

Summary Interpretation of Instincts

Specialized knowledge of the PMC has historically been garnered through formal education (Mills, 1951/2002) and has been the primary marker of PMC status and success. Specifically, markers of PMC status have traditionally been derived from four social bases: specialized knowledge, objectivity, professionalization, and autonomy. Ehrenreich (1989) describes how these bases become markers of class status for the PMC writing,

Its [the PMC] ‘capital’ would be knowledge or, more precisely, expertise. Its security would lie in the monopolization of that expertise through the device of professionalization. Its hallmark would be higher education and, with it, the exclusive license to practice, consult, or teach, in exchange for that more mundane form of capital, money. (p. 80)

In this sense, specialized knowledge grants the PMC exclusive rights to their own modes of productivity.

Especially in an age of technology, expert knowledge of computers, engineering, and work processes which are essential for the daily operations of contemporary organizations serves as the new capital for the PMC. Yet because specialized knowledge is justified by objectivity, it also insulates professionals from the control of organizational

executives (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 1979; Mills, 1951/2002). In other words, objectivity justifies professional autonomy from managerial influence as objectivity can and should stand apart from rules and policies. In that objectivity mandates actions that are uninfluenced by organizational norms, it also decreases the PMCs dependence on and obligation to the EC. In fact, specialized knowledge subordinates the EC as at least partially dependent on the expertise of the PMC. This structural shift ultimately negates traditional hierarchy as a legitimate base for decision-making (see Mills, 1951/2002). Consequently specialized knowledge, achieved through formal education, threatens the status quo of social organizing (hierarchy) making formal education and specialized knowledge also a central threat to the EC. This seems to explain the attacks against formal education articulated throughout BABs.

Positing authentic knowing as the outcome of suffering reconstructs the perception of suffering a positive rather than negative. According to the authors, the lack of suffering can result in a lack of knowing and this rhetorically desensitizes readers to their dissatisfactions and obscures their relation to material, structural conditions. In other words, by framing suffering as the path to knowing, suffering is rhetorically constructed as a socially and personally desirable experience.

By marginalizing formal education, too much questioning, and overactive critical thinking, BABs privilege employees who are not only unwilling but also incapable of questioning organizational practices. Imagine the consequence if this vision were to come to fruition. The United States would consist largely of laborers who lack the capacity to even question let alone resist oppressive social structures. Mills (1951/2002) writes, “as people who specialize in symbols, the intellectuals produce, distribute, and preserve

distinct forms of consciousness. They are the immediate carriers of art and of ideas” (p. 142-143). But what happens when we socially de-legitimize the process of intellectualizing? Intellectuals by definition over-analyze and critically question at least in part due to their formal education and this is the very reason they are the greatest threat to the status quo. As critical thinkers intellectuals have the greatest likelihood of identifying and naming social problems in ways that may not fit within dominant ideological constructions. And as the carriers of new ideas, they are also the most likely to disseminate these critiques throughout society. An undereducated, under-informed public offers the greatest likelihood for large-scale organizational compliance.

Consequently, by defining the healthy self as developed through real experiences, suffering and right knowing, BABs ultimately provide social, not psychological rules of conduct and minimize resistance to contemporary capitalistic working conditions. Discrediting formal education discourages audiences from being reflective or critical and obscures a class-based privilege that potentially grants the PMC greater autonomy from the EC. Since education threatens the stability of the ruling class, education itself has become contested terrain in the struggle over organizational meaning.

Spirituality

The rhetoric of BABs is framed within the ideology of new age spirituality (NAS) and what I have identified as its four basic tenets: suffering is normal and leads to knowing, desire is the cause of suffering and personal discontent, success is internal and based on the right state of mind, and right behaviors and attitude are the path to the self-actualized, healthy self. Each of these tenets has been reflected in the themes described

throughout this analysis. This rhetoric of spirituality runs throughout the texts written for the PMC audiences.

BABs further develop a sense of spirituality through a rhetoric of faith. The books ask readers to have faith in their futures, in their connections to the universe, and in the organization. This theme will be developed through this section.

At the same time the books construct a relationship between work and family by using familial analogies and examples throughout their discourse. In this way the authors also imply organizational leaders fill a paternalistic role for employees. This too will be developed in this section.

In the analysis that follows I will explicate the language of NAS and the metaphor of family used to characterize work throughout the discourse of BABs. In what follows I will analyze the construction of work as an almost spiritual endeavor as well as the positioning of the organization as an omnipotent higher power through the paternalistic rhetoric of the work as family metaphor.

Faith and Spirituality

Much of the rhetoric of BABs is spiritual in nature. The books describe a connection to the universe, to others and to the authentic self in a way that reflects the teachings of various forms of religion and particularly reflects the trend of new age spirituality in the United States. In fact, having faith in something outside of the self is a dominant theme in BABs. For example, Lundin et al. (2000) insert a poem by David Whyte into the middle of their narrative. The poem states,

I want to write about faith
about the way the moon rises
over cold snow, night after night

faithful even as it fades from fullness
 slowly becoming that last curving and impossible
 sliver of light before the final darkness
but I have no faith myself
 I refuse to give it the smallest entry
Let this then, my small poem,
 like a new moon, slender and barely open,
 be the first prayer that opens me to faith. (p. 44)

After reading this poem the narrator states, “The poem had created a moment of insight, and Mary Jane finally saw what was holding her back . . . she had lost faith” (p. 45).

Later the narrator states, “I choose confidence, trust, and faith. I will wind up my clock and get ready to enjoy learning and growing as I work to apply the lessons from the fish market to my toxic energy dump” (p. 52). And later in a note to herself she writes, “persist with faith” (p. 54). According to Johnson, faith is an invaluable part of transcending and succeeding.

The emphasis on faith prevails throughout the BABs and often takes on an even more spiritual tone. Covey (1989) describes the spiritual nature of his ethical principles stating principles are universal ethics,

not esoteric, mysterious, or ‘religious ideas. There is not one principle taught in this book that is unique to any specific faith or religion, including my own. These principles are a part of most every major enduring religion, as well as enduring social philosophies and ethical systems. (p. 34)

While Covey says his principles are not exclusive to any religion, they are spiritual nonetheless. In another passage he includes a quotation from Ezra Taft Benson that says,

The Lord works from the inside out. The world works from the outside in. The world would take people out of the slums. Christ takes the slums out of people, and then they take themselves out of the slums. The world would mold men by changing their environment. Christ changes men, who then change their environment. The world would shape human behavior, but Christ can change human nature. (p. 309)

If this quotation is taken as an analogy, the reader can equate references to the Lord and Christ to any spiritual essence, whether it is the universe, Buddha, or the deity of any other form of spirituality. The implication is then that developing “effectiveness” is a spiritual experience that depends on faith in some form of higher power.

Kiyosaki (1997) and Bronson (2003) also advocate faith as a necessary component of success. Kiyosaki states, “I just trust that the principle of reciprocity is true, and I give what I want” (p. 184). He adds, “God does not need to receive, but humans need to give” (p. 184). Bronson (2003) includes a story of a man who hits hard times during a bad economy. The man begins to read religious texts and was particularly struck by a biblical passage that states, “When you give yourself to the hungry, and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then your light will ride through darkness” (p. 266-267). The man “realized that the only way out of this rut was to give up myself, to make it not about me. To give what I could in my own way” (p. 266). In each example, faith in something outside of the self is fundamental.

BABs also construct faith and spirituality by writing about soul and spirit. Johnson (1998) states, “Haw didn’t realize it yet, but he was discovering what nourished his soul. He was letting go and trusting what lay ahead for him, even though he didn’t know exactly what it was.” Bronson (2003) writes one story of a man changing careers to pursue his authentic desires. Bronson describes the moment of decision writing, “Suddenly, in that moment, he experienced an epiphany. Not a voice like Debbie’s, but a

similar spiritual charge. He was overtaken with emotion and a sense of connectedness to his past” (p. 41). Both authors reinforce a belief in faith and spirituality which serves to reinforce a sense of connection to the universe, and inscribes the authors’ advice with an almost god-like credibility by implying it has been divinely imparted.

Finally, throughout BABs the reader is advised of spiritual laws that govern life.

Covey, (1989) writes,

The Character Ethic is based on the fundamental idea that there are *principles* that govern human effectiveness – natural laws in the human dimension that are just as real, just as unchanging and unarguably ‘there’ just as laws such as gravity are in the physical dimension” (p. 32). The character ethic principles “govern human growth and happiness – natural laws that are woven into the fabric of every civilized society through history and comprise the roots of every family and institution that has endured and prospered. (p. 33)

In this example Covey claims the character ethics that guide organizing are underlying laws of nature that apply to all social relationships. Thus Covey advises readers to pursue work relationships with “integrity, humility, fidelity, temperance, courage, justice, patience, industry, simplicity, modesty, and the Golden Rule” (p. 32), all concepts associated with most organized religion.

BABs consistently emphasize a connection to the universe in what appears to be a spiritual sense. They emphasize soul and spirit as essential components of professional success. And they emphasize faith in a higher power as that which connects us to the universe and guides the reader down his/her authentic path. This path is seemingly divined by a higher power, and the reader’s job then is to find the authentic self (described in a previous section), listen to life’s experiences, and follow one’s soul through faith and spirituality.

The Organizational Leader as Paternalistic Deity

Family serves as an overarching metaphor for work. For example, Covey (1989) frequently relates his advice to the reader through stories of himself as a father. In one instance Covey concludes his example writing,

When parents see their children's problems as opportunities to build the relationship instead of as negative, burdensome irritations, it totally changes the nature of parent-child interaction. Parents become more willing, even excited, about deeply understanding and helping their children . . . Many interactions change from transactional to transformational, and strong bonds of love and trust are created as children sense the value parents give to their problems and them as individuals. This paradigm is powerful in business as well. (p. 203)

In this way he compares work to family by implying the process of organizing work is like the process of organizing family while managing employees is like fathering a family.

Kiyosaki's (1997) entire discourse is framed in a family metaphor, which is illustrated in the title, *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*. While the primary influence in Kiyosaki's life is not a biological or even legal father, he characterizes this "rich dad's" influence and guidance as paternalistic. Here the author frames his advice as fatherly, and accordingly one of the most persuasive elements of his discourse is the comparison he makes between his "rich dad's" advice and his professional success. In one instance he writes,

Both of my dads were teachers. My rich dad taught me a lesson I have carried all my life, and that was the necessity of being charitable or giving. My educated dad gave a lot by way of time and knowledge, but almost never gave away money . . . My rich dad gave money as well as education. (p. 183-184)

Here Kiyosaki describes his relationship with his professional mentor as a parental relationship and credits this role model with his later professional success.

Similarly, Bossidy and Charan (2002) describe executive management as paternalistic in nature. Just as in parenting, leading requires having the “emotional fortitude” (p. 79) to make tough decisions and discipline employees. In another example leaders shape employees just as fathers shape children. They write,

You don't need a lot of complex theory or employee surveys to use this framework. You need to change people's behavior so that they produce results. First you tell people clearly what results you're looking for. Then you discuss how to get those results, as a key element of the coaching process. Then you reward people for producing the results. If they come up short, you provide additional coaching, withdraw rewards, give them other jobs, or let them go. When you do these things, you create a culture of getting things done. (p. 86)

Later the authors add, “the people process is more important than either the strategy or operations processes . . . to put it simply and starkly: If you don't get the people process right, you will never fulfill the potential of your business” (p. 141). According to Bossidy and Charan, leaders shape work culture in a way that is similar to the way Covey describes the father's ability to create and direct families or Kiyosaki's description of the father's ability to create success for his children. According to the books, the leader and the father overlap in both role and responsibility.

As BABs link work relationships to familial relationships, they also describe the organizational leader as the paternalistic. The emphasis on the familial relationships of work and the paternalistic relationship between employee and employer constructs an image of organizational leader as paternalistic. Namely work relationships are characterized as paternalistic suggesting the organization or leader is a fatherly role

model with only the best interests of his family in mind. While the disciplinary moments of this parental relationship are not always the desire of the child, as with all parent – child relationships, the father-knows-best leader will teach his children through meaningful leadership moments.

The core of New Age Spirituality, as with most organized religions, is faith in a higher power that is also often characterized as fatherly. For example, Christianity refers to God as the Father and The Lords Prayer states “Our Father who art in heaven”. Thus within BABs there is a clear analogy between one’s spiritual leader (God the Father), the family leader (Dad) and the organizational leader. In this way, BABs use the family metaphor in conjunction with the rhetoric of spirituality to create an image of a paternalistic organizational deity. Such an analogy of organizational leader with spiritual deity cultivates faith in the organization and its leader for the reader. The vision of the organizational leader can then be interpreted as divine lending credibility to organizational leader’s decisions and actions while discouraging employees from questioning the omnipotent leader’s actions.

Summary Interpretation of Spirituality

According to Buddhist teacher Jagad Guru Paramahansa, as quoted in Veenker (1999), “Now it's becoming the in thing to be spiritual . . . It's more cool, modern, and progressive to be spiritual" (p. 34). Further, this “heady mix of hip spirituality, celebrity, and human rights is irresistible for some Americans” (p. 35). Thus this particular blending of beliefs into what is commonly referred to as new age spirituality is increasingly popular, if not trendy, in the United States.

The American trend towards spirituality is being incorporated into American organizations in what Nadesan (1999) calls “new age corporate spiritualism.” New age corporate spiritualism utilizes Eastern philosophy’s assumptions about the nature of individuals to construct a desirable relationship between individuals and organizations. The rhetoric of new age spirituality reflects the philosophical beliefs of Zen and Buddhism, specifically in terms of transcendence, to inform Western notions of self-actualization (Nadesan, 1999). The combination of Eastern philosophy with human resources amounts to what Nadesan (1999) describes as, “a nondenominational, privatized, and largely individualized, contemporary spiritual movement that encompasses a vast array of philosophies and practices” (p. 10). It focuses on internal self-development, potential through self-help, transformation, and transcendence.

In conjunction with new age (corporate) spirituality, biblical therapy, also called nothetic (Greek for instruct) counseling, is also a growing trend in the United States and has recently been endorsed by the Southern Baptist Convention as the only acceptable form of therapy (Winfrey, 2007, p 24). By replacing legitimate psychotherapy with scripturally based instruction, the texts function to construct patterns of behavior that are consistent with spiritual beliefs (Winfrey, 2007).

The fusion of NAS with self-help reinforces the belief that problems are internal and spiritual in nature while the rejection of social and behavioral science in favor of more spiritually based therapy, which is reflected throughout the rhetoric of BABs, functions as a powerful rhetorical tool. By aligning self-help psychotherapy with spirituality, self-help literature has placed not only the core of but also solutions to problems, and particularly social problems, on the inner substance of the individual

(Jacoby, 1997). The resulting message is one that implies the healthy self is responsible for and creates a healthy society. Consequently, the new age movement has led to a culture of therapy that tends to view social problems as psychological (Jacoby, 1997).

The spiritual rhetoric of self-help focuses on healing and human potential, treats soul and spirit as psychological concepts rooted in the authentic self, and prescribes transcendence as the remedy to human suffering. In this sense, social problems and inequalities are constructed as psychological problems that are cured by discovering the authentic self and transcending material pain and suffering. Thus BABs, as a particular genre of self-help, focus the reader on controlling or changing thought processes by turning inward (Nadesan, 1999) and instructing him/her on right (according to spiritual guidelines) living.

New age spirituality not only informs the claims of self-help therapy but also defines the path to the transcended healthy self. As it relates specifically to organizing, new age corporate spirituality asserts there is no success marked by material measure but rather transcendence over the material needs and desires that constitute suffering. Thus the healthy self serves as a substitute for organizational success and is paramount in achieving this right internal state of transcendence.

At the same time, the image of the organizational father fits into the overall theme of spirituality as it suggests organizational leaders, in their fatherly roles, serve as an all-knowing higher power. Such a positing of organizational leaders constructs a perception of greater authority, knowledge, power, and good intentions. Consequently this generates a greater degree of credibility in the authors, who are themselves organizational leaders, and undermines employee questioning. As with any form of spirituality, faith is defined

as belief without knowing. In this same way, the books persuade readers to have a blind faith in the organizational deity and father-like organizational leaders.

Chapter Summary

In sum, BABs collectively teach readers they are in control of their destinies. One's perceptions create reality and so altering material conditions is dependent on discovering the authentic self and its desires. Paradoxically, the authentic self is uninfluenced by society yet dictated by the books authors. The books tell readers who to be in part by critiquing socially influenced desire then supplanting these social desires with author-defined desires. In other words, the authors create the authentic self for the reader.

At the same time, BABs tell the reader one can achieve personal success by maintaining personal connections and correcting false perceptions that construct personal prisons. Again, BABs place responsibility for satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and overall working conditions on the internal and psychological state of the individual while also distracting the reader from material conditions by diverting the reader's attention towards personal relationships. The rhetorical outcome of this distraction is increased attention on the private sphere of personal connections and distraction from the public and political sphere of work.

Finally the books suggest organizations are paternalistic in their concern for the reader as well as in their wisdom and advice. This paternalistic wisdom is articulated through spiritual rhetoric and implies the organization is not only fatherly but a higher power that imparts universal and spiritual wisdom. These rhetorical constructions of the paternalistic leader and organizational deity not only cultivate faith in the organization

and its leaders but also suppress questioning and doubt that would undermine the core meaning of faith in spirituality. All of these themes are powerful strategies to motivate readers, and they ultimately construct an image of ideal, faithful employees.

CHAPTER 6: IMPLICATIONS OF SELLING CLASS

Throughout this study I have argued that organizing reflects and sustains the social power structure and depends greatly on hegemonic indoctrination of individuals. Indoctrination occurs through organizational socialization processes, which are a form of ideological power. In an effort to understand the role of mediated messages in socializing employees into work I have analyzed business advice books that are routinely incorporated into organizational training and development programs and thus serve as a form of organizational rhetoric. The books selected for study were chosen according to their popularity, specifically their continued placement on best sellers' lists.

Structurally BABs are produced and tacitly endorsed by corporate institutions. Each book's author owns the corporation that produces the book making the text quite literally products of those corporate ideologies. At the same time the books are consumed by various corporations as part of formal training and development programs and are sanctioned by organizations as desirable reading material in their formal and informal efforts to socialize employees. As May and Zorn (2001) write, "many managers are voracious readers of popular writing and, as a result that writing influences their views of management and their day-to-day activities" (p. 471-472). In this sense, BABs both reflect and shape organizational ideology. Thus one function of BABs is to construct ideology that institutionally reproduces capitalist modes of work.

Examining organizational socialization through best selling business advice books has two potential contributions. The first is that it enables scholars to understand social influences on how employees are socialized into work and thus develop a greater understanding of how work is constructed socially in the United States. At the same time,

this approach allows scholars to begin exploring organizational socialization outside of the phase models that have been critiqued by feminist scholars in recent years. Namely, this approach allows scholars to explore socializing messages that all individuals, not just insiders who successfully assimilate in to organizational cultures, receive, which lends some insight into what constitutes feminist descriptions of gendered workplaces and how marginalized individuals are constructed as outsiders-within. And because the books are consumed during virtually any phase of socialization, it allows scholars to better understand socializing messages that are consistent across the traditional phases.

At the same time, by exploring organizational socialization through the lens of ideological rhetorical analysis, this study enables scholars to identify the dominant ideological messages that construct work and organizing and explicate the relationship between work organizing and social organizing. The ideological messages of organizational socialization appear to reflect and reinforce the ideological messages that sustain the social organization of the United States. Specifically, socializing messages construct and reinforce attitudes towards work in general and even more specifically they perpetuate existing class-based stratification that constitutes much of the social, political, and economic structure in the United States. In this sense, I argue these books serve as tools for both organizational indoctrination and larger scale social control.

Based on conclusions drawn from past research regarding organizing, organizational socialization, feminist critiques of socialization research, and power, this study has sought to address the following three research questions.

RQ1: What are the ideological messages regarding work and organizing within BABs?

RQ2: What do the ideological messages of BABs reveal about power in organizing?

RQ3: In what ways do BABs gender the workplace?

Analysis finds BABs do little to provide any meaningful advice to the reader in regards to professional development. While they tell the reader where he/she can purchase more meaningful tools (from the author's corporation), and in rare instances get close to providing the reader with some organizing tools, the advice is either too vague or too under-contextualized to be of any real use. As C. Waterstreet, a licensed and practicing therapeutic counselor, said, "providing self-help tools through self-help books is like assuming somebody can rebuild an engine just because he or she knows how to use a wrench. Literally, rebuilding an engine only requires a series of proper wrenches. But it takes a lot more than that to actually get the job done." (personal communication, February 7, 2007). In this sense, the ability of BABs to create any real healing or even to serve as a resource for self-improvement is minimal at best.

At the same time, that none of the BABs address climbing the corporate ladder as a form of professional success is particularly telling in light of their implied goals (professional development) and lends support to my earlier claim that corporate interests and profit are primary motivators for writing the books. Corporate advancement through promotions and salary increases is popularly recognized as markers of professional success in American culture. Yet the books focus exclusively on psychological achievement, contentment, inner peace, and complacency as markers of success. Further they discourage material rewards through their stories of people who achieve corporate advancement but remain terribly unhappy. One glaring implication of this is that the

books attempt to focus readers inward in an effort to distract them from more material professional rewards such as income and hierarchical advancement. Distracting readers from material rewards helps to create and sustain a professional middle class of workers who are complacent with their working conditions and overall stations in life.

One conclusion that can be drawn from the analysis of BABs, then, is that they exist within popular culture for reasons other than helping people help themselves. Nadesan (2001) suggests BABs provide an agenda setting function highlighting common organizational practices and constructing preferred managerial identities. Jackson (2001) suggest the books also frame what gets prioritized, what constitutes organizational problems and solutions, and how employees experience organizing. I argue these particular BABs shape readers' aspirations, define the meaning of success, and define a particular kind of relationship between employees, organizational leaders, and the organization itself. That is, BABs construct ideal, submissive, and compliant employees.

Several ideological themes emerged in the analysis that also suggests BABs construct perceptions of work, organizing, and social stratification. These themes include rhetorical constructions of reality that serve as the foundation of contradictory advice for executive class organizational leaders and professional middle class employees. Consistent with these underlying contradictions, I found the books to create perceptions of ideal employees who are submissive, compliant, uncritical, and who internalize organizational and social problems as their own. Solidifying this construction of ideal employees is the rhetorical construction of organizational and social problems as individual psychological dysfunctions, organizing as a spiritual phenomenon, and the organization and its leaders as paternalistic spiritual leaders. Each of these themes

appears to serve the overall interests of organizations and the elites of the class-based social structure that organizes Western society.

While BABs frame personal, psychological dysfunction within American social values, they also specifically target actions that undermine organizational interests. By diagnosing unruly employees as psychologically dysfunctional and subsequently prescribing therapeutic cures that align individual interests with those of the organization, BABs simultaneously shape individuals into more ideal employees.

As the wage gap between the rich and the middle class increases to astronomical proportions (Kiyosaki, 1997; Scott & Leonhardt, 2005), maintaining class stratification is increasingly contingent on diffusing resentment towards the upper class. BABs serve to reinforce the status quo of class stratification and economic and political privilege by obscuring the PMC's disproportionately low financial compensation and focusing instead on the inner psychological-self. In doing so, the books diffuse resentment towards executive class privilege.

Throughout this chapter I will further explore the potential implications of the ideological themes developed in chapter five of this study. I will first discuss the implications of dominant ideology that permeates organizational rhetoric. I will discuss implications of what these themes reveal about power, work organizing, and the organizational socialization process. I will then discuss the implications for understanding how the United States is socially organized through organizational rhetoric, and finally will address the implications of gendering work.

Ideology of Organizing

The first research question asks about the ideological socializing messages of BABs. The analysis reveals some interesting implications on a shift in organizational management strategy, organizational socialization, and informs feminist arguments regarding empowerment. These are articulated in the following section.

Organizational Socialization

One of the more intriguing implications of BABs is what they reveal about the evolution of organizational socialization strategies and the collusive relationship between organizational leaders and the training industry. As workers themselves become increasingly sophisticated, organizations adopt new and improved management strategies to maintain order and control. Socialization strategies have consistently reflected these management trends.

The training programs of the early 1980's featured a mix of at home study and college courses with a heavy concentration on the former. But both approaches relied on the employee's self-motivation to take and complete courses that were under the design and control of outsiders who were largely academic educators and who may or many not share the corporate vision. Instead, companies needed greater control over highly focused training programs so prepackaged training from gurus who are themselves executive class leaders comes to dominate corporate training. In this sense, needs of the organization generated the emergence and explosive growth of the training industry.

Later, as relational management strategies increasingly emphasize satisfaction and socialability, training programs again shift focus toward increasing worker skills at maintaining work relationships. For example, the leading training topics in 2003 included

basic life/work skills, communication skills, creativity, customer service, diversity/cultural awareness, executive development, hiring/interviewing, leadership, managing change, middle management development, performance management/appraisals, personal growth, problem solving/decision making, team-building, time management, and train-the-trainer (Training Magazine, 2003). Each of these topics focuses on relational interactions between and among workers. And when management strategies again shift toward self-managed work teams as the primary means of coordinating employees, organizational training begins to focus heavily on team building.

As the post-modern era brings increased globalization and a growing need for networked organizations and more cultural strategies of control (Miller, 2003), corporate training has again shifted in focus. Today, learning organizations have become the trendy new catch phrase within organizational management, and the growing investment of corporate resources into training reflects the rise of the learning organization as a socialization tactic. The learning organization thus generates an ideology of motivating employees through continuous training while BABs generate the notion of the learning organization. Again the shift in corporate training reflects changing management strategies, and thus analysis of the historical evolution of management and training suggests collaboration between organizational institutions, their leaders, and the corporate training industry.

Ubiquitous Control

While the evolution of management strategies and corporate training suggest a collaborative relationship between the two institutions, the specific persuasive strategies

utilized to coordinate employees appears to grow increasingly ubiquitous, unobtrusive, and consuming. Contemporary BABs govern “through freedom and aspirations of individuals rather than in spite of them” (Rinke, 2000). Today corporate training focuses on creating self-satisfied, psychologically healthy workers who take ownership of their work by internalizing organizational problems and goals. Namely, BABs regulate readers through the rhetoric of spirituality and personal psychology, which is even more consuming and unobtrusive than self-managed work teams of the recent past.

Self-managed work teams coordinated employees by enabling peers to monitor and regulate other employees’ behaviors. This was arguably the most ubiquitous and dominating type of control of its time (Barker, 1993; Gibson & Papa, 2000). However learning organizations today persuade employees, through the use of BABs, to internalize, govern, regulate, and monitor the self. The themes analyzed in chapter five indicate organizational control strategies focus on shifting the overall value system of employees in such a way as to coordinate not only employees’ work but also their lives. By using the rhetoric of organizational spirituality and the psychologically healthy self, BABs attempt to shape not only the goals, values, and ambitions of employees but also the psychology and souls of individuals making the rhetoric of organizational spirituality and psychology the most ubiquitous and dominating form of corporate control to date.

Corporate control over employees’ psychology and spirituality results in even less bureaucratic / hierarchical structure and supervisory observation of routine work practices and becomes more deeply embedded in individual employee’s identities. While readers may feel motivated or even empowered by focusing on their internal states, this advice hegemonically positions unempowered individuals as personally responsible for the

conditions of their own oppression. Self-regulation over internal states ensures norms of obligation, accountability, and responsibility that turn the subject back on itself.

Consequently, while organizational control becomes more ubiquitous, the corporate privilege becomes even more obscured.

Empowerment

This study also has implications on the more academic tension between organizational socialization and power. Traditionally socialization research has explored organizational strategies of socialization and individualization as unique processes that are relatively distinct from other organizational process (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Gibson & Papa, 2000; Jablin, 1984; Jablin 2001; Kramer, 1993; Miller, 1996; Miller & Jablin, 1991). Yet this study suggests socialization processes are quintessentially power processes. As BABs are used to socialize employees to internalize organizationally preferred norms and behaviors, organizational socialization is an exercise in and reveals something about power.

Feminist research, which is largely concerned with gendered enactments of power, advocate internal empowerment as a liberatory mechanism. Feminist standpoint theory suggests women experience organizational power in unique ways (Dougherty, 2002; Fine, 1993; Marshall, 1993; Parker, 2001). Power as domination, including hierarchy, is conceptualized as primarily masculine (Dougherty, 2002), while Dougherty (2002), Fine (1993), Marshall (1993), and Parker (2001) conceptualize feminine power as relationally shared or negotiated (i.e. power with). Marshall (1993) notes that men tend to value both boundaries and hierarchy while women on the other hand tend to value networking and more personalized, flowing communities. Dougherty (2002) men

experience power as a product of authority that results in hierarchy. Women, on the other hand, experience power as a negotiated process. For the women, “Power was not something that people had; it was something people negotiated through a complex interaction of perceptions” (Dougherty, 2002, p. 15).

Since research indicates the women tend to define power as power with others (negotiated) or power over selves (Pierce & Dougherty, 2002; Marshall, 1993), feminist visions of empowerment tend to embrace this sense of power over self and power with and this notion of power over self sounds strikingly like some of the themes developed in BABs, namely shaping perceptions to create reality and the belief that correct perceptions liberate. Yet I have argued that altering perceptions in order to shape reality does little to actually liberate individuals. Similarly neither does power over self liberate the feminine from the constraints of patriarchy. Both merely change one’s perception of constraints. Instead, changing perceptions and embracing power over the self simply generate greater satisfaction with fundamentally oppressive material constraints. Just as one cannot will the self out of the barbed wire fences of a concentration camp, neither can one will the self outside of the constraints of material and exploitative conditions of the patriarchal and capitalistic workplace.

Further, just as altering perceptions of the PMC maintains organizational environments where capitalistic exploitation is favored while PMC actors are pacified, empowerment marginalizes the feminine within organizations where patriarchal and hierarchical power structures are favored while feminine actors are pacified. Someone once asked me if individuals are oppressed even when they do not feel oppressed. I argue yes, individuals can be oppressed even when they do not recognize it. That is the power

of ideology and the very nature of hegemony. Hegemonic processes, including strategic rhetoric and cooptation of alternative practices into normative values, persuade individuals to buy into the systems of their own oppression. Happy workers are not necessarily liberated and a sense of internal satisfaction does not constitute the removal of oppressive forces or exploitation. Rather, creating a sense of empowerment in employees minimizes threats to the status quo by eliminating any desire for resistance. In other words, I argue empowerment is not power just as perceptions are not material reality.

Reasoning this potential tension between power and empowerment has some further implications on feminist research. There is at least the potential for feminist visions of empowerment, defined as power over the self, to further subjugate women to the organizational double bind where these actors must sacrifice either their professional or their feminine identities. Specifically, as this analysis exposes the language of empowerment as a rhetorical device used to further subordinate employees by obscuring material constraints, it also suggests that empowerment is not equivalent to power but rather analogous to a perception of control that is merely contained within the dominant ideological power structure. The rhetoric of empowerment may then potentially exemplify a hegemonic process that further obscures oppression and exploitation from the view of individuals. In this sense, the rhetoric of empowerment can serve as a hegemonic mechanism rather than a means of liberation.

Re-envisioning empowerment through the lens of hegemony has greater implications on organizational power research and particularly research regarding marginalized individuals. While a number of studies imply empowerment as a liberatory

goal (Buzzanell, 1995; Clair, 1998; Collins, 1991; Dougherty, 2001; Mumby, 2001), others suggest the potentially oppressive nature of empowerment (Hochschild, 1997; Kunda, 1992). Empowerment, defined as internal, mental liberation from constraints, can and does serve to resubordinate individuals by obscuring the real relations between people, specifically the relationships between capitalist and labor, masculine and feminine. For this reason, feminist notions of empowerment should at least be explored as another possible instrument of oppression since envisioning empowerment as hegemony may expose the potentially fallacious nature of empowerment as a goal.

Socio-Political Implications

Another important implication of the analysis themes is their role in sustaining the socio-economic class structure in the United States. The distinct goals of the capitalist/executive ruling class (EC) and the proletariat/professional middle class (PMC) are dichotomous in nature (Marx, 1976/1990). The capitalist needs to extract labor and profit from employees while labor fights to retain dignity and control over self (see Braverman, 1974). While organizations seek to extract loyalty, commitment, and increasing amounts of work from labor, labor seeks to balance work with family and social life. While the capitalist seeks to extract labor for profit and surplus value, labor seeks to extract his or her fair share of the profit to not only sustain livelihood, but also sustain their own class-based way of life. These tensions represent contradictions between the goals of capitalist and labor, constitute antagonisms between the ruling and professional middle classes (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 1979), and characterize the struggle for primacy of organizational meaning and identity (Trethewey & Ashcraft, 2004).

In order to maintain the status quo of social organization, ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) produce ideology that obscures tensions between labor and capitalist and consequently reproduces the conditions of production (Althusser, 1971/2001). The state, according to the Marxist tradition “is explicitly conceived as a repressive apparatus. The State is a ‘machine’ of repression which enables the ruling classes . . . to ensure their domination over the working class, thus enabling the former to subject the latter to the process of surplus-value extortion (i.e. to capitalist exploitation)” (Althusser, 1971/2001, p. 92). ISAs function as appendages of the State.

BABs, organizations, and the rhetoric of spirituality are all ISAs. Althusser (1971/2001) writes,

I shall call Ideological State Apparatuses a certain number of realities, which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions . . . we can for the moment regard the following institutions as Ideological State Apparatuses (the order in which I have listed them has no particular significance): the religious ISA (the system of the Churches), the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private ‘Schools’), the family ISA, the legal ISA, the political ISA (the political system, including the different Parties), the trade union ISA, the communications ISA (press, radio, and television, etc.), the cultural ISA (Literature, the Arts, sports, etc.). (p. 96)

According to Althusser’s definition, organizational institutions, BABs, and new age spirituality all constitute ISAs which function primarily by ideology to reproduce conditions of the State. Thus by definition, BABs reproduce the conditions of work while the conditions of work sustain social organization.

Socio-economic Class Stratification

As an ISA, BABs contribute to sustaining the existing class-based power structure. Namely, the books cultivate a sense of resignation by lowering ambitions, which in turn limits class mobility. Additionally the books persuade readers to participate

in the system of exploitation, and normalize current conditions of exploitation. Each helps to obscure class tensions and sustain the existing power structure.

Organizational rhetoric and specifically BABs function to sustain dominant ideology and the status quo of organizing society by lowering the ambitions of the reader. Mills (1951/2002) illustrates how inspirational literature primarily serves to lower ambition and consequently limit class mobility by obscuring the tensions between the PMC and the executive ruling class. Mills (1951/2002) describes “literature of resignation” writing,

It is the spiritual value, even of material poverty, available to everyone, which a *Reader's Digest* or *Peace of Mind* philosophy exemplifies. These are not the old sober virtues of thrift and industry, nor the drive and style of the displayed personality, nor the educated skills of the bureaucratic professions. These are virtues which go with resignation, and the literature of resignation justifies the lowering of ambition and the slackening of the old frenzy. (p. 283)

Likewise, BABs function as part of “the literature of resignation” that “justifies the lowering of ambition” (Mills, 1951/2002, p. 283).

The books lower ambitions by articulating qualitative differences in what constitutes success for the EC and the PMC. Despite the EC’s attention to output and productivity, PMC success is constructed as internal satisfaction and transcendence. BABs simply persuade readers to feel better or more positively about work, and since success is internal, adopt Zen-like attitudes that will transcend the reader beyond his/her material conditions.

BABs cultivate resignation with growing workplace demands and increasingly stressful lives (Hochschild, 1994) but also with declining economic success and stability (Ehrenreich, 1989). Kilborn (2005) says the PMC have become increasingly dislocated

and fast paced. They tend to move frequently for jobs and are left with few connections and no real roots. They live in a state of constant change. They are “a growing segment of the upper middle class gypsies” (Kilborn, 2005, p. 147). BABs normalize this state of constant change through rhetoric that constructs change as flexibility and one of the primary characteristics of professionally successful individuals. In other words, BABs sell the PMC on their socio-economic class conditions.

BABs also function as ISAs by persuading readers to participate in the capitalist system in the form of labor. They define professional knowledge as work experience telling readers they must work within the existing system to gain necessary knowledge in order to achieve success. By defining professional knowledge as work experience, the books encourage readers to take even menial jobs in order to learn. In this way the rhetoric serves to reproduce the labor pool and sustain a capitalist system that needs labor in order to generate profit. This is explained by Althusser (1971) as a reproduction of the material conditions of production and is essential to maintaining the conditions of capitalism. Constructing money as negative but working for others as positive perpetuates the capitalist model yet obscures low salaries, exploitation, and / or other poor working conditions.

At the same time, BABs reproduce class stratification by normalizing current conditions of exploitation. Mills (1951/2002) argues the PMC particularly has been separated from the products of their labor. They push papers but never have any end product to hold, admire, and feel a sense of pride over. Braverman (1979) argues this separation of work from the end product contributes to alienation from not only other individuals but also from the love of labor that could potentially exist in other

circumstances. As the *Fish!* tale illustrates, these conditions reflect much of contemporary work of the PMC. Yet BABs normalize these conditions by reframing dissatisfaction and the resulting sense of alienation as spiritual shortcomings or psychological illness. Employees learn to blame themselves for organizational dissatisfaction and even more importantly to be fulfilled despite conditions of alienation.

Additionally, BABs also function to normalize exploitation by redefining affective markers of class status. Williams (2004) writes, “Affect is how we embody our class position, and in a sense generates our class position. We are marked by the ways we feel, experience, and act out professional life. Markers of this position include education, white collar jobs, autonomy, control of hours, tastes, and salaries” (p. 174). Specifically, affective markers of PMC status have traditionally been derived from four primary bases: specialized knowledge, objectivity, professionalization, and autonomy (Ehrenreich, 1979). Ehrenreich (1989) describes how these bases become markers of class status for the PMC writing,

Its [the PMC’s] ‘capital’ would be knowledge or, more precisely, expertise. Its security would lie in the monopolization of that expertise through the device of professionalization. Its hallmark would be higher education and, with it, the exclusive license to practice, consult, or teach, in exchange for that more mundane form of capital, money. (p. 80)

Specialized knowledge in particular has historically been the foundation of PMC affective markers of status.

According to Ehrenreich (1989), expert knowledge of computers, engineering, and work processes, which are essential for the daily operations of contemporary organizations and serves as capital for the PMC. She argues that because specialized knowledge is justified by objectivity, it also insulates professionals from the control of

organizational executives. In other words, objectivity justifies professional autonomy from managerial influence since objectivity can and should stand apart from rules and policies. In this sense, specialized knowledge grants the PMC autonomy but also a marker of status not shared by the executive ruling class.

In that objectivity mandates actions that are uninfluenced by organizational norms, it also decreases the PMCs dependence on and obligation to the EC. In fact, specialized knowledge subordinates the EC as at least partially dependent on the expertise of the PMC. This structural shift necessarily negates traditional hierarchy as a legitimate base for decision-making (see Mills, 1951/2002). Consequently specialized knowledge, achieved through formal education, as a marker of PMC success threatens the status quo of social organizing which would seem to explain the EC's apparent attack on formal education articulated in BABs.

Discrediting formal education marginalizes a class-based privilege that potentially grants the PMC greater autonomy from the control of the EC. BABs consistently marginalize formal education and consequently marginalize the PMC's unique form of capital. But at the same time the books advocate and normalize a lesser-educated PMC. Since education threatens the stability of the ruling class and existing power dynamics, education itself has become contested terrain in the struggle over organizational meaning. Scott and Leonhardt (2005) note, "a degree from a four-year college makes even more difference [in 'getting ahead'] than it once did." (p. 21). They add that while more Americans are getting degrees than ever before, the greatest proportion of those is from upper income families. Yet BABs systematically discourage the PMC from becoming

formally educated. In this sense, normalizing a culture of less-educated employees decreases the likelihood of class mobility as described by Scott and Leonhardt (2005).

Lastly, BABs minimize class resistance through several meaningful rhetorical strategies. One strategy is to perpetuate faith in American meritocracy that many argue does not really exist. Research suggests Americans are more likely than in the past to end up in the class into which they were born. Scott and Leonhardt (2005) write,

A paradox lies at the heart of this new American meritocracy. Merit has replaced the old system of inherited privilege . . . But merit, it turns out, is at least partly class-based. Parents with money, education, and connections cultivate in their children the habits that the meritocracy rewards. When their children then succeed, their success is seen as earned. (p. 4)

BABs reinforce this belief in American meritocracy suggesting intelligence, attitude, and ethics create success and mobility. Yet the intelligence, attitude, and ethics they advocate simply reinforce a committed, loyal, and flexible labor force, not the connections and education that enable class mobility. By defining the rich as those who work smart and the poor as those who work hard, the authors legitimate class divisions as intellectual, rather than structural. The differentiation of rich and poor through intellect reinforces a belief in the American meritocracy and justifies class based differences by implying the poor are poor by choice and / or laziness.

In sum, the PMC is encouraged through BABs to focus on their internal psychological states rather than external conditions of work or society while organizational institutions continue to exploit their labor. Marxism argues this exploitation is inherent in capitalism and the only possible solution is movement toward more communistic economic principles. Marxism also suggests social equality or even equitable class mobility will occur only through social and economic revolution targeted

at external and structural conditions, specifically the redistribution of wealth. If Marx is correct and revolution is required for substantial change to occur, BABs reduce the risk of social resistance and any potential for restructuring the system into more equitable conditions obscuring the real relations of power. This study seems to support the belief that there is no alternative to exploitation of labor without significant structural change.

Depoliticizing the PMC

Self-help books in general and BABs particularly serve as a form of what Rimke (2000) calls governametality in that they are “intrinsically linked to governmental management of populations” (p. 61). For example, Hochschild (1994) argues women’s advice books co-opt alternative views of organizing into the ideology of capitalist and utilitarian values. Cloud (1998) argues this growing tension is not unintentional. In describing the uses and functions of women’s advice books, she argues therapy and self-help have de-politicizing effects that are used as a political strategy within capitalism to serve the interests of the powerful elite.

BABs depoliticize worker dissatisfaction through the rhetoric of self-help and specifically by defining satisfaction as internal and psychological. Capitalist ideology is framed within democracy that consists of both public and private spheres (see Habermas 1962/1989). These are two distinct yet intricately connected arenas of discourse (Ku, 2000). The public sphere is critical for containing democratic discourse and debate while the private or personal sphere protects private lives from institutional influence and interference (Fraser, 1990). The public sphere should, in theory, be the arena where ideas are freely explored and debated by all citizens who wish to participate in the political decision making process.

The private sphere, on the other hand, protects personal discourses from public and democratic scrutiny in societies where freedom and privacy are constitutionally protected. Thus designating topics as either public or private either opens them to public debate and, as Claire (1998) argues, institutional responsibility, or occludes them from public discourse and political concern (Habermas, 1962/1989). By only addressing the symptoms of an oppressive system (unhappy employees) rather than the causes of employee stress and exploitation, BABs minimize critical concerns of modern corporations.

Rinke (2000) argues internalizing work in this way makes work a private, not a public concern. He writes, “By means of self fashioning, citizenship itself disappears. The public sphere and the public responsibility to which citizenship refers, the interidentified subjectivities to which citizenship has obligations, and on which it depends, are negated by a life of self-help” (Rinke, 2000, p. 73). For the PMC, privatizing worker dissatisfaction means occluding any organizational responsibility for conditions.

Privatizing worker dissatisfaction also has a fracturing effect on the PMC and in fact diminishes any sense of collective political resistance. Mills (1951/2002) describes this political impact writing,

The white-collar people slipped quietly into modern society. Whatever history they have had is a history without events; whatever common interests they have do not lead to unity; whatever future they have will not be of their own making. If they aspire at all it is to a middle course, at a time when no middle course is available, and hence to an illusory course in an imaginary society. Internally, they are split, fragmented; externally, they are dependent on larger forces. Even if they gained the will to act, their actions, being unorganized, would be less a movement than a tangle of unconnected contests. As a group, they do not threaten anyone; as individuals, they do not practice an independent way of life. (p. ix)

Similarly, the books construct a class whose political strength is weakened by focusing their attention on individual and internal states rather than collective experiences of exploitation. Thus the fracturing of the PMC weakens their collective ability for resistance.

Further, Sennett (1986) argues there is a decreased ability for Americans to cope with public political life because public life has become subject to the values of private life. This is illustrated in Bellah et al. (1985), which describes the tension between utilitarian individualism associated with public life and expressionist individualism associated with private sphere aspirations. To illustrate, while BABs appear to teach the reader to become autonomous and self-sufficient by developing a healthy self, he/she simultaneously becomes increasingly dependent on the authority of the expert guru (Rinke, 2000). The process creates an unconscious dependence on authority for decision-making and guidance.

Thus it can be argued that socializing employees through the use of self-help and therapeutic rhetoric has a strategic outcome of depoliticizing which essentially paralyzes the PMC in their ability to respond and act politically. Consequentially, the PMC become better suited to succeeding in the private sphere, much like the socialized female, than achieving in the public sphere. In this sense, the PMC unwittingly become uncritical cogs in the corporate machine.

Gendering the PMC

The last research question addressed in this study asks how BABs gender the workplace. Surprisingly, analysis of the books did not produce the expected findings. I anticipated the books would contain language that privileges masculine styles of

organizing including independence, competitiveness, and assertiveness (Wood, 2007), while marginalizing feminine styles of interaction including collaboration, inclusiveness, and egalitarian relations (Wood, 2007). However BABs written for the PMC actually seem to foster more feminine styles of interacting. The problem then lies in how this advice contradicts the advice written for the executive ruling class, which continues to foster the more masculine and competitive style of organizing. While this was not the anticipated finding, it has some specific implications on gendering work none-the-less.

Feminist research suggests gendered organizations charge women with taking care of the emotional labor for everyone. They are asked to smile, exchange pleasantries, and listen to, support, and help others (Basinger, 2001; Bellas, 2001; Cahill & Sias, 1997; Fritz, 1997). This type of emotional labor closely reflects the advice written for the PMC which asks readers to change their attitudes towards work. Readers are advised to be more pleasant, happy, helpful and supportive in order to improve their working conditions and the organizational department as a whole. But research also suggests taking responsibility for emotional labor results in being discounted as a worker and often serves as a barrier to hiring and promotion (Wood, 2007). In this way, the advice in BABs written for the PMC limits mobility via movement up the hierarchy. And the more masculine language of EC advice serves as evidence organizational leaders continue to value masculine styles of organizing. In this sense, BABs seem to feminize the PMC in ways that systematically marginalize them within organizational environments.

Feminizing the PMC has implications at the social and political levels as well. Feminizing and internalizing the PMC rhetorically occludes this class of workers from public sphere discourse. The public sphere is “a discursively constructed space for

argument in which different interest groups compete to articulate conflicting worldviews” (Mumby, 2000, p. 10). The organization of interests into public or private spheres legitimates some worldviews and marginalizes others (Mumby, 2000) so that access to the public / political sphere is critical for having particular interests heard.

Access to the public sphere is not equally available to everyone though. Instead, and contrary to the ideals of democracy, public political discourse is exclusive and accessible more by one’s resources than the strength of reasonable arguments. Who and what gets included in public discourse is determined by those with the resources to define meanings and prioritize interests (Mumby, 2000).

Scholars argue the public sphere is in fact regulated by and exclusive to masculine discourse in both style and content (Clair, 1998; Fraser, 1990; Mumby, 2000). The public sphere particularly privileges “masculinist speech styles, forms of association, and so forth” (Mumby, 2000, p. 13). Thus strong identification with masculine speech communities enables access to the public sphere.

Mumby (2000) further argues the split between public and private spheres serves as the foundation for social order. He writes, “In a Gramscian (1971) sense, we can say that the currently articulated relationship between the public and private spheres provides a foundation for a hegemonic social structure in which certain groups (particularly women and minorities) are denied access” (p. 13). In other words, one way access to the public sphere is regulated is by rhetorically gendering groups of individuals. Thus gendering the PMC is a means of perpetuating a system of oppression and exploitation because masculine style remains organizationally and socially privileged (Putnam & Mumby, 1993).

Consequently, BABs serve to feminize the PMC by turning the PMC's attentions inward. PMC attentions and concerns are thus contained within the private sphere. Because the private sphere is occluded from the public sphere of political discourse and shaped largely by masculine style, which is consistently marginalized throughout BABs, the PMC are left with little, if any, political access or influence.

Future Research

Research into the uses and impacts of business advice books as instruments for training and socializing employees remains a wide-open area of study. While Huczynski (1993) argues that BABs and guru training seminars have a Hawthorne effect on employees, there is little, if any, research available on impact of these books on employees over time. Therefore future research should begin to explore the longitudinal impact of reading these books on workers' performance, job satisfaction, and long-term goals. At the same time, future research may begin to explore corporate executive's motivations of investing time and money into guru training. While these questions may fall outside the domain of the rhetorical critic, they would lend further insight into the motivations, uses, and impacts of business advice books on organizing overall and organizational socialization specifically.

Conclusions

This analysis of popular business advice books raised serious questions about the nature of popular business advice, their relationship to socializing employees into organizations, and their potential role in maintaining a dominant system of class and gender stratification. The implications of using therapeutic and spiritual rhetoric for shaping employee perceptions and maintaining class tensions in the workplace are

profound. One interpretation of their impact is that BABs sustain hierarchical privilege along class-based lines by socializing employees to internalize organizationally preferred behaviors and attitudes. In other words, BABs function to sell PMC employees on their class affect.

The dominant themes in each book of this study reflect dominant ideology and serve to construct class values. Thus in the end, the dominant message of each is to sell the reader on professional middle class values by shaping middle class affect as more desirable than upper class privilege. One critical implication of selling class to the professional middle class is the way the BABs obscure marginalization of the employees who are required to read them as a part of their corporate training. As mentioned in chapter four, the books are utilized by some of the United States largest corporations as training tools. But the questions I have addressed in this study challenge the content of this training.

At the same time, results of this study indicate why companies are so willing to invest so much money in BABs based training. The professional objectives of trainers and consultants consist of selling class position to their clients, or more accurately their clients' employees. In essence, contemporary organizational socialization strategies amount to cultural reproduction of the social structure making class affect the new work of the professional middle class.

In conclusion, there is great debate over the existence of the professional middle class (PMC) because for some it is argued they produce little or no surplus value functioning as unproductive labor and are therefore expendable. However I argue the PMC function primarily to reproduce the social conditions of the status quo. In fact

today's trainers and consultants exist solely for their ability to sell the working class their own social status by persuading them to engage it more enthusiastically, committedly and unquestioningly. So while the PMC may not directly produce surplus, they nonetheless insure the production of surplus by perpetuating the status quo. This role necessarily makes the PMC distinct from either the proletariat or the capitalist and ensures the continuation of socio-economic based class stratification. What business advice books do is create a passive group of workers who now constitute what is called the new professional middle class.

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VITA

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In 2007 Tessa completed her PhD from University of Missouri, Columbia with a focus on organizational communication. Her teaching and research is generally centered on organizational communication with a particular interest in power and social inequalities. Her research interests continue to be in the area of social organizing and the symbiotic relationship between corporate organizing and social organization.

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