insper

IBMEC
São Paulo

Backstage Discourse and the Emergence of Organizational Voices: Exploring Graffiti and Organization

Gazi Islamro

Insper Working Paper

Insper [IBMEC
São Paulo

SECTION: NON-TRADITIONAL RESEARCH

running head: GRAFFITI AND ORGANIZATION

Backstage Discourse and the Emergence of Organizational Voices: Exploring Graffiti

and Organization

Gazi Islam

Ibmec São Paulo

Department of Administration

300 Rua Quatá

Moema, São Paulo SP 04546-040

Brazil

Email. gazii@isp.edu.br

Fax. (55) (11) 4504-2350

Abstract

The current study is a theoretical and empirical analysis of organizational graffiti,

focusing on the novel spatial and textual aspects of this discursive form. It is argued that

bathroom graffiti provides an interesting way to look at discourse because of its dense

and polyphonic aspects, its tackling of important social and organizational questions, its

self-conscious reflection, and its backstage and anonymous nature. A 3 year study of

organizational graffiti is presented, using a functional typology to characterize the units

of discourse. This is followed by a description of these discursive units as composing an

expressive and political space within the organization. Implications of the graffiti

included the decentralized production of organizational voices, the reframing of authors

as both public and private, the negotiation of ambiguous and conflicting cultural ideals,

and the possibilities of political organization within organizational spaces.

"As Americans, we respect all of your political views, but please stop writing on the

walls because your views may be offensive to others"

(Sign posted on the bathroom wall by management)

"In my defenselessness, my safety lies" (penciled in beside the above message)

Introduction

Recent work within organizational studies has called attention to space in

organizations, emphasizing that space can be the locus of contested claims for defining an

organization's values and boundaries (e.g. Fleming & Spicer, 2004, Kornberger & Clegg,

2004, Spicer, 2006). However, of the many spaces within organizations where messages

are exchanged, the bathroom seems understandably neglected as a place where claims

would be situated. In this paper, I explore what happens when an organization's

bathroom becomes the locus of heated debate and cynical resignation. In contrast to the

gut-reaction against viewing this space as irrelevant to culture and identity, I argue that

addressing such a space as culturally important has strong implications for understanding

how authorship is constituted in organizations. Through a detailed analysis of one such

small space, a great deal can be learned about authorship, in terms of the ways in which

multiple voices (e.g. Boje, 1995; Godard, 1992; Phillips and Brown, 1993; Spencer,

1986) are negotiated and managed in order to reflect distinctive subjectivities, even when

the subjects involved are, ironically, anonymous.

The structure of this paper is as follows: First, I discuss literature on the

importance of space and discourse in organizations, arguing that studying organizational

graffiti allows a fertile combination of spatial and discursive views. Then I outline the

current study, organized around a functional taxonomy of graffiti discourse within the site studied, followed by an analysis of the role of the discourse in crafting organizational voices. Third, I use this analysis to discuss the composition and management of culture, citing graffiti as a move away from unified, top-down management to more organic, emergent perspectives, and finally moving from an organizational to a social theoretical standpoint to show how even radically private spaces can be turned into powerful arenas of contested values.

Space and Texts in Organizations

The centrality of texts in establishing social systems has become well accepted in the social sciences (e.g. Berger and Luckmann, 1967, Deetz, 1992, Geertz, 1973). That social orders may be understood as texts is reflected in the words of Clifford Geertz, (1973:453) "The culture of a people is an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong". These ensembles have been shown, in addition, to promote both stability and change in organizations (Boje et al, 1994; Fairclough, 2005; Grant et al, 1998; Phillips et al, 2004). Some key works, further, have emphasized the importance of discursive *spaces* upon which such texts rely for their meanings and political force (Habermas, 1991). The importance of space in the framing of social logics has recently gained currency in the organizational literature (e.g. Spicer, 2006, Kornberger & Clegg, 2004). For example, Kornberger & Clegg stress the centrality of spatial design in organizing, channeling, and limiting the possibilities of speech. While they stress that discursive possibilities are not determined by spatial layout, layouts open possibilities for certain types of speech while limiting other possibilities.

Simply stated thus, however, the above observation does not leave the scholar with any way to get a hold on the immense variety of spatial and discursive forms within an organization, and how these forms are situated within particular sites under study (Schatzke, 2005). In order to better study symbolic forms within organizations, Trice and Beyer (1984) proposed that organizational researchers categorize types of organizational symbols, and focus on particular types that carry dense and rich cultural information in a compact form (e.g. rites of passage). I will argue that graffiti can function as a rich cultural form, providing important messages that would not appear in more conventional types of discourse.

Graffiti as Open Text in an Anonymous Space

One notable feature about Trice and Beyer's taxonomy of cultural forms is that all of the types of cultural expression - rites, ceremonials, rituals, myths, sagas, legends, stories, folktales, symbols, language, gestures, physical settings, artifacts – are described as "customary" ways to "heighten shared meanings" (p 654).   Their focus on rituals also stresses this public, customized nature of cultural expression. In contrast to the "public" nature of phenomena such as rituals (Gephart, 1978), I propose that some cultural forms work by virtue of being "private" in nature, at least at the moment of their production. While I discuss the differences between public and private graffiti later in this paper, it should be noted that such theorists as Goffman (1971) and Cahill (2003) described the bathroom space embodying a sacred privacy, where "backstage" displays abound, and normally unsanctioned social phenomena can appear.

Goffman's (1959) notion of "backstage" used a dramaturgical metaphor to explain a dual aspect of social life. The overt front stage of interaction fixes identities and

attributes, while the backstage provides the ground or subjective horizon for the creation

of self displays. Goffman's perspective drew heavily from phenomenology (Roberts,

2006), including critical elaborations of the work of Alfred Shutz (e.g. Psathas, 1996).

Following these perspectives, private and public experiences are not radically separate,

but exist in a relation of self-realization, such that the private sphere of subjectivity

becomes realized in and through the public.

The stage metaphor further suggests that spatial orientations have implications

for identity expression, voice and authorship, and suggests that by looking behind the

"face" or front stage of everyday interactions, the scholar finds underlying identities not

shown in overt public forums. I argue that bathroom graffiti, by providing a "backstage

pass", allows marginalized voices and subcultures to be detected in ways disallowed by

overt observation. Although the writing on the bathroom wall may be read, it occurs in a

private sphere, usually anonymously (Nwoye, 1993), and is thus free from the stylized

and formal nature of other cultural forms. In this sense the bathroom space may be said

to be the converse of Bentham's panopticon (Foucault, 1995) – whereas in the

panopticon, surveillance is ubiquitous and self-censorship the logical conclusion of

perpetual individuation, in the bathroom, subjects remains invisible. This invisibility,

ironically, may act as a precursor to open expression, allowing people to shed the

Goffmanian "face" and position themselves as agentic subjects.

Graffiti also has an advantage over some other cultural forms in the ease of

interpreting most graffiti vis a vis other symbolic forms. For example, Pratt and Rafaeli

(1997) uncovered conflicting occupational identities through interviewing nurses about

their dress –the symbolic form itself, the dress, was expressed as an attribute of the

individual and had to be interpreted through nurses´ narratives. Forms such as graffiti

(public graffiti art excluded) are not "worn" as identity markers but take a life of their

own, independent of their authors. They often demand response, turn into dialogues, and

are often self-reflexive (Peteet, 1996). Both private and public, graffiti represent a

dynamic, unobtrusive way to study backstage cultural processes.

That said, very little work has been done to study the social significance of graffiti

(Reisner, 1971), and that which exists is scattered among the various fields of folklore

(e.g. Gonos, Mulkern and Poushinsky, 1976), linguistics (e.g. Cole, 1991), cultural

studies (e.g. Grieb, 1984), and sociology (e.g. Abel and Buckley, 1977), making it

difficult to concentrate these views in a coherent discursive progression. The majority of

work that has been done, in addition, examines "graffiti art", the usually large, spray

paint art often used as a territorial marker (e.g. Lachmann, 1988, Ley and Cybriwsky,

1974, Peteet, 1996). These studies give a thorough picture of "tagging", or the

expression of countercultural identities though street art. However, this type of graffiti is

distinct from bathroom graffiti in two major ways. First, because of its size, tagging is

difficult to study as a phenomenon that happens *in* organizations. Because of the

importance of space in the production of discourse, outdoor tagging is of a fundamentally

different nature than backstage graffiti. Second, this type of graffiti art tends to be

heavily stylized, and thus it may be more appropriate to use a visual semiotic approach

(e.g. Morgan, 2005) than a discourse analysis to study these artifacts. The already scant

literature on graffiti thus becomes virtually nonexistent once the focus turns from visual

spectacle to backstage discourse, although the latter may be more relevant to

organizations. This paper, in contrast to the above, will emphasize the sociolinguistic

features of graffiti, attempting to describe the structure and stylistics of graffiti as indicators of social and cultural processes that leave few traces, and thus that are often hidden from the researcher's gaze.

Method and Theoretical Approach

The study is a follow up to a qualitative study of a locally owned chain of coffee shops in a medium sized U.S. city. The preliminary study, which took place over 6 months during the spring of 2002, included participant-observations, 8 customer interviews and 8 employee interviews. These initial interviews were focused generally on the culture of the organization, including perceptions of organizational image, clientele, and comparisons between the coffee shop under study and more mainstream coffee shop chains that were located in the region, including a Starbucks almost directly across the street. These initial interviews, which are separate from but relevant to the current study, gave a picture of this coffee shop chain as prizing itself on it's image as an avant-garde, non-mainstream establishment which promoted public discussion and debate (see also Eley, 1994). This study acted as a pilot to the current study, and while I will mention some of the results to inform the discussion, these points should be considered speculative in nature.

Following this preliminary study, 6 further semi-structured interviews were conducted with the employees, of approximately 30 minutes each. These new interviews were focused on the issue of graffiti directly. The interviews began by asking if the employees were aware of the graffiti, if they had discussed it previously, and if they had any opinion about the presence or content of the graffiti. Following these initial structured questions, which functioned to spur discussion, the dialogue that followed was

allowed to be more unstructured. Interviews were hand-transcribed during the

discussion.

In addition, a comprehensive recording of graffiti messages was initiated. These

were taken from the two bathrooms in the coffee shop, both of which were unisex. The

graffiti were recorded by hand in a notebook by the author during business hours. While

most graffiti were lexical, occasionally pictures accompanied messages – these rare

examples were either copied or described in the notebook, depending on the difficulty of

copying the pictures. Due to the prevalence of profanity in the resulting textual samples,

and the possible inappropriateness of presenting them in full in an academic journal, I

have edited profanity by including the first letter, followed asterisk (*) signs. Graffiti

were recorded in the main branch of the coffee shop approximately bi-weekly over 3

years, resulting in 338 separate entries of graffiti texts. I will use these texts, in

conjunction with the interview data, as evidence that suggests how messages from

diverse actors can, despite the lack of direct, top-down control, maintain and promote a

certain political and social vision.

Theoretical Approach

As a theoretical frame, I base my analysis around the paradigmatic/ syntagmatic

distinction first presented by Saussure (1974). This type of analysis relies on two broad

ways of analyzing texts (Dundes, 1997; Levi-Strauss, 1955, Propp, 1968; Saussure,

1974). Paradigmatic dimensions reflect categorical schema that form the objects of

discourse. They present the functional units of action on which any narrative depends.

In other words, I describe the discursive objects prior to describing their dynamics within

the organization. The second dimension, the syntagmatic (Saussure, 1974), represents

the progression of these objects in an action structure, showing how the units occur within a flow of discursive agents, interests, and interactions. In this approach, a textual rendering site requires both a description of the taxonomic categories at work, and an examination of the ways these categories progress though the actions and beliefs of the agents in the discursive setting.

In using the syntagmatic/paradigmatic distinction to structure the paper, I do not intend to imply, following the structuralists cited above (e.g. Levi-Strauss, 1955; Saussure, 1974), that this story is a unified and coalescent one, with its varied voices combining in synchronous harmony. Much to the contrary, it is the varied and polyphonic nature of the setting that this study wishes to emphasize. Given criticisms of both structuralism and functionalism as part of a general critique of systems-thought (e.g. Bailey, 1984), I do not take the extreme position that graffiti is a necessary part of a fluidly functioning system. Rather, I approach the notion of function by examining not the way in which the discourse "fits" into an integrated whole, but rather takes a position to influence or shape its environment, and even this in sometimes contradictory ways. Thus, I wish to show that bathroom walls are spaces of contested messages, each of which functions to usher in certain forms of social being, without the implication that its effects are part of a unified organizational plan or project. The value of this approach is in the insight that such variation, although not unified, can still contain meanings and influence actors within an organization. To use Moore and Myerhoff´s (1977, p 6) phrasing, graffiti can outline "islands of collective sentiments" navigating between structure and meaninglessness.

In following this approach, I thus propose a working taxonomy of graffiti texts based on the discursive functions of the graffiti (e.g. Searle, 1969), Stated differently, I attempt to outline a paradigmatic structure to the mass of discursive texts before moving further (Saussure, 1974). Within these functional categories, I describe the kinds of topics or genres (Orlikowski and Yates, 1994) that tended to emerge, and how these topics relate to "doing things with words" (Austin 1962). While some past approaches have classified graffiti in different ways (e.g. Gadsby, 1995) provides the categories "latrinalia, public, folk epigraphy, historical, tags, and humorous), these taxonomies have tended to confound different types of discursive analysis. For example, "public" and "latrinalia" describe the spaces in which discourse occurs, while "historical" represents a topical genre, and "humorous" represents a function. By focusing on functional categories, I hope to a. Provide an understanding of why graffiti is important to *the workings of* a culture, and b. do so in a way that is theoretically coherent, with categories that can be compared in the same rubric. In addition, the discussion to follow attempts to place the texts analyzed within a social and political situation that demonstrates how ideological and identity positions are expressed by the public and inscribed within the organization. This ultimate aim suggests that a typology of texts, to best support such a discussion, should be functional in nature, as such an typology focuses on the psycho-social and ideological motives that are reflected in the particular artifacts

After attempting a taxonomic snapshot of the discursive elements recorded, I attempt to discuss these elements in terms of their reflecting syntagmatic narratives (Saussure, 1974) among actors within the organization. This entails analyzing how the graffiti types take on meaning within their context as public yet anonymous practices. By

already framing the categories as functional, they lend themselves to analysis not as stand-alone units of independent meaning, but as parts of a wider narrative of discursive practice. I attempt to outline such a narrative using notions of subjectivity and political speech that are meant to show the relevance of the categories in relation to the organizational actors.

Results

Types of Graffiti

In this section, I present a working taxonomy of graffiti types. These results may be seen in summary form in Table 1 (Table 1 about here).

Tags/identity Markers

While the above discussion attempted to show that "tagging" was a phenomenon prominent in public rather than private graffiti, some instances of tags did occur in the site studied. This form could be identified by the stylized, calligraphic writing of names or symbols. However, some artifacts could be described as tags without such features. Take, for instance, the following 2 graffiti:

(1) Chaucy 5000 Forever

(2) www.Bushwatch.org

In (1), we can label this utterance as a tag because, rather than relate a substantive proposition, it "tags" the wall with an identity marker. That is, it works to mark the organization with the identity of the author, and establish the space as a niche for personal identity. Following Gupta and Ferguson (1992), the establishment of a localized space is critical to a sense of personal identity, and the tag thus allows the individual to symbolically "inhabit" the organizational space. From this point, it is a short step to the

conclusion that, with the proliferation of such tags, the organizational bathroom can become a "grid" on which identities are overlaid (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992).

In statement (2), however, we see an interesting shift of the tag concept, where the marker takes on the function of an advertisement for a web site. In this example, the statement is still, arguably, a tag, as it inscribes the name of an entity with no predicate or description. However, in this instance, the tag seems to contain what might be called an identity "vector", or a tag that incites the reader to explore a site where further identity elaboration will take place. This type of tag may be considered a "hybrid" between pure formal marker and political statement, which is discussed in the next section. Several examples of the type (2) occurred on site, and suggest that tags can be used not only to mark territory, but to promote beliefs and communicate sites of discourse.

Inciting Statements

While tags have as a primary function the marking of identity, inciting statements use the wall as a forum for political action. This action, however, is of a particular type, and specifically fits what Bahktin (1986) refers to as "monological" action, that is, a statement whose purpose is to impose an idea on the audience, without inviting response. Take for example the following statement:

(3) You are all prolonging a subhuman world – Revolt!

This statement is exemplary of the genre in its aggressive style and call for action. As such, inciting statements tend to reflect the use of language as a vehicle for the assertion of power.

Inciting statements may potentially cover any topic, but in this site, they tended to converge on two main themes. The first of these two themes was sexuality. For example:

(4) Lick my dark side

This incitement is a direct assertion of power through language, within a sexual context. The allusion to the "dark side" combines symbolically the repressed nature of the discourse in question with a sexual theme, and finally uses this combination as a rhetorical weapon. In this combination, we have a hint of how bathroom graffiti reveals cultural elements that could not easily find expression in similar ways elsewhere.

While sexuality may seem commonplace as a theme for bathroom graffiti, this site tended to emphasize the second theme, political incitements, to a greater extent. In the following statement, this theme is epitomized well:

(5) Anarchy now

This statement, like (3), is clearly political, yet is not pluralistic in its discursive mode, imposing a take-it-or-leave it option on the reader. That they were usually geared toward rebellion against status quo structures may reflect a "fight power with power" approach that typifies a radical anti-systemic attitude. These types of statements tended not to draw written responses, or when they did, the responses were usually negative or also inciting.

Finally, in some cases the two sub-categories were mingled, as in the following example:

(6) All radicals love boners

Here we see how an ideological system becomes associated with sexual preference. However, this association is clearly not neutral, as the sexuality involved is clearly a negative attribution. As in (4), we see how power relations become inscribed onto sexual figures, but in this case the power/sex figure is used to characterize an ideological position.

Debating/persuasive statements

While the preceding examples of both tags and inciting statements highlighted the one-sidedness of graffiti, many examples of truly pluralistic communicative attempts were also present. These ranged anywhere from information gathering about the organization, e.g.

(6) Is this the coffee shop featured in the movie "….." ?

to lifestyle advocacy concerns, e.g.

(7) Hi, I am a marketing major. What does that make me?

Most graffiti that seemed to be making communicative attempts, however, tended to focus on political advocacies, and promoted particular political/ideological views. These often gave rise to long chains of responses (discussed further below) from across the ideological spectrum, from critiques of the current administration to anarchic and communist proclamations to conservative admonitions:

(8) Anything can be run non-profit. Start looking for happy mediums-

moderation is the key, and awareness is the first step.

(9) Bush (unreadable) likes pharmaceuticals, he is a hypocritical s*** just like

Jimmy Swaggart, so find another fascist to worship

(10) No capitalism, no café

These persuasive messages, as can be see by comparing (8) and (9), for instance, reflect varying degrees of discursive rationality (e.g. Habermas, 1981). That is, on one end of the spectrum, such messages can be bone fide attempts to argue an opinion or find ideas in a forum where they might not otherwise be heard. It seems to me that (8) is of this type of statement. Statements like (9), on the other hand, do put forth an opinion and create ground for debate, but also contain elements of the "inciting" statements discussed above, and at the extreme, replace discursive rationality with ideological jingoism. As discussed above with inciting statements, instances that fall closer to this description often included sexual or vulgar suggestions in conjunction with a political message.

Expressive Statements

Expressive statements are differentiated from persuasive or debating statements by their lack of a clear ideological advocacy, in place of which are found a wide array of existential, mystical-spiritual, and sometime seemingly nonsensical statements which have in common an emphasis on poetic language, paradox, or twisting of conventional writing conventions. Take for example, the statement

(11) Real eyes, realize, real lies

While some political interpretation might be given here, the central thrust of the statement seems to be a word play whose juxtaposition of images sends contradictory messages, the combination of which informs the reader in a way that is difficult to define. This type of message, because of its esoteric form and ambiguous thesis, does not seem to beg a response, and in fact messages in this category rarely received responses. The statements stand alone as islands of discourse that are meaningful yet cryptic. Thus, I term this category *expressive,* as opposed to discursive, because their meanings tend to be

self-contained, and do not constitute a platform for dialogue. Within this category, I

discerned three subcategories of statements that fit the description above.

The first subcategory I term playful statements, because these statements seem

more focused on generating linguistic or semantic novelty than in conveying a readily

understandable proposition. Take, for example, the following statements

(12) Did a vehicle come from somewhere but there just to land in the Andes? Was

 it round? Or did it have a motor? Or was it something different?

(13) I have been left behind a wiser, foolish jellyfish

It seems that to try to find the literal referent of the statements above would be to miss the

alternative nature of their presentation, and the unexpectedness of their conceptual

combinations. Much like Chomsky's famous "colorless green ideas sleep furiously"

example (Chomsky, 1957), these sentences present apparently nonsense semantic

configurations in grammatically acceptable ways, and in doing so express a play between

the syntactic order of discourse and its referential possibilities. Rather than calling these

statements nonsensical, however, I leave open the possibility for interpretation of such

statements, but label them *playful* because of the roundabout nature of their meanings, if

they contain meanings at all.

The second subcategory I call introspective/reflexive statements because they

focus on existential or self-conscious musings. These statements often express profound

concern or anxiety over themes such as death, time, or self-knowledge. This is clear from

the following statements:

(14) I am tired! I am true of heart! You are tired! You are true of heart!

(15) All this means nothing

(16) This is what it sounds like when doves cry.

While none of these statement drew responses or made claims about positions

concerning specific social issues, they were an important part of the discursive tableau of

the bathroom wall, laying a foundation for the space as a mirror for personal and human

concerns.

A more discursive yet still reflexive type of statement was composed of

reflections about the wall itself, commenting on the graffiti, their meaning, or offering

interpretations of previous statements. This graffiti *about* graffiti was sometimes playful,

sometimes introspective. Compare, for example, statements (17), (18) and (19):

(17) Sign up now for the (name of café) free seminar: "Graffiti for the needy":

technique and forethought: 1_____ 2._____ 3._____

(18) WARNING: Writing clever political blurbs on bathroom walls is not only as

ineffective as voting, but also renders you an irreversible d********!

(19) Why does everyone who writes on the wall have so much political concern,

who gives a s***? Sooner or later we're all gonna be dead.

While (17) uses reflexivity as a sarcastic yet playful parody, (18) uses this reflexivity as

an inciting condemnation, and (19), as a tragic comment on futility. What these

statements share is a "meta" theme of graffiti itself, marking a political, playful, or

existential self-consciousness in the very act of writing graffiti.

Finally, the third subcategory involves an eclectic variety of spiritual, religious

and mystical affirmations and symbols. These statements were similar to the debating

statements in involving advocacy, but their esoteric manner and spiritual content made

merit a separate category. We can see the somewhat persuasive nature, and the clear

expressive intent, in the following examples:

(20) Yoga: free your body and soul.

(21) Sanctuary to freedom lies in the eye of the beholder, unfolding a

 mystery…Truth! (note: this statement was embedded in a series of symbols

including an eye, and a moon)

Mystical/religious statements, like expressive statements in general, tended to stand

alone, not drawing responses. An exception, however, was found in those that made

claims about mainstream religions; the following example demonstrates how different

facets of responses followed from a religious question, leading us into a discussion of

responsive chains:

(22) What is Tao?

Re[i]: Tao means the way

ReRe: Which way?

ReReRe: The way to enlightenment.

ReReRe: Jesus is the way

Re: Tao is CSK

ReReReRe: Ted Nugent is the way

ReReReRe: Honalee (Hah-na-lee) – that is the real way

Responsive chains

While the graffiti described above all have in common the fact that they are

composed of single textual units, responsive chains have the feature of being composed

of several statements, presumably by different actors, in response to an initial statement.

It is worth noting that responsive chains are less of a taxonomic genre per se, but a kind of higher order taxa composed of statements from other genres. As mentioned above, responsive chains tend to be more commonly constituted from particular types of initial statements (see Table 1), and can be seen as aggregate phenomena that emerge from distinct communicative acts over time. The importance of responsive chains, then, is that they allow the researcher to view graffiti in its true social manifestation, where idiosyncratic expression turns into social expression.

Take, for instance, the following chain:

(23) Conform now?

-cut your hair?

-submit to drug testing?

-wear a tie?

-be on schedule?

-sell your soul?

-mortgage payments/loans/debt?

-finance American Govt?

-underwrite foreign policy?

-kick ass?

-bend over?

-let someone else think for you?

-do what you are told?

-stand in line?

Re: write predictable trite anarchic s*** on a bathroom wall

ReRe: It is <u>good</u> to question everything.

Re: Ok, conform to what others label as nonconformity? Make up your own

rules. Too trite shame on you.

Re: <u>OR</u>

- quit living off your parents

-start being productive instead of whining all the time

-Follow through on your dreams instead of just talking about them

–good luck- you need it

Re:Re: Amen

Re:Re: The concept that social <u>value </u>is only reached through <u>productivity </u>is the

source of so many social <u>ILLS</u>

- <u>produce </u>so you can <u>Buy </u>what is produced by those who <u>produce</u> so they can buy

- and go ahead and pop out a few babies while your at it (<u>re</u> produce)

ReReRe: <u>OR</u> create (produce) something that has never been before: art, music,

literature, other people's happiness. Teach someone to read. Make someone <u>else</u>

smile. Be <u>productive</u>! (It's not all about factories)

The preceding dialogue clearly shows the deep seated social and cultural attitudes

in graffiti.   This dialogue moves beyond the stylized identity markers of tags in

elaboration, and appears, at least at times, to seriously attempt to influence an unseen

audience to make fundamental changes in the ways that they approach their own lives.

That people would use the space above a toilet to pontificate in such an involved manner

about personal creation and life motivations speaks both to the importance of

ideologically based social organization among members of this community and, to

speculate somewhat, to the lack of more mainstream public fora for such discussions among strangers.

<div align="center">Graffiti in Organizational Context</div>

The above taxonomy, based as it was on functional categories, already suggests a direction for analysis; indeed, as McCanles (1982) has pointed out, the syntagmatic/paradigmatic distinction is not absolute, as functional categories imply flows of action. In the current example, the initial categories presented more identity focused (e.g. tags) or monological (e.g. inciting statements) units, while the later categories presented more politically dialogic speech, until the final category (responsive chains) contained full-fledged philosophical and political dialogues. To parallel this ordering, I begin with the subject-constitutive and identity aspects of discourse in this organization, then progressing to the social and political implications within the organization.

Identity and Authorship: Do the Walls Have Ears?

Both the anonymity involved in the production of the previous textual forms and its decentralized form suggest a more general point regarding the dissolution or absence of a central and unified author. This aspect, here embodied in a loosely controlled yet autonomously produced cultural phenomenon, can perhaps be explained in the light of contemporary theories of authorship and institutions.

For example, the notion of the "death of the author" (Barthes, 1977, Foucault, 1987), is clearly relevant here, particularly Foucault's (1987: 137) claim that "the subject should not be abandoned but reconsidered". Here, an organization's walls become a text with ambiguous authorship, with the organization both responsible for the maintenance of the text and (perhaps) uninvolved in its production. The decentralization of the

production of discourse calls into question the distinction between the organization and

it's clientele, a type of "open source" approach to textual production that should sound

familiar to contemporary cultural theorists.

The question of authorship in this case is complex and ironic. We tend to talk

about authors in two distinct but often confounded ways, the first, in terms of attribution

or citation in terms of concrete authors with specifiable traits (Barthes, 1977) and the

second, in terms of agency or subjectivity, a negative concept that implies becoming,

creativity and actualization (e.g. Heidegger, 1953). The idea of a negative subject is

echoed by various authors, for instance, in Hegel's (1931) famous analysis of master and

slave, and in William James (1890/1950) "I" versus "me" selves. In the tradition

stemming from Hegel, passing through Marx and ultimately in continental views of the

author such as that of Barthes, the subject is a negative space or void, and becomes

realized or concretized through his/her works. The cited, recognized author, as Barthes

complains, places a "limit" on the interpretation of the text through such concretization,

and this limit may be seen as the "face" of the author, or at the organizational level, as the

identity or image of the organization. The tradition of thought in which these two

conceptions of authorship struggled with each other form a context in with Goffman's

front and back stages can be understood more deeply, as parts of the ambivalent process

of recognition.

This point is significant because discursive identity construction and political

discourse are so often thought of as based upon a principle of recognition (e.g. Guttman,

1994, Snow and Anderson, 1987). Identities become "cards" to play (e.g. Gledhill, 2005),

and claims to title or sources of pride (e.g. Nelson, 2001). Political discussion may be

based around identity by revolving around interests or institutions associated with various

identity positions (e.g. Connolly, 2002). Identities and political speech discussed in this

way are based on the first conception of authorship, where "authors" vy for position,

attention and legitimacy. In some cases, however, the authorship is of the second kind,

and is defined by its *lack* of position. Authors in the backstage may freely produce

discourse, but that discourse only becomes concretized in its social recognition. The

initial categories presented, such as identity markers, do not provide a mechanism for

such recognition. The middle categories, expressive and inciting statements,

acknowledge but do not engage their audiences. The latter categories of graffiti,

particularly the responsive chains, in a sense break out of their space. Once a response is

made to these texts, the backstage becomes a political, front stage. The production of

graffiti, in this sense, is both political and not political, providing an anonymous zero

point (Barthes, 1977) from which political discourse can be safely generated.

Political Dimensions of a Private Sphere: Whose Voice is it Anyway?

The first important point to note is that the origin of the graffiti texts was

ultimately ambiguous, as it was impossible to monitor who was writing messages and

when precisely these messages were written. However, when asked, employees

attributed graffiti to customers rather than the employees themselves, an attribution

which, from the wide diversity of styles and topics displayed, seems quite credible. Thus,

the discursive space created through the graffiti texts seems neither planned nor

controlled centrally. As we will see, this does not take the discourse entirely out of the

management's hands, but rather positions the management as one of many players whose

voices appear in the developing organizational narrative. Indeed, a key aspect of the

anonymous yet prolific graffiti is the effect of making the organizational as a whole a kind of authorship-writ-large, where identity features of writers can only be clearly attributed to the organizational culture as a whole, since individual actors remain unknown.

I argue that the relationship between the organizational members and the diverse producers of graffiti is one of tacit, ambivalent acceptance, and suggest that there may be a symbiotic relationship between these actors, based around the production of an organizational image embracing alternative, "sub-cultural" clientele. As Habermas (1991) points out, coffee shops have historically played the roles of seats of civil society, and allowing decentralized control may thus reinforce the "traditional" social role of this type of organization.

During employee interviews, the attempt to cast the organization into such a social role was evident.   For example, when asked about his feeling about the graffiti, one employee responded,

 "I like the graffiti when it is *conversational*"
According to a second employee,

"Liberals don't have a voice any more, they need to get a voice in any way they can".

The first of these quotes reinforces the point that it is the social dimensions of the discourse that is most relevant, while the second shows the overt political nature of the practice.

That organizational actors stood in an ambivalent relationship to the graffiti production, both supporting its proliferation and needing to exert some influence over it,

may be illustrated by the following two examples. The first example was narrated by an

employee during an interview. The employee had been told to paint over the graffiti in

response to a customer complaint. The customer, described as a "lawyer lady", had

complained that she could not bring her children to the bathroom because of the

sometimes vulgar writings on the wall. The employee painted over the graffiti; however,

he finished the story with the caveat, "but we don't really care ourselves". In other

words, the graffiti was embraced as long as it did not drive away customers, at which

point organizational censorship mechanisms were applied, even if these mechanisms

were somewhat dissonant with the espoused image.

A second example reflects a more proactive organizational control over graffiti.

In one instance of recording the bathroom graffiti, the author noted that several Nazi

proclamations had been written, including several swastikas on the wall. Two days later,

when the author arrived to record the graffiti, the walls had been painted over in their

entirety, and a note, printed on paper, had been taped to the wall. This note read:

(23) As Americans, we respect all of your political views, but please stop writing

on the walls because your views may be offensive to others

This example highlights several elements of the organization's approach to the graffiti:

1.That the management was aware of the discursive possibilities of graffiti as a mode of

expression. 2. That the management felt that to respect speech acts was "American",

understood as a respect for discursive pluralism 3. That the organization would use

discursive control in the case of "offensiveness", implying that this control had a strategic

element. The fact that the employees did not only paint over the messages, but engaged

in "facework" by offering justifications to its customers for its actions, implies their self-conscious standpoint with regards to the textual space where the graffiti occurred.

These examples suggest that organizational members actively managed the textual space with a somewhat ambivalent stance, both allowing the forum with very little obstruction and occasionally stepping in to curb the discourse. It is notable that the erasure of graffiti texts only occurred when the content of these texts differed greatly from the liberal image of the organization.   When it did occur, it is also notable that the response did not take the form of graffiti, but of a typed message, printed out and attached to the wall, separating the message from the other messages on the wall. Thus, the reaction was able to remain "outside" of the decentralized forum while diverting and selecting enunciations that best fit the organizations "faces", and tacitly co-opting those messages into the daily experience of bathroom-goers. That the graffiti formed an important part of the organizational culture is implied by employee responses such as "We're a seditious bunch", explaining why the graffiti appeared. The use of "we" in this statement either gives away this employee as a graffiti writer, shows the identification with graffiti writers, or possibly both.

As described above, the co-optation of alternative discourses in this setting took a "negative" or omissive form, in the erasure of graffiti, rather than the "positive" practice of proactively producing discourse. This implies a discursive space in which control is essentially decentralized, the public becoming the purveyor of organizational messages, and possibly ensuring that the organization will continue to draw customers who self-identify with the organization.

This decentralization of organizational discourse may be illustrated by an informal comparison of this coffee shop's bathroom with those of two neighboring coffee shops. The first was studied extensively during the preliminary qualitative study, as a comparative ethnographic example. In this coffee shop, which was a branch of a national coffee franchise, no graffiti was present in the bathroom. However, the wallpaper throughout the organization consisted of fragments of organizationally produced textual excerpts, with poetic themes linking coffee to nature, coffee to love, or coffee to creativity. That these fragments were produced on standardized wallpaper as part of the organization's decor, as opposed to spontaneous production, may reflect an institutionalization of the "coffee shop" ethic, which in the case of the corporate franchise, was produced in a specifically top-down and monological (e.g. Bakhtin, 1986; Habermas, 1981) way, not coexisting with customer-produced statements.

The second coffee shop, which was also a franchise of a larger, UK based corporation, was also empty of graffiti. In this case, however, a chalk board was hung up in the bathroom wall, with chalk provided. While admitting the cursory nature of observations made in this organization vis a vis the organization under study, it is interesting to note the few if any statements made on this chalkboard, and the apolitical nature of these statements (e.g. "I love coffee").

These two counter-examples are important because they illustrate the manner in which the productive authorship of graffiti is central to its discursive function. Organizational attempts to simulate or stimulate graffiti, by the very fact that they are organizationally founded, may run counter to the ethos of marginality that graffiti embodies (Lachman, 1988; Reisner, 1971). Each act of graffiti, even if aligned with the

identity of the organization, constitutes by its very form an act of deviance, by the fact

that it is written on the wall. Thus, in a way that a chalk board cannot do, allowing graffiti

to proliferate allows, ironically, the institutional maintenance of a discourse of the

periphery.

The decentralized, polyphonic nature of this discourse is thus not anathema to the

construction of an organizational subject. Classic to discussions of the development of

civil society and the public sphere (e.g. Habermas, 1991; Rose, 2001; Lange, 2001), such

decentralization may be a strategic choice to relax controls (implied by the occasional

erasure of graffiti and the positive employee reactions to graffiti) or may be a lack of

awareness or interest by management (i.e. the feeling that bathroom graffiti is not an

important strategic concern); in both cases, the development of a popular discursive space

allows for polyphonic culture that ultimately becomes a distinguishing mark of the

organization as a whole.

Discussion

This study has attempted to explore a rarely studied feature of organizational life,

one which may at first glace seem trivial, but, in this authors' opinion, gives insight into

the ways in which civic discourse can emerge from private spaces within an organization.

It was argued that the discreet nature and compactness of bathroom graffiti makes it

interesting to study, because it "compresses" cultural features into rich data (Trice and

Beyer, 1984), and because it's secrecy allows author anonymity, which both gives the

researcher "backstage" access (Goffman, 1959) and is exemplary of contemporary

polyphonic discourse, even of the "death of the author" (Foucault, 1987).   By using

Goffman as a central theoretical axis in this paper, I attempted to draw a bridge between

textual approaches in organizational studies and emerging discussions of organizational

spaces. The notion of presentational front and back stages achieves this crucial link

while at the same time suggesting inroads into the study of identity, voice, and the

construction of worldviews through interaction (c.f. Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

To frame this discussion, I attempted to create a working catalogue of bathroom

graffiti types; the results revealed a paradigmatic structure based on the relationship of

the author with his/her audience, ranging from autistic identity tags to multi-party

dialogues. This paradigmatic categorization, in turn, revealed a syntagmatic development

in which authorship invited recognition, creating a safe forum for public discussion. In

this brief discussion, I expand on some the major lessons learned from this exploration.

First, the current study moves the study of symbolic management into a focus on

the management of spaces (e.g. Hatch, 1987). The backstage nature of the bathroom

space provided an environment in which diverse forms of communication could emerge.

While this emergence reflects both the personal idiosyncrasies of the writers and the

culture of the café clientele, it is also linked to the spatial positioning of the location and

its clandestine relation to the public, "outside" area. I argued that this spatial

configuration gave rise to kinds of personal expression not found in public graffiti. This

difference, ultimately, takes us back to a consideration of subjectivity and the nature of

creative expression.

Second, I attempted to show that the spatial placement of the discourse in

question, as well as the various types of graffiti found there, had important implications

for theorizing authorship and voice in this organization. Past treatments of organizational

voice had dealt with voice as a means to reinforce identities by means of recognition (e.g.

Guttman, 1994), and had treated the choice to author messages as a risk between

recognition and influence on the one hand, and the fear of accountability and castigation

on the other hand (e.g. Morrison and Millikan, 2000). In the current site, the authorship

motive eludes both recognition and the risk of notoriety. As described above,

understanding how this can be the case involves separating "face" identity, or the identity

involved in citation, attribution, and personal display, and "negative" or subjective

identity, that is, identity involved in agentic self expression that does not rely on "face"

maintenance. The ability of a space such as a bathroom to perpetually maintain a chorus

of voices while, because of its quintessentially private nature, stemming the overflow of

these voices into the light of the frontstage, provides a conceptually interesting way to

link late modern conceptions of subjectivity and contemporary treatments of space.

While this theoretical possibility lay dormant in Goffman's highly suggestive metaphors

of front and back stages to describe subjectivity, it remained to be shown how such a

metaphor could be unpacked in practice.

Third, the frontstage/backstage distinction and author recognition were not

independent of the paradigmatic categories of graffiti texts found. Rather, different

categorical types seemed to demonstrate different orientations of authors with their

publics. As described above, relatively content-free categories such as tags stood like

islands without response, and showed no public orientation save that of being present.

Inciting and expressive, although private and anonymous, only made sense in the context

of a receptive audience to move or shock, but rarely drew comment. Other categories

proactively reached for an audience, questioning or broaching issues. These texts found

their audiences willing to respond, and entire dialogues of anonymous speakers resulted.

In this sense, public discourse was possible even in a private space. With the recently popular study of anonymous discursive media such as blogs and chat rooms (e.g. Islam, 2007), perhaps future studies might apply or modify this typology for other similar spaces, real or virtual.

Fourth, in this case, we see how organizational members took ambivalent attitudes towards the textual production. There was, on the one hand, clear support for its proliferation as an affirmation of the coffee shop's character as a seat for public discourse (c.f. Eley, 1994, Habermas, 1974) and identification with producers of graffiti. At the same time, this support was contrasted with organizational controls such as painting over graffiti and posting signs if the graffiti did not affirm the organization's image. Thus, the multivocal nature of the space existed within a managerially influenced limit, and when it stepped "over the line", top-down control was reinitiated. The self-perpetuating, "open-source" nature of the discourse, however, ensured that management could take a minimal role on the stage of discursive production, possibly benefiting from the cultural affirmation with a minimal expenditure of organizational resources.

Fifth, the café, as a central meeting point in the local neighborhood, provided a social function for local inhabitants, who could participate in political and social discourse while remaining anonymous, if they desired. This is a valuable social function particularly because of the non-mainstream profile of many of the local frequenters, who could voice dissenting opinions without incurring negative consequences. The decoupling of the management from this discourse facilitated openness of dialogue, because the management was only tacitly responsible for what appeared on the walls (i.e. by allowing it to remain there). In one sense, then, this site provides a model of how an organization

can become a locus of social and political movements while remaining de jure impartial,,

by means of providing a vehicle for the voices of its surrounding community.

Finally, I hoped to show through my choice of site that organizations are full of

data-rich areas easily overlooked by scholars. The intuitive reflex to study an

organization's managerial structure, stated mission, or other salient features is

understandable and commendable; however, I have argued that the dark corners of an

organization can contain novel and interesting information, novel because seldom

studied, and interesting because of the very fact that they have flourished in secrecy. It is

my hope that such a choice of research site, with its unique attributes, will open a door

for future research into the more private spheres of organizations.

---

[i] The use of Re: as a notation is used in the paper to signify a response to the initial statement. ReRe: is used for a response to the response, etc.

References

Abel, E.L. and Buckley, B.E. (1977) *The Handwriting on the Wall: Toward a Sociology and Psychology of Graffiti*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

Austin, J.L. (1962). *How to do things with words.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bailey, K. (1984). Beyond functionalism: Towards a nonequilibrium analysis of complex social systems. *The British Journal of Sociology* 35, 1, 1-18.

Bakhtin, M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays* (Carol Emerson and Michael Holquist eds., trans. Vern W. McGee). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Barthes, R. (1977). *Image, music, text* (Ed. and trans, J. Heath). New York: Hill and Wang.

Berger, P. and Luckmann, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge.* Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

Boje, D.M. (1995). Stories of the storytelling organization: A postmodern analysis of Disney as "Tamara-Land". *Academy of Management Journal 38,* 4, 997-1035.

Boje, D.M., Oswick, C. and Ford, J.D. (2004). Language and organization: The doing of discourse. *Academy* of *Management Review* 29, 4, 571-577.

Cahill, S. (2003). The interaction order of public restrooms. In S. Cahill, ed, *Inside social life: Readings in sociological psychology and microsociology, Fourth Edition* pp. 167-177 Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing Company.

Chomsky, N. A. (1957). *Syntactic Structures*. New York: Mouton.

Cole, C. M. (1991). Oh wise woman of the stalls. *Discourse and Society 2,* 4, 401-411.

Connoly, W. (2002). *Identity/Difference: Democratic negotiations of political paradox.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Deetz, S. (1992). *Democracy in an Age of Corporate Colonization.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Dundes, A. (1997). Binary opposition in myth: The Propp/Levi-Strauss debate in retrospect. *Western Folklore, 56* , 1, 39-50.

Eley, G. (1994). Nations, publics and political cultures: Placing Habermas in the nineteenth century. In Norman B. Dirks, Geoff Eley and Sherry B. Ortner (eds), *Culture/power/history: A reader in contemporary social theory*. Princeton, NJ Princeton University Press.

Fairclough, N. (2005). Discourse analysis in Organization Studies: The case for critical realism. *Organization Studies 26*, 6, 915-939.

Fleming, P. and Spicer, A. (2004). You can check out anytime, but you can never leave: Spacial boundaries in a high commitment organization. *Human Relations, 57,* 1, 75-94.

Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (trans. A. Sheridan). New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1987). What is an Author? In Vassilis Lambropoulos and David Neal Miller (Ed), *Twentieth-century Literary Theory*, pp 124-142. Albany: State University Press of New York.

Gadsby, Jane (1995) *Taxonomy of Analytical Approaches to Graffiti* [http://www.graffiti.org/faq/appendix.html], consulted May 2006.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures.* New York: Basic Books.

Gephart, R.P. (1978) Status degradation and organizational succession: An

ethnomethodological approach. *Administrative Science Quarterly 23,* 553-581.

Gledhill, John (2005) Citizenship and the Social Geography of Deep Neo-liberalization.

Anthropologica, 47, 81-100.

Godard, J. (1992). Strikes as collective voice: A behavioral analysis of strike activity.

Industrial and Labor Relations Review 46, 1, 161-175.

Gonos, G., Mulkern, V. and Poushinsky, N. (1976). Anonymous expression: A structural

view of graffiti. *Journal of American Folklore 89,* 40-48.

Goffman, E. (1959). The p*resentation of self in everyday life*. Doubleday: Garden City,

New York.

Goffman, E. (1971). *Relations in public.* Penguin, Harmondsworth.

Grant, D., Keenoy, T. and Oswick, C. (eds. 1998) *Discourse and Organization*. London:

Sage.

Grieb, K. J. (1984). The Writing on the Walls. *Journal of Popular Culture, 18,* 1, 78-91.

Gupta, A., and Ferguson, J. (1992). Beyond "culture": Space, identity and the

politics of difference. Cultural Anthropology 7, 1, 6-23.

Guttman, A. (ed. 1994) *Multiculturalism: examining the politics of recognition.*

Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Habermas, J. (1974) The public sphere. *New German Critique, 3,* 49

Habermas, J. (1981*) The theory of communicative action, vols. 1 and 2* (trans. Thomas

McCarthy). Boston: Beacon Press.

Habermas, J. (1991). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society.* (trans. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence.) Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Hatch, M.J. (1987) Physical barriers, Task characteristics, and interaction activity in research and development firms. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 32, 3, 387-399.

Hegel, G.W.F. (1931). *The phenomenology of spirit* (trans. J.B. Baille). New York: Macmillan.

Heidegger, M. (1953). *being and time.* (trans Joan Stambaugh). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Islam, G. (2007) Virtual speakers, virtual audiences: Agency, audience and constraint in an online chat community. *Dialectical Anthropology, 1-2,* 71-89

James, W. (1890). *The principles of psychology*. Dover Publications.

Kornberger, M. and Clegg, S.R. (2004). Bringing space back in: Organizing the generative building. *Organization Studies, 25,* 7, 1095-1114.

Lachman, R. (1988). Graffiti as career and ideology. *The American Journal of Sociology 94*, 2, 229-250.

Lange, D. (2001). Presentation at the Duke Law School Conference on the Public Domain. Accessible at http://www.law.duke.edu/pd/realcast.htm.

Levi-Strauss, C.(1955). The structural study of myth. *The Journal of American Folklore, 68,* 428-444.

Ley, D. and Cybriwsky, R. (1974). Urban graffiti as territorial markers. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers 64,* 4, 491-505.

McCanles, M. (1982). The dialectical structure of discourse. *Poetics Today, 3,* 4, 21-37.

Moore, S.F. & Myerhoff, B.G. (1977). Secular ritual: Forms and meaning. In S.F. Moore and B.G. Myerhoff (Eds.), *Symbols and Politics in Communal Ideology*, pp , 3-25. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Morgan, D. (2005). *The sacred gaze: Religious visual culture in theory and practice.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Morrison, F.J. & Wolfe E.W. (2000). Organizational silence: A barrier to change and development in a pluralistic world. *Academy of Management Review, 25*, 4, 706-725.

Orlikowski, W.J. and Yates, J. (1994). Genre repertoire: The structuring of communicative practices in organizations. Administrative Science Quarterly*, 39*, 4, 541-574.

Nelson, H. L. (2001) *Damaged identities, narrative repair.* Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press.

Nwoye, O. G. (1993) Social issues on walls: Graffiti in university lavatories. *Discourse and Society 4*, 4, 419 - 442.

Peteet, J. (1996). The writing on the walls: The graffiti of the Intifada*. Cultural Anthropology,11,* 2, 139-159.

Phillips, N. and Brown, J.L. (1993) Analyzing communication in and around organizations: A critical hermeneutic approach. *Academy of Management Journal, 36,* 6, 1547-1587.

Phillips, N., Lawrence, T.B., Hardy, C. (2004) Discourse and institutions. *Academy of Management Review. 29*, 4, 635-652.

Pratt, M.J. and Rafaeli, A. (1997). Organizational dress as a symbol of multilayered social identities. *Academy of Management Journal, 40*, 4, 862-899.

Propp, V. (1968). *Morphology of the folktale*. Austin: University of Texas Press

Psathas, G. (1996) Theoretical Perspectives on Goffman: Critique and Commentary. *Sociological Perspectives*, 39, 3, 383-391.

Reisner, R. (1971). *Graffiti: two thousand years of wall writing.* Chicago: Cowles Book Company, Inc.

Roberts, B. (2006). *Micro Social Theory*. New York: Palgrave McMillan.

Rose, M. (2001). Presentation at the Duke Law School Conference on the Public Domain. Accessible at http://www.law.duke.edu/pd/realcast.htm.

Saussure, F. (1974). *General course in linguisitics* (W. Baskin, Trans.). London: Fontana.

Schatzki, T.R. (2005). Peripheral vision: The sites of organizations. ***Organization Studies,*** 26, 465-484.

Searle, J. (1969). ***Speech acts***. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Snow, D.A. and Anderson, L. (1987) Identity work among the homeless: The verbal construction and avowal of personal identities. *American Journal of Sociology, 92*, 6, 1336-1371.

Spencer, D.G. (1986). Employee voice and employee retention**. *Academy of Management Journal***, 29, 488-502.

Spicer, A. (2006). Beyond the convergence-divergence debate: The role of spatial scales in transforming organizational logic. *Organization Studies Online First*: 1-17.

Trice, H.M. & Beyer, J. (1984). Studying Organizational Cultures through Rites and Ceremonials. Academy of Management *Review, 9,* 4, 653-669.

Table 1
Functional Typology and Examples of Graffiti

Type of Graffiti Text	**Discursive Functions of Text - Monological/Dialogical**	**Examples**
Tags/Identity Markers Subcategories: - Tag - Vector	Present Mark or Identity (Monological)	- Chaucy 5000 Forever, - www.Bushwatch.org
Inciting Statements Subcategories: - Sexually Provocative - Political Incitements	Impose view or shock (Monological)	- Anarchy now! - Lick my dark side
Expressive Statements Subcategories: -Playful -Introspective/reflexive - Mystical	Present Funny, Witty, or Philosophical Message (Monological [can be dialogic when reflecting on other texts])	- I am tired! I am true of heart! You are tired! You are true of heart! - I have been left behind a wiser, foolish jellyfish
Debating/Persuasive Statements Subcategories; - Inviting - Ideological	Advocate View or Argument (Monological or Dialogical)	- No capitalism, no café - Is this the coffee shop featured in the movie "….." ?
Responsive Chains Subcategories: - Composed of above types	Higher Order Discursive Composition (Dialogical [can be monological when response contains inciting statement])	- What is Tao? Re: Tao means the way ReRe: Which way? Etc.