

ENGINEERING CULTURE:
CULTURE AND CONTROL IN A HIGH-TECH ORGANIZATION

by

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on October 21, 1986, in partial fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

"Organizational culture" has become a popular way of viewing organizations among both scholars and practitioners of management. While a large body of prescriptive writing proclaims culture management to be the wave of the future (Deal and Kennedy, 1982), a more critical perspective suggests it is a guise for a new form of managerial control of members (Edwards, 1979; Van Maanen and Kunda, 1987). There is little data to support either claim.

This dissertation reports results from a year-long ethnographic field study of the engineering division of a large high-tech organization, noted for its attempts to design and manage an organizational culture. The overarching goal of the study is to address the broad question: "What are the implications of a managed culture for the relationship between an organization and its members?"

Specifically, the findings are presented in three essays, each of which addresses a different aspect of the research question. In the first, the content and form of codified, internally disseminated managerial theories of the organizational culture are analyzed as a form of ideology. In the second, organizational rituals that provide the stage for the dramatic enactment of the ideology are described. In the third, the implications of managed culture for individual self-definition are explored.

The analysis suggests that the management of culture serves to develop a system of normative control that suggests a potential new stage in the relationship between organizations and members, and reveals some of its characteristics and consequences. First, the ideology of "organizational culture," articulated by both outside and inside sources, portrays the organization as an undifferentiated community of committed members, and articulates "member roles" consisting of appropriate beliefs, feelings and behaviors. Second, organizational rituals are shown to be "dramas of persuasion" that are the occasion for role enactment and enforcement using both cognitive and affective means. These dramas are also occasions for

counter-cultural expression, and the ambivalence between the two perspectives is expressed in the central symbols and the dramatic structure of the events. Third, members respond to attributed roles by defining an "organizational self" based on a controlled distance from the role. A distinct difference in orientation to the ideology was discovered between professional employees and others. For the former, ambivalence and self control are the central experience of membership; for the latter, estrangement and marginality.

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CHAPTER 1
CULTURE AND ORGANIZATION

We have not yet seen what man can make of man.

B. F. Skinner
Beyond Freedom and Dignity

"Organizational culture" is a concept that has captured the imagination of many students of organizations. In a large and growing body of research, scholars have attempted to define, refine and apply it to the analysis of organizational phenomena (see Ouchi and Wilkins (1985) for a comprehensive review of this literature.) However, students of organizational culture face the same problems that anthropologists have: "culture" is a notoriously complex and ambiguous concept. As a result, the definitional debates that have characterized the anthropological literature (Kroeber and Parsons, 1958; Harris, 1968) have been replicated in the study of organizations (Dyer, 1982; Sanday, 1979; Schein, 1985).

Despite the diversity of approaches to defining culture, an underlying consensus is evident. Most students of culture would agree with Goodenough's (1970) definition that at the broadest level, culture is "in the minds and hearts of men." It refers to a learned body of tradition that governs what one needs to know, think and feel in order to meet the standards of membership. Others would include in this definition the vehicles for public expression of these meanings - symbols or artefacts (Geertz, 1973). A similar consensus underlies definitions of "organizational culture." In organizational settings (1), culture is viewed as the shared rules governing cognitive and affective aspects of membership

in an organization, and the means whereby they are shaped and expressed (2).

Interest in a cultural perspective on organizational life extends beyond the community of scholars. "Organizational culture" is not only a powerful etic concept, but also has a significant emic dimension (3). Exposure to scholarly work and to a large body of popular literature has contributed to the adoption of a cultural perspective and its associated terminology among managers and other members of business organizations (4). The business press has granted it significant attention (Business Week, 1984) and it has become an acceptable, almost faddish part of routine organizational and corporate language. The focus is on the design and management of "organizational culture" in the service of organizational and personal goals. In particular, it is suggested that the "right" cultures have a significant impact on "the bottom line." In other words, organizations not only "have" (or "are") cultures from the vantage point of the disinterested observer, but their members also consciously use the concept in attempts to understand and influence the organization and its performance.

It is the contention of this thesis that the emic and etic popularity of "organizational culture" and its related concepts reflects important trends in the evolving social nature of work organizations. The overarching goal of the study is to examine some of the implications of the pervasiveness of a "cultural" perspective, and, in particular, to explore its consequences for the relationship between organizations and their members. Before these research questions are further sharpened, a brief review of the main themes in member-organization relations is in order.

Organizations and their Members

Self and Society

A major theme of social theory through the ages is the relationship between the individual and the collective (Sennet, 1977). If there is one generalization to emerge from the enormous body of work on this issue, it is that self and society stand in a dialectical relation. The complex intertwining of private experience and public events is captured in a variety of theoretical and disciplinary guises (albeit with different emphases). Freud (1961) saw civilization both as the sublimated product of intrapsychical impulses and as a constraint on the individual, settling as super ego in the deepest recesses of the mind there to spread discontent. Mead (1934) identified the self as a social entity and suggested that it is formed through role-taking and incorporation of the "generalized other" - a less punitive superego. Marx (1975/1867) pointed out the connection between the forces of production, the emergent cultural superstructure, and experiences of alienation or (he hoped) engagement. Geertz (1973), like other anthropologists, noted the cultural relativity of the notion of man. The list is, of course, long and diverse yet the insights seem like variations on a theme. All converge on the notion that social institutions evolve as the underlying tensions between individual and collective interests are created and resolved.

Berger and Luckmann (1966) capture the essence of this dialectical tension in their analysis of the evolution of society (institutionalization in their terms) as a problem in the sociology of everyday knowledge. They suggest three significant and interrelated moments of this dialectic: externalization - the attribution of meaning to social events, objectification - the creation of stable social arrangements based on

shared meanings, and internalization - the process whereby successive generations are introduced to and molded by objectified institutions. Society, in this view, may be seen as a dynamic reality that is socially constructed, and the self as a social phenomena that is inseparably tied to the evolution of social institutions and the collective knowledge they embody (5).

Questions regarding the nature of the ties between self and social institutions have become increasingly urgent. As Durkheim (1933) first noticed, the modern era is characterized by a breakdown of traditional forms of authority and the rise of increasingly differentiated, segmented and fragmented social groupings accompanied by changing conceptions of the selves of its members. He saw the maintenance of social integration and order in the face of these developments as a crucial problem for any society. In this view, the relationship between freedom and control, and between individualism and collective action, becomes the main issue with which individuals and institutions must struggle. It comes to the foreground of consciousness and becomes an issue, a question, a problem, a debate. This (quite celebrated) condition has been referred to as the "crisis of modernity" (Berger et al., 1974) and in an American context has been most recently revisited by Bellah et al. (1985) (6).

One of the arenas where this crisis is manifested frequently and dramatically is in work organizations.

Work Organizations: The Problem of Control

A conflict of interest lies at the foundation of the relation between organizations and their members. Purposeful collective action requires the coordination of activities of a diverse and heterogeneous membership. There

is, however, an inherent conflict between the demands organizations place on the time and effort of their members, and the frequently incompatible desires and needs of members when left to their own devices. Thus, the ability to control members - to cause them to behave in ways consistent with organizational goals - is a crucial problem for organizations to contend with. Attempts to solve it have resulted in the development of a variety of organizational forms.

There are two approaches to analyzing organizational forms of control: comparative/ cross-sectional, and historical/ longitudinal. Etzioni (1961) outlined a comparative typology of organizations based on the different possible ways in which control is accomplished. In his view, control is the outcome of a transaction between organizations and members (7). He classifies organizations by the type of power they attempt to exert over their membership: coercive, remunerative and normative, and members by the types of involvement in the organization: alienative, calculative and moral. The three main types of control relationships occur where there is a congruency between type of power and type of involvement. These are: 1) the use of coercive power over alienated members; 2) the use of economic power over calculative members; and 3) the use of normative power over members who form a moral attachment. Etzioni suggests that these types are equilibrium positions. While most organizations contain elements of all three, they tend to cluster around a particular type. Most work organizations, Etzioni suggests, fall into the second category (8). Members contribute time and effort to the organization in return for economic rewards. It is a contracted exchange that requires little or no personal involvement.

Like all cross-sectional approaches, Etzioni's typology is a useful

tool for descriptive comparison, but it provides little in the way of explanatory power (9). If one is to understand how and why particular forms of control emerge, a dynamic longitudinal perspective is needed. One such framework is offered by Edwards (1979), who uses a historical perspective to reveal and explain shifts over time in the nature of control in work organizations. He suggests three types of control that have evolved sequentially and correspond to the Etzioni types. The nineteenth century is characterized by "simple control:" the use of coercive power in small firms over a labor force subject to the whims of the market place, and manifested in the personal relationship of worker and foreman. The twentieth century witnessed a shift to "structural control" where control is embedded not in face-to-face relationships but in an anonymous structure supported by economic power. Its early form is "technical control" - epitomized by the automated line - where workers are subject to the authority of the mechanized production process and their compliance is sought through economic rewards. The more recent form is "bureaucratic control." Here control is embedded in the social structure of the work place. Workers are subject to the dictates of company policy and the impersonal, seemingly rational rules that govern work life.

To explain the development over time, Edwards proposes a disequilibrium model. He sees the three "congruent positions" suggested by Etzioni as only temporarily in equilibrium, and ultimately as incongruent. In this view, contradictions and conflicts inherent in each stage cause a new form of control to emerge gradually. Cast in Etzioni's terminology, in effect he suggests that each phase produces forces that lead to a shift to alienative involvement, and consequently to open conflict and decreased efficiency, and to a search for new forms of control designed to reduce

conflict and resistance. Thus, the historical development is one of dynamic shifts from congruent to incongruent positions.

According to Edwards, the shift to bureaucratic control has introduced a new type of relationship between work organization and individual, one that contains an increased emphasis on normative control.

"In previous control systems, there was little direct connection between personal attributes and control...these earlier systems of control left considerable leeway or tolerance for the workers to express other behavior to create their own ambiance or culture in the work place. There existed a certain breathing space inside prebureaucratic control...Bureaucratic control tends to be a much more totalitarian system - totalitarian in the sense of involving the total behavior of the worker. In bureaucratic control, workers owe not only a hard day's work to the corporation but also their demeanor and affections...The most sophisticated level of control grows out of incentives for workers to identify themselves with the enterprise, to be loyal, committed, and thus self-directed or self-controlled. Such behavior involves what may be called the "internalization of the enterprise's goals and values." ...now the "soulful" corporation demands the worker's soul, or at least the worker's identity."

Thus, Edwards suggests that work organizations are increasingly becoming arenas where transactions between participants are not only economic but experiential (10). Edwards is clear about the managerial side. In this view, agents of the organization attempt to manage not only specific work behaviors, but also the underlying cognitions and emotions that presumably guide them. Designing "work cultures" therefore is an attempt to capture the norms of the workplace and embed control "inside" members. In other words, managing culture reflects a shift to the exertion of normative power on the part of management, who in return offer increased employment security. He is less clear however, with regard to employee responses. Edwards warns that we are destined to repeat the past. He sees internal contradictions emerging as employment becomes a fixed cost, too heavy for management to carry. In other words, he suggests that exerting

normative power successfully indoctrinates people, but management will not be able to keep to its side of the bargain. The consequence is alienative involvement, already making an appearance.

Edwards makes broad claims, with little corroborating evidence. While seemingly sound in the analysis of the past, his perspective is at best hypothetical with regard to the present and future, and at worst dogmatic in its attachment to particular frames of reference for historical interpretation. How normative power is exerted, and, more crucially, what the response is in today's economic organizations, is still an open question. Little is known about the substance, form and implications of this type of control. Further generalizations (both cross sectional and historical, both prescriptive and critical) cry out for empirical evidence. This thesis is an attempt to answer the call. In the following section I will develop a literature-based framework for the examination of the control transaction, and specify the research questions.

Work Organizations and Normative Control: A Framework for Research

Most studies of normative control in organizational settings have focused on "people processing" organizations where coercive and normative control is often the explicit task of the organization. The underlying model they share is that of a relatively captive group of "inmates" and a faceless group of "agents." For example, studies of professional education (Becker et al., 1961), mental health institutions (Strauss et al., 1964; Goffman, 1961), the military (Janowitz, 1960), prisoner of war camps (Schein, 1961), police organizations (Manning, 1977; Van Maanen, 1979) and prison and reformatories (Street et al., 1966) illustrate the conflict

between normative organizational demands and individual needs, and the ensuing struggle to define and shape member experience from two different perspectives: the organization (represented by its leadership and agents), and the individual member.

Less attention has been paid to normative control business organizations (11). To provide a framework for studying normative control in such settings, the views of two influential theorists who have taken opposing sides of the question will be contrasted. Barnard (1938) formulated the essence of the organizational perspective, and Goffman (1961) offered the point of view of the member.

The Organizational Perspective

Barnard's influential reflection on his own experience as an executive at New Jersey Bell has provided an inspiration to many organizational theorists (Perrow, 1979). He defines organizations as "systems of consciously coordinated activities of two or more people." Since they are made up of contributions of activity, he claims, the willingness of persons to contribute efforts to cooperative systems is indispensable; "loyalty" must be more clearly recognized as an essential condition of organization. On the other hand, he adds, willingness to contribute also means self-abnegation and the surrender of control of personal conduct. The problem of organization, Barnard concludes, is that there is a large range of variation in individuals' orientation to organizations, from intense willingness to opposition or hatred, with the preponderance on the negative side. What willingness exists is therefore intermittent or fluctuating.

Under such circumstances, Barnard suggests, it is the task of the executive to elicit willing and predictable contributions of effort. Two methods are available:

"An organization can secure the efforts necessary to its existence, then, either by the objective inducements it provides or by changing states of mind. It seems to me improbable that any organization can exist as a practical matter which does not employ both methods in combination."

In this view, "objective inducements" include economic and social benefits of participation, from direct income to the opportunity for communion. These are necessary but not sufficient. They must be supplemented by an effort to change states of mind - the "method of persuasion." This includes the "creation of coercive conditions," the "rationalization of opportunity" and the "inculcation of motives." The latter is

"...a process of deliberate education of the young, and propaganda for the adults.... Associated with these formal processes are those which are informal and indirect. Precept, example, suggestion, imitation, habitual attitudes chiefly condition the motives and the emotional response of individuals to incentives. These are the controlling and fundamental conditions of whole peoples and of groups and classes."

In sum, Barnard claims that shaping the experiential life of others in the service of organizational interests is a crucial requirement of managerial work. Specifically, one of the functions of the executive as representative of organizational interests is to achieve cooperative participation through attempts to intentionally shape the self-definitions of members and control their emotional responses. This goes beyond negotiating a psychological contract (Schein, 1970). Management includes attempts to influence what employees bring to the contracting process by attempting to expand its domain of control over the entire person - the essence of normative power (12).

The Perspective of the Member

Goffman (1961) offers a perspective on life on the receiving end of attempted normative control. In an incisive analysis of the "underlife of a

public institution," he provides a framework for exploring the relationship between individual self-definition and the demands of formal organizations. Although he focused mainly on a narrow examination of patient life in a psychiatric hospital, he also ranged far and wide through literature (in both academic and artistic senses of the word), and engaged in speculation and perhaps (dare one say) introspection, in order to generalize the problem of self in normative organizations.

Goffman reiterates the theme that participation in organizational life, as in any social entity, requires both commitment and attachment. While there are culturally prescribed limits to the implicit negotiated contracts, there is more to these bonds than meets the eye. Goffman concurs with Barnard's view of the organization as a stage for normative control.

"In our society, then, as presumably in some others, a formal instrumental organization does not merely use the activity of its members. The organization also delineates what are considered to be officially appropriate standards of welfare, joint values, incentives, and penalties. These conceptions expand a mere participation contract into a definition of the participants nature or social being. Built right into the social arrangements of an organization, then is a thoroughly embracing conception of the member - and not merely a conception of him qua member, but behind this a conception of him qua human being."

Such conceptions are manifested not only in the verbal ideologies of management but also in varieties of informal versions and in managerial action. These conceptions may be seen as prescribed "member roles."

"Role consists of the activity the incumbent would engage in were he to act solely in terms of the normative demands upon someone in his position....It is through roles that tasks in society are allocated and arrangements made to enforce their performance...."

Roles, then are externally imposed. To this, however, Goffman adds his basic insight: the managed are free to react.

"..if any social establishment can be seen as a place where implications about the self systematically arise, we can go on to see it as a place where these implications are systematically dealt with."

He identifies two types of adjustments members can make to the demands of institutions. Primary adjustment refers to the acceptance of and cooperation with the requirements. Secondary adjustment refers to the unauthorized ways in which members get around the organizational assumptions and stand apart from the role and the self taken for granted for them. These might be disruptive - calling for radical change, or contained - fitting into existing structures. The totality of these practices are referred to as the underlife of the institution. These concepts are illustrated in the context of a mental institution where inmates "make do," "work the system," find escape worlds, engage in ritual insubordination and ultimately attempt to demonstrate (to themselves, if to no one else) that they have some personal autonomy.

Goffman, of course, wishes to generalize beyond the walls of the mental institution (or, perhaps, just to expand the walls) to include other types of organizations:

"The practice of reserving something of oneself from the clutch of an institution... can be found in more benign and less totalistic institutions, too. This recalcitrance is not an accidental mechanism of defense but rather an essential constituent of the self."

Central to his perspective is the notion that members systematically resist claims and decline to accept the official view of what they are about:

"Where enthusiasm is expected, there will be apathy; where loyalty, there will be disaffection; where attendance, absenteeism; where robustness some kind of illness; where deeds are to be done, varieties of inactivity. We find a multitude of homely little histories, each in its own way a movement of liberty. Whenever worlds are laid on, underlives develop."

While openly speculative, Goffman pushes the conclusions as far as he can (with an air of authority whose force, certainly not derived from data, must derive from the readers experience - the ultimate validity test for an interpretive method.) He suggests that in formal organizations

"...embracement of the unit is not all we see. We always find the individual employing methods to keep some distance, some elbow room, between himself and that with which others assume he should be identified. No doubt, a state type mental hospital provides an overly lush soil for the growth of these secondary adjustments, but in fact, like weeds, they spring up in any kind of social organization."

In sum, Goffman claims that members are free to react to their perceptions of the normative demands they face. Such "normative responses" include a choice of acceptance or rejection of the self implied in the normative demands of the organization and are the basis upon which an "organizational self" is constructed.

Conclusion and Research Questions

Taken together, the views of Etzioni, Edwards, Barnard and Goffman suggest that the relationship between organizations and individuals is a reality-defining transaction containing elements of normative control. The existing literature provides extreme and uncompromising views of both sides of the control transaction, built around a dichotomy of manager-employee. The work organization is presented as an elaborate stage where the struggle for defining the human condition is played out between representatives and members of the organization (who, however, are not always as easily distinguishable as Barnard and Goffman, and many who have followed, imply.) The attempt to control member behavior in the service of organizational goals includes attempts to shape the inner experience of members by defining "member roles" that include not only appropriate behaviors, but

appropriate experiences, attributes, and ways of seeing the world. Members, in turn, may adjust to demands made of them in unpredictable, if systematic, ways.

The purpose of this study is to examine the significance of explicit managerial attempts to "manage culture" for the nature of normative control in a business organization. Ethnographic data collected in one organization with a reputedly strong and managed culture is the basis for three related essays that examine three aspects of the transaction between organization and member that underlies the process of control.

In the first essay, the publicly disseminated managerial theories of the "organizational culture" of the firm studied will be analyzed as a form of ideology. The demands of membership that underlie the "reality claims" contained in the descriptions and prescriptions of organizational culture will be drawn out and the vehicles for their articulation described. Together, these represent the articulated normative demands that members face.

In the second essay, the collective gatherings where the ideology is enacted will be analyzed. These are organizational rituals that provide the stage where public definitions and private experience meet, and where some (but not all) reality claims are made and enforced. The rules that guide such events and the interactions that take place illuminate the meaning of the organizational ideology in everyday life.

In the third essay, the implications of managed cultures for member self-definition will be analyzed. How various types of members understand the demands and how they react to them is the basis upon which they construct an "organizational self."

The essays will be preceded by an overview description of the

organization that is the setting for the study, and followed by an integrative conclusion. The methods used to collect and analyze the data will be discussed in the appendix.

FOOTNOTES

1. The precise boundaries of the culture bearing collective is the subject of considerable debate. Some have suggested the entire organization as formally defined, others have focused on specific subgroups (managers, occupational groups, and so forth), and others yet have left it undefined or considered it an empirical question.
2. Students of organizational culture usually consider "culture" too broad a concept for empirical purposes. Pettigrew (1979) suggests it is best seen as a family of concepts that anthropologists have used to analyze their material. The main ones are: symbol, language, ideology, belief, ritual and myth. Schein (1985) offers a framework for tying together cultural elements - artefacts, ideology, and beliefs - and explaining their evolution.
3. The distinction between emic and etic concepts is the anthropologist's way of separating concepts used by people being studied and those used by the people doing the studying. Others have referred to this distinction as first and second order, or "experience-near" and "experience-far" concepts. This is a distinction that might be easy to maintain during temporary visits to illiterate and isolated societies; however, students of modern society have recognized that the complexity of interactions between social scientific discourse and natural language makes a clear distinction close to impossible. Giddens (1976) refers to this as "the double hermeneutic" and claims that it must be the starting point for any social science. Few have heeded him.
4. A number of bestsellers have cashed in on this booming market. For example, Deal and Kennedy (1982) analyze culture explicitly; Peters and Waterman (1982) do so implicitly.
5. Similar perspectives are available. Giddens (1979) proposed the somewhat stilted concept of "structuration" to capture the intertwining over time of subjective meanings and objective social configurations. Strauss's (1978) empirically grounded theory of negotiated order has preceded most, yet is apparently not stilted enough to catch on.
6. Bellah et al (1985) attempted to re-examine the themes of individualism and commitment in American life. They found a profound ambivalence among the several hundred white middle-class people they interviewed. Interestingly, they focus on arenas other than work and work organizations.
7. Etzioni uses "compliance" as his main variable, and he defines it as "... a relation in which an actor behaves in accordance with a directive supported by another actor's power, and ...the orientation of the

subordinated actor to the power applied." (p.3)

8. He points out that professional organizations rely more heavily on normative control. These however are not characteristic of most business organizations. Moreover, "professionalism" might be seen as a throwback to a preindustrial age, or as an ideal type many aspire to or try to present in their search for status (Hughes, 1958). Also, many observers have pointed out the growing bureaucratization of professional work (Wilensky and Lebeaux, 1965) and forms of organization (Friedson, 1970).

9. Perrow (1979) points out, quite rightly, that as far as explanation, Etzioni's scheme is tautological. Coercion produces alienation and vice versa. To the extent that Etzioni's goal was not explanatory, his scathing criticism is overstated. Where Etzioni does fall short, however, is his failure to exploit the power of his taxonomy, specifically in the lack of analysis of the noncongruent positions.

10. Edwards underplays the historical role of the normative aspects of involvement. As Durkheim (1933) has suggested, social arrangements embody and are sustained by a moral order. Edwards, however, in his rush to explain conflict and contest, bypasses the need to explain order and its normative underpinnings, and focuses on organizational control and the resulting conflicts with a recalcitrant and alienated workforce. Consequently, he ignores trends towards organizationally initiated normative control and moral involvement in earlier historical stages.

While it is fair to say that during early periods, the moral order of work was sustained by forces beyond the scope of the workplace, organizational attempts at normative control became increasingly evident at the turn of the century. Empirical support for this claim is provided by Bendix (1956), who documents the shift in managerial ideologies that accompanied the transition in forms of control. In particular, he shows the role that social scientists have played in providing the ideological framework for increased organizational attention to the control of member's personal attributes in the service of organizational goals. More recently, Nye (1985) illustrated the same point in his study of the General Electric photograph archives.

11. The literature on socialization in work organizations comes close. However, as I suggest in chapter 5, there is a distinct bias in this genre towards an integrative and prescriptive view. See f.n. (4) in chapter 5.

12. Barnard's major theoretical impact has been on those who concerned themselves with the calculative aspects of organization and leadership, while his views on the normative side have been relatively ignored. Thus, it is from Barnard that concepts such as "satisficing" and "inducement/contribution ratio" were borrowed and developed into theories of economic decision making under uncertainty. However, although crude by today's standards, Barnard's views on indoctrination have proved to be prescient, if not influential. It is only more recently that the role of leaders in shaping and designing cultural variables is coming under scrutiny (Selznick, 1957; Pfeffer, 1981; Schein, 1985).

CHAPTER 2 THE SETTING

High Technology Corporation: An Overview

High Technology Corporation, or "Tech" to its employees, is a large and successful corporation. Founded in the late 50's by a group of engineers, Tech started as a small and ambitious company with one innovative product. Despite intense competition, growth has been rapid. By 1975, Tech had approximately 25,000 employees and today it is an international corporation employing close to 50,000 U.S. employees and 100,000 world-wide (1). Financial indicators reflect Tech's tremendous economic success: over the last decade yearly revenues have increased from \$300 million to \$7 billion, and net income from \$30 million to \$320 million. The total worth of the company is estimated to be about \$6 billion. Tech is seen by industry observers as strong enough to successfully weather the cycles of prosperity and recession that characterize the industry. The future appears to be rosy.

The past, however, is not forgotten. "Corporate" - Tech headquarters - is located in the vicinity of "technology region," one of the high-tech centers that have sprung up around large urban and academic centers, close to where Tech's first engineering facilities were opened almost thirty years ago. Although the bulk of engineering work takes place at newer facilities (mostly in "the region"), "Corporate" is still the hub of corporate activity and center of politics, power and networking. Industry watchers agree that despite Tech's growth, its heart and soul - "Tech culture" (in popular terms) - remains influenced by its technical and geographical roots.

Conventional industry wisdom portrays Tech as an organization dominated by an engineering perspective. The business press frequently refers to Tech as belonging to a class of product-driven, technologically-oriented companies and contrasts it with others who emphasize marketing and "business." Much evidence is produced in support of this classification. The products are considered by those who make it their business to make such evaluation to be of relatively high quality. Tech is headed by one of its founders, an engineer who is said to think nothing of personally redesigning products before they are shipped, or intervening in the most nitty gritty details of product development. More crucially, Tech is built around people who have emerged from engineering backgrounds, who have put in their time doing product design, delivering "deliverables," "shipping steel," and eating from vending machines. Addicted to their work and often (it is said) perilously close to "burnout," they have lived through and survived what is only partly euphemistically known as "life in the trenches." All these add up to the affectionate yet critical perception of Tech as "an engineer's sandbox."

As one would expect, engineering skills are the time-honored claims to status at Tech - "technical sophistication," "practical experience," and "knowing what it takes to get a product out the door." In contrast, the day of the MBA has not fully arrived. The purveyors of modern management techniques have had to look for their just rewards elsewhere; at Tech they are considered by many to be "second-class citizens." Indeed, it is rumored that managers who have a business degree prefer to hide it or at least underplay its existence, while ambitious managers in other functions are advised to spend their evenings and weekends working on an engineering degree to gain legitimacy and complement what technical sophistication they

have already achieved by osmosis.

Nevertheless, Tech's continued success has created pressures for change. The growing size, changing market, more competitive industry, a number of embarrassing failures and what may only be called the managerial/academic "zeitgeist" introduced by a new generation of managers, have all resulted in calls for more "professional management." A "business perspective" is increasingly challenging the "technical" one. Attempts to simplify and integrate the product line, rationalize and "professionalize" the management system, gain increased control of product development and funding processes, engage in more aggressive marketing, and satisfy an increasingly differentiated customer base are in evidence. The claim that Tech is no longer a hungry start-up with an unlimited market of like-minded engineers is gaining popularity. For proponents of change, "the engineering sandbox" perspective is a continuing source of frustration. Although admittedly fostering creativity, it is also hard to control and structure.

Tech's management structure reflects the tension between advocates of creativity and of control. It is a complex and often shifting matrix headed by its founder, and approximately 40 vice-presidents who manage the functions and areas: engineering, manufacturing, field service and sales, finance, human resources, international groups, product marketing groups and so forth. A group of senior engineers (vice-president level) head the technical direction of the company. A number of senior committees (an executive committee, a strategy committee, and so forth) are the main decision-making bodies that survive the frequent reorganizations and fairly high turnover at senior levels. Engineering is reputed to be the most influential group at the corporate level.

The Engineering Division: Social Organization

"Engineering" is a large and complex social system defying simple description. This chapter will present an overview of Engineering, using a number of different analytic schemas. First, the organizational structure will be outlined. Next, a more detailed taxonomy of the various social categories within the population of Engineering will be developed; and finally, the physical and social work environment will be described. This will provide the foundation and the context for further analysis in the following chapters.

Organizational Structure

The organizational structure of Engineering is often described by insiders as vague, decentralized, chaotic, ambiguous, a controlled anarchy. Like other groups at Tech, it is marked by frequent reorganizations. "If one thing is constant it is change" is an often-heard and apparently insightful, if not original, cliché uttered in a combination of weariness, pride, resignation and probably self-comfort by members of this group who believe generally that "Tech has never encouraged stable groups" and that "it is a Tech tradition not to let any group get too large or too powerful."

Organization charts are not easy to come by. Although they exist for various subgroups for working purposes and may be collected through the efforts of secretaries, or the painstaking piecing together of information, gossip and frequent organization announcements, there is an accepted tendency to frown on simple mappings of the complex network of activities, to be vague about them or fashionably against mechanistic structure. It is conventional wisdom that charts are always outdated, and that current ones

are at best an invitation for tampering.

This posture is realistic to a degree, for it is indeed difficult to display the structure of relations at Tech. But, it is also a way of conforming to what many Tech employees (as well as outside observers) see as one of the key elements of the explicit and often discussed "Tech culture" - matrix management, multiple dotted lines, dense, almost indecipherable networks of informal relations, and an aura of ambiguity that, depending on context, is either celebrated as a source of creativity, or seen as a pain in the neck. As a result, formal and informal organization are not readily distinguishable. Informal organizing is formally prescribed and acknowledged. For many, "culture" replaces "structure" as an organizing principle to explain reality and guide action.

Nevertheless, there is enough stability to allow a structural mapping. Engineering consists of approximately 4000 engineers, 1000 managers, and support staff. Top management and staff groups of the division are located at "Corporate" (see chart 1 for a simplified organization chart). In essence, Engineering is divided into a number of "integrated product groups" (IPG), each carrying profit and loss responsibility for designing and developing a well-defined segment of the overall product set. Engineering also has administrative (personnel, finance), technical (research, engineering process) and business (marketing, product strategy) staff functions. As at the corporate level, senior committees and task forces are the key decision-making bodies.

Advanced Products The materials presented here focus in particular on one of the integrated product groups: Advanced Products (or AdProd). Managed by a vice-president, this group has responsibility for developing a set of products that are seen by many in the company as part of the "new

wave" and therefore critical to the future success of the company. "Either we are successful or Tech is history. Also rans. It's a bet your company gamble..." is a typical, frequently heard, and perhaps overly dramatic summary of the group's perceived importance. The group has "high visibility." Senior management pays close attention to its affairs, and its successes and failures are scrutinized and discussed frequently by those who believe that it is smart to keep a finger on the pulse of the organizational "winners" and "losers."

AdProd staff is located at "corporate" and consists of a number of groups. The architecture group consists of senior engineers responsible for the technical direction and advanced development of products. The strategy and marketing groups are responsible for the "business perspective" - examining the market needs, managing customer contacts and surveys, press relations and so forth. This group is heavily involved in determining future directions for product development based on market evaluation and considerations of profitability. These are Engineering's "in house" business functions; Engineering is perceived to be a more influential organizational location for holders of this perspective. Other staff groups include a quality education group that performs a variety of consulting, training (both technical and managerial) and publication functions and a number of "program offices" - matrixed groups that are charged with integrating the various products developed by the line groups into compatible and marketable product sets, and with influencing future developments.

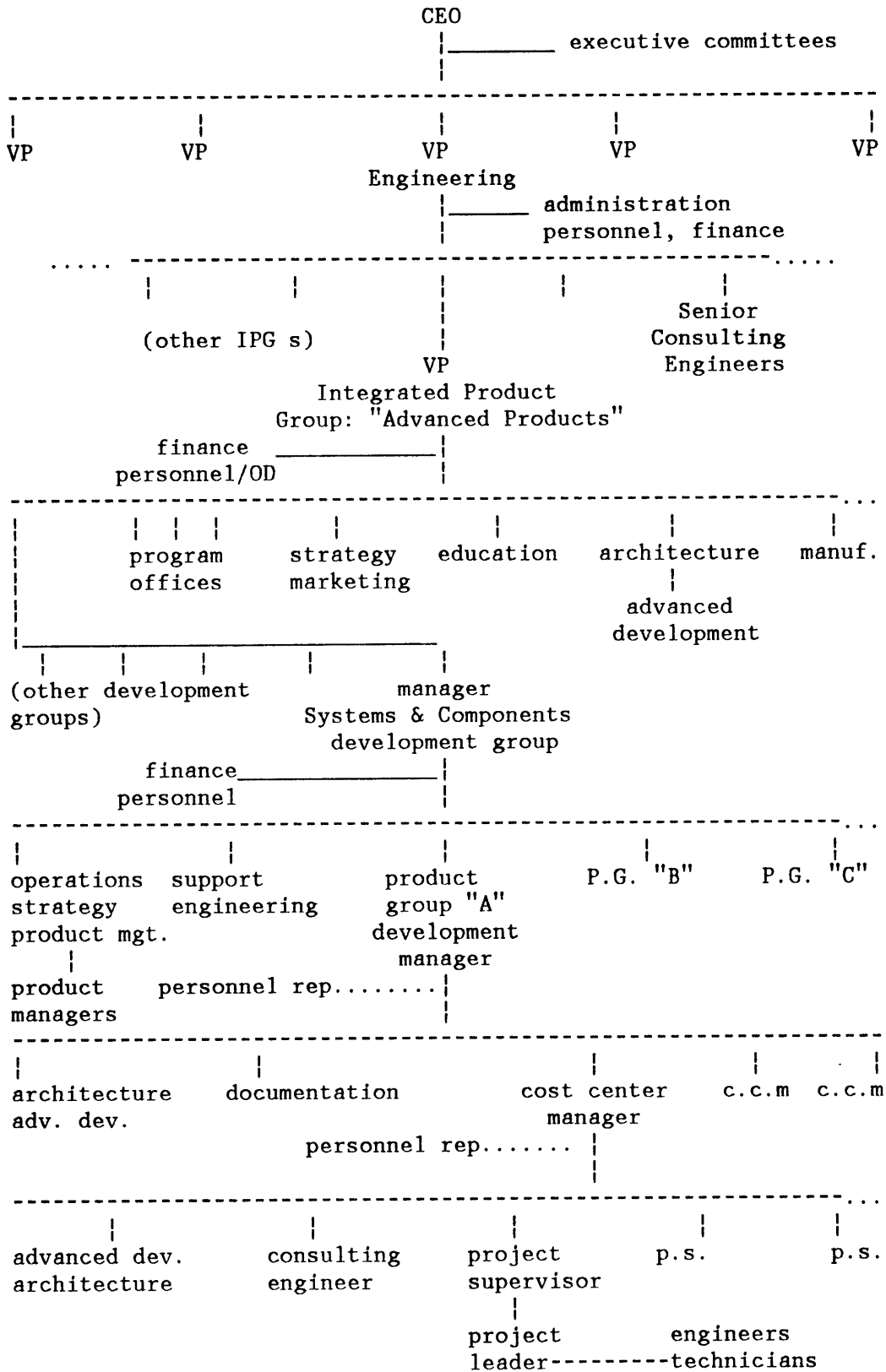
The development groups in AdProd are defined as independent business units. They are located in self-contained engineering facilities in the general vicinity of "corporate." Each is managed by a senior engineering

manager. The structure of one of these groups, Systems and Components (SysCom) is outlined in chart 1 (2). SysCom, located at a facility not far from "corporate," consists of roughly 1,000 employees and has a budget of about \$20 million. As a business unit SysCom has line product development groups and staff. The product groups each have a set of product responsibilities. Each product group is divided into "cost centers" managed by development managers who control a number of discrete "projects" - groups of engineers working on the development of well-defined and funded products. Projects are managed by supervisors (with managerial responsibility), in cooperation with project leaders (with technical responsibility). Each project has a number of engineers and technicians working on it, usually full-time, as well as technical writers and other technical support. Project teams stay together for the duration of the development process, anywhere from a few months to a number of years. Cost centers also usually have a small number of "individual contributors" - experienced engineers not assigned to particular projects.

SysCom staff consists of administrative staff (finance, personnel and administration functions) with dotted line reporting to AdProd staff, and engineering support groups and a product management group. Product managers are assigned to projects with responsibility of overseeing the various development stages, coordinating relations between various actors and with external groups such as marketing, sales and field service, as well as with customers.

An outline of formal reporting relations is just a partial depiction of the organizational structure. One reason is that they are inherently unstable. Projects may disappear overnight or are recombined in different formats. Projects may be transferred from one product group to another as

CHART 1
Simplified Organization Chart



the product groups change their charters (or their managers); they may be funded, controlled or managed by more than one group; they may be funded by external groups or subcontracted out of the organization. Staff groups and groupings may shift around, disappear and reappear.

In addition, there are formal and informal overlays of structure that need to be considered. Many managers and engineers are involved in temporary task forces or committees that cut across the organization. More permanent "program offices" are responsible for integrating the efforts of various groups and organizations around specific issues. Consequently, many working relations are rather loosely defined as "dotted line" or are not defined at all. From this point of view, the organization is conceived of in multidimensional terms and is broken down into "worlds" and "spaces" that transcend the reporting structure. Less formal structural overlays are known as "networks" and these are based on initiative and personal acquaintance around technology, interest, or shared personal characteristics. In such an environment, responsibilities of groups and individuals ("ownership") are negotiated. "Who owns what space" is often the subject of debate, conflict and disagreement - key elements of the highly political and rapidly shifting social environment that many agree characterizes the industry, its organizations and personalities.

Social Categories

The population of Tech Engineering falls into three distinct categories that define the rights and obligations of membership, identity, centrality, and status. First, "wage class four" are all those on monthly salaries - the engineers and the managers. They share a company-wide formal ranking system known as "levels" (ranked from one to seven) that serve as a baseline for compensation, and are entitled to flexible work hours and

part-time work. Second, "wage class two" are the hourly workers. The most salient in Engineering are the secretaries and support services. "Wage class" status is more apparent from below. It is the "twos" who are most aware of the distinction; from their perspective, the "fours" are privileged (and therefore envied). Both wage classes are considered full-fledged members of the organization, entitled to the whole range of formally defined company benefits (3) as well as customary ones (such as the celebrated Thanksgiving turkey for each employee, and the "no layoff" policy). The third category is temporary workers, who are hired for specific tasks but are not considered "Tech people" even over considerable periods of full-time employment. They receive none of the benefits and, more crucially, may be laid off or terminated very easily. Although physically present, they are exempt from "the corporate culture;" depending on one's perspective this is either a blessing or a curse.

Engineers "Engineer" is both a professional title and an organizationally defined employment category. In most cases, these two overlap; Tech's engineers are graduates of engineering schools. However there are also Tech engineers (largely in computer programming) who have no formal training in engineering or computer science; instead, they are self-taught or have received company-sponsored training. To be eligible for the title, they must pass a company-arranged examination. This was easier in the past when Tech was smaller and less formal, and when the software field was less developed.

Development of new products is the glamorous work. This is seen as the essence of creative engineering; it is what engineering is all about. It is high pressure work: crunches, slips and other forms of organized hysteria

accompany the pressure to be creative, to produce, to be smart, and to conform to the demands and constraints of management. Other engineering groups in the Engineering division are involved in lower status support activities: field service, performance evaluation, maintenance, quality. They are found in manufacturing groups, on the staff and in support roles in development groups. Some of these engineers aspire to a job in development and occasionally make the transition; others are quite comfortable in a quieter atmosphere, with nine-to-five jobs and with less of the characteristics of life in "development."

The prevalent image of engineers defines the nature of identification with work and the personal characteristics that accompany it. Technology and its esthetics are said to be the main concern of engineers who are driven by a fascination with "neat things" or "bells and whistles" - challenging features to design, interesting problems, and sophisticated state-of-the-art technology. "The prize for hard work," it is said, "is more hard work." If not available in the regular work and assigned projects, they can feed the "midnight projects" - the illicit projects that dedicated engineers are said to take on in their own free time out of interest or the joy of work (4).

"Art is what you do for yourself; work is what you do for others" says a prominently displayed slogan, one of the many expressions of identity on the walls of the cubicles within which engineers work. Engineers generally are said to prefer the former and to possess big egos, addictive personalities, little if any social skills not to say graces, a bent for hard obsessive work often at the expense of family and other life, and a penchant for "burnout," the scars of which are carried about and displayed almost as one would a purple heart. An engineer's commitment, it is

implied, is often to the technology rather than to the company. This image, immortalized to the satisfaction of many in Tracy Kidder's "The Soul of the New Machine" ("the only one who really understood us"), carries with it much folk wisdom that is used by many in the organization to explain or rationalize their decisions, feelings and attitudes. It is a stereotype against which many measure and evaluate themselves and others. It is of particular concern to managers who must control and channel the energies of engineers as well as keep them happy. Loyalty, commitment and hard, creative work are the goal of those who concern themselves with the nature of engineers.

Within development, engineers sort themselves out by the type of work they do and their perceived skill. Engineering is a highly competitive arena, with the formal statuses supplemented by informal definitions of perceived status. Informally, engineers are categorized by their skill. There are the "brilliant" and the geniuses, their status sometimes debated ("the only way he made the list of 100 brightest scientists is if he mailed coupons from the back of cereal boxes...") and sometimes acknowledged ("Peter is brilliant. There is no question about that," "he is a crackerjack engineer"), and there are journeymen (and the occasional woman) who might be "solid citizens - no rah rah" or sometimes just "bodies." ("They were short on the project; needed some coding done to meet the schedule, so they brought down a body from Corporate; the body's name was Bill.")

Engineers own the "technical world" and see others who might interfere with their art as "overhead," "do-nothings" or, extremely, as "product preventers" - the worst curse of them all. Nevertheless, many are aware of the business issues. In some cases they take an active interest in

pricing decisions, themselves recognizing the market as the ultimate judge of their success, or at least a precondition for the opportunity for more "neat things."

Formal status is organizationally recognized. The "engineering community" has a separate ranking system - the technical track. The engineering career at Tech has a number of stages built around the technical career track. Table 1 presents the levels, ranks, numbers, average pay and tenure of the Tech engineering population (data is limited to the engineers defined as involved with development work) (5).

Table 1

LEVEL	TITLE	POPULATION (% of total)	AVERAGE PAY (\$ per year)	AVERAGE TENURE (years)
7	Corporate Consulting Engineer	0.05	87,000	12
6	Senior Consulting Engineer	1.5	72,900	9
5	Consulting Engineer	5.0	59,000	8
4	Principal Engineer	26.0	48,300	6
1-3	Junior Engineer (three levels)	67.0	n.d.	2 - 5

Junior engineers typically do lowly and boring work ("cranking out code" is the standard example) and engage in narrowly-defined tasks. Principal engineers have proven technical skills to their managers and typically have senior project responsibilities including project leadership on smaller projects. Consulting engineers have larger responsibility, including overall responsibility for an entire product or system ("a

technical guru") or acknowledged expertise in it. Consulting engineers are less involved in specific projects; instead they engage in corporate-wide consulting, trouble-shooting, initiation of projects, membership in technical task forces and committees and so forth.

The technical track has standard stages. Almost all entry level engineers are college hires, recruited out of engineering schools. The engineers with no formal training are a dying breed. Junior engineers can progress up a rank and pay scale. At the junior level promotions are fairly rapid. Over time, junior engineers are informally evaluated. For those who choose a technical career, promotion to principal engineer involves recognition of a status jump. Promotions to the senior levels resemble academic tenure decisions. A corporate committee evaluates the candidate's technical contribution, and engages in the kind of politicking familiar to academics.

Leaving the track can occur for a number of reasons. First, moving in to management. Principal engineers have a critical career decision to make. One can opt to remain on the technical track or move into management (lateral or promotion). At this point the typical engineer has been doing project work for an average of about four years. An abundance of folk theory explains the transition choice - "burnout," ambition, boredom, a technical "Peter principle," a desire for change, an interest in "people issues." Some call it "getting the disease," for others it is the sign of growing up. All agree that the price is involvement in all "the politics and all the shit that goes on."

The pros and cons of the choice are hotly debated. Statistics are utilized to support each case. Some engineers believe that the managerial track promises more potential income and room for growth. Although a

corporate effort has gone into designing a more promising and rewarding technical track in order to keep the talented technical people doing technical work, promotion to senior positions is regarded as difficult. Table 1 shows a distinct bottleneck at the consulting level. Creative ways of circumventing the perceived disadvantages of the technical track include taking a promotion into management while remaining a technical person (6).

Approximately 10 - 15% each year transfer elsewhere in the company. Less successful engineers, or those not perceived to "have what it takes," may transfer to nontechnical jobs. Others might be seduced by the many "headhunters" preying on engineering talent and may join the ranks of the startup companies where security is traded for excitement and higher monetary awards. In keeping with the tradition of job security, very few are actually terminated.

Managers Managers are the movers, the shakers; they make it all happen. The engineering managers throughout this structure all have a technical background; almost all with formal engineering training and development experience (or at least with Tech experience in engineering) (7). Technical sophistication is practically the sine qua non of management in engineering; without it, one gets no respect. Tech managers have a reputation for remaining very technical, often at the expense of developing "management skills." Conventional wisdom suggests that "amateurish management" is one of Tech's shortcomings. Those who wish to break with this tradition label themselves "people persons."

The managerial track runs parallel to the technical one (see table 2). Supervisors - on the first rung of the managerial ladder - are at the same level as principal engineers. Mostly fresh out of engineering work, they typically manage small projects or parts of larger ones. For the first time

they are expected to take care of "people issues" - the formal and informal requirements of managing engineers and others. It is a skill that is not presumed to come easily to engineers. Promotion up the managerial ladder involves managerial responsibility for larger projects and for product groups and organizations. At higher levels, managers become involved in budgetary questions and relations with other groups in the division, company and the rest of the world. Increasingly, "business" and "political" skills become important, as well as "Tech-knowledge" - a familiarity with the company, the people and "the culture."

Table 2: Engineering Managers (8)

LEVEL	TITLE	POPULATION (% of total)	SALARY
5	Group Manager	0.09	97,000
4	Senior Engineering Manager	0.20	80,100
3	Engineering Manager	0.36	63,900
2	Supervisor	0.35	48,900

It is the engineering manager's job to mediate between the technical and business worlds, the two central ideological forces in this universe. The technical world is a familiar one to all managers; it was their first love. But "business" is a pervasive force, an adult reality with its own charms. The "business perspective" is carried by senior managers (and certain specialized staff groups such as marketing, strategy and product management) and driven down the managerial ranks (8).

Business imposes two criteria for success: revenue and time. The business of business is, of course, profit. In this view, making money is

regarded not only as a necessity, but as an ideal, the measure of all things good. Senior engineering managers are evaluated both formally and informally on their ability to "produce revenue." The business perspective is translated down the line into "time to market" requirements and "aggressive scheduling." To balance the forces of technology and profit, managers must be able to ship products on time.

Managing time is of central importance in managerial work. This is not easy. The dilemma it poses is a recognized fact of life. On the one hand, managers are evaluated formally, and more importantly, informally on their ability to ship on time. On the other hand, they are frequently committed to unrealistic schedules. ("Let's face it. If you want the project you have to lie! Otherwise the other guy will get it. And he's lying too. And your engineers - well they are playing the same game...") Schedules, slips, crunches and delays thus become an eternal bone of contention. "I want it yesterday" is the demand of the desperate manager. "I need more time!" is the equally desperate reply. Managers pressure the people and projects they own while fighting off external pressures. "Time to Market" becomes the grand criterion of organizational assessment.

To successfully do their work, managers must balance a number of potentially conflicting tasks. In order to squeeze the most out of engineers and development groups, they are to create the right environment for unleashing creativity by buffering engineers from the organizational turbulence, and protecting them from unrealistic demands and irrelevant politics. They must also keep them from succumbing to the temptations of headhunters or the sirens' lure of overwork and "burnout." They must also channel creative energies towards meeting business goals, by curbing their engineers' predilection for "creeping featuritis," fascination with "bells

and whistles," and urge to move a midnight project to high noon (9).

All would concur that the managers' lives are hectic. "Burnout" is an ever present threat. One has moved away from the dirty work of hands-on engineering, only to find other forms of "dirt." ("There is an incredible amount of crap going on as you move up. All the politics.") In addition, time pressures are great. Heavy demands are made on managers' time. Keeping a sane calendar is an ongoing concern for managers as well as their secretaries.

Many of the managers are ambitious, upward-looking, and aspire to make it at Tech (or elsewhere in the industry, as some would privately acknowledge). To successfully balance the requirements of their work, managers must cultivate a number of skills. First, they must remain "technical" or at least conversant enough not to lose their credibility or allow themselves to be misled. Second, they must learn to understand the business world. Third, they must develop their "people skills." This includes understanding and managing engineers, and learning the often uncultivated intricacies of social interaction. Finally, they must hone their "political skills" - the art of doing battle in an environment perceived as highly conflictual. At the same time, some speak privately of an early retirement or a quieter lifestyle. It is the oft-mentioned alternative to the unpleasant aspects of participation in organizational life.

Mobility can be quite rapid. Managers carry with them a reputation, often as good as the last project they were associated with. Observers of managerial behavior in Engineering claim that managers often attempt to bail out of failing projects or leave before the market has responded in order to preserve and utilize their reputations (10). In this view,

reputations are more a result of luck or "political and presentational" skills. Thus, many a reputation is debated.

Failure may have a number of consequences. Managers reputed to be unsuccessful are often passed on to other groups with good recommendations, while those who have "burnt out" might be "taken care of" by being assigned to one of a number of relatively ill-defined jobs whose sole purpose seems to be to allow the company to live up to its public commitment to take care of its employees. More serious casualties are also discussed by managers and engineers. Stories of alcoholism, divorce, psychiatric breakdown and even suicide are heard. Thus the struggles of daily existence are highly dramatized. The extremes of winning and losing are portrayed in gory detail in stories and in the terminology used to define them. This drama is often public and open, consistent with the images of exciting high-tech organizational life. More privately, however, one also hears references to the fact that losing is not all that bad. There is a well identified (and, no doubt, reassuring) class of early retirees, deadwood. Says one manager faced with the possibility of losing funding for his work: "There is only an upside here; no down side. The worst case is to retire on the job. I know quite a few people who spend most of their time tending their investments or taking care of their yachts... life isn't so bad on 60 K a year!"

"Wage Class Two" "Wage class two" employees are the hourly workers. Neither professional nor managerial, these people provide the services and the work that support the activities deemed central. In Engineering, the "wage class two" are mostly secretaries. Almost all are female. They work fixed hours - nine to five - and make an average of \$12 an hour. Most are lifelong residents of the local towns. The younger ones, in many cases,

have degrees from local colleges, and some hope to move into nontechnical managerial jobs. Others are reconciled to staying where they are and hoping for a promotion within their category. Senior secretaries who have been with the company for at least ten years are entitled to weekly pay.

Temporary Workers Tech employs two kinds of temporary workers. Most are hired for some of the dirty work (cleaning, etc.) as well as security, and other services for which Tech employees are not hired. In addition, people are often hired for secretarial positions beyond that allowed by "headcount." Referred to as "tags," or "temps," they do secretarial work similar to employees. Many of the temps see this as an opportunity to get hired full-time. For them, getting in is an achievement, a promise of more security and access to highly regarded benefits.

Higher status temporary work is performed by "contract workers" who are usually free-lance engineers hired for specific tasks and paid well above the corporate rate (11).

Statistics are not available for all of Engineering, but extrapolating the percentages found in a number of subgroups suggests that temporary workers are approximately 8-10% of the total population. Numbers change with the ebb and flow of hiring freezes and other personnel policies.

The Work Environment

Spatial arrangements are highly flexible. There are many stages upon which the drama of everyday life at Tech unfolds. A primary stage is the office. At Tech the principal of open space design is strictly enforced for all employees. The open office space resembles a beehive of cubicles and activities. Office design depends on level and function. Engineering facilities are built around large open space labs that house the computers

and technical equipment. Offices are designed as open cubicles in large office halls, ringed by seminar and meeting rooms. A typical office measures 8'x 8' with 5' high partitions, and has no door. Each has a telephone and a computer terminal. Projects and groups are typically clustered in the same vicinity. Engineers and managers have their own cubicle. Senior managers occupy corner offices and often have slightly larger space with room for their secretary in an adjacent office. At corporate, senior managers might have closed offices but even they have doors with glass panels. Secretaries to senior managers occupy a cubicle that is designed as the entrance to another; others occupy desks in open space. Each facility also has large open cafeterias. The space is designed for encouraging openness and communication, as well as minimizing status distinctions. Thus, status symbols and privacy must be sought elsewhere.

Many other stages exist, each offering different degrees of privacy. Meeting rooms off the central office space provide space for more private or formal design meetings, status reports, staff meetings, and other configurations in which time is spent or misspent. Much formal and informal interaction takes place in restaurants and bars close to the facilities. Local hotels provide the stage for many off-site meetings, conferences, trade shows, and product announcements. Tech also has conference centers with private meeting rooms.

Technology offers another space within which to interact. The "technet" is an electronic system that offers an instant world-wide link between Tech terminals. It also provides uncontrolled access to multinational and multi-company networks such as "bitnet" and "arpanet." All managers and engineers have their own mailstop directly connected to the terminal in their office. The traffic within and between facilities is

heavy and smooth, and is used for both work and leisure. During the work day terminals are always on, and the arrival of mail is announced with an audible beep. Many engineers and all managers also keep a terminal at home which allows them to work via the telephone lines.

The flexibility of space is complemented by a flexible approach to time. "Wage class four" members often use "flexitime." As long as they fulfill commitments and don't arouse attention, they are allowed to manage their own schedules and to design their work day as they see fit. "Wage class two" members, on the other hand, work regular hours.

On a typical day, engineers may be seen in their cubicles, attached to the ubiquitous terminal, often with ear plugs to keep out the unending background squeaks and whirs of high-tech industry noise, and to prevent interruptions that are always occurring in this space, intentionally designed for openness and communication. Others might be observed in the labs, bent over the hardware. Managers are more mobile and less available, although their secretaries are always around. They might be engaged in the seemingly endless stream of "one-on-one" and group meetings that, if not controlled, tend to take over their diaries. These take place in the office or in any one of the convenient meeting places the environment has to offer.

The common space around the cafeteria is used throughout the day. During the morning and afternoon hours it provides the setting for many informal meetings over computer output or paper and pencil designs. It is humming at lunch time; members of the different categories share the space, congregating around the many tables. The lunch hour is also used for leisure activities; most noticeable are the sports crowd, the runners and the card players.

In sum, the work environment reflects the same tension between structure and chaos that is central to the social worlds of Tech. Here, too, ambiguity and flexibility are key concepts. Both space and time boundaries are loosely defined and negotiable. What structure exists is often subtle and implicit.

Comment

Tech Engineering is an intense, complex, and ambiguous environment. It couples demands of high investment with a looseness of structure, and a flexibility of spatial arrangements and time boundaries. Heavy demands are made on the time and energy of employees, particularly those in the professional and managerial ranks. The organization consists of a complex network of relationships, with relatively few of the traditional organizing principles to comfort and guide members. Structural principles and social categories provide broad definitions with which to begin to make sense of the social environment, but many insiders consider these insufficient. Instead, Tech as a social entity is internally characterized as having a "culture" that provides the map for employee behavior. It is to the explicit views of "Tech culture" that we now turn.

FOOTNOTES

1. All descriptive statistics in this chapter have been rounded or changed in the interest of preserving the disguise. Where relevant, relations between the numbers have been maintained in order to illustrate analytic points. Similarly, references to the popular press do not include specific citations.
2. This group was one of my main sites. Other groups are similar in some respects but different in others, so it is only partly a representative group.

3. Tech offers a broad array of benefits to its employees: a credit union, education, stock options, health, childcare. These are seen by many as a form of "golden handcuffs" that are designed to "lock in" employees.

4. Occasionally management informally encourages these projects or turns a blind eye to the time and energy they demand. It is rumoured that many a successful Tech product started off as a midnigher, occasionally even using company funds somehow made available. Real midnight projects are, apparently, becoming less frequent. This is seen by some as a loss of the old creative spark the company possessed when it was smaller. Others, particularly managers, welcome the normalization.

5. The data in this table was collected from a variety of internal and external sources. Like all statistical data, the context of its production must be questioned. At Tech, statistics of this sort are considered political ammunition and very "sensitive." Accuracy is often challenged. The reader is warned.

6. This, of course, creates misleading statistics. It is one example of the systematic distortions that are built into company-sponsored statistical analysis. There are many others.

7. An additional managerial group consists of the functional managers (personnel, finance, marketing, and so forth). While some have technical training, most do not, and are therefore considered "second-class citizens" within the managerial ranks. Functional managers who are nontechnical are often viewed as "overhead," as "product preventers," or at best as a nuisance to be tolerated. Managers of these functions inside Engineering are aware of their nontechnical status. They are in service roles, and for them engineers and their managers are a group to be understood, dealt with, often pampered, and just as often criticized. Functional managers in finance and personnel develop careers within the function. For many, the career path often leads out of Engineering.

8. Managers take pride in their budgetary achievements. Some of those who hold a "business" perspective see themselves as out to reform the company, introduce professional management processes and mechanisms. They regard the "engineering mentality" in a critical light. A typical view is offered by one manager: "They are arrogant know-it-alls with an 'only way' mentality. They just throw the product over the wall. No conception of the customer or the market." The compliments are of course returned.

9. Managers evaluate engineers on their ability to "drive a stake in the ground" i.e. to settle on a well-defined piece of work and to produce it in a reasonable "time frame."

10. A recent policy requiring at least two years on the job was instituted to address this phenomenon.

11. At the time of this research, no freelancers were employed in the groups I studied. One, who had just left, told me that one of the advantages of his position was that he didn't have to speak to people like me. Despite the fact that it is an interesting role and significant to the subject matter, it will not be discussed further.

CHAPTER 3
IDEOLOGY: TECH CULTURE CODIFIED

The impact of a strong culture on productivity is amazing. In the extreme, we estimate that a company can gain as much as one or two hours of productive work per employee per day.

T. E. Deal and A. A. Kennedy
Corporate Cultures

"Don't the people in the control towers ever raise hell?" "They all belong to the syndicate," Milo said. "And they know what's good for the syndicate is good for the country, because that's what makes Sammy run. The men in the control towers have a share, too, and that's why they always have to do whatever they can to help the syndicate." "Do I have a share?" "Everybody has a share." "Does Orr have a share?" "Everybody has a share." "And Hungry Joe? He has a share too?" "Everybody has a share." "Well I'll be damned," mused Yossarian, deeply impressed with the idea of a share for the very first time.

Joseph Heller
Catch 22

"Tech culture" is a concept familiar to all members of the organization, many of whom use it to describe and explain attributes of the organization and its members. A well-articulated and codified managerial perspective on "the culture" is widely available. This chapter seeks to understand the systematic definition of social reality embedded in these managerial articulations of "Tech culture."

Culture made explicit may be viewed as a form of "organizational ideology (1)." Rohlen (1974) defined organizational ideology as:

"...the public, official expression of the ideas and ideals that define the bank as a social enterprise, provide its goals, explain the relationship of its personnel to the bank, and define the relationship of the bank to the rest of society."

Following Rohlen, I will use the concept of organizational ideology to refer to the managerially sanctioned theory of "Tech culture" that consists of explicit articulated "reality claims" concerning the social nature of

Tech, and particularly the relationship of members to the company.

To arrive at a coherent interpretation of the main themes of the ideology, the available fragments of expression must be pieced together. This requires the analysis of both form and substance of the symbols with which ideology is constituted (Geertz, 1973). This chapter will focus on varieties of the printed word available to Tech members. In the following chapter, reality claims will be analyzed in the context within which they are pronounced.

Tech Culture Codified

Ideological expressions appear in a number of forms. The purpose of the discussion is to examine the substantive reality claims concerning the nature of membership in the organization in order to identify whether there is a systematic view of reality that underlies all forms of ideological expression. To do this, the forms of ideological expression are contrasted, and the similarities, differences, and connections noted.

Reality claims may be classified first by the attribution of source. There are two distinct sources of ideological statements. First, formulations that are internally presented in the name of outside observers of Tech. In other words, this is the internal representation of the ideological environment. Second, formulations attributed to, or made in the name of internal actors speaking for the company, particularly senior management and its representatives.

The Ideological Environment: A View from the Outside

Like many other corporations, Tech is the target of much observation, discussion and analysis by "Tech watchers." Three sources of outside perspectives are recognized: scholars, popular writers, and journalists

(2). Their observations are available (and often intentionally made available) to insiders, many of whom are used to being observed.

Scholars: The Experts Tech has been studied by scholars (primarily in management schools), and their findings are available to insiders in traditional academic form: unpublished manuscripts, working papers and theses, and published articles and books. Typically, findings are disguised at the insistence of the Tech legal department, watchful that "proprietary information" not fall into the hands of competitors. Nevertheless, identity is rarely a secret to insiders; some internal documents, in fact, offer a key to the various disguises. A number of academic studies that make specific reference to Tech culture are available. Copies and summaries of findings are found mainly in training and personnel groups where the material is used to aid the design of training and education events and materials. Senior managers also have access to them. One vice-president, who takes an interest in the topic, is the owner of a large management library, and is familiar with many of the ideas which he frequently mentions in presentations. I found no evidence of distribution of this material elsewhere. Instead, the ideas seem to be disseminated through inside interpreters.

Two studies are described. First, a comparative analysis of Tech culture with other large technological corporations published as a book; second, an unpublished thesis on Tech culture written at a prestigious university not far from "corporate."

In the book, a comprehensive description of Tech is offered. The author is careful to qualify descriptions as "claims" by insiders. A number of themes characterize the description. First, the author implies that Tech

is free of the constraints typically associated with "organization." The company

" ... outdoes the others with the bare wooden floors of the buildings it likes to convert. The signs of liberalism are also there: bins for recycling paper in the hallways, pictures of employee jazz bands, energy efficient fluorescent lights in the offices, van pool and car pool announcements, and a few male secretaries. Just details perhaps but revealing: the new generation of high-tech companies often pride themselves not on the opulence they can afford but on their egalitarian systems in which even big bosses have just a cubicle with partitions in a renovated factory; not on the orderliness of their environments, but on freedom, looseness and creativity."

"Employees portrayed the company with a variety of vivid images: a family, a competing guild, ...a theocracy, twenty five different companies, and a company with "ten thousand entrepreneurs." Organization charts drawn by informants often resembled plates of spaghetti....Its youthful exuberance was aided by a workforce with a mean age of under thirty...both freedom and responsibility were assumed to be available..."

Second, incorporating "the culture" is presented as a crucial aspect of member success, one that goes beyond "just learning a job." The description hints at possible difficulties, although in rather minimal terms.

"The company took steps to transmit its culture to newcomers in the managerial and professional ranks through legends, stories, and special orientations at offsite meetings that were like bootcamp. Just learning the job was not enough for success; one had to learn the culture of the organization too. And this could often be disorienting..."

"The word entrepreneur was frequently used to refer to the kind of person who can survive and succeed in the fast-changing environment; ideas were supposed to bubble up, with top management selecting solutions rather than issuing concrete directions. Therefore managers made a point of demonstrating their initiative and inventive capacities."

"Success meant that people felt good to be part of such a dynamic environment where there would always be an interesting problem to solve...this pattern held for some people particularly when the company was smaller; larger size meant that there were a few left out in the game of musical chairs, some who did not know how to crack the informal network to find another job, and others who wandered around aimlessly a while after their jobs were 'unfunded'..."

Finally, while much of the study focuses on managers and engineers, life at the bottom, or, more cleanly put, "the grassroots level" is also addressed. At this level, too, it is claimed, people can find self-definition and communion through membership. Discussing a participative management consulting project, the author says of lower-level employees:

"Employees can be energized by their involvement in a participative structure... they gain an experience of the *communitas* of teamwork...which lifts them out of the humdrum, repetitive routines of their place...it may be the closest to an experience of "community" or total commitment for many workers, a dramatic exciting, and almost communal process brought to the corporation.... feelings of pride and accomplishment at building something relevant to the larger organization. There is a 'high' in such tasks..."

The suggestion, is that for all employees, regardless of level, boundaries between self and organization become blurred, and work becomes something of a religious or a transcendental experience.

The thesis on "Tech culture" offers a similar view. It is a disguised, interview-based description of "Tech culture" that is quoted in internal training materials. In the concluding section, the author articulates a view of the essence of "Tech culture," and suggests three underlying principles that are widely shared and guide action:

"...the data gathered from this investigation primarily reflect three underlying assumptions of the company's culture: 1. We are one family; 2. People are capable of governing themselves; and 3. Truth is discovered through conflict."

The equation of Tech with the notion of family is central to the description. Most crucially, this imagery suggests that members have strong emotional ties to Tech to the point where they are "inextricably connected."

The term "family" suggests that they are inextricably connected to a social group and are oriented towards preserving and maintaining the integrity of the group.

Maintenance of the group supersedes individual motives and desires, and strong affective ties bind the "family" together.

Although it is cast as a description of the organizational culture, the author carefully qualifies this statement with limits to its applicability:

Because the data was gathered primarily from managers, we may be describing in part an "occupational culture" i.e. the occupational assumptions of a manager rather than the organizational culture per se.... The assumptions that are being described are those that are accepted by "old-timers".... old-timer's assumptions are not universally shared by managers...interpretations of stories, myths and slogans vary greatly.... The fact that there seem to be several different, and sometimes opposing assumptions operating in the company suggests that it should be characterized as a pluralistic society rather than viewed as having a single culture.

In sum, the academic culture description maintains the appearance of neutrality based on a scientific descriptive stance and on careful qualifiers about limited validity of claims. The main point it makes with regard to membership is the fact that member behavior is driven by an orientation to the company based on an identification with the collective achieved through incorporation of "the culture." The boundaries between self and company are blurred, and attachment has an emotional component. The focus is on the professional and managerial employees as natural representatives of the collective. When others - "the grassroots" - are described, a similar framework is applied.

Popular Writers: Merchants of Managerial Wisdom The popular management literature is a distinct genre. The recent crop of quasi-academic bestsellers have enriched their authors, overcrowded airport bookstores, and revitalized the yellow marker industry. They are oriented to a managerial audience, and offer advice on successful managerial practices

based on (unspecified) research and claimed consulting experiences with numerous corporations that are held up as models of success to the reader. Copies are found in the small management sections of the various Tech technical libraries and in the bookshelves of many Tech managers and engineers. They are used as materials for training and education courses.

"Tech culture" is frequently used as a model for success (3), and is characterized by three themes. First, employee experience is described as an uncontrollable, almost obsessive emotional attachment to the company in the context of "barely organized chaos." In essence, this is a hyped-up repetition of the theme of emotional attachment evident in the academic version, with the metaphor of "family" replaced by the more compelling "cult." The recurring images are suggestive: "fetishism," "fanaticism," "love," "zeal," "brainwashing." The introduction to one bestseller purportedly quotes from an interview as an example:

"'I feel like putting a lot of time in. There is a real kind of loyalty here. We are all working this together - working a process together. I'm not a workaholic - it's just the place. I love the place....' These employees seem to be describing an ideal corporation, one most managers would give their eyeteeth to create."

Another author works the same theme in describing the category of companies to which Tech belongs.

"They are fanatic centralists around the few core values they hold dear... marked by barely organized chaos surrounding its product champions. Yet, one analyst argues: 'The brainwashed members of an extremist political sect are no more conformist in their central beliefs.' ... the chaos is so rampant that one executive noted, 'Damn few people know who they work for.' Yet the fetish for reliability is more rigidly adhered to than any outsider could imagine.... Tech pursues quality with quixotic zeal. The corporate philosophy states that 'growth is not our principal goal.'"

To this, however, two themes are added to support the author's normative thrust, neither of which are sanguinely accepted by academics.

First, it is claimed that these cultures lead to economic success. The "bottom line" is the parameter against which all is evaluated.

"'Essentially we act like a group of smaller companies,' says a vice-president. At High Tech that means constant reorganization, product line proliferation and overlap.... people at High Tech regularly lament short production runs, inventory confusion, and sometimes dual coverage of customers. They lament, we'd add, all the way to the bank."

The state of the bank account is easily explained as a consequence of "possessing the correct culture:"

"Why are they so successful as a company? They have been able to maintain a competitive edge by building a culture that pays extremely close attention to customers and believes in the ethics of adapting. In effect, a culture designed to cope with a changing environment. This openness to evolutionary change has become a belief in the value system of each company. Without it the companies would collapse with every introduction of a new technology by a competitor."

Second, it is a designed culture; managers "create cultures." The underlying metaphor for doing this is one of incorporation - "injecting experience." Managers "infuse," "instill," and "inculcate" values, mindsets, and emotions. Tech is used as an example of successful "culture design." Thumbnail description of its culture and numerous anecdotes are used to support this point.

"Good managers work hard to instill an action orientation. 'Try it; fix it; do it' becomes the operative ethic of companies like these. The managers are saying to the employees that the race is to the quick; and they demand a high level of activity and initiative to make sure they stay in the race."

Total social involvement is proposed as a central technique for inculcation of values and beliefs. In effect, it is suggested that the individuals incorporate the culture when the company incorporates them. It is the doctrine of success through intentionally blurring the boundaries between self and organization.

Play in its various forms (jokes, teasing, brainstorming and strategizing) bonds people together, reduces conflict, and creates new visions and cultural values. By encouraging experimentation it can help regenerate the culture. They provide opportunities for play on company time, whether through workshops, exercise facilities, beer busts, retreats or strategy sessions.

Internally generated summaries of this type of literature, typically prepared by members of staff groups, are easily available. The memo in exhibit 1, for example, was prepared by one of the education groups. It was sent over the technet to a number of senior managers who then forwarded it automatically to others. Hard copies were also distributed, resulting in a chain communication. Many such communications flash across the screens of electronic mail or contribute to the huge piles of paper that cover many managerial desks and to the stocks of common sense that underlie daily discourse.

In sum, the popular writers describe "Tech culture" for a managerial audience with an explicit normative purpose. The academic stance of scientific, neutral description with an emphasis on researched arguments is replaced with a strongly partisan tone exuding managerial common sense and pragmatic, anecdotal wisdom that is occasionally bolstered by quoting academic studies. Tech is placed in a more inclusive category of similar companies. The underlying theme of membership as a binding emotional experience is similar to scholarly claims, although the language is more colorful and exaggerated. To this, two additional claims are made. First, cultures of this sort are claimed to lead to economic success; and second, they are designed by managers who have found ways to "inculcate" beliefs and feelings in members.

Exhibit 1

High Technology

to: John Brown and staff

from: Bob Rogers
Corporate Quality

cc: Jim Smith
Bill Nixon
Kip Sutherland

WAYS TO PUT EVERYONE IN TOUCH WITH CUSTOMERS
from Peters and Austin
A Passion for Excellence

The twin themes of the book are:

1. Take exceptional care of your customers
2. Constantly innovate

Several lists or devices for doing the former caught my eye. You'll enjoy reading the book, and these brief quotes are no substitute. But as we continue to work towards making High Technology #1 in customer satisfaction I thought it might be handy to have some of these ideas briefly summarized for reference. In particular, we can give or send this excerpt to participants in workshops. It might help those who aren't sure exactly what concrete steps to take.

AWARENESS

Apple prides itself on having gotten its entire executive staff (the senior officers) to volunteer for a regular stint of listening-in on the 800 call-in number (p9)

Three mornings a week, all executives of castle find a 5" x 7" yellow sheet of paper on their desks. The title: "Daily dose of reality." Below is the name and phone number of a customer...

People Express has an internal TV network, a daily news show... a highly visible bulletin board in each facility... where almost everyone must pass by. Good news customer letters are flaunted on the left side; the right side displays bad news letters....

LucasFilm (Star Wars, etc.)... has few rules, but one is this: on any LucasFilm softball team, there shall be no more than one person from any one department (p 30)

REWARD SYSTEM

Domino's pizza... measure service systematically-- and weekly... The survey not only covers quantitative technical issues e.g. response time-- but also qualitative ones: did anything we do bug you? Monthly evaluation and compensation for all hands (up through the president!) are predicated on the results, which are instantly summarized and made available to everyone; in fact they are publicly and prominently displayed in all facilities... (p88)

Journalists: The Business Press The press reports Tech affairs frequently. The business section of the national press, journals such as Business Week, Fortune, and others, local papers, and the trade press that covers the world of high-tech, carry information on the business, and on technological and managerial aspects of the company (and of course its competitors). In many cases, the focus is on everyday affairs, with cultural commentary an aside, usually consisting of a few platitudes. Occasionally, more extensive articles offer a systematic perspective on particular topics.

The Tech environment is saturated with press reports. Major features in the larger and more influential organs are read by many, particularly managers, and are the topic of frequent discussion. The information is monitored both formally and informally and finds its way not only into various discussion but also onto the walls and into the communication networks. Clippings of stories with Tech relevance, often highlighted in glowing yellow, are posted all over and are hard to miss. They are also used to decorate cubicles. The libraries collect and monitor the press as a matter of routine, and post file all material. Technet bulletins offer summaries of relevant news and commentary. For example, on a typical day in the SysCom facility, up to twenty articles and clippings from the press are available, all published in the preceding two weeks.

What might one discern from a typical selection of press reports? Routine news couples technical and business reporting with overview and thumbnail descriptions of the company that follow a standard formula. A typical example of routine press reports is found in the following review of a major Tech trade show in the business section of a large metropolitan paper. Conventional wisdom framed as journalistic insight compares company

history to current developments and emphasizes two themes: first, the organic view of Tech as an acting entity, and second, the recurring images of "anarchy" and "pain" that describe everyday organizational life.

"Back then solid engineering and product execution coupled with price and performance were enough for success. This 'pumping iron' strategy was shared by competitors. There was less need for broad brush-stroke marketing. Nearly all products were directed to engineers. But that has all changed. Tech's brassy show this week signals the company's completion of its painful reorganization. Instead of the hurly-burly of product groups competing for corporate resources and incurring forecasting problems, Tech claims a new sleek streamlined image. It now appears that this fallen archangel of excellence, condemned for everything from superannuated technology to bloated management has landed squarely on its feet. Indeed the industry may soon have to contend with an expansionist Tech capable of defending its traditional turf, but now also a threat to competitors' territory."

Similar snap analyses have a critical tone, yet employ the same imagery.

"Tech slowed in part before because of its complex matrix organization that meant managers on the ground reported to too many different bosses at once back at corporate. A VP is pictured in the company newspaper juggling at a barbecue to illustrate the point. 'They make a big play of their reorganization,' says a consultant, 'but it is still a kind of controlled anarchy.'"

When the focus is on internal Tech events, the president is frequently the topic. He is characterized in the press as a dominating, influential figure, and his picture graces many of the reports. Aspects of the culture are attributed to him. He is Tech personified.

"Tech's founder and president has been a lightning rod for Tech critics. The company has been described as too loosely organized and too tightly organized. He has been criticized for exerting too much control over a company that has outgrown him. Tech is doing well despite some major weaknesses. Although his product sense has looked good lately, no one would ever call him the greatest manager..... Unlike many rivals, Tech has observed a no-layoff policy throughout the slump. 'That costs them,' Johnson says, 'but it is a big qualitative plus.' 'In theory my word is an order,' says the president, reputedly a strong-willed manager, but in fact he now watches initiatives flow to his desk instead of pumping them away from it."

When referring to other members and the nature of their ties to Tech, at the most general level the repeated theme is "loyalty." For example, a report on Tech's international business starts with a typical cultural comment:

"Of course Tech people world-wide still work to agreed corporate targets and remain fiercely loyal to the company ideals, but their style is effortlessly suited to local custom and local customer needs."

More extensive and less frequent articles explicitly elaborate the meaning of "loyalty to the company," and implicitly suggest which groups are seen as representative of Tech employees. Ways to achieve loyalty and commitment are described. The following sketch of "high-tech people" from Business Week was posted for days in front of the AdProd library. Here, the sources of description overlap: a weekly business magazine cites a Harvard professor using the terminology of the consulting world. The composite result is a message of "missionary zeal" that resembles the theme that characterizes other external genres. Although the statements refer to "workers," the focus is on professional employees: engineers and managers. When Tech people are discussed these are clearly the representative group.

"'Fulfillment oriented people are looking to achieve, to learn more, to grow,' says Stephen B. Smith, group senior vice-president at Yankelovitch. 'They want to do the next thing in their jobs not because it means a promotion but because they get a high from moving ahead... the issue for management is not money, but rather how do you reward these people so they will be more productive and more committed.' 'At the heart of most high-tech companies' efforts to find and keep their innovative workers is a sense of inclusion in a unique undertaking and a sense of missionary zeal,' says Calvin H. Pava, an assistant professor of organizational behavior at Harvard University. To motivate people, most high-tech companies make sure that each worker understands the role that his or her creative effort plays in making a product successful. 'The most important thing you can do is infuse people with the importance of what they are doing by giving them a feel for market impact,' declares Richard L. Crandall... 'they do what they want for eventual recognition...'"

The imagery of involvement is applied to all members of the company. Specific Tech projects or organizations are occasionally the subject of more extended reports. Following is a review of a participatory management experiment in the business section of a large metropolitan newspaper. The importance of self-involvement, and use of the "whole person" is extended to all employees.

"'We do a lot of experimenting as a company,' says Gary Spence, a Tech group manager. 'We encourage it, we reward it, we believe that if the investment and the concept is successful, then other parts of the company will reach in and take segments that are most applicable.'

'The theory behind such new forms of participatory management', says Homer Hagedorn, management consultant at Arthur D. Little, 'is basically that people will be more interested in what they are doing, and do a faster and higher quality job.'

Employees at Tech say that is exactly how they feel.

'This gives me a little more experience in how to put the whole board together and how to check it,' says Betty Stebbins, a grandmother from Springfield who's worked for Tech for five years. 'You're sort of proud because you see the end product.'

...Tech is trying to increase the productivity with fewer people while at the same time emphasizing individual involvement in the process and personal pride in the product. As Paley says, the company is trying to achieve a balance between the social part of one's life and the work part of one's life.

The new system was Dingham's idea. 'It is just the stuff I believe in' he says now.

As the concept for the plant evolved,... employees were involved from the beginning. In addition to the usual architects, engineers and accountants, Tech also employed an anthropologist.

...The volleyball net and exercise equipment at one end of the floor are for employees as well as families ('We're trying to balance work and family,' Dingham says.)

'Everybody is a teacher here and everybody is a learner,' Dingham says. 'People are responsible for themselves; that is the trick.'

Hagedorn says that sometimes causes problems. 'You have to get built into the system a willingness on the part of the peer group to reject very unsuitable people. Sometimes that is hard to do.'

Dingham says the goal is to have an atmosphere that is informal, relaxed and trusting, where people are self-

motivated, creative, open and flexible. 'We don't want a lot of clones here,' he says. 'We want a lot of individuals. Everybody here knows everything I do. We're not paying you for a job here; we're trying to use the total person. Primarily this is an investment in our most valuable asset and that is people.'"

In the tradition of journalistic fairness, alternative views are presented in the final paragraph. Like the academic references to a critical perspective, problems are minimized. Here they are "snags" in what otherwise is a well-oiled "system."

"The system is not without snags. It's a threatening system. We don't need as many people. The role of professional people has changed to one of learning. Hagedorn at ADL says he expects to see a management system like this one spread to other companies because 'many people are a little more comfortable doing this kind of work. The whole notion of job enrichment has been somewhat oversold. It really isn't much of an enrichment of the job if what you do is wash the spoons on Monday and the glassware on Tuesday.'"

More critical analyses and alternative views are rare. Expose journalism is not in vogue in the business press, and what little exists is not publicly displayed. An occasional clipping on a drug ring bust at a competitor might be posted on private initiative, and an infrequent critical article circulated privately, but these are few and far between. The following excerpt is from an article in a regional monthly magazine, reviewing the impact of Tech on the towns in its environment. It was shown to me by a training manager who considered it "yellow journalism." He wrote a letter of protest to the editor. Copies of the paper were circulated informally, but were not posted or referred to on the technet. It starts with a characterization of "Tech culture," some of it borrowed directly from the popular literature.

"The company also has projected a full-blown culture of ideas, a gospel... : thrift, paternalism, self-reliance, and the belief that a hard-working elite can expect to get rich through its devotion..... Tech philosophy is fully in step with the romanticized individualism of the high-tech industry as a

whole. Like most high-tech firms, Tech culture aims at reconciling individual creativity with the demands of large organizations by shattering bureaucratic and social norms."

This article goes on to discuss the negative consequences of Tech on the social life of the town: unstable marriages, alcoholism, overachieving children, crumbling institutions.

In sum, the press is the most frequently observed and referred to of all the outside observers. Many of the cultural references are asides in the course of reporting routine news in what is taken to be journalistic objectivity, yet rarely assumes a critical stance. Occasionally, extended coverage gets into more detail. The press reports are least subject to internal control, but the more critical are subject to what appears to be an informal censorship process with regard to public display and circulation. The descriptions tend to focus on Tech as an organic, acting entity. The internal references focus primarily on the person of the president and secondarily on the professionals and managers as representatives of the work force. The most general image is that of loyalty and high involvement related to the nature of work, with economic motivation underplayed. This image is generalized to other parts of the work force.

Discussion: The View from Outside Little is written about Tech by outsiders that is not at least peripherally in view for almost any member. Science and journalism, aided by an internal hand, combine to bring to member attention a distinct perspective of life at Tech. These images, although they are taken with a grain of salt, provide a backdrop to everyday life in the organization. They are ever-present and frequently discussed. Much of the material is circulated on the technet or is posted in public places. Relentless repetition is the rule. These ideological

formulations become a constant background noise, perhaps the most effective place for ideological formulations to be. They are peripheral, tacit, taken for granted common sense, unthought thoughts, ready-made formulations, platitudes posing as insight, reality claims made in the name of external agents with socially acceptable authority. New recruits are frequently familiar with these materials; some have engaged in systematic investigation prior to joining. Others encounter them in workshops, in their mail, and in passing. Although open to a variety of interpretations (more on this later), such material also carries with it the stamp of approval of common sense, journalism and science (particularly when journalists quote and summarize "experts") and it thus contributes at the very least to the shaping of language with which these matters are thought of and spoken about, and to the stock of "received wisdom" and conventional knowledge that sustains everyday life. It is a dense matrix of meaning that feeds on itself in the course of its own reproduction.

The differences between the external genres are largely stylistic and characteristic of the forms of knowledge they claim to embody: science, practical common sense, journalistic observation. These also tend to emphasize different themes. Scholars focus on careful description. Popularizers emphasize managerial control of culture and resulting economic success. Journalists distill the imagery as a backdrop to daily events.

Despite the differences, however, external views appear to be a variation on one theme: membership in Tech implies a strong emotional bonding of the individual to the company, to the point where boundaries between the self and the organization become blurred. This type of involvement is presented as the key to economic success - a consideration central to the company, but apparently not to its members. It is achieved

by designing a distinct environment based on individual autonomy, informality, minimal status distinctions, and seeming disorganization. Describing a "culture" allows the describer to do away with the sharp and clear distinctions between categories of people that are the hallmark of organization. Instead, the image is of a collection of individuals fulfilling the membership role. Marginal people and groups are only peripherally described, and the focus is on organic unity and similarity.

Internal Views: Tech Ideologists

Tech generates a large body of internally produced public documents (i.e. available to all employees) that serve as a vehicle for ideology. There are three broad categories of internal public documents. First, official company publications that contain Tech specific information thought relevant to all employees. Second, newsletters that appear periodically and report Tech events. Third, internal research papers that report the findings of studies by Tech employees.

Company Publications Numerous company publications are available to employees. These are typically in the form of printed booklets, and they contain information thought relevant to employees concerning various aspects of the company. Many claim to describe Tech and "its people," and they do so in detail. It is quite openly the official view of top management, and the line between normative and descriptive claims is not always clear. In them, a reader finds a summary and an indication of the main theme of managerially prescribed culture: the link between individual and collective characteristics.

For example, there is the "Engineering Guide." This is a listing of all the groups in the organization. Although it is issued yearly, it is

typically out of date. However, it is considered of some interest by those who wish to understand Tech because it is intended to be a comprehensive overview of the organization. The formal perspective on the organization is systematically laid out, and it contains the closest thing to an organization chart officially distributed by the company: a listing of all groupings, their managers, task, address and location. Most managers and many engineers keep a copy in their office; it is welcomed with a sigh of relief by the newly introduced.

The introduction to the 1985 version of the guide offers a number of documents that capture the essence of management's perspective on the relationship between individual and collective characteristics. First is an article by W. J. King, one of the ancient American gurus of engineering education, reprinted from a 1944 edition of an engineering journal and titled "The Unwritten Laws of Engineering." The use of an old manuscript suggests that what follows is grounded in an intellectual tradition. The article is a moralistic exhortation, quoting an Emerson essay on self-reliance and offering aphoristic advice to the enterprising organizational engineer. It is essentially a call for initiative, responsibility, individualism, self-control, honesty and fairness - a portrayal of man in a free-enterprise, laissez-faire system. Rules for appropriate behavior, self-presentation and feeling are made explicit in a tone that suggests they are grounded in the practical wisdom of ages and with a dry humor that does not invite disagreement. Not only are the rules self-evident, but management has some idea as to what they are.

"The subject of personality and character is of course very broad....the following laws are drawn from the purely practical point of view based upon...principles of good engineering ...The selections are limited to rules that are frequently violated however obvious or bromidic they may

appear....One of the most important personal traits is the ability to get along with all kinds of people. It defines the prime requisite of personality in any kind of industrial organization.Do not give vent to impatience or annoyance on slight provocation... do not harbor grudgesform the habit of considering the feelings of others. ...help the other fellow when the opportunity arises. Even if you are mean-spirited enough to derive no satisfaction from accommodating others, it is a good investment... Do not take yourself or your work too seriously. A normal healthy sense of humor...is much more becoming than a chronically soured dead pan, a perpetually unrelieved air of deadly seriousness or the pompous solemn dignity of a stuffed owl. ...One of the most striking phenomena of an engineering office is the transparency of character among the members of any group... therefore it behooves you as an engineer to let your personal conduct overtly and covertly represent your conception of the very best practical standards of professional ethics."

King's article is interesting not for its dated tone, but for its nonsense laying out of a systematic perspective on organizational life and individual experience. To be "successful" one is to manage feelings and self-presentations; moreover, managing must be done sincerely; one is expected not only to follow rules but to incorporate them, to become them. A role is outlined for the member, who is expected to incorporate it as a condition for success.

Following this piece of Americana, is a brief summary of "Tech Culture" circa 1985, where the updated role and its connection to the company are elaborated. It starts with a reference to the social nature of the company:

"High Technology is a people-oriented company. The employees receive courteous, fair and equitable treatment."

But primarily, it elaborates the appropriate member role. It begins with a descriptive tone that refers to all employees, suggesting that the role is an integral part of "the culture:"

"Honesty, hard work, moral and ethical conduct, a high level of professionalism, and team work, are qualities that are an integral part of employment at High Technology. These

qualities are considered part of the Tech culture. Employees conduct themselves in an informal manner and are on a first name basis with every one at all levels.... the opportunity for self-direction and self-determination is always present..."

Then it shifts to an elaboration of management expectations:

"...management expects hard work and a high level of achievement.. a great deal of trust is placed in employees to give their best efforts to a job.... employees are expected to act in a mature manner at all times.... the matrix organization is goal-oriented and depends on trust, communications and team work. As a result, most employees function as independent consultants on every level, interacting across many areas necessary to accomplish the task."

The perspective of management on the nature of the collective and its members is further elaborated in the "company philosophy" (4). It is a five page document composed by the executive committee after a number of extensive "wordsmithing" (5) iterations. The document is widely available and reprinted in many of the company publications, including the Engineering Guide. It has also been published undisguised in external publications.

The philosophy presents Tech as an organic, thinking, feeling entity. It speaks for the undifferentiated, collective "we" in outlining the main attributes of the moral stance of the company vis-a-vis the world, and the collective feelings this stance entails, one that is presumably shared by all members, or at least those to whom the label "we" applies. First, it relates Tech to the outside world:

"Honesty

We want to be not only technically honest but also to make sure that the implication of what we say and the impressions that we leave are correct. When we make a commitment to a customer we feel the obligation to see that it happens.

Profit

We are a public corporation. Stockholders invested in our Corporation for profit. Success is measured by profit. With success comes the opportunity to grow, the ability to hire good people and the satisfaction that comes with meeting your

goals. We feel that profit is in no way inconsistent with social goals.

Quality

Growth is not our primary goal. Our goal is to be a quality organization and do a quality job which means that we will be proud of the product for years to come... the product includes the engineering, manufacturing and services...

Customers

We must be honest and straightforward with our customers and be sure that they are not only told the facts but understand the facts.... We sell our corporation and we must be sure all commitments are met."

Second, it offers an internal focus. Once again the member role is defined with a special emphasis on attitudes that underlie behavior.

"Personnel

...we believe that individual discipline should be self-generated... we promote people according to their performance; not only their technical ability but also their ability to get the job done and to take the responsibility that goes with the job. Ability is measured not only by past results but also by attitude and desire to succeed."

The introduction to the guide concludes with a section on the sayings of the president. In it, excerpts of his ideas on organization are given. It has a lighter, more anecdotal flavor, an attempt to counteract the heavy formalism of the managerial perspective. Nevertheless, the metaphors used are instructive. A typical one follows:

"We follow sort of the New England tradition of revolutionary soldiers. We look and behave like rebels. We think we won the revolution because the British soldiers marched in straight rows, fired their muskets in unison, and never aimed.... the real story is.... when they finally got discipline they won the war."

The metaphor is suggestive not only of behavior resembling a ragtag and undisciplined army, but at a deeper level equates the unquestioned moral rightness of a fight of liberation against oppression with the type of commitment Tech asks of its employees.

Other documents elaborate the overview of "Tech culture" presented in the guide. For example, the conditions and implications of membership are

detailed in a handbook titled "High Technology and You." It is a colorful, glossy, 20 page booklet prepared by the personnel organization for distribution to all new employees. The "company philosophy" is reprinted on page 1 and is followed by the words of the president underneath a picture and over a signature. Here, too, the membership is undifferentiated, and the words, by implication, apply to all who are considered employees.

"Welcome to High Technology. As you may have already noticed, we are a company with the spirit of informality and openness. We strive to maintain an environment where people can grow and excel. We encourage a spirit of cooperation among all employees.

The loyalty, hard work and creativity of our employees has made High Technology a global corporation with a reputation for quality and services....

To show our employees we appreciate them and to invite their commitments, we listen to them and respond to them promptly with genuine interest. Above all we maintain our commitments to them.....

As for your success at High Technology, the people who prosper around here are those who care about the company, can recognize opportunities, propose solutions and accept the responsibility to get the job done."

In sum, company publications offer the distilled views of management. The medium and the message are clearly bracketed as "management's perspective" in the context of an attempt to educate and influence, and thus it clearly belongs to the category of "self-presentation for public consumption" where overstatement and idealization are the norm. Within this context, "culture" is presented as a set of abstract, formalized principles that underlie the reality claims made in the name of management. It combines descriptive and prescriptive elements, and the line between management's wishes and current reality is not always clear.

"The culture" is presented as combining a "member role" with the collective attributes of the company. The ready-made roles are similar to the ones that pervade external descriptions, and consist of behaviors explained by beliefs and feelings. Joining the company implies not only

assuming this role, but incorporating it, becoming it. Unity and togetherness are emphasized and differentiation between types of members is underplayed. Tech is an organic whole, yet there are key representative people.

In contrast to the external descriptions, here the larger context that explains and gives specific substance to the member role is elaborated. Description of Tech's attributes suggests that the company reflects a moral order. Membership has personal significance derived from the collective that is manifested not only in behavior, but runs deeper into the very nature of one's social existence and personal experience. The company is presented as a moral entity - honest in its dealings with the external world and in its internal "people orientation" - combining paternal care with an open, achievement-oriented society lacking the trappings of status-conscious bureaucracies. Membership implies that individuals share in the collective attributes, but requires certain personal characteristics: maturity and self-direction. The implication is that both individualism and collective action are not at odds, but work together to achieve moral goals. This is a tall order for a work organization, but the reality claims are neither understated nor subtle.

Company Newsletters Tech is saturated with newsletters. Their numbers change, but average around 200. A large majority are funded by company budgets (6). The distribution varies. Some are limited to management, others to occupational groups, and others yet to particular organizations. All are potentially available to anyone with an interest. Some of these appear weekly or monthly in employee maildrops or are delivered to their homes. Others wait around to be picked up or appear magically on the

technet. All are kept in the library stacks.

Newsletters are a forum in which the reality claims of management are presented as a less formal, ongoing, living perspective. Newsletters allow the personalized expression of ideology by senior management. These occasionally take the form of editorials, but more frequently appear as journalistic interviews.

Two central and repeated themes in the newsletters are the company goals and the company history. These are overarching frameworks for viewing Tech as a community with a future and a past within which the experience of membership is given explicit and implicit meaning.

Goals are often referred to as "mission" (for added effect due to connotations of both military and religious performance; in either case, strongly normative organizations.) The mission and its importance are repeated in the many interviews that appear. Most focus on the relationship between the twin *raison d'être* of Tech: technology and business. In the following excerpts from "Techlife," a monthly newsletter mailed to all employees, members of the executive committee are interviewed on the "state of the company" (another, perhaps jaded, analogy - this time to the "union.") Their answers are an opportunity to offer their views.

An interview with the president is in the lead-off position. He is widely recognized as someone with a distinct point of view, referred to by insiders as a "vision," a "philosophy," or a "religion," depending on one's perspective. He is frequently interviewed, and ideas associated with him are well-known and widely circulated (8). In discussing the collective purpose and goals, the president matter-of-factly discusses the twin dominant worlds of "business" and "technology" that characterize Tech. He suggests that it is the way of combining them that makes Tech unique.

"In time it became clear that hundreds of other companies would be technically able to do the things that we were doing. It became clear that if we were to make a contribution to the industry we had to do something unique. So we set about to concentrate our efforts and our resources on those things that would be important to customers and those things which other companies would have difficulty doing.

Our goal has never been just to make money or just to sell technology, but rather to do something which is unique and make an important contribution to our customers. This requires much discipline, good organization, and intense work.

We plan to be the most disciplined, the most organized, the best documented high-tech company. We plan to produce the highest quality and excellence in the traditional sense of the word. We will worry about every single detail and make sure everything is done the very best we know how."

The goals are related to the organizational form in a lengthy interview in "Techknowledge," a widely distributed newsletter. This particular issue is considered to have educational significance by the personnel group, and is therefore distributed to all new employees as part of the attempt to "get the message down." Here, the president's views of the organization are quoted, with a specific reference to the question of independence vs. discipline.

"When we had 38 separate entities we accomplished a lot. However over time this sort of organization had to change, because a major part of our contribution to the market comes from doing significant large things. So we've been phasing over from having many separate entities to becoming 'one company with one strategy and one message.' After years of having separate entities, each taking great pride in its separateness, combining them into one company with one strategy has been difficult. We're now well on our way to becoming 'one company with one strategy and one message.' We're not there yet and won't be for a while. It's not easy for people who have been independent for so long to suddenly realize that they depend on one another and must work together."

In this view, Tech is a community in transition. Management clearly speaks for the community and takes responsibility for creating changes.

These include reorganization coupled with planned change in the underlying experiential correlates of members. In this case, pride in independent subunits must change to a realization of interdependence.

Similarly, on the front page of a monthly newsletter dedicated to technical issues, the vice-president of the sponsoring organization signs the following editorial. In it he defines Tech's main mission - profitable technology, and implies ways of achieving it - a shift towards internal cooperation.

"We have a tradition at Tech to focus on products. They are what we sell; what we have valued; what we measure etc. An excellent product is one that wins in the market place; its one our customers use and speak highly of in public forum. Engineering heroes of the past have excelled in delivering a number of such products.

In the past the vision for such products was stored in the person's head. If one wanted the answer to a question, one just had to ask it....

But now things have changed. Now our products are so complex, no one person can manage that task without simplifying assumptions."

The articulation of the mission and the emphasis on the uniqueness of Tech are distinct features of this ideological form. They provide an overarching framework within which implicit references to the nature of membership are made. The member role implied in the mission is often elaborated. Sandwiched between discussions of technical and business-oriented features are frequent explicit references to "the culture," to the "organization," to the experience of membership, to what "we" think and feel. Senior managers have much to say on this matter. Specifically, managers suggest that company and individual goals are not at odds and that achieving them is the source of emotional gratification. In the "Techlife" interview, the president says:

"Individual products often seem to be more exciting than total systems because they are so visible and so much fun. But, we have committed to design and build the world's best

systems. As we aggressively pursue our overall strategy. Tech's opportunities are great, and we can be very successful if we are disciplined and stay with our strategy."

Another senior manager comments on financial performance. He suggests that the numbers should be a source of pride for "everyone:"

"Everyone at High Tech should be proud of these figures which result from hard work and our increased emphases on efficiency and productivity."

The reality claims made in the above articulations of ideology consist of a number of themes. The speakers present themselves as spokesmen for the collective and claim to represent "everyone at Tech." The prescribed attitudes to work in this collective are easily deduced. Not surprisingly, "technology" and "business" are the ultimate goals and sources of meaning. More crucially, the two are compatible in the service of a higher goal - "making a social contribution." It is suggested that the blend is unique to Tech. Moreover, the speakers relate goals to member roles. Technology is "fun," "excitement." By implication, it is a "boy's world," an "engineer's sandbox." In it, "business" is not only a constraint - to be remembered even at the peaks of "fun" and "excitement" - but also a source of pride, intrinsically worthwhile. Together they provide the moral order that sustains the company and provides its employees with emotional ties to it. These emotions, glossed by labels such as "excitement," "commitment," "loyalty," "fun," and "pride" are presumed to be shared by everyone who is a member of this "we."

Company history is the second framework within which membership is given meaning. The glorious past provides not only a meaningful tradition, but also becomes a metaphor for the present. Nostalgia abounds in an anniversary issue of "Techtalk," a popular newsletter dedicated to interviews with senior managers about their recollections of the "old

days." One vice-president refers to the unchanged beliefs management holds about employees and their attitudes to the company. It is known as a "people orientation."

"We had a small personnel department, but had very definite ideas about how to handle people and how people should manage. We had a strong feeling for the individual and wanted to be sure our personnel policies enabled us to provide jobs that people would be excited about and could accomplish, that had goals and measurements. Many of the same things we talk about today..."

I believe you just can't manage a fast-growing fast-moving organization in detail from the top. It limits the growth if you try to do it that way. So we've continuously tried to push decision making functions down inside the organizations to product lines, to engineers."

In discussing the unchanged central ideas about the meaning of membership, definitions of rules for appropriate individual experience abound. Individualism is equated with success, and is consistent with company goals. The "pride," "excitement" and "fun" that are the emotional outcomes of hard work are the normative position he outlines. Individual goals are not at odds with collective ones.

"One of the concepts that hasn't changed from the beginning of the company is that people are responsible for the success of the projects they propose. 'He who proposes does', and is judged on the results. That fundamental philosophy hasn't changed. I hope it never does. We have to keep working to make sure that engineers feel they can propose things and go out and do them; that they aren't powerless, that they can get decisions made. We spend a lot of time trying to make it fun to work here, make it challenging, make you feel as though you you can make important contributions. As for the future, I'd like to see a company where each individual really feels that he or she has a role to play and has the freedom to succeed or fail based on their own ingenuity."

Moreover, in an interesting twist, a heavy self-investment in the collective will supposedly release the individual from oppressive collective experience, from "the horrors of modern society."

"One of the horrors of modern society is 'group think' or 'group do' where you are never singled out as an individual. My vision of a beautiful company is one where individuals when they go home at night feel that they have really made an impact; that they have been able to accomplish something and they feel proud of themselves and proud of the company they work for."

In another interview, the normative becomes descriptive. What was a prescription for the ideal membership experience, becomes a descriptive review of history. It is a frequent and subtle shift, part of a two-pronged effort at defining reality.

"Our basic strength has always been the attitude and commitment of our people. The most important thing we can do is to continue to provide challenging opportunities for personal and professional growth, while we reinforce our commitment to achieve leadership in the industry."

A third prong is provided by a supporting cast of internal experts. The same issue offers a brief interview with a "manager of organization effectiveness," inserted on the same page in a small frame. Steeped in the scientific sounding terminology of Organizational Behavior, he frames the same ideas in academic language that presumably offers a more objective, even scientific aura to reality claims of this sort. As befits an "applied science," and perhaps in deference to those who provide the funding, it is coupled with a facility with the rhetoric of the internal technical and business worlds. Note the assumption of the obvious in his opening words:

"Everyone agrees that Tech needs to be more productive. Does this mean designing things using niftier design techniques or does it come from the people? We are not going to get away with the same basic work design in the 90's that we did in the 30's. I think people commit to what they do. And if what they are doing is very narrow in skill and scope so is their commitment. If what they are doing is really in the main arteries of the business then, then they'll commit to the arteries of the business. When you talk to someone and find that they are disinterested or couldn't care less about the company and you ask them what their job is, it's typically not a broad job. You can preach company spirit all you want, but the best way to guarantee a greater commitment - and therefore greater productivity - from people is to

give them more responsibility and increase their ownership of the work they do. We could free ourselves of the question whether automation and technology are going to carry us into the future. Both are, but our people are the ones best equipped to make it happen."

In sum, company organs present a more personalized and animated view of the ideology that fleshes out the skeletal argument presented in company publications. In interviews and editorials, identifiable people ground the principles in their own experience and their own words. The newsletters provide a recurring stage for such statements. Substantively, the claims relate the nature of the collective as a moral, purposeful community with a history to explicit principles for member roles. It is suggested that individualism, self-direction and maturity are a way to membership in the collective. Hard work, self-investment and commitment guarantee personal returns: fun, excitement, and beyond that, freedom. More crucially, two underlying claims are made. First, that there is no contradiction between personal and collective goals. This is repeated as morally based prescription, as well as both common-sense and scientific description. As a corollary, the boundary between self and organization fades. Second, a claim made by omission rather than commission goes even further to imply that the membership is undifferentiated. As in the other genres, there is no discussion of class or status differences beyond the ones of performance and reward. Presumably the principles of membership experience apply to all who are glossed by reference to "we."

Internal Studies "Tech culture" is the explicit subject of organizationally sponsored research that elaborates and documents its main themes. These are internal studies members conduct on their own organization. Explicit "culture studies" are available, and studies with different focuses make occasional reference to the topic as well.

People in corporate personnel and training functions have formulated aspects of Tech culture. A number of well-known internal documents based on senior management and "old-timer" interviews are available. In the engineering group, there is a full-time culture expert, an ex-engineer chartered with unearthing, documenting and preserving the culture of engineers. As a Tech employee, the culture expert has a "project description," part of her group's yearly plan submitted to justify funding. "Culture" is another of many discreet projects and assumes the contextual norms of engineering development - studying it must have "value added," measurable "deliverables," and a clear schedule.

"Goal: to uncover messages and trends in the culture which have led to successes in the past for products and people.... and to present that information to Systems and Components and other parts of Engineering in such a way that increased productivity will result.

Strategy: Publication of two culture series papers a year, mostly filled with data found out about the Tech culture. Scheduled is a Cultural Operating Manual Volume 2 with original data written by Tech people and various Tech watchers. Draft out spring 86. Herospeak II: 6 successful engineers and the beginning of an algorithm for what is success at Tech-of-the-future containing a mix of marketing, profit, technology and doing the right thing (being a good manager, having vision and providing significant contributions to Tech culture."

The output of this "native anthropology" is a variety of materials: corporate reports, summaries of the published popular and academic work dealing with Tech, academic and quasi-academic papers describing aspects of the culture and referencing academic and popular literature on Tech complete with the unmasking of carefully disguised published material, and slide presentations and talks given throughout the company by self-proclaimed cultural experts. Here ideology speaks in a different voice, with elements of "academic freedom" supported by hints of criticism that are needed to substantiate the claim to

objectivity and independence from a managerial perspective.

The internal studies combine descriptions of the culture that emphasize the member role with explicit advice to readers on role performance. The following examples are drawn from a number of studies. First, an internal paper titled "Talking Values: Heroes of Engineering Speak" outlines the appropriate member role. Framed as "a study of Tech values," it consists of 20 pages of excerpts (with no interpretation) from interviews with senior Tech managers and engineers identified by the sponsoring vice-president as "heroes" - successful manifestations of the culture, who appear to be presenting their experience-based perspective.

One interviewee suggests that formal "company philosophy" is a valid description of Tech. The idea of internalization of the company ideology is emphasized, and the claim is made that it is based on real life experience.

"There is no such thing as a corporate philosophy, it is not something you write down and then somehow invest in the company. These values are inside of us and we don't tell people about our integrity and our morality - they just somehow recognize it in what we do and how we behave. We wanted to keep a sense of modest morality. Those people who know the rules of the game have it all in their heads. One way of institutionalizing some of that without writing it down is to say: 'Your job is to go around and you be the book.'"

It is members speaking of their own experience, in effect a forum for testimonials, a breath of life into abstract principles. What would usually be a criticism of a "corporate philosophy" is here used to support its substance - a pre-emptive strike. "Incorporation" - the underlying metaphor for relating experience to ideology - is emphasized.

Another interviewee is asked to describe the "Tech types." He elaborates the "mindset" incorporated by the typical "successful member" by painting the following picture:

"A lot of people we hire into this company, at least the ones that stick around, have basically the same mind set. Someone who is innovative, enthusiastic, willing to work hard, who isn't hung up on structure, and who has absolutely no concern with educational background. They demand an awful lot from themselves. The harshest critic in the system is yourself and that drives you to do some terribly difficult things. You have to be a self-starter, an individual who takes chances and risks and moves ahead. The expectation is that everyone is going to work hard, not for hard work's sake, but for the fun of it, and enjoy doing what they are doing, and show commitment no matter what it takes. A core of the environment is individual commitment, a lot of integrity, and a very high level of expectations from yourself. Hassle is the price of the organizational structure. For those who don't like it, it's very frustrating. You can wrap those three or four things together (openness, honesty, success, fairness) and you can sum it all up in one word and that is caring. Caring about your job, the people who work for you, yourself."

There are limits to in-house academic freedom, however. A companion study, "the antiheroes" paper, was proposed by the same author. The outline suggested a study of "living examples of how not to manage at Tech." It was very quickly shelved as a "sensitive document," and all copies deleted from the terminals that had received them.

A second study, titled: "Cultural Operating Manual (version I)" combines role description with prescription. The author offers a formalization of "assumptions that support the culture." It is an interpretation of a number of studies by outsiders, and the writer's own experience. The following is borrowed from the academic thesis cited earlier.

"WE ARE ALL ONE FAMILY... subcultural differences are encouraged, failure among members is tolerated to some extent,... people are encouraged to express their feelings and to give candid feedback,... all doors are open, informality and working through people is encouraged.

PEOPLE ARE CREATIVE, HARD WORKING, SELF GOVERNING AND CAN LEARN

People are encouraged to learn from experience.... by the sink or swim method with some support, be a self-starter,... push at the system from your position (Bottom up), respect

the differences of others, find a way to enjoy work, take ownership, do the right thing.

TRUTH AND QUALITY COME FROM MULTIPLE VIEWPOINTS, FREE ENTERPRISE

People are working to help the company produce good products and thus make money. Individuals have different ideas about how to proceed. Some people view this as conflict. Indeed there is some conflict.... Top management feels that they are not smart enough to know every detail. Top management is able to sort out ideas."

Some of the substance has been "wordsmithed." For example, the third principle in the original study, "truth through conflict," is reformulated to a milder "multiple viewpoints" and "some conflict."

As befits an engineering organization, abstract knowledge is put to practical use. The tone is pragmatic and realistic. In particular, the "downside" of life at Tech is given attention in what appears to be a formalization, if not pre-emption, of common sense. The study gives a lexicon of the key terms used at Tech and their implication for role performance.

"The following is a list of terms used at High Technology. They are a clue to the nature of the way the culture works and the skills needed to operate within it.

Beat up A person gets beat up when they are overpowered by the person with whom they are interacting. It is not a pleasant experience.

Burnout A person is considered burnt out when they are unable to contribute. Working too hard, worrying too much, stress, frustration etc. cause burnout. Many times manifestations are serious to the person involved. This person may also be called one of the 'walking wounded.' Burnout will damage a personal reputation as people want to be sure they can rely on each other.

Do it yourself career Employees at High Technology are expected to make their own career plans and to pursue them. The company is not responsible for creating your career path for you. A service manager once said that he and the president had one thing in common, they both had gone as far in the company as they wanted to go and were happy with the job each had.

Losing Being unsuccessful, failure.

Networking A person creates individual support networks either in person or over the established automated networks. They are a way gossip is spread through the

company. They provide personal friendship support. They provide political safety support. They are the way the culture is spread.

Ownership You own the piece of work for which you are responsible. This applies to every job no matter how small...you own your own success or failure....

Sink or swim New employees are left to their own devices often for months...

Personal Reputation ...it opens the doors you need...some causes of bad reputation are lack of honesty, not being supportive, only being a taker, nonproduction and being negative. Some causes of good reputation are production, quality, honesty, being supportive, good people skills...

Unfunding Your resources are taken away from you. You lost."

Following the lexicon, the author offers more elaborate advice to individuals on managing their experience within the "culture." For example, a number of "scenarios" are offered describing typical experiences of new employees. The following excerpt is called "The Valley of the Shadow of Tech:"

"They have just been hired into a new group or are going to try out a new task. They receive a lot of encouragement. This is called the walk-on-the-water point of entry. For a while they vacillate and finally they reach decision point B. Feedback is given. Not all is positive. The employee may even be beat up. (For some) the experience is not so good... the employee falls into the valley. The passage of time will cause some better feelings... other employees will console the injured person... Some people do not risk again, some choose to update their resume and leave the company. Most people get to point E, 'full recovery' and find better ways to interact with the system, a wiser employee."

A third document offers similar cultural description coupled with advice on how one is to best fit in. Here "technical" advice is tied to the larger ideological framework. Points 1 through 9 characterize Tech and give advice on appropriate behaviors and interpretations of organizational reality. Point 10 gives role advice, complete with the required feelings, on the assumption that this too is manageable.

- "1. Things get done by an informal face-to-face system - not by memo through the formal system.
2. The Tech world will overload you if you let it. Only you can say no. An absence of a no connotes a yes. Making

- aggressive commitments and meeting them is a success. Making foolishly aggressive commitments and missing is failure even if the actual result is the same as the aggressive commitment.
3. Understand the word fail. It does not mean you are a total failure as a person - you failed to accomplish something.
 4. The control system appears loose as a goose. Don't ignore it or you will get caught. If you plan to deviate from a plan tell someone ahead of time.
 5. You must be a self-starter and a self-director. Only you can decide what is the right thing to do. If you really believe something, do it, even if you are told no. Be prepared to get killed if you are wrong. Tell the right people what you are going to do even if they disagree and say no.
 6. The Tech world is more dynamic than you probably realize. To accommodate growth and the need for flexibility there needs to be reserve in the system. To an outsider, reserve looks like lack of control. The winners are the managers who know when where and how to put reserve into their system.
 7. Listen to the message not the words. Successful Tech managers like to think out loud and are comfortable doing so. The danger in this is that words are frequently not well thought out. Listen carefully for the underlying message. Don't take words literally.
 8. Get accustomed to radical changes in the organization and jobs people are doing, including your own. Be prepared for surprising and unpredictable changes every couple of years. Be flexible in your thinking about jobs people can do outside their traditional career path.
 9. Tech is a trust rather than a power culture. You will get nowhere without being trusted. You gain trust by being open, talking straight (saying what is really on your mind rather than what you think people want to hear) and listening well. Trust is not just personal integrity but being well enough known that people can predict how you will act.
 10. Tech hates a mercenary. Working for money as a prime reward will be abhorred. You have got to like your work and have an interest in people."

The conclusion outlines the individual-organization relationship and supports the validity of the ideology and its reality claims. Of particular significance is the notion of blurred boundaries between self and company in point number two.

"Tech seems to have achieved over its history a very strong sense of commitment and involvement with its people. This seems to be influenced by and based on management philosophy starting with the president and continuing through most of the management hierarchy. Some important parts of this philosophy which have contributed to innovation and growth are:

1. People are really considered to be important to the company, they do not take a second seat to profits. The company has followed a tradition of full employment.
2. Employees are involved in Tech. Most individuals do not see a sharp demarcation between themselves and the company. There is a great deal of drive and energy to keep decision making at the lowest possible levels.
3. People have ownership in what they do.
4. Successful implementation is rewarded.
5. There are minimal formal processes. There is little bureaucracy compared to other places. Those processes in place are considered only guidelines.

While these could be seen as motherhood statements, they truly appear to be part of the operating fabric of Tech."

Finally, the language of "culture" has permeated other domains of self-study as well. Many technical studies refer to "Tech culture." For example, a review of technical and organizational aspects of a four-year engineering project commissioned by the vice-president in charge and carried out by a staff group, contains a section on "cultural learnings." The manuscript was treated as "sensitive information" and was released for internal distribution only after careful "wordsmithing" to "keep out the politics," particularly the debatable role that upper management played in the project. The authors conclude the following about "culture:"

"Managers must help avoid feelings of personal failure. It paralyzes people. The attitude has to be one of: "It's good to find problems." People have to be unafraid to face up to what is actually happening, and not just push the plan, so that they can understand the deviations and then fix them. High Tech's environment is too free. We need a middle ground between complete freedom and rigid top-down management. We need more discipline, ownership and accountability. We should give managers the responsibility and leave them to manage but hold them accountable. Engineers tend to measure themselves for peer recognition on the technology employed and the latest and greatest design; not on the business goals, such as cost of ownership and time to market. There is a viable middle ground but the situation has to be managed."

In sum, internal studies present what appears to be a relatively independent perspective, suggested by the quasi-academic forms. Cultural

analysis is presented as a unique, objective perspective. In contrast to other ideological forms, it seems to suggest, it offers a more realistic, indeed "scientific" description. However it is funded by management, and excesses are controlled. Within the frames of what is acceptable, the author introduces a note of cynicism, of reality, and some qualifiers. To support the neutral image, the ideological facade is made to creak a little and the moralistic exhortations are toned down, catering to the free spirit of inquiry.

The focus is largely on description and elaboration of the member role, with attention to the required knowledge and nuances of emotion. This is consistent with the member role as it appears elsewhere. The underlying theme continues to be self-control, adherence to rules for appropriate emotional response, and self-presentation in an organizationally acceptable light as a way to full membership.

There are two differences, however. First, it is a more "real world." While a distinct membership role is defined, the unpleasant realities of life are acknowledged. The "downside" is hinted at, and the tone implies a distinction between this genre and the management perspective. It is a political world; there might be some "pain." "Burnout" is a threat. Failure might be tolerated, but only "to some extent."

Second, the larger framework within which roles are performed, is missing here. It is a technical role analysis, and the moral high ground is either assumed or ignored. By implication, successful role performance serves instrumental purposes. Whereas senior management attempts to imbue it with moral meaning, here the extensive normative side is based on an ethic of self-help and personal success.

Conclusion

The materials presented in this chapter offer an ordered selection of the codified and publicly disseminated reality claims concerning "Tech culture." There are both differences and similarities to be found in comparing these materials. The divergence is largely one of form and chosen area of emphasis, while the organizational ideology might be found in the convergence of ideological content.

Ideological Form Reality claims may be distinguished by the attributions of source and the implied basis of validity. Each source has a specific presentational style, and a different claimed base of authority. Whereas external voices claim an objective disinterested stance, internal ones are openly partisan. The external perspective has three different modes. First, the available scholarly work focuses on a general description of the culture, emphasizing similarities between members. Scholars speak with the claimed (though not necessarily granted) authority of science, of objectivity. Ideas, language, models, evidence and proof are presented in the form of scientific publications. Although they are in the public domain, they are not widely distributed. The existing ones are used as inspiration by translators, interpreters, managers, professional ideologists and plagiarists whom they serve as a cherished epistemic foundation upon which the status of other reality claims may rest. Second, popularizers use scholarly sources, but base their authority on a pragmatic, no-nonsense attitude. Their findings are for sale, and they do not hide their biases. Anecdote rather than established fact is their empirical style, and managerial language replaces the more obscure academic jargon. To the academic version they add a more colorful language, an

equation of culture with economic success, and a suggestion that culture is manageable. Both the above genres are bracketed and draw attention to themselves explicitly. Once viewed they are usually shelved. In contrast, the third mode - journalism - is more dense, repetitive and continuous, its claims less sharply bracketed. Journalists provide the ongoing chatter that fills the holes between distinct ideological events. Drawing on the authority of the press as a disinterested observer/ critic, their reports are most frequently seen yet least consciously attended to. They are also least bound to requirements of evidence and the generalized claims they make are presented as unquestioned truths. Mostly concerned with global and company-wide issues, specific ones are glossed or slipped in as assumed truths. A critical perspective is available too, but is much less frequent and is edited by internal hands. Overall, external views appear as variations on the theme of membership. Originally not intended solely for a Tech audience, they may be seen as disinterested observers; it is this "third party" status that insiders wish to emphasize when making use of the material.

In contrast, internal voices are clearly those of interested parties. This has mixed consequences for their validity. Openly partisan, and thus suspect, they also have the insider's advantage of claiming a better empirical grounding by virtue of personal experience. In contrast to external voices, internal ones add prescription to description (although the boundaries between the two are not always clear and appear interchangeable). Official documents speak directly or indirectly for management. Using the most abstract principles, they are the most blatantly partisan. It is the "party line." Newsletters add volume and flesh to the official skeletal principles. People are quoted, their memory

and experience used to bring principles to life. Management is personified and made intimate. The focus is mainly on the attributes of the collective - particularly its goals and history - as a way of lending meaning and adding substance to the member role. Internal journalists, while more constrained than their external counterparts, at least present themselves as observers that are not totally synonymous with management. Internal researchers add the final touch to internal voices. Supposedly they are the most independent of all internal voices, while more empirically grounded than outsiders. Their documents imply a semblance of academic freedom and prescriptions appear as scientific advice. The focus is exclusively on formulating and promoting the personal attributes of the member role, while its larger significance is ignored.

Ideological Content Despite the variation in form and focus, there are distinct consistencies in underlying meanings that are conveyed. Where the genres overlap - in the articulation of the member role - there are no contradictions, and a coherent and dense ideological framework emerges. In addition, each adds certain dimensions to the overall ideology that remain unchallenged by others. The organization is presented as a social entity with specific external and internal characteristics. The underlying metaphors used to characterize it are based on the imagery of cohesive small groups: "family," "sports team." Externally, the imagery is suggestive of clear, unquestioned purpose, and this is frequently articulated and specified by senior managers. Tech is presented as having a mission; in its dealings with the world it has a unique blend of business and technological principles that provide not only a challenge, but a moral purpose; economic success and unique social contribution are consistent with ideological principles of the larger environment - profit, progress,

and individualism.

Internally, the imagery is suggestive of distinct principles of organization. These are captured in the notion of "culture" posed in opposition to "structure." Traditional forms of control are relegated to a supporting role and are replaced by control of the attitudes, orientations and emotions of committed members. Tech is presented as informal and flexible. Members are not constrained by enforced or traditional structure. On the contrary, they are expected to engage in a form of creative chaos. The functional and hierarchical distinctions between categories of members are underplayed and vague. By omission it is suggested that in this community there are few distinctions between people, and most are characterized by the general formulations of appropriate membership. The distinction between management and employees is alluded to in the basic imagery of parental authority in the family, or in the playful, skill-based authority of the quarterback or the coach. Unity and similarity are emphasized, authority and power deemphasized or legitimated. The community is characterized as "bottoms up," loose, free, a "people company," interdependent. The condition of membership is a particular orientation to the community, one that is achievable by any employee through incorporation of organizational norms for behavior, beliefs and feeling.

A distinct and well-defined membership role is formulated, its principles grounded in the basic small group imagery. In particular, the required rules for behavior, belief and feeling are emphasized: loyalty and commitment, identification, fun, excitement, a "high" from achievement, initiative, responsibility, a feeling of ownership, a joy from hard work. There is little mention of the economic structure, and the importance of economic rewards is underplayed. It is a fact of life, but not one to be

emphasized; instead, rewards are seen as arising from the experience of communion, of belonging, of participation in the community as organizationally defined. The "downside" - the negative and problematic aspects - are presented by those committed to demonstrating a balanced approach (external journalists and scholars, and some internal ones) as a dysfunction in the system, one potentially correctable by the individuals involved. Perhaps most crucially, this view of the member role implies, articulates and rationalizes the notion of blurred boundaries between self and organization. The role is "incorporated," based on "strong identification" and an "inextricable connection to the company." It involves "the whole person" and is based on powerful emotional ties expressed in "zeal" or at least "enthusiasm." The role is linked to the collective in the family imagery of "growth" and "maturity" associated with appropriate learned role performance. The ideal state is "self-control" and "self-discipline." When achieved, the organizational interest and self-interest are one. As Joseph Heller suggests, "everyone has a share."

FOOTNOTES

1. Like culture, ideology is a loaded and ambiguous term, carrying multiple meanings. Despite its many connotations, it has proved to be an indispensable analytic concept. Mannheim (1936) attempted to retrieve it for scientific purposes in formulating a nonevaluative general concept of ideology as the basis for a sociology of knowledge. Merton (1957) elaborated this view by defining it to include all thought analyzed in terms of social context while suspending questions of validity. Geertz (1973) narrows it down to those ideas that attempt to describe the social reality faced by a collective and offers the conceptual tools to analyze it as a nonevaluative symbolic form. He suggests that the substance of ideology is meaning conveying symbols and these must be understood in their own terms prior to analysis of social functions. This is not to say that ideology does not have social causes and consequences, but these are a case to be made rather than an a priori definition. The question of ultimate validity of ideological claims has posed a thorny epistemological problem that has been side-stepped by most students of ideology not wishing to get caught in "Mannheim's Dilemma."

In organizational analysis ideology has been used in a variety of forms. With few exceptions, analysts leap to causes and consequences, with little attention to meaning (Kunda, 1986). For example, in a review of the organizational literature, Beyer (1982) defines ideology broadly as "all ideas that create loyalty and bind people together... explaining the environment in terms of cause and effect." These are related to traditional organizational variables with little attention to what loyalty is and how people are "bound together." Few studies have attempted to capture the nuances of organizational and managerial ideology with reference to the social nature of organizations. Most notable are Rohlen (1974), Nye (1985), Rosen (1984), and Sutton et al. (1956).

2. The lines between these groups are not neatly drawn. Overlap - a topic worthy of a separate study - occurs most frequently when popular writers are themselves academics (Deal and Kennedy, 1982) or when they draw on scholarly research (Peters and Waterman, 1982). Published scholarly work of the "applied" sort resembles the popular genre, and journalists often cite the popular literature explicitly, or in lieu of their own form of research and theory. Consequently, these forms of observation, analysis, and reporting do not always fall into distinct categories, but belong on a continuum. What is academic and what is popular is in the mind of the beholder as much as in the intent of the authors. Here I will use the insider's distinction between categories, as well as my own judgment based on style.

3. In the interest of disguise, the excerpts will not be identified specifically. All are taken from bestsellers in this genre. Those willing to undertake detective work to identify Tech, probably will have no trouble in seeing through the disguise anyway.

4. Articulating "corporate philosophy" is a widespread practice in American companies. Many of the managerial textbooks and cookbooks suggest that it is crucial for success. "Philosophy" is to corporations what "literature" is to social science.

5. "Wordsmithing" is a well-recognized practice in managerial ranks. It refers to the collective articulation of group or company philosophy. The slightly cynical flavor of the metaphor is suggestive of the prevalent attitude to the "love of wisdom" in its organizational version.

6. A number of newsletters are circulated on the technet at the initiative of employees. They range from the playful to the almost openly subversive. Use of the technet for these purposes is condoned or at least tolerated by managers, who seem to operate on the assumption that even subversive play is a form of attachment.

7. "Pride in achievement" is encouraged in a very concrete way. Tech employees are encouraged to become investors. Stock options are available below market price to all employees as a percent of income. Additional options are available to high performers as a token of appreciation. These are the most valued rewards. Their distribution is a secret, and the topic of much whispering.

8. Other media are also used. Of particular significance is videotape. Many interviews are stored on tape and are available for screening. Chapter 4 will describe some of these tapes and the circumstances under which they are shown.

CHAPTER 4
PRESENTATIONAL RITUALS: IDEOLOGY ENACTED

Properly done, ceremonies keep values, beliefs and heroes uppermost in employees' minds and hearts.

T. E. Deal and A. A. Kennedy
Corporate Cultures

The "song and dance." Its the only thing at Tech you know will be around tomorrow...

Tech Engineering Manager

The cloak and dagger dangles
Madams light the candles
In ceremonies of the horsemen even the pawn must hold a grudge.

Bob Dylan
Love Minus Zero/ No Limit

Organizational ideology is the explicit managerial codification of the normative demands of membership in the organization. Its meaning to members, however, is determined in the course of social interaction. Therefore, to understand the impact of ideology on members, and the individual responses that are generated, it is necessary to understand the social context within which ideology is conveyed. This chapter describes and analyzes some of the recurring collective events at Tech where ideological formulations are publicly presented by and to members. These events are "organizational rituals."

Ritual has long been recognized as a phenomenon of central importance to the understanding of the relationship between individual and society. Based on his review of the immense literature on this topic, Lukes (1975)

offers a general definition of ritual as:

...rule-governed activity of a symbolic character which draws the attention of its participants to objects of thought and feeling which they hold to be of special significance.

In this view, ritual is an opportunity for those who claim authority to define and exemplify appropriate ways of "being-in-the-world."

Participation allows others to display and experience their stance towards these claims. Analyzing the impact and functions of ritual requires context-sensitive interpretation that references, but is not constrained by native accounts.

Two distinct views on the social significance of ritual exist. On the one hand, the functionalist tradition sees rituals as collective, symbolic behaviors that serve an integrative and unifying function by reaffirming those understandings and intensifying those emotions that create group solidarity (Durkheim, 1915). On the other hand, those with an orientation to conflict processes suggest that rituals help dominant groups achieve compliance and control through the exertion of cognitive power i.e. the ability to define (and thus the ability also to obscure) social reality (Lukes, 1975).

Both, however, are cases to be made. Rituals have multiple, complex, and changing layers of meaning (Cohen, 1974), relatively independent of, yet tied to social structure (Turner, 1974; Geertz, 1973), and only partly articulated and understood by participants (Lukes, 1975). Careless application of past insights that have shown the various latent functions, implicit rules and hidden meanings of ritual, with a bias towards explaining either integration or conflict, have obscured the need for ever-vigilant interpretation. Thus, the meaning and significance of rituals is

context-dependent and always an interpretive empirical question.

Turner (1969, 1974) suggests an interpretive framework for analyzing ritual that transcends both functionalist and conflict views. He sees social life as process, "sequences of social events, which, seen retrospectively by an observer, can be shown to have structure. Such "temporal" structure...is organized primarily through relations in time rather than in space..." In Turner's view, social process occurs between the poles of "structure" - norm governed social relations marked by the salience of status and roles - and "anti-structure" (or "communitas") - a mode characterized by temporarily unmediated relationships. The latter is characteristic of "liminal stages" - transitions between structured modes of relationships. Rituals, in this view, are performances that may be seen as "especially dramatic attempts to bring some part of life firmly and definitely into orderly control..." (Moore and Myerhoff, 1975).

Thus, like others processual forms, rituals are suspended between determinacy and indeterminacy. On the one hand, through the repetitive performance dimensions of social action - the re-enactment and thus the re-experiencing of known form - ritual has the power to transmute not just opinions, but the people who hold them (Geertz, 1983). When ritual "works," ideological formulations assume emotional significance for participants, resulting in a "symbiotic interpenetration of individual and society" (Turner, 1974). On the other hand, the drama of ritual lies in its unpredictable aspect. While some analysts in this tradition refer to rituals as "social dramas" (Cohen, 1974; Duncan, 1969), Turner (1974) used the concept more narrowly to refer to conflictual situations that may occur as part of rituals, where a sequence of events begins with a breach or a challenge to the order, erupts in crisis, is followed by redressive action,

and culminates in reintegration. Thus, the drama of ritual contains both conflictual and integrative processes. It is the task of the analyst not only to identify units of process and their temporal and dramatic structures, but to unpack the subjective meanings associated with both aspects of the performance.

So defined, ritual is found everywhere. Perhaps most easily identifiable are those associated with organized religion (Durkheim, 1933), and the mass spectacles that characterize modern politics (Lukes, 1975), but others have pointed out that ritual behavior is at the foundation of routine social interaction (Goffman, 1973) (1). Organizational life, in particular, is replete with ritual, ranging from the spectacular to the mundane (Trice and Beyer, 1984; Meyer and Rowan, 1977). As in other settings, it is in ritual performances that the nature of the relationship between members and organization is publicly enacted, and ideology is transformed from abstract articulation to lived experience (2). But what the nature of the transformation is, what exactly transpires in such events, what dramatic forms they take, and what meaning they have for various types of participants, is an empirical question of the first order for those who seek to understand the reality-defining transactions that are the basis of normative control in organizational settings (3).

This chapter will focus on one specific ritual form that is pervasive at Tech - "the presentation." Most generally defined, these are events where one member speaks to a group and makes explicit reference to the organizational ideology. A number of questions are addressed. What are the recurring patterns and the rules that guide these events? What are their dramatic structures? What meanings are enacted by and for participants? What, if any, normative demands do they convey to members of the

organization? What member response is elicited?

The Presentation: Talking Ideology

There are numerous possible social situations where the organizational ideology is publicly presented. Members of the organization engage in a seemingly endless ebb and flow of rule-governed interactions. Recurring social situations that are recognized by members may vary with respect to a number of dimensions: participant characteristics (strangers, cross-status, cross-function, cross-organization); size (large - small); temporality (one time - recurring); and degree of openness (open-invitation - exclusive). These dimensions interweave in the various events.

To simplify the analysis of presentational rituals, I will focus on three recurring configurations within which they occur. The three categories are defined by the relationship between presenter and audience. They are:

1. Talking Down: Top management presentations

A member identified as "upper management" speaking to a group of invited people of considerably less seniority convened for the event of which this is part.

2. Talking Across: Training workshops

Presentations delivered by specialized spokespersons (full-time trainers or invited speakers on a temporary assignment) as part of "educational" events designed to convey pragmatic knowledge of the organization to participants.

3. Talking Around: Work group meetings.

Planned gatherings of members of intact, formally defined work groups, where all participants are potential presenters.

While the first two categories focus on discrete and well-defined events relatively removed from the everyday work routine, the latter consists of interactions that occur in the context of ongoing group life, where participants are often more closely and intimately related.

Within each category, events vary with regard to other dimensions. A few examples of each generic type will be presented and contrasted to reflect differences within each category. The typology is neither fully developed nor exhaustive. Instead it represents some of the most frequently occurring types. The purpose of the analysis is to identify the main elements of the dramatic structure, and interpret their significance for member-organization relations. The implications of frequency and timing of the events, although relevant to a comprehensive understanding of the impact of ritual, are not addressed here.

Talking Down: Top Management Presentations

Public presentations by senior managers are opportunities to articulate their perspective on the Tech culture for a Tech audience. They vary along a number of dimensions: the degree to which participation is open, the distance between presenter and audience, and the nature of the relationship between participants. Four events, reflecting this variance, will be described. The first is a closed presentation by a vice-president to a loosely connected group of mid-level invitees who cut across the entire organization; the second is an open screening to an unaffiliated lower-level audience of a videotape of a closed presentation by the president to a select group of senior managers; the third is an open presentation at the facility of an intact development organization; and the fourth is a presentation at a closed off-site meeting of all the managers of a staff organization. The four examples are followed by a comparative analysis.

Culture in the Cafeteria One of the vice-presidents has an interest in the subject of culture and has a ready-made presentation, a "road show," in

which he explicitly discusses "Tech culture" and his interpretation of the popular and academic literature on the subject. The presentation is given to a group of invited engineers and managers after lunch in the large meeting room behind the corporate cafeteria. It is a mixed crowd, with roughly fifty people present; most have been invited as participants in a now completed educational program. The organizers are lobbying for continued support for the program; gaining visibility by designing such "song and dance" events is one tactic. Some of them laughingly refer to this purpose as the "hidden agenda" - a common reference to real purposes reputed to be behind elaborate gatherings of this sort. Identifying the "hidden agenda" is a frequently observed backstage game participants play.

The audience is diverse. Present are some old-timers who know each others from past battles, a number of senior engineers and managers, some new hires, a manager, chain smoking, who is known by all to be "on the way out." All are wearing name tags prepared by the organizers as an aid to (and a symbol of) "networking," always one of the explicit goals of such events. The first stage of the event is a "liminal stage:" all the participants are gathered, and jointly make the transition from routine to ritual. Here it is an extended catered lunch, fairly elaborate in contrast to the simple food served in the cafeteria next door. Lunch is an opportunity to interact, meet new people and old acquaintances, introduce oneself, gossip, badmouth, observe others, pick up information. ("Isn't that the notorious Bill Jones? He looks burnt out. They say he's drinking again!")

When lunch draws to an end, and the vice-president indicates readiness, the crowd is transformed from a complex, energetic network of activities into a hushed focused group.

The rapid moving from table to table, the huddles, the jokes, the watchfulness draw to a close as the VP gets ready to speak. He stands up, arranges the viewgraph, and taps the microphone. In the background, unnoticed, the contracted workers clean up, under the eye of a discreet supervisor, moving in a different space. The last conversations end. The presentation begins.

The presentation follows a standard format, one that is widely used by presenters at all levels.

The presentation ("My career and what I learnt on the way") lasts about 90 minutes. It is built around ready-made overhead slides that are flashed on a screen behind the presenter. On each slide a number of "bullets" are listed: several words succinctly summarizing a point. Each "bullet" is exposed as the point is made, and then a few minutes of elaboration or anecdotes follow.

First, Tech is described. A cultural principle is stated and elaborated with supporting maxims and anecdotal evidence. The vice-president one principle frequently used to characterize Tech, and particularly Engineering. Tech is "bottoms up."

The top of the first slide reads: "Tech is a bottoms up company." Bellow it, exposed one by one as he reads through, a list of "bullets" summarizes Tech wisdom in this regard:
"-If ideas came from me we would be in trouble."
"-He who proposes does."
"-Earn your reputation."
"-Your boss can't make you fail - you can!"
"-You get what you inspect."
"-You're second class if you think you are."
"-If you see a problem fix it."
"-Committees live forever, task forces get to conclusions."
Each such pronouncement is greeted with headnodding in the audience. The bullets are interspersed with anecdotes from high up ("the president told me...") or from the distant past ("Back when Engineering was still..."), and occasional graphic depictions ("This is the Excellence Triangle," he says, turning to the board and drawing a large triangle. Along each side he writes one word: "quality" on the left, "discipline" on the right, and "commitment" on the bottom. "That is the foundation!" he says, turning around again. A number of people jot it down. "It is what 'bottoms up' is all about.")

This is a widely used format for such presentations. Ideas, often

referred to as "messages" are conveyed as brief, aphoristic summaries, spoken with the conviction of self-evident common sense, usually depicted as having been learned through experience, and decorated with artifacts of display: slides, quickly drawn models, photocopied handouts. "Bottoms up" is the general principle. It encompasses a set of maxims that imply a "member role." Specific points are met with signs of affirmation from the audience, and later cited and quoted in the presenter's name by those present.

From statement of principles describing Tech, the vice-president moves to more specific elaboration of the member role. He finishes with the following advice on how one is "to be" in a "bottoms up" company, using himself as an example. Presumably, success will follow if one is to judge from the speaker's experience. Increased signs of audience affirmation, even from those who might contradict that which is said in other settings, suggests the importance of communion in the context of this event.

He reveals the first bullet. RESPECT. "Treat others with respect and the consideration you expect, the way they want to be treated. I get very upset when I hear someone say 'that turkey.' It says you don't value people." I look around. I've heard the expression from more than one person in the room. Heads are nodding, the silent but very visible signs of communion. There appears to be a distinct rhythm to the swaying, increasing in vigor as the speaker's gaze moves across the audience, like the Fenway wave. He continues: "Build on what others have done. Avoid the NIH (not invented here) syndrome. Nothing is more fun than making; but if others have done it, for god's sake use it!" Another bullet is revealed. TRUST. "...cooperate with other groups. Hell, its not Middletown and Lyndsville (two sites of engineering groups embroiled in a well known fingerpointing duel) that are enemies; It's Chiptech! It's Silicon!" More vigorous nodding, usual for references to the enemy. The list is long. HONESTY. "Say what you intend. Make it public at Tech... avoid situations where you can't be honest...." At the end, a burst of applause.

The presentation is a celebration of the member role. It is followed by a question and answer period. This is an opportunity for members of the

audience to take a stand, to participate more actively in the collective event. Most ask routine questions that allow the presenter to elaborate and extend his presentation. But many presentations are also the occasion for at least one challenge to the order, a brief "social drama," as the following example illustrates.

An engineer stands up and introduces himself. "I'm Rick Smith," he says with the air of a celebrity. His name is familiar to many from frequent technet traveling. He is dressed in engineering style with an added touch - a large chain around the neck, a beard, and sandals. He is known as an outspoken engineer. "You said this was a bottoms-up organization. That's the way it was and that's what made us so good. Are you aware that the new network security regulations get in the way?"

The provocative sounding challenge is familiar to all. Engineers vs. managers, freedom vs. control. Members of the audience indicate that this is a familiar routine: they exchange glances, smile, raise eyebrows. But all seem interested as the exchange develops and the tension rises, a mini-crisis.

The presenter replies evenly: "We need both. Security and communication. The new trend in the culture is security! We need to give our new engineers the full picture. We are open but we need security." Slightly patronizing. Rick now standing and obviously fired up, persists: "I disagree! People are cutting back in the name of security! Some things don't get around internally anymore! I send stuff over the net all the time and I'd get upset if management said: 'stop,' or if they make it difficult! Networking is one of the ways this company works! Tech was an engineering bottoms-up company but not all Tech managers behave this way these days. Some managers actually think they run this place! I don't know what you think but you've got managers who work for you, and there aren't mechanisms to get rid of them or educate them!"

The tension breaks, moving into the realm of humor, acknowledged by all. Humor is a typical way of achieving redressive action and reintegration.

Everyone in the room laughs, the speaker smiles too, releasing the tension that has been building up, and acknowledging the familiarity with this scenario and the

recognition of the now clearly humorously overstated case. Rick sits down looking satisfied. Someone says to him: "I'm on your distribution list and your information is wonderful. It keeps us all up to date." Some one else says: "Loose lips sink ships. We have new hires from other companies who still have friends there." The presenter waits for all this to subside, makes a note to himself and says: "Security of info is your personal responsibility! We tracked down a competitor's phone tied into a node on the net. It was plain dumb! Next question?"

The challenge is over. The statements are made, the member roles of manager/presenter and engineer/challenger are publicly enacted. The participants treat this as a well-known and oft-repeated scene. Nothing is said that is a surprise to anyone who has been around. It is the saying rather than the said that is significant. Familiar unchanging positions are publicly stated by people who will probably do it again many times. Although both were speaking for ostensibly different views of the collective - the engineer's "creative freedom," the manager's need for order - they appear to share an open commitment to the company and to the "bottoms up" principle. The difference is a matter of interpretation. So, while the roles of "engineer" and "manager" are pitted against each other, the "member role" is still shared and celebrated. "Good membership" means commitment, involvement, taking an outspoken, emotional stance. The episode has dramatic elements. Together presenter and challenger enact the essence of "bottoms up." The tension rises as the challenger appears to be approaching the point of real conflict, but humorous resolution is collectively achieved and the tension subsides. "Bottoms up" and the implied "member roles" have been articulated and performed.

The final interactions are an example of the closing liminal phase of a ritual. It is a transition back from ritual to routine, an end to the frame within which public and collective sentiment is expressed, a return from the sacred to the secular. In the aftermath, participants begin to

draw their own meaning from the event. It is an opportunity to savor and interpret the events, perhaps get a few final words in. Other realities, temporarily submerged, make their appearance again. In the liminal phase these realities blend.

The meeting breaks up rather rapidly. It is long after lunch and it is a warm day. Some groups are still around, talking. Individuals wander around, lingering, moving between groups. The resident culture expert is still at her table, scribbling. "I got some super quotes for my next paper!" she says to the editor of "High Performance," the in house publication. He replies: "I liked the "Excellence Triangle;" maybe we should do a piece on it. And did you notice how many times he said the word 'system?' It's the new buzzword. The message from the culture is systems!" Someone says to a friend on the way out: "These speeches are interminable, like the Kremlin. I was falling asleep but it was worth coming. I've never seen this guy before." Some petitioners approach the speaker. A few ask for copies of his slides.

The boundaries of the event are clearly drawn for those who do not recognize them.

Rick, the outspoken engineer, is approached by a group of new hires. They tell him excitedly of some bottoms up example, waiting for his approval: "We had this jerk for a supervisor; she thought she could run the project alone, but we went to her manager and got rid of her..." But he is clearly not interested; he nods perfunctorily and wanders off in the general direction of the VP who is still at his table.

The intimacy of the spokesman role was reserved for an earlier setting. It is a sentiment that exists only in the collective enactment. The rejection is a lesson in ritual life for the new hires: ideological articulation has its place and time. As they move to leave, the vice-president walks out with Rick, and the few stragglers are quickly gone, leaving the room to the cleaners.

Through the Peephole Not all senior management presentations are made in person. Speeches given in closed meetings of senior managers, yet

intended for a wider audience, are videotaped and made available to those whose status precludes them from actual presence. The lunchtime screening of a videotape of the president's speech was widely advertised across the technet, and open to all employees. It features a speech he gave at the annual "Tech Forum" to 300 of the most senior people in the company, as well as some high status outside speakers: a European politician, an Ivy League professor. None of the information is classified, but invitations to the "forum" were hard to come by; inclusion is clearly a sign of status. Although the forum was closed to all but the invited "primary participants," the screening is open.

Much of the content of this particular speech is familiar. It has made its way through the various networks and interpretive lenses of formal and informal groups, its intricacies and layers of meaning dissected in detail, analyzed, parodied. Recounting such stories, and making interpretive comments is often a sign of status, of being in-the-know. The videotapes are available in the library, along with thousands of others, including other "forum" presentations, to be shown the next week.

Those present are "secondary participants" - a marginal and belated audience to the main event. It is a screening for those who want secondhand experience disguised as first, or for those who are curious about what they have missed. There is little that is celebratory about the gathering.

The screening takes place in one of the central, all purpose conference rooms at "corporate." The room is dark. About fifteen people present, mostly strangers, seated as far apart from each other as the large room will allow, waiting in silence. Those I recognize are all "wage class four." In the corner, the operator of the video is whispering to the organizer, a manager from central training. They are unhappy about the turnout. After a few minutes, they decide to start. Without a word, the tape rolls, and the president's familiar face appears on the screen. A few seconds later, the soundtrack is heard too.

The president's presentation is an overview of the company. It is in his characteristic style and built around a basic idea - a "message" - stated up-front and repeated extensively. That, it is commonly acknowledged, is how "messages" are "internalized."

The videotape consists of a series of monologues strung together by heavy-handed editing and interspersed with shots of the audience. The president - as is well known - was in vintage form. First his view of the company: "I'm looking for a simple set of products, one that every salesman can understand. One that even a marketing VP can understand!" (Laughter.)

"Simplicity and discipline" is the message. It is coupled with an "in joke" at the expense of a marketing vice-president. The audience is allowed an intimate glimpse at the relationships at the top. The taped laughter acknowledges the reference as well as the message.

The president continues with a description of Tech. He uses two rhetorical devices to elaborate his view. First, a foil. It is a familiar one, and it draws appreciative laughter from the taped audience.

"I had lunch at the Harvard Business School, and I told them about Tech, about our history of separate, entrepreneurial, competitive groups. I said that what we did in the past a large number of people can now do. But our future is doing the hard things, things no one else can do! That is our place! And what we need to do can no longer be done with myriad groups. We need a disciplined organization. We need the pieces to fit!" He discusses how the product line must fit together ("People complained bitterly when they were forced to work on the XYZ!") and then adds: "At the HBS they were dubious. It is a religious belief that creativity comes from autonomy, from independence. They said: "it will limit creativity!" I said: "There is no creativity without discipline! No successful artist is without discipline! But they didn't believe me. They just read each other's articles and teach the latest fad - not real-life business." He pauses for the laughter to subside.

If the unpragmatic, religious, faddy airheads of Harvard represent everything Tech is not, then the following analogy he uses suggests what it is:

At Harvard they think they have all the answers, but that is not the way of the world. In chess and tennis you can be loud, cranky, irritable, ugly. It attracts attention. But in soccer, in basketball, in football, the rules are different. In the huddle, the quarterback calls the plays. A little discussion, a little complaining, a few suggestions, but when he calls it people know exactly what they do. Everyone knows! We should get a touchdown every play (if the other side cooperates....)" "If one man walks away from the huddle saying: 'I have a better idea,' someone could get physically hurt! Sometimes you're so aware of being physically hurt that you can't do it right! We've made progress but we're not all there." He gives an example of a debate over technological direction and concludes: "It's common sense: we need a strategy. We are the same as a football team: we need direction!"

Both images give quick meaning to the collective, one that draws instant response. There is a clear contrast, however, between the videotaped and the live audience. The former laugh appreciatively at various comments, particularly at "in jokes," as the camera moves slowly across the beaming faces. The live audience is silent, displaying none of the collective excitement they are witnessing, a room full of strangers. Two in the corner lean over and whisper to each other. The contrast between the audiences highlights the fact that collective sentiments are highly context dependent. Laughter is a mode of participation, of communion, of shared understanding. It is a public statement of belonging, of acceptance, of affirmation of the organizational ideology as it is expressed, and of criticism of those who don't see it so. The alternative is silence.

The president continues, translating the earlier imagery of sports and academia, disciplined team work and religion, into more explicit rules for the member role - enthusiasm, an independent spirit, hard work - coupled with implied criticism of deviants who forget the overarching company needs. The validity of his argument is reinforced by the obvious agreement of his audience on both counts.

"I owe it to the world to write a book about entrepreneurs. We were masters at exploiting the enthusiasm that comes from an independent spirit. We got a lot of hard work. But no one has written about the long-term effects of entrepreneurs. There are some dangers. They think they have the prerogative, the right to anything in the company. They fall in love with their prerogative...NO! There is no right to anything in the company. They forget their real job and begin to believe they are the greatest general managers in the world. They are the last on earth to delegate to others." More wisdom follows. Committees get their share of criticism: "They are the biggest danger. Worse than VP s.... (recorded laughter)...."

Finally, the message is wrapped in an exhortation, a call to the "we." The collective is subsumed under this label, personified and imbued with a moral purpose, not only in its product, but also its social organization:

"We almost have a moral obligation to society. We owe it to society to do it. We told them what to do; now we must show them how! What is most important is where your heart is. When we started Tech, the business fad was McGregor and theory X and Y. Some tried and said: 'I knew it wouldn't work. We made it work! And for an American company, we do it well!"

The final words provide a high point for the original audience who burst into applause, happy for the company, proud for themselves. For the moment, the message and the medium appear to be one; the member role and the collective purpose merge in words and in dramatic enactment. For the current viewers, it is the opposite. Attending the screening, if anything, is a sign of deprivation and nothing to be proud of. Shame, apparently, is expressed in silence. Most people leave during the session. When the lights go on, the few left depart rapidly.

Talking to the Troops More routine presentations by senior managers on business subjects offer opportunities for ideological expression, albeit more implicitly. Such events are less clearly demarcated from other social interactions. They typically take place closer to the work environment, and participation is less prescribed. Consequently, submerged realities are

closer to the surface.

A senior vice-president is about to discuss "product strategy" with the guys in the technical trenches. It takes place at the facilities of one of the development groups, and most present are members of the group. The session has been advertised in advance, and about eighty people are gathered in the room. Most of the managers and many engineers are present; the marketing types are well represented too. Also present are a number of staff members and trainers from corporate who want to stay abreast of current thoughts. Business presentations are a regular feature of life in this group, and typically occur as part of a biweekly afternoon seminar, along with more technical talks. Having a speaker of this seniority is rare, however, and occurred twice in the course of a year.

The setting is not much removed from routine. The liminal phase begins as the primary participants congregate.

We are in the large meeting room in the front of the building, in the 'business section.' The front doors open into the facility entrance lobby, next to the the security desk and waiting area, and the backdoors lead to another world, the large open space where engineering happens. This is front stage, very clearly a facility prop used mainly for entertaining clients: carpets, shiny furniture, nondescript corporate art. Could be any convention center. It adds to the theatrical quality of the event. The backdoors are backed up and people are standing outside and sitting on the floor. It is a mixed crowd, almost all engineers and managers, some still displaying a work mode. In the back of the room is a video camera, ready to record the event for posterity. A number of people have wandered off ("I'll wait for the video"). But most remain.

The routine setting and the lack of clear space, time, and participation boundaries between the event and other aspects of life requires attention to demarcation. The liminal phase is an occasion for transitional rituals: openly backstage behavior, behind-the-scenes jokes, references to reality not about to be covered, the use of equipment

(videotape and viewgraph), and changes in the lighting. These help bracket the event itself and the claims made in its context.

The group manager stands up to introduce the speaker. He makes a perfunctory joke hinting at backstage events; the group is known for its independent spirit, and the manager and the VP have had their differences. "We finally have Eric here. Our seminar series often features outside speakers, but it is hard to get upper management here. So block him if he heads for the door...." Some smiles indicate the reference acknowledged and he then shifts into a more serious mode. He assumes a straight face and makes a formal introduction: "Like many of us in Engineering, Eric came up the hard way, through the ranks. He knows what it takes to make products and what it takes to get them up and out the door. He is one of us." Some heads nod and Eric takes over the meeting. He pulls the microphone over his head, nods imperceptibly at the video man and moves towards the viewgraph. This is to be a discussion of general business and organizational issues for the technical people. Eric first explains that he pulled this presentation together from a number of ready-made "road shows" that he has; one he has in fact delivered this morning. "I hope the slides are in order." He is talking to engineers; it is family, and some backstage information is acceptable. The viewgraph is turned on and the lights out. We are plunged into darkness and then the large screen behind Eric is lit up with professionally designed multicolored slides. "Our strategy," the first one announces, and Eric leaps in, a solemn voice in the now comfortable semidarkness, typical of many presentations. The effect, by design or not, is to create instant, if temporary, and perhaps not quite real intimacy. It is lighting for communion. "We are on the air," whispers my neighbor.

Although Eric is the main show and focus of overt attention, a number of relevant side shows define the boundaries of the event. First, some of the senior group managers set an upper limit to participation.

As the presentation continues and Eric elaborates on "where we are what we are doing and how we are going to proceed, and what is needed to win (and win big)," some of the senior managers move out into the corridor, standing at some distance from the crowded doorways, and engage in animated whispering. There is not much new in the presentation for them. "This is more of a "pep talk, keep the troops involved type thing," one of them later tells me. "There is more important work to be done: people issues, politics."

They have excluded and differentiated themselves from other participants.

Second are the engineers, managers and secretaries on the other side of the wall who continue to work in their cubicles, unperturbed, oblivious. Some are potential secondary participants. "I don't need all that happy horseshit," one tells me as an explanation; "there isn't much new and you hear about it anyway." Participation, then, is optional. A third appears around the corner. It is Barney, a fifty-year old cleaning man. The ritual is clearly not intended for him. It is a "wage class four" event. He may, as many other "tertiary participants" do, walk through, a shadow. But he chooses instead to make a comment:

He is pulling a little wagon with boxes of waste paper collected from the now unused adjacent seminar rooms. As he maneuvers through the edge of the crowd flowing over into the corridor, he says to no one in particular: "Jee-sus! Standing room only! He slows down and says to the last person in the crowded doorway, who is straining on tiptoe to see inside the darkened room: "Are you getting something out of this?" The man, looking slightly deflated and no longer on tiptoe, smiles in acknowledgment, suggesting a similar question was crossing his mind. After a brief pause, Barney keeps going with a final emphatic "Jee-sus!" The man turns his attention back to the room, and assumes his earlier stance, as Barney pushes through the outer doors and stops to chat with the woman at the security desk.

The final episode offers participants an opportunity to make their own statements. Here it is one of technical prowess, and it is followed by a transition back to the five o'clock routine.

The talk is over. The lights are turned on and after the first awakening reaction it is question time. As usual in Engineering crowds, the questions become increasingly technical, a kind of sparring game that seems to cause a lot of satisfaction to those who feel they have the tools to participate. Some begin to slip away.

After two hours the crowd breaks up. It is five o'clock and the participants mingle with the secretaries who are on their way home. Eric has a scheduled late afternoon meeting and leaves with a few managers in tow.

Reviewing the Troops Program reviews are day-long events where members of a group present their work to a senior manager. They typically happen once a year, off-site, and are fairly festive. One of the SysCom staff groups is having a program review with their vice-president, in a hotel not far from "corporate" that caters to such clientele.

It is a typical setting for an off-site meeting. A small hotel off the expressway, in the woods. The ground floor is built around a large indoor atrium with conference rooms of various sizes in the periphery. Standard decor: tables, green cloth, notebooks, pencils, watercans and the eternal flipcharts. Tables in the corridor serve coffee and tea. A number of Tech groups as well as other local organizations are on premise.

All the "wage class four" members of the group are invited. Mainly managers engaged in varieties of staff work, only some with an engineering background, and a few engineers working on specific projects. Each of them, and the group as a whole, is funded on a year-to-year basis. Budget cuts have raised the anxiety level. Much preparation and "wordsmithing" has gone into the presentations that are going to take up most of the day. A number of staff meetings were dedicated to preparation and numerous trial runs conducted. It is clearly a show, both for the individuals and the organization. It is particularly important for "overhead" staff groups who must always "sell themselves" and convince others of their "value added."

The day has a distinct rhythm to it. The liminal phase marks the transition from the outside world into the world of Tech. Early arrivals congregate in small groups around the coffee table loaded with rolls with unnatural red and yellow centers. It is still "outside time." Small talk. Vacations. Baseball. News. Terrorism. The seemingly unorganized milling about begins to take shape when Mark, the staff group manager arrives. His presence indicates the beginning of a transition into organizational time

that is highlighted by an interaction typical of the liminal phase - the transition into the organizational ritual.

Mark joins the caffeine imbibing, increasingly animated crowd. He wanders over to one of the groups. As he approaches, someone says in a loud, feigned whisper: "Quiet, don't talk, Mark is coming!" Mark responds: "Careful, you'll burn me out!" Everyone laughs. Mark adds ominously: "And the next one might not be as good as me..."

Such dramatized and improvised scripts that reflect a common understanding of life at Tech are frequently enacted at the liminal stages of elaborate rituals, at the boundaries of events. Humorous enactments of realities that will become submerged in the events that follow are transitional rituals that signify increased though still detached attention to the events of the day, a mode that is at once 'in' and 'out.' Participation suggests that the actor is observant, knowledgeable and "wise" to life at Tech, yet unaffected, capable of satire. Improvisational interaction and audience reaction is a demonstration and mutual acknowledgment of understanding and knowledge, and an attempt to create an informal, temporary atmosphere, where status differences seemingly disappear. It allows participants to maintain dignity, yet also manifests some of the ideological principles of Tech.

The collective mood soon changes.

The group is galvanized by the appearance of Ted, the VP. All attention turns his way. Discussions in the small groups around the coffee table continue, but they rapidly lose steam and animation as he makes his way through the crowd towards the table. He nonchalantly pours himself coffee and eyes the rolls. "It isn't which one you choose but in what order," he says, and the comment is received with appreciative laughter from all. The subgroups have disappeared in spirit if not in form. Ted is clearly the center of attention now, though he carries himself as if he didn't know it. "We're ready to start in five minutes" says Mark. "Super! Super!" Ted says between sips; and they move in to the large conference room. It is arranged in semicircular sloping rows around a small elevated stand with a podium and podium and a viewgraph. Ted seats himself in the first row in the middle.

Alternative realities become submerged for now. Theater becomes reality. The rules for public rituals are operative, a transition signified by the opening statements. Ted will open and close the day. In between, other participants will present.

Mark stands up. "Let's show Ted what we are doing. This is an opportunity for some visibility. Ted - would you say some opening words?" Ted stands up. "It's a pleasure being here. It justifies the work we do, and gives meaning to being in Tech. The further you get away from people the more you miss the past! Let me tell you about the challenges we are facing and the role of your group." He describes the new organization he is managing, adding some cultural commentary. "We are not yet a team, and we have to go through some tough times and pain together. We're growing 50% on the gross margin. The profits are high and growing! We're the only group in all of Engineering, the only really profitable business. We should be making gobs and gobs and gobs of money! Our products are better. Yesterday we increased the prices by 10%. To get gobs and gobs... (laughter)."

The inspirational tone has set the frame. A series of presentations follows the opening speech. All managers in the group have five minutes to talk about their work. The slides are standardized. One is "Accomplishments," the other "Plans for Next Year." Each has a number of bullets testifying, promising. Managers of subgroups give an overview and introduce lower-level managers. The vice-president sits impassively through it all as the lights are dimmed and the speaker tries to shine within the confines of the five-minute straightjacket and its rules.

The ritual performance of the presentation has an air of self-consciousness about it. Successful ritual performance requires a juggling of adherence to the rules and the reality frames as well as suggesting "frame awareness" by allusions to alternative realities. The more senior managers begin. Their presentations are smooth, practiced. Within the time constraint they follow the accepted forms. Light-hearted and stylized cultural commentary - a corporate art form - is one way of achieving a

balance. One manager, a veteran of many such events conforms to the standard for elegance, and is duly acknowledged.

He has his own slides, the sign of an accomplished showman. He puts the first one on, bottom half covered. It shows a duck, staring dispassionately at the viewer. "The secret of success at Tech is to stay cool and collected and," (he exposes the bottom half showing the blur of furious paddling beneath the water surface), "- to paddle like hell under the water!" Appreciative laughter from all, including Ted, who until now has only smiled. Heads turn to watch his reaction. After a studied pause, the presenter breezes through the substance, shifting from serious presentation - he makes a reference to a project he wants but suspects Mark doesn't - to the light-hearted commentary that characterized his opening statement.

It is well received. Between the laughter and joking there is some quiet discussion about the "hidden agenda." Recognizing and interpreting it is a favorite activity, a sign of sophistication, part of the undercurrent of the proceedings.

Others take a more serious tone, replacing detached, cool humor with committed fervor. Popular managerial terminology helps:

Marvin, manager of the training group is up. "Let me start with a relevant Chinese parable quoted by Tom Peters who is truly one of my heroes." He quickly describes the wise man who taught hungry villagers to fish rather than give them fish. "Following Tom Peters, in our group we want to shift, from managers that have all the answers, to facilitators, developers of people for the information age. In the future I want to take a look at behavior transfer and truly measure the impact of our programs! My four-person staff is lean and mean. To quote one of my heroes again, 'lean staff and simple form.' It's the way to go." Ted, in the front row, nods at the references and the statements.

Stylized presentations and adherence to ideological formulations generates a quiet response in the audience.

In the back, Bill, one of the few engineers in the group, is muttering to his neighbor as he goes over his own presentation, still making corrections: "Gimme a break! A bunch of damned actors in this group! Know any Assyrian allegories? Phoenician parables? Scandinavian sagas? Mesopotamian myths?" His neighbor raises his eyebrows in mock despair as Marvin continues.

Junior managers, new to public speaking, appear nervous and do their best to conform to the ritual requirements for "a good presentation." Some have never presented before, and the resulting clumsiness draws attention to the ritual nature of the event.

A first level training manager has a hard time finding the correct placement of her slides. With a some help she manages and, a little flustered, proceeds to present the course she is responsible for: "We present the course material, y'know, in a quality way, y'know. We also do T-shirts, y'know." She pulls out one. "Here, Ted, this is for you. " It has the group name printed on front and EXCELLENCE on the back. She hands it to him. He rises and accepts it.

The braver of the junior managers attempts a framebreaking reference.

Roberta, a young manager says of her boss who has just introduced her: "When he interviewed me Phil Smith asked me why an intelligent girl like me would want to do such work." Phil squirms at the public revelation of his culturally inappropriate attitude ("There is no demeaning work.") Laughter smoothes it over, and Roberta gets back into rote accomplishments, bullet by bullet.

Thus the presentational ritual offers a frame against which the presenters and the participants place themselves. Ideological formulations are a resource in this game. Managing the distance from the ritualized ideological formulations is a crucial presentational technique and the source of the day's dramatic tension, contributing to the ebb and flow of the emotional tone created by the presentations. Elegance is the ability to create and resolve tension within the rules. Occasionally, however, the tension reaches a breaking point, and a brief social drama ensues.

A manager who is soon leaving is giving her presentation. In the middle of her talk which has gone over the allotted five minutes, she mentions her coming relocation. All of a sudden her voice breaks and she starts to cry. It is quite unexpected, and the scene freezes momentarily as she tries to regain composure. The emotional intensity is at a pitch, all eyes are on her. The moment is cut short by Al, a grizzled looking old-timer facing retirement, who offers a loud comment from the back of the room, where the more detached have seated themselves: "C'mon Jean, you said you couldn't

wait to get the hell out of this group anyway!" A joke? Undertones of hostility? Friendly face saving? Breaking the frame of her frame-breaking tears? The situation relaxes, she smiles through her tears, and the talk continues. The interlude is not mentioned again. The participants have a range of interpretations to privately live with. The situation is once again comfortably ambiguous. When it is over, the group adjourns for lunch.

Lunch time offers participants a liminal mode. There is some respite from the efforts needed to navigate one's way through the rule-bound events. It allows a certain relaxation. Participants feel freer to associate with like-minded others, to enact realities of their choice, to inhabit a more comfortable place on the continuum between communion and detachment. Interpretive discussions with people of one's choice ("Did you notice he didn't mention John Cummings and the chips folks in his org chart?"), an opportunity to exchange information, to impress one's superiors, to have a drink, to check the box scores or the Tech stocks, to play politics, to wander off.

Ted's closing presentation at the end of the day is an attempt to frame the day's events. First, he suggests that what has transpired is a manifestation of the member role. It is preceded by a qualifier that many find necessary to set up their reality claims if they want any credibility associated with them. It is a humorous declaration of frame awareness, an acknowledgment of the possible ways his words might be interpreted.

"You are doing a good and important job. And that is not a 'Tech stroke,' it's a real stroke!" I found your presentations amazing! I didn't imagine you were doing so much! And having so much fun! It looks like you are really enjoying yourself, enthusiastic. And that is what we are here for!

Then he becomes the spokesman for collective excitement. He speaks of what the culture should be and the appropriate member role it implies.

We need some new heroes. I took that word from Deal's culture book and I'm trying to identify the Engineering

heroes. People who are strong enough to "come forward" and then "go off and make things happen." Since '79 our theme has been discipline. Jim Morrison from advanced technologies is an example of the new kind of hero. I've been pushing it on the executive staff, trying to get the message across without hitting them over the head with it. I learnt this in the school of hard knocks. I had a library full of books on Japanese management. But they have a rigid managerial system. Once a decision gets made by consensus there is no questioning.

He uses himself as an example, a model for others.

How do you get the right headset? We need to use a combination of their and our culture. The idea is to educate people without them knowing it. Have the religion and not know how they ever got it. The point is not to be a rah-rah minister, but to use the culture; it is as important as structure, and I'm first in this leap forward. I must be tough on myself. But each of us needs this undying quest for excellence. We set tough goals and seldom meet them but feel good if we are close. That is good, but in tough times we might be tempted to back off, accept only partial fulfillment. My real goal is to pull together in tough times and "go do things!"

The speech is over. It is question time. An opportunity for affirmation, taken up by one participant who enacts the collective excitement felt in the room.

The first question comes from the front row where the head nodding through the speech was most noticeable. Flushed with excitement, half turned to face both presenter and audience, and emphasizing the pronouns, someone says: "Eric, given what you've said about finances, from where we are sitting, what single thing could we do to help you fulfill your needs?"

There is an air of excitement, of expectation in the room. It is contagious. The questions follow in a similar tone.

Discussion The four examples illustrate the basic form of presentational rituals where senior managers talk to members. Variations are numerous and often part of more elaborate rituals. A number of recurring features are evident.

First, the rituals are demarcated in space and time. Degree of

demarcation may vary. Formal events are defined concretely and artifactually: special settings, festive appearance. Less formal ones are set up behaviorally, requiring elaborate transitional rituals. Often, rituals have ripple effects. They are captured, reported and replayed many times.

Second, rituals have distinct stages. A liminal stage marks the transition from routine to ritual and back. This is a relatively unstructured period prior to and following the event where participants are present and interacting, either informally or around staged events such as meals. During the liminal phase transitional rituals mark the connection between the type of reality enacted in the ritual and other realities. Participants enact "behavioral scripts" that are humorous renditions of life at Tech, make joking references to known facts that are not about to be discussed, engage in interpretive discussions. The shift to the ritual main event is marked by the change of configuration to focus on the presenter, usually accompanied by use of presentational artifacts: viewgraphs, microphones, videotapes. The main event is more festive. The focus is on the presenter who speaks to the audience during the first part, and answers questions during the second.

Third, in the course of the ritual a clear distinction is made between "frontstage" and "backstage." In the former, ideological formulations are used as a seemingly natural and unquestioned basis for defining reality. The latter allows "common sense," criticism and alternative views to be expressed. During the main event, in particular, ideology becomes all encompassing; not only articulated but performed. Previously enacted common sense or alternative realities are temporarily submerged, relegated to a quiet backstage. Public acknowledgment of these two orders of reality, and

the inconsistencies between them, is the occasion for some tension, usually resolved by qualifying statements or through humor - brief social dramas in the course of the main event where challenges to the order highlight inconsistencies and laughter represents acknowledgment and resolution.

Fourth, the event has characteristic roles and behaviors. The "presenter" role is central. Senior managers speak with authority and with close identification about "the culture," using a standard format and visual aids, and often presenting themselves and their experience as an example. Their intent, openly stated, is the mobilization of participants through cognitive and affective shaping. The content is familiar to most participants. It is built around distinct and vivid images that are similar to widely available inscribed versions of the ideology (see chapter 3), and are often the source of its further articulation. In particular, the "member role" is defined and exemplified - an expression of the normative claims on participants. The "primary participant" role requires public affirmation of the claims and a demonstrated sharing in the emotional tone. It acknowledges the validity of the speaker's claims and manifests them in action. "Loyalty," "commitment," "excitement" and "togetherness" are not only articulated and prescribed, but enacted by spokespersons and participants. Participation ranges from headnodding and laughter to spoken questions and statements, and on occasion a more formal presentation using the standard format. While participation requires an enactment of the member role, it also allows a distancing from the procedures within well-defined rules that prevent it from impinging on the collective atmosphere. A specific role, in this regard, is that of "challenger of the order" where one publicly walks a fine line between denial and affirmation. An undercurrent of disassociation from the proceedings exists. The degree to

which it is openly expressed depends on the degree of formalization. For primary participants, disassociation is quietly manifested in the backstage or during the transitional rituals in the liminal stage, and most often includes a "wise" or "cynical" stance, one that focuses on exposing hidden meanings, debunking explicit intents and conveying an instrumental interpretation of events. When open disagreement publicly erupts, minute and brief social dramas are enacted. The threat of deviation from the rules raises the tension and is collectively restrained, controlled, and diffused. Successful conclusion occurs when the challenge to the order is interpreted as a manifestation of appropriate role behavior, or as a humorous incident. "Secondary participants" are those who are involved in spin-offs of the event: videotapes, newsletters reports, informal gossip. They may treat it as informational, and eschew the participatory drama. "Tertiary participants" are invisible people in support roles, present in body and in function only. The three types of audience correspond closely to the hierarchical structure. Primary participants are "wage class four," secondary participants are "four" or "two," and tertiary participants are "two" or temporary workers.

Top management presentations are dramatic performances. Their structure reveals distinct roles and a sequence of stages that creates a setting for the expression of ideological formulations and the emotional tone associated with them where the member role is celebrated. The liminal phases and the brief social dramas are temporary episodes characterized by an inversion of the dominant reality along a dimension ranging from 'being in' to 'being out.' It allows participants to withdraw from participation, to highlight awareness of the theatrical nature of the reality, and, ironically, to achieve a different sort of communion -

between talented, self-aware actors. Thus, the crucial and frequently raised issue in these ritual episodes is one of authenticity.

Talking Across: Training Workshops

Training workshops are carefully choreographed and designed events that are packaged and offered repeatedly. The subject matter might vary considerably but typically addresses aspects of the organizational ideology. "Wage class four" members attend, on the average, anything from zero to three workshops of this sort a year. Trainers or invited speakers on a temporary assignment are usually lower-level managers or engineers. Higher status presenters make an occasional videotaped appearance, but are not the main focus. Participation varies, but typically involves lower-status members: "wage class four" employees up to level 4 (principal engineer or supervisor), and "wage class two." Higher levels are presumed not to need "training," or to receive it less formally. Two workshops will be described. The first is an off-site introductory workshop for new hires, limited to pre-enrolled "wage class four" employees. The second is an on-site, open invitation "career management" workshop available to requesting groups or organizations.

Bootcamp: Learning the Culture The Orientation Workshop, fondly referred to as "bootcamp," is a two-day training event offered a number of times a year. Designed for newly hired engineers with a few months experience in the company, it is fairly popular, and draws attendees from a larger population. Like other in house training events, it must be marketed and sold in order to survive the internal entrepreneurial process. "Bootcamp" has made it in the marketplace. It is a flagship event, and considered an important vehicle for "getting the word down" and "the

message out." Each session is advertised across the technet and enrollment averages about twenty participants.

Participants come from a variety of backgrounds. Most are junior engineers with about six months experience at Tech. However, the workshop has gained a reputation for transmitting valuable knowledge. Consequently, participants occasionally sign up for more than one session. More experienced managers from Engineering and other functions will frequently participate too. In their view, understanding the company, its engineers, and their self-defined culture and mentality is thought to provide an edge over the less knowledgeable.

The workshop takes place in one of the Engineering facilities, in a large meeting room adjacent to the open office space where life continues to teem. The schedule is heavy, running from early morning coffee through lunchtime yawns to five o'clock fidgets. Instructors present a sequence of materials on the history, business interests, products and "culture" of Tech, designed as discrete thematic modules. Each participant also receives a package of readings: the Engineering Guide, an employee handbook, a few copies of Tech newsletters, a booklet describing the history of Tech, a number of internally published research papers on Tech culture, and a mimeographed copy of "Sayings of the Chairman" - a compilation of anecdotes attributed to the president.

The module on "Tech culture" comes first. "Culture" is not a notion that engineers take to naturally, and the module - designed as an interactive exercise - requires some goading.

It is still early. Introductions have just been made. The 25 participants are ranged in a circle around the viewgraph behind large name tags to which they have just added brief descriptions of their organizational location and technology. Most of them are "new hires" 3-6 months out of school; some have transferred from other companies. One or

two have vaguely defined jobs in Corporate, there is an older engineer from manufacturing, a fairly senior finance manager from Engineering and a technician from Field Service. The instructor is standing in front of the group, magic marker in hand, ready to kick off the culture module. Three assistants sit against the wall next to a table loaded with Tech publications. "The topic today is culture. We have a spectrum of people here. Feel free to chime in. 'Culture' has become something of a fad. First, what is 'culture?' What do you think?" She turns on the viewgraph, indicating the beginning of work. A young engineer, slouching in the corner answers: "Fungus. I had a culture for my senior science project. But my dog ate it." A little laughter, and the instructor smiles too, but continues undaunted. "We're looking at behavior, at people. What is the characteristic of people at Tech?" She waits with a warm, inviting looking smile, nodding in anticipation, perhaps indicating the signs of communion she is looking for. Her question remains hanging. No answers. Some coffee sipping. "You feel like you've all been chosen, right?" she says, nodding her head more vigorously and still smiling. Still no replies. The stony silence highlights the incongruity of her demeanor, but she persists. "What else? what are people like at Tech?" Some volunteers speak up, drawn in by discomfort, if nothing else: "...friendly... amicable..." She writes it all on the flip chart. The tempo picks up: "...individual and teamwork....I'm expected to be a good corporate citizen....strong customer orientation...."

The instructor moves to interpretation of the material she has helped generate. She has an ideological resource: a ready made list of reality claims she intends to make. But claims generate counterclaims, and these soon surface. The result is an interpretive battle. It occurs quite openly since the stakes are lower, the status differences less threatening, and the explicit goal is education. First she attempts to establish her claims.

She says: "People tend to like Tech, no matter how confused." One of the younger looking guys nods and adds: "I like it. I hope for profit....I respect the president a lot. Where I worked before you'd hope they fail! Here the executives aren't as ruthless as in other companies; they are more humane. I haven't met anyone here I don't respect." Another one chimes in: "I flash off on technet and get to people without them wondering why; they are open and willing to share information." Others warm up too: "people understand...there is tolerance for new people... supportive..." The instructor, after listing it all adds a summary statement: "That is what makes Tech a different place; people are relaxed and informal. What else?" Someone

adds: "There is little difference between engineers and managers; it's hard to tell them apart." "Authority Not a Big Deal," she writes.

The last comment is an important part of her list. Minimal or nonexistent status differences is a frequently heard and oft-repeated reality claim, a basic tenet of the organizational ideology.

Something of a challenge to the ideology is close to the surface. When the instructor tries to make another point, the first public sign of a counterpoint to the presenter's perspective becomes evident.

Still writing, her back to the group, she adds: "In other places you're incompetent till proved otherwise; here it's the other way around, right?" And not waiting for an answer, she writes it down too, and adds: "Confidence in competence; they know what they are doing, or believe it." "A little too much," the guy sitting next to me whispers to his neighbor.

The session is warming up. Basic principles of the ideology are soon challenged more openly:

When she has completed the list, the engineer from Field Service says with the air of someone who has been around: "Maybe. But I've noticed subcultures. It depends on where you work. Technical writers are considered lower than the dust on the floor. They are there to serve the engineers. In Field Service we are considered above them but not equal to engineers." The instructor uses this to make another point. "Tech is a technical company founded by engineers. Engineers hold a special place in some people's eyes. There are status differences based on what you know. But if we don't work together - we don't sell."

The interpretive battle that ensues is as familiar as the instructor's rhetoric to those who have been around. The newcomers watch with interest.

The older engineer says: "Tech is in continuous meetings. Decisions are made by committee. It stifles creativity..." The instructor has a quick answer: "You find ways to break loose yourself. It is a company of continuums. There are pockets. There is no such thing as 'no;' it depends on how far you wanna push."

Other participants join in, giving personal testimony, offering their own hypotheses. The instructor summarizes each with her ready-made phrases.

"You'll get uncooperative people, status-conscious people. But I've threatened people with talking to the president. It works!" "Are they contract people? Maybe that's why!" another engineer offers an explanation. The instructor picks up on the mood and writes: "We are a family." She turns and adds: "We have a no layoff policy. It's the ultimate backup plan. It would break some people's hearts if we had to do it. We face it as a family: cutting costs, hiring freezes. Every member is asked to contribute."

The instructor's ideological summaries are met by more extreme challenges:

The young woman from corporate, who has been silent so far, says suddenly, in a concerned, almost angry tone: "I work in corporate. A lot of the stuff is only a myth there. I see the very high up people fighting to the death. There is no clear person with the last word. They bounce responsibility around."

These, too, are familiar words, but out of place. They belong in less public places. The challenger continues in this vein, but is interrupted by the instructor when she starts to give an example.

"Tech isn't wonderful or glowing. It's not. It's human. But it's the best I've seen! I was a nomad before I came here. I'm sorry you haven't seen the rest of the companies so you can appreciate Tech." Then she turns to the others and adds: "That is another thing about Tech. People are quick to point out faults, as if they didn't have any. Where I worked before there was rampant 'empire building.' Tech is much better. We are a state-of-the-art pioneer. There is great love and great criticism of the company."

The challenge has been rebutted, the challenger temporarily silenced, and the challenge itself receives an ideological interpretation, an example of the intense involvement of employees and their "great love and great criticism." The little dramatic episode is concluded, the tension resolved, leaving a benign glow and an interpretive sedimentation decorating the flip charts.

The rules for the presentational rituals of the meeting become apparent and largely adhered to. Ideology is a resource that provides ready-made interpretations. Critical allusions to a reality not explicitly portrayed elicit quick laughter, shared by everyone. More challenging ones

raise the tension level and are reinterpreted or managed as deviance.

Conflicting reality claims - ideology and its equally stylized common-sense criticism - find a natural modus vivendi after limits on their expression are tested.

The instructor ends the session by shifting frames. She flips off the viewgraph and puts down the marker, indicating a shift in the rules, in the nature of reality-making. Moving into the circle, she gives a short talk that sounds off the record, very personal, almost motherly:

"There is a downside to all of this! There can be a lot of pain in the system! Be careful; keep a balance; don't overdo it, don't live off vending machines for a year (laughter)...You'll burn out. I've been there; I lived underground for a year, doing code. Balance your life. Don't say: 'I'll work like crazy for four years then I'll get married.' I heard this from a kid. But who will he marry? Don't let the company suck you dry; after nine or ten hours your work isn't worth much any way."

It sounds subversive but has also created an air of rapt attention. The instructor adds the finishing touch:

She stops in the center of the room. All eyes are on her. After a pause for dramatic effect she says quietly: "What kind of company do you think allows me to be saying these things to you?" I feel moved myself.

For some participants the culture module appears to make sense, and they demonstrate it by getting into the discussion - as supporters, challengers, questioners or learners. Others conform to the stereotype of engineers. They smile to themselves, or to a neighbor, or pull out computer printout, clearly indicating their lack of interest. They prefer the "hard data" and the facts. They see explicit cultural analysis as "fluff" - the engineer's term for reality claims identified with the social sciences or with "people-oriented" managers. It is, like "religion," a label used in the ongoing interpretive battle over the public definition of reality. For

them, other modules have been designed.

The next event is a videotape of the founder. The participants are introduced to the president, a keenly felt presence in the company. His "philosophy" is presented in his own words. An instructor frames the coming event. A qualifying statement ritual is necessary to set it up.

As the equipment is being prepared, she tells the participants about the taping: "It was shot over three days. It is a selection from the material. He is really good in this one. It's not like the times we handed him a script to read."

Authenticity, apparently, is always suspect. When one wishes to be seen as "really authentic" it is necessary to qualify the always suspect statements (- an ironic legacy of social science.) Cynicism, it is implied, is never far away. A priori acknowledgment of alternative views, and a limiting of the validity of cynical reality claims or critical common sense, is necessary to combat it - a pre-emptive strike. Then the tape begins and speaks for itself.

The lights are turned out and the large screen flickers to life. It is a professionally produced piece. After the fancy graphics and titles fade away, the president appears. He is sitting in a room very much like the one we are in, speaking to a group of people in business clothes. They ask earnest questions that serve as cues for lengthy monologues. After a question is asked, the camera cuts to a full frontal image of his head and shoulders that fills the screen. His eyes are unwavering as he talks rapidly, punctuating points with a quick smile.

Looking confident, charismatic, and self-righteous, he captures the attention of everyone in the darkened room. He appears very personal, and seems to create an air of instant intimacy as he uses the history of the company to illustrate the underlying "philosophy" that guides him.

"In the university nobody cared. I wanted people who wanted to be artists. So we started Tech. In the beginning we cleaned the johns ourselves. I put linoleum up alone! When pigeons came in through the windows, we chased them till they fell. We said we were manufacturers, not scientists.

And we wanted to make a profit. (A quick punctuating smile.) That has been with us ever since. Profit was a bad word then. Many of my friends were communists! Openly! Later they straightened out of course, made money (smile). But everyone here knew: we are out to make a profit. And we weren't embarrassed to make people work hard. We made a profit, and we were very proud. People still didn't believe we would make it. 'Nobody succeeds this soon and survives,' they said..." He smiles again, modestly acknowledging the implied irony.

A question from the filmed audience helps make the transition to the present and to the abstract principles.

"Any tips on how to better understand the culture in order to succeed?" "The company is big now. Work at it. Get to know everybody. Volunteer for jobs. There aren't rules for how to succeed. But do a good job. The job counts. We tolerate all sorts of schedules. I just worry when it hides incompetence. Some people look odd to hide incompetence! Learn. Stay in an area long enough to learn from mistakes." "What is unique about Tech that you want to preserve?" "Keep the openness, trust. We hired a consultant to examine things. He came back and said: 'I found trust, openness and cooperativeness, little selfishness.' Those were the words I wanted to hear. (Smile). But it is important. Growth is not that important."

As he talks, the company, its history and philosophy are personified. A larger-than-life image takes over and seems to control the room. He moves between everyday homilies and the entire company. He is far above, but the first name, the image, and the dark all suggest intimacy and closeness, if only temporarily. It has a lingering effect.

It is dark. Others in the room are barely identifiable silhouettes. All attention is on the screen. The tape lasts for half an hour. When the lights finally go on, the participants blink, semi-dazed, like a post-movie crowd coming back to reality. The session seems to have had quite an impact and generates a lot of discussion. The financial manager, still sitting says: "I keep noticing his eyes. It's the second time I've seen him, but I've never seen him in real life. He is really impressive." The older guy from Manufacturing tells of the time he actually met the president: "He actually spoke to me a few times, but only in groups." The participants hang around for a while talking about the president, a legend in his time. Pat, the organizer, is happy to talk to all of them. She seems to take a personal pride in showing the tape and representing the president. She seems to consider the awed reaction of the crowd a personal success.

The next module focuses on technology. This is the real thing, this is for engineers. It has everybody's attention. It starts with an introduction, a transition.

An instructor introduces the guest speaker: title, project code name. "John is a consulting engineer and was project leader for ZEUS. Good stuff! Without it, the company would have been history! Even though it was a little late... (smile)...perhaps he can tell us about that too."

The public ribbing of the featured speaker is an allusion to aspects of reality not about to be presented, another way of qualifying what is about to happen and protecting oneself from overly identifying with the proceedings. At the same time, it suggests a familiarity with behind-the-scenes events. John takes over the floor. He does not acknowledge the introduction, as if the trainer has not earned the right to make it.

John conforms to the esthetics of many Tech engineers. He is a tall, blonde, bearded man, clad in jeans, sneakers and a shapeless striped shirt. Well-built with a slight paunch and a tremor in his hands that is revealed as he arranges the slides on the viewgraph. ZEUS has just shipped and he is in between projects, giving talks, making himself known. Turning on the viewgraph, he launches into a softly spoken description of the project he was leading. He has a set of ready-made slides ("my road show") that present his view of the learning from the project. Bullets capture specific points: "Your work can be killed by a large number of other people." "You can ruin the work of many other." "Cooperate." "Discuss." For each rule he has an anecdote fitted into the time it takes to change slides. Practical advice. How to communicate with others, where to find information, how to avoid "fingerpointing," fights and "pissing contests." "It can save you six months! Six whole months!" - he says of the crucial resource, and dropping his voice, he adds ominously: "...and a lot of pain!"

The latter refers to the generally recognized experiential price of fast-track engineering, and is accompanied by the knowing grimace of a grizzled veteran. John is a living example.

Finally, technology has its say, as the talk reaches a crescendo.

The participants are alert. They lead to technical questions and the discussion becomes alive, capturing the attention of those who have so far been passive. The nontechnical people look helpless, yet are swept along too. When technology talks, people listen. John passes out a prototype of the product he has designed, and explains its attributes. It is passed almost religiously from hand to hand, each person turning, looking, feeling, with more, less, or no authority. The financial manager, holding it, hears John matter-of-factly describe its revolutionary qualities. "My god! My god!" he says out loud. "This is awesome! Think of the business implications! It will cannibalize the whole product line! It will eat the competition alive!" He passes it on to the young engineer from advanced development who is enjoying the reaction of the older, more senior, yet nontechnical person next to him. "Neat, huh? What does cannibalize mean?" But he doesn't wait for an answer. The air of rapt attention in the room persists. Here technology, not business, reigns supreme. Questions follow each other, the speaker is kept on, well over the scheduled time. The session finally dissolves under pressure from the lunch schedule and the temporary workers waiting impatiently at the door with the lunch trays, but a few of the engineers capture the speaker in a corner and continue with questions as he lights a cigarette. The financial manager and the guy from advanced development remain in their places; the younger man is engaged in a monologue. The older man is listening, in a combination of fascination and an almost paternal air. The instructors are pleased. The module worked. "John gives a super talk. He gets them all excited. They learn a lot. We'll invite him again." Their goal appears to have been achieved.

The event is an enactment of important underlying themes. Within the confines of the ritual, the emotions are expressed and felt as real. For a while, ideology is validated by experience. Technology needs no justification. It is its own justification, unrelated and untied to anything else. It is a domain unto itself and separates those who own it from others, who are dependent on it, whatever else they have. Technological achievement produces excitement and awe, and, for a while, the hierarchy loses its distinction. Something was learnt, both informationally and emotionally.

Learning occurs at multiple levels. The business module is an attempt to put the involvement with technology in a business perspective, to tie

the ideological themes together into a coherent framework and to generate attachment to the whole package. The realities of business are something engineers need to learn early on. This is considered an important "message" by those who see themselves in charge of reality framing. It is important enough for the manager of the training group to present it himself. He begins with a framing of his own.

First, he collects reasons people are at Tech: "State-of-the-art work." "Corporate philosophy." "I didn't want to sell soap." He gets moving. Next, he gives the engineers a business view of their work. "We're no longer in the business of boxing other people's stuff. Other companies can manufacture us out of existence. You're the only ones who can get us to quality products. You came to work on neat things. What makes 'em neat? They are close to the state of art. Others are forced to develop garbage and be compatible with shitty products. We're state-of-the art for people who are turned on by technical things."

Discussing the company profits, he paints a rather bleak picture. A chart illustrates the declining profits as an engineering problem:

"Our current rate of return is below the bond market! Without ZEUS we'd be history!" He builds a causal map, at the center is the goal, in big red letters: "MAKE MONEY." Little blue arrows point into the statement, and participants are asked to label them. "It's a little technique I learnt in Japan. A neat engineering tool." He takes suggestions: "Quality"; "Neat Design"; "Low Cost"; the suggestions flow in and he places them in appropriate places. Soon the chart is complex, colorful, almost indecipherable.

A humorous dramatic interlude offers encapsulated knowledge about the social world they are learning to inhabit. The nature of relations between Tech engineers and others is parodied.

One of the participants raises her hand to ask a question. The speaker calls on her and she says: "I'm not an engineer, but...." He cuts her off with a quick retort: "So get out!" in an exaggerated high voice, indicating a joke, and an attempt to parody accepted practices and views in the company. The participants are not ready for this and there is a moment of embarrassed silence. He laughs and asks her to continue.

Status and its meaning at Tech have been illustrated, but the participants have learnt something else too: the art of parody, the practice of dramatic enactments, the correct ritualistic behaviors. In this case - the stance of culture consciousness and the joking style of using it in presentations.

The intense modules are interspersed with lighter moments. The breaks, the free time, the timeouts offer a release from the emotional grip of the sessions. In them, a different reality, lurking in the background, is expressed. Humor is a way of doing this.

Five of the participants enter the toilet together, still talking about ZEUS. Inside, three older engineers from the local facility are undressing, getting ready for the lunchtime basketball game. They are talking about their project. "You have to make a lot of friends here." says one. "No. You have to not make enemies." The third, almost as if this was a rehearsed routine, adds his perspective. "You're both wrong. You have to not make waves." On the way out of the toilet one of the participants observes: "Maybe we should move the workshop in there..."

For some newcomers, the multiple realities they encounter can be confusing. Timeouts are opportunities to express confusion, balance the various reality claims, attempt to make sense of them. One participant says over lunch to others at his table:

"After the first day I was high; I thought: 'what a great place.' I went and put all these glowing messages in the system. But this business stuff really depressed me. I was shocked to find out that we were just saved by ZEUS. But my boss wouldn't cooperate with them. He told me not to answer any questions that ZEUS people would ask!"

The last session of the workshop captures and enacts the multiple and confusing realities and demonstrates one way of living with them. It is a study in ambivalence. The guest speaker is from Sales, an expert on everything the company has to offer. He will review the company product line. He has been to the workshop before and is liked by the organizers.

He, too, is known as a "good show." For a salesman he is very knowledgeable about the technology. "The engineers like that," says an instructor.

The transitional rituals are a series of self-conscious frame definitions and frame breaks.

Mike rushes in, a few minutes late. The organizers breath a sigh of relief. Mike doesn't waste a minute. He takes off his jacket, loosens his tie and vest, and comments on his three-piece suit: "You can tell I'm from Sales, right? I'm dressed to the image," and then jumps to the side, pretends to be an engineer looking at Mike the salesman and pulls a face suggesting laid back disdain mingled with feigned horror, a takeoff on the frequently encountered exchanged glances in mixed settings. "Jerk!" he says to the audience. Then he laughs quickly, and leaps back and into a monologue. His high energy and stylized performance waken up the late afternoon group. Some look at each other as if ready to comment, but pre-empted by his own self-mockery and exaggerated takeoff on them. He sounds like a stand-up comic with a New York Jewish accent complete with the rapid fire laugh and the mannerisms.

Moving between statement and comment, he is an artist at frame shifting; serious one moment, kidding the next, then commenting on both. Ideology, common sense, and criticism are inextricably woven.

He moves to a commentary on the company, an almost obligatory introduction. First a characterization of the company.

"In the beginning, we were Tech, you were the customer; we were the best and if you had a problem that's tough. We made a huge revenue. We make it in rupees, yens, pesos. Read Techworld if you want to see where the money goes. But then the shift came. Last year we had a hiring freeze. Still we hired you." He leans back, rubbing his hand, and adds an aside imitating a Fagin-like dirty old man: "We wanted your ripe young minds," and then continues naturally: "There are people here not working. Our clear commitment is not to let people go. It hurts but we're still paying them." He describes the role of Sales in the larger scheme of things, drawing a chart. Then he leans back, admiring his handiwork and says: "Typical Tech. Lots of responsibility, no authority. Great stuff!"

Next he elaborates the personal implications of his views and offers a guide to appropriate membership:

But seriously: this seeming lack of any organization forces on you the need to communicate, to network. It'll be nerve wracking but it'll be fun. The big problem here is info. Too much! 40% of the technet is used by the car clubs, the freaks, the photographers. Walk around, bump into others. Find out. No one has charts. As soon as they're published it changes, so why bother. Go and do one yourself; I'm not facetious. It's the most disturbing thing for newcomers: no structure. Especially for people out of school. Assume there is constant change. It keeps you on your toes and your desk clean. So communicate. Get on the phone, get on the technet. Reinvent the wheel. If you don't like the job wait a minute it will change. Move around. Your project might just disappear. Do more than one thing; you could find yourself anywhere: in Manufacturing, in management, in a dark corner growing mushrooms. And a final thought: never give up; there are a thousand places; go next door; ask for more challenge - you'll get it. And remember: You'll own your mistakes forever."

The last ambiguous statement, contrary to the earlier, straighter presentation, draws a comment from one of the instructors, an ever alert master of ceremony who suspects a slight ideological deviance and makes a correction:

"Its hard to get fired. You'll have to club your manager over the head. If you don't draw blood you still won't get fired." "You might get promoted," Mike adds with a knowing smile, drawing laughter from the participants. He continues: "Now that you've heard the song and dance, lets get down to the real thing: T-e-c-h-n-o-l-o-g-y. What else is there in life. Right? Right!"

It is the end of the transition, the set-up. He now unleashes his "dog and pony show" - high quality color graphics slides covering the entire product set.

Everyone in the room seems interested. Mike, continuing to move in his zany style displays technical wizardry as he works the audience. He lectures on the facts, asks people what they work on and comments on the technological aspects of the specific projects they mention. He seems genuinely excited and impressed with technological achievement and intersperses his facts with an insider's view of engineering life and knowledgeable cracks about salesmen. When he identifies technical shortcomings he turns to the engineers: "Yeah! That is what we need. If you wanna be a hero, figure it out. Do it in your spare time! Someone will be interested." He winds up with another monologue. "Tech is

considered an engineering company. In the field we are proud of it! The commitment to engineering pleases us! The products are great! I sold for other companies, but here I feel good. Wonderful products. There it was real selling - pure skill, selling shit. (Let me tell you the number one rule for selling shit in this business: always turn the customer's objections into advantages...) But you engineers make too many products! My sales manual looks like the New York telephone directory. I like it easier. Put the order in the mail and spend the afternoon on the golf course. "He swings an imaginary golf club.

The session ends with a transition, returning to close the first frame.

"Sales reps can be rowdy. We're into hype, into pep rallies (salute). We're very competitive; it doesn't have to be over anything, so long as we can drink and sing songs (hand on heart). We don't have these techie decorations." He makes a face at the large etching of Isaac Newton on the wall. "We have these big flash cards on the walls: Success. Enthusiasm." He turns around and faces the imaginary cards, arms spread. Then he turns around again and says in a lower voice. "All this altruism. The bottom line is - if I win megabucks tomorrow - hey! Am I coming to work?" He shakes his head slowly. "Damn right! The bottom line: it's the check! Every Thursday! M-o-n-e-y!"

One of the instructors laughs, another subtle attempt to frame all this.

The session is almost over. Mike hands out evaluation sheets, still talking:

"You should move to Sales. It's good work! Give me a call or flash me a note. Come down and see what we are selling. We have a party there." He jumps aside, imitating a distressed engineer: "What?! And compromise my soul? Lie?? Never!!!! I'd rather die!" and then answers: "Yeah! No big deal. I come from Engineering myself. Sales is a good career if you're looking to be a vice-president." As the participants fill out the questionnaires, he sits on one of the tables and whispers in a barely audible singsong voice, clearly imitating the call of the sirens: "Come work for us. Where do you wanna go? Paris? London? We can arrange it for you...you won't be sorry."

Bootcamp ends with a low-key parting ritual. On the surface, it is a routine ending. But it, too, offers opportunity for participants to express their stance towards the proceedings.

The workshop is over. Pat thanks everyone and makes a final pitch asking them to send others, to come again. People file out slowly, some remain talking to new friends. They all get a printed certificate with their name, proclaiming them to be graduates of the "High Technology Orientation Program." It might be used as office decoration. Some are friendly, saying it was a useful program, commenting on its various parts. Others pick up their certificates politely, even shaking her hand in recognition of the attempted parting ceremony. But it is five o'clock, and the real issue is leaving, crossing the boundary to a place where this ritual is less relevant. A tall young engineer with the fixed smile and awkward posture of the overly bright (whose dog ate the culture) refuses the certificate. Pat, holding it out, insists. He declines. She pushes it out towards him. He relents, takes it from her and, still smiling, tears it up and deposits it in the waste basket under the table with all the Tech material. He is the last to leave.

Pat and her assistants begin to collect all their materials. The leftovers will be used again. The Intro workshop once again appears to have earned its reputation. After it is over Pat and her assistants meet to discuss "finetuning" the design for the next one.

The Career Seminar: Working the Culture Workshops are available for experienced members on a broad array of specialized topics. The "career seminar" is a packaged workshop offered by the training group to interested groups in Engineering, and is held once every 3-5 weeks. It is intended to teach "personal skills" and an understanding of the "Tech culture," so that participants become better able to "design their own career." This one was contracted by the manager of SysCom. He wants to emphasize "people issues" in his group. It is offered to the entire group on a voluntary basis and is advertised well in advance. Repeated reminders are flashed over the technet, announcing "a three-part series on career management - three two-hour sessions over three weeks." The notices are up on the library board and on the day of the seminar on a flip chart next to the cafeteria, highlighted with yellow markings. It is scheduled in the time-slot of the

technical seminars.

Towards three o'clock the seminar room starts filling up. The trainer paces the backstage nervously. He is worried about his own career now that training budgets are being cut. "Overhead" people are always nervous around this time of the year. "My wife told me this morning to start applying some of this stuff to myself," he says.

At three there are about fifty people in the seminar room, sitting in rows. Almost all the members of a development team that is in serious scheduling trouble are here. They have just come out of a reorganization meeting with their new manager who has "read them the riot act." This is the public version of getting one's resume ready, being in a career evaluation mode. Two or three principal engineers, a number of junior ones. A few supervisors from other groups. They are the most senior people around. At higher levels, careers are a more private affair. Most others are junior engineers. Five or six secretaries are grouped together in one corner of the room. Two of them are temps who have a strong interest in becoming permanent. This might become an opportunity. Quite a few outsiders from other facilities who have somehow heard of the event. People from sales and support groups that are affiliated with SysCom. One of the group personnel managers sits against the wall. She makes it clear that she is not there for herself but as an organizer.

The transition and set up of the session are quick, perfunctory.

The newly appointed manager of SysCom enters. He often refers to himself as a "people person" and takes great pains to show it. This seminar is another opportunity. He puts the microphone around his neck and gives a brief introduction: "I just want to say two things. This is in response to requests. It is a kickoff in SysCom for activities planned for the last nine months but delayed because of changes in the personnel organization. You asked for topics beyond the technical stuff usual in our seminar series. You wanted more exposure to management issues, information, opportunity. We will get involved in the process of career management and development. We will put formal procedures in place. This is a beginning."

He then moves to the business of the day and reiterates an oft-repeated "message:"

"You own the responsibility for the management of your life and career. Not your boss, your spouse, your organization, your company, but you! We want to help you take

responsibility for your career and life because (he smiles) I don't want you to blame it on me.... (he laughs; others laugh too). This will start a process for you to help you understand if you are realistic or not, if you need to fine tune your plans. That is it." He turns and leaves. The personnel manager nods at him on the way out.

Alan, the trainer, takes over. He is comfortable, exuding an air of practiced public speaking. He, too, emphasizes the same point. At Tech it can not be overemphasized.

"I wanna wholeheartedly support Jack's perspective: Your career is your own responsibility! Your career, your life is in your own hands. I found at Tech that there is an expectation that management takes care of you. Tech expresses that in the form of lifetime employment. It is an expression of commitment to you. If the company goes down the tubes you will find out soon enough. But if it doesn't, take an urgent look at career management just the same. We will take a look at the why, what and how of career management.

He shifts to his prepared part. First he tries to establish a bond of similarity with the participants. As he fumbles with the slides, he talks, giving personal testimony, evoking the chaotic image of Tech, and eliciting audience response.

"I have been fired once, laid off twice, reorganized twice. I was moved like a piece of old meat and when I finally found something..." "They canceled it!" someone in the audience completes his hanging sentence, eliciting the first laughs of recognition.

He ends the introduction Arlo-Guthrie-like, with an added optimistic twist:

"I wanted to work at Tech. I've been reorganized, disorganized, relocated, dislocated. But despite all the frustrations - it is exciting."

The slides are ready. He hands out photocopies. The first slide moves the discussion to the realm of the personal. He walks a thin line between humor and seriousness.

The first slide: "Why career planning?: the use of time." He adds: "We are all on a train. Moving towards the inevitable. Death." He pauses. Silence, then a few nervous laughs. He adds in a somber, funereal tone: "You all know it. We only

have a certain time on this planet. And death is inevitable. We all have aspirations, what we want to do, to be." He stops for effect. Practiced timing. "Basketball was mine." And he straightens up attempting to add a few inches to his rather short frame, making a face. Some more laughter, and the quiet glances between some engineers, public questioning of hype, of style. But he elicits some laughs and has the full attention of the crowd. "Think of your epitaph. If you assume you will perish, you get control of your life."

As Alan moves through the slides, he keeps up a constant stream of chatter through which the central idea is conveyed repeatedly: Self-reliance and individualism serve everyone. Employees are expected to take initiative. There is no contradiction between loyalty to the company and to oneself. To serve the company - take action. The message is conveyed in a number of modes. It is supported by anecdote:

"I was down in Everett; A lot of reassignment. I worked with them, had conversations. People there felt like their devotion to the corporation and product was enough. No need to take time for career management. 'But you're being redeployed,' I said. 'Would you have spent your time differently?' 'You're advocating disloyalty to the company!,' they said. 'No! I'm advocating loyalty to yourself. If there is something you don't like, change it. What's your 'to-do' list? If part of your job stinks, change it! Talk!' 'But I have considerations... children...' 'This is not some primitive agrarian society - we're talking moving in the company. And they pay for it!'"

To reinforce the idea, he involves the participants in dialogue:

"What actions have you taken?" he asks. A hand is raised. "I spoke to another group to find opportunity." "Good for you!" he says emphatically. "I spoke with my manager." "Yeah! Good for you!" "I came to this seminar." "Great!" and then modestly: "...but it's not enough."

Cultural analysis also serves to convey the same idea. Familiar scenarios and experiences are sketched. But instead of the critical tone with which they are usually accompanied, the tone here is upbeat: you can, indeed you should, do something.

The next slide: "Do you know any of these people?" The first one flashes on: "My project has just been canceled." Laughter of recognition. Alan: "How many times have you heard

this one? It's got to be up there with 'Do the right thing!'" Another one: "I'm burnt out. My manager is a turkey and my work is unrewarding and confusing." Alan: "Here's one who needs help!" He keeps the commentary up as the familiar sayings flash on the screen, most of them easily recognized. To each he appends a comment and adds the now familiar line: "What is the phrase you use? What is the tape in your head that keeps you from doing something?"

Social science is cast in a supporting role:

The next slide is "Responsibility in the process. Employee Self-Understanding." Alan: There are a lot of snake charmers... books, everything you always wanted to know in 50 pages. It's fun, its astrology. But not many good ones. A famous psychologist, Rogers says: 'The ego does two things. It seeks information that confirms itself and throws out things that it doesn't like.' So seek feedback; find what you really need, what suits you, and do it! I'll give you the literature (he holds up two do-it-yourself books), without the redundancies. There is a lot of garbage out there. But these two books are the best: 'The Three Boxes of Life' and 'What Color is Your Parachute.' Good stuff!"

The session flows along smoothly, having struck a balance between seriousness and humor, distance and involvement. But a challenge to the order is not long in coming.

A gray-haired woman in her late forties who has been taking an active, assertive role in the proceedings raises her hand. Jill is a temp. She has been working as a secretary for one of the development groups for about a year. Like other temps, she makes it well known that she wants to become permanent. Alan calls on her. She says: "You're assuming we are lifetime employees, always here in Tech." Alan, realizing the direction interrupts: "No I didn't. Find something, dabble. Wanna be a songwriter? Tech doesn't employ songwriters? Are you sure? Maybe there is a newsletter? 'Tech-sing?' He tries to move on, following his train of thoughts to recent national news. "Tech-sing? Maybe Sing Sing if we keep shipping to the USSR..." She does not respond to the light-hearted portrayal of life at Tech and interrupts him. "Maybe I should look somewhere else?" she asks. This provides Alan with an opportunity to close the episode: "Good for you! I wanna open a shop in Vermont some day myself! Alan's Antiques..." He calls on someone else as she tries to say something. The workshop continues.

The final interactions have a liminal quality to them. It is a transition back from ideology to routine, allowing opportunity for sense-

making, for interpretation.

The session continues till close to five. Towards the end Alan begins to sell the next session. His "headcount" is important. "Come next week; I'll give some tools. We have this joke among trainers. The guy is too stressed to take a stress workshop, doesn't have time for a time management seminar. Think about it." People begin to leave. On the way out one of the temps says to me: "I wonder why the company is doing this; maybe they believe that turnover prevents burnout? It sounds good but I still want to know if they practice what they preach. Will they really offer me a job? Or else why encourage us? I've started networking. I go over the job book every day and call up these marketing people." Two engineers talk on the way out: "It was a lot of common sense turned into observations with gobbledygook thrown in. He fit 30 minutes into 90. But some of it was useful." "Maybe; but a lot of the stuff was written for the real world, not this company!"

Others come forward, some to browse through the stacks of self-help books." A secretary pulls Alan aside and asks in a lowered voice: "How should I tell them in the job interview that the reason I want to move is to be closer to home?" She appears not to want others to hear her concern. He thinks for a while, furrowing his brow, suggesting a moral dilemma of the first order, and finally pronounces loudly: "Honesty is the best policy. Always tell the truth in job interviews!" An older technician says: "You should teach this stuff in high school. Used to be that it was 'start at the bottom, finish in the middle, gold watch, and out.' Now its getting real fancy..."

The next two sessions in the following weeks continue in the same format. The topics become more specific: a review of the career management resources at Tech (job posting, counseling, and so forth) and an introduction to a personal career planning instrument. In between the lines, the characterization of the company and its members remains the same. Some of the attendees have dropped out, but most are back for more, and the room appears full, much to Alan's relief; informal ratings are of central importance to him.

Discussion The presentational rituals in training workshops are similar in their dramatic structure to presentations by senior managers. Workshops

are bracketed symbolic transactions set apart from the routine in time and in space. They have the same structure: liminal stages and main events where the same presentational techniques and formats are used, and the same "messages" grounded in the organizational ideology delivered. Participant roles are also prescribed and allow a choice of affirmation or distance.

However, there is an important difference in the presenter-audience relationship. Compared to senior management speeches, training events have a smaller status differential and lower stakes in participation. Most presenters are professional trainers - considered low-status in Engineering - and are often close (occasionally lower) in formal rank, income, seniority and tenure, to participants. In some cases they are dependent on participant approval and support for their livelihood. Ideological expression is their work. Guest speakers are also closer in status range to participants, and usually have few, if any, work or organizational connections to participants. Participants are there to learn, to take a break, to have fun. Participation is not perceived to have consequences beyond the actual event. In most cases their groups have paid a fee for participation, and they expect a service. There are not many obligations owed in return.

The participant-presenter relationship has a number of consequences. First, the dual nature of the presenter role becomes more obvious. Although the presenters are temporarily in role as agents of the company and its ideology, they, in contrast to senior managers, are less identified with it. They do not have the mystique of perceived power to fall back on or to protect, and it is more apparent that they are not only agents of the ideology but subjects to it too, sharing much more of the participants' reality. They need to both establish some authority for their claims as

agents, and, as subjects, to justify their recourse to ideological formulation beyond the routine (and therefore less trustworthy) doing of a job, without losing credibility as either. The need to balance this dual role requires careful self-presentation. Alan's humorous chatter and use of his own difficult experiences are one style. Another is Mike's cynical and "wise" self and culture-conscious stance. Mary's shift from formal cultural interpretation to almost motherly advice is yet another. Presenting thus requires the management of ambivalence. For the presenter it may result in cognitive and emotional dissonance that serve to reinforce adherence to normative demands. In this sense, the active role of presenter might be more important for instilling an ideology than the passive role of audience. Performing an ideological role reinforces the ideological script. This duality will be observed in the following section too.

Second, participant responses are less constrained. Confrontations and challenges are more open and more extreme, ideological debates more heated, and the limits less ritualistically prescribed. This allows submerged realities to surface more quickly. Similarly, identification is less suspect. Lack of hierarchical differentiation and fewer rewards suggest that there are fewer reasons to doubt sincerity, to question stances, to search for "hidden agendas." If collective excitement occurs, it is experienced as more authentic and less forced. Consequently, it is possibly more compelling.

The training workshops, like the top management presentations, are dramatic performances, providing stages upon which to enact and experience the member role. In both cases, most participants are part of an audience, the presenter being in a specialized and distinctly defined ideological function. Moreover, the drama is self-conscious, the theatrical nature of

the event close to the surface, the transformatory intent known, and therefore possibly self-defeating. For many, both types of ritual are discrete, intense and infrequent events. What comes to the foreground of experience, then, in these repeatedly performed rituals is the conscious choice of participation. In the following section, presentational rituals that occur on a more routine basis are described.

Talking Around: Work Group Meetings

Members of intact formally defined work groups often meet face-to-face in the course of work in planned gatherings with a specific organizational purpose. These meetings are the occasion not only for presentations by senior and middle managers to subordinates, but for presentations by group members to peers and managers. It is here that members have the formal opportunity to talk back. Because of the organizational complexity, many different types of such meetings occur, reflecting different types of association of participants and a variety of reasons for meeting. In the following section, three of the most basic configurations will be described, and a few examples of presentational events given. Once again, the purpose of the analysis is not a comprehensive taxonomy of group meetings or types of rituals. Rather, the goal is to illustrate a few examples of presentational rituals that are part of the routine work of an organization and take place within a salient set of relationships, and to identify their underlying structure. The three types of group meetings are:

Small group meetings: a manager and his or her direct reports. Called "staff meetings" by managers, "team meetings" by engineers.

Inter-group meetings: members of a number of work groups participating in a joint project. A number of levels are present but with no single reporting relationship.

Large group meetings: members of an intact work group with at least three reporting levels present. Often referred to as "organization meetings."

All the meetings described are part of the routine work in AdProd.

Small Group Meetings One of the most frequently occurring configurations is the staff or team weekly meeting. Typically two levels are present as regulars (a manager and direct reports) and occasional guests from outside or inside are invited. Staff meetings are the embodiment of the formal structure; participations is defined by functional groupings and reporting relationships (4). They occur at all levels. For managers, having a staff and belonging to one is a primary formal affiliation. For many it represents the basic order around which deviation occurs and is understood.

Staff meetings are where face-to-face managerial work takes place. Information sharing, communication, and joint decision making are the explicit goals. The meetings appear to have a distinct and recognizable structure. Most are on-site in one of the meeting rooms close to the main working space. Occasionally, senior staff meetings with heavy agendas might take place off-site in one of the Tech conference centers. Meetings are closed to outsiders.

The following descriptions are of staff meetings at a number of levels: AdProd staff, SysCom staff, development groups, and a staff organization.

The AdProd staff meeting is scheduled for the whole day and has a full agenda. The entire staff is present, some invited guests have scheduled appearances, and some managers are sitting in for their bosses. About fifteen people are present. The meeting starts with a liminal phase. The early milling about the coffee pot is an opportunity for company-related small talk. The content is informational: personal ("I heard about your

talk at the 'state of the company' meetings. I heard it was great." "Yes; they're making a video out of it. But they're taking out some of the president's stuff; they really have to edit him these days..."), company policy ("We have a window of opportunity before..."), technical, political: ("I hear the 'x-prod' program is in hot water these days....") Attending the meetings is an opportunity to navigate through this material in order to draw conclusions for oneself.

Meetings are also the occasion for meaningful episodes, recognized by all as having a scripted quality to them - improvisational theater around known behavioral scenarios. Some of the scripts are very explicit. For example, the manager of one of the product groups disengages himself from one interaction as he notices one of his peers with whom he has been involved in protracted "fingerpointing duels" - public political conflict around the blame for the failure of a particular project.

"Jack, I'd like a 'one-on-one' with you soon; we have some stuff we need to do. Off-line." Jack searches for his diary. "I don't have my calendar here." "Oh. The old 'I forgot my calendar routine,' huh?" Others, watching a politically interesting situation, laugh. The script has been named, it's meaning noted, filed.

Waiting for their manager to arrive, the members sit around the table. The configuration is in place, the mood not yet. It is still the liminal mode and some transitional rituals occur that contrast the member role with the outside world.

"Why do we have to be here?" Let's start without him." "No. Let's break up." "Let's take a vote. It's a perfect day for golf." The bantering continues until the VP arrives. "We were discussing why we have to be here," one of the more outspoken members informs him. He replies seriously, aware of dissent on his staff: "Because you are on the staff!" and immediately moves into the meeting, starting with the usual informational content.

Similar preparations are evident in other staff meetings. At lower

levels a more critical and personal tone might be heard.

Staff members sit around the table, waiting for John. Some company related chatter: "Who owns the t-675? You?" No! Ken Smith does but he reports to Cranston so now he has that monkey on his back - or some other animal." "I hear he is hanging out the window by the shoelaces." "He could slip any minute!" (laughter). "He must be getting midnight phone calls..." A moment of silence, then a feigned sigh. "It's such a nice day outside. I just want to be a beach bum. But I'm trying for the big bucks now." "We all had the same reason to come..." Some more joking about not being there, not working anymore. John walks in, all business. The mood shifts very rapidly into the breathless, curt, clipped, pragmatic language of action. "OK. Who has some action items. No time for the intergalactic stuff today."

Staff meetings are considered to have an important informational function. They frequently begin with an introductory phase of news and commentary about Tech events. Stories and gossip filter down from primary to secondary participants. The staff meeting is thus the basis for cascading interpretations of events. The manager of AdProd, like many others, starts with "news from the street."

"The state of the company meeting was superb!" Max says in an excited tone, defining the tone of the next stage. "I spent three evenings with marketing people. We had serious discussions; none of the rah-rah stuff. And thanks to Jim (he turns to one of the senior technical people) who gave a super presentation. It was by far the best Tech talk I've heard! They walked away with powerful messages. It was fantastic!" All attention is on Max. Heads are nodding. Some of those who were present at the event give their own interpretation. "The boss is moving to another level now. He got people to be successful and now he is challenging them." "He took Jackson to task," someone adds, referring to an unpopular senior manager. Some ask questions. "Is Jackson going to change directions?" Max furrows his brow, thinking, indicating that it is not an easy question, that he does not feel at liberty to answer openly. Then he frames his answer self-consciously: "The statement I would like to make at this point is this: The boss asked me what were the three major issues over the next four years. I said: One, get Engineering thinking business...." (a round of head nodding.)

The discussion goes on in this vein for a while. The tone is excited, animated. The focus is the company and its success and in particular the

role of the present group (and its enemies) in the great achievements. This episode, one that repeats itself in a variety of staff meetings, seems to mobilize the energies and the emotions held at bay during the initial phase. The participants appear to be sharing backstage information. They are also gearing up for their own performance, one that will be similarly transmitted in other forums.

The working phase of the staff meeting consists of a series of prearranged agenda items, usually associated with one or more of those present, or with an outsider, specifically invited for that purpose. In both cases, presentational rituals are an important part of the interaction.

Internal presentations range in their degree of formality. Many tend to be informal, their ritualistic aspect self-consciously discussed. For example, the manager of AdProd interrupts the proceedings, when the group is discussing a proposal for an increased training budget:

I'll give you one of my one minute lecturettes - I can't stifle myself. This group is getting into a leadership position. Others will follow using the same tools. I'm pleased we're in the single largest growth industry. But... engineers are the worst strategic planners. We teach them, we beat it into them: micro thinking. Control, specify and understand all the variables. An engineer can't see the large scheme, can't work with loose concepts, with unspecified stuff. It's right for engineers - that is the way they should be doing things. Or else they should be doing something else (like being managers...) but seriously: we have to help our engineers. We have to have a small number of strategic goals. Three, maybe four. Macro ones that can last for five years. Something like: 'Reach a billion in sales in 88.' Something they can understand and don't have to micro it to death. Or maybe: 'Use standards to competitive advantages.' So if someone comes to a meeting we can ask them: "How does that help us, or is there a new goal?" I wanna see buttons, posters repeated over and over again: "Use standards." "Make a billion." So even secretaries understand and know the strategy. We'll become well-organized and aggressive. But we'll still get quality products out the door. That's always the number one priority.

It's always being tops. Maybe there is only one thing above it: being honest. Boy I didn't know I would be getting philosophical (laughs) This is the end of my presentation; I'm not good at this.

More formal presentations by staff members are similar in form and content to presentational rituals elsewhere. However, the participants have more familiarity with each other, and relationships extend beyond the setting. Consequently, discrete incidents stand for real interests and are located in a broader perspective of ongoing relationships. The responses are more varied, the debates more intense, the meanings more complex, ideology more seriously challenged. They are the occasion for intense social drama. For example, a presentation by the personnel manager on "personnel hiring guidelines" is cast quickly in ideological language. It goes smoothly until Jim, a development manager on the staff, intervenes. He wants to hire people who have left Tech and now want to return. The company policy (always somewhat vague) is perceived to be against rehiring. Jim, under severe scheduling pressure, wants people, good people. The personnel manager says that the corporate policy is adamant. The tension between them rises. Finally Al, the group manager, intervenes to resolve the crisis.

He tries an explanation. "We can't hire back anyone who left 'for significant financial advantage,' or who 'competes against Tech,' or who has 'burnt bridges.'" The personnel manager wants to know if it applies to lower levels too. Jim, now directing his comments loudly to the group as a whole, persists: "Do you want this product? Right now we are flat out! Either we cut back expectations or we OK outside hires. And forget this loyalty crap!" A moment of tense silence follows, and Al uses the resolution of the last resort. "Jim, I'll take that with you off-line." Jim nods, accepting the temporary shelving, indicating that he still intends to get his way.

The challenge to the "loyalty crap" is too extreme a challenge for public resolution. "Off-line" means that the issue now becomes a private one, removed from the public domain. Whatever action will be taken will not

get in the way of comfortable ideological formulations. "Taking an issue off-line" is frequently observed in staff meetings and often serves as a safety valve for the tension between different interpretations of ideological formulations and between them and other forms of reality (most notably - "common sense").

The "no layoff" policy is a cause for further debate. One manager responds hotly to some of his peers who propose "getting rid of the deadwood in Manufacturing" so that more engineers can be hired. He gives an emotional and personal rendition of the ideology. It is countered by an alternative view - "common sense" cloaked in humor.

"Let's get it straight. I don't care about the profitability! Nothing gets my loyalty to this company more than the current policy! These are people out there, real people and real bills. I was laid off once and I know what it's like." The statement quietens everybody in its emotional intensity and appeal. Someone adds jokingly: "And I thought they were interchangeable work units..." A compromise is offered by a third party. "Tech's run on emotion too much! We need facts, not religion! The numbers can get us out of all this emotional stuff, all this 'do it my way!' The only thing that is real is making money!" On this all seem to agree.

There are boundaries, however, beyond which ideological debate is not tolerated. The group manager tries to close the debate by describing his views of the "Tech disease":

"We think that we are in terrible shape, but in fact we are in good shape. We are very self-critical and love to beat ourselves up. A lot of good people left because of it. It might be a self-fulfilling prophecy." Mike, who has been quietly leaning back in his chair taking all this in, sits forward and bursts out: "What is all this talk of Tech? I don't see any Tech? What is this 'we?' I haven't met any Tech! I work with some people and get a paycheck!" There is a brief, tense silence. The manager swivels his chair back to the flipchart and says loudly, a little too loudly: "Moving right along..." and brings up the next agenda item. Some people exchange glances, and a few under the breath titters are heard. The next time Mike starts talking, Bill laughs, takes a dollar bill out and says: "I'll buy you a beer if you stop talking...." With this the issue

has been transformed into a joke. Bill is an older manager, a veteran himself, known for his outspokenness. Mike is quiet for a while and then joins in the normal discussion. Later someone explains to me that he was "burnt out" in his previous job and is now recuperating. "Bill handled him just right..."

Mike went too far. His challenge threatens the collusion to sustain the ideologically prescribed view of Tech as a living entity, and the associated emotional tone. It is not framed, like other challenges, as "in the company's good." It is true deviance. The person is either a "negativist" or (as in this case) not fully responsible as a result of "burnout." Managing it is a collective problem, shared by all parties to other debates.

Outsider presentations to the staff are usually formal and highly ritualized. They draw attention away from internal issues and highlight the shared group interests in relation to other groupings, or to the company as a whole. The following examples illustrate these two cases.

The guest presenter from a competing development group is scheduled for the middle of the day. Preceding it is the discussion of "an emotional issue" that developed into a shouting match between two managers. It is brought to a close.

The fight is over. The group relaxes. It is a familiar scene. The emotions seemed real, dangerous. The protagonists almost attacked each other. The personnel manager, one of the few women in the group, intervened a number of times, trying to calm it and contributing to the air of danger. Finally, after agreeing to take some of it "off-line," the episode closes. It is time for the distancing from the ultimate involvement of warfare. People walk out. Some jokes. Frank, a manager from another organization has been waiting outside for his scheduled appearance. He is here to talk about a product he is developing and its connections to this group. There is potential for disagreement. Frank sticks his head in. He knows a good number of those present. "Is it safe to come in yet?" he asks, holding the door open just enough for his head to pass through, pretending to be afraid of flying shrapnel.

It is now the liminal stage between performances. The shift must be made from internal to external relationships. The previous episode must be put to rest and the new one prepared. This calls for elaborate rituals based on insightful humor and knowledgeable behavioral scenarios, to allow participants to reorder their distance, their dignity, their reality frames.

One of the participants laughs and replies in kind: "It's OK, we're ready for you, we have you all set up." He is referring to the collusion among members of one group to cause the failure of others- a scenario frequently heard as the explanation of actions. They laugh. Frank walks in, addressing Max, the group manager, as he walks towards the head of the table: "I heard about your talk at the 'state of the company' meeting. Did they tape your session?" "Yeah." "Good! I'll catch it." Max formally introduces him, indicating the beginning of the next session. "Frank was one of the first to come over from Marketing." Frank slides up the blackboard covered with leftovers from previous discussions. The one revealed underneath, however, still has the day's agenda listed on it. Frank does a double take, and says with mock horror: "Aha! A hidden agenda!" This causes loud and lengthy laughter. When it subsides, Frank begins his presentation with some cultural commentary: "This company is really 6000 10 man companies... and everybody talks. I sent out a draft of this proposal over the net to a few people and got back comments from people I've never heard of...The presentation takes an hour... without participation." The last added with a meaningful wink, indicating he knows what to expect.

The presentation begins. Slide after slide is presented. The tone shifts from serious presentation to humor that characterized the earlier transitional mode, a way of keeping things smooth.

Frank explains the business plan and the schedule. Everyone in the group is clearly against it, and the comments reflect it. Max asks in the tone of 'constructive feedback:' "Does the boss know? I would make sure through some mechanism (not yourself!) that he does." Frank acknowledges the comment by another routine: "You're right. Give us the 'didn't happen on my shift' option if anything goes wrong." Max: "And then stand back." Fred steps back against the wall, raises his arms, and remains for one second in the crucified pose, recognized by all as the price for misstepping. It is light-hearted and accompanied by demonstrations of amusement. The brief interlude is over and

they go back to business. Again it is "we." Another comment: "It'll never get across the executive committee!" There is a back and forth and finally Frank says: "I hear you, but in spite of it we're gonna get our funding. 80 big ones." The business interchange again fades into a humorous exchange: "Well Fred, you know we're behind you!" Fred, walking towards the door retorts: "That's the problem!" All share the amusement, the good cheer that comes from this interchange. There is comradeship in the enmity.

In the following example, group interests are balanced against company ones.

A lawyer from legal is making a presentation. He is warning the group to be careful in their documents to avoid antitrust issues. "We're not the little old high Tech company from down the street anymore. You can't round 11% market share into 20%. I've seen letters say: 'we have 85% of the market share and by god we'll get it all!' Your mail is claimable in court. Think of everything you write as being forwarded to the FTC! One case is enough. You don't know where it will hit us from - a disgruntled distributor, an irate ex-employee..."

It is "we time," reinforced by the solemn nodding of the group manager. He sets the tone for others. The corporate interest is not something to be openly questioned, but timeout humor following the presentation serves to balance the ritual with reality.

The lawyer leaves and a coffee break is announced. A group of managers stand together discussing the presentation and its implications. One says: "It's bullshit. Nothing to worry about. A lot of the documents we write are on the technet. So they're here today, gone tomorrow. I always keep my mail in order. Delete the sensitive stuff is the first thing to do." Someone else says: "You're forgetting one thing. They can go over the tapes! Everything stays on tapes!" A few are surprised. "Oh Oh!," says a third. "Someone should better run through the tapes with a magnet. I'm gonna be more careful." Someone else joins the group, reporting a joke from across the room. "Did you hear? Alan just had a great line. The lawyer said: don't get the documents in the wrong hands and he said: 'I know what he meant. Keep them away from the executive committee!'" This elicits a round of laughter. "Yeah, especially anything with funding on it!"

In sum, staff meetings are small, intimate, and ongoing settings where participants are relatively tightly coupled and have extended relationships

and real interests at stake. Consequently, the contrast between ideological formulations and an alternative view is more salient. This requires more attention to dramatic management. The liminal stages are more elaborate, and the presentations themselves are interspersed with frequent lulls in the action that allow a reordering of frames. The distinctions between "on-line" and "off line" and between humor and seriousness become a central aspect of the ritual form.

The Inter-Group Meeting The meeting is convened by a program manager who is responsible for project ABC - a corporate program aimed at linking various technologies and products across the groups responsible for them. The program, like many others, reflects "the matrix" (see chapter 2). The program manager must pull together many functional groups and organizations that are involved. Consequently, the authority definitions are not clear. Nevertheless, the program is considered one kind of organizationally defined work group with loose structure and boundaries, and less clear definitions of authority. There are no clear prescriptions for the timing of such meetings, but they occur no more frequently than once a year.

The ABC program is highly visible and the subject of much politicking both in and out the company. The three day meeting is a mini-conference where representatives from all engineering groups as well as interested others converge. It is an opportunity to interact, exchange views, learn, network. The session takes place in a large conference room at the local Hilton. It is a fancier setting than many, befitting the importance of the event. Carefully choreographed ahead of time by the program manager in consultation with managers of participating groups, the meeting is organized around a series of presentations delivered by members of the various interested groups. Over a hundred people are present. It is a well-

publicized event that has drawn a variety of statuses and functions. Managers from the level of supervisor to group manager and engineers from junior engineer to senior consulting engineer. Also present are representatives from other functions including marketing and manufacturing. Many know each other or of each other. The gathering reflects the tension between group and corporate interests. Potential conflict is in the air.

The day begins with a "self-analysis" ritual, witty and serious interpretations of life at Tech.

The milling around is cut short at nine when the program manager begins the proceedings with a short talk. She is blonde, in her late thirties, chain smoking and apparently nervous. These events are important for forming the public opinion of the program. "Welcome to the meeting. The point is to share info, to get people together. So introduce yourself. The person next to you may be vitally important to what you are doing. We need consistent communication. We need to keep talking. To start it off I have a joke. A policeman stops a man driving a car full of penguins. He orders him to drive them to the zoo, to 'do the right thing' - 'do the right thing' is a Tech term, you know. The next day he stops them again, this time all wearing sun glasses. He gets mad and says: 'I thought I told you to do the right thing!' The man answers: 'I did. I took them to the zoo yesterday. Today I'm taking them to the beach.'" The joke falls flat. Not much laughter. People are still walking in and seating themselves behind the rows of tables.

The opening is followed by a sequence of presentations. The audience listens carefully, watches for any sign, any message, any clue to the various hidden agendas. The words of the presenter are important and so are the reactions in the crowd. First to speak is Tony, who heads a major developmental effort in this area and is sponsoring the meeting. He moves the tone towards the issues of the day. He has a distinct "message," and the audience is busy with interpretation.

Tony, looking uncomfortable in a rather ill-fitting suit heads for the podium and offers a quick opening comment: "I have no jokes. I'm a warm-up show. Not much content, like at a rock concert. A group that may make it some day, but now

is getting everyone to scream, jump, and clap." He gets serious, taking care to make the next point quite clear. This is a corporate program, it's not ours. We don't own it. But we do support it, and encourage others to." As he says this, some whispering starts. He is giving a message. Its meaning becomes the topic of hushed whispers next to me ("he wants to be a good corporate citizen and cover his own ass..."). Next to me, a manager from Tony's group turns and tries to identify the reactions of some of the senior engineers and managers. Tony stops for a few seconds and continues. "I delight in heretical, paradoxical things; well here's one. The ABC program is bad! It's to our disadvantage. It will homogenize the products and take away our edge! People with crappy products get the advantage back." Tension rises in the row in front of us where the English contingent sits. They are known to be strong supporters of ABC. Others turn to discreetly eye the group that might be taking offense, now huddling with their heads together, whispering. Next to me someone says: "He will get things thrown at him." Tony smiles, noticing the reaction: "Sorry to those of you who have to make it!"

After establishing his reservations, Tony now moves to the viewgraph with slides to explain the reasons for supporting the program. He turns it on. A typical presentation scene ensues. Dim lights, a rather eery setting, the presenter in a shadow, and the messages glowing in the semi-dark with almost religious overtones. It dims the view of each other and creates the aura of a darkened mass focusing on the issue, the person, and the message. It is a style that pervades all presentations.

Well here is my warm-up slide: "ABC is a competitive weapon." We're doing it not because we're good guys, not for religious reasons, or because it is best. We're doing it to use as a competitive advantage. It is suited to what we have to do as we move to the future."

He has set up the tone, the atmosphere. This is business. Advantage. Pragmatism. Hardball. No "religion, no fluff." We. We in Tech. He emphasizes his points again, chanting rhythmically, emphasizing each "we."

"We believe that Silicon Tech is our primary competition. We believe that Silicon Tech is stuck with crap. We believe that they cannot move into ABC technology easily. We believe that this is our great opportunity. Most of the competition will have the same problem. We have to put our energy, our creativity into development." Second slide. "We have a

strategy... we believe it is the way to go.... we think it's a win...." Another slide. "We would like to be the leader in ABC." "People worked hard to make ABC acceptable. We normally knock ourselves for not doing this; but this time we did it well. We increased the market share in the Far East! Many believe that 60% of revenues will come from there in the future."

This is the public domain and the corporate entity speaks loudly through the mouth of Tony. It is a strong, clear, almost provocative statement, framed as a "message" - a unit of communication that is frequently framed and sent out. The Tech space is full of such messages.

Tony is followed by a long series of presenters. Each says some personal words. It is an opportunity to get known, to work on one's reputation. A marketing manager is next. He assumes the reflective style and "wise to" approach that many adopt for such occasions. This requires cultural interpretation. It is always there and increases the theatrical atmosphere in the ability to act and then to discuss it.

First he introduces himself and then he tells a standard joke that gets very little response. "We want people to think of Tech and immediately of this product. It is better than sex! And to think of Silicon and theirs as slavery!," he proclaims dramatically. Familiar hype from marketeers, long past shock value and now standard style, not even worth an engineer's raised eyebrow. "We have to enhance the High Tech image, appeal to the consulting industry, cultivate them, use them as press announcers, have them become our missionaries, carry our messages." He gets into a chanting rhythm now about "we need to" (maintain high levels, give customers the warm fuzzies, make management feel good all over etc.) The marketing manager makes his appeal to engineers: "Our assumptions: Engineering will continue to produce quality on time. The competition will be tough. We need Engineering's support. We're not technical people. We need help in setting it up, getting it running. Marketing got involved late in this process and is behind. We need to work as a team, to further define and enhance this product.

Tech culture is interpreted not only in the platitudes of the speakers, but in the private whispers and thoughts of the participants. As the presentations continue, the slides, jokes and exhortations become

repetitive. The flow of public words and activities provide the formal occasion for interaction. They celebrate the unity and integrity of the company, the "we," the common purpose. Nevertheless, it is clear that much is happening backstage, and that there is just as much information in the quiet activities and the whispered conversations that must be monitored, decoded and stored. Here the focus is on the subgroup rivalries, the conflict, the politics.

Tony is already outside. There is some movement. Discussions are taking place near the coffee just outside the main door. My neighbor explains the scene to me and some other novices. She points to a ruddy-faced man sitting in the back row and engaged in energetic whispering with his neighbors. "That is Cliff Laing! He is God! He is one of the chosen! He made the president's list last year! And that is Bob Howe next to him. There was a reporting line, but now it is dotted. They both are gurus. And if they are having a fit right now, they are right!" The last statement in reference to a flurry of whispers from their direction after a statement by the presenter, a junior marketing manager. "But it isn't serious, or else Cliff would have spoken up." She notices her boss, a few rows away, making notes, and turns her attention to the presenter, opening her own notebook.

Since it is a large and open forum with many strangers, the felt tension between public unity and private strife is not usually acknowledged. Occasionally, however, the two perspectives clash in a dramatic fashion. Conflict between organizations and their representatives is expected, and is not far from the surface. It develops in stages and boils over publicly, a "social minidrama." First signs are in exchanges during presentations. The previously adhered to rule of not openly challenging presenters is breached when a question is asked.

"What is the probability of a slip? What would you do?" Silence and then a snap response. "It's like asking me what I would do if my house burnt down. That means that on the date we said we'd deliver we won't deliver. I guess that is the definition of a slip." (Laughter). "Well in the event of a disaster - I have no plan. You are actually asking what is my contingency plan. I will tell you that when it happens.

It soon develops into open hostilities. The ideology is a resource in such exchanges. Opponents are accused of breaking the norms, of being "countercultural."

Tom, a smiling, gray-haired, balding and rather macho-looking man in a yellow jacket and a colorful tie asks a question of a presenter who has just finished extolling the virtues of ABC. He manages the XYZ project, a new group competing with ABC and fighting for its "space." "ABC is not known in the US, while our XYZ is. It doesn't help the company..." There is some back and forth and finally Jerry intervenes. He is a recognized "industry guru" with a rather vague strategic planning function for ABC, the business version of a hacker. During the interchange he was leaning against the wall, demonstratively paging through trade journals. Looks like a character in the supporting cast of one of the Siedelmaier commercials. As the XYZ person makes his point, he whispers an explanation to the Brits: "Those XYZ people, they are a closed community, and are on the inside looking out." He gets visibly more agitated and finally he drops the magazine, raises his voice and says: "What you are proposing is high risk; you don't want to argue about that now!" The debate ceases for a while and the presentation resumes its earlier tone.

Both sides made their point and the show continues. The level of aggression had risen too high and was managed in a rather curt way. But it soon reappears:

Next is a the marketing manager for XYZ. He does his presentation, another smooth job. Jerry gets involved again, surfacing the conflict that started earlier: "Forgetting all the religion..." he says of the just presented technical and business arguments and makes his own point. It is an open challenge, but the scene is cut short again by the program manager, who stands up and calls for the lunch break. "Have those conversations that you were dying to have," she says, as behind me people laugh silently. The room empties quite rapidly as lunch and "all those conversations" beckon. But Jerry is not done yet. Tom saunters over to his side of the room. Jerry is still lounging, paging through the same journals, waiting, pretending not to notice the approaching challenger. Some others, expecting a juicy showdown, wait around too. Jerry closes the journal and looks up: "The industries don't care about your product! The financials don't give a shit either! So I don't have to agree to the markets defined by XYZ!" Tom responds quickly: "Read the popular media, see who has more reference! No one mentions your stuff!"

Jerry responds at a different level now, escalating the disagreement to cultural interpretation.

"You're raising flags and alienating people. If you don't quietly sell people on the religion you won't get anywhere in this company." Tom: "I'm arguing that XYZ is the way to go." Jerry: "That's religion. What evidence do you have? What numbers?" Tom: "Take the popular press..." Jerry: "That is not my measure. Ask the companies. And you're not successfully selling people in Tech; you're alienating them. You move in with your whole contingency and you're beating 'em over the head with it." It is getting distinctly unpleasant. Tom has a fixed smile on his face, and Jerry rises. They move away and break off from each other, Jerry almost walking out on him as they make their way to the door. It is lunchtime, time for a suspension of hostilities. There is a long line for a buffet lunch.

Lunch is a pause, a timeout. It is an opportunity to mingle, interact, interpret, digest. It also allows dramatization of stance.

People slowly gravitate towards the dining room and sit around large tables. Discussions seems animated. After lunch, there is time for leisure activities. Senior managers are still in shifting huddles. Others line up at the public telephones, taking care of other business. Some of the engineers wander off alone. Dave in particular seems rather aimless outside. Three or four Englishmen (boys, really) make a show of walking off in search of a bar. One responds to a question with the grin of naughty boy: "Where do you think we're going? We're English!" They spend the lunch break in there. Towards one o'clock, people are again congregating at the doorway of the still darkened conference room. The earlier showdown is still the topic of discussion. "They are the 'new kids on the block.' They have to push and shove to get recognition. That is the way it always works." one manager explains as he watches the protagonists return to their seats. "And isn't over yet!"

The program meeting continues for three days. In contrast to other events, there is a clear lack of central authority figures. Instead, the complex and often chaotic and conflictual relations are given a semblance of order by the ritual presentational form. "Social minidramas" of the sort described above represent the enactment of these tensions, the temporary breakdown and re-establishment of order. In such a context, presentations

are given by peers and opponents. Ideological formulations are not so much an attempt to influence others as a public adherence to form, and occasionally a resource in open conflict. They are overt instances in the ongoing relationships between individuals and between groups.

Large Group Meetings These meetings are of functionally based groups where all members are invited. They are larger, more public, and less frequent than staff meetings. They are not intended as stages for decision making or the manifestation of conflict, but serve symbolic purposes, particularly that of integrating groups and "raising morale." Two examples of meetings where all members of SysCom are invited are described. First, the SysCom monthly meeting; second, "the summer olympics" - a designed timeout.

a. The Monthly Meeting

Members of the SysCom organization are invited to a monthly organizational meeting open to all employees. All managers, many engineers, and some secretaries are there. The manager has made it known that he would like full attendance and this has been informally encouraged. The meeting takes place in the cafeteria of SysCom's new facility.

The cafeteria is in the corner of the building, and like many others, is designed with large windows that open up onto a spectacular view. About 150 people are gathered around the tables, facing the corner of the cafeteria, where the group manager is getting ready to speak. He is standing next to the "golden bull" - the monthly award that is presented at the meeting. It is a garish trophy, roughly six feet of fake gold. At the top is the bull. Underneath it are random figures: a bust of Einstein, a dolphin, a golfer on a stage supported by golden columns. It is self-consciously outrageous, a comment on itself. Around the golden bull on a table are other awards: twelve statuettes of golden angels about eight inches tall.

The transition into the meeting is quick. Bob, the group manager, stands up. Quite a bit shorter than the trophy and seemingly oblivious to

it, he begins with a review of the group performance, focusing on appropriate feelings that should be connected to membership in this group.

"I say all the right words," Jack tells me as he is scribbling down the main points a few minutes prior to the meeting.

"The new building we will be moving into is great: 3 floors, windows(!) at the end of the corridor, plenty of lab space. The old building will be taken by someone outside Engineering. They want a cafeteria and it will be a significant improvement for them. You look at those funny things (he points at the window) and it will make you feel: I'm a professional, I'm valued." "I sense the beginning of momentum, feeling good about ourselves. We've shipped some important products. Those who have been down on us can look now. We're shipping and we're even going to make a profit this year. I want to salute the ZEUS people. They nursed it and brought it back to health and we're even making a bunch of money on it! The overall product strategy is coming together. I feel really good about it, and so should you." He spends about 15 minutes discussing the status of various projects.

This portion of the meeting is straight and serious in its dealings with the groups success. The tone is businesslike and the presentational style appropriate.

The award introduces a different tone. When he has finished the talk, Jack smiles broadly, steps aside and looks at the golden bull. The mood shifts as the "bull" becomes center of attention. Although they go through all the motions of an award ceremony, it is now more playful, semi-serious, tongue in cheek.

"Now the golden bull award, representing the spirit of the bull: put your head down and plow through the problems." A dramatic pause. "It goes to... Tony Williams and the people who made x-101 happen." A round of applause, clapping. Some cheers. Tony, a development manager (in jeans and sneakers standard engineering attire) walks to the front of the room, waving at the applause. Jack gives an account of the difficulties in the project and its current business success, naming major corporate clients. Then he reads the names of the project team, stumbling on the foreign sounding ones. "Sorry if I slaughtered the names, but it's Tony's fault. I asked him to spell the list carefully. I was going to get money for a restaurant, but money is short these days, the

squeeze is on us... maybe we can afford McDonald certificates, though." There is another round of laughter. It is a game and the roles are familiar. Bob raises his hand for quiet. "Today I also have new trophies. We'll have to find a reason for each..." He lifts two of the statuettes off the table. "These are genuine metal - not plastic." He raises them "They come in male and female versions, so if you get the wrong sex let me know."

Everyone is amused. When the laughter subsides, it is back to business.

Jack introduces a new manager, asks if there are questions. None. "No problems?" Someone near me snorts to himself. Jack leaves and the meeting is adjourned. The golden bull is transported to Tony's office. One of the engineers walks out carrying horizontally it in one hand, highlighting its nature as a prop. For a month it will protrude out of Tony's cubicle into the open space above, visible from anywhere in the building.

After the meeting, Tony tells me:

"The bull doesn't mean much, it's just for general morale: it amuses people. The message is: 'You overcame the bullshit, the obstacles, in spite of all the craziness in this company.' But the real reward is stock options; that's the real thing. But the stock prices aren't great lately.

The contrast of humor and seriousness in the event captures the complex and ambiguous meanings of the ritual. Humor expresses the ambivalent attitude of participants. It allows ritual expression as well as a comfortable distance from the implications of full participation. The image of the bull and its grotesque nature, along with the possible connotations of "bullshit" that accompany it serve to allow the ritual to take its course, while commenting on it and making available aspects of the submerged realities that rituals often obscure. Ritual has become imbued with self-parody, a form of frame awareness that is facilitated by the familiarity of the setting and the participants, and the sectional nature of the event: the group is the collective to which commitment is demanded; the bullshit can be attributed to the rest of the company.

b. The Summer Olympics

Play-time is the gathering of members during working hours, where the explicit purpose is not work-related. Ostensibly, these are events designed to introduce leisure periods to work settings. Rules that govern work life are - at least partly - suspended and standard configurations are broken down. The only commonality is that of membership.

At Tech there are many occasions for timeouts. "It is never too late to party," say some. Tech, many agree, encourages socializing. However, since the definitions of organizational time are not clear, and there are many attempts to annex and colonize members' time, it is never quite clear what is "time out" and what "time in." At best it is a matter of degree. Work and play are frequently combined, shading into each other.

Playful periods are occasions for presentational rituals. For example, Art, the manager of one of SysCom's main development group, arranged a "summer olympics sport session" for his group to which all at SysCom were invited. The opening meeting of the participants in the games provides the transition to timeout, complete with overt signs that a new reality is taking over. The setting, the time, the participants, all indicate an unusual event.

Invitations have been out for weeks. All nodes on the technet were informed by Art's secretary. For the marginal, the unconnected or the disconnected, notices were posted all over the building along with sign up sheets for the various sports. There is a five dollar charge and it covers the formal red or green t-shirt representing the two randomly chosen teams. At three o'clock, all participants (about forty) gather in the conference room that usually serves the senior staff meeting. It is a cross section of the organization: engineers, managers, secretaries, support staff. We are crowded around the long, shiny table, waiting. Suddenly the door opens, and Art, the group manager, with a torch made of rolled-up computer printout, and an olympic style crown of leaves on his head, enters the room in slow-motion running movements and circles the table. Reactions range from the smiles of those who have seen this before to the rather surprised looks of others.

The introductory presentation moves from parody to dead seriousness, from play to reflection. Art assumes his place at the head of the table and with a practiced motion flips on the viewgraph, removes the playful accouterments, and gives a presentation.

The presentation lasts about 15 minutes. The first slide covers the history of the "summer olympics," the next one the purpose, the next one the rules, and finally the administration. At this point, it resembles a regular presentation, despite the red and green t-shirts, the unusual mix of people, and the crown of leaves on the table. Art, a technical type manager, is clearly not comfortable talking. He follows the slides quite closely and seriously, revealing each "bullet" on the slide by lowering the paper that shades the as yet unnecessary information. He calls on his secretary to give the administrative arrangements. She, straight faced, replaces him and reproduces another perfect presentation with her own slides.

Finally, Art sums up:

"I want to say a few words. Its good that we are doing this. I'm glad you came. I know that things have been a little rough lately. There has been a lot of pressure." Heads nod. "This will give you people an opportunity to relax and take your minds off things, to work off your excess energy, feel a little better about what's going on. Get a little more motivated. Also get to know each other, improve your morale. But remember. Nobody is watching you. This is not a Tech event. So don't take off company time too blatantly. There is enough of that anyway. And don't get hurt. Benefits are great - but you're not covered on this one!"

Time out fades back to time in. The interpenetration of work and play and the significance they lend each other hang over the dispersing crowd, as people return to their daily routines.

In the two weeks that follow, the various sports events occur during the lunch hour. The summer olympics are in full swing, and the green and red T-shirts become a familiar feature of the lunch hour. Events include everything from volleyball on a makeshift court next to the parking lot, to a Trivial Pursuit tournament in the seminar rooms. Results are posted on the walls and sent over the technet. Spirits appear to be high. Many are

involved. Intergroup competition was intentionally avoided. The games provide a new grouping, a high-spirited collective where affiliations other than red or green are no longer meaningful.

Although the games are designed, arranged, and managed as a timeout from regular work, as a counterpoint to the routine, much of what transpires has meaning only in relation to work, to structure, to the framing in the opening presentation. This is illustrated in the following example.

The softball game is the crowning activity of the summer olympics. All the participants are there, and a picnic follows. Softball is a virtual world. The rules of everyday organizational life seemingly give way to the rules of the diamond. The setting has all the characteristics of a respite from the reality of work.

The softball game is well advertised. It takes place at a community center not far from SysCom facilities. It is a sunny afternoon and at two o'clock, the participants start converging on the field in the red and green T-shirts depicting the groupings of competition. About forty people show up with gloves, bats, balls. Susan, Art's secretary is the organizer. It is a mixed crowd: a number of secretaries, two or three young men from the support group (one of them a temp after hours - there are no time outs for temporary workers) about fifteen junior engineers, stragglers from the marketing group, supervisors, a few more senior managers. Art is still not here. Batting practice. Show-off stretches, friendly ribbing. The teams slowly get ready.

The game offers a stage to those who otherwise play taken-for-granted or ignored marginal roles. The alternative rules allow the tables temporarily to be turned. A number of the "wage class two" participants becomes the focus of attention.

Joe is pitching for the greens. He is a stockroom helper. Local boy, large, muscular, a tattoo on his forearm. Few people know him by name although he is a familiar background figure. He is the only one suited up in a complete outfit. It stands out from the others, who are mostly very casually attired. The greens, busy on their batting order, stop to watch. He seems oblivious. Takes the ball, and delivers a

professional looking fastball to the rather startled catcher. And a curve. The greens look at each other. A ringer. The game starts and Joe delivers the usual high, slow pitch with an air of boredom, lazily fielding the first dribbler to the mound and putting away the slow-running engineer. Sue, usually a quiet and unassuming secretary, becomes a dominant figure. She has assumed the role of green coach/ cheerleader, authoritatively deciding the line up, and then yelling softball talk in between directions to the engineer who is taking pictures and the supervisor responsible for getting the ice.

In the course of the game, the reality of work recedes into the background, but exists as an undercurrent against which to interpret the events. The game is dominant, but in its shadow, work continues.

The greens are at bat. Some, drinks in hand, are watching the game, waiting their turn. Attention to the game is coupled with references to work. Misplays are jeered, related to project problems, schedule slips. Quieter references are noticeable too. People who know each other whisper identifications of apparent strangers, explaining their presence. Gossip is exchanged. Stories are told. Interpretations offered. Art's shaky status as manager is a central topic. His absence is noted and explained. ("He has a hard time getting away from the terminal; he's a techie manager. And he's in trouble now." Quieter exchanged glances about Art's precarious situation by those in the know). Behind firstbase, a number of engineers (with the partial attention of the firstbase coach/ umpire) discuss a technical problem, using the sand for a sketch.

The rules of organizational life, temporarily submerged, reassert themselves when a crisis develops.

A few innings of high scoring play in the sun. The reds are at bat, the game is the thing, when a problem develops. Art, the group manager whose absence was noted and explained earlier, is making his way across the adjacent soccer field. A quick huddle develops around the beer keg and Sue. Some whispering. Then Sue approaches the fieldworker happily established at first and says: "How would you like to play second? Art kinda likes first..." The rules of softball and its etiquette are suspended momentarily. The green coach effects the lineup change in the red infield. A marketing manager (unknown to most and playing rather ineffectively) is shifted from second into an increasingly crowded left field. Art walks right onto first and takes a few throws, scooping one out of the dirt with an exaggerated stretch and swing of the glove.

After this brief interruption, the timeless game of summer continues. At five o'clock, however, organizational time reasserts itself. People start to leave. The game is called. Sue invites those left to a barbecue at her home. Some (mainly secretaries) accept. Most others leave. Walking off the field, one engineer says to another, in reference to the opening presentation: "My morale's just about fine, now. How's yours?"

In sum, large group meetings are infrequent and informal gatherings of members of an ongoing work group who do not usually have the opportunity or the reason for face-to-face interaction. These meetings are intentionally designed by managers as "timeouts" (Van Maanen, 1984) for the explicit purpose of "morale" building and motivation. As such, they have a strong playful element, are often tongue-in-cheek and humorous, and set against regular organizational life. In both, the main event is playful, and the transitional stages are reminders of the serious side of organizational life. In this sense it is a mirror-image of other types of rituals.

Thus, large group meetings have the contradictory goal of "designed liminality." They are at once rituals which reflect and comment upon reality, and self-conscious reflections on the ritual process. The multiple frames of meaning, "winks upon winks" in the words of Geertz (1973), are captured in central events and symbols such as the "golden bull" award, the "summer olympics" opening ceremony. The multiple and contradictory frames are the central experience for all participants. Although they might choose to interpret them differently, they are a celebration of ambivalence between identification and distancing, and draw attention to the central question of membership, that of authenticity. Organizational comedies of this sort are a way of living with and commenting on this dilemma.

Discussion Work group meetings offer a complex context for presentational rituals. The meeting is of well-defined subgroups with pronounced and salient interests, roles and relationships. Here the reality overlay created by ritual presentations is pitted against other realities embodied in the roles and relationships represented. The organizational ideology and the implied membership roles built into the ritual compete with other roles and points of view.

The ritual form, while adhered to by all, comes to mean different things depending on the structural features of context within which it occurs. A number of structural features of meetings have consequences for the meaning of the presentational rituals that occur.

First, the meaning is determined by the relative status of presenter and audience. Senior managers engage in presentational rituals that are similar to those observed in other settings. They are always expected to speak for the organizational ideology. Their role and presence takes precedence over other realities. At lower levels, however, presenters who are the most senior present tend to approximate this form, yet appear to do it more self-consciously. A note of humor and even parody is introduced in informal events. In many cases, organizational meetings allow presentations by participants other than the most senior. Such events puts individual participants temporarily in the limelight. Adhering to the form and content of such rituals is an opportunity to publicly and visibly enact an organizational role. It is a form of testimonial that helps generate a collective mood that emphasizes similarity and solidarity, and also might create emotional and cognitive dissonance in presenters - making public commitments and statements of identity might reinforce the private experiences and views that support this stance.

Second, group meetings often embody disintegrative forces. In staff meetings and program reviews, conflict and disagreement between individuals and subgroups are at least partly a result of lack of accepted formal structures. In such events, the ritual form offers a semblance of order to counteract what is otherwise experienced as chaos. The ideological formulations and the behavioral rules are a way of containing and interpreting conflict in public life. Cultural rules replace structural ones as a form of "quasi resolution of conflict" (March and Simon, 1957). This is most obvious in the humorous cultural interpretations of conflictual situations that the protagonists appear to share. Ritual forms are overlaid interpretations of collective gatherings that emphasize the appearance of affiliation and distinguish the modes of public "on-line" from private "off-line." A working knowledge and skill with use of appropriate ritual forms is the underlying common denominator. Similarly, informal gatherings and timeouts represent alternative social ties between participants. Ritual forms are used to tie these in to the organization and to interpret them in ways that are consistent with the ideology. This is obvious in the "summer olympics," but also in the less formal timeouts in the course of meetings.

In sum, ritual expressions of ideological formulations come to have multiple meanings. Ideology becomes a resource used to interpret events in a favorable way. It also is a way of distancing from conflict and sharing a point of view. Debate occurs much more frequently, particularly in informal settings. Transitional and framing rituals are crucial for maintaining a semblance of order and integration when intragroup or intergroup conflict is high.

Conclusion: Ritual and Normative Control

In this chapter, presentational rituals occurring in a variety of collective, face-to-face gatherings were described, and their dramatic properties analyzed. These rituals appear to have a special epistemological status: they become stages for self-conscious enactment of reality where symbolic content - ideology - is reinforced by symbolic action. The dramatic structure of the various rituals described appears to have a number of implications for ideological pronouncements and the experience of membership.

First, presentational rituals convey information to participants. A distinct view of the organizational ideology is presented: ready-made formulations ("Tech is a bottoms-up company"), metaphors ("we are like a football team"), maxims ("he who proposes does") and juxtapositions ("we are not like the Harvard Business School") with which the complex reality that is Tech may be viewed. In particular, a distinct view of the member roles and their appropriate attributes, cognitions and emotions is presented or implied. In addition, alternative forms of knowledge are available. A common-sense point of view that is sometimes at odds with the official one is available in the cracks and behind the scenes, and occasionally - in the form of humor or parody - in the limelight. In this sense, the rituals portray a complex reality and allow some debate, albeit highly prescribed and controlled. Although publicly constrained, participants are free to privately draw their own conclusions about the nature of the company and their own role in it. Whatever the conclusion, participants learn the appropriate language, ideas and feelings, the public expression of which is the prerequisite of membership.

Second, and more crucially, rituals offer opportunities to enact the

ideologically defined member roles. Appropriate roles include the beliefs one is committed to and the emotions one is to experience and display. The presenter demonstrates emotional commitment, excitement, an acceptance of ideological depictions of the company. Primary participants share in collective excitement and affirmation. This type of role enactment might be seen as a form of "deep acting" (Hochschild, 1983). Borrowing from Stanislavsky's (1965) theory of acting as "self-induced real feelings," Hochschild proposes that institutionally prescribed roles require the performer to try and "feel" rather than feign role prescribed emotions. The rituals described here appear to offer a stage for such "deep acting." As Hochschild suggests, participation may lead not only to cognitive dissonance but to emotive dissonance that serves to blur the boundary between the performer's perception of an acted role and an "authentic self."

Third, the dramatic structure of the ritual occasion provides opportunities for subtle forms of face-to-face control. Participants are both performers and audience; everyone performs, everyone is being watched. While debate is allowed, and is in fact partly a role requirement, there are collectively enforced limits on expression of ideas and feelings. When challenges to the order occur, they take a dramatic form, resembling what Turner (1974) defined as "social dramas." Here, they appear to be brief "minidramas." These enforcement dramas not only control the deviants, but put other participants in the role of controllers, itself a subtle influence mechanism. In this sense, rituals are enactments of the fundamental existential condition of members, particularly in the ranks of management: they are both subjects and agents of the ideology. This is perhaps the main contrast between economic organizations seeking normative control and other types (see ch. 1) where the root metaphor was the

distinction between controlling jailer and controlled inmate. In this sense, normative control works in two ways. First, as some have suggested (Edwards, 1976; Bendix, 1956; Van Maanen and Kunda, 1986), by expanding the domain of control from participant behaviors to its underlying personal experience. Second, and perhaps more crucially, by decentralizing the control process from the formally prescribed channels of control between superior and subordinate to relations with other participants who make the transition from subject to agent in order to further their own interests.

Finally, the liminal phases allow transitions between drama and routine, and stage setting enactments of improvised behavioral scripts. The shift from liminal stage to main event highlights the distinction between frontstage and backstage. In the course of the main event, temporary breaks in the action highlight the theatrical aspect of ideological reality. The liminal phases offer a counterpoint to the main event. In the more frequent "serious" events they offer an often humorous distancing. In playful timeout events, they offer reminders of the real world. In both cases, they provide a bridging function that highlights the theatrical aspect of the event. As Turner (1974) pointed out, liminal phases are typically the occasion for the reversal of central dimensions of the social structure. In the African tribes he studied, the reversal was one of hierarchy; superior and inferior roles were temporarily reversed. Here however, a different dimension seems to become salient. It is not hierarchy so much as inclusion. During liminal stages, the reversal of being "in" and being "out," of believing and not believing, of participating and not participating is most salient. The dramatic structure, then, essentially allows a juxtaposition of ideology and other views of reality ("common sense," "cynicism, "critique"). It is a drama of choice just as much as it

is a drama of persuasion.

In sum, the ritual occasion provides an organizing principle and a mechanism of control that is overlaid on - or replaces - formal structure. At Tech, formal structure is perceived to be loose, nonbinding, changing, weakly enforced. It is but one interpretive resource people use in furthering their aims. Control through structure based on formulated rules and adherence to an internally produced quasi-legal system (Edwards, 1975) and to the relations of fealty, loyalty and deference that characterize hierarchical control systems (Kanter, 1977), is not trusted by members. It is bolstered by normative control through ideologically prescribed member roles that provide both the rationale and the motivation for collective action. For the subordinate role, agents of control are few; for the member role, they are many. Ritual occasions offer a mechanism for enacting, enforcing and reinforcing these roles.

The mediating function of ritual, however, is not simple. In the juxtaposition of "ideology" and "common sense," of obligation and choice, of seriousness and humor, of belief and denial, the drama of ritual at once serves to reinforce and to question authenticity. It is an instance of the larger dilemmas of individual response to attempted normative control. This will be explored in greater depth in the following chapter.

FOOTNOTES

1. Goffman's point creates potential for semantic and analytic confusion. In his view, all interactive behavior that takes into account cultural rules has ritual properties. Taken to the limit, this argument suggests that all social interaction is ritualistic. Consequently, since ritual, like prose, is everywhere, for analytic purposes one must distinguish types of rituals from each other based on the nature of the social configuration within which it occurs and, perhaps, the degree to which it is openly and self-referentially acknowledged.

2. Most students of organization have shown a bias towards the functionalist perspective of ritual (Van Maanen and Kunda, 1987). The focus of the work is on those rituals and those aspects of ritual that bring about integration and value consensus and result in "loyalty," "commitment" and "satisfaction" (themselves ideological references to member emotions that masquerade as social scientific variables, usually of the dependent sort.) The scholarly work in this tradition often offers "implications for management" (thus mildly contradicting its own assertions - see Trice and Beyer (1984) for an example) and the popular work openly defines itself as a search for managerial control techniques (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). A number of studies have highlighted the counterculture, or rituals of resistance (Roy, 1956). These, however, are the exception, and they tend to focus on alternative rituals rather than on alternative views of the same rituals. In other words, they have conceded a vast and important domain to the functionalists and the prescribers.

3. It is an interesting comment on the state of organization studies to note that with very few exceptions (Van Maanen, 1986; Rosen, 1984) there are no detailed descriptions of organizational rituals available in the research literature, despite the calls for "thick description" and "qualitative research" and the massive amount of theoretical statements from those with an interest in organizational culture. This type of work is apparently more easily prescribed than done.

4. Things are never so simple. While the main principle guiding participation in a staff meeting is a direct reporting relationship, the matrix design creates the usual complexities. Some belong to more than one staff. Others are invited as "individual contributors," others still by virtue of a "dotted-line" relationship. While members like to play up this seeming chaos, a count of the numerous staff meetings I observed revealed that over 90% of participation was determined by a simple, straightforward reporting relationship.

5. Video images are frequently encountered ways of enhancing the written word for those not in a position to experience senior people firsthand. The Tech libraries keep copies of numerous talks given by senior managers over the last five years, as well as recordings of technical material. The tapes, along with viewing equipment are available to members.

CHAPTER 5
THE SELF: IN THE SHADE OF THE GOLDEN BULL

We have moved forward by dispossessing autonomous man, but he has not departed gracefully. He is conducting a sort of rear-guard action in which, unfortunately, he can marshal formidable support.

B.F. Skinner
Beyond Freedom and Dignity

...they rebel in their heart against a subordination to which they have subjected themselves and from which they derive actual profit. They consent to serve and they blush to obey...

Alexis de Tocqueville
Democracy in America

The golden bull... it tells you that you did a good job, that you deserve recognition. But it's also a joke. I mean look at it. It keeps up the morale because we're all up to our neck in shit. It's a crazy place. I mean crazy! A zoo! So what can you do?

Tech Development Manager
Recipient of the Golden Bull Award

You can check out but you can never leave.

The Eagles
Hotel California

In this chapter, the focus of the analysis shifts to the individual. The analysis will examine how people construct, maintain and display an understanding of themselves under the glare of the cultural spotlight and in the shadows of its darker sides. The forms of experience that are shaped in this context will be documented and related to the question of normative control.

Self and Social Organization

The self, it is generally recognized, is a social product, "society within the individual" (Durkheim, 1933). Defined as "the totality of

theories, thoughts and feelings held by an individual with reference to himself as an object" (Gecas, 1982; Van Maanen, 1979), it is formed as the individual learns through social interaction to "take the perspective of the generalized other" (Mead, 1933) and thus "internalize a linguistically objectified institutional order" (Berger and Luchmann, 1966). A crucial link between social institutions and individual selves are socially defined "roles" - sets of prescribed behaviors, attitudes and feelings deemed appropriate to particular positions (Berger and Luchmann, 1966; Merton, 1957).

Goffman (1973) suggests that the self is constructed in relationship to attributed roles. He identifies two aspects of this relationship. First, conformity to role expectations - an embracement of the self implied in the role.

...in performing a role the individual must see to it that the impressions of him that are conveyed in the situation are compatible with role appropriate personal qualities effectively imputed to him....These personal qualities, effectively imputed and effectively claimed provide a basis of self-image for the incumbent... A self, then, virtually awaits the individual entering a position; he need only conform to the pressures on him and will find a me ready-made for him.

Second, distancing from the self implied in the role.

The individual stands in a double relationship to attributes that are, or might be, attributed to him... Some attributes he will feel are rightfully his, others he will not...This effectively expressed pointed separateness between the individual and his putative role I will call role distance...the individual is denying not the role but the virtual self that is implied in the role for all accepting performers.

Faced with these two choices, the self, in this view is

...a stance taking entity, a something that takes up a position somewhere between identification with an organization and opposition to it, and is ready at the slightest pressure to regain its balance by shifting its involvement in either direction (1).

Working Selves

In complex society, self-construction occurs in a variety of social settings, each with its role demands. Consequently, individuals may be seen as possessors of "multiple selves," each defined for a particular region of social life and the roles it offers (2). For many, work life is a central source of self-definition (Hughes, 1958). A large and diverse body of empirical studies examines the content and process of self-formation in the social contexts of work in general (Van Maanen and Barley, 1984) and formal work organizations in particular (Van Maanen, 1976). Most studies of work organizations relate specific cognitive and affective dimensions of the self to work-related behaviors and structures (3). More specific attention to intentional shaping of the self by organizational agents is addressed in the literature on socialization (4).

Goffman's definition of the self is a starting point for the analysis of individual responses to the organizational ideology. The "organizational self" consists of subjective meanings attributed to the self, arising out of acceptance or rejection of articulations of the organizational ideology and its role demands, and enacted in the course of social interaction.

The Organizational Self: Coping with "Tech Culture"

Organizational claims constitute attributed but not necessarily embraced "membership roles." Such roles consist of definitions of appropriate behaviors and underlying beliefs and feelings associated with membership in the organization. Loyalty, ambition, satisfaction, fun, commitment, ups and downs, entering the valley and emerging from it, excitement, pain, work addiction; these are some of the documented, sanctioned and enacted role attributes that members face. How people form

and display an "organizational self" by attributing meaning to their situation - in word, in deed, and in artifact - is the subject of the following discussion.

The self is an elusive subject. Self-referent meanings are not easily come by, nor are they readily interpreted. Much of the data are themselves complex, context dependent interpretations by members. To capture the main themes that characterize the subjective experience of the "organizational self" at Tech, three sources of data are used. First, interview-based discussions of member experience; second, observation-based description of behavior; and third, analysis of self-display through the use of artifacts. It is worth noting that interviews, too, are a form of display - in this case to an audience of one, namely the fieldworker.

The focus of attention in this chapter is on the "wage class four" members who are most clearly both objects and purveyors of the prescribed culture. However, to provide a contrast, the experience of marginal members - temporary workers and "wage class two" employees - with regard to the organizational ideology is briefly described first (5).

The Marginal Member

There are two distinct marginal categories. The truly marginal are temporary workers, assumed to be exempt from the demands (and benefits) of membership. For them the challenge is to form an organizational self in the face of exclusion. More central (and less clearly excluded) are the "wage class two" employees for whom there exists a mixed membership role. Much of the organizational ideology supposedly applies to them, and an organizational self is formed in response to the unclear limits of its applicability.

Outsiders: The "Extra-Culturals"

Temporary workers are exempt from membership and its deeper implications. Although physically present, they are not expected (or allowed) to become full-fledged participants in the organization or subjects to its ideology. In the managerial view, they are present in body and activity only and are not expected to share the experiences that members are assumed to have. The relationship is defined as economic, and there is no managerial attempt to encompass or penetrate the self. A common-sense understanding of this is pervasive. The engineer in the intro workshop (ch. 4, page 120) who hypothesized that uncooperative behaviors might be related to a lack of loyalty inherent in the temporary status, reflects this widespread understanding. By contrast, what is not expected from temporary workers, suggests what is expected from others: an exchange that is more than economic.

In many cases temporary work is separate, unnoticed by regular employees, and frequently dirty: late or early cleaning, kitchens and dining rooms, security. No managerial attention is paid to the inner experience, no shaping of the self is in order. Since the body is replaceable, no leverage of the soul is deemed necessary. Temporary workers move through the organization without much friction with the ideology and its agents. In relation to full members and the organizational routine, the scope for self-expression is very narrow. Interaction with "wage class four" members is minimal and limited to the actual services performed. In such situations, only a minimal self is displayed. For example, in the following routine encounter between a security guard and a senior manager, the interaction is smooth and scripted, the roles clear and acknowledged, the attributed meanings tacit and private. Yet lurking close to the surface

is the question of inclusion and exclusion in the organization, and the associated feelings.

It is a few days before Christmas. Six pm, dark and snowing. Jim, a security man, is at the front desk, ready to start the night shift. He is in the security uniform, equipped with a transistor radio for later. The last of the daytime people are leaving the building. He is telling me: "They gave out turkeys today but only for the employees. Heck, I don't need a fucking turkey. I can go out and get one for myself!" One of the senior managers hurries out. He is carrying a large brief case and extra documents under one arm. In the other hand is his turkey, frozen and packed. He is in a hurry. He nods absent-mindedly at Jim as he stops to put on a dark fur coat, peering out the window past his reflection, looking for his chauffeured car. Jim, who was talking about his efforts to get a full time job at Tech stiffens. "Good night sir. Careful. Its slippery out there. We had an accident on 131 a few hours ago, sir." Sir is hurried: "OK. I'll tell the chauffeur to be careful. Good night." He turns to leave, and adds as an afterthought as he passes through the door: "And merry Christmas." When he is gone, Jim relaxes. "Boy. A chauffeur and a turkey! Some guys have it all." He laughs. And then adds seriously as he turns on the radio: "He's a pretty important guy, y'know."

The minimal self may seek public enlargement. When this occurs, aspects of the self beneath the organizationally prescribed one are publicly surfaced, the smoothness of the interaction and the clear definitions are temporarily broken, and participants surface private meanings and make comments to themselves and to each other, as they strive and negotiate for recognition.

"Enlargement dramas" happen most frequently in settings where the more rigid rules of organizational reality are relaxed. One example occurs during a formal "timeout": the attention paid to the suited-up pitcher and his fast pitches during the softball game (ch. 4, p. 161). The timeout status of the event gives otherwise ignored aspects of the self of a temporary worker an opportunity to be displayed and attended to. For a brief moment, he is center stage.

Another example occurs "after hours." A manager, working late, encounters a cleaner doing his regular rounds. The mutual recognition is a brief - and atypical - break in the routine enactment of practiced selves.

It is seven thirty. Only the dedicated, the overworked, and the cleaners are still around. John, a project supervisor is in his office working on a document, deep in thought in front of his terminal. For him it is crunch time. Mike, a cleaner, is making his routine way from office to office, collecting the leftovers of the day from the wastepaper baskets. He is a temporary worker. About 25, clad in jeans, sneakers and a baseball cap. The edge of a tattoo shows on his upper arm. He is wearing an apron with a Tech insignia, and has a temporary name tag - a removable paper label that is fixed to the shirt at the beginning of the shift and peeled off and discarded at the end. As he moves to collect the plastic bag under the table, John turns and throws his plastic coffee cup out. Their eyes meet. "How ya doin'?" Mike asks automatically. "Shitty!" exclaims John. The scene freezes. John, noticing the surprise, says: "What do you want me to say? Great?" Mike straightens up and says more conversationally: "I dunno. All these people here - real professional like, y'know." He imitates their exclamations: "Great! Super! Have a good weekend! Merry Christmas!" Both laugh. A brief silence. Mike turns, and on the way out says: "Well, have a lousy Christmas." John calls after him: "Hope your New Year stinks."

Self-enlargement might occur during more formal occasions. One example, where it happens quietly, on the boundaries of the event, is the interaction between the cleaner and the manager during a presentation (ch. 4, p. 105). Here, the cleaner appears neither angry nor envious. Instead, he presents himself as questioning the displays of earnest involvement on the part of the "wage class four" audience. It is comedy. For a brief moment his stance is acknowledged by one member.

Less frequently, "enlargement dramas" take center stage. An example is the question posed by the temp during the career workshop (ch. 4, p. 135). Her challenge to the comfortable order that ignores the situation of marginal members creates a sticky moment. It is quickly suppressed by other participants, anxious to preserve the appearance and emotional tone of

routine interaction.

Temporary secretaries - "temps" - are a more problematic case. The membership boundaries are less clear-cut and are open to some negotiation. While some appreciate the part-time nature of work and soon disappear, for many the goal is to become a permanent employee - not easy to achieve. During routine work life they are indistinguishable from other secretaries. They often spend their time with regular employees and frequently perform similar duties. Except for the different ID card they wear, they could routinely pass for full members. Events that publicly highlight the different membership status might be occasions for "enlargement dramas." The routine is briefly interrupted as the feelings associated with exclusion are thrust into the public domain. A secretarial supervisor describes one such scene when the Thanksgiving turkey - a Tech tradition - is distributed. Computerized lists of employees are the basis for the distribution - a policy made, from the point of view of development organizations, "somewhere in Corporate."

Things got very uncomfortable today. The turkey slips arrived and we each got one with our name on it so we could pick it up when the truck came in the afternoon. As I was putting them in the mail slots, Faith - she's been tagging here for two years - started crying. I don't know why they are so mean. You can have one, you can't. And they give the leftovers to charity. I mean she's like almost one of us, does the same work. Would it hurt them to give her a turkey?

In sum, the role attributed to temporary members implies a minimal organizational self. In orderly and routine interactions with full members (particularly "wage class four"), these people mostly engage in the prescribed behaviors that reflect this narrow view of the organizational self. Their presence, when orderly, serves as a contrast for others, who presumably are what the minimal self is not. "Enlargement dramas" are breaks in the routine order. The situation of the minimal self is put on

display and brought into question, followed by a self-definitional struggle that temporarily disturbs the order, and often has emotional overtones.

Enlargement dramas of this sort are revealing. It is in the breaking of the routine that their nature is exposed. They offer a temporary suspension of practiced organizational selves, an opportunity for negotiation, for enlargement, perhaps a cleansing moment of truth. In acknowledgment and interpretation there is dignity and perhaps the only form of camaraderie possible: actors commenting on their roles. But in routine there is little place for enlarging the narrow scope granted to the organizational selves of those engaged in temporary work.

"Wage Class Two:" On the Sidelines

Most of the "wage class two" employees are secretarial and clerical workers. Although they are considered full members, there are limits, in their case, to the applicability of the ideologically prescribed role demands, which are largely formulated with others in mind. While temporary workers can literally "walk through," "twos" sit on the sidelines.

For many the relationship is openly instrumental. Tech is seen - and referred to - in the third person plural. "They" are seen as capable of giving or withholding rewards. Membership has a number of salient dimensions. First, inclusion. Getting in is important. A secretary says:

I always wanted to work here; I grew up around here and have a lot of friends and relatives at Tech. A friend brought me for a day as a temp. Most secretaries tag for a while but I lucked out, got in just before the freeze. The tag program is OK; you get the same pay but no benefits. But you could be out the door if they don't need you.

Inclusion is interpreted as participating in certain aspects of "Tech culture," primarily the economic security it is perceived to offer.

The best thing about being an employee here is the "no layoff policy." Other companies also had it but lifted it when times got rough. Here they are still sticking with it. My brother - he's a technician over at Lyndsville - was terminated. That means he has 6 months to find another job at Tech, and in the meanwhile he is on full pay.

The degree to which ideology applies to members of this group is a matter of some debate. Beyond inclusion and routine performance, for many there is often open detachment. The standard exchange is employment, benefits and guarantees in return for prescribed efforts. Time boundaries reflect this. "Wage class two" work is strictly nine to five. Part-time and flexitime work is a privilege of the "wage class four" members only. Similarly, they are less frequent primary participants in the kind of rituals described in chapter 4. Occasionally they participate by choice (ch. 4, p. 132) but more often serve as secondary or tertiary participants, managing it for others or coolly observing. The spatial arrangements are indicative too. Most secretaries sit at desks in the open spaces in front of offices, or in partly enclosed areas that lead into managerial space. Most secretarial space is not adorned (particularly secretaries to senior managers.) At lower levels, decoration reflects detachment. One secretary, one of the few blacks in the facility, has a poster of Martin Luther King, and next to it a large calendar with a picture of a partly unclad, extremely well-built black man; the image stands out in the almost all-white and nonphysical environment. Others usually carry versions of the "secretaries lament:" poems, comic strips, sayings. Semivisible statements; easy to ignore. Few, if any, exhibit materials that suggest a positive orientation to the company.

For those who appear to be reconciled to their station, the expression of low involvement seems congruous. The ambitious might aspire to *e* promotion within their "wage class." For example, a long-time secretary

considers promotion for its economic advantages:

I've been here 14 years. Grew up here. I'm a two, but I want a promotion to administrative secretary. The biggest difference is that you stop being an hourly and become a salaried worker with overtime. You need a degree or minimum years service. I have the years. But there is also a committee, and you have to take a test. Like it's serious, y'know.

For most, however, potential enlargement is seen as a burden. A secretary says of her boss's attempt to increase her responsibilities "in line with Tech culture:"

My boss gives me some of the easier technical assignments, like running computer tests and correcting documents. He says that is the way to do things at Tech, that is the culture. But I get all the stuff the engineers hate doing. I'd rather read a novel and answer the phone, like some of the others. That's what I'm paid for.

For those who do seek increased involvement, the extent of the applicability of the organizational ideology is perceived as unclear. Beyond the promise of inclusion, security, and economic return lies a gray area. Against aspirations the current status is uncomfortable and frustrating. Work is often boring and occasionally humiliating. For example, a secretary who is openly interested in advancement says, as she absent-mindedly separates documents:

This is mindless work. I hate dealing all day with managers and their inflated egos. They want things done they can't do themselves. And all those brilliant people, all they can do is numbers.

The ideology is a potential resource. The possibility of status transition offers her some hope. Recognizing and identifying role demands is a first step.

They say they don't hold you back here like some other places. I'm a college major and I want to get in and interact with customers, maybe something in sales. (Definitely not anything technical!) I can do it. I can be just like those Techies - running around, taking initiative. Sometimes I feel like them anyway.

However, the feasibility of status transition is a question in the minds of those who want to increase their involvement. A secretary who has just been accepted as an employee after a few months of "tagging" is enrolled in a community college and often spends her lunch hour with management textbooks and has an updated resume ready on her work station. Nevertheless, she has doubts.

I went to a career management seminar. "Taking charge of your own career at Tech." I often think it is just lip service when it comes to us. I almost walked out on the first day when I saw that it was mainly the "wage class four" people there. Then I said fuck them. I'll keep pushing. I look at the job book everyday. There is a copy in the library and you can pick one up at personnel. I like the marketing and sales, not the technical stuff. I'll bring my resume; get some phone numbers; I'm persistent. I'm going to make it. But in the meanwhile I have to stay here for at least a year in this job. That's the policy - and they won't count my "tag time" for the year. I hope Gary - my boss - will help me and let me leave. Some managers want to keep you. People have a mindset against the secretaries. I know someone who made the shift. She was a secretary for seven years and now she is a product manager. She encourages me, but I think they still keep her down. They won't forget she was a secretary.

For "wage class two" employees, then, there is a mixed membership role. The degree to which the ideologically defined member role is applicable to them is not entirely resolved. For many, the choice is between responding to the occasional opportunities to enact it, and between the option of enacting the detached "minimal self" characteristic of temporary members.

The mixed membership role is often displayed in the daily routine. The following is a typical interaction involving the various classes of participants.

A group of managers are standing around after their staff meeting in the common space between the offices. The space also accommodates the group secretaries whose desks ring the space in front of offices. Anne, the most senior one, who

is hoping to be promoted to administrative secretary, is participating in the animated discussion from her seated position. Jill, a temp at the adjacent desk, is quiet, apparently daydreaming between phone calls, as the discussion swirls around her. The issue is the political implications of the group's planned move to another facility. It is breathless, excited. A variety of knowledgeable interpretations of the move are offered, complete with the first names of the various senior managers involved. Anne, from behind her desk, adds her perspective as one of the group and then, as if the incongruity of her stance is too obvious, she smiles suddenly and adds: "But what do I care? I'm just a peon!" A moment of silence. The conversation continues but quickly runs out of steam. The managers are soon off, for their various lunch engagements, leaving Anne and Jill at their desks. As she turns her attention to the unfinished document on the screen of her terminal, she says to Jill: "They come, they go. I'll cover for you. Take a lunch break."

In sum, the organizational selves publicly enacted by members of this group are shaped by the question of partial inclusion. They want in, or they don't care that they are out. The more ambitious might experiment with the applicability of ideology, but at the foundation the relationship is openly economic. In low status and low self-involvement there is apparent congruity, as Anne seemed to indicate in the previous example. The organization is "they," and the status of "peon" (including the insight to recognize it) is apparently more comfortable than attempts to adopt "wage class four" roles.

The Full Member

"Wage class four" employees think of themselves as full members, and thus the primary targets of ideological formulations. Despite the distinctions within the group, primarily between managers and engineers, and between levels, members of this group have in common the need to define themselves in the face of articulated and enacted claims against the self that are remarkably similar, and captured in the ideologically defined

"member role." The purpose of the following analysis is to focus on the common condition of the members of this group in relation to ideological claims. Differences between types of members will be highlighted only when it has direct bearing on the discussion.

The analysis consists of three parts. In the first, interview data illustrate the main elements that are characteristic of the subjective meanings attributed to the organizational self. The second and third sections analyze the ways in which these elements are combined. The second section focuses on successful self-construction. The routine presentation of the organizational self is described in two settings: organizational rituals, and office space. In contrast, the third section analyzes failed self-construction as it is manifested in the meaning and presentation of "burnout."

Speaking of the Self

Two themes stand out in descriptions of the subjective experience of membership in the organization: role boundaries and role responses. In the former, the emphasis is on segmenting the organizational self by establishing clear boundaries that delineate its domain with regard to both physical and social space and time. In the latter, the emphasis is on controlling the balance of role identification and role distancing with regard to both cognitive and affective aspects of the self. In the following, first role boundaries and then role responses will be discussed and analyzed.

a. Role Boundaries: Segmenting the Self

Establishing boundaries is the subjective experience of delineating limits to the world within which the organizational self is defined. Two

types of boundaries are described as important: time and social relationships. Both are felt to require active management.

Managing Time Work at Tech is experienced as making heavy demands on time commitment. Members describe heavy workloads, scheduling pressures, competition, the possibility of working at home, and perceive these as factors that combine to blur work and nonwork time boundaries. In response, members put much effort into establishing time boundaries. Designated segments of time are allocated to the organizational self, while others are designed as a respite from it. The imagery used in the following examples to describe work time suggests that it is experienced both as seductive and repulsive, thus the importance and the difficulty of maintaining boundaries.

A number of different time segmentation techniques are reported. First, careful separation of time at work from nonwork time. Many make an effort to adhere to prescribed working hours. Says a marketing manager:

My boss puts in 18 hours a day and you should hear his wife complain. I do 50 hours a week and then I have time for my real estate deals. Sometimes I'm tempted to work longer hours, to turn on the terminal at home. I have to remind myself - there is no rush! We just bought a second home. My wife is over in marketing. There is a lot of free time there. So she manages some of the deals and in a few years we should be independently wealthy. I still want to be VP but there is no rush.

Work time is portrayed as both contaminated and attractive. It is "shit," and "crap" yet engrossing nevertheless. Enacting the boundary between work time and nonwork time is described by a product manager as a daily ritual of purification.

During the day, I'm "on" all the time. No time to stop and think. I drive home 35 miles a day, slowly on the right hand side of the road, and play Mozart on the stereo. It sort of buffers me from the shit here. I never use my terminal at home. I don't smoke or abuse stuff, I do a lot of sports. I

want to retire at the age of 40, but in the meanwhile it's a good place to work if you keep in mind that it is a large company; so you put up with all the shit, all the talk about Tech culture.

Vacations are a longer period of nonwork time. These, too, are equated with cleanliness, in contrast to "dirt" associated with work experience. Yet the purity of nonwork time is hard to maintain.

I'm going to Club Med for a week. It's tiring all this head work, all this politics. I need to wash the culture out of my hair. It's almost a physical thing. Here you just sit and talk all day. But even there you meet Tech people. Last year I wound up spending a lot of time talking Tech. We're having a reunion soon.

Second, timeouts - temporary relaxation of the stance required of the organizational self, taken during work time. Timeouts vary in length and utilization of space. Short ones consist of momentary distancing in the course of a highly involving work day:

You have to keep your sanity somehow. You gotta laugh. I go out for lunch, leave this building even for 45 minutes, with someone, talk about basketball. People just walk into your office here. You can't close doors or hide. Finding a few minutes for yourself is a problem. If I eat in the cafeteria I'm caught up in business. People get caught up in this shit. It's not only the power. Maybe the growth. The times I want to leave is when there are too many things happening that are out of control. I can't take too much bullshit even though I'm paid to be an asshole.

Lunchtime leisure activities offer communal timeouts. Daily basketball games, running, Trivial Pursuit, bridge; most allow a form of communal activity where shared distancing from the organizational role is an overt goal.

Without my daily bridge game I'm a wreck. Look at all those runners. What do you think they are running from?

Partial timeouts may consist of "off days;" establishing them requires considerable effort.

The most important thing is keeping a boundary. Prioritize. You can't do everything. That is what I tell my people. My

terminal is often shut all day and I don't take any calls. When I want to hide, I go sit in someone else's office. It takes a lot of energy to separate yourself. Discipline. People are after you all the time. Before you know it your calendar is full. Luckily I don't get too much pressure from home and the secretary has orders to let my wife through whenever she calls. Most people I know are just married or divorced. It is incredible how many divorces there are. You can tell by looking at someone's calendar what the state of their marriage is.

Third, time segmentation can involve the more distant future and past. Hope and memory offer a fantasy of limits. One option is to see a future end to involvement. Many speak hopefully of the day when they will leave. They have defined a benchmark beyond which the organizational self will cease to exist, making way for other forms of experience. Future disassociation carries overtones of purification. An engineer says:

You have to take a lot of crap here. It's rough, it's crazy. I want to slow down. Its not worth it, all the Tech crap. I've been considering leaving, maybe to a smaller operation with higher risk but bigger return, or maybe to a new discipline altogether: carpentry, plumbing. Take a cut in income - but kiss Tech goodbye. Perhaps when my kids grow up and go to college.

One alternative is meaningful work. A group manager, reputed to be highly involved with his work, says:

I give myself 5 more years before I go back to art teaching. That was my major in college before I got caught up in this. Its still my first love although I don't have too much time for it. But I promised myself that I was going to go back.

Another frequently mentioned alternative is affluent leisure. A thirty-one year old product manager, currently on the fast track, has clear plans.

I'm planning to retire at the age of forty. I had it all planned when I was still at school. By then I will be independently wealthy. I'll live on my yacht. By then I will have deserved it.

The past, nostalgically remembered, offers another time boundary. Identification is presented as having been strong and justifiable in the past, less so in the disappointing present.

In the early days loyalty was real and strong. We had less than 20,000 people. I worked my butt off to make it a success. I believed in the company. It was a moral force. People were behind that. You worked for a company that didn't deliberately lie to customers, you worked to keep commitments. We worked hard. Now that it is big, people are more concerned with their own welfare. With 20 people you can have a company spirit. In 72 we did. My badge number is 17800. There were 10,000 people then. I could call up a vice-president - there were only 2 or 3. I could go around my boss and his boss. Today the open door policy is not nearly as open as it is alleged to be. I can do it with my boss, maybe, but many others can't. And in 72 they would have been going around to speak to us.

In sum, managing time boundaries is presented as an essential feature of the organizational self. The recurring imagery used to describe time segmentation is founded on a contrast between work and nonwork time. Work is impure and crazy; nonwork is pure and sane. Work is seductive. Nonwork must be protected. The boundary between the two requires discipline and effort. It serves two "containing" functions. First, members define time segments within which the organizational self is operative. Second, they define time segments within which different degrees of distancing from the organizational role occur.

Managing Relationships Managing the social relationships one is involved in is another way of delineating limits to the organizational self. Members attempt to segment types of relationships. This is considered necessary for a number of reasons. First, many report frequent overlap between work and nonwork acquaintances. Nonwork relations might be pulled into the sphere of work. A typical instance of overlap is reported by a development manager.

They needed a lab manager here and asked me if I knew anybody. I recommended a guy I sort of knew socially. It didn't work out. He couldn't operate on his own. He was making rules, you had to go fight and scream to get anything. He turned into a little czar. It just didn't work

out. I still saw him socially. I helped him get another job because I felt responsible.

On the other hand, work ties offer the opportunity for socializing.

Socially there isn't much going on here but there are connections. My two best friends work for me. It happens that these are the people you run into.

Second, work relationships often become personalized. Says a senior development manager:

You develop a series of personal/ professional relationships. It is based on trust and can take years to develop. Without it, nothing can work for you. It requires a lot of work, including socializing.

Another manager mentions the importance of having Tech "confidantes."

You need someone you can trust, someone you can do reality testing with about what's going on. A lot of people have confidantes: an ex-boss, a friend from somewhere else. Without reality testing, you can go crazy.

The experienced overlap of role-related social ties is countered by an effort to separate, at least conceptually, types of involvement with the same people. After hours socializing with work acquaintances is perceived by some as work, as a duty, and is kept to a minimum.

At Silicon I worked 80 hours a week. That's 2 weeks in one. Then I realized that you can walk away from your job but not your family. I decided that my family comes first. I've been married for 22 years now and I keep my life totally separate. We do no socializing. Nothing. It's an ironclad rule we have. I go to my boss's party every year, but that is work.

Others take care to distinguish work relationships and social ones with the same people. A supervisor says of her relationship with an engineer who reports to her:

We go out together sometimes. But after work we have a rule never to talk about work. Every Thursday after work we drive to a ceramics class together. The company sponsors it. They are very good at that type of thing. We very consciously don't talk work. Once when there was a crisis, I said: "I'm breaking the rule now because I forgot to tell you something, but it will never happen again!"

At work, there are limits to the degree which "personal" issues are surfaced. A supervisor says of her engineers:

I'm willing to listen to some of their problems. They come with all kinds of stuff. Some supervisors listen, but when it gets too personal I send them to EAP - the Employee Assistance Program - free-lance shrinks the company hires. That's what the company pays them for.

For many, however, the overlap of work and nonwork aspects of social ties is hard to separate, even confusing. It seems to require constant definition and redefinition. A manager says of his boss:

His wife is unhappy. She complains a lot about his work involvement. I had them over one evening. You learn a lot that way. I should invite them again. But it is because they are OK. My wife likes them. It would never be only for politics. I would never do that!

An extreme case of overlap is when two members are married (7). This requires a continued effort at social segmentation that is both public and private.

My husband works here too. We work on separate sides of the building and try not to see each other. I don't want to hear his voice. And I don't want any "finger pointing." People might not trust you if they know you have a special relation. Some things you might not hear. I know my boss is sometimes concerned about information flow. I ride home with my husband. But some things I just wouldn't tell him.

In sum, managing social relationships is another way of establishing boundaries. The multiple relationships encountered at work are felt to contribute to a blurring of the boundaries of the organizational self. In particular, the distinction between work and nonwork relationships is felt to be important for sustaining a segmented self. In many cases the distinction is socially constructed.

Discussion Self-segmentation is a recurring theme in member self-descriptions. Management of time boundaries and of social relationships is

felt to be important for successful self-construction in this particular environment. It is not so much the success or failure of these efforts, but the perceived importance and difficulty of engaging in them that is indicative of subjective experience. Segmentation is an attempt to control boundaries and thus limit self-involvement. It is defined against a perception that there are organizational pressures working in the opposite direction (8). In other words, attempting to assert control over boundaries of the self is felt to be part of a struggle over control, where the turf is the organizational self.

b. Role Responses: Identification and Distance

Role responses are the stance one assumes to both cognitive and affective aspects of the ideological definitions of member roles. Role responses are characterized by two recurring themes: role identification is the acknowledgment and affirmation of ideology; role distancing is its denial. Each will be discussed separately.

Role Identification Two types of identification are evident: ideological agency and ideological testimonial. In the former one speaks of others, in the latter of oneself.

Ideological agency is implied self-definition through contrast with others. Hierarchical relations are a frequently observed basis for contrast. Senior managers present themselves as agents of the company, "the culture," and its demands. They identify themselves through contrast to others, usually subordinates, whom they wish to change "for the company's good." The recurring imagery of the self has a cognitive component - "a mindset," and an affective one - "gut feelings." A senior vice-president says reproachingly of his direct reports (who themselves make similar

claims about their subordinates; agency is relative):

They come to the staff meetings and want to know what is in it for them, not for the company! That kind of responsibility does not exist. It is a question of maturity. Not everything is always immediately relevant, but what about the company good? They don't have it in their gut! I have to keep pounding away at them, I have to keep painting a vision. I told them I was at the executive staff meeting and I sat in on stuff that didn't concern me. I made a contribution for the company good! That is the mindset we have to create.

The imagery of religion underlies the view of the self; proselytizing, conversion, total commitment, "the larger cause" and self-sacrifice are frequently used to frame discussions. For example, another senior manager discusses his view of motivating people.

You know the old anthropological maxim: "get them in a survival mode. Convince them that survival is at stake, that there is a threat, then make them see the light." I'm a missionary. I articulate the vision. Sure, careers can get hurt. It's often more than they bargained for. But they help others in getting the religion. Give them the resources and point them in the right direction. They'll kill themselves.

Middle managers often assume a more pragmatic, macho style. The images of intense involvement and strong motivation are the same, but the explanations less lofty. Says a development group manager speaking of a peer who is "in trouble:"

She is in the "problem employee" mode now. You saw the signs. She's an alcoholic. That is the nature of the industry. Constant change, high pressure, motivation to achieve. It results in burnout. That is the "old Tech." The president has one primary criteria: success in the market place. Nothing else counts, no institution at Tech is holy. We'll try different things. Sociologists tell us the price is high. Bullshit! Get people really involved and motivated and 20% burn out. But 80% work. And there are countless startups to employ people. I worked at Data Corp and it was exactly the same.

The appropriate member role is a widely held standard of evaluation. It might be applied to peers and managers as well as to subordinates. A lower-level manager says of her supervisor with whom she has been feuding:

He's a loser. He just can't handle the ambiguity. He wants someone to tell him what to do. He doesn't go out and get it done. Gets all scared when he doesn't get clear direction. You know the kind. He was out sick for a few days after one emotional meeting. A wimp. It doesn't work in the Tech culture.

Other types of contrasts are also the basis for ideological agency. For example, the distinctions between "wage class four" and other groups and between engineers and managers (see ch. 2) elicit a cultural description, a criticism, and an implication by way of contrast that the presenter is a manifestation of the most appropriate cultural type.

Ideological agency is the presentation of self as reviewer and critic of others, using ideological formulations as a yardstick for evaluation of appropriate role performance. The self implicit in these demands has both a cognitive dimension - "a mind set," and an affective one - "having it in one's gut." By implication, those who make the statements are presenting themselves as possessors of culturally appropriate selves. The contrast suggests that the speaker is a successful manifestation of the way people ought to be. It is an expression of conformity with "the culture."

The second mode of role identification is ideological testimonial - self-definition through direct reference to one's own experience as a member, using the ideology as a resource. The interrelated cognitive and affective dimensions of the member role are acknowledged, and attributed to specific aspects of the company: the culture, the founder, the technology.

One component of such testimonials is a general orientation to the company, presented as consisting of combined beliefs and feelings that are glossed by the label "loyalty." Note in particular the pervasive imagery of incorporation - "swallowing" - that underlies the language used to describe the relationship of self and company. Also note the habit of qualifying positive statements of this sort with an indication of awareness; more on

this in the following section. In a typical statement, an engineering supervisor acknowledges "being a Techie." Emotional reaction to praise or criticism of the company and an overlap of social and work relations are a defining feature.

You know, I like Tech. I don't think of leaving. Maybe the culture swallowed me. But there really is a feeling of loyalty I have. We have a lot of that in the culture. We like working for Tech. It is a positive company. You get really involved. I get a real charge when Tech gets a good press. Or when people I knew from this other company were dumping on Tech, I was offended. I didn't like hearing it. They made millions with us! Because of us they got rich! They get all this free knowledge from us and say it with impunity! My husband works for Tech and he feels the same way. We spend time with friends talking about work; we're worse than doctors. I guess you can call me a Techie.

Loyalty is frequently associated with the image of the president. His personality is the subject of much discussion. For many he has come to symbolize the "philosophy," everything that is unique about Tech. A positive view of him is frequently heard, particularly at middle and lower levels (more senior managers often tend to be critical; it is a sign of the insider to be close enough to know "the real story.")

A mid-level manager, speaking, as many do, in the first person plural, acknowledges his belief in the validity of the ideology, identified with the president. Emotional attachment is presented as a fair exchange.

People might say I've swallowed slogans, the party line. But I do believe that Tech "does the right thing." We don't lay off, even though some people deserve to be laid off. So you feel loyalty back. The boss believes in "taking care of your people" and he gets paid back with loyalty.

A similar exchange is apparent in the words of an engineering supervisor describing the impact of "secondary participation" in the president's speech at the "Tech forum" (ch. 4, p. 100):

I trust the man. He means well. There is a lot of honesty at the top and the bottom of the company. I don't know about

the middle. But he really means it when he says it's the company's duty to take care of employees and customers. I've never met him but I've seen the videotapes. He can be very powerful. I got excited when I heard him say: "It's our moral duty to give the customers what they want." Moral duty!

Frequently heard from engineers is an acknowledgment of the president's philosophy:

You can tell the boss is an engineer. His philosophy is give the worker the tools and they will do the job. Their goal in life is not to rip off the company. That's the way it should be!

Expression of loyalty to the company is often contrasted with other affiliations in the company. Functional group affiliation as a source of identification is rarely mentioned. Groups, if anything are stepping stones, temporary arrangements, one aspect of an individual's network position. A manager who thinks he is about to lose his job in one of the unfunded staff functions is openly disturbed and worried about his future. He is angry with his boss and his peers whom he blames for the failure. He sees his commitment to the company, however, as overriding the commitment to the specific group (8).

I'll never leave Tech. I'm a Techie! but I want to leave this group; I came because I wanted to learn and watched it crumble and fall apart. I was insulted, I got upset and stayed home; my boss is crazy; he's nuts! The worst boss I've ever worked for. I have my resume out and I'm speaking to all my friends. People come and go. Organizations change here. But you'll meet again if you're around for a while.

Similarly, an engineer who is concerned about his advancement and getting recognition for a product he has designed that is being debated and "badmouthed" says:

I don't want to leave Tech. I like the environment. These things happen elsewhere too. I wouldn't want to be at some other place. You know the stories, you've heard them so often. Some old engineers working on obsolete technology in the basement of corporate. The project was canceled and the company sent them to school for 6 months; they went on to

become the biggest fans of the company. That is why I basically like it here; I certainly don't want to go into supervision, and I'm keeping the headhunters at bay in the meanwhile. It'll take time to evaluate - maybe a year or two - to see if the product makes money.

Testimonials are often based on a contrast between Tech and other companies. The perceived advantages of Tech are presented as the basis for an exchange. An engineer compares Tech's "no layoff" personnel policies to its competitors:

At Data they pay great but they fire you as soon as the downturn comes. This company keeps people and retrains them. I just love this company. I would die for it!

"The culture" is frequently contrasted to other "corporate cultures." The informal environment is an often mentioned attribute that is in contrast to the hostility other companies elicit. A manager says of his reasons for joining:

I didn't want Chiptech. I have an irrational dislike of them. Suits, pinstripes, the whole corporate clown thing. And because they unfairly and unjustly dominate the market. They just don't deserve the sales they have. It's not right! It's only because the purchasers are morons. I took a lateral to come here and also lost some pay.

Tech is often mentioned as the ideal place for engineers. It is referred to as a "country club" or as an "engineers' sandbox," where engineers who are supposedly addicted to their work and emotionally attached to their projects can "play." An engineer in advanced development explains:

Tech has the best engineers. I'm an engineer and I want state-of-the-art technology. At Chiptech they develop what marketing tells them. I'm happy as long as you keep me away from marketing types. Tech caters to engineers. It's reputation in the industry is a country club for engineers. It's laid back. Overall there are less fires, less stupid deadlines. They allow people to transfer freely, they put a lot of money into training, they give inexperienced people opportunity. Learning is the most important thing to me. If I gave it up I'd become comatose. Right now I'm learning chip design. A totally new area for me. Some engineers love houses, others cars; engineers like details, how things work. I like to learn. And the environment here is open enough to let you get involved in anything you like.

Tech's way of doing business is often contrasted to the "sleazy defense contractors" - the companies that develop products for the Department of Defense. A project manager says:

I worked for a while for a company that was built on those contracts. I worked on the ABM radar. It's not so much that I mind what the products end up doing. No. But all the dishonesty - the excessive costs, the stupidity, the unnecessary work - it really got me down. The norm was: hide the basic specs, follow the letter of the law and produce garbage, then get another contract. Disgusting stuff. Like telling reliability engineers to cook figures. At Tech at least we give customers an honest product. They get what they pay for. Most of the time. I feel good about that.

For many the relative security of working for a large and stable corporation is important. Compared to the high-risk life at startups, Tech is seen as a haven of security. A consulting engineer says:

In the startups and the small companies things are much worse. I worked at one where the bank auctioned off the company and the paychecks were held up. In comparison here the pressure is fairly low. The whole industry is high pressure. Time is important. You've got to get things out before the competition. But in the small ones it is much more competitive. I tried a startup for a while. The headhunters got to my head. It was a big mistake! Things were crazy there. I burnt out. Had to see a psychiatrist. I really needed help. I was lucky they took me back. I called my old boss. Except for a few "I told you sos" there was no problem.

Many engineers acknowledge attachment to the technology, and through that to the company.

Once you've worked with Tech products in a Tech environment, it's hard to go to anything else. They are just so much better. It's an engineer's dream - if they are into technology.

Finally, a frequently-heard testimonial is acknowledgment of the validity and applicability to one's own experience of specific aspects of the prescribed member role. For example, "individual responsibility and ownership" is a fundamental and oft-repeated principle (see ch. 3). The

following testimonial by an engineering supervisor combines both beliefs and feelings.

I'm a slow cultural learner. It took me two years to learn mainly that "it is your own ownership." You can do anything you want but you have to push. The idea is that you are a professional and responsible. You gotta feel the ownership. Don't sit and wait. You're a grown up. The onus is placed on you to live up to expectations. Don't bitch about problems, go do something about it. I buy that.

In sum, role identification is a recurring theme in descriptions of subjective experience. Role identification occurs through ideological agency or testimonial built around the imagery of incorporation and religion. The organizational self is presented as tightly coupled with the company. The "mature" self is bound by ties of belief and strong emotions, often described as offered in exchange for the positive aspects of the company. At the extreme, self-definitions merge (at least temporarily) with the shared definitions of the culture, suggesting collapsed boundaries between self and organization.

Total identification, however, is perceived by many to be undignified. Role distancing is a repeated theme in many descriptions of the nature of individual's ties to the company.

Role Distancing Distancing occurs with regard to both cognitive and emotional dimensions of the member role.

Cognitive distancing - disputing popular ideological formulations - is achieved by suggesting that one is "wise" to what is "really" going on. Being "wise" implies that despite behaviors and expressions indicating identification, one is also fully cognizant of their underlying meaning, and thus free of cognitive control; autonomous enough to know what is going on, and dignified enough to express that knowledge. Interviews elicit different modes of cognitive distancing. While different in tone and in

substance, all are posed as alternatives to ideology.

One mode of cognitive distancing is cynicism. It is the implication that reality is the opposite of ideological claims. It has the flavor of debunking. An engineer says of "Tech culture:"

It's like a religion, a philosophy that the company expounds; the president says do the right thing, be on the up and up, satisfy the customer, do the right thing by them. It's like a kind of morality thing. You can go into the president's office if you're not happy about a supervisor. I've heard of someone who has done it. Of course nothing might get done. In this group, "do the right thing" means "make your manager visible." (Laugh.) Aren't all organizations like that?

A development manager describes his view of the type of employees the company attracts:

Techies. We're all Techies. The whole goddamn industry. It's a type of individual who is aggressive and involved, looks loyal, puts in a lot of time, but underneath the surface is self-serving and owes allegiance only to himself. They are mobile, and choose the projects as they see fit.

A second mode is that of detached theoretical observation, often referred to as "Tech watching." Its essence is in the ability to interpret Tech reality and view it with scientific detachment; it is frequently cast in the language of various social scientific disciplines. This is not only the expression of a point of view that is distinct from ideology, it is also a reversal of roles - members who are often the subjects of organizational research, become knowledgeable students of organizations. A senior manager who has since left the company says:

"Tech culture" is a way to control people, to rationalize a mess, to get them to work hard, and feel good about it; it is really an ideology. Like all other ideologies it is part truth and part lie.

A personnel manager, just promoted, and viewing his success as related to his "understanding of Tech," explains his perspective:

Look at the Engineering Guide, look at the values in it. It is a uniquely American value system, grounded in, almost straight out of, the Puritan tradition, out of Emerson, Thoreau. You know, the Protestant Ethic and all that. The president really wants a "Christian company" with "Christian values."

Cultural commentary is frequently heard. Many regard themselves as having expertise in cultural interpretation. It might have an anthropological flavor. Says an engineer, possessor of an undergraduate degree in sociology:

The company may appear informal, loose. Open offices, first names. But there is a very distinct status system here. People always ask who you work with. They won't ask you your title or your rank, or look at the size of your office. Once they have you placed, they will treat you accordingly.

Similarly, a development manager becomes a management theorist:

I have a mixed reaction to layoffs. The president says things like "moral obligation" to employees, but it isn't consistent with American culture. American culture is individualistic. No layoffs are suited to the Japanese. It's consistent with their culture: paternalism, traditions. It's a long time coming getting rid of poor performers. The question is: is it worth betting the company. He feels it is big enough to absorb the slack. He feels he has responsibility; I respect him for that. But I respectfully disagree. Making a profit and carrying the deadwood don't go together.

A third mode is "common sense," posed as a contrast to ideology. It is presented as a body of knowledge that describes the social attributes of Tech, yet is not part of the formally prescribed ideology. The difference often seems more stylistic than substantive. For example, a group manager distances himself from "the culture stuff" and contrasts independently gained pragmatic knowledge with ideology.

They are making more out of this culture stuff than it is worth. You have to laugh. It is an instance of self-consciousness. "Look at us enjoying ourself, being good guys." I never read that stuff, maybe see it in passing. It is the same nauseating stuff they print in Business Week. They have this intro course for new employees. They talk about culture but I will never send anyone to it. It leads

to circular thinking. Its a waste of time. You have to know how this place works, how decisions get made at Tech. You pick it up as you go along. I tell my people how to get things done. We know that we want consensus, that power plays lose. I don't know what it is like at the top, how the big guys fight, or what they do. But the people who work for me, I brief them: "be tactful, don't beat 'em, don't piss 'em off." I train them explicitly and show them how.

The substance of common sense knowledge might differ from ideology. A project leader, challenging the ideological claims concerning the uniqueness of Tech, describes what "everyone knows:"

I don't buy all that "we are unique" song and dance. There is nothing unique about Tech. Constant reorganization is a way of life in this industry. Everyone knows that - unless their head is up their butt. That is the way it is, particularly in this kind of changing technology. Every company is like that; at Data Systems I had 8 bosses. Nothing is unique here, except, perhaps for the president's influence; like everyone else we're good at product development, bad at marketing. All companies like to feel that they have a culture, that they are a community. It makes them feel different, special, unique. It is an intangible force. It helps identification, gives a sense of belonging, and extracts a little extra loyalty.

Although the modes of distancing differ (and no doubt reflect a reaction to the perception of the interviewer), they are all a way to express "cognitive distancing" in relatively private settings by demonstrating the ability to reflect on the validity of the ideology and to offer alternative formulations. The availability of numerous terms that refer to systematic ideas - "religion," "philosophy," "song and dance," "ideology" - indicates the prevalence and centrality of this type of distancing.

Emotional distancing is another form of role distancing. It refers to the ability to distance oneself from the feelings associated with the member role. Three types of distancing are frequently mentioned. First, denial. In extreme forms, denial is accomplished by presenting motivation for membership as purely instrumental. The relationship with the company is

construed as contractual and economically driven, and its emotional aspects denied. For an engineer this means not only avoiding the "people and the politics" where "emotions" are likely to be found - a typical engineer response - but also denial of attributions of "loving one's work." One engineer says:

I wanted the security of working for a big company - no excitement and less pay. I get green dollars, I do my best, I know my worth. I work flexible hours but never more than eight. Technology is not my hobby. I have no terminal at home, and I keep my social life separate. I'm a private person. I don't go to the workshops or to the meetings. That's for those who want to make an impression, those who want to get ahead. They can have it. None of the "addicted to your work" "ego involvement" bullshit. I do my job. All the weird political aspects of the project don't bother me. They fight all the time. They are defensive and paranoid. There is an "ain't it awful" attitude. Finger pointing. Accusing each other of screwing up. But I stay away from all of that emotional stuff.

Managers, too, may choose emotional denial. Says a group manager, considered to be a hard worker:

Loyalty - they make a big deal about that - is old school. What is important is work. Some people feel a sense of belonging, but in my case it is not strong. It's a nice company but it isn't my mother. I'm not a joiner; I never liked organizations or clubs. I just don't feel that way about organizations, even though I bust my ass here. Others get some satisfaction in belonging. "Techies" (laughs). At social gatherings they will talk about Tech, say: "We do it this way, we do it better." Some of them don't even work at Tech anymore. Some started 15 years ago, felt part of what was happening. But it isn't the same anymore. Some moved on. Tech is just a thing. I find it amusing when I hear all that talk.

In both cases, denial of one's own emotional involvement in work is contrasted both to recognized ideological role demands, and to a caricatured depiction of those who accept them.

A second mode of emotional distancing is emotional localization - containment of emotions within the boundaries of the performed

organizational role. Role appropriate emotions are viewed as a distinct and separate category. A specific code for role-related emotions is a widely used part of the language. "Emotion" is a recognized part of interaction, used to explain role-related displays. These are presented as forms of experience that have relevance only to a localized role display, and are isolated from other aspects of the self. "Pain" refers to negative feelings that are attributed to organizational experience. For example, one manager describes a stormy staff meeting:

It was an emotional meeting. We went through a lot of pain. But we did reorganize. Bill lost quite a bit of his project work, and Sam is going into a "career examination" mode - he took the heat for the slips. But everybody took it professionally - you can't let those things get to you. Go home and forget about it till tomorrow.

A senior financial manager uses popular terminology of emotions when speaking of his role with regard to his boss.

My job is to read and interpret the numbers. I keep track of them all and then I whisper in his ear when to get angry. People start getting "midnight calls." We put the "fear of God" in them. It spreads the pain through the system. Nail a few people to the wall and drive a spike through their heart.

It is accompanied with a tap on the stomach to illustrate the location of "the pain."

On the other hand, "excitement" and "warm fuzzies" suggest a positive emotional reaction.

When they see the profit numbers and read the reports coming in on this project, management will get the warm fuzzies. They'll feel good all over.

Successful emotional localization is seen as requiring a constant effort, captured by the recurring images of "ignoring crap" and "developing a thick skin." Says a development manager temporarily on a staff assignment after his project was "unfunded:"

I've learnt here that you can do your own job, but you have to let the waves flow over you; ignore them or you'll go crazy. There is a lot of shit coming down, people wandering around, consultants, studies; that is the way it is, but it isn't a bad place. On a scale of ten it's maybe a six or a seven; but they really stuff ten pounds of shit into five pound bags. I have a Russian immigrant friend who says it reminds him of the USSR; all this shit about big brother.

A product manager, considered by many to be highly successful, explains the reasons for his success.

In this job we are self-motivated, internally driven. But you have to have a thick skin to survive. You must depersonalize; it's a rough environment. Take all this stuff professionally, not personally.

A marketing manager says of himself:

Sometimes it's like here is Jim doing all this getting involved, getting excited, jumping up and down, yelling and screaming; and here is Jim watching. I have to keep reminding myself it's a game. I should watch it and enjoy it.

The third mode of emotional distancing is dramatization. Here, role related emotional expression is viewed as somewhat contrived and calculated. Learning to instrumentally manage and interpret emotional displays is referred to as "people skills." The authenticity of the performance of others is regarded with some suspicion. A supervisor says:

I'm developing a thick hide. Before I take anyone's advice, or react to yelling and screaming, I think about what their agenda is. The people skills are important here; I learnt that the hard way. I'm suspicious. All of a sudden my boss is being a good guy, being nice. He is learning to put on that act. That means I have to be even more careful now.

Similarly, a manager of one of the staff functions suggests that emotional expression is game that he thinks many recognize:

We went to this off-site meeting. A consultant led a session on "how we feel towards each other." People were talking. But it's not real. It's just an opportunity to see how you handle yourself in that kind of session. The only one who believed all that Californian bathtub crap was the consultant.

Many view their own displays in a strategic light. A supervisor reveals her approach:

Before I had a one-on-one with my boss, I read some advice in "Things They Never Taught Me at the Harvard Business School." Good stuff. It says: "Never show them that you're feeling anything; keep a straight face; confuse them." It's exactly what I did. Worked too.

A development manager says of his plans for an upcoming staff meeting:

I'm gonna go into that meeting and put on my dumb-engineer act. Ask them for help with the people issues, the politics, ask for advice. (Opens eyes wide, parodying the performance) "Gee, I dunno..." By the time I'm through, they'll recommend I do what I've already done.

An engineer says:

I didn't get the promotion to consulting engineer. Maybe my boss didn't support me enough, or maybe someone on the committee was playing some game. So I'm in a "career evaluation" mode now. I'm angry. I won't take any new projects.

Unsuccessful emotional distancing invites censure. Loss of control over emotional displays is considered inappropriate. Allowing emotional expression to appear to transcend the boundaries of the role and to get too personal, or too real, is a serious problem, worthy of managerial attention. A development manager says of one of his project leaders:

Jim has a people problem. He is gruff with people and says exactly what is on his mind. He gets angry in meetings. I want him to control himself. Next year he is going to be evaluated on that. I'm watching him. He knows it.

A group manager says of a peer:

Rick gets too emotional. He is a good manager but he gets carried away with his stuff. It's not bad but sometimes I think he overdoes it, loses control. Its not professional, and it can harm you. Personally, and also career damage. Someone should tell him.

A development manager says of a supervisor:

He is a good manager, but a complainer. He is too negative about the company and constantly complains about "too many levels of management," "fucked-up decision making," and all

that. It's a bad attitude.

In sum, cognitive and emotional distancing are ways in which individuals maintain a controllable distance between themselves and the beliefs and feelings that are part of their organizational self. The metaphor that underlies distancing is a theatrical one. Notions of performing, playing a game, watching oneself, strategically designing a role, and so forth, are deeply ingrained in experience and explicitly articulated by members.

c. Discussion: Speaking of the Self

In this section, the basic elements of self-construction were illustrated. The organizational self, consisting of a cognitive and affective components, is that part of the self that individuals associate with membership in the organization. The organizational self is commonly experienced as being an arena for self-definitional struggles associated with pressure from the organization and its various agents (for this purpose everyone who is not oneself). Constructing a self is presented as a continuous struggle for control. Self-definition occurs in relation to the organizational ideology and the member roles it prescribes.

Two types of control processes are the recurring theme that underlies member description of experience. First, controlling time and relationship boundaries of the organizational self in the face of experienced organizational pressure. Second, controlling cognitive and affective role responses within the context of the bounded self. Through agency and testimonial individuals chose to identify with the ideologically defined member role and its associated beliefs and feelings. (Agency, of course, may be experienced by others as a form of control. In this sense the sides in the struggle for control are not clearly set.) Through cognitive and

affective distancing, individuals attempt to assert control over beliefs and feelings perceived as being threatened with outside control. Distancing then, is a declaration of autonomy, motivated by dignity.

To construct an organizational self, individuals must learn to define boundaries and to express both identification and distancing. How these elements of self-construction are routinely combined is the subject of the following section.

Successful Selves: Balanced Displays

An organizational self is routinely displayed to other members of the organization. Two main types of self-display are evident. First, behavioral displays that occur in the course of social interaction. Second, artifactual displays that are part of the office design. In both, an acceptable balance between identification and distance is negotiated between members.

a. Rituals: Behavioral Displays

Organizational rituals (see ch. 4) are the occasion for interactive expression and affirmation of appropriate organizational selves. All have socially constructed front and back stages that are jointly negotiated to allow shared expression of identification or distancing. The appropriate balance of identification and distance depends on the nature of the setting and the status of the presenter. Displays of identification are most overt when the event is formal and the status gaps are large. Consider the program review (p. 106). In the closing words for the day (p. 111) the vice-president publicly offers his self-definition in relationship to the company. He uses the language of ideology to openly express his identification along both cognitive and affective dimensions. It is

considered an appropriate display by the participants who offer affirmation in return. A member in the audience gives vocal ideological testimonial responding to both dimensions, while others nod their heads in quiet affirmation.

Displays may be inappropriate, as the following two examples suggest. At the same meeting, the manager of the training function who is nontechnical and therefore relatively low status, presents the work of his group (p. 109). To some of the participants it appears that his display is a caricature of identification, and therefore embarrassing. Wholehearted identification and pontification are expected from senior managers. They are assumed to have the right to speak for the company (or at least to have it publicly acknowledged.) Others must frame their identification in more limited terms, like the manager who presents tongue-in-cheek slides to frame his presentation and indicate he is "wise" (p. 109). Similarly, the brief crying episode (p. 110) suggested exaggerated identification and was met by a humorous response.

In less formal settings where the status gap is smaller, distancing is more evident. While participation and presentation still carry with them signs of identification, the humor that precedes, follows, and accompanies them offers a shared backstage where distancing occurs. Staff meetings (p. 140) offer routine opportunities for this type of display. The presentation by Frank is a complex display, shifting from distancing to identification quite rapidly. Mike's presentation at the intro workshop (p. 128) has similar qualities. Overdoing one or the other elicits responses. For example, in the debate about the company's "no layoff" policy (p. 145) the manager who openly expresses his loyalty, has displayed identification with the organizational ideology beyond what is usually acceptable in a small

group meeting with peers. His outburst elicits humorous responses. Similarly, questioning the very idea of Tech (p. 145) is perceived as overdoing distancing; it draws a collective rebuke.

Informal interactions are an arena where the organizational self is most commonly put on display. Role identification is frequently observed in the casual meeting of acquaintances. The use of company shorthand, terminology, cliches and slogans expressing conventional wisdom on correct modes of operations with no hint of a self-awareness is an expression of identification and an invitation to acknowledge and respond. It frequently occurs in informal groups, as part of the small talk of "timeout discussions," where the language flow is considered natural, and many non-Tech topics are discussed. For example, a consulting engineer speaks with colleagues over an informal lunch about setting up his new project.

A randomly collected group is sitting around a cafeteria table. Small talk. One of the engineers describes his latest project to an acquaintance, against the background of sports talk. "I need to get people to agree. The general philosophy has agreed that it is 'the right thing to do,' but a 'philosophical buy-in' is different from an 'implementation buy-in.' I'll put together a straw dog proposal and send it to most development managers and consulting engineers in Lyndsville. Let them 'pushback.' Then we'll 'go off and make it happen.'" After some questions, the discussion flows almost imperceptibly back to Larry Bird and the play offs.

Dyadic interactions also offer opportunities for displays of this sort. The following is an example of a frequently observed and elaborate language game occurring during a random meeting of distant acquaintances.

It is lunchtime outside corporate. The local restaurants are filling with Tech customers as the business of the day shifts in location. We are at a table in one of the popular Italian restaurants. A manager from another group sidles up after seeing us through the window. He stands next to our table exchanging standard pleasantries with my lunch partner, a staff manager, as his eyes also track new arrivals and others walking by on the sidewalk outside. They haven't seen each other for a while. "-How are you?"

"Super! Super!" -"Haven't seen you since... when was it? Last year at the management forum." -"Yeah. I'm over with ZEUS now." -"Super! Super!" -"Yeah, its really neat. They're going to wheel it into the president's office pretty soon. He's gonna love it." -"Super! I hear its tough getting anything through corporate these days." The conversational moves continue for a while as they discuss the specifications of the project in the same tone of clipped excitement. When he leaves my partner turns to me and says: "He's vicious! He'll eat you alive! But I heard that he is still a 50-50. Not clear if he is a "win" or a "lose."

A similar interaction, this time the meeting of two closer acquaintances, elicits a shared distancing routine.

"Hiya doin'?" he stops at the cubicle door. The inhabitant, turns from the screen, an invitation to enter. He enters, sits on the table. A loud sigh, a nodding of the head. "I'm going on a vacation. Gotta get outta hear for a while. Can't take much more crap." Head shaking slowly, in commiseration. He moves his hand over his body, indicating a cleansing motion. "Yeah. Gotta get rid of some of the crap..." They launch into some gossip.

The ability to engage in successful displays of role identification is a quality recognized in others. Speaking of a newly arrived manager from across the ocean, a manager refers to identification as acquisition of a language skill.

This guy is a "Brit," but he speaks the culture. With a British accent. He started talking and I recognized "corporate" immediately. People recognize it. He said to me: "I speak Tech culture." He knows all the catch phrases, all the idioms.

A particular behavioral style associated with the language routines is recognized as being appropriate and referred to as being a "Techie:"

We're Techies. We network, we break the rules, we are less formal. I went to this conference and most of us were out of the lecture room, in the halls. We "do the right thing," we speak of "dying" and "killing," "winning" and "losing." We're all aggressive. The first rule is "notice me!" You "put up the flag," call attention to yourself.

Humor is an important element in self-display. Humorous comments offer a built-in timeout that allows members to engage in shared and public

expressions of distancing. Typical humorous statements are invariably a challenge to ideological formulations, an expression of unspoken truths, a legitimate way of "being wise." They are bracketed by laughter and self-mockery that both support and belie the statement, and also convey an impregnable air of sophistication, of insider's knowledge. Thus humor has a dual role and multiple meanings. It conveys both identification and distancing, and is one of the many overt signs of ambivalence.

b. Office Space: Artifactual Displays

The office is private space, individual territory. The "open office" is designed with the explicit purpose of maximizing communication, exposure and face-to-face work, while minimizing status differences (see ch. 2). It is a hallmark of the "prescribed culture."

There is little variation in office design.

Offices for members up to and including group managers are cubicles, roughly 8'x 8', arranged in large blocks in the open office space. They are made of portable partitions - about 5'5" high - that allow overnight reconfiguration. Entrances are gaps in the partitions. The width of the entrance is 4'. Standard equipment includes a desk, a terminal (or two), a phone, a writing board, a bookcase.

Status differences in office design are subtle.

More senior managers might have more space and an extra table. Their cubicle opens into a secretarial one through which visitors must pass. Some senior managers (VP and up) typically have a room with a glass door. Managers are usually situated in corners, against walls or positioned so that they are least exposed. What little physical privacy is available in such configurations is allocated by seniority.

For most however, privacy is largely socially constructed. Boundaries that are largely symbolic might be constructed from available materials.

Many offices have bookshelves placed against the entrance to narrow it. More extremely, one office has an entrance maze constructed out of a number of bookshelves and filing cabinets that force a circuitous route on the visitor. A

large picture of Rambo conveys the message on another. One manager, away on a two-day vacation, closed the symbolic door with a strip of tape across the entrance.

In deference to symbols of privacy, the work space is often treated as if it were private. It is customary to indicate one's presence at the nonexistent door by a loud "knock knock," or to pretend to ignore easily overheard private conversations. Seemingly private conversations in the office frequently occur with a quiet awareness of an audience. For example, a manager I interviewed was telling me a project-related story he thought was "sensitive." Suddenly he smiled, and pretended to pull the pin out of an imaginary hand grenade and toss it over the partition, indicating the designed impact of his words on his neighbor. "Real privacy," if needed, is found away from the office.

The office is a stage for self-display. It usually has three "regions." First, the various work-related artifacts that indicate the occupant's work activities; second, a personal region where nonwork aspects of the self are displayed; and third, statements about the company conveying the views, ideas and feelings of the occupant with regard to the organizational ideology.

The work region contains artifacts that combine to convey the impression of hard work. For engineers these include extra equipment, piles of tapes and computer output. Managerial offices are often stacked high with paper: reprints, trade press, proposals. The blackboards are covered with the visible output of thought processes: diagrams, calculations, formulas. Terminals are typically on all day, and an occasional beep signifies the arrival of electronic mail. In the background during the day are the constant noises of high-tech: spurts of keyboard squeaks interspersed with beeps of arriving and departing mail, an occasional phone

ring, and the unpredictable bursts of the guttural, driving sounds of printers.

The personal region contains aspects of life beyond work. In a large majority of the offices, these are representations of family members. It is a downplayed reminder, a hook to the other, non-Tech world out there. Perhaps a frozen exhortation to fight to survive.

Over the desk are pictures. Mike has the standard loved ones arrangement: pictures of wife, wife with kids, dad with kids. Fireplace. Idyllic. Hobbies are also depicted: water skiing, mountain climbing. Self against the elements. Bob, in the adjacent office isn't married and has a picture of a haloed Jesus and some inspirational words semi-hidden over his desk in the same place, along with a copy of "Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Shine Up?" Hip high-tech Catholicism.

For some, organizational attachments have invaded this region too, and the balance between organizational and personal swayed:

Mary is unmarried. Over the desk, where others keep family, there is a glossy picture of her at a trade show with colleagues. A row of ribbons and name tags from various such events are pinned to the wall next to it. Above it is an "I Love High Tech" (complete with the little red heart) bumpersticker. On a shelf there is a golf section with a few trophies. "Most Improved Golfer" from Golfer's Digest, and a Tech trophy. Next to it a color print of a sailing boat with a large Tech logo on the billowing sail. An orderly row of beer bottles, and mugs with a Tech logo, all with their handles facing left.

The ideological display region contains statements that reflect the stance of the occupant towards the surrounding reality. Statements of identification are constructed with available company and industry materials: newspaper clippings, company advertising, and the myriad artifacts through which the company identity is - intentionally or not - stamped on physical forms.

Steve is a product manager. The decoration is almost entirely company-oriented. On the wall are Tech posters. One proclaims in large letters: "Help overcome competition." Another, fairly popular, depicts Tech as a truck about to run over a bicycle rider representing the competition. A third provides

a family tree for all Tech products. Outside the entrance are clippings from the press with disparaging comments about the competition yellowed in. The space is very orderly. Piles of trade journals as well as copies of Business Week and Fortune are on the table, and a few xeroxed copies of a Harvard Business Review article. The bookshelf has a few Tech technical publications, the Engineering Guide and "In Search of Excellence."

Displays of distancing are abundant and seem to become more abundant at lower levels and at greater distances from "corporate." In the vicinity of a vice-president's office, for example, there are no displays at all other than formal company material. Engineering facilities on the other hand are the stage for an abundance of this type of corporate art. Humor plays a central role in such displays - a defused and legitimate expression of dissent. Many expressions are standard and ready-made. Comic strips bemoaning the stupidity of organizations, clever sayings posted on walls, ironic twists of slogans to express their opposite ("there is unlimited opportunity at Tech - for inflicting and receiving pain"; "I'd rather be dead than excellent"). More elaborate expressions are also available. For example, the "management model" was constructed anonymously and incrementally.

On a filing cabinet just outside the entrance to the office someone has placed the "management model." It is a plastic toy in which little penguins appear to be climbing up a mountain. It could be activated by pouring water onto the penguin track which would make the little penguins move slowly up the mountain and then slide down in an endless circle. Above it someone has posted a large sign: "Management model. Makes a lot of noise, climbs heartbreak hill and gets absolutely nowhere." To that someone has added: "I know. But don't you just love to watch?" There is space for more comments.

Less humorous and more critical materials are found mainly around engineers' offices. For example, posted company materials with commentary attached at the entrance to a cubicle of an engineer willing to be labeled a dissenter.

Prominently posted in front of the office is a personalized form letter from a senior vice-president thanking the recipient for contributing to the success of a sales event. The recipient, an engineer, adds in a scrawl: "What kind of nerds run this company? I was only there for a few hours. No wonder Tech stock is down!" Next to it a new Engineering newsletter is posted to the door. On the front is a lead article by a VP calling for excellence. It has been circled and a yellow note attached: "Tech's answer to Chiptech's Journal of R&D."

This is a typical, safe, and often ambiguous outlet, one that ironically achieves a version of identification: the angry author is hoping for a better Tech, finding senior people to blame, and announcing it loudly. Criticism of this sort - often just as platitudinous as ideological formulations - is always present. Successful displays require that care be taken to strike the exact right tone so as not to be labeled "negative" or "burnt out." It should not be overly public, and should have "constructive intent."

A repeated theme in many offices is an explicit statement about the relationship of the individual to the company. The phrased, catchy insights that decorate these spaces reflect the image of the organizational self that their residents wish to convey. Such statements combine identification with cognitive distancing. For many, the image is that of a strong individual surviving in a hard, competitive, often irrational world. For example, a young and promising ex-engineer who has chosen the managerial route, has put more effort into it than most:

His office is in the corner, behind an enclosed secretarial space. It is dominated by a large chart with colored markers depicting his projects and their stage of development, and a board for calculations. These are given extra meaning by his chosen decorations. Over the desk is a page borrowed from an advertisement in the Sunday section of the Times: simple elegant white letters against a black background: "The race goes to the swift." It is not one of the ready-made ones that decorate many similar offices. Next to it a clipping from the New Yorker: A manager holding a "smoking" club

saying to an employee, on the ground, just clubbed: "That should take care of any more ideas from the right side of the brain." On the left, a card depicting a lonely fisherman on a small icy island, fishing. All around are sharks: a graphic portrayal of the frequently-heard metaphor of life at Tech. Next to it is a card with one word: "WINNER," and another with a sketch of one violinist playing in front of a row of flailing, uncoordinated conductors. Tom, one of his less imaginative peers, conveys a similar, if less classy message, typical of many offices. He has a poster with a mean-looking alley cat staring out over the caption "No More Mr. Nice Guy," and a framed reminder: "When running with the herd never fall down; getting up can be a bitch."

In many offices, the self-displays convey multiple messages, a balance of identification and distancing, perhaps a sense of ambivalence. For example, Ron, a development manager just awarded the "golden bull" trophy, has moved with his project team to a new location. They are now clustered in about ten cubicles in the new office space, having taken with them what they consider essential.

On a message board hanging next to the entrance to Ron's office, are two xeroxed pages. On the left is a computer printout with a status report on the project he is managing. Certain lines are yellowed in, indicating pride in the technical achievements: "new high levels of speed performance - metrics on performance." On the right side, next to it is a Pogo strip. This one is worn and was one of the few decorations to move with him when he moved into a new space. In it Pogo says: "They say if you is patient and tolerant, you gits covered with glory." In the next frame he is deep in a hole, digging. Another character is pouring garbage over him. "My sakes, what are you doing in the garbage hole, Pogo?" he is asked. The response, and the punchline: "I'm gittin' covered with glory!" In the cubicle next to his, Bill, the project leader, has competitor equipment wired up, connected to cables from the ceiling. The equipment is in various stages of dismantling. Against one partition he has arranged about 500 empty cans of Coke in a pile, leftover from many long nights. In the other corner, on the table, is the "golden bull," garish, funny, sticking high into the space over the cubicles, visible from anywhere in the building.

Thus, the office space contains numerous clues to the stance the inhabitants wish to assume towards the organization. These are artistic renditions of identity constructed out of a variety of materials.

Together they may be seen as people's declarations of their own images of themselves in this setting and of the ways in which they wish others see them. The images and interpretations of organizational life that depict the relationship of the individual to the company, are a backdrop to life at Tech, and capture aspects of the relationship between the individual and the context. Typically they contain ambiguous statements of both identification and distancing.

c. Discussion

Routine self-display is a complex accomplishment. Two of the methods for accomplishing the self were described: drama and art. They differ in a number of respects. Behavioral displays are designed for a specific audience and setting. They are time-bound; once accomplished, they exist only in memory and gossip, and the performer is free to move on to other performances. Artifactual displays, on the other hand, are less public; they exist, frozen in time, in one's private space, for guests and passers-bys. If in drama one can choose aspects of the self for particular display, art encompasses the entire statement.

Nevertheless, there are distinct similarities. Most crucially, the self-displays capture the underlying ambivalence that seems to drive self-construction. In both, the elements of self-construction are combined to illustrate the recurring motif: self-control of the balance of identification and distance. The message conveyed is always a variation on the theme of control.

The importance of control is illuminated in the following section, where failed selves are the issue.

Failing Selves: Burning Out

"Burnout" is a widely recognized, frequently discussed, and often applied label for specific experiences that members of the organization identify as an integral part of life at Tech (9). "Burnout" refers to a failure at self-management and as such is indicative of the underlying conceptions of the self and its management in this environment. Because "burnout" is a drastic breach of the routine order, it provides a clue to how the order is constructed (10). What does "burnout" mean to those who must live with its threat?

"Burnout" is recognized as a serious condition and is highly dramatized. Stories of alcoholism, divorce, psychiatric breakdown and even suicide may be heard. This drama is often public and open, consistent with the images of exciting and dynamic high-tech organizational life.

To those who live with its presence, "burnout" has complex meaning containing a number of themes. First, it is seen as a privately experienced condition that is primarily manifested in public loss of self-control. Says one manager:

My girl friend is a technical person working for Tech. She got burnt out. I mean really burnt out. You know, fighting screaming four letter words, the whole route. Well, she had a nervous breakdown. She is emotional about work as it is. She started shaking in the morning, couldn't face going in, got hives. I did too.

I was burnt out. Doing 12 hour days. I couldn't sleep or listen to anyone. I only managed 50% of the work. You know the signs. I didn't care. I got tired. One day I just stopped, broke down, and called the EAP guy. He told me what to do, what to say. They have a lot of experience with it. He coached me: "Get up, go have a glass of water, go home, don't talk to anyone on the way out." Then people said: "Dan is burnt out," and started avoiding me. So I took a job here. It's more relaxed and I don't work so hard. I watch it, though. In business it's tough, its a jungle. Don't make friends, don't trust anyone. Just let your boss know that your work is your work.

It's easy to burn out. It's happened to me a number of times. I just couldn't handle things any more. So you learn to manage yourself, when to quit, when to go home.

Burnout is when you can't handle it anymore. Its so intense and you need a vacation, emotionally you just can't handle it. You need private time. Management cared less at GE. Here at least my boss would feel badly. He'd offer me a leave of absence or something.

Second, a number of causal attributions relate the experience to the social nature of Tech. Some see "burnout" as a result of succumbing to the temptations and demands of over identification. "Burnout" is related to overwork, to long hours, to overcompliance with organizational demands, to emotional involvement. It is the organizational role dominating lie.

I'm burning out. Burnt out. I've got a wife and three kids who want attention. Some nights I'm up all night working problems, as long as the mind works. Even when I'm asleep, I dream about work. My terminal at home broke. I'm thinking I shouldn't fix it! They say that some supervisors watch who is logged on to their home terminal at night.

She worked all weekends and on New Year's day. She gave 150 percent. You get recognition for it - especially technical people like us. Being a Techie took over her life. There is more work than you can handle and a hiring freeze. My boss put it in print. He said: "If you work 9-5 you get an average job review."

A development manager with a reputation for keeping long hours and demonstrating emotional intensity says:

They say Tech encourages divorces. They promise you a lot, make it lucrative, give you more and more. It's not just Tech, it is this whole industry. People get addicted to work. I look around and I see weird things. I see screwed-up marriages, I see fucked-up kids. I thought Rick had problems: alcoholism, a depressed wife. So I found him another job. But now his replacement has just left his wife and kids himself.

I work 17, 18 hours a day. I get a few hours done in the early morning then I take the kid to school, spend the day here and work in the evening. It's family and work. That is it. It's hard. A lot of burnout. Maybe because of "he who proposes does." Its not like Silicon or Chiptech. The intensity in engineering can't be compared to other functions. It is so much greater. Over there, I never lost

any sleep. Here there are people nipping at your heels, holding a gun against your head. Also, you get carried away by the complexity of the problems. There is so much stuff it boggles your mind.

This is a real seductive organization. You wanna do more and more. But I'm re-evaluating now.

Addiction to engineering is frequently cited. Says a project leader:

I know two cases who are going to burn out. I say slow down, take some time; you have to decide. They want to develop the perfect design. Sooner or later it will take all you've got to be good, to be a genius. Did you read "The Soul of a New Machine?" When a project is over, they have a tremendous need to dedicate themselves to something. You have no other identity. I'm an engineer vs. I'm Joe. They are intense people.

Others claim that "burnout" may also result from interactions between people. The social environment is perceived as highly competitive, with a reputation for being hard, merciless and dangerous. Life is a struggle, and failure can lead to "burnout."

"I was warned that they would eat me alive before I came here. This is a rough place. A lot of head butting. It took me a while, a few problems and some beers after work to learn my work."

Evaluations are quick. Everyone is said to have a "press," a reputation regarding their past performances that determines their current credibility. It is easy to become a "loser":

Reputation in this company is based on the last performance. They are out to get you, sharpening the knives. You are a violinist and if the string breaks, that is it; you've had it. You are as good as lost. Burnt out. This is like primordial soup.

Association with a failed project is the key. It can doom a career.

I survived NEPTUNE. It was a circus. Living hell. A bunch of them burnt out. Some left the company. I took this job for a while to relax.

"Setting up" - intentionally causing failure - is an accepted tactic.

A manager warns his staff of a senior manager in another group:

He will not be highly successful. We will help him but keep our distance. If he goes down he might drag us down too. He has no credibility. A lot of unspoken stuff around him. The strategy is to make him such a bastard that everything goes around him. Either he burns out or he leaves. So if he calls you, don't do anything until you've checked with me!

Failing, losing, and overworking are frequently seen as related, as part of the "burnout spiral." Says a development manager associated with a major failed project.

I'm in a hole right now. Most of my group no longer reports to me. I just want to get out of the hole. I asked myself how far along I was to burnout? I don't know. I've never been burnt out before. I work 8.00 to 12.00 every night on top of the regular, trying to save this project. It might be too late. There might be some career damage. I might look for another job. I have a daughter and I should protect her.

Third, "burnout" is a meaningful and complex display, a distinct and elaborate message that people send.

The development manager has been held responsible for an extended and very visible fiasco that caused delays of months on an important product. It has attracted the attention of senior management. He has been relieved of most duties and is working full-time on salvaging the project in a temporary staff position. His future is unclear. It is common knowledge that he is burnt out. A little plaque on the front of his office says: "Before I came here I drank without a reason; now I have a reason."

An engineer says of his recently departed manager:

Our manager burnt out. He was in over his head to begin with. But his wife and he and their teen-age son are also alcoholic. They tried to get off the stuff and things got really bad. One day he stood up and told us that he was going to a detox center with his son for two weeks. In the middle of our crunch. He didn't have to tell us. Some people were quite upset. He's gone now.

Displaying signs of "burnout" is a way of sending signals to one's peers and superiors. Burning out it is a sign to others that one is highly invested. Allowing one's experience to be dominated by the organizational self is proof. It is a sign of commitment, of self-sacrifice, and from this perspective, a call for some respect. One has declared oneself a casualty.

Says one manager, slumped in front of a terminal, his desk overflowing with documents:

I can't take it any more. I'm leaving I'm dropping out. I'm getting real burnt out. I don't get along with my manager, and he is really going to screw me in performance appraisal. He is the biggest obstacle for me. I went to his manager's secretary and told her I need a padded cell. He'll get the message from her.

"Burnout" is often referred to in public. For example, the threat of "burnout" is discussed at a staff meeting. A solemn air of shared acknowledgment of overwork accompanies the statement by the concerned looking group manager.

Some people are getting funny. Even in this room! Send them home! We're flat out. (Quiet head nodding by personnel manager.) I want a workshop on managing stress.

In sum, the mixed status of "burnout" - both degradation and elevation - reflects the complex relationship between the self and the company. "Burn out" is seen as the loss of control over boundaries that separate and protect the self from the demands of the organization, and the inability to distance oneself in the course of work. It is a condition that is personally experienced and publicly displayed. It is a message to oneself and others that suggests overwork, overcommitment, overidentification, inability to distance. As a display, "burnout" has complex significance. On the one hand it is considered demeaning and difficult. But for many, there is an element of pride in having survived "burnout," or in living with its threat. It is a battle scar, a purple heart, an indication that one's heart is in the right place.

"Burnout" is an extreme condition, a drastic outcome. Public display of collapsed or blurred boundaries and failed self-control reveals the often hidden or tacit boundaries and techniques of distancing that are a

crucial part of self-management in everyday work life. Distancing and detachment become essential aspects of self-construction when the experience and display of identification is a fundamental requirement of membership.

Conclusion

The organizational self is formed in transaction with the ideological environment. Individuals define, interpret, and display their understanding of the social environment, their personal experience, and the relationship between the two. The organizational ideology, cast in the terminology of "culture," is perceived to offer "member roles" through articulation and ritual enactment. In this regard, there is a distinct contrast between marginal members and the "wage class four. Whereas the former are limited to minimal selves, broad and well-defined member roles exist for the latter. It is an ironic inverse of the situation in total institutions, where the inmates - the lower status - are the objects of attention. Here marginal members attempt to enlarge a minimal self, while "wage class four" members must limit an expanded one. By omission or commission, thought, word or deed, all participants explicitly or tacitly choose a stance towards what is attributed to them.

For "wage class four" employees, two central themes appear to underlie the stance they assume. The first is ambivalence. If in low status there is congruity, in higher status one encounters the "dilemma of the self." It is spoken of and expressed in numerous ways. The ambivalence between attraction and repulsiveness; between responding to the seductiveness of increased involvement, and maintaining one's autonomy; and ultimately between identification and distance. It is dramatically expressed in ritual

performances, in the humor that at once highlights and denies ambivalence, in the rapid frame shifts in the course of presentations, in the qualifiers that precede many statements, and the escape clauses designed into them. It is artistically expressed in office artifacts, it is the essential meaning of central symbols such as the "golden bull" that contrast "shit" and "glory." In the double meaning of "burnout" as both elevation and degradation - the contrast between "being a casualty" and "self-sacrifice" - is found perhaps its ultimate expression.

Thus, ambivalence appears to be a systematic feature of self-construction. What is its source? Merton (1957) offers a structural explanation for ambivalence in role performance. He defines "sociological ambivalence" as resulting from "incompatible normative expectations assigned to a status or set of statuses in a society..." To explain the structural features of ambivalence in this case, it is necessary to resort to the second theme that appears to underlie self-construction: self-control.

As one chooses to invest more of oneself in the organization, one is increasingly faced with attempted normative control. By seeking and accepting higher status, greater opportunity, and more rewards, "wage class four" members have also exposed themselves to the organizational ideology - the codification of "Tech culture" and its individual cognitive and affective correlates - as objects. They are the targets of its formulations, "overlaid worlds," and attempts at mind and emotion description, prescription and control. By choice they have entered into a contract that is more than economic, one that must contend with overt external claims on self-definition. Behavioral conformity and evidence of vaguely defined "loyalty" are not enough. A demonstration of

"incorporation" of the "culture," of adopting an organizationally defined and sanctioned self is required. Consequently, dignity - the presentation of self-control typically associated with high status (Goffman, 1973) - is threatened. Although not immediately apparent, the price of power is also submission. The contradiction designed into the member role between internal self-control and external control of the self - in this case by agents for the organization - is the source of the sociological ambivalence that many experience. The "contested terrain" (Edwards, 1979) is now the self of members.

The management of role boundaries and role responses may thus be seen as mechanisms for resolving sociological ambivalence. A crucial requirement for contending with powerful reality claims and maintaining dignity in the face of attempted control is defining and displaying a controllable distance between oneself and the demands and definitions of the culture. This requires developing an appropriate organizational self and controlling the distance (and degree of involvement) at which it is held and the degree to which it overlaps with the selves offered by the culture, and demonstrating it both to oneself and to others.

Self-involvement in the organization has been viewed along a continuum ranging from attachment to detachment (Dubin, Hedley, and Taveggia, 1976). At one extreme, ideological claims are affirmed and acknowledged. Public as well as private self-definitions merge (at least temporarily) with the shared definitions of the culture and the offered "we." At the other, the culture is thought to have no relationship to one's self. The self is felt to be safe - or alienated - from the demands made on it, and the validity of the explicit claims against it are denied. In this view, employees typically find an equilibrium point along the continuum.

However, when people face cultural control of the sort found at Tech, it becomes apparent that the relationship is not one-dimensional, and that equilibrium is difficult to sustain. At Tech, for many individuals (in the "wage class four"), both attachment and detachment are high. There is not only a "they" but a "we" to contend with, and constructing a self becomes a problematic and disjointed endeavor. Consequently, the organizational self becomes an active and artful construction, a performance, a tightrope walk, a balancing act of organizational reality claims, fluctuating between contradictory modes of relating to the organization.

FOOTNOTES

1. Goffman's view has been criticized as overly pessimistic. Coser (1966), for example, suggests that he ignores the creative aspects of the self. She suggests that the "mature individual ...has learned to live up to the demands of his status position with a repertoire of attitudes and inner dispositions which he can call upon freely to solve unexpected and ambiguous situations... role relationships rather than being a source of constraint.. provide the opportunity for socially creative behavior..." She adds that the implied freedom in role distancing is exaggerated and that it is often also subject to social control. However, granting the disturbing vision Goffman offers, his logic is impeccable; there is nothing in his perspective that precludes Coser's points. Suggesting that role demands often include the display of distancing, or prescribe "freedom, individualism, and creativity," is precisely the kind of frame complexity that Goffman thrives on.

2. Some theorists see these as organized in a hierarchy. In this view, the self is formed through primary, secondary or tertiary socialization (Berger and Luchmann, 1966), and the result is a core self around which others are constructed (Schein, 1970). Others prefer to posit the notion of situationally specific, perhaps loosely coupled selves as an existential condition (Becker, 1961; Goffman, 1955; Van Maanen, 1979).

3. Most studies emphasize either engagement or disengagement, and regard the other as a form of pathology, false consciousness or manipulation; both focus on populations and methods that support their views. While similar phenomena are addressed in similar ways, the distinctions are largely ones of political preference guiding implicit interpretation.

The "work attachment" literature focuses on predefined forms of experience and their relation to structural variables. In the role distancing version, Seeman (1959) and many others used a Marxist framework to investigate the experience of "alienation" in industrial settings. Operationalized as "powerlessness," "meaninglessness," and so forth, blue-

collar alienation was shown to be related to the lack of control over work arrangements. Using the inverse of the same approach, countless others (see Locke (1973) for one review) explored role identification. "Satisfaction," "motivation" and other more managerially oriented attributions of experience are related to job design variables. Context-sensitive studies have documented the evolution of worker subcultures with norms and beliefs that often run counter to management interests for lower level participants (Roethlisberger and Dixon, 1939; Homans, 1950; Roy, 1960; Gouldner, 1954; Burroway, 1979). More recently, attention to lower level workers in service industries has drawn attention to "emotional labor" (Hochschild, 1983) and the resulting forms of disengagement.

Studies of managers and professionals in organizations have documented the patterns of role engagement and distancing. (Mills, 1956; Dalton, 1959; Merton, 1957; Bailyn, 1985; Becker, 1961). Kanter (1977), for example, suggests that "disengagement" (a code word for alienation) is rife in the managerial ranks of the corporate world. She identified the main reasons as lack of opportunity and unsatisfied aspirations that are structurally produced. These result in a variety of role distancing patterns such as "chronic criticism," the formation of anti-success peer groups, "conservative resistance" and so forth. The forms of disengagement are more complex when so viewed. It is not disengagement from a repressive and depriving world. On the contrary, it is confusion in a world that promises too much, that makes conflicting demands, and does not live up to its promise. It is middle-class disengagement, reminiscent of the famed experimentally-induced approach-avoidance conflicts.

4. Studies of socialization emphasize role engagement. Schein (1970) develops the notion of psychological contract, defined as a set of mutual expectations between the individual and the organization that is a result of a complex bargaining process "involving the decision whether to join, commitment, expectations of being taken care of and finding a sense of identity through an organizational role, and a host of other decisions, feelings and expectations." Schein suggests that individuals can choose between pivotal, relevant and peripheral norms offered by the organization. The choices result in modes of behavior. He also offers an organizational model that makes salient those dimensions of organizations that are relevant to the socialization process. From an organizational point of view, Van Maanen and Schein (1979) propose dimensions to the socialization process and hypothesize outcomes for innovative behavior.

Van Maanen (1976) points out that little is known about "inefficacious socialization" and types of deviant behavior in which some members resist or confront the socialization process. This study addresses, in part, this shortcoming.

5. Van Maanen and Barley (1985) distinguish between organizational and occupational culture. The former relates to the organizational boundaries and has cultural elements associated with it. The latter views occupational groups within organizations as culture bearing entities. The two sources of meaning for members of work organizations often clash, as indeed other subcultures might. In this analysis, primary focus is on the organizational locus of meaning, the ideologies associated with it, and the relationship individuals develop with it. A fuller analysis would focus on distinct

subgroupings such as engineers or secretaries as having meaning for self-definition. These groupings cut across the organization and extend beyond it.

The analysis here focuses in particular on interactions between members of the different classes. In other words, the interest is in the point of view of "wage class four" members, and the organization defined as a cultural community. As much of the literature has demonstrated, self-construction of marginal members invariably occurs in the context of specific subcultures. No data is available on this question at Tech. However, it is worth pointing out that the temporary and shifting nature of contracted work probably precludes the possibility of group or marginal cultures that allow for the evolution of stable work-related selves. In this sense, at least from the point of view of work life, the temporary worker is truly marginal.

6. In many interviews, the age of 40 was proposed as such a benchmark. There is no data, but the image suggests shifting career patterns in this industry, and perhaps a different orientation to work.

7. There are no statistics available on married members. However, they are frequently encountered, and their presence is often an issue. A company policy forbids employing a couple in the same group, but there are a number in the same engineering organizations, and more with spouses elsewhere in Tech.

8. Many Tech policies tend to support the blurring of boundaries. Flexitime, home terminals, the availability of technet for leisure activities, policies that support socializing, and so forth.

9. This attitude was frequently encountered. The emphasis on networks and the relative ease of communication seems to have relegated the primary work group to a secondary role in the forming of attachments. The work group is a temporary arrangement and is treated as such in many cases. This is a dramatic change in the structure of work experience.

10. "Burnout" is both an emic and an etic concept. It is used by those interested in the psychological aspects of work behavior as a technical term referring to a variety of work-related pathologies. At Tech it is used by many insiders to describe certain work-related experiences, some of which are thought to be specific to Tech. Both modes are obviously related. In this discussion I will focus on the latter.

11. "Burnout" is one instance of failure. It is of interest because it is an extreme, often dramatic, and widely recognized manifestation of aspects of the membership experience. "Burnout" is a broad concept, subsuming a variety of marginal and deviant experiences. However, other modes of failure or boundary exploration are important. In particular, cases of individual choices to leave the company, cases of firing, and cases of deviant or criminal behavior are crucial to an understanding of the contours of the membership experience. The decision to focus on "burnout" - like other analytic choices in this thesis - stems from a preference for in-depth and detailed description over more comprehensive taxonomies, and reflects methodological constraints, and a modicum of poetic license.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

Indefatigable boozers, and you, thrice precious martyrs to the pox, while you are at leisure and I have nothing more important on hand, let me ask you a serious question: Why is it commonly said nowadays that the world is no longer gormless? Gormless is a Languedocian adjective, signifying unsalted, saltless, tasteless and flat. Metaphorically it means foolish, simple, devoid of intelligence, and cracked in the upper storey. But would you say, as might logically be inferred from this, that the world which was once gormless has now turned wise? What conditions, and how many, did it require to make it gormless? And what conditions and how many, were necessary to make it wise? Why was it gormless? And why should it become wise? By what signs did you recognize its former folly? By what signs do you affirm its present wisdom? Who made it gormless? Who has made it wise? Which were more numerous, those who loved it when it was gormless, or those who love it now that it is wise? For how long was it gormless? For how long will it stay wise? What did its former folly spring from? What are the roots of its present wisdom? Why did its ancient folly come to an end at this time and no later? Why did its present wisdom begin now and not before? What harm came of its former folly? What good can we expect of its present wisdom? How can its ancient folly have been abolished? How can its present wisdom have been restored?

Now answer me, if you please, and I'll use no stronger entreaties on your reverences, for fear I may disquiet you, my worshipful fathers... I swear to you by the great Hurlyburly that if you don't help me by the solution of the problem I've propounded, I shall shortly be sorry that I ever put it to you. Indeed I am sorry already. But I'm in a great quandary as if I held a wolf by the ears and had no hope of assistance.

Francois Rabelais
Gargantua and Pantagrue

The central question this study has attempted to answer is: what is the significance of an explicitly managed "organizational culture" for the relationship between individuals and the organization? The assumption guiding the study is that this relationship is a reality-defining transaction containing elements of normative control. Borrowing from the pioneering work of Barnard and Goffman, a framework for exploring the relationship between "organizational culture" and normative control was proposed: the organizational ideology of "culture" represents the normative

demands on members, organizational rituals are an occasion for their enactment, and something of an organizational self results from the stance members assume towards these demands.

Tech - the setting for this study - is reputed to be "on the leading edge" in implementing modern managerial techniques and is often held up as a model of a successful "corporate culture." For the purposes of this study, however, I regard Tech as neither typical nor representative; it is just there - and available to be studied. The goal, therefore is not so much a probabilistic generalization to some universal mean, but an exploration of the possible. Ethnography, noted for the contrast between heroic efforts and modest returns, can claim no more.

Consequently, this chapter is both minor and open-ended, and the conclusions are anything but clear. But, this said, I will comment on what it is I think I've learned, and what I think remains in question. I briefly summarize and discuss the main points, and then offer some integrative (and speculative) thoughts, in an attempt to provide possible generalizations and an evaluation of what the findings seem to indicate.

The first question to address is whether the attempts to define and manage "Tech Culture" represent an instance of the managerial interest in normative control that Edwards (1979) postulates. In order to do this, it is necessary for comparative purposes to place Tech's organizational ideology within a larger historical context. In this discussion I will relate Tech ideology to Bendix's (1956) analysis of the historical evolution of managerial ideology that accompanied the rise of the large American corporation in the twentieth century (1).

Bendix views managerial ideology as a way of rationalizing a pervasive feature of economic life: that "the few control the many." In essence,

Bendix sees the historical development of managerial ideology as an attempt to facilitate employee adjustment to the complex control structures required by corporate endeavors. He illustrates the gradual ideological shift from belief in a Spencerian world of "survival of the fittest" to notions of adaptability and cooperation, and shows how this is accompanied by a process of increased managerial attention to the personal attributes - "the real desires" - of workers and managers. According to Bendix, early attention was focused on lower-level workers, but the "human relations" movement generalized this process to the ever-expanding ranks of professional managers and white-collar workers.

Thus, Bendix suggests that the private beliefs and feelings of employees were "discovered" and increasingly became a factor for management to publicly consider. Spokesmen for managerial ideology depicted worker "sentiments" as constraints grounded in private life, an irrational and immature source of disruption to rational control systems, and proposed ways of overcoming them. While higher status managers were generally depicted as capable of subordinating sentiments to rational process, and freeing themselves of emotional involvement, lower-level employees were seen as hopelessly irrational, and in need of firm guidance. It follows then, in this view, that it is the task of managers to manage and control cognitive and affective processes, both in themselves and in their employees.

In sum, Bendix views the historical development of managerial ideology as a continuing attempt to bring about employee adjustment to the needs of large organizations and the strict structures of work that they dictate. Specifically, this ideology preaches personal adjustment to a system of structural control in its bureaucratic form (Edwards, 1979; see also

chapter 1, p. 6-7) where the desired state is one of work as a declaration of allegiance in a world where competing allegiances, whether to trade unions or to informal peer relations, create potential for uncontrollable "deviant" action, an impediment to structural control. This formulation of member-organization relations reflects a growing managerial recognition of the existence of work cultures, and a concomitant encroachment on previously private and unregulated domains of work life. In essence, Bendix makes the case that an ideology of normative control begins to emerge in the first half of the twentieth century in conjunction with an elaborate system of bureaucratic control.

Viewed in the context of Bendix's framework, Tech ideology appears to be one instance where the historical development he outlines is carried further. Specifically, Tech ideology appears to focus not only on the recognition and adjustment of personal attributes, beliefs and feelings in order to facilitate structural-bureaucratic control, but on their understanding and conscious shaping in order to begin to subsume it. Two main themes of Tech ideology illustrate this point.

First, the terminology of "culture" underlies the imagery of the organization and depicts Tech not as a task-oriented economic enterprise, but as an organic community; not a social segment, but a social whole. While the metaphor of "family" has long been applied to industry (2), "culture" expands, elaborates and thickens the view of organization as social organism, transforming the rather distant "family" metaphor, mostly used as a rhetorical device by managers, into a complex and experience-near theory in which Tech is portrayed as a context for human development. Society as a whole has become a metaphor for organization, suggesting adoption of the entire person into the organizationally defined community.

This means attention to the range of what is considered to define personhood, and particularly to emotional life. In this sense, emotions, once considered, as Bendix shows, beyond the scope of organizational regulation, and then recognized as an irrational constraint on organizational structures, are legitimized at Tech as a domain of explicit and systematic organizational interest and influence. They appear in Tech ideological formulations in full-blown form, not only as a given constraint to be satisfied, but as a complex phenomenon to be shaped. The goal appears to be a blurring of the boundaries between subjective and organizational definitions of the self and its experience, and full identification with the organizational entity and its goals. Barnard's lonely voice out of the thirties now has support (at Tech, at least): management views normative control as a mechanism of central importance.

Second, in the articulation of Tech ideology (though not necessarily in practice), the increased emphasis on normative control is accompanied by a deemphasis of bureaucratic control and the related types of economically-based attachment. In these formulations, hierarchical and functional differentiation between members and groups are almost nonexistent. Moreover, economics are underplayed as both a motivating and a controlling factor. The bureaucratic notions of control, the unchanging mainstay of Bendix's description, are downplayed in Tech ideology. Instead, the imagery is one of individual initiative and responsibility guided by internalization of norms, emotional attachment, self-control and self-discipline, reflecting individual maturity and personal growth within the constraints of the company goals (3).

Generalization from one case is, of course, at best highly speculative. Nevertheless, when placed in a historical context, the

ideology of "organizational culture" found at Tech suggests the possible emergence of a new phase in organization-member relations. The content of Tech ideology, although it is but one example, appears to corroborate Edwards' (1979) claim that modern corporations are explicitly seeking normative power. Moreover, at Tech, this claim is coupled with a rhetorical downplaying of remunerative power and structural control. As Van Maanen and Kunda (1987) tentatively hypothesize, and a number of prescriptive writers more openly herald (Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Ouchi, 1981; Peters and Waterman, 1982), such ideological formulations are suggestive of the emergence of a post-bureaucratic phase, one that relies more heavily on attempted control through the internalization of "member roles" and the associated beliefs and feelings than on economic rewards. As Edwards suggested, such historical changes typically originate in the technologically most advanced industrial sectors of the time, those that are considered by many to be "on the leading edge of innovation," and thus often become publicly acclaimed models for other organizations. To the extent that Tech represents developments in the self-labeled "high-tech" sector, and to the extent that Tech is used as a model for others to follow, the pattern seems to fit the analysis. Whether Tech is an unusual outlier or an indication of future developments is a question that requires more evidence. At the very least, the findings concerning Tech ideology suggest that "post-bureaucratic rhetoric is found and promulgated in an organization that is both large and quite central.

Does Tech ideology indeed indicate the emergence of a new form of control or is it just a faddish way to express the eternal managerial quest for cooperative and docile members, with little connection to actual practices? When focusing solely on the articulated substance of Tech

ideology, we find a number of clues indicating that there is more to normative control than empty rhetoric.

First, ideological formulations were found in abundance (4). While no comparison is available here, it appears that the Tech environment is saturated with "reality claims," and that the principle of endless repetition guides many of the sources, both internal and external. The seeming abundance is aided by the availability and control of resources and technology for ideological dissemination. Those who disseminate this material apparently consider it a worthwhile investment. Perhaps reality shaping of this sort is an indication that the current shape gives rise to some concern; its continued presence suggests also that there is a perceived payoff.

Second, the various sources of internal and external ideological production are interrelated and appear to feed on each other. In particular, chapter 3 shows the connection between the output of academics, consultants, the press, and internal ideologists. How exactly this occurs is a matter of separate and specific study, but the outcome is a dense matrix of consistent "messages." Multiple sources claiming the authority of experience, of expertise, and of objectivity combine in an attempt to lend credence to ideological arguments based on metaphorical images that frame social reality and call attention to specific emotional ties among the membership of Tech.

Finally, ideological principles appear to be embodied in specific Tech policies and practices. Consider, for example, the open office space and the technet communications system. These reflect a managerially approved emphasis on high levels of informal interaction and an expectation of member initiative. Consider, too, the "no layoff policy" - or at least the

belief that upper management intends to offer security and perhaps a sense of belonging to employees - and the internal mobility practices. These policies are the subject of much debate and various interpretations but appear to be ingrained enough to be considered ideological statements, particularly when they are manifested in concrete artifacts such as technet, open office space, and relatively secure employment.

Thus, Tech ideology is a codified and widely disseminated system of meaning that reflects an apparently strong desire on the part of agents of the organization to convey meanings and have them accepted by members, manifested in both language and practice. Many students of organizations, however, stop here, satisfied with having demonstrated normative control by equating ideology with control. It is however, at best, an incomplete analysis. If control is a transaction, ideology represents only the demand side, containing implications about what members are or should be, what they should think and feel, while the full nature of the normative transaction remains obscure. Conveyed meanings tell us nothing about received meanings; yet overt behavioral compliance has all too often been taken as an indication of successful normative control (5). But is this indeed the case? To fully understand the nature of normative control, it is necessary to understand how ideological claims are enacted, how individuals respond to attributions, what meaning they attach to ideological claims, and, ultimately, what are the individual consequences of living with an "organizational culture."

A view of the relationship of "Tech culture" and normative control that takes interaction and response into account comes from the analysis of organizational rituals, where "the culture" is explicitly presented and talked about. There are interpretive problems associated with the use of

the concept of "ritual." In particular, the theory of ritual was developed in studies of the religious behavior of tribal societies, and its application to "secular ritual" and modern society might be as misleading as it is illuminating (Moore and Meyerhoff, 1977). Specifically, many views of rituals define them as having succeeded in the ideological goal of influence and emotional intensification, and the empirical question becomes a foregone conclusion. Consequently, in order to avoid superficial and glib generalizations - of which we have more than enough - about the function of ritual in modern organizations (Trice and Beyer, 1984), I preferred a detailed description of a small number of ritual episodes over a comprehensive taxonomy. The primary purpose of the analysis, therefore, was not to add to the theory of ritual (although the work on secular rituals in general and in organizational settings in particular, is clearly deficient), but to reveal the specific meanings for membership coded in the minute details of ritual performance.

At Tech, "presentational rituals" are abundant. The central theme underlying ritual performance is the enacted duality of meaning of the ritual to its participants. On the one hand, the rituals appear, at the manifest level, to be dramas of persuasion, enforcement and acknowledgment, where symbolic content - ideology - is reinforced by symbolic action. On the other hand, the rituals are also dramas of denial and resistance, opportunities to enact limits to the manifest meanings. This duality is reflected in the dramatic structure of the events, and in the central symbols around which they are organized.

As dramas of persuasion, the rituals offer information to participants concerning the ideology and, more crucially, a set of roles, an audience, a stage and a backstage for its dramatic enactment. In this

sense rituals potentially are the occasion for learning, enacting, practicing, measuring and enforcing role identification. They allow at least temporary "dramatic transformation" of participants that blurs the boundary between self and collective, and fuses self and enacted role for participants. Two mechanisms whereby rituals enact and support normative control were identified: emotive and cognitive dissonance associated with "deep acting," and face-to-face control between participants who are both subjects and agents of normative control. This finding is consistent with standard views of ritual.

The evidence suggests, and it is at least a worthwhile hypothesis, that the persuasive aspects of ritual are of increasing importance to management, and more prevalent, when normative control is a salient mode of member-organization relationships (Van Maanen and Kunda, 1987) or, as a partial corollary, when structural control is perceived to be ineffective (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Of particular interest is the fact that these types of gatherings support forms of interaction that might be referred to as "decentralization of control." Whereas in structural types of control, one is held accountable to role performance mainly by immediate superiors, subordinates and peers as defined by the formal structure, here a more diffuse member role is "supervised" by a broader group of control agents - practically anyone who is a member of the organization, and particularly the audiences at such performances. It is also the case that rituals of this sort were far more predominant among the "wage class four" participants, and most were intended almost entirely for them. In this sense, ritual was once again found to be a vehicle for ideology, a drama of persuasion (Moore and Meyerhoff, 1977), and its prevalence reinforces the conclusion concerning the centrality of normative control as a mode of

member-organization relations at Tech.

In addition to their overt ideological function, rituals are also dramas of denial and resistance, and as such, they offer additional insight into the member-organization relationship. In particular, a set of oppositions appears to underlie the meanings conveyed through ritual. First, a distinct differentiation between primary participants and others is noticeable, suggesting different orientations to ritual and ideology among the population of members, and a tacit structuring of membership based on the extent of normative involvement. In this sense, the rituals enact a reality that is hidden in ideological formulations. This will be discussed in further detail in the following section on the individual consequences of normative control.

Second, and more crucially, these rituals are self-consciously enacted, and characterized by an ambiguity of meaning. This is revealed in the shifts over time in mode of interaction from humor to seriousness, in the importance of demonstrating a reflective or "wise" stance, in the multiple meanings of central symbols such as the "golden bull," in the transitional rituals that are enacted to self-consciously define a theatrical reality and contrast it with acknowledgment of other realities, in the juxtaposition of ideology and "common sense," and, perhaps most revealingly, in the centrality of the theatrical metaphors to the proceedings. These oppositions, mostly in peaceful coexistence but occasionally sharpened and enacted in "social minidramas," are too often ignored as sign of failed rituals or as pathologies in prescriptive views. As the findings indicate, however, they are integral to the ritual performance, and, ironically, call into question that which the ritual seeks to reinforce. If taken seriously, this ambiguity is indicative of the

central meanings of membership, particularly the struggle with and accommodation of normative control. In this view, rituals of this sort, above and beyond their manifest function, whether of initiation, renewal, degradation, influence, or self-aggrandizement, are also rites of participation and choice, an exploration of, and comment on themselves and thus on freedom in a normative system (6).

No doubt more work is needed on the nature of ritual drama in organizations. In particular, a comprehensive taxonomy of dramatic events is necessary, as well as an analysis of the cumulative impact of ritual life from the point of view of individual participants who make their way through these complex interactions. Nevertheless, the analysis of the rituals described in this study, partial as it may be, does offer evidence in support of the claim that normative control is of central importance in this organization, and demonstrates some of the mechanisms for achieving it. In particular, it illustrates the claim that the ideology of "Tech culture" is not just empty rhetoric, but represents strong and openly expressed and enforced normative demands and pressures, captured in the ritual articulation and enactment of the member role. At the same time, rituals are shown to contain meanings that seem to contradict ideological intentions. These objectified multiple meanings are the context within which members live, and provide the building blocks for constructing their experience.

How members make their way through the cultural landscape at Tech is the final issue that must be addressed. What are the individual consequences of living with an "organizational culture" and the normative demands it poses? In the study of the "organizational self," I attempted to provide as extensive and systematic an answer as I could to this question. A

number of aspects of self-construction indicate the impact of "culture" on members and illuminate the nature of normative control.

First, the variation in member responses to normative demands reflects the nature of stratification of member groups. Specifically, a three-tier system is evident that reflects not only hierarchy, but cultural inclusion. For the marginal groups - "wage class two" and temporary workers - the applicability of the ideology is either a question or a non-issue. One might suggest that normative control is not applicable in their case, and that there is a clear contradiction between the structural realities they face and ideological representations. In Edwards' (1979) terms, "wage class two employees" are living with "structural control" based on economic incentives. More interestingly, the temporary workers appear to be the subjects of a form best described as a reversal to "simple control." Both groups experience the contradiction between practice and ideological formulations. So long as it is not surfaced, order prevails. When it does, the ensuing disruption is contained in brief "dramas of enlargement."

On the other hand, the "wage class four" members are clearly both subjects and agents of the ideology, and primary participants in the associated rituals. If marginal members must accept or challenge the "minimal self," or the contradiction between ideology and practice, full members must face the consequences of an expanded and demanding role. Clearly, then, the members are polarized and differentiated by stance to implied role and the nature of organizational involvement. These polarizations are relatively unspoken, often supplanted by the celebrated distinctions between engineers and managers, both members of the "wage class four." In this sense, stratification and polarization might resemble similar processes in the external environment. If and how structure and

culture are causally related in this regard is an open question, and not answerable by the nature of the evidence in this study. However, one might speculate that for normative control to work with a specific group, particular structures must exist. In particular, an organization might need a two-tiered internal system where lower-level work is performed under different conditions of membership, and, perhaps of more significance, a system of temporary workers for performance of duties which, if required of regular employees, would undermine the possibility of normative control, and which allow the flexibility in employment levels required to keep commitments to central members (7). Thus, the consequences of increased normative control might not be a general alienation as Edwards (1979) implies (8), but an increasing polarization of the workforce between central and marginal members. Although the consequence of polarization and its impact on members of the marginal groups was not the main issues in this study, the importance of the question is underscored by the evidence.

Second, and more directly the focus of the study, the experience of full members who are both subjects and agents of normative control is characterized by "sociological ambivalence." As members move in and aspire to increased centrality and higher status, they are also increasingly subjected to normative control and are faced with a potential loss of the dignity associated with autonomy and control of self-presentation (Goffman, 1955). Consequently, the strongly felt organizational pressures are simultaneously seen as both attractive and repulsive, contaminated and pure. The response to this dilemma is manifested in a variety of ways, described in detail in chapter 5; all are based on the attempt to manage a controllable distance between self and role, under conditions where equilibrium is hard, if not impossible, to sustain. Thus, the central

experience of membership is not only that which the ideology seeks to instill, but the experience of struggle with it. In this sense, members have internalized the "problem of control" that lies at the heart of organization, and the private selves of members have come to reflect what Edwards (1979) referred to as the "contested terrain."

Finally, perhaps the most important individual consequence for member self-definition is the centrality of the metaphor of "drama" to member experience. As Geertz (1983) suggests, the drama analogy has come into its own as a mode of analysis of social life, reflected in extensive and systematic application, and a shift away from depreciatory connotations. To this one might add that in normative systems, such as the one found at Tech, it appears clearly as an emic concept, central to members' own understanding of what it is they are up to. The irony is that in the attempt to offer members a stable self grounded in an organizational community, the opposite is produced - an ambivalent, fluctuating self (9). "Loyalty," "allegiance," "commitment," to the extent that they may be said to exist, are dramatically mediated; in the theater, authenticity is always a question. In this sense, perhaps, ideology is its own inoculation, and the outcomes represent the price of freedom. But it is a large price, for the inoculation might destroy that which it sets out to save.

Concluding Comment

To the extent that the evidence in this study is conclusive, the management of "organizational culture" at Tech appears to be the manifestation of a relationship between organizations and members that is based on an emphasis on normative control. The study describes the nature of this form of control, reflected in normative demands coded in the

organizational ideology, the techniques for its dissemination and implementation, and the individual consequences of membership in the organization. How are we to evaluate this state of affairs?

For critics such as Edwards (1979) and Goffman (1961), normative control in economic organizations raises the scepter of tyranny, domination and oppression; for management theorists like Schein (1985) it is a legitimate and promising technique for effective management; for popularizers like Deal and Kennedy (1982), it is the wave of the future: a "you can have it all" world, the fulfillment of a dream of release from the unhappy constraints of limited opportunity that have been the theme of both critical and prescriptive analysis of bureaucracy (Kanter, 1977). What light does this study throw on the matter?

More specifically, it is worth repeating the question Bendix asked himself in the conclusion of his study:

...it is pertinent to ask whether the collectivism of large scale enterprises may give rise to a general monstrosity that bosses not only working hours but invades our homes and dictates our thoughts and dreams?

Does it "get the soul," as Edwards suggests? Or "imprison people in the clutch of institutions," in the words of Goffman? Is normative control turning the corporation into a prison? Some of the evidence seems to support this claim. Indeed, in the attention to ideology, Tech management partly resembles "big brother" as some members might point out. Others might see some of the rituals and the importance attached to these type of group testimonials as reminiscent of the Chinese brainwashing techniques that Schein (1961) describes. Moreover, members report the feeling of intense pressure, and there is indication of considerable personal suffering, manifested in "burnout" and associated forms of despair.

There is indication, then, of at least a limited resemblance to well-

known forms of political "tyranny." However, the answer to Bendix's question must be similar to his, and for the same reasons. He felt that ultimately, this type of "collectivism" is not by itself sufficient to be worthy of such blanket condemnation, and that evaluation depended on the extent to which the larger social system allows freedom of association and political pluralism. At Tech, members are, technically at least, free to leave. Economic constraints notwithstanding, membership is mostly voluntary, even though the alternatives are often association with similar types of organizations. More crucially, members are free to associate with alternative groupings and have some recourse to external and independent agencies of control. As the evidence suggests, members are far from reaching the state of "ritualization of belief" which Schein (1961) sees as the ultimate success of normative control; perhaps the best evidence for this is the members' own ironic stance manifested in cynicism, humor, or analytic insight. Finally, to perhaps state the obvious, economic enterprise must be seen in a comparative light, certainly for the purpose of evaluation. Tech is open to investigation more than a South African gold mine or a Cuban sugar refinery. Overanalysis of organizations such as Tech might contribute, inadvertently (or not), to the trivialization of tyranny.

Thus, Tech members experience such freedoms as capitalist societies offer. Is all, then, sweetness and light? Again the answer is no. To the extent that the metaphors of condemnation are taken literally, they clearly fall short of the mark. But, as metaphors are wont, they also capture underlying truths that give rise to some concerns.

First, the polarization of membership. To the extent that a normative system requires that for some to become central, others must be marginal, some doubts must be raised. Specifically, one must understand what is the

fate of the "extra-culturalists" - a question that not only Tech, but the larger society must face. The temporary work force is clearly a rising phenomena. As the evidence suggests, these people are in a position to be truly marginal - belonging neither to home nor host cultures, governed by few regulations, often invisible, yet increasingly necessary. In this sense, "the extra-culturalists" are equivalent to the homeless, forced to depend on the kindness of strangers. The ideology of "organizational culture" and its various forms of implementation might contribute not only to the evolution of this state of affairs, but to obscuring its reality.

Second, for members considered central, Tech culture is not an overt prison but it might nevertheless represent a rather subtle form of domination, a "culture trap" combining normative pressure with seductiveness rather than coercion. The evidence suggests that though many maintain a sense of freedom, they also experience a pull that is not easy to combat, a form of "escalating commitment" (Staw and Fox, 1977) that often results in negative outcomes suggestive of a benign, often self-imposed, and rather limited tyranny.

Third, the nature of the organizational self evolving in such a setting gives rise to two concerns that are possibly contradictory. On the one hand, one must ask what is the strength of a moral order that is based on abundance, the assumption of plenty, and a tenuous, dramatically mediated commitment where the distinction between theater and reality is not clear, but the performance is often all-encompassing. Is it the case that the foundations of collective action are in the process of being undermined? What happens to the theater of reality and its elaborate props when, or if, times change and assumptions no longer hold? On the other hand, the ostensible personal incorporation of organizational goals -

whether dramatically mediated or not - leaves them unquestioned. The well-known scepter of the "organization man" who has no questions looms in the background. In the case of Tech and its people, thoughts and ideas concerning the role of its technology, the use of its products, and their social consequences were notable by their absence, glossed by such words as "innovation," "productivity," "profit," and their unquestionable connotations of inevitability and rightness. Is it typical of engineering organizations? Perhaps. But the system of normative control and its anticipated and unanticipated consequences described here might make it even more typical, in an industry that claims to play a major role in shaping the future.

In sum, the management of "organizational culture" at Tech reflects at the very least an interest in and experimentation with organizational forms based on normative control. Whether this is a growing phenomena or not, whether we are at the dawn of a new and revolutionary post-bureaucratic phase or merely repeating the universal cycle of authority, is beyond the scope of this thesis. But, if this is indeed the future, some glimpses into its workings are offered. And if not, at least some of the realities of today have been documented.

FOOTNOTES

1. Bendix's analysis is one of the few studies available that offers a careful and detailed documentation of the substance of ideology in organizational settings rather than a focus on the claimed functions of ideas. His data are the the texts produced by management spokesmen for public consumption.

2. Rosen (1984) analyzes the use of "family" as a metaphor for organizations. In particular, he suggests that it legitimates authority relations by equating managerial power with parental authority and portraying employees as children. This of course presumes a certain view of

the nature of the family, itself a matter of ideology. Whether Dad brings home the bacon or creeps into his daughter's room at night has very different metaphorical implications.

3. The similarities between the ideology of Tech culture and conceptions of Japanese management are striking. Rohlen (1974) summarizes the essence of the organizational ideology of the Japanese bank he studied, where employees are supposed to develop an emotional attachment expressed through pride, dedication and enthusiastic participation as a manifestation of one general ideal: "that of a collectivity, constituted of emotionally satisfying personal relationships, working in the spirit of concord for the general interest..." In this system, "considerable attention is paid to the individual... as a human being with an inherent urge for satisfaction and accomplishment... there is no need for a person to be independent of his institutional connections in order to achieve happiness. There is no contradiction, that is, between institutionalized work and personal aspiration... devotion to duty, perfected through greater self-discipline, in time leads to a reduction of the disturbance caused by conflicting demands. The result is an improved state of personal spiritual freedom and a sense of joy focused on fulfillment in one's work..." Rohlen sees in this ideology echoes of Confucian heritage, a way of relating the organizational ideology to the larger social environment.

One would be tempted to explain similarities as a manifestation of the current interest in Japanese management techniques in popular managerial literature. The concept of culture in organizations in fact is closely related to an interest in Japanese management (Ouchi, 1981). In this view, Japanese organizations have found the solutions to the problem of control, and Tech ideology is an example of American attempts to emulate Japanese management by developing a complex and all-encompassing relationship between the company and its employees, most notably in the practice of guaranteed employment in return for "loyalty."

This explanation however is not sufficient. The roots of Tech policies and its associated practice are in the 1950's. Much of the current language and ideas appear to be rooted in a local tradition, from Emerson through the "company town" to the "Human Relations" approach to management. Current discourse is full of references to these sources, as in the president's reference to Douglas McGregor (ch. 4, p. 102), one of the leading proponents of Human Relations in industry. When the groundwork was laid, Japan was still reeling from its meeting with the products of Western rationality. Moreover, as Rohlen points out, Japanese managers seem equally obsessed with Western management and its perceived techniques of efficiency and rationality. The ironic reversal highlights the universal managerial quest for more control and the role of cultural arguments in this process. In this process, others are seen through the mediating lens of the perceived deficiencies of one's own status.

4. In this study I focused on one major form in which ideology appears - the written word. A more comprehensive analysis would examine other forms of ideological expression as well. The written word is perhaps the most pervasive vehicle for conveying ideas. It lends itself most clearly to textual analysis, and on the assumption that the coverage is comprehensive, i.e. that all ideological formulations are translated into words, it

provides an analytic short cut. However, other forms are no less expressive, and a systematic study would include them too. Photographs are one crucial and pervasive form. For example, Goffman (1976) reveals the important and consistent messages that are conveyed by commercial art. Nye (1985) demonstrates the value of photographic analysis for ideological analysis in his study of the General Electric archives; and Kunda and Dougherty (1985) examine photographs in corporate annual reports and reveal the underlying ideological themes they contain. Other forms are notable too. Videotapes, in particular are popular at Tech, and receive some attention in chapter 4.

5. A review of the few in-depth studies of ideology reveal, in Geertz's (1973) words, "a sociology too muscular, a psychology too anemic." As I stated in the introduction, this is found in the very definitions of ideology that presume what needs to be demonstrated (see f.n. 1, chapter 3). For example, in one of the more sophisticated studies of organizational ideology in turn-of-the-century General Electric, Nye (1985) concludes that "ideological formulations have reciprocal effects on social systems." The language he uses is typical of this genre. Ideology is presented in active terms. It "imposes," "instigates," "legitimizes," "compels." Thus, in his conclusion he states that:

The image of individualistic work displayed on the cover of a magazine for blue collar workers plays a role in the ideological formulation of workers even if they consciously resist company public relations. Similarly an engineer who regularly reads a technical review where other engineers are consistently depicted as part of management receives a set of messages about how to conceive of the self, other workers, the company, the impact of technology. Such images instigate social norms. They do not imply, reify or reflect existing conditions. Rather these image classes themselves help to constitute the social worlds that they then address. (They) imposed the appearance of logic and naturalness on newly created programs that extended corporate power. They legitimated the new Research and Development arm of the company, presenting the corporation as an educational and scientific institution.... they offer a compelling construction of reality for each audience.

The question of the impact of ideological formulations, of possible interpretations, of the meaning to its subjects, is glossed by the hyper-active terminology; the possibility of resistance, of counterculture, of alternative views, are just hinted at. The choice appears to be between submission and resistance, with a strong bias to the former. Nye's "muscular sociology" can be forgiven on two counts: he is flexing previously unused muscles, and his subjects are long gone. This is not the case in many other studies.

6. It is worth noting that Barthes (1967) considered self-referential signs that openly convey their own artificial status as "healthy" rather than "pathological." In this view, signs that pass themselves off as "natural" rather than contrived are a weapon of ideology.

7. For an extensive development of these issues consistent with the findings here, see Berger and Piore (1980) and Sabel (1982)

8. To be fair to Edwards, he is not clear about the boundaries of the employee population and the applicability of his claims to "management." Some of his examples indicate that he is interested mainly in the lower strata of the corporation, while his claims are suggestive of a more encompassing view. In either case he is open to criticism for ignoring the dual manager-employee role of many in the corporation and the blurring of boundaries between agent and subject of control.

9. This view of the nature of the organizational self has intriguing parallels in the theory of literary criticism. Particularly striking is the similarity between the stance many members assume to their production of versions of organizational reality and the "ironic mode" described by Frye (1957). Likewise, it is not by chance that the analysis has assumed somewhat of a "deconstructionist" (Derrida, 1981) flavor. Perhaps the various relations of members and meanings are indicative of the emergence of "post-modernist," "post-structuralist," or just simply "ironic" views of organizational man to complete Schein's (1970) taxonomy of perspectives (economic, social, and complex man).

APPENDIX
METHODS: A CONFESSIONAL OF SORTS

We see: facts alone are not strong enough for making us accept, or reject, scientific theories, the range they leave for thought is too wide; logic and methodology eliminate too much, they are too narrow. In between these two extremes lies the ever changing domain of human ideas and wishes.

Paul Feyerabend
Against Method

Jesus! I've t'ought about dat guy a t'ousand times since den an' wondered what eveh happened to 'm goin' out to look at Bensonhoist because he liked duh name! Walkin' aroun' t'roo Red Hook by himself at night an' lookin' at his map! How many people did I see get drowned out heah in Brooklyn! How long would it take a guy wit a good map to know all deh was to know about Brooklyn!

Jesus! What a nut he was! I wondeh what eveh happened to 'im, anyway! I wondeh if someone knocked him on duh head, or if he's still wanderin' aroun' in duh subway in duh middle of duh night wit his little map! Duh poor guy! Say, I've got to laugh at dat, when I t'ink about him! Maybe he's found out by now dat he'll neveh live long enough to know duh whole of Brooklyn. It'd take a guy a lifetime to know Brooklyn t'roo an' t'roo. An' even den, yuh wouldn't know it all.

Thomas Wolfe
Only the Dead Know Brooklyn

Lately it's occurred to me
What a long
strange trip it's
been.

The Grateful Dead
Workingman's Dead

This study falls squarely in the camp that Van Maanen (1987) identified as "realistic ethnography." To say this says much about presentational style, very little on the actual research process. In this genre, the descriptive style presents in the writing an author functioning as something of a "camera obscura" in the course of his sojourn in the field,

a veritable "fly on the wall," following well-defined procedures for observation and verification. It requires no great insight, however, to recognize that "realistic ethnography" is a distortion of convenience. Fieldwork, as all who have engaged in it will testify, is an intensely personal and subjective process, and there are probably as many (or more) "methods" as there are fieldworkers.

It is the task of the method section to balance the potentially misleading implications of the realist style as adopted in the text with a backstage glimpse at the actual research process. Often reading like a confessional (Van Maanen, 1987), the research story is told, with particular attention to shortcomings, mistakes, potential for bias, and the random nature of data collection and analysis. Such a methods discussion serves a number of purposes. First, it conforms to the conventions set by more stylistically scientific genres. The methods section provides the reader with procedural information that would allow a qualified reading (replication having fallen on bad times - even in experimental circles.) Also, for the more sophisticated, it introduces the issue of observer subjectivity into the scientific process.

Second, and more interestingly, a methods confessional also serves to establish a kind of ethnographic credibility; here self-criticism not only exposes weaknesses and qualifies assertions, but also allows a demonstration of the breadth, depth, indeed the relentlessness of an ethnographic incisiveness, seemingly so powerful that it is applied most scathingly to oneself. In this sense one has both qualified and bolstered the credibility of the self as researcher. Although it reads like a confessional, it is in fact a self-application of one's scientific tools, a "realistic ethnography" of the research process (1).

However, as an ethnography of ethnography, a confessional - no matter how dramatic, how insightful, how excruciatingly honest - falls short, a victim of its own interpretive logic. One is writing of oneself; and beyond the very human conventions and constraints of self-presentation, one runs afoul of the most basic epistemological dilemma inherent in interpretive logic: how is one to know oneself? Techniques for verification, for introducing multiple voices, for turning the object of meaning around and repeatedly lighting it with evidence from apparently independent sources (what the more mathematical-minded would refer to as triangulation), are not applicable. Self-analysis has opened the writer to the implied criticism of informant knowledge that is the essence of the ethnographic enterprise: it is only "experience-near;" it is only "first-order;" it is, in Geertz's (1973) terms, like "an ethnography of witchcraft written by a witch." The question, then, looms large: how is one to break through the vicious cycles of one's own interests, distortions and misperceptions?

There is no clear answer (2). Yet a discussion of "methods," whether confessional, obsessional, or professional, is necessary. Given this rather awkward repetition of the obvious, what is one to say? In this section I will offer some comments on the background of the study, then I will review the nature of my activities in the field, and conclude with observations on the data analysis and writing process. What follows should be regarded primarily as an informant-produced text; as elsewhere in this study, it is offered with the recurring refrain: let the reader beware.

Why Fieldwork? In retrospect, there appear to be a number of different reasons for engaging in fieldwork at Tech (beyond the pressures to get the thesis started and the doctoral program done.) I had generally decided to study a large corporation. My past experience as a researcher had been in

public sector people-processing organizations (Kunda, 1986) and as a participant in military, psychiatric, and educational institutions. I knew nothing firsthand of the business world (though I was in a school of management) and there were few secondhand sources that seemed trustworthy. I felt that a sojourn in this world was necessary for a student of organizations. Having decided this, a number of considerations came into play. One set of concerns was methodological. My motivation appears now to me to have been less a consequence of an intrinsic interest in the specific organization and more a result of a desire to do "qualitative research," "see for myself," get involved firsthand, test my methodological beliefs concerning the importance and feasibility of interpretive methods, and challenge what I took to be the dry and unexciting procedures that characterize much of the research in the field of organization studies. I was armed with much (perhaps too much) previous reading and some ideas about culture, ideology, identity, reflection, interpretation, intervention; the specifics of high-tech engineering never really attracted me - and they still don't, although I did develop a working layman's knowledge of some of the technical issues (having succumbed to and overcome an addiction to computers in the days of Fortran and punchcards), as well as an ongoing curiosity about the social worlds built around them, and a grudging respect for the skills involved. But ultimately, I was after a generic business corporation as a methodological proving ground.

My personal background was another factor. As an Israeli who had come to the US in order to pursue graduate studies, and therefore a foreigner (albeit one in a rather accelerated process of assimilation, and, but for the accent, almost perfectly bilingual) I was already in an ethnographic mode. "Learning the culture" was a real life experience. Formal "fieldwork"

seemed an opportunity to discover more of America, and particularly to observe some of the manifestations of its power. In Israeli popular terminology, "America" stands for (tongue slightly in cheek) everything that is advanced, powerful, comfortable. Things American carried (and still do) an ongoing fascination for me whether found in Fenway Park, on route 128, or anywhere I chanced stumble, like Thomas Wolfe, with my map. In some sense, they represent an authentic cultural source of the secondhand artifacts that flood the rest of the world. For an Israeli, growing up in a premeditated and designed culture, "authenticity" was a never-ending quest. Moreover, for many Israelis "America" is both a dream and a threat, representing an option not taken by one's grandparents, and always posing the dangerous temptation either to "Americanize" Israel, or, more drastically, to commit the ultimate betrayal and emigrate. As a guest in the US, I was already suspect on both counts. Ethnographic exploration of corporate America was an excuse to follow the sirens, examine them from up close, and in the process turn the tables on the historically onesided anthropological enterprise.

My background seems to have influenced me in another way: for those familiar with Israeli culture, my preoccupation with the relationship of ideology and identity will be understood; it is a central and salient part of the experience of my generation. In the Israeli context, it raises issues of life and death that are far from resolved, and I find myself returning to them wherever I cast my analytic net. Upon rereading this study, it seems obvious that issues of Zionism and Jewish and Israeli identity are easily accommodated by the theoretical edifice (such as it is) that I have erected - if it is not already a subtext. In this sense, ethnographic exploration is also a process of self-exploration and

discovery. I do not recall thinking of these matters consciously at the time, but looking back, it seems to account for a good deal.

Finally, I might add that there are solid rational reasons for an interpretive approach to research. Of central importance is the fact that the subject matter is elusive and highly context-dependent. It is inseparably intertwined with the way people understand their reality and reflect on it. Research requires some intimacy to access conscious constructions, and close observation of behavior to uncover tacit ones. However, many interesting but fruitless methodological debates have convinced me that there is more than rationality at stake in methodological preference. These rationales become cliches hurled back and forth. The best one can do, then, is to let the work speak for itself.

In the field Fieldwork was characterized by continued ambiguity with regard to my role and extended periods of anxiety and stress. Like many members of the organization, the threat of "burnout" was never very far away. My entry process was the first manifestation of an ambiguity that would never disappear. The first contact was made through M.I.T. I was approached by members of a staff organization seeking consulting help from one of the members of my committee. Intrigued by the idea of combining and perhaps comparing ethnographic and clinical approaches to research (3), I decided to explore this possibility. How and why it failed is another story, about which I have only partial data. In essence, the staff group had completed a study documenting the shortcomings of a specific engineering project, and wished to introduce me to an engineering development organization to help them "implement" some of the conclusions. The engineers, however, were clearly not interested, viewing this as a

"political move" by the staff group for whom they had little sympathy. Nevertheless, one of their managers was willing to accept my presence as "an M.I.T. sociologist." "I am interested in what you write, but I want you to know that it might also make this group look good to have someone like you..." he told me with a bluntness that characterized many managers at Tech. He was the new manager of a group that in the past had been seen as "closed" and "paranoid." I, presumably was to be part of his "signals" that times were changing.

As my role as a passive observer in the development group emerged, my fortunes with the staff group changed. In the course of my entry, I had established good ties with a number of the members of the group, some of whom became valued informants. Nevertheless, when the nature of my role became apparent, the staff group manager considered asking me to leave. By then, however, my ties with the engineering group were established, and he chose to tolerate (at arm's length) my presence as an observer in his group. Consequently, I wound up with access to two groups: the staff group, and the engineering development group referred to as SysCom in the previous chapters.

The staff group was located at corporate headquarters. It consisted of 20 - 30 people encompassing training (both technical and behavioral), communications (the various publications and newsletters generated in the organization), some technical consultants, and marketing research. It also had a number of "individual contributors" including a full-time "culture" expert. The manager of the group reported directly to the vice-president. The group had relatively low status (as do most staff groups) but was quite central. Through this group I gained access to the various training affairs and also got a bird's-eye view of the entire organization and particularly

of senior management. I was given my own office space, a computer terminal with access to electronic mail, what administrative assistance I needed, and a free run of headquarters.

SysCom consisted of about 600 people housed mostly in one facility (see chapter 2). Here life was much harder. I was given grudging access to three projects (one of which was considered to be "in bad shape"), temporarily vacant office space (occasionally), another terminal (so I could send technet messages to myself, at least) and permission to initiate interviews with anybody, with the understanding that they had permission to refuse.

Once formal access was negotiated and my presence relatively legitimate, I was left to my own devices. In the staff group my role evolved into that of an "individual contributor" functioning in my own "meta-space" (for which, as in progressive mental institutions, there is much overt tolerance and just as much covert backbiting.) I also possessed some credibility as an academic with a perceived specialization in "management." In SysCom I was "overhead," with the redeeming feature of a (very uncharacteristic and rather wildeyed) thirty second performance on Eyewitness News resulting from my private political involvement in Middle Eastern matters, an inexplicable (to many) M. I. T. affiliation, and a last-minute overtime goal in the summer olympics soccer game. But for many, my true motives and the exact nature of my work remained unclear. This was caused not only by my own ambivalence, the relationship between the two groups, and the general air of high pressure ambiguity that characterizes Tech, but also by the widespread suspicion of the motives of the numerous consultants and academics who are a familiar - and to many not always welcome - sight at Tech.

Between January and June of 1985 I was a full-time participant-observer in the staff group, averaging 3-5 days a week. I participated in all public activities and a variety of private ones, and established a number of close informants as well as various acquaintances. During this time I also used the group's help in gaining access to SysCom.

Between June and December I spent most of my time at SysCom, working the same 3-5 day schedule, but spending a day a week at the staff. At SysCom, I began by initiating rather extensive interviews (1-2 hours) of the sort known as conversational. First contact would usually be made at my initiative, by requesting permission to talk. In reserve I had a note from the group manager suggesting "it was alright." Responses varied dramatically. From these initial interviews, I developed a few close informants and friends, made many casual acquaintances, and knew of many people who seemed to consider my presence there a problem. I made an appearance at all public activities: talks, group meetings, summer sports, training sessions. I enrolled in anything that indicated open enrollment: workshops, sporting events, and so forth. I also managed, with the help of friends, to get invited to a number of more private affairs: staff meetings, design meetings, review meetings and so forth. However, this was an uphill and rather taxing battle. Often a meeting would start with a rather pointed question: "Who's your friend, Jack?" A brief explanation would be followed by a sigh, a remark of the sort: "Oh well. It builds character..." and a resumption of the usual working style, with little, if any, acknowledgment of my presence. Over the last month I initiated day-long observations of managers and engineers with whom I had established relationships. They would choose a day, and I would tag along, going to meetings, having lunch, asking questions when possible, and disappearing

when necessary. On some occasions I offered myself as a driver; several interesting discussions took place "on the road" with a captive informant beside me.

In between scheduled events, there was much free time. I spent these long, and often unhappy, hours in a variety of places: in the library, pouring over trade journals, in-house publications and company videotapes; in the cafeteria, eating and eavesdropping, often feeling lonely and pathetic; in front of my computer terminal exploring the public files or reading my technet messages and mail; or wandering aimlessly through the labyrinth of cubicles, trying to present myself to those whom I encountered as someone with a purpose in mind. On the way, I read and memorized the various signs, decorations, comments and comic strips adorning the offices. It was during these times that I established ties with members of the "wage class two," particularly secretaries, many of whom seemed curious, friendly, and eager to talk.

Towards the end of the year, I stepped up my staff activities again, largely because it was easier, and my role of observer-confidante-interesting guy seemed to work. The group was undergoing a rather painful process of being disbanded, and a friendly ear seemed to be appreciated. There is nothing as seductive for the fieldworker as being made to feel like an insider, like someone with something to contribute, particularly in an environment where "value added" is the ultimate measure of a person's worth, and worthlessness is very unsubtly communicated. I responded to invitations eagerly, and developed what often seemed like a quasi-therapeutic consulting role with a number of people. It was in these types of interactions that important data for chapter 5 was gathered.

Studying a formal organization surfaced two major concerns that stayed

with me throughout my fieldwork. First, the problems for ethnographic work posed by a hierarchical system. As was to be expected, my access was in direct proportion to the inverse of the hierarchy. Interactions with the pinnacle of power were limited to a number of interviews, observation of presentations, and continuous and often frustrating contact with protective secretarial gatekeepers. A number of senior managers took more of an interest and made themselves a little more available. Towards the end, the vice-president responded to a request I made (in a moment of recklessness) and surprised me by inviting me to observe his work. I sat in on a few of his staff meetings, wondering what had held me back earlier (4). Most of my contacts, however, were engineers and managers in the middle range and in my age (thirty three) - and possibly status - group. With them, my main goal was to transcend their suspicion of the nature of the ties I might have with more senior managers, or with other groups, and to work out of the possibility of me playing into whatever organizational purposes they might have. In addition, those who were somewhat different, or marginal, seemed to find their way to me: minorities, especially those with an interest in my background, those who might be failing, unhappy or "burnt out," and those who wanted to distance themselves from the "nerd" and "techie" images, some of whom revealed a strong, even formal background in social science (Goffman seemed to have considerable appeal in surprising places...) I have no way of establishing my success other than intuition and "clinical" skill (or what was left of it at this point) and the fact that people seemed interested in talking and thinking about their experience even when it was apparent that there was no benefit for them. For people at the lower organizational levels, I seemed to be a curiosity, an anomaly, someone close to having a Ph.D. yet often ignored, rejected,

and seemingly confused. My marginal status seemed to attract some of the disaffected in this group, while I also appeared to represent an easily accessible (even openly grateful) contact with the class of people from which members of the "wage class four" hail.

Second, access to data on the informal aspects of life at Tech was curtailed by the nature of my involvement. By limiting myself to relatively standard working hours and to the main working facilities and their close environment, I limited the nature of events that were accessible for direct observation. This reflects the difficulties inherent in the research process, the rather segmented social lives many people at Tech lead, deficiencies in my "networking" and socializing skills, and, to some extent, my own family constraints. Consequently, participation in informal and off-site meetings was relatively rare. I was invited to only two homes over the course of the research, and to very few after-hour events. I did not travel with members, many of whom spent considerable time in airplanes, hotels, and conference centers. For what transpired outside my view, I pieced together hearsay, gossip, and stories.

During the year in the field I generated thousands of pages of field notes (produced at the end of each day from the fragmented notes hastily scribbled during and between events), collections of archival material, computer output, newsletters, papers, memos, fliers, posters, textbooks and assorted leftovers. Internally produced statistical evidence landed in my lap on a number of occasions, along with explicit caveats or dark hints about their "political" nature, "sensitive" quality and questionable validity. I also made some informal counts through the interviewing process (educational background, personal background, employment status, and so forth.) The strength of my argument, however, does not rest on data of the

quantitative sort.

Writing it up Ethnographers, when describing their craft, and I am no exception, often cultivate the connotations of heroism associated with fieldwork. In comparison with the efforts of their tamer colleagues, doing ethnography, they claim, is an adventure. This is true, I submit, not only in the tribulations associated with exploring the unknown jungle, tropical or corporate, but also in the seemingly unexciting task of analyzing and reporting one's findings.

Having returned to safer shores, I discovered to my horror that, chained to a desk like the mythical hero, I was forced to relive the essence of the dangers and the pain of the field adventure over and over again: facing the unknown, the incomprehensible. Masses of facts, stories, vignettes, numbers, rumors, and endless pages of fieldnotes documenting the observed trivia of everyday life offered daily testimony in their sheer volume to the seeming impossibility of making any valid statement at all. And, ironically, the more conscientious one is as a fieldworker, the more impossible one has demonstrated one's task to be, and the more tempting is Wittgenstein's silence. Moreover, the less adventurous and closer to home the field experience, the more painful the secondary one, for one is not the sole owner and interpreter of the particular culture one has studied; nor is it far away - physically or personally.

I began the analysis and writing during the last months of my fieldwork, and completed the thesis close to a year later. The first step was reading and cataloguing my fieldnotes, creating and discarding numerous categories and groupings. Next, I wrote a short ethnographic description of Tech as part of a co-authored paper with one of my advisors (Van Maanen and Kunda, 1987). In it, the seeds of my analytic framework were planted. These

became the foundation for rather frenzied and apparently directionless writing of descriptions that I began to do after the fieldwork was (arbitrarily) terminated. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 emerged, as relatively independent essays after repeated writing and rewriting, and under pressure from readers to move from pure description, with occasionally disguised theoretical insinuations ("illustrated diatribes," in the words of one advisor), to an explicit analytic framework.

Writing the rambling "pure description" was the most satisfying part of the process. A reader of my fieldnotes might note that I have indulged in some "poetic license;" not only clearing up the grammar and phrasing of informants, but occasionally combining and embellishing scenes. Ethnography, by definition, has elements of fiction, Van Maanen (1979) asserts. An accurate rendition of a culture borders on the artistic, and in the gray area between fact and fiction, perhaps lie both its weakness and its strength. In retrospect, however, I feel that if things didn't happen exactly as they are described, they could have.

It was the analytic statements, the generalizations, the framings, that proved to be most difficult. A reader might recognize that these parts of the work came last, and are not fully integrated. This reflects not only the inherent difficulty of generalizing from ethnographic data, of combining the general with the specific, but also my own deep suspicion of any general theoretical statement. I have not fully resolved these questions, and the final version represents not only an honest attempt to theorize, but also, to some extent, a compromise with the required style and form of a this type of research.

In sum, this study is far from finished. Each completed sentence represents, to paraphrase one of Weber's biographers, "a tenuous victory

over the infinite complexity of the facts." Such victories are short-lived, and the battles must be fought again. If, as Thomas Wolfe, himself a student of detail, suggested, "only the dead know Brooklyn," then the living must continue to sketch and follow their own maps.

FOOTNOTES

1. Self-application of one's conceptual tools is a typical and understandable approach to reflexive discourse. Psychoanalysts analyze countertransference, sociologists "do" a sociology of knowledge, ethnographers reconstruct the culture of research. When properly done, such reflexive analysis is a crucial and enriching part of the research process; however, perhaps the mixing of perspectives (i.e. countertransference in ethnography, the sociology of the psychoanalytic encounter, and so forth) would be even more beneficial, and a contribution to the "blurring of genres" that Geertz (1983) calls for.

2. Not for lack of trying. Marcus and Fischer (1986) point out some of the experimental techniques used in an attempt to address this problem. For example, providing unedited transcripts of interviews or field notes, or introducing the fieldworker as an actor into the description. However, so long as it is the fieldworker who ultimately writes and reports the findings, he or she is still very much in control. More extremely, some have attempted joint authorship with informants, in line with Schutz's (1933) uncomfortable (from the point of view of the researcher) "third postulate of adequacy:" confirmation of the validity of findings by the subjects. Less drastic and more mundane solutions have been offered. For example, teamwork in the field, of the sort reported by Gouldner (1954) and Strauss et al. (1964). Alternatively, one might consider working with constant supervision of the sort often used in psychotherapeutic training (although not exactly in line with the heroic and individualistic image of fieldwork many subscribe to.) Experimental attempts notwithstanding, there appears to be no easy way out of the "interpretive loop" (Taylor, 1979). Ultimately, the researcher must take authority, ask the reader for a leap of faith, and perhaps do battle with critics. As Geertz (1973) points out, the ultimate test of anthropological (and perhaps other) claims, is in the crucible of continuous debate and survivability.

3. Clinical research refers to the use of consultation as a basis for research, in the tradition of Lewin's (1948) action research program. Schein (1987) has discussed his view of this process and contrasted it to ethnography. I myself have engaged in this kind of work prior to beginning graduate studies, and in the course of the fieldwork I supported myself by working (an average of a day a week) as a paid consultant in another company - an experience that I believe both enriched and confused the fieldwork at Tech. While I chose to identify with ethnography, I believe there is important unexplored shared ground in the kinds of interpretive work both methods offer. In particular, it seems that in the clinical mode, access to managerial practices and thinking is almost unlimited (at the

risk, of course, of losing contact with other strata, and, ultimately "going native;" this however is a question of skill and commitment, and not a logical necessity.) Conversely, as Marcus and Fischer (1986) point out, ethnography is a research method most suited to clinical, interventionist or psychotherapeutic theory, fields notoriously lacking in empirical research of whatever scientific persuasion.

4. Participation of this sort in organizational life elicited strong emotional involvement that seemed to have impact on my work. Although there are limits to a confessional, I think it is important to acknowledge that it was around issues of acceptance and rejection and relationships with people with authority and power (or lack of it) that I found both informal and personal discussions with one of my advisors, as well as ongoing psychotherapy, very helpful in staying in the field and managing my relationships with some of its inhabitants.

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