

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN THE COMMUNICATION STUDIES CLASSROOM:  
AN EXPLORATION OF THE SPACE CREATED FOR THE STUDENT THROUGH  
INTRODUCTORY COMMUNICATION TEXTBOOKS

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by

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## **DEDICATION**

This manuscript is dedicated to my loving parents, Tommy Lee Hayes and Judith Ann Mahaley Hayes. None of my accomplishments, triumphs, or happiness would have been possible without their unconditional love, support, and dedication through both the great times and the difficult times. They are the best parents anyone could hope to have and I love them dearly.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In 1961, United States President Dwight D. Eisenhower coined an infamous term that he used to describe the growing conflation between the industrial private sector and the United States military. This “military-industrial complex”, according to Eisenhower, creates “the potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power” and “endangers our liberties and democratic processes” (Eisenhower, 1961, part IV). Among the lesser-known facts about this speech is that Eisenhower wanted to include “academic” in his key phrase, warning of a “military-industrial-academic complex” (Giroux, 2007a). In the late 1960s, Senator J. William Fulbright identified this ideology, arguing that institutions of higher education could perpetuate the aims of the military-industrial complex. He posited, “in lending itself too much to the purposes of government, a university fails its higher purposes” (Fulbright in Giroux, 2007a, p. 15).

While Eisenhower, Fulbright, and Giroux all indicted the rise of the American institution of higher education in unnecessarily perpetuating military and industrial ideology in the civil realm, their questions about the nature of the university’s “higher purpose” are much larger. They prompt an inquiry into the function of higher education and its role in creating a space for the student via the territory of the classroom. This analysis seeks to explore these questions, specifically with regard to the contribution of the textbook to the classroom space. How do texts represent questions of power? For example, in what ways do they work to frame or territorialize notions of culture, class, race, or gender?



The focus of this analysis will be to interrogate the space generated through textbooks used in the basic communication course, specifically to uncover the dominant narratives created through these texts. Communication studies, as a discipline, represents a prime territory for consideration of the nature of academe, as it generally identifies itself as a necessary component of the college curriculum, and in many areas the basic communication course is required for completion of a college degree. As a result, the basic course is the primary mechanism of communication studies departments to serve a number of functions. These include recruiting majors, maintaining increased numbers of positions for faculty, and often generating increased funding and recognition at the larger university level. From early in the discipline's formal inception in the United States, communication studies introductory courses were defined via their focus on constructing the student in a particular way. As Paul, Sorenson, and Murray (1946) note, an introductory communication course is concerned with a broad "social integration" (p. 233) of the student. This thesis investigation prompts a question about the nature of integration into what particular social sphere. If the introductory course and the textbooks it uses serve as a form of social indoctrination, what are we indoctrinating students into? Why? These questions provide entry into a conversation about notions of power, particularly how it is constructed in the communication studies classroom.

Dominant narratives and ideologies are constituted largely through positive exertions of power. Foucault (1977, 1979, 1984) argues that these positive exertions of power operate to construct truths that individuals then depend upon to create their lives, their actions, and their relationships. In this sense, "Foucault is subscribing not to the belief that there exist objective or intrinsic facts about the nature of persons but instead to

constructed ideas that are accorded a truth status” (White & Epston, 1990, p. 19). These truths function to generate the dominant discourse or narrative of society. Foucault argues:

Each society has its regime of truth, its “general politics” of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault, 1977, p. 72-73)

Here, the “positive” nature of power for Foucault does not imply a general goodness, but rather a constitutive and shaping influence over the lives of individuals. This influence yields control and, true to Foucault’s approach, that control is fluidly exerted among individuals. Nakayama and Krizek (1995) offer a helpful method of analysis to discuss this type of power and control in their combination of Foucault’s notion of discursive formation with Deleuze and Guattari’s idea of assemblage. This methodology provides an effective way to analyze the rhetorical space of the classroom, and is discussed further in the methodology section of this chapter. The identification of discursive formations and assemblages in introductory communication textbooks opens a space for interrogation of the dominant narratives of the classroom.

### Significance and Focus

The significance of notions of power and control in the communication studies classroom stems from the historical background of the educational sphere itself. In fact, the idea of a liberatory deterritorialization of dominant approaches to classroom control

has been so historically controversial, just singing about it can generate trouble. While Roger Waters' lyrics from "Another Brick in the Wall, Parts I, II, and III" have been emblazoned into global popular culture, they incited protest from their inception.

We don't need no education

We don't need no thought control

No dark sarcasm in the classroom

Teacher leave them kids alone

Hey! Teacher! Leave them kids alone

All in all its just another brick in the wall

All in all you're just another brick in the wall. (Waters, 1979, disc 1, track 5)

The day after the song was released as a single, it shot to the number one position in charts all around the world (Sander, 1999). Within a few months, the song was adopted as an anthem of protest by nonwhite students in South Africa as part of the national school boycott. The nation formally banned the song in 1980 (Sander). Waters expressed his amazement: "People were really driven to frenzies of rage by it" (Waters in Schaffner, 1992, p. 245). In the early twenty-first century, controversy still abounds over attempts to uncover and question the dominant narrative of the educational sphere.

This analysis continues an interrogation into the constructed space that the song describes. In the wake of the 2008 election cycle and the post 9/11 political era, the academic space of the classroom (in both secondary and higher education settings) is ripe for deconstruction. In clarifying the nature of deconstruction, Derrida (1983) argues "structures are to be undone, decomposed, desedimented...Rather than destroying, it is also necessary to understand how an 'ensemble' is constituted and to reconstruct it to this

end” (p. 25). In an attempt at consistency with Derrida, this analysis does not employ deconstruction as a specific methodology (Derrida, p. 25). Rather its discussion is grounded in the starting point of both Foucault’s notion of truth construction and Derrida’s assertions about ensemble creation. The project seeks to uncover the dominant narratives, truths, and ensembles constructed by a particular classroom tool, the textbook.

While the ongoing discussion about the territory of the classroom has been limited, both the necessity for and significance of this analysis stem from the dominant cultural narrative created by two areas of current discourse about education, political rhetoric and academic discourse. Political discourse shapes a popular understanding of the educational sphere through an effort at public involvement in education via voting for particular candidates who advocate particular positions about education policy. Academic discourse transforms the sphere of higher education itself, promoting the dominant narrative constructed at the political level and gaining adherence to the dominant narrative by those professionals who engage in the educational sphere.

Education has thrived as a political agenda item for decades. In the early twentieth century, educational scholars began to advocate for education as a mechanism for making students better citizens in their democracy (Dewey, 2007/1916). With the first administration of standardized tests in 1926 up through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, use of uniform standardized measures to test student achievement has become increasingly popular. In 2008, then president George W. Bush and major presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama argued for a specific narrative with regard to education that advocates education and knowledge as a commodity, a competitive tool for advancement. In this sense, education and knowledge are framed as

a means to an end. For example, in discussing the implications of No Child Left Behind, President Bush noted,

The philosophy behind No Child Left Behind was in return for money there ought to be results... That's what corporations ask -- if we're going to spend money, are we going to get a return on the money? That's what our schools ought to be asking, too... we measure for that reason. We want to know whether or not this nation is going to be competitive... And the achievement gap said, here's a problem. (Bush, 2008)

Bush's language emphasizes the need for education to address an issue of national and global competitiveness, and for schools to mirror corporations in their notion of commodity and investment return. Two other predominant politicians in recent history have also assisted in structuring this dominant narrative: 2008 presidential candidates Barack Obama and John McCain.

Obama, in an Ohio campaign speech, reflected the same rhetorical leanings as President Bush, likening education to a competitive tool necessary in modern society:

At this defining moment in our history, America faces few more urgent challenges than preparing our children to compete in a global economy. The decisions our leaders make about education in the coming years will shape our future for generations to come. They will help determine not only whether our children have the chance to fulfill their God-given potential, or whether our workers have the chance to build a better life for their families, but whether we, as a nation, will remain in the 21st century the kind of global economic leader that we were in the 20th

century. (Obama, 2008)

Perhaps Obama's most significant statement came toward the end of the speech, in his claim that "What matters, then, isn't what you do or where you live, but what you know. When two-thirds of all new jobs require a higher education or advanced training, knowledge is the most valuable skill you can sell" (Obama, 2008). Once again, the political rhetoric frames knowledge as directly analogous to a commodity for sale on the market.

While John McCain spoke less frequently about education issues (Dillon, 2008), like Bush and Obama, he helped paint the dominant cultural narrative of educational institutions as spaces for "training" where knowledge is a "skill" to be sold on the market and standardized measures to test achievement are useful measures. McCain noted in his address to the Republican National Convention:

My opponent promises to bring back old jobs by wishing away the global economy. We're going to help workers who've lost a job that won't come back, find a new one that won't go away. We will prepare them for the jobs of today. We will use our community colleges to help train people for new opportunities in their communities. Equal access to public education has been gained. But what is the value of access to a failing school? We need to shake up failed school bureaucracies with competition, empower parents with choice, remove barriers to qualified instructors, attract and reward good teachers, and help bad teachers find another line of work. (McCain, 2008)

The political rhetoric of McCain is no different than Bush or Obama. Competition among schools is the focus, and McCain even advocated utilizing the space of the community college as a “training ground” for jobs, an expression of the commoditization of the higher education sphere.

Academic discourse on the subject of education has provided many of the same dominant narratives of education. Empirical literature on the issue of education remains steeped in a specific ideology of student achievement, with a number of studies working to measure variables such as “affective student learning” and “cognitive retention”, both exterior judgments of student behaviors designed to commodify knowledge. While this literature reinforces the dominant narrative, it also ignores textbooks as rhetorical agents in the classroom, with the majority of studies specifically tied to teacher/student interaction or individual behaviors in the learning environment. The conclusions of many studies in this area provide prescriptive, normative recommendations for teacher and student behavior and are often employed by departments as a specific way to train incoming instructors. The next section of this chapter will detail many of these studies.

In short, a dominant cultural narrative with regard to educational theory has been established, through both political discourse and academic study. Although a notable body of literature has opened space for an interrogation of this narrative, a call for a “critical pedagogy”, it has not been widely received. American critical pedagogist Henry Giroux argues that critical pedagogy’s:

very definition is the task of educating students to become critical agents who actively question and negotiate the relationships between theory and practice, critical analysis and common sense, and learning and social

change. Critical pedagogy opens up a space where students should be able to come to terms with their own power as critical agents; it provides a sphere where the unconditional freedom to question and assert is central to the purpose of the university, if not democracy itself. (Giroux, 2007b)

This analysis assumes, as Giroux's claim illustrates, that critical pedagogy cuts against the very nature of the dominant narrative of education in America. In this sense, the rhetorical choices of Democratic candidate Obama are no different in their construction of the educational sphere than Republicans McCain or Bush, proving the power of the dominant political narrative. The implications of critical pedagogy are reflected in its ability to question the dominant constructions of knowledge, institutions, and people within the educational sphere.

Finally, this analysis specifically focuses on the textbook as a centerpiece for the dominant construction of narratives in the classroom, in this case, the introductory communication classroom. Textbooks are a critical space for analysis for three compelling reasons. First, textbooks are rarely mentioned in the critical pedagogy discourse, and stand as a space that has yet to be fully explored with regard to its impact on the dominant narratives of education. Additionally, textbooks are one of two major components of interaction in the classroom for a student, the other being the instructor. While a small body of research exists on the interactions between students and instructors with regard to the dominant narratives this relationship builds, little investigation exists that examines the power of the text in the classroom. Finally, in the dominant narrative of education and knowledge as commodity and the specific construction of identity (such as race, class, gender, etc.), textbooks are rich with rhetorical constructions that this



analysis seeks to uncover. Dominant narratives creep into and saturate textbooks in specific ways, through writing of the texts, the textbook adoption process, and the presentation of textual material in the classroom.

### Literature Review

The existing research with regard to the rhetorical territory of basic communication textbooks is limited, but there are three different areas of academic literature that are relevant. First, a body of work exists that discusses textbooks specifically as rhetorical artifacts for study. Second, literature in instructional communication is abundant and provides a necessary frame for this analysis while simultaneously expressing the dominant discourse prevalent in academic discourse. Finally, critical pedagogy serves as a necessary frame for this analysis.

In the conversation about communication textbooks, Teague (1961) stated clearly the traditional value of the textbook in the basic speech communication course, arguing, “A good textbook...provides a common core around which to build a syllabus. Furthermore, it helps conserve precious class time by making available an explanation of principles and of procedures that need not be discussed at length during the class period” (p. 469). Gemin (1997b) writes a comprehensive discussion of the basic communication course and the texts selected for that course, arguing that fundamental ideologies of basic texts are enforced in particular ways to create specific territories in which students are expected to exist. With texts utilized as a common core of the course by which the instructor builds a syllabus, their power in the classroom space is evident.

In discussing the implications of the textbook at the introductory level, the student is constructed as an active audience. Berger (1991) argues that within the communication

studies and speech communication discipline, there should be concern about how basic communication texts are perceived by an external audience, in this case, the student. In a sense, Berger is concerned with the disciplinary credibility created through the use of particular texts (Worley, 1999, p. 323). This raises a larger question about the territory staked by introductory texts. In a review of Lucas's *The Art of Public Speaking* textbook, Olsen and Bollinger (1999) argue that rarely do exercises in introductory communication texts address student needs directly, by asking them to articulate questions rather than providing critical questions for them to answer. The fact that many texts avoid addressing students in a direct fashion contributes to the overall dominant narrative also asserted in the political arena, constructing knowledge as a commodity for students to absorb.

Textbook selection is a vital part of the process of building dominant narratives through texts, and in illuminating what is present and what is absent in academic discourse. Newberger, Smith, and Pledger (1993) offer a useful discussion of the process of textbook selection specifically for the introductory communication course. They also analyze the reasons university departments turn to creating their own texts, opting to generate their own discursive formations that work to “satisfy a faculty with differing topical interests, who service a population of students compelled to enroll in the course for the primary purpose of fulfilling a basic undergraduate requirement” (p. 31). They identify a number of approaches in communication textbook adoption, such as the avoidance of a blind review process, on the grounds that some departments feel that process is insufficient to “preserve their text package’s integrity as being ‘field-wise’, in addition to being campus specific” (p. 35).

Some academic literature with regard to textbooks focuses on specific aspects of the construction of communication textbooks throughout the field. Pomerence, Varner, and Mallar (1996) explore the depiction of men and women in photographs throughout business communication textbooks. Their analysis reveals that while frequency of the presentation of both sexes was evenly distributed, stylistically the content of the text revealed a space where traditional gender roles were apparent. Webb, et al. (2004) performed a content analysis on undergraduate family communication textbooks to determine the amount of coverage dedicated to gender and diversity issues. They found that while books varied immensely on coverage of diversity issues, the texts did not differ with regard to their amount of coverage on gender issues. Both of these studies provide the opening of a space in which to territorialize the representations generated by communication textbooks.

The second area of research with regard to textbooks is not specific to the communication field, but relevant in an analysis of how textbooks function in constructing ideology and student space. One body of this research focuses on the spaces created through history texts, both historically and in the aftermath of 9/11 in the United States. Zinn and Macedo (2008) argue that a number of vital elements are missing from current textbooks that create deficiencies in the modern school system. In his discussion of the need for alternative textual views of historical education, Zinn (2003) argues that “there is no such thing as a pure fact, innocent of interpretation. Behind every fact presented to the world - by a teacher, a writer, anyone - is a judgment. The judgment has been made that this fact is important, and the other facts, omitted, are not important” (p. 684). Loewen (2008) completed a survey of twelve major upper level high school

textbooks, finding that myths and misinformation abound in the texts, and that many texts ignore major historical issues on the basis of race, class, and gender, in addition to other factors. While his study is based on high school texts only, its findings are a necessary part of a discussion about the territory generated for students by textbooks.

The works that address the dominant space of history textbooks also highlight the relevance of the post 9/11 political era in the United States in influencing the dominant narrative found in the texts. Before the 9/11 shift in this country, Jenkins (1991) argued that “history is a shifting discourse constructed by historians” (p. 13). Zizek (2002) argues that in the post 9/11 era, historians, journalists, and most Americans have been increasingly rallied to “take sides” in the geopolitical debate, constructing spaces where real alternatives are obstructed and rhetoric serves to manipulate its audience. This 9/11 historical marker serves as further evidence that texts work in particular ways to construct dominant narratives in the classroom. This constructivist nature of educational discourse, particularly textbooks, will be a central part of this analysis.

A third broad base of literature exists in the form of instructional communication research. While this analysis focuses on the territories created by the rhetorical space of introductory communication textbooks, a body of empirical research in instructional communication has become increasingly prolific. This work is particularly important in creating the dominant cultural and academic narrative with regard to both the communication discipline and the use of textbooks within the discipline. Here, the empirical literature can best be divided into work that focuses on the instructor and work that focuses on the student. This division is important because the research in each area constructs the teacher/student relationship in a particular way. This construction then

functions to weave the dominant narrative of education and enforce its power relationships. In addition, the absence of discussion about the role of textbooks in either of these areas provides ample justification for this thesis investigation.

Empirical study in instructional communication focuses on a number of different phenomena with regard to the role of the instructor in the classroom environment, such as teacher clarity, student affective learning, and teacher evaluation. Scales exist to measure teacher clarity (Sidelinger & McCroskey, 1997; Simonds, 1997; Chesebro & McCroskey, 1998). Clarity here “represents the process by which an instructor is able to effectively stimulate the desired meaning of course content and process in the minds of students through the use of appropriately structured verbal and nonverbal messages” (Chesebro & McCroskey, 1998, p. 262-263). Researchers have used this scale to study the relationship of teacher clarity to student cognitive learning (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2001), an attempt to connect the actions engaged by an instructor to the success or failure of the student. This body of work is directly related to dominant cultural ideas of both course content and the nature of appropriate messages in the classroom because it functions to construct which messages are “appropriate” and which are not. In stating clarity as a measurable, quantifiable goal, this research generates a space where messages in textbooks are either acceptable or not acceptable, using a particular standard. This standard then becomes a part of the “regime of truth” Foucault identifies, privileging what is allowed in the classroom space and eliminating what is not. Textbooks work as part of these appropriately structured verbal messages. As a result, the empirically constructed territory of clarity is vital for discussion, as it frames the dominant narratives of which textbooks are valuable, and which are not.

Additional studies exist with regard to the instructor that focus on the importance of measuring affective cognitive learning and teacher evaluation by students (e.g. Comadena, Hunt, & Simonds, 2007). Much of this literature seeks to discuss the nature of teacher evaluation by students through the concept of immediacy. The principle of immediacy argues that “people are drawn toward persons and things they like, evaluate highly, and prefer; and they avoid or move away from things they dislike, evaluate negatively, or do not prefer” (Mehrabian, 1971, p. 1). A vast amount of this research argues that teacher immediacy is associated with more positive student affect and increased cognitive learning by students (Rocca & McCroskey, 1999). Among a number of significant immediacy studies (e.g. Kelley & Gorham, 1988; Richmond, 1990; Frymier, 1994; McCroskey, Fayer, Richmond, Sallinen, & Barraclough, 1996), none discuss the course textbook as a factor in student affective learning. McCroskey’s (2007) notion of learning objectives comes closest to the idea of textual guides in the classroom, but still avoids a conversation about the role textbooks play in classroom experience. This absence is notable in building the dominant narrative of communication.

The notion of affective learning identified in this literature arrives closest to the space this analysis wishes to interrogate, specifically the territory created by textual messages in the communication classroom. Student affective learning is a predominant concept in instructional research, a domain of learning discussed initially by Bloom (1956). Affective learning “leads to motivation to learn and to use what is learned after the student has left the classroom” (Chory & McCroskey, 1999). Affective learning is categorized as behavioral commitment and internalization of ideas by students (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964). In generating another quantifiable standard by

which to judge how students are motivated to learn and employ the ideas they learn in the classroom, powerful regimes of truth are structured that operate to mark the specific territory of acceptable messages in the classroom space. In creating judgments of affective learning, particular messages about the student and the classroom are embraced, leaving others out of the discourse altogether. In this sense, commoditization of knowledge is again woven into the dominant discourse of education. Students are expected to “internalize” and “be motivated” to “use” what they learn in the classroom, yet this body of research leaves unaddressed the notion of *how* students are to “use” this knowledge. These empirical measures of affective learning also leave vacant a conversation concerning the power constructed by these messages. The literature assumes a measurable coefficient of student motivation, ignoring the constructivist nature of both texts and instructor interaction with students in this process.

Finally, a body of work exists on the notion of liberatory education, or critical pedagogy, described by Giroux previously. The work of Brazilian educational theorist Paulo Freire, expressed in his *Pedagogy* series (1970, 1995) first established the notion of pedagogy as a critical practice. In these texts, he introduces the “banking” concept of education, in addition to other key methodological concepts such as the notion of education as dialogical, the implications of praxis, and oppression in the classroom. Westbrook (2002) provides a historical analysis of nineteenth century debating societies as the departure point for critical questioning of dominant ideology in education, employing Freire’s model. Freire’s work provides a necessary supplement to the methodology of Nakayama and Krizek (1995) in this analysis. In this sense, Nakayama and Krizek extend the idea of discursive formation and assemblage as a way to

understand what dominant narratives are at work in discourse. Freire adds the critical component that makes Nakayama and Krizek's methodological work significant for the classroom sphere.

The body of critical pedagogy work is enhanced when bell hooks enters the conversation with seminal works such as *Teaching to Transgress* (1994) and *Teaching Community* (2003). hooks provides the link between educative environments and the discursive formations that articulate spaces of race and gender, in addition to a further endorsement of the experiential nature of education. Her work provides an additional way to understand the specific ways in which dominant narratives function, privileging particular conversations and suppressing others.

Still more authors explore the space of the classroom in a critical way, some including a discussion of textbooks and their use. Illich (1971) argues for a broad based elimination of educational institutions, arguing for a "rebirth of the Epimethean man (sic)" (p. 105), rejecting the limitations of the institutional nature of knowledge created through human attachment to the institution itself. For Illich, the dominant narratives of the classroom have become so powerful and oppressive that elimination of the educational institution is the only solution. Other scholars like Ira Shor (1992) advocate a less radical approach to the discursive formation and assemblage of the classroom, calling for the invention of a transformative discourse for education. This analysis likens Shor's call to Nakayama and Krizek's (1995) call for reflexivity in scholarship.

Some critical authors characterize this liberatory approach to pedagogy as a vehicle for increasing the power of the student in a democratic society. While this framing of the student still works to generate a particular space for the classroom, the



student, and the textbook, it does operate as an alternative to the dominant political and academic narratives of education. Chomsky (2000) enters the discussion through an examination of the “pedagogy of lies” (p. 173) found in historical dialogue and educational discussion. He refers frequently to Dewey’s original assertion about the relationship of education to democracy and social change. Here Chomsky identifies a liberatory assertion of early critical pedagogy: “that the ultimate aim of production is not production of goods but the production of free human beings associated with one another on terms of equality” (p. 38). Chomsky’s approach represents a direct contrast with the commoditization of knowledge narrative prevalent in political and academic discourse.

The critical pedagogy authors discussed above notably are absent from the instructional communication literature also discussed above. This provides ample evidence of a clear dominant narrative and resistance to that dominant narrative. Additionally, the dominant narrative finds ways to reassert itself by discrediting critical pedagogical approaches. A number of critiques of critical pedagogy aim to indict the methods of critical pedagogists and to assert that students do not respond to more liberatory methods in the classroom space. Seas (2006) discusses the nature of student response to critical pedagogies, particularly with regard to rhetorical texts. This work suggests that “we examine how students negotiate the critical composition course as a rhetorical space in which they are asked to accept certain enthymematic messages about their subjectivity that they may be unable or unwilling to help construct, thus resulting in apparent resistance” (p. 427). Seas both provides a discussion of how students respond to liberatory frameworks and texts in the classroom and also generates an argument about why perceived resistance on the part of students might be present in critically

pedagogical settings. The dominant narrative is powerful in its construction of the student in this sense.

The dominant ideology generated about United States education is a cross-cultural narrative about the student, the classroom, and the tools used in that classroom, such as textbooks. In this sense, critical pedagogy narratives also are utilized outside the United States, and are specific to the textbook. Shin and Crookes (2005) extend the critical pedagogy sphere through a study that examines East Asian student reactions to materials that were critically situated in opposition to dominant discourses. Their analysis represents part of the cultural conversation about critical pedagogies and provides an analysis that includes the textbook as a central component of critical discourse in the classroom.

Previous work establishes a model of analysis this thesis will employ. O'Regan (2006) provides a useful perspective regarding the text as critical object in critical discourse studies. Arguing for an infusion of Derrida, Habermas, and Adorno into Foucault's systemic perspective of institutions, O'Regan's work has both methodological and pragmatic implications for an analysis that strives to interrogate the spaces created by communication texts. This work functions as an existing investigation into the nature of the text as a critical object, and along with Nakayama and Krizek (1995), provides the grounding for the approach of the discussion about textbooks, dominant narratives, and the classroom.

### Methodology

The methodology for this examination will begin with a combination of Foucault's notion of discursive formation and Deleuze and Guattari's idea of assemblage.

The melding of these two frameworks was first identified by Nakayama and Krizek (1995) in a discussion of the rhetorical territory marked by whiteness. They combine the two concepts in order to “uncover the ways in which whiteness exerts its influence throughout the social fabric” (p. 294). In a similar way, this analysis seeks to explore the ways that basic communication course texts both contribute to and reflect the dominant narrative of education, marking a territory in which the student is expected to exist, and in doing so create that space as the same type of rhetorical center that Nakayama and Krizek discuss with regard to whiteness.

The rhetorical center is a space that is largely uninterrogated. The notion of this center dates far back in communication studies and rhetorical theory. As Nakayama and Krizek (1995) argue,

Historically, the development of the study of communication has followed a focus on the center. Plato and Aristotle, from a privileged class, were not interested in theorizing or empowering ways that women, slaves, or other culturally marginalized people might speak. The rhetor was always assumed to be a member of the center. (p. 292-293)

In their application of the concept of the center to the rhetorical space of whiteness, Nakayama and Krizek argue that as a result of existing in the center, whiteness has “assumed the position of an uninterrogated space” (p. 293). When this occurs, the only way to explore the space of the center is to explore the rhetoric that constitutes that space. Here, Nakayama and Krizek apply Foucault:

We are not to burrow into the hidden core of discourse, to the heart of thought or meaning manifested in it; instead, taking the discourse itself, its appearance

and its regularity, that we should look for its external conditions of existence, for that which gives rise to the chance series of these events and fixes its limits. (Foucault in Nakayama & Krizek, 1995, p. 293)

This thesis investigation argues that textbooks work as part of these external conditions necessary for the existence of the dominant narratives of education and the classroom. The space created for the student through this dominant discourse is similar to the space Nakayama and Krizek argue is created for whiteness, an invisible center or uninterrogated space. Beyond this uninterrogated space, power relationships stem from the discursive formations present in textbooks. In this sense, not only is the space for a student uninterrogated, but the dominant narrative tells a story in which the student exists as a tool to be sharpened and honed by the classroom experience and the materials within the classroom, including the textbook.

Foucault's idea about discursive formation sees power as fluid, yet interruptions in the stratification of power relations occur and can be marked. The discursive formation serves as a space where discourse, action, and representations work to interrupt the fluid nature of power. The formation represents a normative discursive approach to a particular subject, and it is not without its own level of contradiction:

A discursive formation is not, therefore, an ideal, continuous, smooth text that runs beneath a multiplicity of contradictions, and resolves them in the calm unity of coherent thought; nor is it the surface in which, in a thousand different aspects, a contradiction is reflected that is always in retreat, but everywhere dominant. It is rather a space of multiple dimensions; a set of different oppositions whose levels and roles must be described. (Foucault,

1972, p. 155)

In an examination of a text, discursive formation(s) must be identified, and then the “levels and roles” Foucault discusses must be both described and mapped in relation to the exertions of power the text influences. This thesis begins by utilizing Foucault’s discursive formation concept to investigate the most commonly used textbooks (based on sales and longevity of editions) in the introductory communication classroom, uncovering the dominant themes, messages, and approaches inherent in the text.

Nakayama and Krizek (1995) argue that Deleuze and Guattari’s work offers both a “compatibility with contemporary critical work, as well as its offering of a new approach to viewing critique” (p. 294). While the assemblage is not positioned as a methodology by Nakayama and Krizek, it is a mechanism through which to observe power relationships in a text, much like the discursive formation. For use as a methodological lens, the notion of deterritorialization is useful. Nakayama and Krizek argue that “once we view power spatially, a rearticulation of the space of the assemblage is a counterhegemonic move” (p. 294). Once discursive formations in a text are identified, the notion of assemblage can function to help rearticulate that space. For Deleuze and Guattari, Nakayama and Krizek argue that this action is counterhegemonic, generating an alternative discourse to the dominant narrative and the dominant center generated for the student. However, it is first necessary to identify the assemblage and determine how it functions. This tool, along with Foucault’s discursive formation concept, provides a starting place for the uncovering of power within the text itself.

While Foucault’s notion of discursive formation and Deleuze and Guattari’s idea of assemblage are used here in order to identify these territories of power, the concepts

fall short in their application to critical educational theory. In order for the methodology of this analysis to more specifically address the basic communication text, I will argue for a third element to infuse the melding of discursive formations and assemblage, creating a new lens. Here I argue that Freire's (2000/1970) notion of the "banking model" provides a link between the ideas of power and territory and the enacted model of how those territories function in educative settings.

In 1970, Freire published his seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, in which he created a vision for an intellectual movement that would soon be called critical pedagogy. His conception of current education systems becomes apparent in his arguments about the "banking" of knowledge with regard to student/teacher relationships:

Narration (with teacher as narrator) leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet, it turns them into "containers", into "receptacles" to be "filled" by the teacher. The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better teacher she is...Education thus becomes the act of depositing...This is the "banking" concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filling, and storing deposits. They do, it is true, have the opportunity to become collectors of the things they store. But in the last analysis, it is the people themselves who are filed away through lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system. For apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human. (p. 72)

This analysis will incorporate Freire's arguments in two ways. First, his description of the teacher/student relationship is easily transferred (through the analysis of discursive

formations and assemblage) to the textbook/student relationship. Here I mean to imply that textbooks, through a territory of space they mark as the center, create a relationship with the student in which power is destratified. Second, the “scope of action” Freire ascribes to students provides a method through which an analysis of discursive formations and assemblage can discuss how territorial spaces behave and function. In this sense, Freire’s work is a necessary step in the process of assessing the way an assemblage or discursive formation operates in relation to human action, specifically, the action of the student.

This chapter has served to provide an explanation of this analysis, a justification for the investigation, an overview of much of the relevant literature, and an overview of methodology. With this in mind, the analysis proceeds with a second chapter that details the methodology for the analysis. Chapter three encompasses the analysis of five major introductory basic communication course texts, applying the methodology outlined here. Finally, chapter four generates conclusions drawn from the analysis and offers directions for future research in this area.

## II: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A number of scholars have discussed the nature of primary and secondary school classrooms, which served as the focus for predominant education theorists in history like John Dewey. A growing number of pedagogical theorists are now turning their attention to the classroom of higher education. Henry Giroux (2007c) argues that higher education is critical in American society, and that its demise would “signal a crisis in democracy and the critical education foundation upon which it rests” (p. 1). He simultaneously expresses one of the key concerns of critical pedagogists about higher education:

Underlying recent attacks on the university is an attempt not merely to counter dissent but to destroy it and in doing so to eliminate all of those remaining public spaces, spheres, and institutions that nourish and sustain a culture of questioning so vital to a democratic civil society. (p. 2)

While Giroux also argues that specific forces are attacking academe, more important for this analysis is Giroux’s assertion that the university classroom is evolving, inherently shifting the space where the student is invited to exist. The agent of questioning central in a democratic society for Giroux is the student, and this analysis seeks to discover if and how the textbook works in the process of shaping/molding/constraining the student. Dominant narratives are a necessary first step in this understanding.

As discussed in the first chapter, the methodology for this examination will begin with a combination of Foucault’s notion of discursive formation and Deleuze and Guattari’s idea of assemblage. Nakayama and Krizek (1995) combine the two concepts



in order to “uncover the ways in which whiteness exerts its influence throughout the social fabric” (p. 294). In a similar way, this thesis seeks to explore the ways that basic communication course texts both contribute to and reflect the dominant narrative of education, marking a territory in which the student is invited to exist while creating that space as the same type of rhetorical center that Nakayama and Krizek discuss with regard to whiteness.

This methodology incorporates three unique aspects of philosophical approach to rhetorical study. First, the idea of a dominant narrative provides the framework for this analysis. Michel Foucault (1977) describes this dominant narrative as a “regime of truth” or “the types of discourse which it [a society] accepts and makes function as true” (p. 72). Basic course texts generate this regime of truth, or set of dominant narratives, in specific ways. These dominant narratives are the focus of this thesis. Second, as Nakayama and Krizek (1995) argue, Deleuze and Guattari’s invention of the assemblage is a useful aid in accompanying Foucault’s discursive formation as a means to understand dominant narratives. Finally, the focus of this project on educational materials (i.e. basic communication course texts) makes the work of Brazilian education scholar Paulo Freire (1970/2000) a necessary component of this methodology, particularly his discussion of narration and “banking” in educational settings. Even beyond the scope of these artifacts, Freire’s work can be incorporated into the convergence of discursive formations and assemblages to further ground the theory for its use in application.

### The Dominant Narrative

While the Neo-Aristotelian paradigm in rhetorical criticism finds its roots in Wicheln’s 1925 *Literary Criticism of Oratory*, contemporary approaches to rhetorical

criticism expand the rhetorical canon in a number of ways, yet often are obligated to pay homage to the approach. Gaonkar (1990) describes this phenomenon as follows: “It is a sort of disciplinary ritual required of a new generation of critics to come to terms with and propitiate the dead” (p. 293). For Wichelns (1925/1962), criticism was grounded in the Neo-Aristotelian canons, as he argued that criticism is “not concerned with permanence” but “is concerned with effect” (p. 209). In this sense, the heart of the Neo-Aristotelian approach argues for “speech as a communication to a specific audience, and holds its business to be the analysis and appreciation of the orator’s method of imparting his (sic) ideas to his (sic) hearers” (p. 209).

Modern approaches to criticism, including the new method discussed in this chapter, push the boundary of the notions of audience, orator, and method beyond the space of Wichelns’ limitations. Edwin Black (1965/1978) began the deconstruction of the Neo-Aristotelian paradigm, arguing that Neo-Aristotelian approaches represented a “decision to evaluate rhetorical discourse in its immediate context by either measuring effect or by assessing the persuasive quality” which “results in a severe truncation, if not a virtual abdication, of the judicial function of criticism” (Gaonkar, 1990, p. 301). More importantly, the Neo-Aristotelian framework ignores the role of the critic in the relationship between object and method. In this sense, criticism is ideal if “a critic were to see any rhetorical discourse as working to make certain techniques conventional, to shape an audience’s expectations for discourses that they will hear and read, to mold an audience’s sensibilities to language” (Black, p. 56). Herein lies the birth of the idea of dominant narrative.

Dominant narratives represent a culmination of Black's criteria in that they work to make certain techniques conventional and shape the audience's expectations for discourses and sensibilities to language. This notion differs little from Foucault's "regime of truth" that functions to "enable one to distinguish true and false statements" and "the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth" (1977, p. 72-72). The narratives are "dominant" precisely because they begin to both produce and reproduce the surrounding social, cultural, and political sphere. The conventional nature of the narratives makes them the norm in social discourse, and the narratives are then utilized to construct a society's truths and control the power exchanges that promote those truths. As a result, these narratives become inextricably woven into the texts they permeate.

Rhetorical scholars generate mixed views about the nature of historical context and its role in constructing dominant narratives. Some argue longitudinal study of the long lasting effects of texts is important. Beyond the Neo-Aristotelian perspective, this assertion claims "such a reading would place a lessened emphasis on the need for the critic to provide a single magisterial reading of the invitation of the text" while "attending to the insurgent polysemy of the text" (Campbell, 1990, p. 369). Other scholars argue this longitudinal emphasis should be instead placed directly on the historical context of the object, so that a critic may "identify dominant strategies of remembrance, as well as the chronological historical absences required of those articulations" (Bruner, 2002, p. 269). In chapter one of this thesis, historical significance is determined through discussions of political, social, and academic discourses that work to frame the dominant narrative of the educational space, providing the groundwork to later analyze the texts

themselves for both the “historical absences” Bruner notes and the “polysemy” Campbell identifies. As a result, these notations of both social/political discourse and academic discourse in the literature review herein become the frame of the dominant narratives that chapter three will explore to determine if and how they are at work in the textbooks.

While Black (1965/1978) creates the grounding for dominant narratives, more contemporary rhetorical scholars have elaborated on this notion. Foucault’s regimes of truth fit into the dominant narrative paradigm, as do Deleuze and Guatari’s assemblages. Also helpful here is Derrida’s previously mentioned assertion about the study of ensemble creation through deconstruction. Deconstruction is one of the most specifically definable systems of rhetorical approach to regimes of truth, discursive formations, and assemblages, all directed at discovering dominant narratives. In this sense, “the very meaning and mission of deconstruction is to show that things – texts, institutions, societies, beliefs, and practices of whatever size and sort you need – do not have definable meanings and determinable missions, that they are always more than any mission would impose, that they exceed the boundaries they currently occupy” (Caputo & Derrida, 1997, p. 31). As a result, “every time you try to stabilize the meaning of a thing, to fix it in its missionary position, the thing itself, if there is anything at all to it, slips away” (p. 31).

The approach in this analysis incorporates the ideas of deconstruction into its methodology in a different way. Basic communication course textbooks reveal discursive formations and assemblages that work to help construct and reflect the dominant narratives concerning education and the student. The process of identifying discursive formations and assemblages becomes a process of deconstructing the text in a

way that allows for an exploration of the spaces these formations create before letting them slip away, if they indeed do so. Freire's notion of banking and narration then provides a vehicle to help understand and identify the formations and assemblages, as well as to explore the ways in which they fit into and help form the dominant narrative of education.

### Discursive Formations and Assemblages

Using a combination of Foucault's discursive formations and Deleuze and Guattari's assemblages for rhetorical study evolved from the work of Nakayama and Krizek (1995) in their article about the rhetorical space of whiteness. The goal of utilizing this methodological approach is to create a method to attempt to find spaces of power relations at work in a text. In this sense, "the place from which power is exercised is often a hidden place. When we try to pin it down, the center always seems to be somewhere else. Yet we know that this phantom center, elusive as it is, exerts a real, undeniable power over the framework of our culture, and over the ways we think about it" (Ferguson in Nakayama & Krizek, p. 291). Identifying discursive formations and assemblages at work in a text allows for a chance to territorialize the space created by the text and the dominant narrative it may simultaneously reflect and work to construct.

Assemblage is a necessary component to work with discursive formation in a rhetorical approach to the reading of a text for three key reasons, according to Nakayama and Krizek (1995). First, Deleuze and Guattari's work is consistent with the critical turn in rhetorical criticism by not prescribing methodology. Instead, they "offer the concept of the nomadic scholar who is not constrained by methodology, but by perspective" (Nakayama & Krizek, p. 294). Secondly, the view of power relations offered by Deleuze

and Guattari “upends traditional, linear histories” (p. 294) allowing it to be more dynamic and to compliment Foucault’s historically grounded approach to discursive formation. Finally, Nakayama and Krizek argue that Deleuze and Guattari’s most compelling contribution to methodological approach in rhetoric is their idea of deterritorialization.

In describing the relationship of the book to the world, Deleuze and Guattari (1980/2004) frame this process of deterritorialization:

Contrary to a deeply rooted belief, the book is not an image of the world. It forms a rhizome with the world, there is an aparallel evolution of the book and the world; the book assures the deterritorialization of the world, but the world effects a reterritorialization of the book, which in turn deterritorializes itself in the world (if it is capable, if it can). (p. 12)

Deterritorialization increases the territory of a particular idea, method, object, or approach. Reterritorialization shifts the center back again, creating boundaries for the space, yet never (re)constructing the same space as before. This flow, or constant shift, is aligned with the Foucaultian notion of power as fluid. We might think of power as water in a bottle. The bottle can be turned, and the water will shift, but will recenter itself in another place when we move the bottle, and likely will end up back where it started. In this process, “the two factors nevertheless have the same ‘subject’ in a stratum; it is populations that are deterritorialized and reterritorialized, and also coded and recoded” (Deleuze & Guattari, p. 61). The methodology utilized in this work proceeds with the student population as its focus, seeking to determine the nature of the deterritorializations and reterritorializations that influence this population’s space.

Once the assemblage has been identified, it is possible to understand how it functions. Both of these tasks, identification and understanding, mirror the way discursive formation is utilized in rhetorical scholarship. However, after this identification, the assemblage then can be rearticulated as a counterhegemonic move. This rearticulating or reassembling of the narrative provides a unique compliment and extension to Foucault's notion of formation, and works to explain how the agents (e.g. the students) are able to articulate and rearticulate the space constructed for them.

Deleuze and Guattari discuss the terminal purposes of assemblages and how they are identified: "If we wish to move to the real definition of a collective assemblage, we must ask of what consist these acts immanent to language that are in redundancy with statements and order-words" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2004, p. 89). When applied to a text, this process becomes one of searching for repetitive themes and identifying order-words as they exist to structure a hierarchy of power within the text. Again, the commonality with Foucault's notion of discursive formation is evident. For Foucault, "the unity of a discursive formation is not based on the degree to which the theoretical perspectives it contains agree with one another, but on the manner in which systems of dispersion manifest an organized logic or code at work" (Gemin, 1997a, p. 251-252). In criticism, this marriage of method between Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari consists of determining these organized patterns, logic, and codes.

In regard to the act of deterritorialization, Deleuze and Guattari (1980/2004) argue that the process is a mirror component of reterritorialization, the concept that adheres also to Foucault's notion of the fluidity of power relations. They argue, "deterritorialization must be thought of as a perfectly positive power that has degrees and thresholds

(epistrata), is always relative, and has reterritorialization as its flipside or component” (p. 60). Once assemblages are identified, notions of territorialization help a critic understand the interaction between a text and an audience. This dynamic, ongoing process from Deleuze and Guattari provides a way in this analysis to discuss how students experience the text, producing and reproducing meaning from it. The process is compatible with Foucault’s notion of positive power discussed in the introduction, a notion that implies shaping influences over human action and thought.

#### The Addition of Freire to Formations and Assemblages: The Power of Narrative

When Paulo Freire (1970/2000) first described the power relations evident in a classroom, he chose one overarching analogy for his descriptions of student interactions. He argues, “A careful analysis of the student-teacher relationship at any level, inside or outside the school, reveals its fundamentally *narrative* character. This relationship involves a narrating Subject (the teacher) and patient, listening objects (the students)” (p. 71). Here Freire gets to the heart of his critical analysis of classroom exchanges in power; that at its core, these interactions are interactions of narration. This analysis extends Freire’s hypothesis to the student-textbook relationship. The extension of Freire’s argument in this way is justified for two compelling reasons.

First, the student-textbook relationship is both grounded in and created by the student-teacher relationship. Teachers rather than students write textbooks, and this quality immediately places the textbook in a similar space within the student-teacher relationship as the teachers themselves. In this sense, a student interacts with two significant sets of educational components in a higher education classroom setting, the instructor set and the textbook set. The instructor set includes the instructor and their



directive materials (i.e. syllabus and self created teaching materials). The textbook set includes the text itself, plus any added components incorporated with the textbook, which frequently include online sections, guidebooks or workbooks, and supplemental materials. These two sets, instructor and textbook, construct and reflect the power of the classroom in totality, and their presence works to territorialize the student in ways that this analysis seeks to explore.

Second, the narration component of the student-textbook relationship is undeniably like the student-teacher relationship. Textbooks themselves can be read as one long story, a story of what, who, when, where, and why phenomena occur concerning the particular subject matter. In addition, many higher education textbooks (particularly at the introductory levels of any discipline) include scenario based learning, a model in which fictional stories about fictional characters describe and depict the concept the textbook is constructing for the student to learn. Most evident in these narration tactics is the consistent approach to the student, except here the textbook functions as the narrating subject and the student remains the passive listener. This role of listener is passive both because students are expected to retain the information and because they are expected to regurgitate it in some form of an examination or written essay. As a result, the process of storytelling and narration in the classroom becomes embedded in the power relations of what material is taught, how that material is taught, and why that material is chosen to be taught from the sea of potential material in the discipline.

Narration as a component of rhetorical analysis is typically not credited to Freire, but rather to Walter Fisher (1984) through his introduction of “narrative rationality” as a paradigm. Fisher argues that the rational world paradigm has been and continues to be

the dominant method of public moral argument, but is problematic at a number of levels. Primarily, Fisher argues that the corruption of the rational world paradigm can be attributed to the fact that “being rational (being competent in argument) must be learned” and as a result, “an historic mission of education in the West has been to generate a consciousness of national community and to instruct citizens in at least the rudiments of logic and rhetoric” (p. 4). In this sense, Fisher posits that another paradigm, the narrative paradigm, should be “contemplated as worthy of coexisting with the rational world paradigm” (p. 3) for two key reasons.

First, Fisher (1984) proposes *homo narrans* as one of the necessary “root metaphors” that “represents the essential nature of human beings” (p. 6). Here, Fisher argues that the notion that narrative thought is innate for human beings, in contrast with the rational paradigm that requires teaching in order to attain human mastery. As a result, Fisher propels the idea of *homo narrans*, arguing that it becomes the “master metaphor” that subsumes the other metaphors of humanity. As a result, he describes the narration process: “each mode of recounting and accounting for is but a way of relating a ‘truth’ about the human condition” (p. 6). The recounting and accounting for identified by Fisher grounds the assertions made in this thesis that narration is a necessary component of a methodology of discursive formation and assemblage. Fisher’s own discussion of narration assumes both the “truth telling” Foucault identifies as the power of dominant narrative and the “recounting and accounting” that Deleuze and Guattari discuss as part of the territorialization process.

Second, Fisher (1984) uses the “good reasons” discussion as a path to explain how humans use stories to make and understand their world. Here he argues,

Rationality is determined by the nature of persons as narrative beings – their inherent awareness of *narrative probability*, what constitutes a coherent story, and their constant habit of testing *narrative fidelity*, whether the stories they experience ring true with the stories they know to be true in their lives. (p. 8)

This part of narrative theory is vital for the methodology in this thesis. Fidelity and probability are posited by Fisher as a means by which humans determine “good reasons” and as the central way that the set of stories in the world is either believed or rejected by the hearer of the story. It is this innate ability that humans possess that makes the narrative paradigm a competitive mode of rationality for Fisher. However, as Freire has established, in the teacher-student interaction (and as a result, the textbook-student interaction), the student is a passive listener. An understanding of this power relationship is at the heart of the methodology in this thesis.

The integration of Freire and narration theory along with Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari is integral in discovering power relations at work in a text. Foucault (1982) discusses these power relations with regard to the educational space. He argues,

Take for example an educational institution: the disposal of its space, the meticulous regulations which govern its internal life, the different activities which are organized there, the diverse persons who live there or meet one another, each with his (sic) own function, his well defined character – all of these things constitute a block of capacity-communication-power. (p. 218)

In this sense, the educational context carries a particular type of power assertions both by and about its subjects. Foucault goes on to note that these power relations in the

educational space are constituted by “lessons, questions and answers, orders, exhortations, coded signs of obedience, and differentiation marks of the ‘value’ of each person and of levels of knowledge” (p. 218). He calls these approaches “regulated communication” (p. 218). In a classroom of higher education, the textbook includes the majority of these regulated approaches that constitute power norms in the classroom space.

As a result, an application of this methodology to a text essentially illuminates the necessary power relations structured and deconstructed by the text. This methodological approach articulates finally the necessity of Freire and Fisher’s perspective on narration. While the student may receive stories from the text and may even evaluate them based on probability and fidelity, the process of “good reason” is shaped and structured by classroom power relations, which are evident in the text. Here, the discursive formations and assemblages operate in powerful ways that work both to reveal and conceal their own power and the power of the audience (i.e. the student) to territorialize these spaces. The power relationships then become evident and might be exposed to the “counterhegemonic moves” that Deleuze and Guattari note as part of the process of reterritorialization.

Freire (1970/2000) elaborates on these power relationships. He argues “the more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are” (p. 72). As a result, “in the banking model of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider know nothing” (p. 72). This leads to “projecting an absolute ignorance onto others” and “negates education and knowledge as a process of inquiry” (Freire, p. 72). This component of narration applies in the same way to the textbook-student relationship and

makes the inclusion of narrative theory absolutely necessary in an understanding of how these texts work to reflect and construct the dominant narratives of the discipline.

### Implementation of the Methodology

This thesis proceeds next to chapter three, the analysis of existing textbooks. For this project, five textbooks were chosen based upon distribution, popularity, and longevity in use. The texts include: *Communication: Principles for a Lifetime*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed by Beebe, Beebe, and Ivy; *Comm*, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. by Verderber, Verderber, and Sellnow; *Human Communication. The Basic Course*, 11<sup>th</sup> Ed. by Devito; *Communication Mosaics. An Introduction to the Field of Communication*, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed by Wood; and *Communication: Making Connections*, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed by Seiler and Beall. The textbooks were chosen to represent a group of texts to which the largest group of students would be exposed (e.g. basic course texts) over the longest periods of time (e.g. texts in later editions that represent longevity in use by the discipline). Each textbook will be analyzed using the method described herein.

First, the texts are scoured for narrative exchanges and narrative approaches. Here, narratives are broadly interpreted, using a hermeneutic approach to their definition. Bruner (2003) articulates this position: “the accounts of protagonists and events that constitute a narrative are selected and shaped in terms of a putative story or plot that ‘contains’ them” (p. 47). These narratives will in turn have parts that contribute to the total understanding of its whole. In this sense, “there seems to be indeed some sense in which narrative, rather than referring to ‘reality’, may in fact create or constitute it, as when ‘fiction’ creates a ‘world’ of its own” (Bruner, p. 52). At its most basic, a narrative consists of characters, actions, settings, and outcomes, much like Burkean dramatism.

However, this analysis moves beyond traditional narrative structure. In its “hermeneutic composability” (Bruner, p. 47), a narrative essentially dictates pieces that come together as whole to create meaning. So while narratives in textbooks might be found in fictional stories to illustrate concepts, they just as easily appear in the piecing together of a coherent message throughout the work. For example, a text might carry a “communication is something we should study” grand narrative, which is put together chapter by chapter in telling stories of ways in which the dominant claim is justified as true.

Next, the narratives or narration present are aligned into a set of discursive formations or assemblages. As discussed throughout this chapter, redundancy, repetition, and order-words all work to constitute both discursive formation and assemblage within a text, which then in turn can be explored across texts using the same vehicles. Finally, the discursive formations and assemblages present are discussed in relation to the ways they constitute or (re)constitute spaces for the student, articulate or decompose the possibility for counterhegemonic moves, and enforce or reflect the dominant narratives of the higher education classroom.

### III: ANALYSIS

Five texts were selected for this analysis. Choices were made based upon discussions with publishers, attendance at book fairs at major conferences such as the National Communication Association annual convention, and a review of which texts are most widely utilized at universities where the basic course is standard over long periods of time, reflected in later editions of the text. Newer texts like the Beebe book are included based on their wide distribution radius (a top seller for Allyn and Bacon since its 1<sup>st</sup> edition release in 2001) and older texts like the Verderber text, which while technically in a 1<sup>st</sup> edition, is in reality an extension of Verderber and Verderber's previous text, *Communicate!*, which was last published in 2004 as an 11<sup>th</sup> edition.

This analysis attempts to remain genuine to its Foucaultian methodological considerations. In this sense, while formations are descriptively identified and discussed, they are not deemed particularly objectionable, good, bad, desirable, or undesirable. Pickett (1996) offers an explanation of Foucault's rejection of these particular labels with regard to discursive formation. Foucault argues that these labels will lead to actions or modes of resistance that "become trapped in the very system of power that they are trying to overcome" (Pickett, p. 447). As a result, this chapter provides a descriptive analysis of the formations with textual examples. Deleuze and Guattari's notion of assemblage, along with critical pedagogy literature, are utilized as mechanisms to understand implications of discursive formations and generate the bulk of the conclusions drawn about these formations in chapter four.

Before moving into two specific content themes that form discursive formations fluent in these five texts, two observations are useful. First, the organizational structure of the texts helps establish the commonalities between the texts, justifying the search for formations between them. Second, a discursive formation exists that this analysis will deem foundational for the operation of the two content formations, specifically with regard to authorship and the texts.

### Organization Across the Texts

All five texts are organized almost identically. Each opens with some type of short preface, explaining the features of the text, the course, and often including some acknowledgements by the corporal author. They range in length from 258 pages (Verderber) to 498 pages (Seiler). They contain between fifteen and nineteen chapters each, and chapter content is markedly similar. Each text begins with a foundational or preliminary chapter. The texts are so similar, even the titles of the opening sections create a discursive formation based on their likeness. They include “Communication Careers and Foundations” (Wood), “Foundations of Communication” (Verderber), “Foundations of Human Communication” (Devito), “Foundations of Human Communication” (Beebe), and “Making Connections through Communication” (Seiler). Using the methodological approach described in chapter two of this thesis, the repetition here is undeniably present.

The texts include almost identical content areas as well. Each text covers several topic areas deemed essential for the study of communication through the basic course. These include perception, verbal communication, nonverbal communication, listening, interpersonal communication, group communication, and public/presentational speaking.



All five texts include at least one chapter on each of the above topic areas. Culture is also featured in each text, although in the Beebe text and Wood text, it is discussed in a chapter identified as “Adapting” while Devito and Verderber designate a single chapter about culture. In the Seiler text, culture is discussed in the chapter entitled “Connecting Self and Communication”. Gender is discussed in all five texts, although no chapters are defined or appropriated as chapters on gender as its own topic area, a notable fact about the discursive formation of these texts. Gender is found in the “Adapting” chapters from the Beebe text, and the culture chapters from the Verderber text and the Seiler text. The Devito and Wood texts scatter the discussion of gender throughout other chapters, such as listening and nonverbal.

The Beebe text is most explicit about a system of organization in its preface. The text claims, “To help students remember and integrate essential information, we’ve organized the study of human communication around five fundamental communication principles” (Beebe, 2007, p. xvi). The text goes on to defend this organizational approach as legitimate:

The communication principles we highlight should look familiar. However, although they are included in some way in most introductory communication texts, they are not as often used as a scaffolding to provide coherence to the entire course. In most texts, principles are typically presented in the first third of the book and then abandoned, as material about interpersonal, group, and public communication is presented. We don’t use a hit-and-run approach.  
(p. xvi)

In this defense, a clear foundation for discursive formation becomes evident. The text acknowledges its undeniable similarity to other texts and their organizational structure, which is consistent with the analysis of the textual structures above and provides the impetus for the type of analysis this thesis focuses upon. However, it goes on to maintain its authenticity and differences from these texts.

This text's acknowledgement of its similarity to others like it is notable when considering a notation found earlier in another, the Seiler text. Early in its discussion of communication, this text argues that plagiarism is defined as "the use of another person's information, language, or ideas without citing the originator and making it appear that the user is the originator" (Seiler, 2008, p. 7). The Devito text offers a similar definition: "the term plagiarism refers to passing off the work (ideas, words, illustrations) of others as our own. It is not the act of using another's ideas – we all do that. Plagiarism is using another's ideas without acknowledging that they are the ideas of another person; it is presenting ideas as if they were ours" (Devito, 2009, p. 313). The Verderber text defines plagiarism as "the unethical act of representing another person's work as your own" (Verderber, 2009, p. 158). The Beebe and Wood texts offer no specific definition of plagiarism.

The use of the term "plagiarism" begins to illuminate the opening of another foundational formation at work in these texts that functions with regard to authorship concerns. The Beebe text begins its exertion of power early, articulating a clear space for itself in direct opposition to other texts, despite marked similarities. It does this by framing the approach of these other texts as "hit-and-run". The text works to position itself in opposition to other texts immediately, and in doing so, generates a specific space

for the reader/student. In addition, the discussion of plagiarism at work in many of these texts is notable when observing the similarities in organizational structure of all five texts. None of the texts give credit to another author or notate their use of particular topic approaches, even though the approaches are almost identical. As evidenced above in the naming function of the opening chapters alone, the texts mimic each other without regard for or articulation of the very credit they later deem “ethical”.

Two implications stem from this argument concerning authorship and the way the texts address the notion of plagiarism. First, since the texts indeed mimic each other without regard for their own later edicts that credit needs to be appropriated when the words of another are used, Foucault’s notions of contradiction and polysemy are evident. As discussed in chapter one, Foucault argues that discursive formations are “a space of multiple dimensions; a set of different oppositions whose levels and roles must be described” (Foucault, 1972, p. 155), and he argues that they are not without their own levels of contradiction. The multiple meanings implied by increasingly post-structural modes of criticism depend on these contradictions to imply the impress of power, both externally and internally. The presence of this contradiction in the five texts discussed in this thesis not only indicates the operation of discursive formations, but also legitimizes the discursive formation approach as the most basic way to discuss power through the texts. Simultaneously, the presence of these contradictions illuminates the appearance of assemblage at work in the relationship between text and reader (in this case, student).

Second, the contradiction inherent in the organizational approach of the texts draws attention to another tenet of the methodology used in this thesis. Consider the following question: If all five texts use the same approach in organization, almost word

for word, then who originally came up with those words? Which texts are plagiarizing and which texts are being plagiarized from, based on their own definitions of plagiarism? The impossibility of answering this question highlights a critical argument Foucault discusses with regard to discursive formation, the disappearance of the author. The next section will discuss this argument and its relevance in this analysis.

### The Notion of Authorship: A Foundational Discursive Formation in Communication

#### Texts

The five texts selected for this analysis represent the work of ten authors. All ten authors have Ph.D. degrees in communication, and are currently affiliated with universities from Ohio, Kentucky, New York, Texas, North Carolina, Iowa, and Nebraska. Across the ten are six women and four men. Four of the five books have introductory prefaces in which the texts are explained, new changes for the edition are introduced, and the author(s) acknowledge a number of people who have influenced their work. The Verderber text lacks this preface. In all four of the preface sections, specific detail is paid to “student resources” that the text includes. These resources range from electronic and video materials to interactive website additions to the text. Markedly each text dedicates between four and seven pages to a discussion of the appropriation of the text in technological spaces.

Beyond these basic observations, each text operates in a way that creates a narrative space in which the student and the text exist together in specific ways. While they use different methods through which to enter this space, each text grounds itself in a narrative approach that makes the methodology discussed herein relevant in the final analysis. The authors of each text articulate their voice in ways that construct the

position of the text in relation to the student. In some continental philosophy, the possibility of a disconnect between the corporal author and a text is discussed. Barthes (1967) noted that assigning a particular text to an author was a way to impose a limit on that text:

A text consists of multiple writings, issuing from several cultures and entering into dialogue with each other, into parody, into contestation; but there is one place where this multiplicity is collected, united, and this place is not the author, as we have hitherto said it was, but the reader. (p. 148)

For Barthes, the possibility of meaning was to lie with the reader of the text, and not with the author. As a result, he widely discouraged historical analysis and acknowledgement of the author's background, views, or status as a part of criticism.

Foucault would later tamper with Barthes' discussion in his own work about discursive formations and the author. In a discussion of historical approach to discourse, Foucault (1969) describes precisely the tactics used in the five communication texts in this analysis. Historically he argues, "once a system of ownership for texts came into being, once strict copyright rules concerning author's rights...were enacted - toward the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century - the possibility of transgression attached to the act of writing took on, more and more, the form of an imperative peculiar to literature" (p. 212). In this sense, discursive formations historically have been strongly linked to the idea that the "author function" (Foucault, 1969, p. 211) heavily influences the text itself, a notion that Foucault openly rejects, arguing instead that authorship serves not as a textual marker but rather a subject position, and this shift signals the disappearance of the author (p. 222).

Here, Foucault generates some questions that are useful for this analysis. He argues that questions such as “Who really spoke? With what authenticity or originality? What part of his (sic) deepest self did he (sic) express in his (sic) discourse?” (p. 222) become replaced with questions such as:

What are the modes of existence for this discourse? Where has it been used, how can it circulate, and who can appropriate it for himself (sic)? What are the places in it where there is room for possible subjects? Who can assume these various subject functions? (p. 222)

Carrying these questions forward, the similarities within the five texts in this analysis are striking with regard to authorship positioning, and create a significant foundational discursive formation.

One text, the Wood text, includes a one page “introduction to the author” in which the author discusses her background and personal experience in the subject matter using an operative “I”. Three of the other texts (Beebe, Seiler, and Devito) use this “I” or “we” voice in the acknowledgements section of the preface. The Wood text extends this highly personalized “we” and “I” language throughout the textbook chapters, using “we” to refer to the author and student. For example, in the opening chapter she notes, “In my classes, students teach me and each other by sharing their insights, experiences, and questions. Because I believe students have much to teach us, I’ve included reflections written by my students at my university and other campuses” (Wood, 2008, p. 7). This inclusion of student narratives throughout is a prime example of inclusion and exclusion of particular spaces for the student via narrative of the text. Students are invited to share in the experience of the text with their fellow subject position, other students, rather than the

detached author function. Yet, inclusion and exclusion of the student narratives are appropriated specifically by the author, an insertion of the corporal author's power into the space of the text.

In addition, the Wood text begins each chapter with a highly personalized story from the author in first person. Chapter two opens with a story about the author's father and the tales he used to recount about family history. Chapter three opens with a story about the quest of the author and her partner in the adoption of a new puppy. These narratives serve as the foundation for the discursive formations at work in the text, grounded in highly personalized authorship as opposed to a more author detached research oriented approach. The subject function of the author shifts from researcher to friend, or even confidant, through a string of self-disclosures (e.g. the author's sexual orientation is revealed by default through her discussion of her romantic partner and their relationship).

This shifting function rearticulates the space for the student. Not only does the author employ the space of external power (through qualifications, research notations through the writing, etc.), but now the author also impresses an internal notion of similarity. This action occurs textually and blurs the boundaries of the space created for the reader (i.e. student) and their subject position in relation to the text. Power is impressed both externally through author ownership of the text (as Foucault discusses) and internally by way of subject positioning through the text. In short, a student is invited to accept the claims of the text as true both because of the author's status and degree of expertise and as a result of their feelings of *connection* with the author. A space is generated by the text where the author and student can share an overlapping

subject space – they both once bought a puppy, or both have listened intently to family stories at the dinner table. This power impress is found at work in other texts as well.

The Seiler text utilizes the universal “we” more frequently than the more interpersonal “we” and “I” employed by the Wood text. It includes an “About the Authors” section that is written in third person biography rather than the first person of the Wood text. In this sense, the same form of power enactment through qualification and expertise is present as in the Wood text, what I have deemed “external” power impressing. However, the same efforts as “internal” power impress occur here as well, in efforts to overlap the author position and the student subject position in an attempt at similarity. For example, in the opening chapter, the Seiler text ponders, “What is communication? And what do we mean when we say that communication occurs? How do we know when we have communicated effectively? How do we use communication to *make connections* in our lives?” (Seiler & Beall, 2008, p. 3). This “we” is used prolifically in various spots throughout the text, and operates to conflate the author and student subject spaces.

Countless more examples of interpersonal narrative flow from the Seiler text much like those witnessed in the Wood text’s approach. For example, in discussing listening, the text takes a narrative tone similar to the Wood text, noting, “I tell my students that the listener is 51 percent responsible for effective communication” (p. 159). Again it is evident that the text begins to normatively tell stories of the author position, and these stories are appropriated to rearticulate the spaces designed for both author and student. Much like the Wood text, the Seiler text employs the space of internal power



impress repeatedly in chapter openings. In the beginning of chapter three, the Seiler text directly addresses the reader in a specific way:

For example, when you are home with your parents, your self-image as a responsible adult might at times come into question. You might not pick up things after yourself, or you might even expect that someone else will do your laundry, and so forth. However, when you are away at college, you perform these tasks competently and see yourself as a responsible adult. Despite such readily admitted pockets of irresponsibility, does this mean you will see yourself in this way? No, of course not! (p. 56)

A prime example of narration designed to rearticulate the subject positions of the author and the student, the above text works in two ways to impress power. First, the author becomes an omniscient voice speaking directly to the student. In the same way that the Wood text seeks identification through common self-disclosure, the Seiler text here seeks to directly identify with the student through a clear articulation of understanding of a traditional college student's life. Setting aside the exclusive nature of this narrative (discussed later in this chapter), the story seeks to position the author as an expert not in communication, but also in the life of the college student, striking the same internal power articulations evident in the Wood text.

Secondly, while functioning to impress power through identification with the student, the Seiler text here simultaneously operates to impress external power upon the student. This represents a prime example of Foucaultian polysemous textual meaning (Foucault, 1969, p. 222) at work. In the subtle insertion of the following text: "Despite such readily admitted pockets of irresponsibility", the author space immediately

reemerges from a space of peer-like identification with the student to a space of external judgment of the student, almost like a parent or other outside power structure. The text emerges as both an attempt of friendly understanding of the student and an exertion of omniscient power wielding over the student. This occurs repeatedly through the text, most frequently in chapter introductions.

The Devito text articulates yet another approach to the authorship formation. Like the Wood text, the acknowledgement section of the preface is written in a highly personal first person approach, yet lacks the increased self-disclosure found in the Wood text. Relying heavily on the external power establishment of credibility and expertise, the text opens most units with a narrative approach that places the author as narrator to the student as narratee. While other texts work in similar ways, this is the primary feature of the authorship formation in the Devito text. For example, in the opening of chapter one, unit one, the text opens as follows:

Let's begin this unit with a clear explanation of what you'll get out of this text and course and what forms of communication you'll study. You'll benefit greatly from studying the forms of communication covered in this course. So let's begin our exploration with an introduction of these benefits. (Devito, 2009, p. 3)

The polysemy we see in both Wood and Seiler is again evident. While the Devito approach relies more heavily on external power impress based on expertise and knowledge, there still is an attempt to simultaneously create identification between the student and author. The text here positions the student clearly as learner, immediately articulating the text as having power to give the student specific knowledge they do not currently possess. However, at the same time, it identifies the student as a partner with

the author in this journey, beginning the exploration of communication together. This overlapping subject positioning is precisely evident in the previous two texts as well as here in the Devito text.

The Beebe text uses a similar approach to author introduction in the preface as Devito and Seiler, with a short acknowledgements section written in third person. Like Devito above, this text depends more heavily on external power articulation in generating the space for the student. In the opening of chapter one, the text address the student directly, generating a specific power relationship between the text and the reader:

In the course of our study of human communication, we will discuss a myriad of skills, ideas, concepts, and contexts. The number of terms, ideas, skills, and competencies that you'll encounter in the discussion can be overwhelming. To help you stitch together the barrage of ideas and information, we will organize our study around five fundamental communication principles. (Beebe, 2007, p. 2)

As with Devito, the text here immediately articulates its power to impress knowledge upon the reader that they do not already possess. In addition, the articulation of power in this part of the discursive formation more assertively articulates not only the subject position of the text as teacher and student as learner. The text goes on to more clearly determine the boundary where the student space is articulated by speculating the student's subject positioning in relation to academic ability through the assumption that the student will be overwhelmed by the text and needs particular accommodation in order to experience it.

The Beebe text continues throughout to work by assumptions, like the Devito and Seiler texts, that articulate the student space in an effort to create both the external power

of expertise and the internal power of identification, or an effort by the text to appear similar to the student in some way, conflating the differing subject positions. In the introduction to chapter two, a chapter about self awareness – the first principle in the Beebe text – the text works to assume the actions of everyday college students in exactly the same way observed above in the Wood and Seiler texts: “Many of you have designed a personal Web page as part of a class project or simply because you wanted a way to communicate who you are to people across the globe” (Beebe, 2007, p. 30). It goes on in the next paragraph:

If you do not have your own Web page, you’ve probably had other opportunities to communicate who you are, perhaps by writing a self-exploratory essay as part of your college application process. Some of you have no doubt placed personal ads in your local or campus newspaper. (p. 30)

Again, this example demonstrates the depth of the foundational discursive formation regarding authorship at work in these textbooks. An attempt is made at identification with the average college student in an effort to decrease distance between author and student. In effect, this discursive formation clearly defines a space in which the student is placed to exist and their subject positionality is articulated and maintained.

While the Verderber text avoids any discussion of the author through a preface or acknowledgements section (a demonstration of the Foucaultian nature of disappearing authorship in this text), it too generates specific authorship approaches to the author/student binary. Considering the opening paragraphs of the Verderber text: “During this course, you will learn about the communication process and have an opportunity to practice basic communication skills that will help you improve your

relationships” (Verderber, 2009, p. 3). It goes on to say, “we discuss communication competence and a process you can use for improving your communication skills” (p. 3). The external articulation of power is familiar and aligns with the formation found in the first four texts. The external articulation of power regards the text as teacher of knowledge that the student does not currently possess.

In addition, the same part of the formation regarding identification with the student is found throughout the Verderber text, particularly in the opening sections of each chapter (also consistent with findings across all five texts). In the opening of chapter seven, a chapter about listening, the text places the author and student positions very strategically: “Most of us can improve our listening skills. We must not underestimate the importance of listening, which can provide clarification, connect us to others, build trust and empathy, help us learn and remember material, and improve our evaluation of information” (p. 79). This part of the text depends more specifically on an internal power impress that articulates the author and student as closely aligned in the process of experiencing the text together. This is a different approach than the one utilized above, where the expertise of the author is impressed upon the student in an external way, clearly articulating the student as learner and the text as teacher.

In short, the notions of authorship at work in these texts are integral in generating a foundational discursive formation through which the texts articulate the space allowed for the student. The texts operate together to simultaneously impress power in two ways, externally through a top-down approach with author and text as teacher and student as learner and internally with an effort to create a sense of identification with the student reader. These two competing approaches demonstrate the first discursive formation

identified in this analysis and their contradiction opens up room for assemblage building, as discussed by Deleuze and Guattari. Students have two articulated subject positions offered by the text as they encounter it. First, they are offered the idea that the text is valid because it is a higher authority than the student, a notion Freire describes well in his discussion of the “banking model” of education. As he argues,

In the banking model of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as a process of inquiry. (Freire, 1970, p. 72)

The tone Freire describes here, originally discussed as a model in which “the students are the depositories and the teacher the depositor” (p. 72), is evident in the subject positioning articulated in the authorship formation of the communication texts in this analysis.

The second subject position articulated for the student is one of internal power impress, a world in which the student gives power to the text because it speaks to them, or they identify with it in some way. Just like the top-down power model described above, this approach was all discovered in all five texts, typically as an effort to align subject position with the student, describing the text as a “journey” for the student and text to experience together or as an attempt to identify with the student subject position through demonstrating an understanding of the lifestyle, beliefs, or ideas of the student subject position. Both of these articulations of space for the student provide the foundation for all of the content related discursive formations found in these texts by

empowering the text with a specific voice. Two are discussed here including the representation of relationships and identity and the appropriation of the communication discipline for manufactured purposes.

### Content Formation #1: Identity and Relationships

The first discursive formation at work in these five introductory communication texts is a formation concerning identity and relationships. In this sense, the texts function to create a specific type of space about identity and relationships for the student to occupy, which in turn is exclusive of all other spaces. The spaces created for students rest along two areas of social identity and relationships, including sex and gender and sexual orientation.

#### *Identity Sex and Gender*

All five texts create specific space with regard to notions of sex and gender. These spaces can best be described as essentialist. While essentialism originated from the work of Plato, its modern conception has moved a bit beyond his idea that every form has a true, underlying essence. In modern scholarship, essentialism is discussed as a phenomenon implying a belief that certain phenomena are natural, inevitable, universal, and biologically determined (Irvine, 1990). It should also be noted that at least part of the research concerning this cultural term argues that the word itself generates a particular limitation. For example, DeLamater and Hyde (1998) argue, “Interestingly, the term *essentialism* is generally used by those who are opposed to it, not those who practice it” (p. 11). As a result, sociobiological and evolutionary theorists have much to say on the matter (e.g. Wilson, 1975 and Symons, 1979); however, this analysis is concerned only

with discussing what spaces are articulated for the student through identification of discursive formation, not whether these spaces are valid or invalid.

Consider the following assertions made in various chapters throughout the Beebe text. In chapter two, titled “Self-Awareness and Communication”, in the section about self-esteem, the text argues,

The difference in self-esteem levels seems to pertain to such factors as boys feeling better able to do things than girls. A related factor is the reinforcement boys receive from participating in athletics, which helps them cope with changes in their bodies better than girls. (p. 39)

This short commentary is absent any references to research outside of the text itself, and articulates power in a number of ways. First, the reference to athletics as a vehicle to boost self-esteem in males is a specific articulation of a discursive formation and power impress regarding sex and gender stereotypes. The following formation is generated here: athletics good for male self-esteem, males participate in athletics more than females, and males cope with body change better than girls. The articulated space for the student to identify their personal experience or articulate their subject position is very specifically limited.

Second, although these comments appear under a heading “Gender”, they clearly aimed at what the text defines as “sex”. The difference is noted by the text itself: “sex is the biological/physiological characteristics that make a person male or female” (p. 38) while “gender is a cultural construction that contains psychological characteristics but also includes your sex (being female or male), your attitude about appropriate roles and behavior for the sexes in society, and your sexual orientation (to whom you are sexually



attracted)” (p. 38). The text again asserts itself, articulating power by claiming, “because the term gender is more broad and all-inclusive, it’s our preferred term in this book” (p. 38). The text then goes on to defy its own stated preferential schema by using the term “gender” to make arguments that clearly are “sex” based, according to the textual definitions of both terms. The above notation about self-esteem focuses on physiological characteristics, and even includes a reference to “changes in their bodies”, narrowing the space constructed as a purely sex driven assumption. This space is articulated numerous times throughout the text.

Consider chapter six in the Beebe text, “Adapting to Others”. Half of the chapter is subtitled “Gender and Communication”, and defends the inclusion of gender alongside adaptation arguments about culture by stating the following,

Even though the focus of this chapter is on culture and gender differences, realize that these are only two of the many differences that can divide people. Differences in age, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and even in height, weight, or clothing choices have created tension between people in the past and probably will in the future. (p. 137)

Here, the text articulates clearly its own discursive formation. When it comes to adaptation in communication, the spaces where students should focus effort are culture and gender. When it comes to questions of adaptation in any of the other areas articulated above (or all of the possibilities absent from this list), the space for student is limited. In fact, the text does not even guarantee that tensions based on issues like sexual orientation will pervade the future, using the modifier “probably” in a deliberate way.

Chapter six in the Beebe text goes on to discuss gender in a specific way. Keeping in mind the discursive choices the text has made concerning the conflation of its own terms (i.e. “sex” and “gender”), consider the discussion of communication styles in men and women. The text argues, “Men tend to talk to accomplish something or complete a task. Women often use conversation to establish and maintain relationships” (p. 147). These are termed “instrumental” and “expressive” orientations, terms and/or arguments found again in the Wood text (p. 169), the Devito text (p. 90-91), the Verderber text (p. 93), and the Seiler text (p. 72). While this research is presented under headings such as “Gender and Communication”, “Gender Expectations”, “Gender Differences”, and “Listening and Gender”, it clearly represents part of the sex-based discursive formation, creating a distinction about communication practices based on physiological distinction rather than psychological or social boundaries. In presenting research in this manner, the text is using its foundational authorship formation to legitimize the articulation of a particular set of assumptions about sex, gender, and communication, and those assumptions are power laden. This impress of power again opens up spaces for the student to occupy, while eliminating others.

The Beebe text is not alone in generating a particular formation regarding sex and gender issues. Other texts make the same distinction between “sex” and “gender” that is found in the Beebe text (i.e. Devito, p. 34; Verderber, p. 56; Seiler, p. 70), and the Wood text repeatedly uses the term “gender” throughout when discussing the topic. Also, consider some of the following notations from the texts, generating the same power distinctions discursively as the Beebe examples above. The Devito text argues, “studies from different cultures show that women’s speech is generally more polite than men’s

speech, even on the telephone” (p. 105). It goes on to note, “women engage in significantly more affectional behaviors with their friends than do males” and “male friends self-disclose less often and with less intimate details than female friends do” (p. 198).

The Verderber text refers to research by Deborah Tannen (whose research is presented in all five texts), arguing “men are more likely to engage in report-talk (sharing information, displaying knowledge, negotiating, and preserving independence) whereas women engage in rapport-talk (sharing experiences, and stories to establish bonds with others)” (p. 93). The Wood text extends these arguments when it notes, “women are more active than men in giving verbal and nonverbal feedback, using head nods, facial expressions, and responsive questions to show interest” (p. 125). The Seiler text actually refers to research by Wood (the corporal author of another text in this analysis) to argue,

Men generally exhibit greater development of the left lobe of the brain (the locus of mathematical abilities, analytical thought, and sequential information processing), where as women manifest greater development of the right lobe of the brain (the locus of intuitive thought, imaginative and artistic activity, and some visual and special tasks). (p. 71)

First, it is notable that the authorship formation discussed earlier in this chapter is evident here. Texts begin to borrow from one another and appropriate the text of each other in specific ways that contribute to the discursive formation of sex and gender, demonstrating the Foucaultian notion of the disappearance of the author; consequently, this practice in some ways strengthens the formation itself.

Second, all of the texts operate in the same way to articulate space where the categories of male and female are represented in particular ways, utilizing certain sets of research to make arguments while ignoring others. As a result, this discursive formation articulates a space for the student to think about their subject position and the text that is exclusive of other spaces. The implications are significant with regard to the assemblages possible through these formations.

### *Relationships: Sexual Orientation*

All five of the texts in this analysis also function to create a discursive formation regarding sexual orientation, not only in terms of self identity and subject positioning, but also in terms of formations about what relationships are included and which are excluded from the formation. While some of the formation here can also be described as essentialist, like the sex and gender formation, this formation is probably best described as heterosexist. Heterosexism has been defined as “the ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any nonheterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community” (Herek, 1990, p. 318). Just like essentialism, a great deal of social psychological research exists regarding the nature of heterosexism (e.g. Weinberg & Williams, 1974; Herek, 1984). Again, this analysis is not preoccupied with the rightness or wrongness of research regarding the nature of heterosexism, but only uses the term provided as a marker to help describe the spaces articulated and power impresses evident in discursive formations of sexual orientation at work in introductory communication textbooks.

In chapter one, “Foundations of Human Communication”, the Beebe text asserts one reason why communication should be studied. In the subheading “To Improve Your

Health”, the text argues, “grief-stricken spouses are more likely than others to die prematurely, especially around the time of the departed spouse’s birthday or near their wedding anniversary” (p. 10). Due to its publication in the United States, a nation where marriage is patently narrowed to heterosexual relationships only, this statement establishes the beginning of a discursive formation normalizing heterosexuality, and closes a space for the student where homosexuality is ideologically excluded. The text goes on to make a number of references to marriage, and includes several uses of exclusive “wife” and “husband” language. For example, in chapter three, “Understanding Verbal Messages”, the text casually inserts an example into its discussion of “trigger words”:

One student, Travis, was immediately able to identify a word his wife used during arguments that really sparked his frustration and anger more than anything else. When Travis would make a point that frustrated his wife – one for which she had no comeback – she would look at him, toss her hands in the air, and say, “Whatever”. (p. 72)

The discursive formation here is at its most sophisticated in two ways. First, the example is casually inserted into the text, almost as a side note to the information presented for the student. Burke (1972) argues that these types of identification tactics are most effective, noting that these insertions “derive from situations where it goes unnoticed” (p. 28). The example fits this almost unnoticed criterion. Second, the foundational authorship formation provides the ground for the power of the text here. The text can shift away from its own voice, placing the interaction it describes in the hands of “one student”, fulfilling again the Foucaultian disappearance of the author. In this way, the text itself

asserts a space for the student of both identification and articulates the formation where marriage is an exclusive norm in communication interaction.

The examples like those above in the Beebe text are pervasive. Casual insertions of examples into the text are prevalent, like in chapter three, “Understanding Verbal Messages”, where the text describes how language has the power to shape and reflect culture: “Some gays and lesbians have reclaimed the once derogatory term *queer* and altered its meaning so that it’s now a term of pride...Gang languages and symbols are also a means of establishing an identity unique from other groups” (p. 65). The casual pairing of examples about homosexuals and gang members is another way to discursively create a formation that articulates a space for students to think about homosexuality. The text has chosen gang activity from all of the possible examples of language and made it comparable to homosexual approaches to language.

Most notable based on the Foucaultian methodology employed in this analysis is the subject positioning the text creates when it speaks directly about homosexuality. In the Beebe text, two notable assertions are made. First, in chapter three of the text (where we find the gang example above), the text actually defines heterosexist language, “A person who uses heterosexist language speaks from an assumption that the world is heterosexual, as if romantic and sexual attraction to those of the same sex or to both sexes was not possible” (p. 68). It goes on to discuss heterosexist language in a few ways, asking students rhetorical questions such as “have you ever heard an instructor in one of your classes give a dating example using two persons of the same sex?” and “how often do you hear or use the term *partner* instead of *husband* or *wife*” (p. 71)? In this sense, the polysemy and contradiction of the text is most evident. While using the external power

of authorship to define heterosexist language and generate questions about its use, the text itself employs the very language (e.g. terms like “husband” and “wife”) that it argues “communicates a heterosexist bias” (p. 71). This fits Foucault’s notion of discursive formation precisely.

Other elements at work in different texts articulate the same space for the student with regard to sexual orientation and relationships. A mere glance at photos used in the interpersonal chapters of each text to discuss romantic relationships provides evidence of the formation at work. Four of the five texts set aside chapters they specifically refer to as “interpersonal communication” chapters (Beebe, Wood, Devito, and Verderber). In the photographs of dyads across these eleven chapters, photos featured male/female dyads fifteen times, male/male dyads five times, and female/female dyads eight times. In the male/female dyad photos, romance, dating, or marriage were depicted fourteen out of the fifteen times. In the male/male dyad photos, romance, dating, or marriage were never featured, and in the female/female dyad photos, romance, dating, or marriage were featured only once. Using descriptive statistics, the texts depict male/female romance, marriage, or dating in 50% of all of their photos highlighting interpersonal dyads in addition to 100% of their comic strips featuring interpersonal dyads. This is in contrast to the depiction of interviewing or work dyads in 11% of the photos, and depictions of friendship dyads in 25% of the photos, leaving family and stranger dyads to account for 11% of the photos. The formation clearly articulates heterosexual romance as the space for student understanding of relevant communication contexts.

In the Verderber text, many examples like the ones described in the Beebe text are present. In chapter six, “Communicating in Relationships”, the text explains differences

between men and women that lead to intimacy in relationships, arguing, “when men and women fail to recognize these differences in disclosure patterns, the stage is set for misunderstandings about whether or not they are being truly open and intimate with each other” (p. 93). Again, relational romance is emphasized as heterosexual. The Verderber text also uses a number of heterosexual examples in relation to interpersonal behaviors, like the Beebe text. In chapter eight, “Developing Intimacy in Relationships”, the Verderber text describes the following example in a discussion of aggressive behavior in romantic relationships:

Aaron and Katie routinely go to the gym at 10 am Saturday mornings, but Aaron’s Friday work schedule has changed and he doesn’t get home until 3 am on Saturday morning. Aaron behaves passively if he doesn’t say anything to Katie but drags himself out of bed even though he’d much rather sleep. (p. 99)

As in the Beebe text, the casual insertion of heterosexual examples works to further articulate the space for the student to exist and to self identify.

In the Wood text, examples of heterosexual romance abound. In chapter ten, “Communication in Personal Relationships”, the text utilizes a number of personalized stories from students in this section to frame the concepts of the chapter. One story by a student named Sarah begins, “When Sean and I were first married, I was so happy I didn’t care about anything else” (p. 210). Another story from Miguel begins, “Sherry and I had been dating for six months when some of my friends from another school came to visit on their spring break. We decided to go out on Saturday night to hear a local band...She was so mad at me” (p. 211). Relationships are consistently framed in



heterosexual terms and the texts continually use heterosexual examples to impress and articulate the space for the student.

The Devito text issues the same warnings about heterosexist language found in the Beebe text, also offering students a number of rhetorical questions about their handling of such issues. For example, the text asks, “do you avoid making the assumption that every gay or lesbian knows what every other gay or lesbian is thinking” (p. 111)? It goes on to argue, “Usually, people assume the person they’re talking to or about is heterosexual. And usually they’re correct, because most people are heterosexual” (p. 111). The text goes on to use repeated heterosexual arguments about romantic relationships, including, “In much research men are found to place more emphasis on romance than women” (p. 202) and “when men and women were surveyed concerning their view on love – whether it’s basically realistic or basically romantic – it was found that married women had a more realistic (less romantic) conception of love that did married men” (p. 202).

The discursive formation here is evident. Not only does the text reinforce a space for the student where homosexuality is excluded, but also it includes the normative statement, “most people are heterosexual”. No research citation is present here in the text, and regardless of chosen research support or not, the text operates to specifically legitimize a particular articulation of interpersonal romance and dating that impresses power in certain ways. In short, the texts work together to formulate and articulate a clear discursive formation with regard to sexual orientation and relationships, one that is highly exclusive. As with the formation of sex and gender, this formation operates and

impresses power in specific ways that dictate the assemblages possible for the student. These will be discussed in chapter four of this thesis.

### Content Formation #2: Appropriation of Communication

The five texts in this analysis delineate a second major discursive formation. The texts appropriate communication and communication skills in particular ways. Most notably, the discursive formation is framed as a descriptor for why students should study communication, and communication itself is rarely the reason. In most cases, the texts work to justify the study of the discipline for other purposes or ends rather than framing communication as an end in and of itself. The particular choices and justifications provide the content of this discursive formation and can best be summarized in two themes: employability and maintenance of particular types of personal relationships.

On the first page of chapter one in the Verderber text, “Communication Perspectives”, an opening quote frames the entire chapter, and the text itself: “The first skill that employers seek from college graduates is communication, including both speaking and writing” (Verderber, p. 3). The statement is positioned at the top of the page, and is in considerably larger font than the rest of the writing, in addition to being published in a bright orange typeface, selected presumably to draw attention to the statement. This opening statement is an ample summary of what all five texts argue is the predominant justification for the study of communication. The Verderber text states in its opening paragraph, “Studies done over the years have concluded that, for almost any job, two of the most important skills sought by employers are oral communication skills and interpersonal abilities (Goleman, 1998, 12-13)” (Verderber, p. 3). After a significant paragraph about communication related skills in the workplace, the text moves

on to offer another justification for the study of communication: “How effective you are in your communication with others is important to your career, but it is also the foundation for all of your personal relationships” (p. 3). These two themes are found in all five texts and work to form the discursive formation that structures the space in which students are invited to understand the purpose for their study of communication.

The texts here not only offer these two justifications as reason for the study of communication, but also move on to impress their own importance in the process. The Verderber text uses chapter one to define a concept found across all five texts, communication competence. It argues that communication competence is “the impression that communication behavior is both appropriate and effective in a given situation” (p. 13). The text goes on to subtly impress its role of power in this process: “Because communication is at the heart of how we relate to each other, one of your goals in this course will be to learn strategies that increase the likelihood that others will view you as competent” (p. 13). The space of the students here is dictated directly by the text: they must work toward engaging in actions that affect the way others view them in specific ways that the text has empowered itself to present. Communication competence is used in almost the same way in other texts (i.e. Seiler, p. 25-26; Beebe, p. 4-7; and Devito, p. 453)

As an extension of this argument, the Verderber text states, “Communication is effective when it achieves its goals; it is appropriate when it conforms to what is expected in a situation” (p. 13). In this very powerful piece of text alongside the earlier textual parameters concerning the interaction of the student with the course and the text, the discursive formation emerges clearly. Communication is deemed *appropriate* by the

texts when it *conforms* to what is expected. The space for the student is clearly articulated here: some communication is acceptable and some is not. A student can best make that judgment by determining what is expected in the situation and conforming to those standards. Of the many available possibilities in framing how the student will interact with or utilize the skills offered by the text, this particular frame is engaged by the text, one in which the student focus is almost entirely on changing their subject position and altering their behavior to conform to others.

### *Employability*

In addition to the opening lines from the Verderber text discussed above, other texts work in the same way to articulate a discursive formation where employability is the prime purpose for the study of communication skills. Consider the following argument from the opening section of chapter one in the Wood text, “The Values of Studying Communication”: “It’s obvious that careers such as law, sales, and teaching require strong communication skills. However, even if you don’t pursue a career in one of those fields, communication will be essential in your work” (Wood, p. 4). The frame for why a student should value the study of communication is immediately focused on employment and work related outcomes. The text offers a barrage of research it has chosen to support this argument, such as a National Association of Colleges and Employers study in which 480 companies identify communication skills at the “top of their list” in hiring qualities (Wood, p. 8) and a Darling and Daniels study that proves “even engineers” reported that their success on the job depended on good communication skills (Wood, p. 8). The discursive formation appropriates the study of communication as a vehicle for employability. In conjunction with the authorship formation, it functions to reinforce its

credibility by choosing careers a student might argue do not require strong communication skills (i.e. engineering) and specifically addressing the unspoken doubt about the communication required to be successful in those jobs. These almost appear as preemptive arguments in the space of the student's understanding of why communication should be valued, and contribute to the discursive formation at work.

The Devito text takes a bit of a different approach than Verderber and Wood, but still aligns with the discursive formations of employability and relationship maintenance. In the opening chapter, "Preliminaries to Human Communication", the Devito text cites six bulleted "benefits of human communication" (Devito, p. 3), including "present yourself as a confident, likeable, approachable, and credible person", "build friendships, enter into love relationships, work with colleagues, and interact with family members", "interview to gain information, to successfully present yourself to get the job you want, and to participate effectively in a wide variety of other interview types", and "communication information to and influence the attitudes and behaviors of small and large audiences" (p. 3-4). While not all as clearly stated as the Wood and Verderber texts, these tenets frame the benefits of human communication as the means to achieve a desired outcome, arguments consistent with previous texts.

In addition, the Devito text features prominently an "Ask the Researcher" box in the opening chapter. The box's purpose is framed as follows:

These brief Q&As are designed to illustrate the close connection between theory and research on the one hand and practical skills on the other. In each Ask the Researcher box, a question is posed to a national or international expert, who responds as if speaking directly with a student. (p. 11)

The approach here is notable in three ways. First, the authorship formation is again exemplified. The Foucaultian disappearance of the author is now significantly interwoven into the text through these “student questions”, which are notably produced by the text rather than actual corporal students. This contributes to the articulation of the space the text creates for the student in terms of their understanding and comprehension of the text. Second, the contradiction of the authorship formation is demonstrated through the act of creating a box with text-generated questions that are framed as “student questions”. Simultaneously, the text consults an expert on the matter, whose response, along with their name, school affiliation and short biography are printed in the text itself. The experts are designated and distinguished from the faceless “students” whose questions are framed as the impetus for the inclusion of the feature in the text. Third, the box again reinforces the employability arm of the discursive formation at work. The “student” question posed in this opening box is, “I’m taking this course in human communication. I am not certain what practical uses this course will have for me. Why should I be taking this course?” (p. 11). Dr. Mark Hickson III, the appointed expert for this question, responds with a significant paragraph including the following statement: “In job interviews, you need to know what factors the employers are seeking in nonverbal behavior, language use, attitude, level of knowledge, amount of enthusiasm, and personal motivation” (p. 11). Hickson goes further, adding, “As a manager of others, you need to know what kinds of messages will motivate your subordinates to perform at their highest levels” (p. 11). The distinct overtones of employability in a capitalist framework are clear, and demonstrate the discursive formation at work.

In the Beebe text, the same employability and relationship maintenance justifications are evident. In chapter one, “Foundations of Human Communication”, the text includes a subheading titled “Why Study Communication” (p. 8-10)? Beneath the subheading are three bold, bright red responses to the question: “to improve your employability”, “to improve your relationships”, and to “improve your health” (p. 8-9). The section includes claims like, “people who can communicate well with others are in high demand” (p. 8) and uses half of one page to include a table titled “Factors Most Important in Helping Graduating College Students Obtain Employment”, where the first three factors cited in the table include “oral communication (speaking) skills”, “written communication skills”, and “listening ability” (p. 9). The list includes other communication related skills as well. Even in the section titled “To Improve Your Relationships”, the text reasserts the employability formation, closing the section by arguing, “Increasing our understanding of the role and importance of human communication with our colleagues can help us better manage stress on the job as well as enhance our work success” (p. 9).

The Beebe text also cites other arguments throughout, including the following observation from chapter six, “Adapting to Others”: “Journalist Thomas Friedman argues that globalization, the integration of economics and technology that is contributing to a worldwide, interconnected business environment, is changing the way we work and relate to people around the world” (p. 139). Not only is the reference back to employability and work evident, but the text again implies its own role in teaching the student. In an enthymematic structure, the text argues that since the world is evolving and new

communication skills are necessary, this course and this text are the necessary “teachers” of these new skills.

Finally, the Seiler text contributes to the same discursive formations at work in the other texts. In the opening of chapter one, “Connecting Processes and Principles”, it uses the authorship formation to speak to the student directly: “Every day you take on numerous roles. You’re a student, family member, friend, citizen, employee, or maybe employer as well as many other roles. In those roles you usually are required to connect with others around you” (p. 1). In addition to using its authorship voice to create a specific space for the student here, the roles described by the text illuminate the same formations at work in the previous five texts, primarily focusing on roles in the workplace and roles of personal relationship. The chapter goes on to include a subheading titled “Why Should We Study Communication”. Just like the Beebe text, the subheading contains four bold, bright orange responses including “Communication and Career Development”, which is listed first, as is the employability argument in the Beebe text.

In addition, the Seiler text continues its reinforcement of the employability formation throughout the text. Like the “Ask the Researcher” boxes in the Devito text, the Seiler text includes boxes through the book titled, “Making Connections for Success”. In chapter one, this box includes the subtitle, “Communication Principles in the Workplace” (p. 16). The box presents a fictional story of “Erin”, a woman who has a bad day in her place of work at a local restaurant, who allows her verbal and nonverbal communication to be affected in her interaction with customers. The box argues that this communication behavior will “likely also affect the amount of tips she receives” (p. 16).



The use of examples like this focuses the message of why a student should value communication on the discursive formation of employability.

### *Personal Relationship Maintenance*

The second way that these communication texts contribute to the discursive formation that constructs communication as a vehicle to achieve other things is through a formation that stresses the importance of communication in relation the maintenance of personal relationships (a term employed by the texts themselves). In some areas, the formations of employability and relationships overlap, arguing that relationships in the workplace are vital in a student's life. This is consistent with Foucault's arguments that discursive formations have "multiple dimensions" with overlapping sets of "different oppositions" (Foucault, 1972, p. 155) that must be mapped and described.

The Beebe text uses chapter seven, "Understanding Interpersonal Communication" to offer a subsection titled "Maintaining Relationships" (p. 179). In the opening of that subsection, the text argues, "Many forms of interpersonal communication are necessary to maintain successful, satisfying relationships" (p. 179). The text both contributes to the discursive formation of communication as a vehicle for relationship maintenance and again enthymematically implies its own importance in the student's experience of learning communication behaviors. In its opening chapter, it also stresses the value of communication in relation to relationships: "Understanding the role and function of communication can help unravel some of the mysteries of human relationships. At the heart of a good relationship is good communication" (p. 9).

In a very interesting addition to the formation about relationships, the Beebe text links communication in relationships with death. It argues, "Good friends and intimate

relationships with others help us manage stress and contribute to both physical and emotional health” (p. 10). The text notes two examples, arguing “patients who are widowed or divorced experience more medical problems, such as heart disease, cancer, pneumonia, and diabetes” and “grief-stricken spouses are more likely than others to die prematurely, especially around the time of the departed spouse’s birthday or near their wedding anniversary” (p. 10). The Wood text asserts the same argument, citing research that argues, “couples who exchange nasty comments during marital spats were more likely to have clogged arteries” (Wood, p. 5) and “heart disease is also more common among young people who lack strong interpersonal relationships” (p. 6). These additions to the discursive formation are notable for two reasons. First, the overlap here with the discursive formation of sexual orientation is clear. The text has chosen to present research that is limited to relationships in which marriage is a part of the interaction. Second, the discursive formation of relationship management has been articulated to draw very strong boundaries regarding the importance of happy relationships. In short, if students do not take heed of the advice the text offers about communication skills in relationships, they risk nothing short of dying prematurely.

In the Wood text, the first chapter includes the subheading discussed above, “The Values of Studying Communication”. The first section includes a subheading titled, “Personal Relationships”. Here the text argues, “everyday talk and nonverbal interaction are the essence of relationships” and “communication scholars have documented a range of social and interpersonal influences on violence between intimates” including “strong links between verbal behaviors and reciprocal violence between spouses” (p. 7). Again,

this part of the text situates the space for the student where learning communication is vital to their health, well being, and even as a mechanism to avoid domestic violence.

The Devito text also stresses communication as a vehicle to manage relationships. In its opening chapter, “Foundations of Human Communication”, it argues that one purpose of human communication is “to relate” (p. 9). Here the text argues that interacting in personal relationships “takes a great deal of your time and attests to the importance of the relational purpose of communication” (p. 9). In a figure included in the same section, it argues that the results of this time are “relationship formation and maintenance, friendships, love relationships” (p. 10). The Devito text also goes on to introduce a number of concepts that stress communication skills as a way for individuals to interact in relationships. For example, the text introduces “equity theory” in chapter eight, “Interpersonal Relationship Stages and Theories”. It argues, “you develop and maintain relationships in which the ratio of your rewards relative to your costs is approximately equal to your partner’s” (p. 187). The text again is operating to create a space for the student with regard to the importance of studying communication as a vehicle to understand and be able to participate in relationships.

The Seiler text also contributes the formation of communication skills as a way to manage relationships. In its opening chapter, it argues:

Communication is complex. If it were simple, people would have few difficulties with it, and we would not need to study it! But this complex and challenging process is critical to making connections in all of our relationships, from the professional to the romantic and everything in between. (p. 3)

Relationships are framed both as professional, another reinforcement of the employability aspect of the formation, and as personal, listing romantic as one form of relationship developed that necessitates enhanced communication skills.

Finally, the Verderber text works to illuminate the same space for the student where communication is understood as a vehicle for other things, particularly maintenance of relationships. In the opening of chapter one, it argues, “Your ability to make and keep friends, to be a good family member, to have satisfying intimate relationships, to participate in or lead groups, and to prepare and present speeches depends on your communication skills” (p. 3). The first three references are specific to how communication skills are a way to maintain or keep specific types of personal relationships in a student’s life. The text goes on in the first chapter to define communication as relational, arguing “in addition to sharing content meaning, our messages also reflect two important aspects of our relationships: immediacy and control” (p. 10). These two terms are discussed further in the text, and essentially offer ways to understand our relationships based on liking (immediacy) and dominance (control). Again, communication concepts are offered as ways to understand the essence of relationships and as a source for skills to maintain them.

This chapter described some of the operative discursive formations at work across the five communication texts discussed in this analysis. Alignment exists across the texts in their organizational patterns, and a foundational discursive formation with regard to authorship was identified. In addition, the discursive formations of identity and relationships were discussed as well as the appropriation of communication study for other means, specifically employability and relationship maintenance. This illuminates a

generalized space that has been created for the student through these texts. Chapter four discusses these findings with regard to the assemblages available for students in construction of meaning, and draws some conclusions about the nature of these formations and their function.

#### IV: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has used a particular methodology to analyze five major introductory communication textbooks. Three operative discursive formations have been identified. First, a foundational formation concerning authorship and the texts is evident. Here, Barthes (1967) offers arguments about the death of the author that inform notions of how these textbooks embody authorship with regard to the space created for their audience. This formation is deemed foundational since it provides the frame for the two content formations that are identified in chapter three. These include a formation about the nature of identity and relationships and a formation about the appropriation of the study of communication. The formation of identity and relationships was specific to sex and gender as well as issues of sexual orientation. The formation about the appropriation of communication had two major components, employability and maintenance of relationships.

As noted in the opening of chapter three, while discursive formations have been identified and discussed, they have not yet been deemed particularly objectionable, good, bad, desirable, or undesirable. This creates a dilemma regarding this analysis as it balances an attempt to stay true to its methodology while drawing conclusions about the implications of the formations it identifies. In order to draw some conclusions about these formations, the work of Deleuze and Guattari and their notion of assemblage, as well the critical pedagogy literature, provide mechanisms to understand implications of discursive formations. This chapter will discuss how both assemblage and critical

pedagogy literature inform an understanding of these formations, then will discuss the dominant narrative the formations identified in introductory communication textbooks create, before finally discussing some implications of these conclusions and directions for future research in this area.

### Assemblage

Deleuze and Guattari's notion of assemblage uniquely compliments the Foucaultian concept of discursive formation (Nakayama & Krizek, 1997). This thesis argues that the way assemblage compliments discursive formation is based in the idea of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, concepts that center Deleuze and Guattari's work. As discussed in chapter two, deterritorialization is a positive power with varying degrees, and always has reterritorialization as its flipside. In this sense, assemblage provides a mechanism to understand student interaction with basic communication textbooks once discursive formations have been identified. Students deterritorialize the space they are provided and in turn, allow for their own reterritorialization of the formations they experience. This typically is a fluid process, which is complimentary with how Foucault views power. The water bottle analogy from chapter two is worth repeating here. A water bottle may be turned upside down or on its side, and the water will disperse from its location, reemerging in another location, moving a fluid manner throughout its container. Its absence in one location will always be marked with its presence in another. For this analysis, discursive formations will be discussed in this way. It is not possible for a student to "throw off" the formation, as reterritorialization is always a necessary component of the deterritorialization of the assemblage by the student.

It is also relevant to think about how Deleuze and Guattari use the assemblage to conceptualize the subject. As noted in the authorship formation identified in the textbooks, the voice of the text is reified into a power relationship with the student through the death of the author and through the overlapping and consistent language employed by the texts. The impossibility of locating the author of the text's claims contributes to this post-structuralist feeling that allows for the shifting of the author voice as deemed necessary by the text. This is consistent with Deleuze and Guattari's idea of how assemblages work to replace the author. In the applications of their work, they have argued that an assemblage is "a signifier which names, amongst other things, a conceptual place-marker where once its subject and its support systems abided" (Dowd, 2007, p. 258). In this sense, Deleuze and Guattari argue that an assemblage works to take the place of the subject.

In the same way the discursive formations at work in introductory communication textbooks work to take the place of their authors. All that is left is the territory of the formation, and the possibility of deterritorialization and reterritorialization by the student. This chapter will discuss these deterritorial and reterritorial acts as they are possible by the student, and their implication for understanding the ways textbooks interact with their audience. However, a short reference to critical pedagogy authors here is necessary to fully illuminate how these spaces interact with the student, and to understand the possibilities for reterritorialization acts by the student.

### Critical Pedagogy

As discussed in both chapter one and chapter two, critical pedagogy lies at an intersection of educational thought and critical theory. Its articulation in the United



States is limited, and it is notably absent from the dominant narrative of instructional communication literature, as discussed in chapter one. At its core however, critical pedagogy depends on the discursive formations identified in educational contexts as a means to resistance and emancipation for the student, a step beyond the Foucaultian framework. Dalder, Baltodano, and Torres (2003) argue,

Critical pedagogy loosely evolved out of a yearning to give some shape and coherence to the theoretical landscape of radical principles, beliefs, and practices that contributed to an emancipatory ideal of democratic schooling in the United States during the twentieth century. (p. 2)

This emancipatory ideal is the focus of most critical pedagogy literature; the most specific extensions of these arguments to the field of higher education, and most relevant for this analysis, come from Henry Giroux. As Giroux (2007) notes, “critical pedagogy opens up a space where student should be able to come to terms with their own power as critical agents; it provides a sphere where the unconditional freedom to question and assert is central to the purpose of the university, if not democracy itself” (p. 1).

Critical pedagogy becomes a vital component of the discussion of the implications of discursive formations upon their interaction with the student. In an understanding of the territorial acts available to the student and the consideration of those acts, critical pedagogy provides a frame to understand ways in which higher education, pedagogical environments, and student interaction occurs. The absence of critical pedagogy literature from the dominant narratives of education described in chapters one and two sufficiently implies the position of critical pedagogy arguments as a deterritorialization of current educational practice, and hence this literature becomes one

point of entry into the conversation this analysis explores with regard to the space created for the student by these texts.

### The Dominant Narratives of Introductory Communication Textbooks

Based on the analysis in chapter three, this thesis has identified a foundational discursive formation regarding authorship and has identified two content formations. One regards identity and relationships that focus on sex and gender and sexual orientation. The second content formation is concerned with the appropriation of communication, specifically with regard to employability and relationship maintenance. Two observations are important in a discussion of these formations. First, a plethora of textual examples of these formations exists in the five textbooks discussed in this analysis. Particular textual pieces have been taken from the texts and used to demonstrate these arguments in chapter three. While the selection of textual example in this analysis were the researcher's choice, no other examples that were excluded from the analysis would defy the conclusions drawn in this analysis. In this sense, there are many more examples of the same phenomena that space constraints did not allow full discussion of in this thesis, but all of these examples are consistent with the formation identified here.

Second, there are a number of other discursive formations at work in these textbooks. Some of these are discussed briefly at the end of this chapter as directions for future research in this area. However, the three formations identified here were deemed most pervasive throughout all five textbooks and do the majority of the work necessary to build the space created for the student by the text. It would not be inconsistent with the methodology in this analysis to identify these other formations, even if they operate in

contradiction with the formations identified here. The Foucaultian approach to formation is explicit about the possibility of contradiction in formations, and if that contradiction is present, the formations would be even more strongly descriptive of the space created for the audience; in this case, the student.

Overall, the discursive formations in this analysis generate a number of narratives about the student and the educational sphere in general. These narratives are strongly woven throughout the text, and as chapter three exhibits, they are reinforced through every textual part of the book itself. This includes written prose from beginning of the book to the end, photographs placed throughout the text, boxes integrated into the text, and everything in between. The pervasive nature of the narratives is clear across the five texts. The narrative component of this analysis is drawn from both Freire's work about the relationship between student and teacher and Fisher's work about the nature of humans to be narrative creatures. As noted in chapter two, Freire (1970) argues that, "Narration (with teacher as narrator) leads the student to memorize mechanically the narrated content" (p. 72). This analysis applies Freire's argument about the narrative nature of the student-teacher relationship and applies it to the student-textbook relationship. Fisher (1984) argued that the process of narration is "a way of relating a 'truth' about the human condition" (p. 6). In this sense narratives identified in this analysis work to both construct the student-textbook relationship in a particular way, and operate to act as "truth tellers" in the text, relating stories to the student in an effort to lead them to basic truths about humanity.

### *The Authorship Formation*

Using this methodological lens, it becomes clear that five major stories are at work in the five textbooks in this analysis. First, the textbooks tell the story of their own credibility, which operates to generate a power stratification with regard to the student-text relationship. In the authorship formation, the five texts use introductions to the corporal author, the “I” and “we” voices, self-disclosure, and attempts at similarity with the audience (i.e. students) to build an omniscient voice of power directed at the student. This occurs through what this analysis identifies as both external and internal power impressing. The notion of impressing power is consistent with Foucault’s arguments in his later work about the fluidity and localization of power. In short, it is not impressed upon individuals by a top-heavy structure, but can be laterally impressed across individuals.

External power impressing occurs in the texts when power is impressed through statements of expertise or qualification. This is akin to what other literature used pervasively in communication study (including the five texts in this analysis) calls “legitimate power”, which is defined as power granted to an individual as a result of their relative position or duties of their titled job description (French & Raven, 1959). While this analysis enacts a different approach to power based on a Foucaultian framework, the notion of external power impressing is useful as a way to understand how these textbooks position themselves with regard to the students. Ultimately the authorship voice found in this analysis imposes the same system that is noted by Freire (1970) in chapter two as the “banking model of education” in which “knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider know nothing” (p.

72). The texts are positioned this way in various sections; both in the descriptions of their corporal authors and in features such as those identified in the Devito text's "Ask the Researcher" boxes.

Internal power impressing as described in this thesis occurs when the text associates itself in an overlapping subject position with the student in an effort to invite the student to give credibility to the text because they can "relate" to the text. This type of power impress depends on the disappearance of the author in order to function. For example, if the corporal author of the Wood text (a middle aged, white, female professor of communication) were to be engaged in face-to-face conversation with a student, some of the voices employed in the Wood text would not be possible, such as the student scenarios the text offers and the boxes that include student commentary on subject matter offered in those pages of text. These internal power impresses occur frequently across all five textbooks and functions again to elevate the textbook into a position of a power relationship with the student.

In short, the authorship formation is used by the texts as way for students to assemble the power relationship between themselves and the text. In generating this assemblage, the student gives power to the text in a particular way, adopting a subject position of "receptacle to be filled" (Freire, 1970, p. 72) while allowing the text to embrace a position of power. The internal power impressing here is particularly notable as a means to deterritorialization by the student in approach to the text. The formation moves to overlap the subject positions in a way so as to build identification with the student. This opens a space for the student to deterritorialize the external power impresses of the text, which only shift back to the center in a Deleauzean fashion. In this

sense, while the student is invited to deterritorialize the “legitimate power” of the corporal author, the text has generated a formation where the reterritorialization available to the student only serves to reestablish the same power norms. As a result, the authorship formation is inescapable, and by the measure of critical pedagogists, emancipation from this formation is impossible.

As a result of the voice this formation provides the text and the way it constructs the student-textbook relationship, this formation becomes the necessary foundation for the existence of all of the content formations that are later identified in chapter three. The authorship formation allows the text to enter into discursive exchange with the student about issues of content in an authoritative manner without fear of the text’s power and subject positioning being subverted by the student. The two formations discussed in this analysis are the formation of identity and relationships and the formation of appropriation of the study of communication.

### *The Formation of Identity and Relationship*

The establishment of dominant narratives is vital for the formation of identity and relationships at work in the five textbooks in this analysis. Riessman (1993) argues that narratives in a text “give prominence to human agency and imagination” and as a result, argues that narrative analysis is “well suited to studies of subjectivity and identity” (p. 5). With this in mind, the dominant narratives of the text in this formation specifically address issues of human subjectivity, identity, and relationships, making the approach consistent with Riessman’s conclusions. The narratives in this formation can be organized into two major themes, the narrative of sex and gender and the narrative of sexual orientation.

The dominant narrative of sex and gender is identified throughout the five texts in this analysis and has various implications. Most significantly, the formation reveals that while the textbooks work to define sex and gender differently, they textually make arguments about sex when they claim the arguments are about gender. As noted in chapter three, the formation's function can best be described as essentializing. Irvine (1990) discusses essentialism as an assumption that particular phenomena are biologically occurring. With regard to sex and gender, essentialism occurs when arguments are made about particular qualities or characteristics with an assumption those characteristics are biological in nature rather than social constructions or choices. In this sense, essentialism specifically is a sex-based assumption about individual behavior.

Consider the arguments about athletics from the Beebe text or the discussion about instrumental versus expressive communication patterns expressed in all of the texts. Both of these textual positions assert the power of sex-based assumption. The texts clearly argue that women communicate in a particular way (e.g. expressive orientation) while men communicate in a different way (e.g. instrumental orientation). Even more essentializing, the texts describe these approaches as if they are mutually exclusive, often including them in a chapter about "adapting" communication practices. The two orientations are framed not as orientations taken by both sexes depending on their social constructions of reality (an argument truly based in gender rather than sex), but offer the orientations as competing ways that men and women communicate. The space for the student not only requires the same essentializing approach, but also empowers the text (the authorship formation is at work here as well) to "teach" the students ways to adapt their communication based on their sex.

Even more alarming is the fact that the texts often defy their own edicts with regard to this formation. As noted in chapter three, the Beebe text specifies that “gender” is their preferred term in the book because it is “more broad and all-inclusive” (p. 38). This contradiction is consistent with Foucaultian approach to discursive formation, but becomes a notable approach when considering the assemblage available for the student. In this sense, the text uses its authorship formation to establish teaching authority over the student, powerfully noting the appropriate adoption of “gender”. Simultaneously, the text works in every other available way textually to establish a view of communication in which “sex” is the predominant term utilized in research and taught to the student. Not only are elements of Freire’s notions about the student as empty receptacle to be filled by the text evident, but also essentialism becomes the dominant narrative of the text in discussions of sex and gender.

The debate about the nature of essentialism is substantial, but at the very least it is an approach to an understanding of sex and gender that has competing views. A few points from this debate help inform this analysis. First, the binary created by the texts that is, a choice between “sex” (a biological construct) and “gender” (a sociological construct) is considered false by some scholars. Judith Butler (1993) argues:

There is a tendency to think that sexuality is either constructed or determined; to think that if it is constructed, it is in some sense free, and if it is determined, it is in some sense fixed. These oppositions do not describe the complexity of what is at stake in any effort to take account of the conditions under which sex and sexuality are assumed. (p. 94)



The dichotomy embraced in the discursive formation of sex and gender in introductory communication textbooks creates a particular assemblage for the student, an assemblage in which the binary between essentialism and constructivism is the way sex is discussed. As a result, even when the student attempts to deterritorialize the text's notions of sex or gender, they are only free to reterritorialize in this same binary. Butler assumes this binary as false, questioning the dichotomy: "If sexuality is so constrained from the start, does it not constitute a kind of essentialism at the level of identity?" (p. 93). Here, Butler links the false choice presented in the discursive formation of sex and gender in these textbooks to the essentialization of identity itself, an argument consistent with the authorship formation implications of overlapping subject positions. The text works to manipulate subject positioning in ways that create particular power assertions from which the student must draw conclusions about communication issues and sex and gender. At best implications might include a misunderstanding of the complexities of sexuality that Butler refers to, reterritorializing the same notions they have "banked" into their consciousness that are learned from the voice of power impress present in the texts.

These implications are not significantly different for the part of this formation that operates with regard to sexual orientation. Again the texts reveal the authorship voice of power and again they reflect the banking model of approach to student learning. These parts of the formation however are notable because at some levels the texts become self-referent with regard to arguments about sexual orientation. Consider the following from the Beebe text: "We realize that sexual orientation is one of the most difficult topics to discuss, mainly because people tend to hold strong opinions about it" (p. 70-71). Here the text creates a very distinct space for the student to assemble meaning. The formation

here asserts that the very discussion of sexual orientation is “controversial” or “difficult”, framing the issue in a particular way for the student. While deterritorialization here may be possible, the reterritorial moves available to the student already are framed in the context of understanding sexual orientation as a space of “controversy”. This would be in distinct contrast to some scholars, who would argue this type of frame for issues of sexual orientation is a significant factor in entrenching heterosexism.

Butler provides the ultimate implication of both the sex and gender formation and the sexual orientation formation. She argues that these categories,

not only function as norms, but are part of a regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs, that is, whose regulatory force is made clear as a kind of productive power, the power to produce – demarcate, circulate, differentiate – the bodies it controls. (p. 2)

The danger of these formations for Butler lies in the political. She asserts, “the political discourses that mobilize identity categories tend to cultivate identifications in the service of a political goal” (p. 4). This political goal is frequently discussed as one in which the institution of compulsory heterosexuality is an inextricable part of hegemony, violence, and power, with some literature arguing that this occurs uniquely in pedagogical settings such as the classroom (e.g. Friend, 1993).

This regulatory practice is much like the Foucaultian notion of biopolitical power, in which bodies are appropriated in particular ways by the power structures that surround them. The discursive formations at work in these texts provide the space for the student to deterritorialize notions of sex, gender, and sexual orientation, but once again, the texts simultaneously function to limit the possibility for reterritorialization. In short, a space

for students based on this formation necessitates an essentialist view of human sexuality in which heterosexism is normatively enforced as the “real” or default identity category. The possibility for pervasive conversation about the nature of sexual orientation is further labeled as “controversial”, a frame that deters the student from the further investigation necessary to open up other reterritorialization, particularly discouraging investigation that defies the norms enforced by the text.

### *The Formation of Appropriation of Communication*

The second major discursive formation at work in the introductory communication textbooks is a formation that appropriates communication in a particular way, specifically as a vehicle for employability and for maintenance of certain types of relationships. The second aspect of this formation overlaps to some degree with the first formation, which will be discussed in this section of the chapter. This formation primarily identifies reasons why students should study communication, use communication skills, and learn about communication. The two primary reasons the texts argue that students should study communication create the discursive formation and convey a number of implications.

First, the texts work together to create a formation of employability. In this sense, the books argue that communication skills and study are integral to the ability to get a job, have choices about the type of job to have, or be effective in a job. This positioning of the discipline is again consistent with the authorship formation identified in these texts. The authorship formation impresses power to both gain credibility and to stress its own importance in the process of learning communication, a process that the formation

simultaneously relates to capitalist notions of work and livelihood. This authorship approach has various implications with regard to the formation of employability.

One implication here is the enforcement of capitalism by the texts. From the earliest formal critiques of capitalism, Marx articulated the role of education in the superstructure. For Marx, the superstructure and base are central to his discussion of capitalism and capitalist states. The relations of production in a society, or its economic influence, dictate the base. From this base stems the superstructure, represented by the political, legal, and social forces of society that enforce and protect the base. Marx (1859/1975) describes this system:

In the social production of their existence, men (sic) inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure, and to which correspond definite forms of consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political, and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men (sic) that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. (p. 425-426)

The inclusion of education in the superstructure is one way Marx argued that societies maintain the relations of production and a way that social existence determines consciousness. If this is true, then the very formations at work in introductory

communication textbooks are a part of this superstructure, and work to generate the social existence of the student, in turn articulating their very consciousness.

The consistent appropriation of communication as primarily a skill for employment by these texts articulates the importance of capitalism for the student, simultaneously warning of the dangers of failure in a capitalist political structure, the inability to earn capital or have work. This appropriation can arguably be found in other parts of the university. In reference to the strong capitalist influences found in the higher education context, Giroux argues, “the present crisis represents a historical opportunity to refuse the commonsense assumption that democracy is synonymous with capitalism and critical citizenship is limited to being a literate consumer” (p. 1). For Giroux, the very movement of the academy toward a place of capitalist advancement defies its purpose as a place for contribution to democratic citizenship.

Here, the space for student deterritorialization of the text is difficult to find. The texts work so pervasively to advocate the use of communication skills (even using this claim to justify the very existence of the discipline), that a space for student deterritorialization is almost impossible. If a student can deterritorialize the text here, they would only be able to assemble a form of meaning using the other arguments the texts provide about why communication is important to learn and study, which is covered in the discussion of the second part of this formation. However, even this would prove highly improbable due to the overwhelming number and strength of messages that appropriate communication for capitalist ends. They begin most of the sections in each text about why students should study communication, and the texts even use terms like “value” in a discussion of this appropriation. For example, several texts argue that

finding a job and career advancement provide the primary reason students should “value” communication as a field of inquiry. The capitalist overtone here is undeniable and the assemblage constructed by the student will inevitably center on these notions of worth. This is precisely how Marx argues the superstructure determines human consciousness.

If a student attempts to deterritorialize the positioning of the text as an appropriation for capitalist good, they could assemble meaning at the site of other textual arguments concerning why communication is important to study or “value”. This is reflected in the second part of this discursive formation, in which communication is appropriated for the maintenance of relationships. As discussed earlier, these implications overlap with the implications from the first formation about sex, gender, and relationships. This occurs because the appropriation of communication for the maintenance of relationships relies heavily on an appropriation of these skills for the maintenance of *certain* relationships. Some relationships are included while others are excluded.

As noted in chapter three, this formation of the text positions communication as a necessary skill to maintain relationships, but centers largely around marriage, often using terms like “wife”, “husband”, and “marriages” throughout the formation. This formation also argues that communication skills are vital to not only good health, but to staying alive. This connection is established through appropriating relationships as healthy, and arguing that they increase human longevity. Again, particular kinds of relationships are emphasized here, specifically heterosexual romantic relationships and marriages.

If a student assembles meaning in this formation through a deterritorialization of the capitalist messages discussed above, then the space available for them to

reterritorialize the text inevitably will be around this part of the formation. The implications discussed earlier in this chapter with regard to relationships would all still apply. In addition, it is important to note what arguments are noticeably absent from sections of the texts about why communication is important. Giroux's arguments about democratic society are largely missing here, as are arguments about localized civic participation. Even more dramatically absent are arguments linking communication to a larger tradition of the arts as opposed to positioning it as a discipline of social science.

All of the reasons to "value" communication in these texts depend on communication being articulated as a social sciences discipline, one in which research can establish particular norms that are then taught and circulated throughout the academy, becoming the literature reviews and basis for further research. This is important in this analysis for two reasons. First, it contributes to the external power impress of the authorship voice, in which offering research by "valid" sources and researchers is a mechanism to establish credibility and power over the student by the text. The student space to question the findings of "legitimate research" offered by the text is nonexistent.

Second, the implication of this framing where communication is a social science becomes relevant in a larger consideration of communication and its interaction in higher education. The very arguments found in these formations become the arguments appropriated by department chairs, deans, and professors when budget cuts threaten the advancement of department interests. Ritzer (2008) argues that this is a symptom of what he calls the "McDonaldization" of higher education. He goes on to argue that introductory courses in every department are "subject to the greatest pressure to undergo McDonaldization" (p. 153). These courses become the way that departments justify their

funding needs, and as a result, depend on appropriation arguments just like those found in the introductory texts. Consider a meeting between a dean who hopes to cut funding for a communication department and a chair of that department. It seems likely that similar statistics found in these five texts about communication skill necessity in the workplace would find their way into that conversation. The discursive formation grips not only the text, but permeates the very heart of the discipline itself, indicating that Marx's arguments about the superstructure lending itself to dictate consciousness are evident.

### Directions for Future Research

In a final consideration of the nature of introductory communication textbooks, this thesis has argued that the texts work together to generate particular discursive formations. These formations articulate the space in which the student is invited to exist, and simultaneously impact the ability of the student to interact with the text. If the formations discussed in this thesis are present in introductory communication course textbooks, and they possess the implications discussed previously in this chapter, where does this research go next? Ritzer (2008) argues that one potential solution to rethink the nature of pedagogical approach in the college classroom involves a shift in curricular choices. He argues that the university focuses most of its corporate pressure on introductory courses where "there is often much commonality in these sections; in fact, departments often impose a common textbook and curriculum" (p. 153). In contrast, Ritzer advocates for a system in which there are

A series of sections each of which is designed to be different from all of the others. Each section would be clearly labeled and defined, so that its distinctive focus and its differences from all other sections would be clear to students, who



would be free to choose that one that best fits their needs and interests. (p. 153)

As a hypothetical example, Ritzer cites an introductory sociology course that has eight different variations of the same course number, including a course taught by nonacademics focusing on social work, a course taught through motion pictures or TV programs concerning sociological concepts, an internet based course directed through a range of websites, and the traditional textbook lecture format most typically employed by introductory courses, communication being no exception. All of his hypothetical courses represent what he argues are different types of space for the student within the same discipline.

Perhaps further study in this area should focus on solutions like Ritzer's idea, and work toward changing the makeup of the course curriculum or the textbook itself. However, Foucault might caution that this shift will only get reabsorbed back into the same systems of power that it is attempting to overcome. Either way, a number of future studies are necessary in this area of discussion, particularly in light of the fact that no major studies currently evaluate or even describe the formations at work in introductory textbooks.

One area for future study would be to continue in communication studies, looking at more introductory textbooks, or shifting attention to upper division textbooks to see if the same formations exist. These five texts contained additional formations that could be identified and used to further illuminate the spaces created for the student by communication textbooks. Research could move beyond textbooks into supplementary materials like websites, videos, and workbooks packaged with texts.

In short, the implications of the formations discussed here at the very least necessitate additional study and further reflection. The call from Nakayama and Krizek (1997) is notable. At the end of their exploration of the space of whiteness, they call for specific continued engagement from the community of readers, communication scholars. Framed as “an invitation”, they argue that reflexivity is necessary on behalf of scholars in mapping the territory of whiteness. They argue, “Rather than offer any definitive conclusions, we offer instead an invitation to further consideration and dialogue about whiteness” (p. 303). They go on to present three aspects of this reflexivity, including consideration of what has been silenced or invisible in academic discussions, consideration of the presentation of research and the articulation of the researcher’s position vis-à-vis social and academic structures, and an examination of the institutions and politics that produce “knowledge” (p. 303-304). I consider each of these reflections with regard to the formations discussed in this thesis, and offer the same framework as a vehicle to move forward with this project.

First, we must continue to consider what is invisible or silenced in academic discussions. The formations at work in the five textbooks discussed in chapter three reveal significant exclusions from the literature, including competing versions of romantic partnership from the traditional male-female marriage model and competing versions of traditional sexual identity that might include such notions as (but not limited to) transsexuality. In discussing the value of communication as a discipline, employability is the focus while messages of civic engagement or social activism are almost absent from the texts. Reflexivity about the nature of these exclusions and a

vigilance in continuing to map these exclusions is necessary if any meaning is to be located in the texts, whether social, subjective, or institutional.

Second, the presentation of research and the nature of the researcher's position with regard to academic and social structures is the central focus of many critical pedagogy theorists who inform perspectives in this thesis (i.e. Shor and Giroux). Beyond the critical pedagogy movement, this thesis identifies a number of ways in which introductory communication textbooks reveal a discursive formation that crafts the voice of the academic and the researcher in particular ways that appropriate power. Power is appropriated through the spaces made available for the student to assemble meaning, deterritorialize, and reterritorialize the text. The authorship voice shifts and forms itself in ways that produce this power in the way Foucault described, fluidly. Reflexivity in mapping the position of the research and researcher's position in relationship to the social and academic structure is a vital step in continuing this research, and is vital to any understanding of meaning in the communication studies discipline.

Finally, an examination of the institutions and politics that produce "knowledge" is the reflexive notion that informs the very reason this thesis was written. The quest for an understanding of the way institutions within the communication discipline produce knowledge must begin in an investigation of the types of knowledge produced in the discipline, the voices used to produce it, and the ways that knowledge appropriates subjects in the discipline. Notably, it seems little research in the discipline is dedicated to this notion. Instead, most reads like the literature review in chapter one of this thesis, creating variables like "communication apprehension" or "student affective learning" to weight mathematically or qualitatively against other variables. Absent from all of this

dominant academic narrative is the desire to map the three basic tenets of reflexivity Nakayama and Krizek have presented, a necessary quest if we are to attempt to understand the power relationships communication studies evokes and maintains.

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