Texts and the Ontology of Organizations and Institutions

Dorothy E. Smith

The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto, Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5S 1V6

This paper examines the problem of how institutions and the phenomena called formal or large-scale organization exist—the problem of the ontology of organizations and institutions. It addresses this problem using an approach that has been developed as part of a sociology exploring the social from women's standpoint, from which standpoint the extra-locality and objectification of these forms of organization are problematized. For the most part, sociology formulates the phenomena of organizations and institutions in lexical forms of organization, institution, information, communication and the like, which suppress the presence of subjects and the local practices that produce the extra-local and objective. This paper argues that texts (or documents) are essential to the objectification of organizations and institutions and to how they exist as such. It suggests that exploring how texts mediate, regulate and authorize people's activities expands the scope of ethnographic method beyond the limits of observation; texts are to be seen as they enter into people's local practices of writing, drawing, reading, looking and so on. They must be examined as they co-ordinate people's activities.

Introduction

This paper examines a problem that has scarcely been raised in sociology, that of how institutions and the phenomena called formal or large-scale organization exist—the problem of the ontology of organizations and institutions. It addresses this problem using an approach that has been developed as part of a sociology exploring the social from women's standpoint (Smith 1987). From this standpoint the extra-locality and objectification of these forms of organization are problematized (Smith 1999). For the most part, sociology formulates the phenomena of organizations and institutions in nominalized forms of organization, information, communication and the like, which perform a lexical suppression of the pre-

sence of subjects and the local practices that produce the extra-local and objective. Even when the presence of people and their activities is restored ethnographically, organization itself is taken for granted. The problem of how what is thus named comes into being out of the located ephemerae of people's everyday doings is bypassed.

This paper argues that texts (or documents) are essential to the objectification of organizations and institutions and to how they exist as such. It suggests that exploring how texts mediate, regulate and authorize people's activities expands the scope of ethnographic method beyond the limits of observation. Texts and documents make possible the appearance of the same set of words, numbers or images in multiple local sites, however differently they may be read and taken up. They provide for the standardized recognizability of people's doings as organizational or institutional as well as for their co-ordination across multiple local settings and times. It is not enough to use texts as sources of information about organizations. Rather, they are to be seen as they enter into people's local practices of writing, drawing, reading, looking and so on. They must be examined as they co-ordinate people's activities.

An analysis of a particular text (a grade appeal procedure in a department of sociology) is used to illustrate the architectural significance of texts for organizations and institutions and to suggest a promising research approach. From a particular text, it is possible to trace sequences of action through institutional paths, identifying where and how the institutional texts produce the standardized controls of everyday work activities (de Montigny 1995; Mykhalovskiy, this issue; Ng, 1988; Pence, this issue; Rankin, 1998, this issue; Turner, this issue). Beginning with a particular text, research can burrow into organization or institution, investigating how key texts co-ordinate the local sites of people's work.

Women's Standpoint and Institutional Ethnography

The general approach adopted here has come to be called "institutional ethnography." Institutional ethnography was proposed originally as a methodological realization of the project of writing a sociology for women (Smith 1987). Taking women's standpoint as a starting place meant starting where consciousness is embodied, in the actualities of people's lives. But if we take this seriously, we run into the problem that we cannot grasp how people's everyday/everynight worlds are put together by remaining within the scope of the experienced. Our directly-known worlds are not self-contained or self-explicating despite the intimacy of our knowledge of them. They are organized by and co-ordinated with what people, mostly

unknown and never to be known by us, are doing elsewhere and at different times.

Institutional ethnography takes up a stance in people's experience in the local sites of their bodily being and seeks to discover what can't be grasped from within that experience, namely the social relations that are implicit in its organization. The project calls on sociologists to discover just how the everyday/everynight worlds we participate in are being put together in people's local activities, including, of course, our own. It conceives of the social as actually happening among people who are situated in particular places at particular times, and not as "meaning" or "norms." It draws on people's own good knowledge of their everyday/everynight worlds and does not substitute the expert's 'reality' for what people know in the doing. The aim is to create a sociology *for* rather than *of* people that can expand the scope of our knowledge of what we are part of but cannot apprehend directly. Investigating develops from within the local worlds of people's everyday experience, exploring the social relations and organization that co-ordinate people's activities across local sites, and explicating the workings of powers that are deeply implicated in our everyday lives.

An explicitly embodied—and hence localized and particularized—standpoint, confronts the modes of consciousness and action of the great complex of objectified and extra-local relations co-ordinating people's activities across multiple local sites, known from various theoretical perspectives as discourse, bureaucracy, large-scale or formal organization, the 'state,' institutions in general, and so on. Each of these concepts distinguishes a particular dimension of its organization. To conceptualize the complex in general, I have used the term of "the ruling relations" (Smith 1990b, 1999; Campbell and Manicom, 1995), conceived as emerging historically as an objectified order of relations differentiated from the local and particular. Increasingly organizational theory recognizes that the unitary organization that was at one time its prime object is problematic. In the developments of the last thirty years or so, we have seen changes that set the model of the unitary organization at odds with the actualities. The concept of institution has been appropriated by some organizational theorists to address this change. W. Richard Scott recommends a view of "institutions as complexes of cultural rules that were being increasingly rationalized through the actions of the professions, nation-states, and the mass media and that hence supported the development of more, and more types of organizations" (Scott 1995: 3). The concept of the ruling relations welds organization and institution as components of a complex of relations. The objectification of these forms is not taken for granted as it is in Scott's formulation where complexes of cultural rules are held to exist independently of people. Rather,

the concept follows Marx's example in formulating the objectified as an organization of relations among people which does not appear as such. Hence, rather than notions of 'culture' or 'cultural rules,' people's doings in particular local settings are recognized and attended to as participating in relations in which they are active and through which their local doings are co-ordinated with those of others elsewhere.[1]

Thus the concept of ruling relations focuses attention away from formulations that presuppose the objectification to attend to how local settings of people's work is co-ordinated into sequences in which others are active elsewhere and at other times. Consider the existence of financial markets, for example, or of a chain of hotels such as the Hilton. These are social relations or organization within which people engage and interact but which are not constructed out of localized and particularized relationships as are kinship systems or the feudal forms of power. Somehow the objectified and translocal character of the ruling relations is accomplished in the local actualities of people's work and work settings.

Beginning in the local sites of people's doing and experiencing and proposing to discover the social in how people's actual activities are co-ordinated (Smith 1999) confronts fundamental problems when, as a method of inquiry, these are extrapolated into the sociological domain of organi-

---

[1] Janos Kallinikos captures the significance of organization for coordinating activities extra-locally in the following passage:

The mode of being and the organization of the contemporary social world are inextricably connected to the ability of its institutions to transcend the limited spatio-temporal coordinates of immediate context and to act on signs or cues that represent absent states of the world, i.e. states extending beyond the here and now. Instrumental action and accomplishment are very much concerned with the codification, ordering and mastery of absence, a task rendered management through the confluence of cognitive and material techniques which enact, in abbreviated forms, absent states of the world and provide the physical connexions that enable action at a distance. Space centres or industrial control rooms are certainly spectacular yet ordinary instances of representational techniques, in the sense of embodying a world orientation and a set of practices and operations which apply to a much wider range of phenomena. By providing a sort of codified knowledge about states of the world which extend beyond the horizon of immediacy, representations creates the requirements for the interlocking of actions and things separated in time and space and their insertion into extended regulative frameworks. The numerical representations of the market, for instance, are able to unite actors separated by spatial and cultural barriers. Similarly a map, a population census, a balance sheet, a database are all codified versions that recapture the diversity and extension of the world in forms that enable immediate visibility and inspection.... (Kallinikos 1996: 117–8)

zations and institutions. We know that organizations and institutions exist only in actual people's doings and that these are necessarily particular, local and ephemeral. We can, of course, recognize specific social forms, a soccer match, a university class, or a family dinner, for example, but each event is produced in time and locality, and decays into the past over the course of its accomplishment. There is no moment when it is decisively there and no place in which it can be found again as the same as it was before. The essential ephemerality of the social remains a challenge that is particularly daunting when sociology moves to comprehend forms of organization of larger scope beyond the immediately observable. They exist, we know, as large-scale corporations, governments, and institutions such as universities and school systems but their substance is somehow produced of the same essentially ephemeral stuff as short-lived and locally-achieved events. In ordinary language, we talk of these entities as objects or beings without finding their existence problematic, but as soon as we approach them, they dissolve into the air. The field of study is left with irremediable ambiguities:

> Organization studies participate in the debate over what exists 'out there' (practice or ontology) and how it can be known (theory or epistemology) and the nature of their interrelationships... Are organizations objective, tangible, empirical things or are they more elusive, intersubjective constructs? (Marsden and Townley 1996: 660)

Inquiry wants to get hold of, be able to speak/write of the social as if it could be given simple apparently ostensive presence and could be held still for examination, but the actuality of the social is always decaying under the sociological gaze. People build what we inhabit as we go along and as we go along it falls away behind us. It is only in some modest areas of investigation that representations of sequences of interaction have been made available for laboratory study. Even then the technologies of audio and video tape themselves perform a technological editing that produces an artificial stability and unity from a reality that is more like a river than a pond. But when we come to forms of the social that transcend the local settings ethnographic or ethnomethodological practices must be discarded for the shaky ground of theory.

Large-scale organizations have an extraordinary capacity to co-ordinate people's work activities to achieve objectives. The work of the 'used,' the employees, becomes the work of the organization and can be said to be theirs only as within its discursive domain they are allocated agency. How is it that despite the fleeting character of people's activities and inter-activities, an organization can be identified as the same entity today as it

was yesterday and will be tomorrow? How is it that institution[2] or organization can be recognized as the same across multiple local sites of its recapitulation? How is the translocal character of organization or institution to be found in the ineluctable temporal and geographical localization of people's doings?

The ruling relations are essentially text-mediated (Smith 1990a, 1990b, 1999) and it is texts (or documents), I argue, that provide for their capacity to exist beyond particular times, places, and people's doings. For whatever reason, sociology has not recognized texts as implicated in social organization. Texts, in the sense I am using the term here, are definite forms of words, numbers or images that exist in a materially replicable form. The replication of words and numbers or images as texts in multiple local sites reproduces them across time and space and among people variously situated. The text itself, as a material presence (paper, electronic and so on) is produced, read (watched, listened to) in particular local settings by particular people. People's activities in local settings are in this way connected into social relations organized by the text. When a text is read, watched or heard it brings consciousness into an active relationship with intentions originating beyond the local. Texts therefore are key devices in hooking people's activities in particular local settings and at particular times into the transcending organization of the ruling relations, including what sociology

---

[2] Berger and Luckmann (1966) understand 'institution' rather differently than I do in this paper. In my usage, dating from my earlier work on institutional ethnography (Smith, 1987), institutions are phenomena of the contemporary world. They are functional foci within the textually-mediated relations of ruling. The term institution has been adopted by some organizational theorists (Jepperson 1991; Scott and Meyer 1994) to enable organizational theory and research to expand its focus beyond the limitations of earlier approaches that were confined in both theory and research to the organization as a self-subsisting unit. Berger and Luckmann address institutions in a much more general sense. The term for them is defined in a way that makes it inclusive of stable social forms as generally characteristic of non-literate or less-literate forms of society than our own. They argue that repeated interactions come to have stable meanings for participants producing for them a social reality in common. Institutions are perpetuated as habits. An institutional order is "the sum total of 'what everybody knows' about a social world, an assemblage of maxims, morals, proverbial nuggets of wisdom, values and beliefs, myths, and so forth—every institution has a body of transmitted recipe knowledge, that is, knowledge that supplies the institutionally appropriate rules of conduct" (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 83). Their account relies on habituations which individuals carry into the future, replicating the social reality that has emerged over time. Habituations are supplemented by rules of conduct.

Berger and Luckmann's account has serious limitations from the point of view of investigating the ruling relations, particularly in those forms known as large-scale organization and institutions in the sense used here. I am arguing in this paper that it is essential to account, not just for the development of stable patterns, but also for how institutions are generalized from one local setting to another, delivering power and agency of sometimes extraordinary scope.

calls institutions and organizations. The capacity of texts to import the same set of words, numbers or images into local settings separate in time or space is essential to how what we call organizations and institutions exist in the peculiar way in which they do.

Floating Sociology

Once it escapes the everyday world of ethnography and ethnomethodology, sociology's characteristic lexical practices allow it to float free of any actuality capable of constituting a common ground of reference. A universe of discursive objects are created in which people, their doings, and time and locale disappear. Here is a sample:

> Schools receive legitimacy in a society to the extent that their goals are connected to wider cultural values, such as socialization and education, and to the extent that they conform in their structures and procedures to established "patterns of operation" specified for educational organizations. (Scott 1995: xi)[3]

Here it is 'schools' and not people that somehow receive legitimacy from no one in particular. As discursive entities, attributes such as 'structures and procedures' can be ascribed to them; these attributes are somehow subject to evaluation in relation to patterns of operation specified for educational organizations. The abstractions 'socialization' and 'education' are further abstracted as 'wider cultural values.' The construction of discursive entities in this fashion produces a wholly abstract conceptual space in which they can be related to one another as subjects or objects of action without reference to people: 'Wider cultural values,' for example, can comfortably play the role of agent, giving legitimacy to schools or taking it away. There is nothing here about the daily work of teachers in the classroom or of parents in the home; there is nothing here about angry parents visiting the classroom and berating the teacher; there is nothing about the effects of poverty in the classroom. There is no account or indication of the administrative agencies that regulate schools to ensure conformity to 'patterns of operation.' There is nothing here about the law and truants and penalties for parents who don't send their children to school without making special provision—and getting authorization—for home tutelage. Nor is there any indication that 'value' might have a 'real life' correlate in child development research, its teaching in universities, and its popular dissemination through university and college course, the mass media and so on. Or indeed, given that we could locate what might be indexed by 'wider cultural

---

[3] The passage describes a paper by Talcott Parsons.

values,' of how they are connected to 'legitimacy.' *None of these entities are required to be referential.* That they exist is assumed. It might be described as a method of blob-ontology—for every discursive object named, there is assumed to be a something out there of which we can speak without worrying about how it exists.

Two principal devices can be identified as characteristic of sociology's lexical practices in general:

1. the use of metaphors, such as 'structure,' and 'system' thus bypassing the difficulty of building concepts of the social out of individuals;
2. the use of nominalization, that is, terms that convert verb forms into nominals, such as 'organization,' 'information,' 'communication,' 'institution,' and so on, thus eliminating the textual presence of people as subjects and agents while preserving the presence of what is done by people.

It is easy to ridicule this style of writing of the social. It is ubiquitous, perhaps even essential in sociology. It does the work of abstracting the social from the ruck of the ephemeral but without the labour of demonstrating how this move is entitled. It gets around the problems identified above, of the ephemerality of the social and of the non-observability of the forms of the social that have been called institutions and large-scale organization.

Theories of large-scale organization and institutions rely extensively on devices such as these that bypass the problem of how to pass from particular individuals and their activities to the objectified. Here, for example, is Ronald Jepperson's (1991) specification of 'institutions' written as a contribution to the attempts to overcome the limitations of established organizational theory by integrating into it the concept of institution.

> Institution represents a social order or pattern that has attained a certain state or property; institutionalization denotes the process of such attainment. By order or pattern, I refer, as is conventional, to standardized interaction sequences. An institution is then a social pattern that reveals a particular reproduction process... institutions are not reproduced by "action," in this strict sense of collective intervention in a social convention. Rather, routine reproductive procedures support and sustain the pattern, furthering its reproduction.... (Jepperson 1991: 145)

Though it may be well understood that organizations and institutions only exist in actual people's activities, we can see in Jepperson's definition a struggle, largely implicit, to deal with the problem that institutions can exist only in people's activities and yet cannot be reduced to them. No phrase seems to be quite adequate. Each seems to require elaboration; each elaboration increases ambiguity. Institutions are a social order or pattern; "order or pattern" refers to "standardized interaction sequences;" yet institutions (*i.e.*, order or pattern) are not reproduced by action but by routine reproductive procedures which support the pattern. How to distinguish

routine reproductive procedures from standardized interaction sequences remains unexplicated. The struggle to conceptualize these objectified forms without reducing them to people's activities is achieved by jumping to the nominalized level of abstraction, bypassing the problem of how they exist. Organization or institution itself is not locatable in other than common-sense ways and commonsense provides no resources for specifying the referents of the technical discourse. Though institutions and organizations are defined and redefined, the problem of their ontology remains undecided. Here is another example: "Organizations reflect patterns or templates established in a wider system.... The rise of such patterns drives the birth... of organizations..." (Scott and Meyer 1994: 2). The use and mixture of metaphor here is telling in itself—organizations act as mirrors to patterns, patterns drive birth, templates are established in systems. This is not just a stylistic question. It's a difficulty in finding how to speak of what is not observable and cannot, drawing on existing theoretical resources, be made observable. In particular, the characteristic stylistic devices make it possible to utter the social without having to specify just how it exists. In general, *organizational and institutional studies presuppose organization rather than problematizing it.* The use of such nominals makes it possible to name without being committed to reference[4] and in consequence, it is virtually impossible to arrive at a conclusive formulation of 'what exists out there' as a common ground of reference in discussion about the adequacy and accuracy of any particular sociological representation.

The problem is not the use of nominalizations and metaphors as such. They are inescapable. I certainly want to feel comfortable in using terms such as 'co-ordination,' 'organization,' 'social relations.' The problem that taking women's standpoint introduces is that the ontological ground of whatever is represented in these nominalizations is left wholly indeterminate. Concepts of organization and institution can be substructed

---

[4] Charles Bazerman's investigation of the rhetorical properties of scientific papers characterizes these problems in a paper by Robert Merton:

> Such underdetermination of language provides further reason for requiring the good will of the audience. A sympathetic audience is more likely to expend the effort to reconstruct from partial indicators the meaning most congruent to the argument—a process that may be called reading in the intended spirit. The unsympathetic reader, however, can find in underconstrained meanings enough inconsistency, contradiction, and unacceptable thought to mount a serious attack. Even such ordinary appearing terms as "scientific accomplishment" or turns of phrases as "as happy as a scientist can be": rely on many loosely defined conceptual assumptions; they can easily disintegrate under a hostile reading. (Bazerman 1988: 37)

The possibility of engaging in argument projected in Bazerman's analysis and at arriving at an (at least *pro tem*) agreement constrained by actualities external to the technical discourse is essential to anything even remotely entitled to describe itself as 'science.'

by building up underneath them accounts of the local practices and forms of co-ordinating them that entitle reification. In a sense, the proposal is to invert a procedure that M.A.K. Halliday (Halliday and Martin 1993: 7) has identified in Isaac Newton's scientific writing. He has found a textual procedure that goes from statements in an active verbal form such as "the light is refracted" to a corresponding nominalized term, in this case 'refraction.' A process is thus reconstituted as an 'entity.' Once constituted the entity can be treated as active cau-
sally in relation to the other events or processes with which Newton is concerned.

Halliday treats Newton's nominalizations as strictly lexical innovations (he and Martin are critical of social scientific nominalizations). He does not refer to Newton's experimental work or its possible significance for creating the conditions under which it makes sense to replace statements based on observations to a nominal form. I suggest that this shift is grounded in Newton's ability, with the technology at his disposal, to isolate a process, recreate it, observe it again, and *recognize it as the same*. My aim here is to suggest research procedures capable of substructing nominalized or other standard sociological abstractions enabling statements in which people and their activities reappear. I propose that nominalizations such as 'organization,' 'institution,' or 'discourse' can be substructed *ethnographically* to discover just how their characteristic objectifications are locally accomplished. This means examining how the allochronic and extra-local forms of sociological discourse are produced out of the local ephemerality of people's everyday/everynight activities. Returning the abstract nominalizations that capture these dimensions of the social to the observable and experienceable of everyday life and of people's doings can be achieved, it is argued here, by investigating of the role of texts in transcending the local and ephemeral. Terms such as these, when substructed, can be shown to locate forms of the social that rely on texts and, though texts are not the only medium in which social relations are co-ordinated translocally nor the only mode in which the essential ephemerality of the social is, at least virtually, overcome, texts are of foundational ontological significance to the existence of anything we can call 'large-scale organization,' or 'institution.'

The Role of Texts

Despite their ubiquitous presence, texts seldom appear in organizational or institutional studies. Characteristically, work that incorporates texts into sociological thinking are dispersed in the literature and don't form a de-

veloping body of thought and inquiry.[5] Where they do, they are generally viewed as sources of information about something else: Bresnen, for example, describes his use of key informants to provide information for his basic databank, but referring to "documentary sources" (company manuals, contract documents and so forth) to supplement the information and

[5]It is, however, possible to find a fairly extensive, though unsystematic, collection of researches that examines texts or documents in organizational contexts. These do not however address the problem of texts as constitutive of organization or institution rather than in, for example, organizational communication (J. R. Taylor 1993) or in ethnographic strategies such as Richard Harper's study of the International Monetary Fund. Here is a partial list: Anderson (1978) Some organizational features in the local production of a plausible text; Atkinson and Coffey (1997) Analysing documentary realities; Bazerman (1988) *Shaping written knowledge: The genre and activity of the experimental article in science*; Bazerman and Paradis (eds.) (1991) *Textual dynamics of the professions: Historical and contemporary studies of writing in professional communities*; Berg (1998) Order(s) and disorder(s) of protocols and medical practices; Buckholdt and Gubrium (1983) Practicing accountability in human service institutions; Cicourel (1968) *The social organization of juvenile justice*; Colignon and Covaleski (1993) Accounting practices and organizational decision making; Cushing (1994) Fatal words: Communication clashes and aircraft crashes; Czarniawska (1999) Management she wrote: Organization studies and detective stories; de Montigny (1995) *Social working: An ethnography of front-line practice*; Emerson (1994) Constructing serious violence and its victims: Processing a domestic violence restraining order; Erikson and Gilbertson (1969) Case records in the mental hospital; Espeland (1993) Power, policy and paperwork: The bureaucratic representation of interests; Green (1983) *Knowing the poor: A case study in textual reality*; Harper (1998) Inside the IMF: An ethnography of documents, technology and organisational action; Heath (1982) Preserving the consultation: Medical record cards and professional conduct; Heap (1991) Reading as cultural activities: Enabling and reflective texts; Manning (1986) Texts as organizational echoes; McLean and Hoskin (1998) Organizing madness: Reflections on the form of the form; Meehan (1986) Recordkeeping practices in the policing of juveniles; Mehan (1996) The construction of an L.D. Student; A case study in the politics of representation; Mellinger (1992) Accomplishing fact in police "dispatch packages:" The situated construction of an organizational record; Ng (1988) The politics of community service: Immigrant women, class and state; Olshan (1993) Standards-making organizations and the rationalization of American life; Olson (1995) Record keeping practices: Consequences of accounting demands in a public clinic; Pence (1996) *Safety for battered women in a textually-mediated legal system*; Pettinari (1988) *Task, talk, and text in the operating room: A study in medical discourse*; Smith (1990b) *The conceptual practices of power: A feminist sociology of knowledge*; Smith (1990a) *Texts, facts and femininity: Exploring the relations of ruling*; Smith (1998) *Writing the social: Critique, theory and investigations*; Smith and Whalen (1995) Texts in action; Swift (1995) *Manufacturing 'Bad Mothers:' A critical perspective on child neglect*; Taylor (1993) *Rethinking the theory of organizational communication: how to read an organization*; Taylor and Van Every (1992) *The vulnerable fortress: Bureaucratic organization and management in the information age*; Usui and Colignan (1996) Corporate restructuring: Converging world pattern or societally specific embeddedness?: Walker (1995) Lessons from the battered women's movement; Watson (1997) Ethnomethodology and textual analysis; Wheeler (ed.) (1969) *On record: Files and dossiers in American life*; Woolgar, Steve (1990) Time and documents in researcher interaction: Some ways of making out what is happening in experimental science; Yates (1989) *Control through communication: The rise of system in American management*; Zimmerman (1969) Record-keeping and the intake process in a public welfare agency; Zimmerman (1966) Paper work and people work: a study of a public assistance agency.

cross-check details (1988: 37); in the same volume, Dunkerley treats documents primarily as a source of information and hence is concerned with issues of their truth (1988: 88) even when they are documents that are not primarily referential in their intention; Vaughan (1996) uses documents to trace the organizational history at NASA of the decision to launch the ill-fated Challenger; for Linstead, organizational texts are to be read "[as] constituting a major source of evidence for grounding claims about the sort of social structures produced by and constraining organizational and individual action" (1999: 3); others integrate texts into the conceptualizing of organizational communication (Manning, 1985; Taylor and Van Every, 1992).

Even in Manning's work, where we find texts functioning to 'stabilize' the forms of people's activities, texts are not seen as foundational to the existence of organization. Yet it is possible to find in many organizational studies the implicit presence of the textual as integral to organizational process. Sometimes the text-mediated character of organization or institution is explicit but its significance marginalized. For example, Melville Dalton's classic study, *Men Who Manage* (1959), reports on the organizational significance of texts without bringing them into focus. He contrasts rationality in the planning of organizations with the actual ways in which men conspire, conflict, co-operate in "its multifarious and interlocking actions" (1959: 218). He adopts a strategy that opposes appearance to reality, the appearance being the formal representation of organizational lines of authority "implied by title and rank, detailed planning, systems of detection and control, etc." However, they "do not quite hold individuals to routine activity and assured compliance." The organizational chart maps lines of authority that do not in fact operate as they are represented; there is an "inevitable distortion" (1959: 18).

Dalton's account of how cliques operated in the company he studied purports to show how organization is produced as an ongoing interplay of informal groupings among men. His study, according to one authority, "shows brilliantly that cost accounting of all kinds is a highly arbitrary and therefore easily politicized process rather than a technical procedure decided on grounds of efficiency" (Granovetter 1992: 69). But if we return to Dalton's text, we find that this is not at all what his description shows. Rather, we find a textually regulated order that creates the organizational conditions for organizational politics and that changes may be consciously designed to regulate the political process. Though Dalton's focus is on the interplay among the men who manage, his account of relations among managers implicates at every point the system of record-keeping and cost accounting in use at the time. Again and again he describes a system of record-keeping the very precision of which created specific managerial contexts of action:

To keep his record straight, each head [of department] was given a series of order numbers which constituted his "account." The Auditing Department prepared the wage and salary record of all employees in a given department. Consumption of utilities was recorded with similar precision. But upkeep of present equipment, purchase of new and replacement of old material, and the unforeseen costs attending expansion were all more difficult to control. Hence the area of upkeep was used by the department head as one means of relieving cost pressures on himself.... As pressures for economy increased, many operation executives place low short-run productivity costs above concerns for equipment. That is, they favored continuous use of equipment with shutdowns only for breakdowns followed by minimum repair and quick resumption of production. (Dalton 1959: 33)

When these procedures are redesigned by Head Office and new auditing procedures introduced, the political conditions of managerial work and hence the relations among the managers change significantly. Revising the textual technology of management from the forms within which the relationships described by Dalton had developed changes the relationships. Powers exercised by leading members of the most powerful clique are undermined by a tighter control over maintenance costs and a new organization of the maintenance department. Charles Perrow's cheerful assertion that Dalton shows "top people with no power and those three or four levels below with extensive power" (1986: 40–1) is undermined when attention is shifted from the local organization to the textually-mediated managerial controls exercised by a head office at a distance. The 'power' relations among those with 'extensive power' three or four levels below the top people are transformed when the system of record keeping is transformed. Though the cliques persist, they are reconfigured. The new cost controls undermine the bases of power differentials among individuals and groups. The political process operates on a ground constituted organizationally precisely by a technical system of cost accounting and of record-keeping. It is the merit of the care of his ethnography that Dalton's study does provide considerable information about the cost accounting and record keeping procedures of the organization of that time as well as its relation to the formation of cliques and the games men could play. Indeed it is a major merit of Dalton's ethnography that what is not of central interest, is nonetheless present in the account.

For the most part the textual dimensions of organization are buried in the standard nominalizations described above. Arthur Stinchcombe, for example, is interested in the functions of 'information' in organizations and writes about the significance of 'experience' in the development of a preventative maintenance program in the Norwegian corporation Statoil:

Part of the information embedded in such a program comes from thousands of bits of experience: experience of the mean time to failure of thousands of parts, experience about how good a predictor this mean is for failure of particular individual

parts (experience of the variance of time to failure), and experience of the costs of having that part fail unexpectedly before it is replaced or repaired. (Stinchcombe, 1990: 76)

The use of the nominal 'experience' displaces the mediating texts, most probably electronic, that have been assembled as a data base or data bases; it displaces the electronic processing of data used to arrive at the mean time to failure of individual parts plus whatever record-keeping procedures constitute the 'experience' of unexpected failure and its translation into costs that register in Statoil's system of managerial accounting. This isn't necessarily a problem for the kind of descriptive anecdotes in which Stinchcombe excels, but interpolating of the nominalization operates to bridge ethnographic lacunae in the representation of informational processes in the organization. Such implicit references to the textual are ubiquitous in organizational studies. Similarly implicit references to the textual are to be found in sociological treatments of accounting and accounting activity (Meyer, Boli *et al.*, 1994; Olson, 1995; Usui and Colignan, 1996); or, in theoretical formulations such as Kallinkos's sophisticated theorizing of the "invisible archi-texture" that detaches "instrumental accomplishment" "from the concrete and tangible reality of the work" (Kallinikos 1995: 124). The very concepts of an 'information society' or 'information technologies' refer implicitly to textually mediated forms of social relations.

The 'archi-texture of the invisible' can, however, be made visible. The missing bridge connecting Stinchcombe's bits of experience to the programme in which they have become embedded can be discovered and described—at least in principle—as can the organization of people's work activities in local settings as they accomplish what becomes 'information' at the level of management. The persisting vagueness of Stinchcombe's 'experience' and 'information,' or of the examples of organizational and institutional theory from Jepperson (1991) and Scott and Meyer (1994) cited above, allows a fundamental indeterminacy of reference. The vagueness means that what is referred exercises no control over the referential concepts. Concepts are never exposed to being reshaped and reworked by an encounter with how what they reference is actually being produced. The use of nominals without substruction of the kind I am recommending performs objectification by lexical fiat. People, their doings and the everyday production of the existence of an organization or institutional order in particular local sites disappear from view. Yet it is just there, in those doings and in the forms of co-ordination that connect people's doings translocally and transtemporally that organization and institution must come into being.

Here, then, comes the text. In the studies adduced here, we can find or infer that there are texts 'at work,' most distinctly in Dalton's ethnography, but also as a necessary but invisible presence in Stinchcombe's study. We find them doing precisely the work of organizational co-ordination. The Head Office in Dalton's story reaches down into and, by transforming the organizational texts, transforms the games men in management were playing; in Stinchcombe's story, experience in one site is transformed into information in another or others, via some textual device, most probably a computer.

I do not want to be mistaken as arguing for a reduction of organization or institution to the technologies of their architecture. Rather I am proposing that such 'textual technologies' be recognized sociologically for how they co-ordinate people's work in particular local settings. A sociology that comes from women's standpoint as I've specified it earlier in this paper insists on returning to what is taken to be the foundational problem in exploring the ruling relations in general, namely how people's activities in particular places and at particular times are co-ordinated across local sites. While it does not rule out the use of abstract nominals of the kind described above, it would propose that research underpin their use by working towards descriptions that can operate as their precursors, just as Newton's assertion that 'the light is refracted' precedes the nominalization 'refraction.'

Texts in Action

In exploring the everyday/everynight world in which organization and institution come into being, we find at every point the textual mediation of people's activities through standardized and standardizing genres[6] such as forms, instructions, rules, rule-books, memos, procedural manuals, funding applications, statistical analyses, libraries, journals, and many many more. Texts are integral to people's daily and nightly activities on the job. What might in the past have been purely manual labour becomes textually invaded and regulated. The work of a labourer on a hog farm in the past would not have involved the keeping of sophisticated records. Today, however, since NASA developed a protocol for hog-rearing to ensure that astronauts would not be struck down by sickness when in flight, commercial hog-farming has to conform to strict regulation involving keeping

---

[6] For the theory and analysis of genres, see *inter alia*, Bazerman (1988, 1994); Bazerman and Paradis (1993); Bhatia (1993); Dias *et al.* (1999).

detailed almost hour by hour records of feeding, etcetera. Such forms of textual regulation are standardized so that the records of any farm claiming to produce hogs according to these standards can be checked. Replicable and replicated texts are essential to the standardizing of work activities across time and translocally. The co-ordinating machinery of organization and institution is textual, whether on paper or in computers.

In contrast to Roland Barthes (1979) who introduced and mandated the severance of the materiality of the text from its meaning, I need the text's materiality, for it is its material replication that reproduces at least one term, the text's, of meaning in the multiple local settings in which it is read, seen, and interpreted. It is the textual mediation of people's doings that enables large-scale organization and institutions to appear in the allochronic mode that transcends the immediate continuities of day to day activities among people in particular local settings. For these organizations and for the social relations of other kinds such as those of discourse to exist extra-locally and to co-ordinate multiple local sites of people's everyday activities, the organizing texts must be readable as the same even though they are taken up and interpreted differently in the different settings in which they are read. Hence the replicated text joins a particular setting in which it is read to the organizing system of texts that co-ordinates multiple sites of such reading and writing.

In returning to the actualities of people's everyday/everynight living to find organization and institution, we would want to see the text as 'happening.' The notion of text as 'happening' or 'occurring' seems an oxymoron. Yet if we can fix our attention on the ongoing actualities of people's doings, we can see them/ourselves as we pick up a newspaper or a book, switch on the television, bring up a file on the computer monitor, read a set of instructions, fill in a form, and so on and so on. Reading (and writing) are doings in time. We are actively engaged with texts as we read them, or as we continue to carry on a silent conversation with what we have read (Smith, 1990a). Textual materials on the shelves, in files (whether in computer directories or in file cabinets), or otherwise out of action, exist *in potentia* but their potentiating is in time and in action, whether in ongoing text-reader conversations or in how the 'having read' enters into the organization of what is to come. Even Julia Kristeva's (1986) argument that the text is the reader's production presupposes a text that can be treated as recognizably the same in the varieties of readings that can be created. Reproducing the same managerial and accounting procedures across many local settings hooks their local work organization into 'centralized' regulatory and decision processes that are themselves located in particular settings. These relations could not exist without the possibility of a stan-

dardized reproduction of texts, enabling them to be recognized as 'the same' in the multiple local contexts in which they occur.

Again I do not mean to suggest that texts are somehow mechanically effective nor that organization or institution can be reduced to texts. Rather I am insisting that they are the foundational media of co-ordinating people's work activities, including talk, in large-scale organization or in institutional complexes. As they recur at different times and in different local settings of people's work they automatically reproduce organizationally or in-stitutionally standardized messages. This does not mean to imply that they automatically reproduce particular patterns of activity. The question of how they enter into actual courses of action is always an empirical one. It is useful, I think, to work with the notion of text-reader conversations in which, unlike real-life conversations, one side of the conversation is fixed and unresponsive to the other's responses. In face-to-face conversations among people, the utterance-response sequence is one in which each next utterance is modified as a response to the utterance that preceded it. In text-reader conversations, one side is obstinately unmoveable. However the reader takes it up, the text remains as a constant point of reference against which any particular interpretation can be checked. It is the constancy of the text that provides for the standardization effect. Hog-farmers every-where in North America who want to have a commercially viable product introduce standardized recording procedures; they may lie, cheat, mis-represent and otherwise deceive, but deception aims to reproduce the tex-tually standardized outcome and operates in the same textual medium as the truth.

The capacity of the replicable text to standardize at least one term of the text-reader conversation and hence the organizational/institutional input into whatever course of action that conversation is embedded in, is a reg-ulatory device essential to the existence of the large-scale corporation or to the multi-situated character ascribed to institutions. The multiple replication of exactly the same text that technologies of print made possible enable an organization of social relations independent of local time, place and person. Texts suture modes of social action organized extra-locally and co-ordinating multiple local sites of people's work to the local actualities of our necessarily embodied lives. Text-reader conversations are embedded in and organize local settings of work.

Text-reader conversations characteristically co-ordinate work organiza-tion in two directions, one the actual local setting in which it goes on and the other the hook-ups it creates with other settings and text-reader con-versations of other people reading the same text. The latter are significant in co-ordinating, for example, the work of various departments in relation to

the making out of a sales order. Each of its multiple copies will travel to the department whose next action in the sales order sequence is initiated by receiving a copy or electronic version of the sales order. Then multiply the texts, attend to how they are transformed into data bases, to how they enable the work that produces them to be surveilled (Smith and Whalen 1996), and to how they come to feed into the construction of an objectified 'reality' that is independent of and displaces particular perspectives.

The replicated identical text as utterance activated by participants joins them in a situation which it names and defines, standardizing among them the terms in which they can know, understand, and evaluate it, regardless of how its naming and its terms provide for the utterance of what they are actually experiencing. It generalizes an organizational and institutional speech genre (Bakhtin 1986) or discourses (Foucault 1972; Smith 1999). In standardizing one 'party' to every text-reader conversation, the terms of all conversations with the 'same' text are standardized. Among participants, an open-ended chain is created: text-reader-reader-reader-. All participants are joined into the same utterance, hence in the same set of categories, connections, subject-object relations, etc., carried by the text. Here, in this technology, is the site of organization as a form transcending the interrelations of particular individuals. The text that stands free of particular moments of speaking and doing among particular individuals enters the regulation of people's activities into an atemporal dimension that is also free from the local histories of interactions. Texts provide the basis of a technology enabling, among other things, an order of facticity suppressing divergent perspectives and establishing a shared and enforceable common ground, a virtual reality standardized across multiple settings. The diverging and conflicting concerns can be negotiated in the production of a text in which divergent views no longer appear; the resulting regulatory text, precipitated into textual time (Smith 1990b), has been authorized and can be activated to regulate and appropriate actions as organizational or institutional. Formal or large-scale organization and institutions exist as such in just these text-mediated forms of co-ordinating people's work, as do discourse (in the Foucauldian sense) and other dimensions of the ruling relations.

A Demonstration

In what follows I go to work on a specific text to show, in this instance, how it can be seen to locate people's doing as organizational/institutional procedure order over and above particular settings, people and activities. The text, of a grade appeal procedure, installed in the department of sociology

of a Canadian university, is examined and analyzed. The analysis first explicates the ways in which the text is brought into relation with what people do to perform an appeal and how it identifies what they do as steps in the procedure. I then go on to show how starting with a particular text can be used to burrow into an organizational/institutional complex of textually co-ordinated work processes in the university that produce for students their grade records as valid representations of their university (or college) career. In exploring a particular text, I do not intend to argue that all texts enter into action in the same fashion. This is an empirical question. It seems likely, however, that those texts that function specifically to produce what people do as organizational activities may have properties in common, whether of the procedures (themselves organizationally produced) that establish them as authorized and *of* the organization, or in how the characteristic dialogics of the text-reader conversations in which they are brought into local settings of people's work.

I want to move away from concepts of meaning as central to the discovery of organization (Weick 1969, 1995; Manning 1985) towards the possibility of finding what we call organization or institution as it is actually produced in the concerting of people's activities. Language, discourse, or the like, is not conceived as a distinct sphere, a symbolic order, separable from people's practices and therefore having somehow or other to be reunited with them. Rather concepts, ideas, ideology, beliefs, knowledge and any other social form of consciousness are taken to be among those actual practices, whether they appear in text or talk, and as central to the ongoing co-ordinating of consciousness or subjectivity that realize organization or institution. In a sense, I want to lift discourse off the page and pull it into life; I want to step outside the artifice of the text's stasis and rediscover discourse as an actually happening, actually performed, local organizing of consciousness among people.

In exploring texts as they enter into organizational/institutional action, I am formulating language and discourse rather differently from the classic model of communication as an interchange between individuals in which a speaker codes meaning into language, transmits a message which the receiver decodes/interprets to arrive at meaning. I have proposed, elaborating on George Herbert Mead's (1947) examination of symbolic communication. Mead formulates what he calls 'symbolic communication' rather differently from the message exchange model. He locates the symbolic as an active process among people taking place in the interactional sequences of act-response-response. Meaning isn't already given but is activated and affirmed as interaction develops. Mead makes much of the spoken because the conventionalized sounds that make up words are heard by both speaker

and hearer. Both speaker/writer and responder 'respond' to the gesture, the conventionalized sound or movement, in the same way (sounds are particularly well qualified to function symbolically because both can hear them as, for all practical purposes, the same).[7] Both orient to what has been said; both respond to it. This doesn't mean that the next speaker's response is fully determined by the previous speaker's utterance. It means that both can hear the second speaker's response as a response to what the first speaker has said. In this sense, the first speaker's utterance projects and in a sense controls the other's response.[8] Utterances project an organizing of consciousness that co-ordinate the subjectivities of both and it is within the communicated frame set up by each response that the next response both retroactively affirms and interprets the preceding and proactively frames the following.

Mead's thinking insists on restoring the symbolic to activity among people *and as inseparable from it*. Speech co-ordinates how people interact. Sense or meaning are always coming into being as people make it. Language is conceived as more like a zipper interlacing diverse subjectivities than as units of meaning traveling from one individual to another. The distinctive property of writing, print or computerized texts is that the co-ordinating of subjectivities is potential, jumping from the moment of writing to the moment of reading and actualized only as the reader participates in a particular text-reader conversation.[9] Meaning only 'occurs' in actual text-reader conversations. Texts control responses by framing rather than dictating them and are written or drawn with that intention (this doesn't mean that they necessarily work in the way they are intended). They co-ordinate consciousnesses at a distance. As they are activated, they organize readers' responses, though, I emphasize again, they do not determine them. Standardized and replicated, they co-ordinate the diversities of people's perspectives and interests that work organization itself generates.

The text that I examine was introduced to me by Katarzyna Rukszto (1994). I have worked with an example with which I am familiar as an academic so that in addition to Rukszto's brief ethnographic account

---

[7] The notion of response has probably been contaminated by the later and narrower behaviorist interpretations of the notion of response—Mead's, for example, specifically allowed for the unobservability of stages of the act that went on 'inside' the individual.

[8] This is the logic exploited and systematized in ethnomethodology's conversational analysis.

[9] Where the jump extends in historical time, the meaning of terms and grammatical constructions may shift and create disjunctures in the seamless organization that is Mead's model of the significant symbol.

written from a student's experience of making a grade appeal, I can draw on
my own knowledge of such procedures and has also the advantage of being
familiar to most of my readers. I emphasize this because, strictly speaking,
this text has not been researched as would be properly done in a field in-
vestigation. Largely for economic reasons, I have not otherwise in-
vestigated the text in operation.

1 GRADUATE PROGRAMME IN SOCIOLOGY
2
3
4
5 Grade Appeal Procedure
6 1. It is the responsibility of the instructor to clarify, early in the course, the
7 assignments, their weighting and the deadlines which students are expected to
8 observe. Where a student's appeal indicates that members of the class were unclear
9 about these matters, fair decision-making becomes much more difficult.
10
11 2. Students have the right to appeal the grades they receive on written work, but not
12 on seminar presentations or for seminar participation. This must be done within two
13 weeks of the date when notification of the grade is sent to the student. Grades
14 submitted by May 15 are mailed to the student in June. When a grade is submitted to
15 clear an incomplete, a copy is placed in the student's mailbox in 2071 Branksome
16 Hall.
17
18 3. When a student is dissatisfied with a grade, the first step should be to discuss it
19 with the instructor. There may have been a misunderstanding which can be cleared
20 up between them. The instructor may be able to suggest changes which the student is
21 willing to make, if the paper has been handed in well before the deadline for clearing
22 Incompletes. Where there is little time, it may be possible for the instructor to give
23 the student an oral exam on those aspects of the topic which were judged to be
24 inadequately covered. Should the student and instructor find it difficult to reach an
25 agreement (*e.g.* consensus on course expectations) the Graduate Director may be
26 asked to act as mediator.
27
28 4. Where student and instructor are unable to reach agreement, the student may
29 appeal to the Director for a re-evaluation of the paper(s). The Director will then try
30 to find an appraiser who is acceptable to both instructor and student. Before any
31 appraisal is made, the student and the instructor have the right to communicate in
32 writing to this person any matters relevant to the appraisal, such as instructions
33 about coverage, style, and length or agreements about the scope of the paper. The
34 appraiser will send an evaluation of the paper with reasons to the Programme

35 Director, who will communicate these to the Executive Committee of the
36 Programme.
37
38 5. Where student and instructor cannot agree on a neutral appraiser each has the
39 right to name one reader. The Executive Committee of the Programme will see the
40 paper, be told of the two names, and appoint a third person who will join them to
41 form and will chair, the Appraisal Committee. The persons appointed will normally
42 be members of the Faculty or Graduate Studies in good standing. The Appraisal
43 Committee will meet and report its decision, with reasons, to the Executive
44 Committee of the Programme.
45
46 6. If the Appraisers' evaluation differs from the instructor's enough to alter the grade
47 for the course, the decision whether to make the change rests with the Executive
48 Committee. A judgement must be made, whether the difference between the
49 evaluations is small enough to be due to reasonable variation in judgement between
50 one instructor and another, or is large enough to justify overruling the instructor's
51 verdict. In the past, a half grade difference was considered small and a full grade
52 large, but this is not a binding guideline.
53
54 7. The Executive Committee makes the final decision at the Programme level. There
55 is provision for appeal of a Programme's decision to the Dean of Graduate Studies
56 and/or the Senate. Such appeals are likely to be heard, however, only if there is
57 evidence of irregularities in the procedures which the Programme Director or
58 Executive Committee followed. Appeal procedures beyond the Programme are
59 currently under revision.
60
61 Revised and approved by Executive Committee January 27, 1993.

Analysis

The following analysis explicates how the text of the grade appeal procedure can enter into and co-ordinate the work of various participants to produce what can be recognized as an organizational or institutional process:

1.   Organizational and institution appropriation

The text formulates a process. People's doings are no longer just that, but become interpretable as expressions or instances of a higher order organization, independent of particular people. The process has definite personnel, anchored in the categories of the regulating organization in which it

is positioned; it names a course of action, with a sequence of steps, alternative routes to a conclusion, a determination of what might be considered a conclusion, an opening of routes beyond the scope of the text. These provide for how variations in process and outcomes of what people do become accountable as steps, or otherwise, in appealing a grade. Somewhere or other in the text will appear its authorization as an organizational/institutional text—for example, in the grade appeal procedure, the date when the text was revised and approved by the executive committee (line 61).

In the absence of the authorizing text, modes of authorizing and *appropriating* the interplay as *of* the organization do not operate. Compare the account giving in the text of the grade appeal procedure with what a sequence of action might look like in the absence of a properly installed grade appeals text. Imagine this situation: A student is talking to her friend about how disappointed she is with the grade she got for a course. "I loved the course," Laura says, "but I was really upset at only getting an A–. I know it doesn't seem like a bad grade, but it's enough to kill my chances for a scholarship. And when I looked at Ann's comments on the paper, I could see that she'd really missed the point." Her friend says: "Why don't you go and talk to her?" "I don't know. I feel embarrassed, but maybe I'll go talk to Tony" (who is Graduate Program Director of the department and unusually accessible). So she does. And Tony tells her that she really does have to go and talk to the instructor before he can intervene. "Maybe she'll change her mind when she has another look at it." But when Ann, the instructor in the course, takes another look at the paper, she feels her comments and the grade were justified. "I know you do really good work and that you put a lot of work in the course, but sometimes the paper written just doesn't come out as well as you wanted it to. It wouldn't be fair to the other students if I changed your grade at this point." And so she goes back to Tony and Tony says he'll ask another faculty member to read it and see what she thinks. But if the other reader disagrees with the original grade, there's no mechanism for changing it. And so on. There is no Grade Appeals process here. Though Tony may have confronted these situations before or have heard about them, he and the student work this out together and it is a one-time-through course of action. The student has no rights in this situation. There is no preset course of action or sequence of steps to be followed. There is no provision for appeal beyond the process. The installation of a grade appeals procedure as a formally approved procedure of the graduate program may not look in practice too different from the non-formal process just been described. The student is dissatisfied with her grade; she talks to the instructor whose response does not satisfy her; she goes to the Director

of the Graduate Program, and the Director finds a second reader. Now, however, her moves are interpretable with reference to the text of The Grade Appeal Procedure.

That I can write of 'a grade appeal procedure' or of a 'process' is an 'effect' of the transposition of what particular people do into institutional or organizational acts. This is a condition of how we, whether as sociologists or as participants in an organization, are able to speak and write of a grade appeal 'process' as existing in an ordinary and unexamined way.

Note that analyzing what has been done in the text's terms also produces different moments or events as steps in a process—the instructor and student have agreed on an appraiser and the appraiser has agreed to act—orienting those involved to the next sequence. Different moments or events, the student's consultation with the instructor about her work, for example, become moments in the process by virtue of the text. The co-ordination of one such moment with others is not direct; it has neither effects or consequences relevant to the process without the text. If the instructor agrees to change the grade, then the procedure ends. If she does not, the text connects her refusal to change the grade to the next step and to the Graduate Program Director's appointing of an appraiser. The text maps discrete acts, performed sometimes without direct contact with those involved, into a co-ordinated sequence. It is in this way that actions and courses of action, analyzed and recognized in the language of the authorized text are co-ordinated organizationally/institutionally among people who are not in continuous contact with one another, and who are not all active in each specified step of a process.

In making observable how such a text might operate to produce out of particular actions done by particular people in a particular time and place an organizational/institutional process, I've drawn on Harold Garfinkel's (1967) treatment of the everyday work of the Suicide Prevention Center staff, of jurors, and of people at work coding sociological data. People in such settings are engaged in "the concerted work of making evident from fragments . . . how a person dies in society, or by what criteria patients were selected for psychiatric treatment, or which among the alternative verdicts was correct." Garfinkel moves radically away from the paradigm that treats the 'patterning' or 'typicality' or 'repetitiveness' of social activities as an effect of conforming to norms or rules. Rather he explicates an ongoing open-ended development of concerted activities that is aimed at producing what participants can *recognize* as the rational processes of investigating and arriving at a determination of which category of death a given person's death should be assigned to, or arriving at a verdict, or determining whether a given person should be admitted as a patient. The rationality of the in-

quiries done by those at work in such setting should not therefore be treated as directly a property of their activities. Rather the *"recognizably* rational properties of their common sense inquiries . . . are *somehow* attainments of members' concerted activities" (1967: 10), that is, those who participate produce for themselves and others what they can recognize as rational and objective.[10] It is the *recognition* of what is said and done that produces it as accountably accomplishing the rationality and objectivity of a given institutional order.

This conception can be brought to bear on an analysis of the forms of text-reader conversations characterizing the reading of a regulatory text of this kind. The text *standardize* one term of the text-reader conversations formalizing for participants how their activities are to be co-ordinated. The standardized text establishes the terms (or images) by which participants recognize and make accountable the rationality and objectivity of their doings. The text isn't read prescriptively. Rather, the reader's work is to find what could be done that is recognizable as an instance of its categories. A student *initiating* a grade appeal might decide to write a letter to the Director of the Graduate Program. S/he orients thereby to what s/he and other participants can recognize, under the terms of the text, as initiating a grade appeal (notice how it is already possible to write of the 'grade appeal' as if it had objective existence—which, of course, it has). We can imagine that s/he might have decided to write a letter so that the step s/he was taking would be unambiguously analyzable by others as starting up the grade processing machine. The text establishes a set of terms, formalized sequences, providing standardized-for-all-participants methods for analyzing and recognizing what might be done and what gets done. In this way the work of different parties in an actual appeal process is co-ordinated *to*

---

[10] Though in general Garfinkel does not make this explicit, his observations focus on how rationality and objectivity are achieved in settings that are textually regulated: the determination of how a person died is governed by legislation which incorporates a comprehensive set of categories to which every death within a given jurisdiction must be assigned; similarly jurors are working with a legal order and specifically within a textually-prescribed and textually-specified set of procedures; the criteria for selecting patients of psychiatric treatment draw somehow on the discursive texts of psychiatric discourse as well as upon administrative texts that determine the admissibility of patients. My own view is that 'rationality' is essentially text-mediated and that Garfinkel's observations are specific to textually regulated institutional settings. Texts are, I suggest, foundational to what he makes observable as the "recognizably rational properties" attained by "members' concerted activities" of what is recognizable as rational and of the concerting of members' activities. The extrapolation of 'account-ability' to, for example, the analysis of conversations, or of rationality to 'sense-making' elides and displaces the significance of the text in talk or other activities and specifically in producing recognizably rational forms of action.

produce what can be formally recognized as a step in a grade appeal procedure. What people actually do can be analyzed and evaluated by others as 'discussing the grade with the instructor' (lines 18–9), 'appeal to the Director' (line 29), 'finding an appraiser acceptable to instructor and student' (line 30), and so on. And in projecting their own actions, participants attend to how others will be able to recognize them as instances or expressions of the text.

The grade appeal text is not prescriptive in the sense that actions can be derived from it. Different experiences can be analyzed and recognized under the phrase, "discuss[ing the grade] with the instructor" (lines 18–9). Do student and instructor actually have to meet? Would a telephone call suffice? Possibly. The actual discussion might differ greatly from case to case. Perhaps one instructor receives the student coldly; virtually refuses discussion; reiterates her right to give the grade as she sees it; insists on the validity of her comments. Another may be open and responsive, discusses the comments, but isn't persuaded to change the grade, in part because she felt it would be unfair to other students. Similarly the Director's arrangements with the instructor, the student, and appraiser might be on the telephone, via chats in hallways or in the cafeteria, by email, and so on. Activities involving any of these kinds of contacts can be recognized as 'finding an appraiser acceptable to both student and instructor' (line 29). Certainly the encounter may be very different in different instances or cases. Indeed the very notion of 'cases' or 'instances' relies on the existence of the formalized text as bearer of the paradigm that constitutes them as cases or instances.

Speech genre is a concept formulated by Mikhail Bakhtin. He associates speech genres with the "diverse areas of human activity" the conditions and goals of which are reflected in utterances "through their content (thematic) and linguistic style, that is, the selection of lexical, phraseological, and grammatical resources of the language, but above all through their compositional structure" (1986: 60). The structuring of subject and agent discussed in the previous section are clearly pieces of what Bakhtin means by speech genre. Here, however, the concept is used and extended to locate a distinctive way of using language that refers beyond the text as utterance (Bakhtin's notion of utterance subsumes both text and speech). The language of the grade appeal text is abstract; it does not particularize; it looks descriptive but does not describe. It is a language that will subsume particular events or actions as instances or expressions of a grade appeal or provide sites of entry to subject/agent positions for particular individuals. The particularities of the actions performed are not specified in the text; rather its language operates to collect sufficing actions as the actions or

steps specified in the authorized text process. The conditional sentences, for example, those beginning "Where there is little time ... " (line 22) or "Where student and instructor are unable to agree ... " (line 28) provide for the text's capacity to comprehend and provide for a next step if the preceding has not produced a settlement. These features of the text enable it to transpose what particular people, Laura, Ann and Tony, do into a grade appeal.

2.   Textual subjects and agents:

Interpreting what people do or have done in the terminology of the text accomplishes it as an instance of the process, and hence locates it in the sequence that the text contains. This discoverable relation between what people actually do and the authorized text construes their actions as organizational, locating them as actors not as individuals in particularized relationships to one another but in their organizationally defined capacities as 'student,' 'Director,' 'instructor,' and so on. What they do or have done becomes recognizably a moment in a grade appeal. It is conceivable that a Director's failure to follow through might open the university to legal action on the part of the student. The categories establish organizational/institutional subjects and agents.

Poststructuralism has introduced a conception of the subject as constituted in discourse. In the organizational text, the textually standardized categories constitute sites where particular individuals can 'enter' as subjects participating in the grade appeal. She is a student (itself a textually-constituted status); she is an instructor/member of the faculty. Within the textually-formalized grade appeal procedure, subjectivity is organized as objectives to be pursued, tasks to be undertaken, others to be connected with. Here we see the importance of the organizational standardization of categories. A particular student, learning from her reading of the grade appeal procedure that the person to go to is the director of graduate studies, knows she has to locate, if she doesn't already know, a person who is designated by that title. Such organizational/institutional categories locate subjects in procedures, processes, tasks, and so on that are standardized in authorized texts such as that of the grade appeal procedure.

But not only subjects are constituted; so is agency. While for the purposes of a sociological metaphysic it may be important to identify the sociological actor as having agency (Giddens 1987), for the practical purposes of organizational/institutional investigation, 'agent' and 'agency' must be seen as constituted in the authorized texts of organization. Better to follow the poststructuralist example of recognizing how the subject is

discursively constituted and to recognize also that agents are constituted in organizational/institutional discourse. Whatever the actual work of those involved in a grade appeal, agency is recognized and becomes accountable in terms of organizational/institutional status categories. Not everyone who is at work in accomplishing the work recognized organizationally as a grade appeal procedure is constituted as an agent. Some things happen without being assigned agents within the text: "When a grade is submitted to clear an incomplete, a copy is placed in the student's mailbox in 2071 Branksome Hall (lines 15–16)" Those who do this "placing the copy in the student's mailbox," are not recognized as 'agents' in the organizational/institutional process, the Grade Appeal. Marilee Reimer (1988) described the way in which executive secretaries in a government office in Ontario some years back had their own executive work redefined in their personnel records in terms that described it as ancillary to the work of executives and as delegated by the executive they worked for. Hence it did not count as experience of executive work when they sought to shift into the higher positions. The authorized text assigns agency to definite organizational categories; it assigns definite types of actions as the recognizable forms that agency may take: for example, with respect to judgments of the work she has done for the course, the student lacks agency: "The instructor may be able to suggest changes which the student is willing to make" (lines 20–1); "it may be possible for the instructor to give the student an oral exam" (lines 22–3). Agency rests with the instructor at this stage: it is the instructor who may take steps to change the grade, but only by changing the basis on which the grade is given. The text of the Grade Appeal Procedure does not recognize deferring to the student's evaluation of her own work as an accountable procedure. At no point is the student admitted to agency with respect to the grading of her work.

In multiple ways the text relies implicitly on features of organization: the status categories of student, instructor, and so on, objects such as the grade, the paper, the course, and 'bodies,' such as the executive committee. These are more than discursive subjects, agents or objects, they are accomplished as organizational features in just such dialogics of authorized text and particular doings as those I have sketched above. A person who attends lectures, writes tests, and completes other assignments of a course is only a student if her name locates a file on record in the Registrar's office and her payment of fees is up-to-date. What constitutes a course is produced in definite procedures that include the departmental submission of a course description as part of a program, procedures that ensure that a given course proposal doesn't encroach on the disciplinary jurisdiction of other departments, evidence that guarantees that the course topic is sustainable by a

competent literature, and so on, as well as the administrative processes that enable students to register and that produce a course list and assign a room. Similarly care is also taken in the grade appeal text to articulate the scheduling of the appeal process with the institutional processing of grades. The appeal must be begun "within two weeks of the date" when the student is notified of the course grade (lines 12–3) so as to avoid violating the registrar's office regulation of the uniformity and standardization of the grading procedure. The grade appeal text both hooks particular courses of action into the institutional frame and reproduces/produces that frame in how the doings of participants are articulated to each other and to the organizational/institutional work.

3.   Burrowing into organizational/institutional intertextuality

Intertextuality is a concept from literary theory (Kristeva 1986). It insists that a text cannot be read in detachment from other texts that it addresses, reflects, refers to, presupposes, relies on and so on. A text is necessarily embedded in a complex of texts. Appropriating the concept from literature to the investigation of organizations and institutions directs us towards the complex of texts on constitute their archi-texture (Kallinikos 1995). A text such as the 'grade appeal' is embedded and implicated in and refers to the multiple texts that co-ordinate people's work done in a variety of different settings and at different times. Often texts are the exclusive medium of co-ordination. Each such text is intertextually co-ordinated. Entering the complex of organizational relations at one text connects the ethnographer with the other texts that come into play in ways analogous to how the grade appeal operates in locating particular people and their doings in the textually transcending order of the university. People's activities and sequences of activities are co-ordinated through the authorized texts of an organization/institution with the work of others similarly co-ordinated. In this way, the concerted work of an organization or institution gets done *as its work*. In this way, people's work in a given setting is co-ordinated to accomplish organizational or institutional objectives.

In the theoretical literature, intertextuality is for the most part viewed as primarily a matter of the interrelations among texts. In the organizational/institutional settings of research, intertextuality projects exploration of the complex of sequences of activity. Investigation can begin with a particular text, such as that of the grade appeal procedure. Its intertextuality can be traced in two ways: it can be traced through the categories of objects, subject/agents and forms of action of the text itself which presuppose and rely on other texts; and it can be traced for its part in a complex co-ordi-

nating the work sequences that produce organizational outcomes (such as valid grade transcripts registering students' academic achievements). A systematic ethnography of grade production in universities would examine the part played by texts in the transliteration of actual activities/work into organizational/institutional effects and outcomes. Each text would locate a moment in actual courses of action involving particular individuals when what is done becomes *of* the institutional order. The texts of the grading sequence could be schematically described as follows: Student and instructor enter a box called a 'course' itself defined as a set number of hours distributed week by week over a period of two months or whatever the term or semester length is. The topic of the course is part of a programme in a department or other administratively defined unit. Its presence as a unit in a programme has been approved at the university level, normally by the Senate or an equivalent body or one of that body's committees. The authorization of the course description establishes it as a course which can be counted, among departmental offerings. All such arrangements are designed at the departmental level, but they must be reviewed and approved by the registrar's office in order to ensure that they conform to the university-wide procedures and format.

This textual web creates the conditions under which the work of teaching and learning can be transformed into an authenticated record of student achievement. Imagine a faculty member deciding to give a course that has not been authorized through whatever procedure a university uses to recognize a course as among its offerings—students might take the course; learn a great deal; do interesting and fascinating work that demonstrates how much they learned which is then graded by the faculty member who taught the course. All this disappears like water into the sand if the course has not been authorized as part of the university offerings by the appropriate procedures.

For the student and instructor the course of work is specified in a course outline. The course outline is identified as an instance of the course as described in the bulletin by carrying the course number and its title on the outline. The course outline defines the sequence of topics, the readings and the assignments. The list of readings is co-ordinated with the bookstore and the library holdings and arrangements to put course books on a reserve list or otherwise provide for the availability of the books and articles listed. It provides a reading of what goes on in the course as a structured sequence of work in which the instructor on the one hand delivers to students discursive resources of the defined kind and evaluates their work in relation to that discourse, and students take on the tasks of translating each class into a stock of resources for the doing of an assignment or the taking of a test *in*

order to get a grade. Of course, students may take courses for other reasons or may audit a course that they are simply interested in, but the order of the course as a sequence is structured to produce work to be graded. Assignments are due on a given date. Dates for handing in completed assignments to the instructor for evaluation are set by the instructor, but the dates by which grades have to be handed in to the Registrar are set by the university. Grades are processed by the Registrar's office and officially entered as an item in a student's grade record. Registrar's office and instructor that (a) grades differentiate students (some universities require undergraduate course grades to approximate a bell curve); (b) that the piece of work evaluated by an instructor has actually been performed by the student whose name is linked to the grade in the final grade sheet. The Registrar's office also ensures that the length of courses and time allowed for completing assignments is more or less equitable across different departments and programmes.[11]

The grading procedures of a university hook it up into a complex of relations with other universities, hence a university must be able to guarantee the value of its grades by ensuring their authenticity (the student named did the work; the instructor evaluated her/his work and recorded the grade; the proper reporting procedures, including the instructor's signature have been followed; the computerized system is protected against hackers, and so on). And all these presuppose the textual systems that co-ordinate the university with its financial base and which provide an appropriate the buildings, the libraries, the paper, the copy-machines, and so on and so on and pays for the university employees not only faculty but the cleaners and maintenance people. And the course itself is a site at which the university's complex of authorized and authorizing texts connects through the course substances—material to be studied, books to be read, exercises to be done, and so on—to the social relational web of formalized academic and scientific discourses.

Every step of this sequence is textually organized and the agents and the types of activities that will be organizationally recognized are scripted. The texts both regulate (though they do not *prescribe*) and appropriate people's activities as organizational/institutional actions performed by people who can be named as members of an organizational/institutional category. What it is to be a student and hence someone who, having participated in the course and completed the assignments, is entitled to a grade, is defined by for the course being a registered student and having registered. Similarly

---

[11] Karen Jung has pointed out that the standardization of time periods within which course-work must be completed is a feature of the institutional order of the university that disadvantages people with disabilities (Jung 2000).

the instructor who teaches a course must have been duly appointed to a position—not just any one can walk on to campus and start teaching courses and grading students' work. An instructor has a definite contract with the university and is a paid employee. S/he has become an employee through selection procedures which pay attention to qualifications achieved in graduate school, including by implication at least, the individual's history of grades at undergraduate and graduate levels. The course with its description appears in the university's bulletin. The course description is part of the submission made by a department or program when a new course is being introduced. It becomes, once approved, among the formal offerings of the university. The description does not prescribe the course outline, but the course outline should be recognizable as a proper instance of the described course (students sometimes complain when the course outline doesn't conform to the formalized description in the university's publication listing departments, programs and courses, and so on).

The validity of the grade depends on the student having no say in the evaluation that produces the grade. The 'grade appeal' process introduces a loop in the sequence, enabling student and instructor or the arbitrator to redo the sequence from student's work, its evaluation and the submission of her or his grade. It is a loop that contains potential hazards for the validity of a university's grades. To appeal a grade is a potential insult to validity. Hence the grade appeal process is embellished with safeguards. The text-regulated procedure that co-ordinates the activities of the different parties is designed to ensure that the student's contestation doesn't challenge the operation at its basis in the profound insecurity of the instructor's judgment. Though the student has a say in who shall be the adjudicator, the director of graduate studies's mediation insulates the adjudicator from both student and instructor. The outcome of the whole process must then pass through the executive committee on its way to the registrar so that the final recommended grade comes to the registrar as an act of a departmental committee, an act of the department.

As organizational and institutional scripts, each text, sequence, subsequence or loops designed, as is the grade appeal process, to take care of contingencies while avoiding spoiling the textual coherence of a sequence, presupposes and can be connected back into the intertextual complex that holds the organization/institution in place and gives it form and capacities to act. These organizational/institutional sequences are vested in texts and it is texts that produce them as organizational/institutional. The sequences can be traced by tracing the sequence of texts that co-ordinate the work of those who are identified as participants. In a sense, it is possible by exploring a given text to burrow into the organization to discover how a given

work process is organized as a recognizable and accountable sequence of what sociologists sometimes describe as 'organizational behaviour.'

Conclusion

I have argued in this paper that developing sociological inquiry from within the everyday world in which discourse itself comes into being as particular activities, problematizes the multiple forms of objectified organization characteristic of the ruling relations. Inquiry from a standpoint in the everyday world problematizes these forms in two principal respects: one is the separation of organization from the particularities of relationships among individuals—a characteristic noted by both Marx and Weber; and the second, perhaps distinctively visible from the localized standpoint of the household which is where my own sociological adventures began, is the characteristic extra- or translocality of the forms of organization and relations through which the particular local settings and the particular times of people's doings are transcended.

Inquiry that starts in the particularities of the everyday world would seem to be stuck with observations that can be made within its scope. Important as have been the gains of sociologies that have mined the micro-levels of social organization, the penetration of the extended social relations in which people's everyday worlds are embedded is hampered by the characteristic lexical practices of sociology. The latter kick in as soon as observation no longer serves. The language of social science and more particularly that of the field of large-scale organization and institutions enables the social scientist to work at a level of abstraction that bypasses the problem of how the objects and relations it constitutes are to be found in the actualities of the social in people's doings. An essential indeterminacy is introduced into sociological statements at this level.

In this paper, I have proposed that recognizing the role of texts in the constitution of organization and institution makes it possible to extend ethnographic methods into the objectified, translocal relations of ruling. The materiality of textual replication means that the same form of words and images can be present in multiple local sites and across time. The notion of the text-reader conversation locates the text in the particularities of the everyday world in which a text is read or watched or listened to, and becomes actively engaged with readers, watchers or hearers. Here is the join between the local and the extra-local and here too is the medium of coordinating geographically separated, temporally various, and disconnected settings of people's work.

My examination of the text of a grade appeal showed the following:

1. How the text establishes a set of terms, formalized sequences, and so on, providing standardized-for-all-participants methods for analyzing and recognizing what might be done and what gets done as accountable organizationally/institutionally.
2. The grade appeal procedure as a text identifies definite categories of persons who can be recognized as subjects and agents with their appropriate capacities for action within its scope; people must meet definite (and textually-defined) conditions for entering the procedure;
3. The grade appeal text does not stand alone but is intertextually connected with a textually organized complex that can be explored ethnographically. A sketch of the interconnection of courses, grades and of grade transcripts as a final product suggests the potential of ethnographic strategies for exploring how texts accomplish organization in people's localized work activities.

I emphasize again that introducing texts as 'active' in organizing people's activities in organizational and institutional settings is not intended to be reductive. Texts, I suggest, are to be seen as they 'occur' in what people are doing locally. Just how organizational and institutional texts enter into local text-reader conversations and co-ordinate the work of people engaged in them is an empirical question. The 'grade appeal' analysis direct attention to how an institutional or organizational ethnography could begin to incorporate texts into ethnography and to substitute ethnography of the social for the indeterminacy of nominalized forms in organizational and institutional research. It shows how inquiry can burrow into large-scale organization beginning with a particular text and expanding research into the intertextual complex it is part of. Of course, texts don't stand by themselves; they are embedded in courses of action the institutional or organizational character of which is, however, accomplished textually. Indeed it is precisely that embedding that becomes to sociological investigator's resource for making visible the objectified and translocal organization in the daily actualities of people's work. Here is the possibility of *discovering* rather than presupposing organization and institution.

References

Anderson, Digby C. (1978) Some organizational features in the local production of a plausible text, *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 8.

Atkinson, Paul and Amanda Coffey (1997) Analysing documentary realities, in David Silverman (ed.) *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice*, 80–98, London: Sage.

Bakhtin, M.M. (1986) *Speech genres and other late essays*, Austin: University of Texas Press.

Barthes, R. (1979) From work to text, in J. V. Harrari (ed.), *Textual strategies: Perspectives in poststructuralism*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Bazerman, Charles (1988) *Shaping written knowledge: The genre and activity of the experimental article in science*, Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press.

Bazerman, Charles (1994) Systems of genres, in A. Freedman and P. Medway (eds), *Genre and the new rhetoric*, 79–101, London: Taylor and Francis.

Bazerman, C. and J.G. Paradis (1991) *Textual dynamics of the professions: Historical and contemporary studies of writing in professional communities*, Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press.

Berg, Marc (1998) Order(s) and disorder(s) of protocols and medical practices, in Marc Berg and Annemarie Mol (eds), *Differences in medicine: Unraveling practices, techniques, and bodies*, 227–46, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Berger, P. and T. Luckmann (1966) *The social construction of reality*, New York, NY: Doubleday.

Bhatia, V.K. (1993) *Analysing genre: Language use in professional settings*, London: Longmans.

Bresnen, M. (1988) Insights on the site: Research into construction project organizations, in A. Bryman (ed.), *Doing research in organizations*, 34–52, London: Routledge.

Buckholdt, David R. and Jaber G. Gubrium (1983) Practicing accountability in human service institutions, *Urban Life* 12(3): 249–68.

Campbell, M. and Ann Manicom (eds) (1995) *Knowledge, experience, and ruling relations: Studies in the social organization of knowledge*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Cicourel, Aaron V. (1968) *The social organization of juvenile justice*, New York: John Wiley.

Colignon, Richard A. and Mark Covaleski (1993) Accounting practices and organizational decision making, *Sociological Quarterly* 34(2): 299–317.

Cushing, Steven (1994) Fatal words: Communication clashes and aircraft crashes, in Steven Cushing (ed.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Czarniawska, Barbara (1999) Management she wrote: Organization studies and detective stories, *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies* 5(1): 13–41.

Dalton, M. (1959) *Men who manage: Fusions of feeling and theory in administration.* New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

de Montigny, G. (1995) *Social working: An ethnography of front-line practice,* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Dias, Patrick, Aviva Freedman, Peter Medway and Anthony Paré (1999) *Worlds apart: Acting and writing in academic and workplace contexts,* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Dunkerly, D. (1988) Historical methods and organizational analysis: The case of a naval dockyard, in A. Bryman (ed.), *Doing research in organizations,* 82–95, London: Routledge.

Emerson, Robert M. (1994) Constructing serious violence and its victims: Processing a domestic violence restraining order, *Perspectives on Social Problems* 6: 3–28.

Erikson, Kai T. and Daniel E. Gilbertson (1969) Case records in the mental hospital, in Stanton Wheeler (ed.), *On record: Files and dossiers in American life,* 389–412, New York: Russell Sage.

Espeland, Wendy (1993) Power, policy and paperwork: The bureaucratic representation of interests, *Qualitative Sociology,* 16(3): 297–317.

Foucault, Michel (1972) *The archaeology of knowledge* and the *Discourse on language,* New York: Pantheon.

Garfinkel, H. (1967) *Studies in ethnomethodology,* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Giddens, A. (1987) What do sociologists do? In A. Giddens, *Social theory and modern sociology,* 1–21, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Giltrow, J. (1998) Modernizing authority: Management studies and the grammaticalization of controlling interests, *Technical Writing and Communication* 28(4): 337–58.

Granovetter, M. (1992) Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness, in M. Granovetter and R. Swedberg (eds), *The sociology of economic life,* Boulder, CO: Westview.

Green, Bryan S. (1983) *Knowing the poor: A case study in textual reality,* London: Routledge.

Halliday, M.A.K. and J.R. Martin (1993) *Writing science: Literacy and discursive power,* Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Harper, R. (1998) *Inside the IMF: An ethnography of documents, technology and organisational action,* San Diego: Academic Press.

Heath, Christian (1982) Preserving the consultation: Medical record cards and professional conduct, *Sociology of Health and Illness* 4: 56–74.

Heap, James 1. (1991) Reading as cultural activities: Enabling and reflective texts, *Curriculum Inquiry* 21(2): 11–3.

Jepperson, R.L. (1991) Institution, institutional effects and institutionalism, in W.W. Power and P.J. DiMaggio (eds), *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kallinikos, J. (1995) The archi-texture of the invisible: technology as representation, *Organization: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Organization, Theory and Society* 2(1): 117–40.

Kristeva, Julia (1986) *The Kristeva reader*, Toril Moi (ed. and trans.), New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Linstead, S. (1999) An introduction to the textuality of organizations, *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies* 5(1): 1–10.

Manning, P. (1985) Texts as organizational echoes, *Human Studies* 9: 287–302.

Marsden, R. and B. Townley (1996) The owl of Minerva: Reflections on theory in practice, in S. Clegg, C. Hardy and W. R. Nord (eds.), *Handbook of organization studies*, London: Sage Publications.

McLean, Christine and Keith Hoskin (1998) Organizing madness: Reflections on the form of the form, *Organization: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Organization, Theory and Society*, 4(5): 549–91.

Mead, G.H. (1947) *Mind, self and society from the perspective of a social behaviorist*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Meehan, Alfred J. (1986) Recordkeeping practices in the policing of juveniles, *Urban Life* 15(1): 70–102.

Mehan, Hugh (1996) The construction of an L.D. student: A case study in the politics of representation, in Michael Silverstein and Greg Urban (eds), *Natural histories of discourse*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mellinger, Wayne Martin (1992) Accomplishing fact in police "dispatch packages:" The situated construction of an organizational record, *Perspectives on Social Problems* 4: 47–72.

Meyer, J.W., J. Boli, *et al.* (1994) Ontology and rationalization in the Western cultural account, in W. R. Scott, J. W. Meyer and associates (eds), *Institutional environments and organizations: structural complexity and individualism*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mykhalovskiy, E. (2001 forthcoming) Troubled hearts, care pathways and hospital restructuring: Exploring health services research as active knowledge, *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies* 7(2).

Ng, Roxanna (1988) *The politics of community service: Immigrant women, class and state*, Toronto: Garamond.

Olshan, Marc A. (1993) Standards-making organizations and the rationalization of American life, *The sociological Quarterly* 34(2): 319–35.

Olson, Lynn M. (1995) Record keeping practices: Consequences of accounting demands in a public clinic, *Qualitative Sociology* 18(1): 45–71.

Pence, Ellen (1996) Safety for Battered Women in a Textually-mediated Legal System, PhD thesis, University of Toronto.

Pence, Ellen (2001 forthcoming) Safety for battered women in a textually-mediated legal system, *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies* 7(2).

Perrow, C. (1986) *Complex organizations: A critical essay*, New York: McGraw Hill.

Pettinari, Catherine (1988) *Task, talk, and text in the operating room: A Study in medical discourse*, Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Rankin, J.M. (1998) Health care reform and restructuring of nursing in British Columbia, Exploring the restructuring and transformation of institutional processes: Applications of institutional ethnography, York University.

Reimer, Marilee (1988) The Social Organization of the Labour Process: A case study of the documentary management of clerical labour in the public service, PhD dissertation, University of Toronto.

Rukszto, K. (1994) Grade appeals procedures as co-ordinating courses of action, unpublished paper, Toronto.

Scott, W. Richard (1995) *Institutions and Organizations*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Scott, W.R., J.W. Meyer, *et al.* (1994) *Institutional environments and organizations: Structural complexity and individualism*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.

Smith, D.E. (1987) *The everyday world as problematic: A feminist sociology*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Smith, D.E. (1990a) *Texts, facts and femininity: Exploring the relations of ruling*, New York: Routledge.

Smith, D.E. (1990b) *The conceptual practices of power: A feminist sociology of knowledge*, Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Smith, D.E. (1999) *Writing the social: Critique, theory and investigations*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Smith, Dorothy E. and Jack Whalen (1995) Texts in Action, unpublished
    mss., OISE/UT.

Smith, D. E. and J. Whalen (1996) *Texts in action*, Toronto.

Stinchcombe, A. L. (1990) *Information and organizations*, Berkeley, CA:
    University of California Press.

Swift, Karen J. (1995) *Manufacturing 'Bad Mothers:' A critical perspective
    on child neglect*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Taylor, J. R. (1993) *Rethinking the theory of organizational communica-
    tion: How to read an organization*, Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Taylor, James R. and Elizabeth J. Van Every (1992) *The vulnerable fortress:
    bureaucratic organization and management in the information age*,
    Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Turner, S. (2001 forthcoming) Texts and the institution of municipal
    government: The power of texts in the public process of land
    development, *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies*, 7(2).

Usui, Chikako and Richard A. Colignan (1996) Corporate restructuring:
    Converging world pattern or societally specific embeddedness? *The
    Sociological Quarterly*, 37(4): 551–78.

Vaughan, D. (1996) *The challenger launch decision: Risky technology,
    culture, and deviance at NASA*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Walker, Gillian (1995) Lessons from the battered women's movement, in
    Marie Campbell and Ann Manicom (eds.), *Knowledge, experience, and
    ruling relations: Studies in the social organization of knowledge*, 65–
    79, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Watson, Rod (1997) Ethnomethodology and textual analysis, in David
    Silverman (ed.), *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice*,
    80–98, London: Sage.

Weick, Karl E. (1969) *The social psychology of organizing*, Reading, MA:
    Addison-Wesley.

Weick, Karl E. (1995) *Sensemaking in organizations*, Thousand Oaks, CA:
    Sage.

Wheeler, Stanton (ed.) (1969)_ *On record: Files and dossiers in American
    life*, New York: Russell Sage.

Woolgar, Steve (1990) Time and documents in researcher interaction: Some
    ways of making out what is happening in experimental science, in
    Michel Lynch and Steve Woolgar (eds.), *Representation in scientific
    practice*, 123–52, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Yates, JoAnne (1989) *Control through communication: The rise of system
    in American management*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University
    Press.

Zimmerman, Don (1966) Paper work and people work: A study of a public assistance agency, PhD dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles.

Zimmerman, Don (1969) Record-keeping and the intake process in a public welfare agency, in Stanton Wheeler (ed.), *On record: Files and dossiers in American life*, 319–54, New York: Russell Sage.