IV. IMPLICATIONS: A FEMINIST/POSTMODERNIST RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY AS IT APPLIES TO THE ORGANIZATIONAL NEWCOMER

How might we understand how the newcomer comes to know the organization? That question hinges on our assumptions about who the newcomer is, about how we come to know, and about what we consider the organization to be, assumptions which are ultimately about the nature of the self, about reality or truth, about language, and about power. How does organizational theory deal with both the question, and the assumptions on which it is based? In particular, which variant in organizational theory—modernist, postmodernist, feminist/postmodernist—best illuminates the question? What do they have to say about the self, about truth, about power and about language which is liberating, emancipating, not oppressive? Postmodernism, and postmodernist organizational theory, may be a new attempt to deal with power, and with liberation and oppression, but like Marxism, it has perhaps insurmountable difficulties dealing with gender, and gender power relations. And because all newcomers are either men or women—as Spivak has pointed out in another context, there is no "literal referent" for newcomer—postmodernist organizational theory alone cannot deal with gender power relations. Instead I propose an intersection of feminism and postmodernism: a feminist/postmodernist reconceptualization of organizational theory is my attempt to illuminate the material covered in the review of the literature which seemed most pertinent to the question "how do we come to know an organization new to us", without constructing new forms of oppression, new ways of silencing.

MODERNISM AND ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

In much, if not most, of organizational theory, the organization itself is written about as if it were a thing, a factory or maybe a plant, but nonetheless something that is real, something that is there, something that can be defined, described, revealed, discovered—all words which reflect our Enlightenment heritage. Burrell and Hearn (1990) point out that most organizational theorists write within the tenets of modernism, within the philosophical assumptions of the Enlightenment which privilege reason and progress and link the two to human happiness. In both systemic modernism, or "the instrumentalization of reason" (Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 95), reason understood as that "which can yield the preferred outcome" (p. 96), and critical modernism, or the recapturing of rationality for emancipatory purposes, the goal of the Frankfurt theorists, our organizations are described as extensions of human rationality, as exemplifications of "planned thought and calculative action" (p. 91), as "intrinsically logical and meaningful . . . constituted by Reason" (p. 96), where what we call knowledge is "expressed in terms of the needs of large scale technological systems" (p. 95), where what we we want is what the system needs (p. 97). In this understanding of what organizations are, rational authority is the basis for the model organization, which is also the "basis for the good social order" (p. 104). We are firmly at the centre of this "human projection"; here, in a world which we have created for ourselves, we can "uncritically assume that the world exists only for us" (p. 94), the creation myth replayed through the Enlightenment. And in this world we understand our organizations very narrowly, within a troika of "modernism, productivity and big science" (Burrell and Hearn, 1990, p. 11) which focuses on the "production of goods, services and outcomes" (p. 14), common tenets in both systemic and critical modernism.

If the organization can be described as something which is fixed and unified, something with definite boundaries, something that is "calculative and utilitarian in intent, reassuring in its substance" (Cooper and Burrell, 1988, p. 93), then the self in modernist organizational theory is equally unified, equally fixed. This self is fully

conscious, stable, and "constituted by a set of static characteristics such as sex, class, race [and] sexual orientation" (Lather, 1991, p. 5). "It is the "centre of rational control" (Cooper and Burrell, 1988, p. 91), understanding the world from "the self-elevated position of a narcissistic rationality" (p. 94); it is the ultimate source of all knowledge or meaning. This all-knowing, self-present self embarks on a process of discovery of knowledge or truth, best taken alone, in the liberal or systemic version of organizational theory, or inevitably shaped by its social context, in the critical version, but in both cases knowledge is acquired through the opposition of the subject who knows to the object to be known. In both cases the subject—the individual, or the worker, in the Marxist versions—is essentially male, "rational man" who uses the power of reason to discover a fixed reality and to impose his solution on the world (cf. Hekman, 1991). What the organization is, then, is something which is an extension of rationality, a "bounded social system system with specific structure and goals which acts more or less rationally and more or less coherently" (Cooper and Burrell, 1988, p. 102), which the rational male individual, or a rational male worker, can know, both of whom have a unified, all-knowing self, in the sense that they can know themselves, and in knowing themselves, know—and control—the world.

In modernist organizational theory, language refers to something other than itself; it reveals meaning, it does not create it. It is referential; it legitimates itself by referring to some grand narrative, some great story which we tell ourselves, forgetting that it is just a story which we have made up to explain ourselves to ourselves. In the sense that "it already knows, modernism is totalizing and controlling" (Cooper and Burrell, 1988, p. 94). Language is conceptually the same as the organization and the self in modernism. It is transparent; like a limpid pool it reveals a reality that can be known. The essential meaning of reality belongs to the subject; the subject is the source of meaning, the author of meaning. The individual in this conceptualization of language assumes centre

stage—evocative words in organizational theory, and particularly in their discussions of how people might come to know the organization.

In both systemic and critical modernism the rational, unified self, a fixed and unified reality, unified theory, transparent language and power as fixed, unified and sovereign mirror each other in their assumptions. As Nancy Hartsock (1984) reminds us, "different theories of power rest on differing assumptions about both the content of existence and the ways we come to know it" (p. 3). Although Hartsock argues that power in systemic modernism is really domination, and that power in critical modernism is capacity, in both cases power is understood ultimately as sovereign, as a fixed entity—a city on the hill to be stormed.

As she explains, power in systemic modernism rests on the epistemology of the capitalist. To Hartsock "market exchange theory"—her term for Cooper and Burrell's systemic modernism—is based on the assumption of autonomous and isolated individuals making a free exchange in a free market, where the market is uncoercive and the exchange therefore voluntary, or the exchange is economically necessary and therefore justifiable. She argues that social theorists like Homans, Blau, Dahl, Polsby, Parsons, Lasswell and Kaplan all "share the fundamental assumptions of exchange theory: individuals are assumed to be isolated and interest-driven, and to interact only on terms of their own choosing" (p. 10). But to Hartsock it is only by descending to the epistemological level of production from the epistemological level of exchange that we can "understand such issues as the relation between structural determination and individual action, between the choices individuals may make as opposed to the choices available to social groups and classes, [and] between real and subjectively held interests" (p. 92). What the use of Marxist theory allows us to understand is not only the dialectical rather than the dual nature of power and fate, intentional action and structural determinism, and the individual and the group, but also how our sense of community and our view of power is structured by an emphasis on exchange rather than

on production. In market exchange theory the view of power on which it rests can only be construed as domination. In Marxist theory, which emphasizes production rather than exchange, and which has a very different understanding of community, the view of power on which it rests is capacity, or "competence and effective action in dealing with both the natural and social worlds" (Hartsock, 1984, p. 137). Nevertheless, in neither systemic or critical modernism can power be construed as anything other than separate and sovereign. Like language, the self, and reality, power is fixed and unified, sovereign over all.

POSTMODERNISM AND ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

Instead of the fixity, rationality and purposefulness which characterize how organizations are thought about in modernism, in postmodernism organizations are conceived of in terms of flux and indeterminacy, as places where neither reason, the unified self nor power as sovereign are given positions of privilege, those taken for granted assumptions about the world which inform us as we write. Instead, in postmodernism organizations are conceived of as "episodic and unpredictable manifestations of a play of domination", where power "masquerades as the supposedly rational construction of modern institutions", where the "systems of rationality" by which we understand our organizations are discourses of knowledge and power which both position us and create us, within the organization and without (Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 109). In this postmodernist understanding of the organization, or organizing, power and language are central, not the self—it is the disciplinary discourses of organizing which are the focus. As Michel Foucault points out, "'our own contemporary society is not maintained by a visible state apparatus of national guards and state police, less still by shared value systems, but by the hidden techniques of discourse always at work in 'carceral' institutions'" (Burrell, 1988, p. 225). It is a world which we cannot

escape: we are all "incarcerated within an organizational world"; we exist "within an institutional framework of incarceration", Foucault's notion which resonates with Weber's iron cage (Ibid, p. 232). Power is no longer separated from knowledge, knowledge from power, the self from either; they are inextricably intertwined, each with the other. The self is no longer separate, autonomous, the source of meaning; instead the self is created within language, an effect of strategies of discourse. We are both created within and enmeshed by what we call our organizations: our organizations are places where power is all-pervasive, where there is no escape, where we are disciplined rather than punished.

Modernist organizational theory depends on the Enlightenment dualities within which it itself is constructed for its internal coherence; the organizational world is understood in terms of hierarchical opposites, where one is privileged over the other. Hence in modernist organizational theory, for example, the irrational and the informal are demonized, rationality and formality suppressing their own opposites "in such a covert way that we remain unaware of [their] censoring function" (Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 109). But in postmodernism the irrational and the informal are understood as always already having contaminated the rational and formal, as have any of the other Enlightenment dualities which confine as they order, forcing us to see the world in digital flashes rather than in the spectrum of the analogue. The postmodernists argue that the rational, for example, is constituted by the irrational, that the terms are self-referential, that they cannot be separated. Without a singular meaning, without a referential or transcendental point, the rational can no longer be deemed "a privileged and unassailable site in social discourse" (p. 109). Instead of meaning and understanding as "naturally intrinsic to the world", the modernist view, the postmodernists argue that meaning and understanding are constructed. Derrida's project of deconstruction is to reverse the process of construction, to show "precisely how artificial are the ordinary taken for granted structures of our social world . . . to show that rationality and rationalization are

really processes that seek to hide the contradictions at the heart of human existence". Our organizations are not neutral sites of rationality and efficiency; instead they are "the result of a complex process of a will to know which orders and organizes the world because it cannot tolerate not knowing; contradiction and ambivalence are forms of abnormality which have to be exorcised" (Cooper and Burrell, 1988, p. 100). What had been referential, fixed, hierarchical in modernist organizational theory, in postmodernism is brought down to earth and re-examined in terms of the Other, the containment of the Other understood not as an ordering principle, but as a site of power.

In modernist organizational theory power is understood as a "kind of property that is owned and operated by such social units" as organizations or individuals; it is "an autonomous system of compulsion". But in postmodernism, formal organizations are "the ever present expression of an autonomous power that masquerades as the supposedly rational construction of modern institutions" (Cooper and Burrell, 1988, p. 110). Power does not reside in structures or in particular people, but in the interconnection of networks of relationships (Burrell, 1988, p. 227). It is all pervasive, "transmitted by and reproduced through all human beings in their day to day existence. It is discrete, regular, generalized and uninterrupted. It does not come from outside the organization but is built into the very processes of organizing" (Ibid, p. 227). Our organizations are not extensions of human rationality; they are "transitory manifestations of relationships of dominance-subordination" (Ibid, p. 231).

Thus, instead of the rationality and purposefulness that characterizes modernist organizational theory, in postmodernism organizations are "without meaning and purpose" other than what we give them (Cooper and Burrell, 1988, p. 94). Cooper and Burrell point out that we must recognize that our "world of commonsense structure is the active product of a process that continually privileges unity, identity and immediacy over the differential properties of absence and separation" (Ibid, p. 100). In modernism we decide what it is that we want, we create it, and we maintain that it is transcendent,

beyond questioning, that it is rational, that it embodies "commonsense". In postmodernism we recognize that our organizations are "self-referential, processual (i.e., without fixed location)", and automatic, meaning that we cannot control them, that they are not something subject to us (Ibid). Instead of focusing, as in modernist theory, on the production of goods and services within an organization, and therefore how it might be more efficient, more rational, in postmodernism we focus on the processes of organizing, writing within the assumptions which that entails: that all knowledge is relationally produced rather than revealed; that reason and progress are no longer inextricable from human happiness; that rather than the confining hierarchies of the Enlightenment we have the free play of meanings, that all terms contain their own opposites and hence cannot be singularly grasped; that meaning originates in language, not in ourselves; that language does not reveal the reality of the world, it creates reality, the only reality we can know.

FEMINISM/POSTMODERNISM AND ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

If we ask ourselves how actual women and men—not just the undifferentiated newcomer—come to know the organization, or in postmodernist terms the discourses of power and knowledge which we call our organizations, how would we answer? How might we understand the self, the organization, language, power and knowledge as they are constructed within a feminist/postmodernist understanding, and how might that illuminate how women and men come to know the organization, in a way that neither marginalizes women nor fixes woman as referential? How might we not just add on women, leaving the previously taken theoretical approaches intact, but theorize about

sex, gender and gender relations[*] within a feminist/postmodernist reconceptualization of organizational theory?

For gender—specifically female gender—is simply added on if it is even considered at all; it is not theorized in most organizational theory, modernist or postmodernist. When I read organizational theory as a woman, I am reading theory written by men about male experiences in organizations designed by men for men—and then universalized, so gender disappears (cf. Sheppard, 1990). A supposedly neutral theory written in the abstract by abstract individuals—who are in actuality men—remains. As Derrida would point out, in the act of writing, all traces of a gendered being choosing one path—and not another—have been erased. We cannot any more contemplate who is actually taking the path than we can contemplate any of the other paths which might have been taken. The accomplishment of power is the effacement of gender, the effacement of the structuring principle of the Other which is always repressed, but which always returns (cf. Gerber, 1992).

The lack of attention to gender in organizational theory is a common complaint. Both Calas and Smircich (1990) and Burrell and Hearn (1990) maintain that gender is either ignored, or it appears that only women have a gender, not men—men are "persons", women are women, men are the norm, women the deviation (cf. Sheppard, 1990). To Calas and Smircich this is accomplished by collapsing sex and gender "into the category of sex: a biologically determined variable easily measured. And further, sex is reduced to the category 'women'. This approach to sex/gender helps maintain

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[*]I will follow Hekman's (1990) analysis of sex, gender and gender relations. When I use the term gender I do not mean socially constituted gender as opposed to biological sex. To repeat Hekman's statement from the conceptual framework, I will use gender in this sense: that biological sex is something understood "through social categories . . . Biological sex and socially constructed gender are not separate or opposed, but rather form an integral part of what we are as individuals. . . . We are of course, sexed beings, but that biological fact is always understood socially and culturally. It can be understood no other way" (1990, p. 142).

organizational theorizing's traditional premises" (p. 5), in spite of the asymmetrical relations of power between women and men which exist "as dominant structural principles" (Ibid). To Burrell and Hearn (1990), although the theory is written as if it were only men who worked in these organizations, it is implicit rather than explicit—it becomes about people in general. They point out that "Weber's theory of bureaucracy is implicitly about male bureaucrats", and that little has changed in organizational theory over the course of the century, although large numbers of women began to work for pay for a much larger part of their lives. Later organizational theorists continued to write of "the generic 'organizational man' (Whyte, 1956), 'corporate man' (Jay, 1972), and 'bureaucratic man' (Kohn, 1971)" (Burrell and Hearn, p. 9), the maleness of organizational theory so deeply embedded that it was not—and is not—experienced as problematic (cf. Sheppard, 1990). Burrell and Hearn conclude that "in surveying the treatment of gender within organizational theory (Hearn & Parkin, 1983, 1987, 1988) it is hard to avoid the conclusion that gender has been either ignored, treated implicitly as male, considered an organizational 'variable', reduced to relative stereotypes, or been analysed in a blatantly sexist way" (p. 10), omissions, lacks and inadequacies that preclude the discussion of asymmetrical gender power relations as well.

But if we are to theorize gender and asymmetrical gender power relations in feminist/postmodernist organizational theory, how might we better understand the effect of gender on the self? How might we start talking about women and men, and the asymmetrical power relations of women and men, rather than assuming that we can just talk about 'people', like 'the individual', or 'the worker', words without literal referents, words which are polite evasions, silences for that which would rather not be spoken aloud[1]? How might we start talking about the self as other than something

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[1]In a brilliant meditation on the construction of race as a sign in American literature, Toni Morrison (1992) ponders how what we don't talk about determines what we do: "Silence and evasion have historically ruled racial discourse. Evasion has fostered another, substitute language in which the issues are encoded, foreclosing open debate. The

which is totally the effect of language or discourse, the postmodernist position, but a position which denies the effect of gender and asymmetrical gender relations on the self[2].? I believe that to talk about the self as solely an effect of language or discourse is to take a position which violates postmodernism itself, because it works to reconstruct a hidden opposition with its emphasis on language or discourse as the sole determinant of the self. Like the theories of feminism and postmodernism, neither of which is fixed or unified, to oppose them is to make them what they are not (cf. Kirby, 1991), and so it is with the feminist/postmodernist understanding of the self. The self is neither single, unified or static *as opposed to* the self constructed solely as an effect of language or discourse. That is to resurrect oppositional dualities. Instead, the self transcends "both biological essentialism and linguistic determinism", moving "between several positions 'in which the necessity of adopting a position in a given situation . . . [includes] simultaneously calling it into question'" (Lather, 1991, p. 29). As Lather (1991) points out, "the goal is difference without opposition"; not "the self as unchanging authentic essence" but "the self as a conjunction of diverse social practices produced and positioned socially, without an underlying essence (p. 82).

I maintain that to recognize gender and its effects on the self is not to take a totalitarian or essentialist position, that it provides a necessary other lens through which the machinations of power might be viewed, a view not necessarily favoured by the

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situation is aggravated by the tremor that breaks into the discourse on race. It is further complicated by the fact that the habit of ignoring race is understood to be a graceful, even generous, liberal gesture. To notice is to recognize an already discredited difference" (p. 9). But these silences and evasions are not polite liberal nostrums; they "risk lobotomizing that literature, and diminish both the literature and the critic (p. 12). [19]As Patti Lather (1991) notes, "'Surely it is no coincidence that the Western white male elite proclaimed the death of the subject at precisely the moment at which it might have had to share that status with the women and peoples of other races and classes who were beginning to challenge its supremacy'" (p. 29). But feminism refuses to go along with these death of the subject because of the dilemma facing feminism: How might we account "for the specificity of gender without reifying one particular definition of femaleness, without falling into an essentialist discourse on gender" (p. 28)?

postmodernists. Immanence, not transcendence, is our lot, but immanence not fixed, not unified, the sexed and gendered self existing in a body that cannot be denied. But neither do I wish to resurrect oppositional dualities. Like Hekman (1990), I agree that neither our sex nor our gender can exist in opposition, that to see the two opposed, one as biological, the other as socially constituted, is to remain embedded within Enlightenment dualities. To understand sex and gender as not opposed but as relational, to reject the dualities which structure—and inhibit our thoughts—is neither to deny our bodies which we inhabit as women and men, nor is it to make our bodies the determining factor in how we understand our worlds, nor is it then to agree that we must be wholly constructed in discourse. It is to understand positions as interactive, to recognize the necessity of shuttling between positions which are not fixed and cannot be fixed. I do not agree that all women and all men at all times experience their bodies and what they mean in the same ways, that there is something innate about our experiences living in our bodies that has some larger determining effect that transcends historical time and place. I do agree that being born into a female body rather than a male body has vastly differing consequences in terms of who will have power and who won't, who has power and who hasn't, however power might be measured, whatever standard might be applied. To argue innate versus socially constructed, essential woman versus essential man is to miss the point, as well as to remain caught within the violent hierarchies of Enlightenment thought, to use Derrida's term. It is not biological essentialism versus the self wholly constructed in discourse which is at stake, but power, power which we can use to analyse the discourse of essentialism as a form of silencing women through arguing that to maintain a gendered self is to argue at the same time for the innate and unchanging.

Thus I maintain that we are only partially—not wholly, the postmodernist position—constructed as an effect of discourses of power and knowledge. We are also partially constructed in our relations with others, Jane Flax's point, a partial construction

which also allows for the construction of a site of resistance. To state otherwise would be to privilege language, to turn language into the stalking horse for reason, to set up oppositional dualities which work to maintain male privilege. Instead of language— criticized as ultimately deterministic, referential, transcendent (Cf. Flax, 1990, Cameron, 1985)—which informs Foucault's notion of strategies of discourse, I propose that discourses of power and knowledge arise in the materiality—the sensuality—of our lives. I do not understand materiality in vulgar economic terms, in who controls relations of production or even reproduction, but in the very much broader sense of believing that we come to know the world in terms of what we do—perhaps more precisely, in the way that we live, which is not the same as arguing that this is fixed and therefore an unanalysable site of power. Foucault's understanding of the intertwining of power and knowledge as strategies of discourse, and his understanding of the effects of the disciplinary discourse of carceral or normalizing institutions on who we are is enormously helpful as we try to understand how power operates through the process of organizing, but as Dorothy Smith has pointed out, power has no ontology, no state of being. And if we're going to understand how women and men come to know the organization, we have to have a broader understanding of gender power relations than one which postulates that we are solely an effect of disciplinary discourse. As any woman can tell you, power isn't maintained only through the force of words.

Nevertheless, the flux, the indeterminacy, of postmodernism, the skepticism which we know we must apply to the construction of a grand narrative to ensure a place for doubt, and with doubt, a place for enablement, Spivak's words, this skepticism we must bring to any theory, however benevolent, stands us in good stead. By its very nature the totalitarian position is used by the powerful against the powerless; the temptations of the Enlightenment which reside in a perfectly coherent whole resting on perfectly constructed dualities have never been, and cannot be, ours. Our way lies in flux and indeterminacy, the recognition that knowledge or truth or reality—or what we call the

organization—cannot stand outside relations of power. Where I differ from the postmodernists is that I maintain that the gendered self is not wholly constructed by relations of power and knowledge, that we are not solely an effect of disciplinary discourse. We cannot stand outside relations of knowledge and power, but neither can we dissolve the gendered self as nothing other than an effect of language, of discourses of knowledge and power. That is an ambivalent statement, one that attempts to reconcile perhaps the irreconcilable points of Flax, Foucault, Derrida and Smith, among others, but like Spivak I say that strategically, politically, it is one that I must make, one that I believe is consistent both with the postmodernist and feminist displacement of hierarchical oppositions. It is within this feminist/postmodernist understanding of the self, reality, power, and language, then, that I will assess the material in the review of the literature as it applies to how we come to know organizations new to us.

THE SELF, LANGUAGE AND POWER IN MODERNIST ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

CULTURE AND SYMBOLISM

Terms like culture and shared meaning have become more and more important in our understanding of what organizations are as many of us have attempted to move away from a positivist or natural science explanation of how we live in the world to a view that, by the early 80's, was one much more influenced by anthropological and linguistic theory. Deborah Cameron (1985) cautions, however, that neither anthropological nor linguistic theory was free from behaviourism and determinism. To her this means an adherence to a transcendental set of rules, which by virtue of being inherent in the human condition, could remain unquestioned—and unquestioned, could serve to maintain the status quo.

It resulted, at least in organizational theory, for all its talk about process, about symbolism and about organizing rather than "the organization", in a static, rather than dynamic concept of the organization, organizational reality, and the self. The emphasis, at least to the early to mid-eighties, remained focused on culture as a variable easily manipulated by an all-knowing self, an all-knowing self who could also easily grasp or learn this unified and shared concept of what this organizational culture might be. Conversely, it could be taught, passed down, communicated, using transparent language as a medium of exchange. We could learn or enact a role; we could be socialized into the proper role; we could strut our stuff on the organizational stage. Garfinkel's (1967) theory of skillful accomplishment, Weick's (1979) theory of enactment, Mangham's (1983) dramaturgy—all of which emphasized a fixed reality which could be grasped by an all-knowing self—remained intensely influential as theorists struggled to understand how we came to be in our organizations.

Role or socialization theory is thus one major way to attempt to understand how the newcomer comes to know the organization, a theory which rests on modernist assumptions of the fixed and unified self, and a reality that can be known and transmitted through transparent language. But a feminist/postmodernist reconceptualization would maintain that there is no fixed and all-knowing self which can remain apart from the action on the stage, inviolate and removed, whose only involvement in the acquisition of a role is the putting on of the proper clothes or attributes or conversely, the refusal to do so. What is advanced in role theory is freedom of choice, where we choose or not choose, as the case may be, an assumption that also rests on the notion that power is irrelevant. The same assumptions of a fixed self underscore the notion of socialization; but paradoxically, although freedom of choice is advanced, the self exists as something that is done to, not something that does. The behaviourism and determinism of role and socialization theory remain covert; nevertheless, they function as explanatory categories in organizational theory written within systemic modernism to deny the possibility of analysis of asymmetrical power relations between women and men. In these analyses women freely choose behaviour which marginalizes them in organizations; their lack of success, the definition of which is left implicit, is labelled inadequate psychological motivation or an inability which stems from [often covert] notions of characteristics innate to women. That success is in the eyes of the powerful, that no matter what women do, it may never be the "right thing", or as Deborah Cameron (1985) wryly puts it, "a woman's place is in the wrong", are questions that cannot be raised within these assumptions about the self and the organization. In this conceptualization, power and gender are both rendered irrelevant, power because it simply functions as another medium of exchange—information can be exchanged in this conceptualization, but like a dollar bill, it retains its unity, its substance as it is exchanged between one person and another—gender because the gendered

nature of the [male] self is effaced in this conceptualization, reappearing as the abstract individual.

The theoretical assumptions of role acquisition and socialization are used by a number of organizational theorists in their attempts to explain how newcomers come to know (cf. Meryl Louis [1980] and her notion of the 'cognitive map' as a way of understanding how newcomers to an organization make sense of it, also Van Maanen & Schein [1979], Schein [1984], Wanous et al [1984], Weick [1979] on learning in organizations). In her critique of organizational theory (1989), Jill Blackmore points out the political implications for women of theories of socialization, or of role acquisition. She stresses that socialization theory, by arguing that who we are is the result of socializing agencies such as schools, the family, work and the media, is implicitly behaviourist. We are passive, acted upon; we do not act. But paradoxically, we are blamed when this socialization process doesn't work, when we're either too aggressive, or not aggressive enough, the norm being men. In this sense socialization and role theory are forms of norm and deviation studies (cf. Cameron, 1985), depending as they do on what men do and therefore what women ought to do, but all of that is structured into the assumptions which underpin this theory. Nor does it question the status quo, a point that Fiona McNally (1979) underlines. She argues that much of the work done on socialization and the subjective experiences of workers mistakes cause and effect. McNally points out that in studies of socialization, women's place in the work force is explained as the "inevitable outcome of an attenuated ambition, imposed by socialization and later reinforced by domesticity. This assumption seemed highly questionable since one was informed elsewhere that depressed levels of pay and prestige among male workers should be examined in relation to prevailing structures of power" (p. 180). The material on socialization and the acquisition of roles in the literature pays little attention to the larger context, preferring to concentrate on the individual, uncoerced by differences in power, undismayed by differences in opportunity, concerned only with

learning a part assigned by someone else. The tautology which informs roles and rules rests on the assumption that we can choose certain ways (already given) and from those, present ourselves, like being in a closet and choosing the proper clothes. We obey a hidden set of rules, learn the lines of a role—but in both cases, who made up the rules, who wrote the role? That remains the unasked question, and in that unasked question power resides and gender is effaced.

Organizational theory in the early to mid-eighties was influenced not only by anthropology in its emphasis on culture, but also by linguistic theory. Initially, it was a linguistic theory which was positivist and empiricist (Cameron, 1985), much like the anthropology which the organizational theorists drew upon as we tried to explain our organizations to ourselves. Both Garfinkel's theory of skillful accomplishment and Weick's theory of enactment bear a great deal of resemblance to the theory of their contemporary, the linguist Noam Chomsky. Considering how parallel the development has been in the United States between linguistic theory and anthropology, and how much anthropologists have drawn on linguistic theory in their study of other cultures in the United States, it is not surprising that similar assumptions about the world are embedded in both Garfinkel's and Weick's work, both of whom, in turn, draw on anthropology in their study of organizations. Much of what one linguist says about linguistic theory could be paraphrased to apply to Garfinkel and Weick's version of organizations: "The data of [organizations] are very complicated, heterogeneous to the point of chaos, so [organizational theorists] propose that they must rest on something much more elegant and unified, a set of rules or relations which cannot be observed directly, but which may be inferred by the skillful scientist (Cameron, 1985, p. 13). Just as Chomsky defines competence as a "set of rules known by native speakers of a language, and performance the actual and imperfect language these speakers produce on the basis of the rules" (Ibid), so might Garfinkel and Weick define the world in which their actors follow the rules or enact their setting (cf. Morgan, 1986, pp. 128-130). Noam Chomsky's competent

speaker, and his notion of competence, seems to rest on the same theoretical assumptions as Garfinkel's skillful accomplishment and Weick's theory of enactment. The question that isn't asked is not how do we know which rules to apply, but where did those rules come from?[3]

Deborah Cameron (1985) explores these linguistic assumptions about the rules of language—ultimately referential—which reside in Saussure's langue/parole duality and in Chomsky's notion of competence/performance from a feminist perspective. To Cameron, it is not that women use language (which in this assumption is neutral, a thing) incorrectly, that they don't know the rules, and if they just learned the rules, everything would be better. Neither does she argue that men have sole control over language and the rules (ahistorical patriarchy) or that somehow there is a male language. Instead Cameron maintains that power differences between men and women are expressed not only in what we say and in the words we use, but in how we think about those differences. She states that "So long as women are subordinate to men, their language *has got* [her italics] to be characterized as indicating natural subservience, unintelligence and immaturity. While men dominate women in mixed groups by limiting their opportunity to talk, our folklinguistic beliefs must include the untruth that women talk incessantly" (p. 33). She goes on to point out that "Non-standard speech [slang, swearing] connotes masculinity"; "femininity [is] constructed in deliberate opposition", which would explain the strong pressure on women to "talk like ladies"—in other words, differently than men (p. 48). The way that we as women speak and how we are

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[3]Gareth Morgan (1986), describing Garfinkel's theory of skillful accomplishment and Weick's theory of enactment, refers to their use of a transcendental set of rules in both cases which, like Chomsky and Saussure, are ultimately abstract and referential. So, for example, he describes Garfinkel's (1967) theory in these terms: "the most routine and taken for granted aspects of social reality are in fact skillful accomplishment. . . . We can say that the nature of culture is found in its social norms and customs, and that if one adheres to these rules of behaviour one will be successful in constructing an appropriate social reality (p. 128-129). To Weick, "we implicitly make many decisions and assumptions about a situation before any norm or rule is applied" (Ibid, p. 130).

perceived has much less to do with our so-called incorrect or inappropriate use of language than it has to do with the notion that whatever language we use will be termed incorrect and inappropriate. As a friend of mine ruefully stated, "They keep changing the rules on me, so it never seems to matter what I do, I always do the wrong thing"[4], a point that can be extended from language to roles. In this view, all you have to do is change the way you talk, change the way you act, that the problem lies in the wrong talk, the wrong action, the wrong role. You just learn to talk correctly, act the right way, choose the right role (or role model) and you too will get ahead. Modernist assumptions about the self, about language, and about power, are deeply embedded in both role and socialization theory as well as the linguistic theory it both draws on and resembles.

THE LABOUR PROCESS THEORISTS

However, this emphasis on culture and symbolism, and the role and socialization theory that fits within it, much of it drawn from anthropological and linguistic theory, has been challenged from another perspective that equally emphasizes symbolism, language, and the creation of consciousness, but from a perspective that is forthrightly political. Whereas the implicit behaviourism and determinism of socialization and role theory denies power, turning it into a neutral medium of exchange, the labour process theorists focus on power, and how our place in the material world shapes who we are. Labour process theory is modernist in its presumptions, like the material on culture and symbolism, but it is Marxist rather than bourgeois, and ultimately no more able to grasp

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[4]Cameron's argument is directly counter to others like Lakoff (1975, 1990) or Tannen (1990) who state that our problem lies in what we say and therefore by changing what we say and how we say it, we can get ahead. This is yet another version of norm and deviation research, dependent on an implicit male norm.

gender as a problematic than are static notions about organizational culture, and socialization and role theory.

How might the newcomer come to know? As Marxists or neo-Marxists, labour process theorists emphasize the sensuous nature of what we do in creating how we come to know the world, but their analytical category is class and they understand power ultimately in terms of who controls production, although they draw on Marcuse and Habermas in their emphasis on technological rationality and the recapturing of rationality for emancipatory purposes. In this understanding reality is fixed, power is sovereign, and the self is created within systems of production that privilege men and manufacturing. In labour process theory, although the Marxist notion of the sensual nature of the material world is helpful to women, ultimately gender power relations are irrelevant. Class is primary, and 'the worker' erases 'the woman'.

One of the tenets in labour process theory is that we are alienated from a fixed reality—one which we can know—by a particular form of consciousness which is formed by a particular, technocratic, way of doing work. But in this conceptualization, neither privileging a fixed reality, nor privileging a particular form of rationality recaptured from technocracy, is questioned. Disintegration and alienation and how to combat those twin demons of modernity are of prime concern, not flux. Thus labour process theorists like Alvesson, Burowoy and Thompson draw on the various ways that ideology is understood within what is termed Marxist-humanist or critical modernist thought, but none of them would disagree that there is some version of a better reality that must be understood if we are to be freed from the conditions of our alienation. They focus ultimately on that "better" reality, and on the conditions which would reveal that reality—a classless society.

Alvesson (1987) goes further than either Burawoy (1979) or Thompson (1989), because what is implicit in their work is thoroughly explored in his—the problem of false consciousness in Marxism, but given a new twist in the 1980's. How do we come to

think about the world—and in particular, about the organization—in ways that imprison rather than free us? Technological rationality, an idea which draws on notions of Marcuse, and particularly developed by Habermas, alienates us from who we are, and from a rational understanding of a world that might be if we could shuffle off the coils which bind us in the unequal arrangements between capital and labour. To Alvesson it is not just what we produce but how we understand it that is problematic. How do words act to coerce us, how does ideology function? In Alvesson's theory, language is not transparent, a limpid pool, a neutral medium of exchange to which power is not attached; it creates meaning—power and words are not separate. Nevertheless, in Alvesson's conceptualization ideology, or technological rationality, functions on behalf of the elite to repress the "critically rational subject . . . in the interests of a machine-like system of social functionality" (Cooper and Burrell, 1988, p. 96), functions to obscure the truth, the reality, the real conditions—which can only be reached when we exist in a state of classlessness. A fixed reality, a utopia where men do not oppress other men because class has been eliminated, is what we are left. Like all Marxist and neo-Marxist theory, the focus is on the timid worker—but not on the timid woman who follows the worker home, the wife whose second day is just beginning. But from a feminist/postmodernist position we must ask, whose reality is taking precedence as we come to know? Where are we in this utopia of classlessness?

CRITICAL COMMUNICATIONS THEORISTS

Deetz (1987), Kersten (1987) and Mumby (1988) all focus on the role of language, of power and words, in accomplishing asymmetrical power relations in organizations. What had been initially a focus on culture in organizations, an idea that rested on the neutral observations of an anthropologist in a strange country, where the focus is on uncovering the rules by which people live, not how things work as they do

and who benefits, has slowly shifted. How people learn roles, how they enact their place in the world, the flashy costumes and dramaturgical metaphors that keep our eyes glued on the stage, have been shoved to the side, and the director and the writer beckoned out. The focus is now on who writes the roles, how the roles get written, how words position.

The critical communications theorists focus on language from a slightly different perspective than the labour process theorists, although they too write within the traditions of critical modernism, to use Burrell and Hearn's term. They focus less on the material conditions which give rise to how we understand the world, and more on language, and the actual formation of meaning. How is language shaped so our understanding of the world continues to benefit those in power? In their view, how would we come to know organizations which are inevitably unequal? How is that knowing shaped by language, or in Mumby's (1988) terms, how is meaning both formed and deformed?

Those who write within systemic modernism in organizational theory are concerned with issues of efficiency, effectiveness, clarity—how might we speak more clearly, write more clearly so the goals of the organization are met. In this conceptualization the self is the neutral abstract self of liberal humanism, language is something that can be grasped and manipulated, meaning is indissolvable from the word itself, reality can be described by a language that is clear and objective. Deetz (1987), Kersten (1987) and Mumby (1988) take issue with those ideas, and in particular because these theories about language lack any conceptualization of how power can distort meaning. In that, they remain well within critical modernism—ideology is embraced, but it rests on the idea that there is a non-ideological reality, or in Mumby's terms, an undeformed organizational culture, which can exist. The notion of fixity and of elites who manipulate language for their benefit remains.

Deetz, Kersten and to some extent Mumby draw on Marxist humanism and its critique of capitalism within the tenets of Kant and the Enlightenment, even as they move away from the positivist view that language is referential to a Saussurean or neo-Saussurean view that language creates meaning. Kersten advocates Habermas and his theory of communicative action as a way of recognizing domination in communication, but Habermas has been criticized for his adherence to a transcendental rationality and his maintenance of Enlightenment dualities, both unexplored sites of power (cf. Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 97).

A number of feminist philosophers have pointed out that Habermas' theory of communicative action poses difficulties for women. Benhabib (1987), Young (1987) and Fraser (1987 a,b) all stress that the unacknowledged dualism of Habermas' theory relegates women to an unanalysable sphere where their concerns remain outside public-moral discourse, Benhabib by focusing on Habermas's hierarchical use of the generalized as opposed to the concrete other; Young on the opposition between reason and desire, consensus and love; Fraser on Habermas' assignment of structural properties to one set of institutions (the official economy and the state) and interpretive ones to another set (the family and the public sphere) (1987b, p. 168). Rather than a rigid duality, Fraser maintains that "all of these institutions have both structural and interpretive dimensions and that all should be studied both structurally and hermeneutically" (Ibid). Furthermore, she argues, Habermas conceptualizes those roles which mediate between the system and the life world: worker, citizen, client and consumer, as gendered, the first two as male, the second two as female, although that conceptualization is unacknowledged. To Habermas, in order to be a citizen, one must be able to talk to others as an equal, "under conditions of freedom, equality and fairness" (1987a, p. 38). How then is one to be a citizen and thus to speak freely, if one is a woman? Given these criticisms, how illuminating is *The Theory of Communicative Action* for women in organizations?

Mumby draws on both Habermas and Anthony Giddens in the development of his analysis of organizational narrative as the formation and deformation of culture. To Mumby, what we can know about the organization lies in the construction of organizational narrative, in our conversations which we have with each other. In this way he brings down to the organizational level the concept of ideology—it is those conversations which create and reinforce asymmetrical power relations which are ideological, those conversations which are egalitarian which do not. However, what is ideological and what is not remains outside Mumby's purview; he is concerned with the formation and deformation of organizational culture, not with an exploration of what is ideological other than that which is determined by Marxist categories of ownership. Like Deetz and Kersten, ultimately his notion of power depends on class; gender is rendered marginal in his analysis, although his most telling narrative is recounted by a female secretary in a university department where those in power are men. Neither Habermas, Giddens, Marx or Weber can provide analyses of the organization, of the self, of language or of power which do not marginalize women, or women's concerns. The question "how we come to know an organization new to us" remains fixed at the level of men describing how other, more powerful men use words in a way which prevents the less powerful men from changing the situation, although Mumby in particular adds a much needed dimension to our understanding of what we do in organizations that works to maintain asymmetrical relations of power between men.

CONCLUSION: MODERNIST ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

Organizational theorists like Pettigrew (1985) and Ranson, Greenwood and Hinings (1980), who draw on Weber, but the Weber of the iron cage, not rational bureaucracy; labour process theorists like Alvesson (1987), Burawoy (1979) and Thompson (1989) who draw on Marx and Marcuse, and organizational communications theorists like Deetz (1987), Kersten (1987) and Mumby (1988) who draw on Habermas and Giddens all focus on power, all focus on language and consciousness; all neglect gender. Like those who write within systemic modernism, by the 1980's they too focus on organizations as cultures as they attempt to grapple with an increasing focus on symbolism within the social sciences as a whole. But whereas those writing within systemic modernism emphasize the isolated self, the liberal ideal of the transcendent and therefore objective observer with its behaviourist and positivist implications, those writing within critical modernism focus on the social context in the creation of the self. But in both the self remains an unacknowledged male self, both in their explicit focus and in their implicit theory.

These writers are less constrained by economic determinism than earlier writers on the left, and much more interested in exploring strands in both Weber and in Marx that deal with consciousness, a focus that fits in well with organizational symbolism and the question of how we come to know. Pettigrew and Ranson, Greenwood and Hinings, for example, draw on Weber and his notion of organization as an iron cage, something that exists in the mind rather than coerces the body, stressed by Ranson et al as an "order of domination". Burawoy, Thompson and Alvesson's view of the self, of reality, of language and of power is explicitly Marxist—they draw on a long history of Marxist and neo-Marxist thought in their analyses. Burawoy and Thompson try to draw together what have been sometimes competing strands of thought within Marxism over the century: if Marx has written a humanist critique of capitalism, is it the emphasis on alienation or on

production which best characterizes the critique? More simply, can we ever separate the mind from the body? For both Burawoy and Thompson, the organization—in both their cases, factories and male workers—manufactures not just things, but ways of understanding the world: in Burawoy's terms, the manufacture of consent. To him, rules, unquestioned and covertly innate in Garfinkel, Weick, Goffman, Mangham, the same notions reappearing in Chomsky's behaviourist and deterministic theories about competence in linguistics, are made by the powerful to benefit the powerful; to play the game means consenting to a set-up where you can never win, but where, since it's the only game in town, you don't have any other choice.

Their analysis of alienation depends on a fixed reality which we can be alienated from; similarly, the assumption about the self which exists in the Marxist humanism or critical modernism of the labour process theorists or the critical organizational communications theorists depends on fixity—that we can be alienated from our true selves by ideology, in Alvesson's terms, in the form of technological rationality, or in Mumby's, that our participation in the creation and recreation of what we know as the organization will be deformed by ideology which has as its origin the control of production. This idea of an innate, fixed self in Marxist humanism or critical modernism poses the same problems for women as it does in systemic modernism; in both cases the selves are in actuality constituted as male, although the worker and the individual are understood as without gender. Neither control of production nor the extension of Marxist epistemology to the control of reproduction as a way of including women have so far been able to get around the knotty problem of power residing in the asymmetrical relations between women and men.

THE SELF, LANGUAGE AND POWER IN POSTMODERNIST ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

Just as the fixed nature of the self is abandoned in postmodern thought, so is the fixed nature of reality—that we can know ourselves, and know our world—the fixed nature of meaning in language, and the fixed nature of power, all of which are explored in Stewart Clegg's (1989) postmodernist reassessment of organizational theory. The question of how we might come to know an organization new to us is given a completely new slant. No longer is there a fixed self, the author of all meaning, the chief player on the stage. Although from the early 1980's onward there had been a shift in the literature to an understanding of organizations not as things but as processes, the idea of a fixed self understanding and putting into play those processes called organizing was maintained. This idea of the all-knowing author of all meaning is dispensed with in Clegg's work; instead, drawing on Foucault, the self, who we are, becomes nothing other than an effect of language, or in Foucault's terminology, an effect of strategies of discourse, where power and knowledge intersect to construct the self. Who we are, and what we can know, are only what we can say about the world. Instead of "I think, therefore I am", in Clegg's formulation we become "I use language, therefore I am". The organization, very far now from anything fixed or reified, becomes not just meaning, as it is in Mumby's formulation, to be formed or deformed, but a position that is an effect of power and knowledge. In Mumby's notion, the organization remains possibly utopian; in Clegg's, that utopian notion is dispensed with to be replaced with strategies of discourse, "regimes of truth", where knowledge and power meet, where both domination and resistance exist. Power is no longer fixed, or sovereign. It exists in representations and networks, Luxemburg, Lukacs and Gramsci linked to Weber and back to Marx, not in his focus on economic determinism, but in his focus on consciousness.

What we can know, then, is what we can say; we can no more separate ourselves as an effect of knowledge and power than we can separate what we know about the world from power. The transcendence of the Enlightenment, the possibility of reason uncontaminated by power, of truth about a world we can know, is interred, literally

brought down to earth. Immanence, formerly the lot of women, becomes, theoretically at least, the lot of us all. Instead of the newcomer coming to know the organization as something that can be described in transparent language, a reality which we seek as the truth, or the newcomer coming to know the organization as something that is obscured by an ideology constructed by those in power to keep the powerless in their place, we become the effect of the strategies of discourse, the nexus of power and knowledge, which the organization is also. What we can know, and how we can know, cannot be separated; we cannot achieve any distance, any perspective, either from what we call the organization, or from ourselves. We are ineluctably and inextricably involved, and what we can know is only what we can say.

However, can Clegg's reconceptualization of organizational theory within postmodern thought with its emphasis on flux and indeterminacy, its denial of any boundaries, including the boundaries of the body, not just the boundaries of the mind, help us in any way to understand what women say about being a newcomer to an organization? Or are we left precisely where liberal individualism or Marxist humanism leaves us, at the level of the abstract, where gender is simply effaced, rendered irrelevant, and we all move on to other questions which are considered more important, how importance is defined, and by whom, left unquestioned?

As a woman, I reject that I am irrelevant, that what both Engels and Freud called the woman question has no place in organizational theory. We want to figure out how we ended up where we did, how things are structured, how things work. Is the denial of fixity and the privileging of language and of discourse an answer, or more precisely, our answer, even recognizing that postmodernism rejects the idea of one answer as inherently totalitarian? In the view of many feminist theorists writing in the late 1980s—there are, unfortunately, not large numbers of feminist theorists writing in organizational theory, even now—feminist theory and postmodernist theory are useful correctives to each other. The gaps and lacunae which are impossible for each to

address, are addressed through an intersection—not a synthesis, not a conversation, certainly not a marriage—of feminism and postmodernism, where each addresses what the other cannot, each reminds the other of the dangers of forgetfulness. Feminism reminds postmodernism of a radicalism it might wish to disavow—in a theory written primarily by men, male power may be an unwanted mirror and the discourse of essentialism a happy screen, but the displacement of hierarchical dualities demands the displacement of male over female; postmodernism reminds feminism of the dangers of the fixed and referential point, of the essentialist argument, no matter how benevolent the intent.

Postmodernist theory, written by men, for men, about men's experiences, at the same time as it purports to write about only power and language, maintaining that gender is only an effect of power and language, renders gender marginal. And in a world where men are more powerful, renders questions about that irrelevant. Feminist theory, with gender, and gender relations its central organizing principle, needs postmodernism in the same way postmodernism needs feminism—to deal with the gaps and the holes, the lacuna that by its very nature the theory cannot address. In feminism, as Spivak stresses, gender may not be fixed, but when we speak of gender, when we speak of women, we are generalizing, we are universalizing, and politically, strategically, we cannot do anything other than that. And yet at the same time we must resist the totalitarianism inherent in universalizing and generalizing, in speaking for the other. Likewise, postmodernism must confront its own gaps in its pursuit of flux and indeterminacy, of strategies of discourse which constantly shift, of the free play of meaning, of *differance*, of the liberation which comes from the rejection of the confining hierarchies of the Enlightenment given force and coherence by the rendering of woman as the Other which takes as its form the unseen rules that we follow both in Chomsky's notions about language and Garfinkel and Weick's notions about roles and enactment.

Confronting one's own involvement in the creation and maintenance of asymmetrical gender power relations when gender is constructed only as an effect of power and knowledge in discourse removes the mirror from men's faces. When everything we can know about the world is what we can say, the physical violence that is a daily aspect of many women's lives, where a man's fist, and not words, is the way power is maintained, cannot be addressed. The sexual subordination contained in Clegg's litany of "worker, wife, woman or whore" (1989, p. 151)—that women are subordinate to men, and are subordinate because they are women, is uncommented upon. But these situations are not mere language games. They are concrete in their subordination. It is not just what it means in the mind, in the ethereality of language, Hegel's idealism rewritten for the 21st century. The bodily concreteness of female subordination needs to be addressed, and it is not addressed, not in Foucault, not in Derrida, not in Lacan, not in Clegg. The denial of fixity in all its forms as inherently totalitarian needs to be addressed as itself a strategy of discourse which denies the power of physical violence which postmodernism forgets in privileging language alone. As Bordo (1990) points out, we can only dance in our own bodies; although reality may be intensely plural, our perspective cannot be, we can only see out of our own eyes, we can only talk out of our own mouths, we have to confront our own bodily selves.

The problem with Clegg's Foucauldian conceptualization of power is that it lacks an ontology. It is both everywhere and nowhere, residing in a Hobbesian world of desperately competing individuals, good not for class nor race nor gender or whatever fault lines fracture the amorphous mass. For Foucault, power is embedded in Heidegger's will to know, the nexus of power/knowledge expressed in language. In Foucault's analysis of organizations, he forgets that the normalizing institutions of psychiatry, psychology, medicine and education are run by men. His theories can't account for group domination of another group, although it is good for the implicit totalitarianism of the closed definition, and how normalizing institutions, by defining

what is normal, [that set of rules again] keep us all in line—but those men at the top also keep women in line.

In Foucault language is privileged; it is the determining, the organizing principle. But Dorothy Smith maintains that that is not enough. Where does power come from? If we don't know where it comes from, we can't fight it; if we can't define it, how can we resist it? From what is ultimately a Marxist perspective, Smith maintains that we cannot overlook the sensuous nature of our lives, that in bringing into being the conditions of our existence, which seems to me to include all the things we do from the time we get up until we go to bed—which is not necessarily to argue that any of the positions are fixed—we create ourselves. We create ourselves in the process of being a clerk or a teacher or a lawyer or a mother, or all of those at various times in our lives. These experiences shape us; they don't reveal the truth of ourselves to ourselves, but they do shape us in ways that language does not fully capture, as both Cameron (1985) and Flax (1990) point out, although in slightly different ways.

Cameron maintains that the privileging of language in Foucault retains the determinism of the neo-Saussureans in that language arises seemingly from the sky, another form of deus ex machina to rescue us when we can't figure things out. To Cameron, the rules of language as ultimately referential which reside in Saussure's langue/parole duality, where "langue is the abstract system of relations which make individual behaviour possible" and in Chomsky's notion of competence/performance, where competence is "the set of rules known by native speakers of a language, and performance the actual and imperfect language these speakers produce on the basis of the rules" (Cameron, 1985, p. 13) re-emerge in the arguments of the neo-Saussureans like Lacan, Derrida and Foucault. Although they reject the rigidities of Saussure, they retain language itself as referential by maintaining that who we are is an effect of language, "that language creates all meaning within a society rather than reflecting, or interacting with, anything else" (Ibid, p. 19). And, as Flax pointed out, where is art,

empathy, the relationship with others, primarily our mothers, which helped to form who we are before we could even talk? Is this not "I think, therefore I am" rewritten to "I use language, therefore I am"? Whether it is God or reason or language, they are all transcendental reference points which cannot be challenged, the maintenance of a site of power which postmodernism in theory attacks, but which on closer analysis does not. Substitution of one transcendental reference point for another is not what they seek, I think.

CONCLUSION

What I wish to develop here in this construction of how the newcomer comes to know the organization is a theory of oppression and emancipation which draws on both feminism and postmodernism, a theory which forces us to be skeptical and critical about any answer which we may construct, recognizing, as Foucault states, that power lies in the construction of the question itself. Feminism has always used whatever vibrant philosophy is at hand to wage its war against male domination and male privilege; Mary Woolstonecraft used the tenets of the Enlightenment, Nellie McClung, progressivism and the social gospel, I will use the revolution in consciousness which I believe characterizes so much of how we in the twentieth century in the West have tried to understand our world. Thus feminists find the conceptualization of the self particularly problematic in postmodernism. As much as feminists find Derrida's project of the deconstitution of Western metaphysics and Foucault's notion of the intersection of power and knowledge emancipating: that the Otherness in which we reside is the lesser side of a violent hierarchy which must repress in order to structure, and that Otherness is itself a discourse of power and knowledge which seeks to maintain male privilege, feminists remain skeptical of postmodernism's political intent. They find the postmodern privileging of language and the denial of not just a central but a coherent self in favour

of a boundary-less self constructed solely as an effect of language to be a move that assigns woman—and women—to the margin. Is the self in postmodernism understood in a way that is perilously close to the isolated, competitive, status seeking individual interested in maximizing [his] advantage in the marketplace, or is the self complex, a relational being, constructed not only in language with its overtones of Enlightenment privileging, but in relations with other people, in ways which language cannot express, but which are not innate, which are not fixed, which do not reside in any referential point but in the constantly changing human condition in a sensuous, material world? As Seyla Benhabib has remonstrated, when there are no criteria, the old criteria remain in place; the abstract individual remains. In the case of postmodernism, men preserve their power because whatever concerns women have as women are rendered irrelevant within the tenets of the theory.

So how might we reconceptualize the self so that we retain our skepticism of all totalitarian positions at the same time as we struggle to make a place for us in theory so our concerns are not rendered irrelevant, so we are not marginalized? By taking this focus, I am drawing on our perhaps peculiar twentieth century need to explain the world by focusing on who we are, and in that, I am drawing on currents of thought which go back to Marx, to Georg Lukacs' reinterpretation of Marx written in the same year as Freud's *Ego and Id*, to Rosa Luxemburg's reinterpretation of Marx to which Lukacs made reference[5], to Weber, to Gramsci, and to Foucault. Lukacs refocused our attention on "the concept of 'alienation' as the philosophical root of Marx's humanist critique of capitalism" (Ibid), on the manipulation of our consciousness, not just on our productive capacities, "the mechanistic materialism by the theorists of the Second Internationale"

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[5]Luxemburg focused on the consciousness and attitudes of the people, prompting Lukacs to write that she was "'the only disciple of Marx who effectively continued his life work'" (Ettinger, 1986, p. 167).

(Kadarkay, 1991, p. 273)[6]. Why alienation? Are there not links between alienation and the internal disciplining accomplished by the normalizing institutions explored by Foucault, both given expression in language? Although Foucault is more closely linked to Weber and his idea of organizing as the iron cage, it is not so easy to discount the similarities between Weber and Lukacs and Foucault, and how they have thought about how we might understand what we are, and how we came to be. Feminism and postmodernism are further explorations of that, feminism forcing postmodernism to confront its denial of the self, and its denial, therefore, of its own theoretical roots, postmodernism available as a corrective to feminism. As Spivak has pointed out, postmodernism is helpful to women in that it reveals the totalitarianism of any transcendental reference point, and since women are not in power we benefit from abolishing the idea of the sanctity of any reference point. It's a moot point, as several feminist theorists argue, that we need our chance to invoke Enlightenment certainties. We live in the here and now, and our best political strategy is to do away with the idea of the unchallengable, the innate truth, whether ordained by God or man. We're neither one, and cannot be either one, given the theory that supports them.

    Thus I propose an intersection of feminism and postmodernism, or a feminist/postmodernist focus on discourses of power and knowledge rooted materially, and on the self as partially constructed in language, partially constructed by gender and asymmetrical gender relations, but constructions which are not oppositional positions, to link back to and to clarify the literature's focus in organizational theory on meaning in organizations constructed through language and mediated by power. By focusing on the discursive constitution of relations of gender and power and knowledge, of strategies of

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[6]To Kadarkay, "It is customary to credit Lukacs with the discovery that the concept of 'alienation' was the philosophical root of Marx's critique of capitalism . . . .But what lends further importance to *History and Class Consciousness* is that therein class consciousness is treated for the first time in Marxist theory, as something subjective and culturally bound rather than determined by objective economic existence" (p. 273-274).

power and knowledge and gender which struggle to [partially] constitute subjectivity and meaning, feminist/postmodernist theory helps to illuminate how women and men come to know an organization, without reifying the organization, denying gender power relations, denying the material world, or positing any unified fixed categories or representations—neither subject nor reality nor transcendent justificatory appeals which defy change, plurality and strategies of power and knowledge.

What feminist/postmodernist theory brings to the review of organizational theory and specifically newcomers to organizations is a particular understanding about the relationship between power and knowledge, or power and meaning, as neither fixed nor transcendent. In this understanding meaning is not fixed in language, nor is meaning transparent, merely reflecting an already existing reality or truth. We do not interpret in the sense of translating what is transparent, leaving us uninvolved; we attach meaning to our understanding, and in that act, are involved in the creation and recreation of meaning. But this formation of meaning is contested, and because it is contested it is a site of power. The question then becomes not just how meaning in constructed and maintained, but who imposes their meaning on others? To put this is Foucauldian terms, how do strategies of discourse position us in organizations which are themselves discourses of power and knowledge, "episodic and unpredictable manifestations of a play of domination" and of resistance, to repeat Cooper and Burrell (1988, p. 109), discourses which we ourselves create and participate in, but which we ourselves are not the sole authors? In this understanding, then, organizations are really sites where women and men struggle to impose their meaning on others.

But the organization, like every place, cannot stand outside gender power relations. Relations of power between women and men, and strategies of discourse, the nexus of power and knowledge, are all intertwined. There is no neutral stance outside of these relations, no theory which can presume that any of these are irrelevant. It is not, then, just understanding the creation and maintenance of meaning in organizations, what

might be otherwise termed the construction of a culture, but asking who is imposing

that meaning? Or to put it in other, more familiar theoretical terms, whose social reality

prevails, whose metaphor is dominant, how is closure, and thus power, achieved?