
Transformational Discourse: Ideologies of Organizational Change in the Academic Library and Information Science Literature

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ABSTRACT

THIS ARTICLE EXAMINES DISCOURSES IN THE academic and information science literature that attempt to justify and promote, to criticize and resist, or to explain and interpret transformational social change. These discussions represent one face of a much larger wave of popular and technical discourse that has arisen in response to pressures put on currently dominant institutions by the processes of post-industrialization. The nature of these institutions and the pressures they face is explicated in terms of Western civilization's modernization project, whose internal cultural contradictions and conflicting foundational metaphors have generated a variety of unanticipated social consequences. The resulting cultural disjunctions provide an invitation to rhetoric.

Modern organizations, with their complex division of labor designed to accomplish unified corporate purposes, have become primary sites for the application of managerial ideologies aimed at creating identity among divisions. Modern academic libraries, as organizations devoted to the preservation and production of cultural knowledge through the efficient collection and processing of information, stand directly astride the cultural fissures that generate transformational discourse. This article surveys the resulting corpus of library and information science (LIS) literature about organizational change in academic libraries and uses multiple methods to build a syncretic interpretation that may be able to overcome some of the traditional problems of qualitative research.

To accomplish this, multiple interpretative frameworks were applied by means of an especially flexible and powerful qualitative analysis software

program to identify overlapping discourse features and to begin generating theories that can be used to explain these features. The unique contribution of this research derives from its attempt to identify basic formal linguistic patterns in a representative corpus of discourse that can be linked to larger discourse systems and whose organization, in turn, can be interpreted in terms of broader social theories. Patterns discovered so far suggest that current LIS rhetorical strategies continue to operate within a modern grammar of organizational motives that reproduces existing forms of organizational life rather than radically transforming them.

INTRODUCTION

All civilizations exhibit fissures in their cultural foundation. These breaches are caused by contradictions in the structural principles upon which they were founded (Giddens, 1979, pp. 131-64). The social tensions that build along these fault lines usually are controlled or dissipated in ways that prevent major dislocations from occurring. Sometimes, however, a major realignment occurs and triggers the release of tremendous cultural energy which transforms the social landscape. Academic libraries currently are caught up in a cultural tsunami caused by just such a realignment in the principles upon which modern Western civilization was founded.

The resulting waves of rhetoric inundate us daily with proclamations about the transformational changes occurring in this turbulent environment and about the need for individuals and their organizations to adapt by transforming themselves. This flood of what can be called "transformational discourse" began around 1970 with the publication of Alvin Toffler's (1970) best-selling *Future Shock* and has by now overflowed into nearly every field of endeavor. Library and Information Science has both helped to create this form of discourse with its visions of electronic libraries and scholarly workstations and has been heavily influenced in turn because the application of information technology is everywhere assumed to have a transformational effect on modern organizations, especially organizations such as academic libraries that specialize in "knowledge work." The question then becomes, how do we know it will have a transformational effect, and what do we really mean by that? To pursue these questions, we first need to understand how modern organizations came into being as social institutions designed to promote and maintain the foundational principles of modern industrial society.

FOUNDING THE INSTITUTIONS OF MODERN ORGANIZATIONAL LIFE

These principles were developed by Renaissance and Enlightenment thinkers and doers whose aim was to reconstruct medieval society on a more humanistic and rational basis. Their labors have resulted in the four great institutional edifices of modernity: (1) cultural institutions committed

to the unfettered creation and accumulation of knowledge; (2) governmental institutions dedicated to the equitable organization and use of power; (3) religious institutions consecrated to the universal pursuit and defense of human dignity; and (4) economic institutions devoted to the efficient accumulation and distribution of wealth (Wallace, 1994, p. 65). This impressive institutional monument to humanistic enlightenment values is maintained by numerous individual organizations—business corporations, churches, state agencies, academic libraries, and so on—that embody these values in practice. Internally, organizations support these values through a combination of cognitive, normative, and regulative structures (Scott, 1995a, 1995b; Tolbert & Zucker, 1996; Zucker, 1977). Among organizations, common institutional values are constrained by social environments in which each organization is expected to play by the rules (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Thus, one useful way of studying interaction among organizations is to consider them as players whose strategic behavior follows the regulations and fashions of their particular institutional “field” (Stearns & Allan, 1996; Thornton, 1995).

The modern conception of an organization as a legally incorporated virtual person originated

during the Late Middle Ages, as natural persons strove to break the power monopoly of the Church and State [and] created juristic, legal or “corporate” persons. . . . In the U.S. . . . an 1886 Supreme Court ruling explicitly recognizes the rights and obligations of the corporation-as-person. (Cheney & McMillan, 1990, p. 96)

Using this metaphor, organizations are often talked about as if they were human actors who have missions and needs, who have rights and responsibilities, who can plan strategies, who can learn, and whose behavior can become dysfunctional. At the same time, organizations are treated as agents—the organs (from the Latin “organum”; tool, instrument) of society—designed to achieve the goals of society in the most efficient and effective manner possible. Organizations thus serve as a powerful manifestation of the instrumental rationality that characterizes modern Western civilization. Their ability to produce a high level of social power has been a major factor leading to the rise of the West (McNeill, 1963). Modern theorists and practitioners have always treated organizations primarily as rational agents of society. Variations on the theme of designing more effective organizations continue to fill the literature.

Working together in an organized manner, people can accomplish much more than they can working alone or in an uncoordinated fashion. This is particularly true when it comes to making large physical changes in the world (Wallace, 1994, p. 26). Thus, before the industrial revolution, most large social projects used organizations that were similar in many ways to modern ones. The traditional religious values that such organizations institutionalized, however, differed from the secular rational values

that characterize modern organizations. These values in many ways create one of the important fault lines in modern culture—what may be called the paradox of “creative destruction.” This image

is very important to understanding modernity precisely because it derived from the practical dilemmas that faced the implementation of the modernist project. How could a new world be created, after all, without destroying much that had gone before? You simply cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs, as a whole line of modernist thinkers from Goethe to Mao have noted. (Harvey, 1989, p. 16)

The process of creative destruction leads to the constant replacement of stable social structures and their institutionalized values by supposedly new and better ones. Modern organizations look forward, hardly ever backward—except to borrow items from the past that may be useful in the future. Although this paradoxical dynamic arose early in the history of modernism, it was only after the growth of industrial capitalism that it reached into every citizen’s life and became the defining feature of modernity. That growth occurred as capitalist entrepreneurs applied technology to organize production.

The entrepreneur, in Schumpeter’s view a heroic figure, was the creative destroyer *par excellence* because the entrepreneur was prepared to push the consequences of technical and social innovation to vital extremes. And it was only through such creative heroism that human progress could be assured (Harvey, 1989, p. 17).

Entrepreneurial capitalism itself developed earlier in sixteenth-century Europe when the rationalizing and humanizing motives of the Enlightenment and the Renaissance combined with the moral asceticism of the Protestant Reformation to produce the Protestant ethic (Weber, 1930). When the steam engine was invented, entrepreneurs quickly saw the possibility of increasing their profits by applying this new technology and had accumulated the investment capital needed to do so. Earlier societies also used technology to help overcome natural human limits, but only in modern times has technological innovation in and of itself become a primary motive for change. This has dramatically increased society’s ability to generate wealth. It also has speeded up the process of creative destruction and thereby created new cultural fissures.

During the nineteenth-century, as capital came to be tied down in large “power-driven industries, profit [began] to depend on [how fast] one moved these investments past one’s fixed capital” (Beniger, 1986, p. 169). Various arrangements were devised to increase profits by speeding up production. Ways to increase the speed of distribution were then required to handle increased production. In both cases, increases in operational speed and complexity quickly became a strain on informally organized enterprises and challenged the unaided natural intellectual capacity of the individuals who ran them. The problem was how to process

information more quickly, more accurately, and over greater distances so that it could be used to control the quality and quantity of production. One solution was to enhance the information processing capabilities of the unaided human brain by embodying those capabilities in the rules and activities of organized groups of people. An analogy can then be made between the human brain, with its ability to coordinate and control individual behavior, and bureaucratic management, with its ability to coordinate and control the behavior of "corporate persons." From this point of view, the development of bureaucracies and computers can both be seen as a historical development arising from the need to perform the ever more complicated cybernetic or "steering" functions required by industrial capitalism (Beniger, 1990). Thus, the history of organizational expansion over the last century can largely be told in terms of the increasing rationalization of information processing techniques (Beniger, 1986).

In the late nineteenth century, this process brought about the paper-based office in which people had assigned positions, followed formal procedures, filled out standardized forms, and filed them using standardized equipment. Melvil Dewey and the new profession of librarianship were at the forefront of this movement (Dewey, 1912; Frohmann, 1994, pp. 121-31). The resulting "paper explosion" placed additional burdens on the expanding system of bureaucratic organizations and led to the invention of various mechanical devices designed to automate processes of calculating, sorting, and retrieving data. Eventually, spurred on by the demands of World War II and the Cold War, this process culminated in the birth of the modern computer and telecommunications industries (Bowker, 1993; Burke, 1992, 1994; Edwards, 1996; Leslie, 1993; Lowen, 1997; Wiener, 1967). However, the application of contemporary information technology has created productivity problems of its own and generated a new round of attempts to overcome them (Beniger, 1990; Dordick & Wang, 1993; Harris, 1994; Landauer, 1995; Shenk, 1997). No one can predict how these problems will be resolved, but it remains true that the crises faced by modern organizations tend to be defined in terms of the structural principles of modern capitalism. These principles focus on instrumental rationality and establish a hierarchy of values with organizational efficiency and success at the apex. Thus, the difficulties that people have in adapting to the introduction of computer control systems is defined as a "productivity problem," and the solution to this problem involves making employees "change ready" (Kriegel & Brandt, 1996). The increasingly dominant global influence of these principles seems likely to continue well into the twenty-first century (Berger, 1986; Heilbroner, 1985, 1987, 1993).

ORGANIZATIONAL DISJUNCTIONS AS AN INVITATION TO RHETORIC

Kenneth Burke (1969b) has noted that when you "put identification and division ambiguously together, so that you cannot know for certain

just where one ends and the other begins, . . . you have the characteristic invitation to rhetoric (p. 25). Modern organizations, with their complex division of labor designed to accomplish unified corporate purposes, thus become primary sites for the application of managerial rhetorics aimed at creating identity among divisions:

Organizations, by their very nature, are persuasive enterprises [that] must . . . (1) maintain a system of communication, (2) communicate a common purpose, and (3) secure the essential contribution of members. These key elements of organization can easily be translated in terms of communication networks, shared "visions," and individual motivation, respectively. . . . The central concern of organizations is control . . . [which] manifests itself primarily through symbolic means; . . . the "system" is in fact a set of symbols (rules, policies, job descriptions, etc.). (Cheney & McMillan, 1990, p. 98)

Anyone who has ever read a Dilbert cartoon understands the fundamental paradox of modern organizational life. Managers continually attempt to improve corporate productivity by exploiting their employees as just another, albeit human, resource. Using the latest managerial fad, they also present each new effort to increase productivity as a humane program designed to empower their employees. Employees, well aware of the underlying contradiction, treat their bosses as sincere, but clueless, or as insincere and manipulative. The resulting comic understanding (Gusfield, 1989, p. 26) offers insight and solace if not a guaranteed program for organizational improvement.

This incongruity between individual human freedom and corporate economic rationality is not new to our age but developed as an integral feature of industrialization:

Constitutional guarantees of personal rights and a heightened interest in individual emotions and personal growth developed in Western Europe and in the United States a short hundred and fifty years ago. This emergence of modern individualism coincided with the development of modern industry in the course of which an ever increasing number of individuals became subject to the strict and impersonal discipline of factory or business office. The subordination of the many had not been a central issue of intellectual controversy as long as custom or traditional authority pervaded more or less unchallenged. But the humane aspirations of the Enlightenment tended to challenge the new subordination to an industrial way of life, and the human problems of an industrial civilization became a matter of controversy from its inception. (Bendix, 1963, p. vii)

Is Transformational Discourse Ideological, Utopian, or Social Scientific?

Ideological, utopian, and social scientific writings all arose as intellectual attempts to explain—and to justify or to challenge—the social forces that generated this controversy over the human problems of industrialization. A plethora of competing discourse communities and interpretative paradigms grew from these attempts (Alvesson, 1987b; Bell, 1962; Bendix,

1951, 1963, 1988, 1993; Berger & Kellner, 1981; Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Burrell, 1996; Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Collins, 1994; Giddens, 1979; Mumby, 1988; Reed, 1992, 1996). These different ways of talking about society will appear incommensurable if one interprets ideological discourse as the self-interested distortion of social reality, utopian discourse as the self-deceptive invention of social reality, and social scientific discourse as the unbiased explanation of social reality. This incommensurability arises because the modern ideologue, utopian, and social scientist alike have inherited two paradoxical traditions that developed out of the Enlightenment: a materialist tradition which assumes the existence of an "autonomous, objective world that exists independently of individuals and that determines what they think"; and a scientific tradition which assumes that those very same individuals have the ability to "someday write the objective laws of this social determination of ideas" (Collins, 1994, p. 3).

These traditions have helped to create what C. P. Snow (1959) called the two cultures of the humanities and the sciences and the accompanying division of research into qualitative and quantitative varieties. In general, humanistic qualitative research is thought to deal with the artistic expression of subjective emotions and opinions, while scientific quantitative research deals with the precise description of objective facts and conditions (Booth, 1974; McCloskey, 1994). One way in which to reconcile these various paradoxes involves the introduction of technology as a *deus ex machina*, by means of which social conflicts are resolved, the organizational protagonist is saved, and humanity is finally liberated. Transformational discourse of this persuasion represents only the latest in a long line of attempts to reinvent the corporation and transform organizations into harmonious societies in which "The Dilbertean Dilemma" has been overcome and "sincere efforts to improve the quality of work life . . . yield high productivity" (Lubans, 1998, pp. 7-8). As will be documented, this type of transformational discourse in fact represents the dominant ideology among those currently involved in the management and computerization of organizations, including academic research libraries. It depends heavily for its credibility on the ideas of utopian social scientists like Daniel Bell.

UTOPIAN ACCOUNTS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

The moral and economic failure of ideologically inspired attempts to "set down 'blueprints' and through 'social engineering' bring about a new utopia of social harmony" (Bell, 1962, p. 402) led directly to the "exhaustion of political ideas in the fifties" that Bell believed heralded the end of ideology (p. 402). In that failure, he also recognized a gap, which a decade later he attempted to fill with his evocative concept of the coming post-industrial society (1973). Concerning such ventures, he wrote back in 1962:

A social movement can rouse people when it can do three things: simplify ideas, establish a claim to truth, and in the union of the two, demand a commitment to action. . . . In a business civilization, the intellectual felt that the wrong values were being honored, and rejected the society. . . . The ideologies, therefore, which emerged from the nineteenth century had the force of the intellectuals behind them. . . . Today these ideologies are exhausted. . . . The end of ideology is not—should not be—the end of utopia as well. . . . There is now, more than ever, some need for utopia, in the sense that men need . . . some vision of their potential, some manner of fusing passion with intelligence. (Bell, 1962, pp. 401-05)

A crucial component of the utopian message carried by the concept of a post-industrial society is the ameliorative effect that information technology is assumed to have on the basic contradictions between humanistic desires and economic realities. America has had a long romance with technology as a progressive social influence and as the basis for economic expansion. Discourse about technology thus has most often appeared as a form of "technological utopianism" (Kling, 1994; Pfaffenberger, 1990). Contemporary utopian discourse assumes that computers represent a technology that will transform society and perhaps humanity itself. More importantly, it assumes that this transformation will finally liberate human potential and resolve social conflicts in a manner that earlier technologies, such as the steam engine and television, failed to do. Such discourse, based upon the questionable metaphorical attribution of purpose, perception, and communication to machines (Agre, 1997a, 1997b; Bowker, 1993) leads to the creation of romantic visions in which robots run our libraries (Miller & Wolf, 1992) while we roam the universe embodied as immortal silicon intelligences (Hardison, 1989). In reaction, "technological antiutopian critiques portray computerization—in almost any form the analyst can conceive—as likely to degrade social life" (Kling, 1994, p. 156).

RHETORICAL ACCOUNTS OF UTOPIAN DISCOURSE

Faced with the many internal contradictions of modern society and the plurality of interpretations generated by those contradictions, a growing group of researchers in the human sciences have sought to directly confront these paradoxes of modernity by reviving the ancient tradition of rhetorical analysis in which all discourse is put in the context of human interaction (Barley & Kunda, 1992; Barley et al., 1988; Booth, 1974; Brock, 1995; Brown, 1994; Burke, 1968, 1969a, 1969b, 1989; Cheney, 1995; Cheney & McMillan, 1990; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1988, 1992, 1997; Czarniawska-Joerges & Joerges, 1996; Gusfield, 1989; Kling, 1994; Kling & Zmuidzinas, 1994; MacIntyre, 1984; McCloskey, 1985, 1990, 1994; Nelson et al., 1987; Roberts & Good, 1993; Simons, 1989, 1990; Vyborney, 1992). Other researchers, while not explicitly evoking rhetorical traditions, have empha-

sized the importance of human symbolic action and the use of rhetorical devices, such as metaphors, in the construction of social reality (Agre, 1997a, 1997b; Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Bowker, 1993; Bowker et al., 1997; Budd, 1997; Burrell, 1996; Buschman, 1993; Chriss, 1995; Fisher, 1987; Frohmann, 1994; Giddens, 1979, 1981, 1986; Goffman, 1959, 1974, 1983; Graves, 1995; Grint & Woolgar, 1997; Habermas, 1988; Latour, 1992; Lyman, 1995; Mumby, 1988, 1993; Orlikowski, 1992; Polkinghorne, 1983; Prasad & Prasad, 1994; Radford, 1992; Smith, 1994; Taylor, 1993; Taylor & Van Every, 1993; Tuominen, 1997; Winter, 1988, 1993).

As a result of this rhetorical turn, a growing number of scholars doing research on organizations and technology take a reflexive stance toward their own discourse. They realize that "all discourses, even scientific discourses, make ideological assumptions" (Kling, 1994, p. 167) and that "the results of research activity are knowledge claims that compete to gain the community's acceptance" (Polkinhorne, 1983, p. 256). Only a few, however, have explored the possibility of explicitly applying rhetorical theories to the discourses they study as a means for overcoming the problems of "contextualization, understanding, pluralism, and expression" (Sutton, 1993) that qualitative research faces.

In his 1994 article "Reading 'all about' computerization," Rob Kling provides a detailed description of "how genre conventions shape nonfiction social analysis" (p. 147). He defines a genre as "any body of work that is characterized by a set of conventions" (p.148). He is concerned that many readers do not understand "that many social analyses of computing are written with genre conventions that limit the kinds of ideas that can be readily examined" (p. 149). In general it appears that "technological utopian analyses are most likely to dominate the popular and professional literature" (p. 147). Vannevar Bush's seminal 1945 article "As We May Think" is an early example of utopian discourse about the potential of information technology to transform research and scholarship (Kling, 1994, pp. 150-52; Burke, 1992, 1994). Other mileposts include Engelbart's (1963) "A Conceptual Framework for the Augmentation of Man's Intellect," Licklider's (1965) *Libraries of the Future*, and Lancaster's (1978) "Whither Libraries, or Wither Libraries?"

Writings such as Bell's (1973) work on the coming of post-industrial society use utopian conventions to paint a broader vision of how computers might transform society itself. Alvin Toffler's best-sellers, which have appeared every decade on the decade (in 1970, 1980, and 1990) perhaps best epitomize the seductive power of popularized utopian discourse to stimulate enthusiasm about drastic social transformations:

Toffler . . . characterized major social transformations in terms of large shifts in the organization of society, driven by technological change. The "Second Wave" was the shift from agricultural societies to industrial societies. He contrasts the industrial ways of

organizing societies with new social trends that he links to computer and microelectronic technologies. Toffler is masterful in suggesting major social changes in succinct, breathless prose. . . . Toffler opens up important questions about . . . information technologies [and] people. . . . But his account—like many popular accounts—caricatures the answers by using only illustrations that support his generally buoyant thesis. (Kling, 1994, pp. 154-55)

Such reality-transcending visions not only raise important issues but “play important roles in stimulating hope and giving people a positive sense of direction” (Kling, 1994, p. 158). From Bell’s perspective, they serve as a replacement for exhausted ideologies. In that role, they function as ideologies of the future, which “can mislead when their architects exaggerate the likelihood of easy and desirable social change” (Kling, 1994, p. 159). More specifically, utopias tend to: (1) minimize the existence of social conflict; (2) ignore the uneven distribution of some social resource (knowledge in this case); (3) downplay unanticipated consequences and problems of development; and (4) assume the inevitable, natural, necessity of the effects predicted (Kling, 1994, pp. 158-162). These tendencies of the technological utopian genre exemplify the four major rhetorical functions commonly listed as defining works as ideological. Such works: (1) efface conflict by denying or transmuting internal social contradictions that could lead to open conflict; (2) identify the subjective, special interests of some with the real interests of society as a whole; (3) reify social structures by treating existing or future arrangements as an inevitable or immutable objective environment to which one must adapt; and (4) offer hope by providing a script to solve problems and achieve a vision of reform (Abercrombie et al., 1994, pp. 206-08; Alvesson, 1987b, pp. 144-53; Bell, 1962, pp. 393-407; Bendix, 1993, pp. 274-75; Berger & Luckmann, 1967, pp. 123-25; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1988, pp. 4-9; Giddens, 1979, pp. 165-97; Johnson, 1968; Mumby, 1988, pp. 71-94).

SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC ACCOUNTS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

Kling (1994), evoking the ethical tradition and the genre conventions of social science, suggests that we use the empirically oriented accounts informed by these conventions “to understand the social opportunities and dilemmas of computerization without becoming seduced by the social simplification of utopian romance or being discouraged by dystopian nightmares” (p. 168). There are two problems with this approach. First, the results of empirically oriented accounts often get appropriated by those promoting the interests of the dominant ideologies (Alvesson, 1987b; Briody, 1989/90; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, 1997; Mumby, 1988). This, in fact, seems to have happened on a wide scale in recent years with the appropriation of anthropological methods and concepts into the field of organizational discourse that treats “corporate culture” as a management tool (Barley et al., 1988). Second,

the main alternatives—social realism, ethnographic studies of specific groups and places: social theory, logical abstraction from empirical evidence; and analytical reduction, empirical data examined in terms of a few well-defined categories—are less likely to be produced in comparable quantity. . . . These alternatives are relatively subtle, portray a more ambiguous world, and have less rhetorical power to capture the imagination of readers. . . . [Thus], the development of systematic social analyses of computerization that are both credible and compelling [is] a major challenge for the 1990s. (Kling, 1994, pp. 160, 168-69)

Using primarily the conventions of social realism and social theory, Kling and other scholars have produced a considerable body of work about organizations and the transformational power of information technology. Whereas imaginary scenarios of the future provide the primary form of proof or evidence in utopian and dystopian discourses, eyewitness testimony provides the primary evidence used in social realist ethnographies. This evidence is then used to create empirically grounded theories (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The results of this research suggest that any consciously implemented organizational change has both intended and unintended consequences, and that the positive or negative distribution of these consequences for various stakeholders is strongly influenced by the ideological context within which the change occurs (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1988; Despres, 1996; Dunbar et al., 1982; Kling & Iacono, 1988; Kling & Zmuidzinas, 1994; Mumby, 1988; Prasad & Prasad, 1994; Smith, 1994; Starbuck, 1982; Tuckman, 1994; Weiss, 1986). By and large, this scholarly literature on the social effects of computerization has had little influence on LIS literature.

Rhetorical Strategies in Popularized Scientific and Managerial Discourse

As Pfaffenberger (1990) and Vyborney (1992) point out, citizens today do not need better information systems and better theories about information so much as they need to learn better interpretative techniques that can be used to make more knowledgeable judgments about important public issues. The rapid spread of discourse focused on the transformational potential of computers derived, in part, from its intrinsic, aesthetic, and moral appeal and, in part, from the rhetorical gap it fills between the highly specialized discourses of elite scientific and technical communities and the unspecialized popular discourses of mass society:

The nature and potential of computer technology is a particularly significant topic of popularized scientific discourse because computers are both persuasive and inherently mysterious. . . . On a broader social and scientific level, the nature of computer technology, the uses to which it has been put, and the effects of popularization have combined to give computers claim to special status as a “transformative” or “defining” technology. (Vyborney, 1992, pp. 1, 18-20)

Vyborney shows how these popularized discourses about the transformational potential of computer technology can fruitfully be analyzed as a contemporary form of ceremonial rhetoric:

To link facts, novel or familiar, to social values is the traditional function of epideictic, or ceremonial rhetoric. Recognizing the epideictic, implicitly persuasive nature of exposition provides insight into a species of discourse which has gained a pre-eminent position in our information-rich, knowledge-poor polity. . . . Epideictic rhetoric can . . . be defined as a form of discourse that is delivered to audiences who are not expected to take direct, immediate social action but who are members of a community capable of action, which focuses on moral issues, that involves the ethos of an issue and of a rhetor, and that is composed in a literary or highly polished style [which is] best evaluated on a combination of aesthetic and ideological criteria. (pp. 4-5, 47, 69)

Popularized business management discourse about transformational leadership and organizational reengineering has arisen in the last few decades to fill a similar rhetorical gap. Such discourse performs the ceremonial function of explaining new organizational theories and soliciting public praise for the action programs supported by these theories. Although popular management discourse includes a great deal of talk about employee empowerment, most employees continue to have little real deliberative or judicial power. Thus, rhetorical strategies appropriate to deliberative or judicial rhetoric are eschewed in favor of panegyric strategies aimed at establishing the good character (ethos) of the rhetors, consultants, and managers who need to undertake the role of transformational leaders by creating high morale (pathos) in their organizational audiences (Lanham, 1969, pp. 106-07).

Thus we find, running parallel to the broad stream of technologically oriented utopian romances about the transforming effects of charismatic machines, an equally broad stream of business management literature consisting of romantic stories about an organizational hero, or heroine. This hero or heroine becomes a *Visionary Leader* (Wall et al., 1992) and one of *The Change Masters* (Kanter, 1985) who practices *The Fifth Discipline* (Senge, 1990) in order to teach his or her followers how to live in *The Age of Unreason* (Handy, 1989) and ride *The Third Wave* (Toffler, 1980) of *Megatrends* (Naisbitt, 1983) and *Post-Capitalist Society* (Drucker, 1993) by *Thriving on Chaos* (Peters, 1987), going *Beyond Certainty* (Handy, 1995), and using *Liberation Management* (Peters, 1992), for the purpose of *Reengineering the Corporation* (Champy & Hammer, 1993), and *Reinventing Government* (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992)—thereby achieving a *Competitive Advantage* (Porter, 1985) and discovering that *Sacred Cows Make the Best Burgers* (Kriegel & Brandt, 1996).

Most of these works have been best-sellers, and “the agenda-setting and credibility-creating powers of popularization” have meant that their

authors have been “quickly accepted . . . as the significant figures in the field” (Vyborney, 1992, p. 3). Academic library administrators commonly cite works from this genre as authoritative guides for programs of organizational change and refer to their authors as management “gurus.” The influence of both discourse streams on LIS literature can be directly observed in titles such as: “Re-engineering Academic and Research Libraries: Technology Continues to Change the Nature of Our Jobs” (McCoy, 1993); “The Transformation Potential of Networked Information” (Henry & Peters, 1993); “Transforming Libraries into Learning Organizations—the Challenge for Leadership” (Phipps, 1993); “The Time for Transformational Leadership is Now!” (Riggs & Sykes, 1993); “Benchmarking, Total Quality Management, and the Learning Organization: New Management Paradigms for the Information Environment” (St. Clair, 1993); and “Leadership Skills in the Reengineered Library: Empowerment and Value Added Trend Implications for Library Leaders” (Sweeney, 1997). Recognizing the relationship between the use of magic in so-called primitive societies to control unknown forces and the analogous use of ideology in modern society as a form of rhetorical “mystification” (Burke, K., 1969b, pp. 40-42, 101-110), Micklethwait and Woolbridge (1996) have chronicled the rise of popular management literature in a work entitled *The Witch Doctors: Making Sense of the Management Gurus*.

RIDING THE WAVES OF AMERICAN MANAGERIAL DISCOURSE

The Rise of the Organizational Culture Control Paradigm: 1975-1985

In a social scientific study cited for its exemplary combination of rigorous qualitative and quantitative methods (Frost & Stablein, 1992, pp. 19-46), Barley et al. (1988) have documented the “implicit causal model” (p. 39) which management practitioners first articulated in the mid-1970s and which since has been widely adopted by practitioners and organizational theorists alike. It also forms the basic plot outline used by nearly all management “gurus” to weave their dramatic tales of organizational change. It consists first of a need and “desire for control.” This control operates via two major vehicles. The first vehicle, “rational organizing strategies,” affects “performance and productivity” directly, as well as indirectly, through its influence on an organization’s “social integration.” The second vehicle, “cultural manipulation,” has no direct effect on performance and productivity, but has an important indirect effect as a result of its impact on social integration. External threats to control over performance and productivity are seen to come from: “foreign competition”; “environmental turbulence”; “Japanese management”; and “economic hardship” (Barley et al., 1988, p. 39).

Barley et al. arrived at this model, which may be called the organizational culture or normative control paradigm, in an attempt to develop

empirically grounded methods for “assessing whether members of two subcultures, in this case, academics and practitioners, have influenced each other’s interpretations” (p. 24).

To proceed with such an analysis requires identifying two streams of discourse: one that can be said to encode the practitioner’s view on an issue and another, the academic’s perspective. In the case of a topic of burgeoning interest in a field where academic and practitioner-oriented journals are well defined, the task is reasonably straightforward. (p. 28)

“The rise of organizational culture” represented just such a topic, so “the initial task was to identify a suitable universe of articles on organizational culture” and then assign each article to the writer’s appropriate discourse community—i.e., academic or practitioner (pp. 31-38). The universe selected encompassed “all articles on organizational culture, symbolism, myth written in English that appeared in periodicals or collections of reading published between January 1975 and June 1985. . . . The final sample consisted of 192 papers published in 78 different outlets” (pp. 33-34). A coding scheme was developed and used by the three authors to produce inter-subjectively valid readings of each paper. This scheme identified formal linguistic features of each text to represent its “pragmatics, . . . how the meaning of a word or phrase is shaped by its surrounding context” (p. 28). The scheme is too complex to review here, but examples of two particularly significant pragmatic features, that we have found also characterize contemporary LIS models of organizational change, indicate how the codes were defined and applied.

Turbulent environments (TE): The percentage of a paper’s paragraphs that contained references to unpredictable changes in an organization’s environment that were not primarily economic. Lexical clues included mentions of “shifting regulatory policies,” “changing technology,” “shifting demographics,” “environmental turbulence,” “hard times,” etc. (p. 42)

Most . . . authors of early practitioner-oriented texts argued that culture’s promise hung on the following pseudosyllogism: culture enhances social integration; social integration increases performance and productivity; therefore, if one can enhance social integration by manipulating culture, then, substantial increments in performance and productivity should ensue. . . . Four collocational indicators tapped expressions of successful and unsuccessful attempts to manipulate culture [for example]:

Gaining control over culture (Covc+): The percentage of a paper’s paragraphs containing a sentence whose syntax included (1) a verb signifying control, (2) a direct object referencing culture, and (3) a verb or subject that implied a social actor in a position to exercise control. . . . (pp. 42-43)

Initially, academic and practitioner literature exhibited different interpretative paradigms:

Whereas the pragmatics of papers written for practitioners displayed surprising commonalities, the contextual framework of academic discussions varied widely. In part the plethora of discursive frames reflected the fact that different authors relied on different anthropological paradigms. . . . Nevertheless, it was possible to specify an ideal pragmatics for academic discourse by focusing on global themes . . . and by noting types of statements that were conspicuously absent in academic texts. . . . [For example,] academic papers frequently expressed the anthropological theme that culture operates as a form of normative control beyond the volition of the individual. But, while cultures might control people, it was almost unthinkable that people could control culture. (pp. 43-44)

The primary purpose of Barley's research program was to assess the mutual influence of two discourse communities and to produce definitive results about this influence by using a methodology that was unusually rigorous and as impervious to criticism as possible. His initial hypothesis was that practitioners would borrow from academic theorists, which is a common assumption made by diffusion theorists and the general public alike. It also seemed likely that there might be a merging of the two cultures. In fact, the research revealed that "over time, . . . academics appear to have moved toward the practitioners' point of view, while the latter appear to have been little influenced by the former." Although this conclusion had been demonstrated as conclusively as possible by the use of a rigorous methodology, that same methodology could only show the direction of the influence. It could not explain the reasons for this result, although reasonable speculations could be made about why academics became acculturated to the practitioners' discourse community (Barley et al., 1988, pp. 52-55). In order to put these unexpected findings into a broader explanatory framework, Barley and Kunda (1992) expanded the context of this research and reviewed the history of American management discourse.

Economic Cycles and Oscillations in Organizational Control Paradigms: 1870-1985

In their 1992 study, Barley and Kunda reread this history by treating its theories as "rhetorics or ideologies [that promulgate] a set of assumptions about the objects . . . of rhetorical construction . . . with which it deals: . . . corporations, employees, managers, and the means by which the latter can direct the other two" (p. 363). That history has generally been read by the general public, managers, and scholars alike within the context of the broader American ideology of progress. Managerial theories and practices have been assumed to be evolving away from direct authoritarian control and toward indirect normative control, with an increased concern for the social and psychological aspects of work. Barley and Kunda (1992) find, contrarily,

that since the 1870s American managerial discourse has been elaborated in waves that have alternated between normative and rational rhetorics. . . . [This] tendency for innovative surges of managerial theorizing to alternate between rational and normative rhetorics of control appears to be rooted in cultural antinomies fundamental to all Western industrial societies: the opposition between mechanistic and organic solidarity and between communalism and individualism. The timing of each new wave is shown to parallel broad cycles of economic expansion and contraction. (p. 363)

The authors identified five waves: (1) from 1870 to 1900, the normative rhetoric of industrial betterment captured the attention of prominent industrialists; (2) from 1900 to 1923, the rational rhetoric epitomized by scientific management moved beyond engineering circles to the larger managerial community; (3) from 1923 to 1955, the resurgence of welfare capitalism and the rise of industrial psychology marked a return to normative theorizing that gathered full force in the human relations movement; (4) from 1955 to 1980, the rhetoric of systems rationalism, inspired by the rise of general systems theory in the mid- to late-1950s, came to dominate managerial discourse, if not practice; and (5) from 1980 to the present, the rhetorics of organizational culture, commitment, and quality gathered force as American managers once again evoked a normative ideology in the face of foreign competition and global dependency (Barley & Kunda, 1992, pp. 384-86).

Because the tensions that underlie this oscillating pattern are internal to the system and result from fundamental contradictions in the cultural foundations of modernity, "they can never be resolved even by the most cunning theory" (Barley & Kunda, 1992, p. 386). But why has an alternating pattern of "temporal segregation" rather than some other way been used to balance these opposing forces (p. 386)? Barley and Kunda suggest that, of the three available viable strategies (integration, social or spatial segregation, and temporal segregation), Anglo-American culture has generally tended to select the latter strategy in keeping with its overall political culture that, "among other things, . . . underwrites the institution of two-party politics" (p. 386). Thus, after an initial surge of enthusiasm for a newly dominant system of regulation, tensions gradually build up so that criticism from the opposition begins to challenge the reigning ideology and a reversal takes place. However, "because conceptual tensions are theoretically omnipresent, the mere fact of their existence cannot trigger a surge. To account for the timing of alterations one must therefore invoke forces exogenous to the culture's conceptual repertoire" (p. 387). It appears that "changes in the tenor of managerial discourse" have followed, with a slight time lag, the "four broad cycles of expansion and contraction . . . that . . . Western economies have experienced . . . over the last 200 years" (pp. 389, 391). Rational rhetorics surge following periods of expanding capital investment spurred by basic shifts in the technical infra-

structure “when profitability seems most tightly linked to the management of capital”; conversely, normative rhetorics surge following periods of contracting capital investment in which the increased productivity created by the introduction of a new technical infrastructure has saturated the market and “profitability seems to depend more on the management of labor” (pp. 389-91). It remains to be seen whether the introduction of yet another new technical infrastructure, in the form of networked information processing systems, will truly transform the institutions of modern society and its discourses or will simply initiate a new cycle.

TOWARD A SYNCRETIC THEORY OF TRANSFORMATIONAL DISCOURSE

Derivative Managerial Ideologies in LIS

At first glance, LIS literature about organizational change in academic libraries appears to be almost entirely derived from the forms of discourse analyzed by Kling (1994), Vyborney (1992), and Barley et al. (1988). The theory and practice of management in libraries has always borrowed heavily from the dominant managerial culture, usually after a significant time lag (Day, 1969). As with everything else today, that process has speeded up, and academic library administrators are adopting the latest organizational fashions almost as quickly as their corporate counterparts. Along with other managers and organizational theorists, they also seem to have accepted as valid the core argument of the normative control paradigm. This argument claims that building a strong non-bureaucratic organizational culture will enhance competitiveness, performance, and productivity as well as improve the quality of working life (Fore et al., 1993; Harrington, 1981; Honea, 1997; Lee, 1993a, 1993b; Lubans, 1998; Mullen, 1993; Neal & Steele, 1993; Phipps, 1993; Stoffle, 1995; Sweeney, 1997).

In support of this argument, they cite standard sources from the popular management literature—both from the older human relations and organizational development schools as well as from the more recent organizational culture and organizational learning schools (Argyris, 1967; Argyris & Schön, 1978; Bennis, 1969; Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Lewin, 1951; Maslow, 1954; Mayo, 1933; McGregor, 1960; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Ouchi, 1981; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Schein, 1985; Schön, 1971; Senge, 1990). They do not mention the considerable body of research that reveals how ambiguous the empirical support really is for this argument (Alvesson, 1987b; Fischer, 1994; Gillespie, 1991; Jones, 1992; Schwartzman, 1993).

Human Science Research, Grounded Theorizing, and the Spiral of Interpretation

In response to the increasingly rapid intrusion of derived forms of transformational rhetoric into the organizational life of academic libraries, this author began a long-term research project several years ago that has gone through three stages so far. The first stage involved action research

focused on creating a collaborative institutional structure in which information technologies could be put in the service of humanistic research and teaching (Day, 1994). The second stage reviewed the professionalization project that academic librarians have undertaken during this century and the challenges to professional control over academic library work that are presented by economically and technically driven change (Day, 1997). It became clear from these projects that issues of organizational change in academic libraries were being influenced by much deeper cultural forces than usually recognized. In order to better understand these forces, the present research project was undertaken. Its ultimate goal is to develop the type of systematic social analysis called for by Kling that is both more compelling than traditional LIS research and more credible than the managerial ideologies that so many LIS administrators and researchers repeat. The syncretic research method has been chosen as most appropriate for making progress toward such a goal (Polkinghorne, 1983, pp. 252-56). This method

can deepen and clarify [the human science discourse community's] understanding of a topic through the integration of the results derived by the various systems of inquiry. . . . [In addition] human science research can reap significant methodological benefits from using multiple procedures for its research design. . . . The use of multiple methods to study the same problem has been termed *triangulation*. . . . Denzin lists four varieties of triangulation: theoretical, . . . data, . . . investigator, and the use of multiple methods. . . . When all of these various approaches are combined into the study of one problem, the process is called "multiple triangulation." (pp. 252-54)

For research on such a complex and controversial topic as ideologies of organizational change, the use of multiple triangulation seems most likely to produce a syncretic kind of knowledge that does more than simply add to our existing accumulation of information on the topic and more than simply apply or construct yet another interpretative scheme. Making sense of the topic under consideration involves multiple levels of interpretation and "requires the use of systems logic and hermeneutic understanding procedures because the process involves identifying similarities in differences and . . . identifying an organizing pattern which fits the . . . topic" (Polkinghorne, 1983, p. 255). Discourses taken as data for research (the various accounts of organizational change that form the subject of this investigation) already have been systematized by their producers according to a wide variety of rhetorical principles. In addition, those organizations which form both the subject and the context for all our discourses exist as such only because we have systematized them in the form of historically created social institutions. Rather than taking all these systems of interpretation and painting a new picture of organizational change from a new dominant perspective, the syncretic approach

can be used to weave a multidimensional interpretative tapestry which expresses Polkinghorne's (1983) five principles of syncretization:

1. The syncretic process does not force an artificial unity on the results of the various systems of inquiry.
2. The work is synoptic. It looks at the manifestations of the subject of inquiry as they have appeared in the various approaches in order to identify underlying patterns which will account for the manifestations.
3. The integrity of the results of the initial inquiries needs to be maintained. . . .
4. In the syncretic process, the information becomes part of a new whole, and its meaning can be transformed by its relationship to the integrated whole.
5. The syncretic process does not end with a finished product. (p. 256)

This process necessarily starts at a particular point in time and space but then gradually moves around and beyond that point to draw a growing spiral of interpretation. In fact, one may draw several interpretative spirals around a variety of interrelated systems and then begin to overlay them to create a composite multidimensional picture similar to those found in anatomy textbook descriptions of the human body and its many functional subsystems. Here is where the process of multiple triangulation has proven useful. A particular variant of that process, known as "grounded theory," has been used:

The grounded theory approach is a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon . . . [in which] data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge. . . . A well-constructed grounded theory will meet four central criteria: . . . fit, understanding, generality, and control. (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 23-24)

LIS DISCOURSE COMMUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

A complex procedure was needed to identify texts representing the ideologies of distinct LIS discourse communities and social interests. Following Barley's lead, LIS literature was first searched for works on "organizational culture" in printed and online databases, including ERIC, LISA (*Library and Information Science Abstracts*), *Library Literature*, PCI (*Periodical Contents Index*), Social SciSearch (*Social Sciences Citation Index*), and SocioFile (*Sociological Abstracts*). Only a few LIS works explicitly focused on organizational culture so the search was expanded to cover the broader topic of "organizational change." This turned up significantly more material, but that material clearly did not represent a focused "topic of burgeoning interest in a field where academic and practitioner-oriented journals are well-defined" (Barley et al., 1988, p. 28).

A search of Chadwyck-Healey's historically oriented *PCI: Periodical Contents Index* revealed only a small stream of articles from 1900 until 1970

when discourse expressing transformational styles of change from the humanist point of view began to emerge. A variety of online databases and catalogs were then searched to create three sets whose results were manually reviewed for relevant titles. One set included works indexed by words denoting "change" (evolution, future, reengineering, transformation, etc.). A second set included works with words denoting "organization" (administration, bureaucracy, management, hierarchy, etc.). The last set included works that explicitly mentioned "ideology." Additional materials were located in Drabenstott's (1993) and Pastine's (1995) bibliographies about the future of libraries. The tables of contents of key academic and library administration journals were also reviewed. Finally, an Internet search revealed several useful online sources, such as the Follett lecture series (Gott & Stark, 1997). As of February 1998, 506 titles published between 1972 and 1998 have been identified. Of these, 76 percent (460) were published in the 1990s, 22 percent (114) in the 1980s, and only 2 percent (11) between 1972 and 1979. An updated bibliography of these titles is available on the author's Web site (Day, 1998).

Bibliographic and social survey research indicates that LIS literature can be divided into two broad discourse communities of information science and librarianship (Apostle & Raymond, 1997; Järvelin & Vakkari, 1992; Rice, 1990). The literature produced by these communities overlaps the academic versus practitioners distinction. LIS educators tend to publish theoretically oriented articles in journals such as *JASIS*, whereas academic librarians tend to publish more applied, institutionally oriented articles in journals such as *College & Research Libraries*. Additional splits occur between public library practitioners working within the librarianship paradigm and special librarians working within the information science paradigm. Likewise, the old split between technical and public services continues.

The most salient split for research about organizational ideologies is that among three LIS communities whose boundaries reflect the basic divisions of authority and work found in all modern organizations. Mintzberg (1993), in his synthesis of empirical research on organizational structure, identified five basic parts that can be collapsed into three basic groups: managers (divided into strategic and middle managers), staff (divided into operating and support staff), and technocrats. The normative control model that Barley et al. (1988) summarized expresses a similar division. Managers charged with overall responsibility for organizational performance have a need and desire for control. They attempt to exert that control by designing strategies to deal with externally generated opportunities and threats. They attempt to implement those strategies by exerting various types of internal control. Direct supervisory control of employee behavior is no longer considered to be appropriate or efficient. However, attempts to control behavior by improving the technocratic struc-

ture (through computerization, quality control systems, etc.) can be aggressively pursued. Simultaneously, ideological strategies are undertaken to integrate staff into a strong corporate culture that motivates them to improve their performance in the pursuit of organizational goals.

The bulk of material dealing with changes in the technocratic structure of academic library work thus comes from the previously dominant technical service wing of librarianship and from the rising computer science wing of information science. Most of the literature dealing with the strategic and cultural aspects of organizational change comes from practicing library administrators. Library "paraprofessional" staff form the bulk of an academic library's operating and support staff but have no real discourse community or ideology to defend their interests (Oberg, 1992, 1996, 1997; Oberg et al., 1992; Rodgers, 1997). Thus, the corpus of texts available for analysis consists primarily of material published by academic library and information system administrators for their own discourse communities and reflects managerial control ideologies.

CODING THE GRAMMAR AND RHETORIC OF IDEOLOGICAL MOTIVES

Traditional humanistic methods have been used to locate and interpret historical, social scientific, and popular managerial literature about ideologies and organizations as well as LIS literature about organizational change in academic libraries. These methods have been enhanced by observations gathered over thirty years as a participant observer in academic libraries. They have been augmented by extensive use of computerized information retrieval, bibliographic management, and qualitative data analysis programs. The primary objective has been to identify formal linguistic patterns that can be linked to larger discourse systems whose organization can be interpreted in terms of theoretical principles. Several core concepts have emerged about how ideologies operate to create and sustain organizations and about how contemporary LIS ideologies of organizational change operate to both reproduce and transform academic libraries.

These concepts have specific grounded correlates in the formal linguistic features of the texts being studied. When interpreted through the reading process, these features generate those pragmatic or rhetorical features of discourse that Barley et al. (1988), Kling (1994), and Vyborney (1992) documented in their studies. Many of the same features they found also appear in the LIS literature, including high percentages of lexical references to a "turbulent environment," the existence of syntactic structures indicating a desire to gain "control over culture," and a heavy reliance on scenarios and vision statements full of future tense verbs.

The most accessible and appropriate material available for studying relationships of social domination, empowerment, and transformation are what Frohmann (1994)—following Dreyfus and Rabinow's (1983)

explication of Foucault—calls “serious speech acts . . . performed by institutionally privileged speakers” (p. 120). In the language of critical social theory, such speakers represent the interests of specific social classes, elites, groups, or sections and tend to express those interests in terms of a dominant ideology (Abercrombie et al., 1990; Alvesson, 1987a, 1987b; Alvesson & Willmott, 1992; Braverman, 1975; Clegg, 1989; Giddens, 1979, 1981; Hardy & Clegg, 1996; Weiss, 1986). In general, social theorists agree that ideologies serve to legitimize and motivate coordinated social action. They accomplish this by providing a shared public story about what the social world is and should be like—particularly in regard to the distribution of authority and resources. The difficulty, of course, arises from the fact that turbulent times create a situation in which many different ideologies compete. As was suggested earlier, ideological, utopian, and social scientific writings all arose as attempts to explain, justify, or challenge the social forces that generated the human problems of industrialization. How one interprets those forces determines what type of theory or ideology one prefers. Does culture control us or do we control culture? If “by an institution [we] mean a structure in which powerful people are committed to some value or interest” (Stinchcombe, 1968, p. 106), how do people get to be powerful and committed, and who decides what values or interests they should be committed to?

However one answers these questions, it seems clear that “at the heart of both domination and power lies the *transforming capacity* of human action, the origin of all that is liberating and productive in social life as well as all that is repressive and destructive” (Giddens, 1981, p. 51). Thus, an analysis of discourses promoting one or another form of organizational change needs to distinguish between two primary types of ideological functioning. The first emphasizes the *strategic dimension of ideology* and represents the Machiavelian situation in which people consciously manipulate available forms of discourse from a presumed position of autonomy in order to rationalize a distribution of power and resources that favors their own group interests. The second emphasizes the *systematic dimension of ideology* and represents a situation of disciplinary power as elaborated by Foucault (1972) in which people unconsciously apply the symbolic orders of their discourse community to express forms of lived experience that maintain existing forms of social domination (Giddens, 1979, pp. 190-91).

For the purpose of analyzing LIS literature about organizational change, Kenneth Burke’s (1968) “dramatism” approach to human interaction has been used to capture this aspect of ideological discourse. Based upon Burke’s work, a provisional, conceptually coherent “start list” of codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994) has been developed. The systematic dimension of ideology is treated as providing “a grammar of motives” (Burke, 1969a), which both constrains understanding and also provides material

for enacting ideological strategies. This strategic dimension of ideology expresses “a rhetoric of motives” (Burke, 1969b), which provides symbolic devices for promoting interests.

Czarniawska-Joerges (1997) has already applied Burke’s insights to the study of narrative dramas aimed at transforming organizational identities. Her approach developed from earlier cross-cultural studies on ideological control in non-ideological organizations (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1988). Burke (1968, 1969a, 1969b) and Czarniawska-Joerges (1988, 1997) both share with Barley (1988) and this author a concern for identifying those rhetorical features in organizational discourse that explicitly encode ideologies of control. Burke’s (1968, 1969a, 1969b) “dramatic” terminology supports a syncretic grounded theory project particularly well because it links basic linguistic features at the word and sentence level with the interpretative language of everyday life as well as with abstract social theories. For example, entrepreneurial ideologies of “transformational leadership” will tell a story in which actors dominate the scene. It will be composed of sentences with a human “actor” as subject, with the organizational cultural “scene” as an object under the actor’s control, and with positive organizational “action” as an indirect object of that control (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1997, pp. 30-41).

This coding system is not being used—as Barley used his—to “test” a theory. Rather, it is being used to develop a theory. Thanks to the use of the software program ATLAS/ti, a “code-based theory-builder” explicitly designed for the purpose of generating grounded theories (Muhr, 1997; Weitzman & Miles, 1995, pp. 217-29), the coding system and the theories it supports can easily be modified. Once digitized, texts can be grouped into interpretative units and overlaid with various coding schemes. The most basic level involves noticing and “quantifying” one or more distinct features—just like highlighting a printed text. Additional levels include: automatically searching and coding formal features; manually attaching memos to texts, features, and codes; and constructing complex hypertext links or graphical networks that represent underlying semantic and pragmatic systems. Because the text itself is never changed or marked, the various overlays can continually be rearranged in a very flexible manner as the spiral of interpretation proceeds. Likewise, whole texts, textual features, and their codes can easily be added, deleted, or regrouped into different interpretative units.

So far, the texts have been grouped into two primary categories: those that express technocratic and those that express managerial ideologies and interests. Within each group, sub-groups form primarily around different rhetorical strategies for promoting organizational change. Each strategy emphasizes different forms of control, uses different organizational metaphors, and relies on different sets of organizational theorists in their attempt to solve the current “identity crisis” that modern

organizations appear to be undergoing (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1997). Many technocratic texts emphasize a traditional systems rationalization approach. The work of Kling and his collaborators differs from these in emphasizing the "social design of worklife with computers" in which organizations are treated as "open natural systems" (Kling & Jewett, 1994).

Within the managerial literature, three major strategies stand out. The first is represented by the work of Lewis (1984, 1986, 1994). Both his approach and the second one apply formal economic theories which stress the influence of a market system and that treat all organizations as if they were "firms" whose primary reason for existence is to lower "transaction costs" (Barney & Hesterly, 1996; Lewis, 1984; Porter, 1985). Lewis's strategy involves reaffirming the traditional values of librarians and strengthening their professional power, while improving staff conditions and rewards, in order to create a professional firm similar to that of accountants and lawyers. The second strategy is represented by Stoffle et al. (1996) at the University of Arizona who are pursuing a more radical strategy of cultural revolution in which staff and professionals of all types are merged into flexible work teams within a strong corporate culture. A great many libraries have adopted the third strategy, Harvard being only the most prominent example, which represents an updated "organizational development" model (Clack, 1993; Lee, 1993a, 1993b, 1996). This model was created in the 1960s as an attempt to merge human relations and general systems concepts so as to create a "learning organization" (Ackoff & Emery, 1972; Argyris, 1957; Argyris & Schön, 1978; Bennis, 1969; Leavitt, 1965; Shepard, 1965; Simon, 1960). It was adopted as a core strategy of academic librarianship when the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) established its "Office of Management Studies (OMS) in 1970" (Johnson & Mann, 1980, p. 47) and with the OMS's subsequent development of its Management Review and Analysis Program (MRAP) in 1971 (p. 52).

Despite their strategic differences, nearly all the texts encountered so far continue to reproduce the basic structural dichotomies of modern Western industrial civilization. The grammar of ideological motives that they utilize stays within what Alvesson (1987a) calls the "consensus paradigm" of work organization research "which regards the prevailing order in working life and society as for the most part laid down and inevitable with regard to basic conditions of the type of economic system, private ownership and technological development" (p. 3). To this extent, transformational discourse involves little true transformation.

CONCLUSION: THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY AS A RHETORICAL VEHICLE

This article has reviewed the development of the academic library as part of a broader historical process. That process transformed the values of earlier modernization projects and institutionalized them in an economic system of continuous creative destruction. The major cultural di-

chotomies created by that system provide an invitation to engage in ideological rhetoric whenever tensions become particularly apparent. We live in an age when basic changes in the technological infrastructure of society have triggered the release of tremendous cultural energy and waves of transformational discourse. Those charged with responsibility for our academic libraries are searching for new organizational identities that will allow them to survive the turbulent economic and social climate. Some of their more compelling visions are based upon scenarios of digitized virtual libraries.

It has been suggested that a more syncretic and rhetorical view of how people organize themselves could help to place academic libraries into a broader historical and institutional context so that their truly unique defining features may be discerned. From this point of view, academic librarianship itself can be seen to be an ideology that arose during the twentieth century and helped to create academic libraries as powerful rhetorical vehicles designed to translate cultural artifacts from the past, through the present, and into the future. Like all metaphors, this definition of academic libraries as rhetorical vehicles will remain dead until we bring it and what it represents to life with discourse. An ideology of academic librarianship that understands that we have been working in "virtual libraries" all along will be able to draw upon the repertoires of cultural materials and devices preserved in real libraries to enact more compelling and convincing dramas of organizational change.

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