

On the Ideological Subject: Media Discourse and the Projection of Communicative Origins

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The aim of this paper is, in part, the development of a hermeneutic approach to the analysis of the enunciative origins of media(ted) discourse. The project set forth is twofold: initially, we will examine certain basic assumptions which guide the analytic strategies of Speech Act Theory and other strains of “ordinary language” pragmatics in order to show the impossibility of performing a rigorous analysis of media discourse while operating under the implicit assumptions of these frameworks. Instead, we will propose an alternate strategy, one which is designed to take into account the shortcomings of ordinary language pragmatics, which fails to provide a suitable basis for the analysis of texts or other forms of discourse which emanate from “ideological subjects”. Texts which have ideological subjects are those whose origins are not concretely linked to an individual human subject; rather, these are utterances, discourses or generally communicative acts which project their own imaginary — or ideological — origins. In linking this idea to the analysis of media discourse, we hope to develop a methodology which will illuminate the problematic notion of a mediated subject and provide a platform from which it is then possible to examine how claims to objectivity and to identity function within media discourse. This methodology will then be applied to the analysis of several texts drawn from the crisis engulfing the Pacifica Radio Network in the United States.

Problematizing the Notion of the Subject in Mediated Discourse

What is particularly troublesome about the application of classic theories of speech to the analysis of discourse in or by the media is these theories' implicit reliance on an unproblematized notion of a "subject" — without fail, it is a *human* subject which speaks and a *human* subject which understands, and it is the human subject's capacity for intention and knowledge which forms the basis for the analysis of meaning as it is expressed in discourse. Even in the study of socially shared ideologies or group/institutional discourse, the focus is upon the *interaction* between individuals in a particular context, with recourse to how discourse and discourse situations are shaped by the claims made on a subject by his or her social identity. In the media(ted) act of communication however, unproblematic reference to a human subject as the origin or producer of a text or dialogue is impossible, almost by definition. What "mediates" in media discourse is precisely the media, which is necessarily technical and not properly human. Speech, in its everyday and interindividual or even intergroup usage¹, implies an immediacy in communication where communicants are *present* to each other as human subjects; media(ted) communication is precisely communication which occurs when this condition of immediacy is not met. Certainly, media(ted) communication, in interposing a technical artifact between communicants, allows human subjects who are absent from each other to communicate, such as in the case of a telephone call, a transmission on a CB radio, or an email. But in these cases, mediation's triumph over absence can still be understood as a communicative relationship between human subjects.²

In contrast, when the intervening technical artifact (i.e. the text) is not created by an individual human subject, but rather produced by a collective technical process, it seems unfounded to insist that the *meaning* of that text, as it is produced, depends upon its relation to a human subject.³ While the production of the text certainly depends upon the human subjects who actually *produce* it, the intentions and knowledges of these subjects are not necessarily those which are manifested in the text and which therefore allow it to be interpreted. (For example, the employees who run the machinery which prints *The New York Times* have little to no influence on or prior knowledge of the contents or intentions of the printed material.)

There is far more at stake⁴ in a piece of discourse which is attributed to “*The New York Times*” than the sum total of the knowledge and intentions of its current employees, even more than the sum total of the knowledge and intentions of *all New York Times* employees since its history began, although this latter thought begins to approach the root of the problem.

It is crucial to recognize that a text produced by a group of individuals can claim to speak for that group of individuals, representing the whole as an abstract “subject” from which the text emanates. The meaning of such a text depends upon its relation to the postulated collective subjectivity, which is reducible neither to a conjunction or disjunction of the communicative intentions, knowledges, or ideologies of the individual subjects belonging to the group, but instead is a product of their collective imagination, and an ideal to which they subscribe and perhaps struggle to define. The question which arises here is whether this abstract and collective subject is a ‘knowing’ subject — that is, whether this subject is one who draws from a body of held knowledge in producing a text. Knowledge is a fundamentally *human* concept, and even when we speak about socially-shared or generally-accepted knowledge, we speak of facts which are shared, reproduced, accepted or challenged *by individuals* in society. Knowing subjects are individuals who share their knowledge in the process of communication (and reproduce it in the process of socialization). But, in the case of a collective subject which is supposed to have produced a text by virtue of *itself*, we suddenly find ourselves speaking of a knowledge which is held by an abstract and projected entity — for example, in a statement such as “Monsanto is aware of the allegations ...” it is most likely not the case that *everyone* associated with Monsanto has knowledge of the events or allegations referred to. What are the criteria for defining what Monsanto *knows*? To be clear, it is possible for an abstract collective subject to speak and represent the group of individuals which make up the collective institution *and* for a text which is issued representing the collective to still be drawn directly from the shared knowledge of the members. The sort of projected group representation which is under discussion here is closely related to the idea of the corporate legal subject, which individuals may represent, but which stands above them as a separate entity, and whose “voice” is determined by structures of institutional authority.⁵

We wish to address here, in addition, another sort of ideological subject, one

which is not directly linked in a relation of representation to the human individuals which project it, but rather the sort of abstract, ideological subject which does *not* claim a concrete link to a well-defined group of individuals, a collectively produced subject which seems to exist *as an individual*, distinct from this collective of producers. A text can project an ideological subject in such a way that this subject does not manifestly appear to speak *for* a group or institution, but *as* an ostensibly autonomous subject. It is this latter mode of subject-projection, which still depends upon groups and institutions but which makes a claim to identity which denies this dependence, that we believe best characterizes media discourse.

In what follows we refer to both of these types of abstract subjects which exist only by virtue of the communicative act⁶ — i.e., projected through texts — and which stand above or apart from the individuals who produce those texts according to a certain set of ideological guidelines, as “ideological subjects”. The word ‘ideological’ is meant to capture both the ultimate non-existence of these subjects and the relationships with these non-existent or imaginary subjects entertained by the human individuals who produce the projecting texts. Although uncomfortably similar to the subject projected by a first-person literary narrative, this kind of presentation of the subject in discourse is not understood simply as a literary device, but is taken seriously — the subject which is projected by the text can be addressed and quoted in subsequent discourse as a real communicant.⁷ We will refrain — except where absolutely necessary, for purposes of analysis — from investigating the extent to which *all* texts refer back to an ideological subject as their producer, and instead concentrate on media discourse, where this concept is an indispensable part of accurate analysis.

The Basis of Meaning in Intention and the Signature

The indispensability of the human in the Anglo-American pragmatic tradition

There is a feature common both to Speech Act Theory (Austin, Searle, etc.) and “the intentional theory of meaning” (Grice) which makes them particularly unsuitable for the analysis of texts which originate in what we have called above an “ideological subject”, namely the reduction, partial or total, of meaning to rela-

tions holding between an utterance and the psychological or mental characteristics of the communicants, particularly the speaker. Austin devotes Lecture IV of *How to Do Things with Words* to an extended discussion of the ‘unhappy’ condition of utterances which are carried out without the accompaniment of the expected “thoughts, feelings, or intentions”. This unhappiness is not due to any “misfire” in the execution of a conventional procedure, but in the “abuse” of that procedure. (Austin, 39-52) Grice’s intentional theory of meaning is even more dependent on the mental conditions of the speaker. He writes:

1. “*A* meant_{NN} [meant non-naturally] something by *x*” is (roughly) equivalent to “*A* intended the utterance of *x* to produce some effect in an audience by means of the recognition of this intention” . . .
2. “*x* meant something” is (roughly) equivalent to “Somebody meant_{NN} something by *x*.” Here again there will be cases where this will not quite work. I feel inclined to say that (as regards traffic lights) the change to red meant_{NN} that the traffic was to stop; but it would be very unnatural to say, “Somebody, (e.g. the Corporation) meant_{NN} by the red-light change that the traffic was to stop.” Nevertheless, there seems to be *some* sort of reference to somebody’s intentions. (Grice, 220)

Here, in the canonical formulations of the two theories, the possibility of meaning tied to anything but a human subject is methodologically eliminated without comment.⁸ Austin’s commitment to a philosophy of “ordinary language” results in the unhappy situation that any text whose meaning or more generally whose success as a communicative act depends upon the accurate and sincere representation of a properly human state of mind, and which cannot be so connected because they are best interpreted as representing a non-human subject, will be, according to Austin’s analysis of infelicities, “hollow”. Grice, despite almost admitting the flaw in (2) above, fares just as poorly — the presence of meaning depends on the presence of intention, which can only be properly attributed to humans.

In order to repair either analysis, one must allow the possibility that a virtual or ideological subject may be interposed between the production of texts and what is communicated in them, without the texts becoming any less meaningful. For

example, a corporation may testify (through its human representatives) in a court of law as a subject of the law, and this testimony is as binding upon the corporate subject as it would be if offered by a human subject. Yet we cannot truthfully say that the corporation has been insincere, or has entertained insincere intentions, in assessing the meaning of its communications, at least not without sacrificing our analyticity for metaphorical anthropomorphism. An attempt to rescue the respective analyses of Grice and Austin might proceed by attempting to rewrite their conditions involving intentions/thoughts/feelings such that the hearer must be able to recognize the intentions of a ideological subject which does not properly intend anything, and also that the human subjects which contribute to the production of the text must intend this effect. This, however, seems to be the kind of duplicity that both Grice and Austin wish to exclude from their definition of what it is to communicate.

Duplicity and the historical development of mass communication

The purely formal constraints operative in the analysis of the meaning of media discourse — those which, by virtue of the hermeneutic distance introduced in the process of mediation through a technical apparatus, are irreducible to the intentional actions and psychological states of a single human individual, and “exist” as the projection of a virtual or ideological subjectivity — are only confirmed when the analysis shifts to consider the concrete historical situation in which the modern mass media⁹ has developed. In the work of Jürgen Habermas on the development of the “public sphere” (1991), a historical correlate to the formally necessary “ideological” character of media discourse can be found in the relationship of media to capital. Briefly, Habermas traces the transformation of the public sphere from its origins as a space of rational-critical debate existing between free and private human individuals, into the mediated space of modern publicity and representations. Economically, as the techniques of letter writing metamorphosed into those of newspaper printing, the loudest voices in the public sphere became those who were most entangled with capital. Consequently, *critical publicity* (in the sense of Kant’s Enlightenment program of the rational legitimation of domination) gave way to *manipulative publicity*, a “public sphere in name only” (*ibid.*, 170-171), in which ostensibly rationally justifiable or criticizable speech acts are employed for

the representation of power and the provision of its (power's) public acclamation. Modern media communication is essentially uni-directional: from the media, which draws on capital invested in the means of production and distribution, to the public, who are largely relegated to the role of a passive audience. In order for the media to function as a voice which claims to be public in character, i.e. keeping with the Enlightenment ideal of a public sphere in which free individuals come to an understanding through rational-critical debate, it is necessary for the private interests¹⁰ which make this voice possible to remain unheard. Habermas' later attempts at a theory of "Universal Pragmatics" (1998) provide a valuable classification of the situation he describes in his earlier work. The distinction between the critical-rational public sphere, and the "public" sphere of private interests manipulating a duped public corresponds to the distinction between *Communicative Action* ("a process of reaching understanding among members of a life world") and *Strategic Action* (based on "egocentric calculations of success"). Habermas breaks down the latter category into *manifest* and *latent* strategic action. Traditional advertising, as the unconcealed expression of a private interest in the public media sphere, can be understood as a case of *manifest* strategic action — the explicit intent of the communication is not to come to an understanding with the consumer, but to exert control on his behaviour. *Latent* strategic action, on the other hand, is further analyzed into *unconscious* and *conscious* deception. Habermas, in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, gives an excellent description of an example of conscious latent strategic action, that of "public relations", which "fuses both [advertising and news reports]" and must "absolutely not be recognizable as the self presentation of a private interest. It bestows on its object the authority of an object of public interest about which — this is the illusion to be created — the public of critically reflecting private people freely forms its opinion. (Habermas 1991, 193-94)" Habermas conceptualizes "unconscious" strategic action by reference to psychological mechanisms of repression — the actors behave believing they are oriented towards reaching an understanding, while actually they are merely concerned with the instrumental effects. Although Habermas does not make the connection himself, it seems that this last category admirably describes the condition of a sincerely public-minded propagandist, or a reporter for a corporate media outlet who believes that they speak from a position of perfect objectivity. Somewhat sadly,

despite Habermas' insistence, in the development of his "Universal Pragmatics", on the the superiority of speech act analysis over Gricean intentionalist semantics due to the emphasis in the former on the structure of the language in determining meaning (the illocutionary) rather than the emphasis in the latter on the intentions of the actors, Habermas' categories of social and purposive action wind up ultimately making too much reference to the individual actors and their states of mind (i.e. the "unconscious"). We feel it is also necessary to analyze the relationship of the "strategic" text to the false or "ideological" subjectivity which it projects.

The Mechanism of Projection of the Ideological Subject

Having defined and motivated the notion of the ideological subject, and shown the inadequacy of theories of discourse which make the human being the origin of all meaning in dealing with such subjects, the task still remains to elucidate how ideological subjects can come to be represented in discourse. The process of representation is quite different from the corresponding process which occurs in conversational interaction between humans. There, the immediacy of the speech situation and the immediately apparent physical co-presence of the subjects who are communicating makes the assignment of an enunciative origin to a piece of discourse relatively easy.

For example, we can ask how, in conversation, intentions are linked to utterances. In Schiffer's *Meaning*, the analysis of the structure of intentions is refined to the point where the state of affairs which the speaking subject brings about in their attempt to communicate must be such that some feature of that state of affairs allows the interpreter to recognize the speaker's intention to bring about that state of affairs. In ordinary human conversation, this feature would most commonly be supplied by the *body* of the human subject as the common locus of intention and action — the subject is, in an important sense, the body and whatever voice emanates from it can usually be assumed to be the product of its intentions.

An ideological subject, however, is bodyless, a projection into and from a text. Whatever body it might be said to have — whatever body of people and/or technical apparatus which produces the text through which it speaks — cannot be understood as something that has an intention or a thought. We must look beyond the confluence of body and utterance in any attempt to theorize the ideological

subject and the features of a text which facilitate its recognition or appearance, especially in the case of ideological subjects which speak through technical media, where the “utterance” reaches the ears or eyes of an interpreter in the complete absence of the productive body responsible for it.

It is useful here to keep in mind the inversion of the Gricean theory proposed by Göran Sonesson. He suggests, simply, that rather than assuming that the recognition of intention is necessary for the presence of a meaningful sign, one should maintain that the presence of a meaningful sign will make it possible to discover or invent the intentions behind it. Sonesson limits himself to a brief refutation of Searle’s argument that letters in sand produced by the wind would be meaningless because they could not be connected with human intentions. He points out, instead, that an interpreter faced with such letters would be perhaps more likely to attribute them to the agency of a supernatural spirit. However, the basic mechanism of projection, from the material signifier to the phantasmagoric enunciating subject seems an apt model for the process by which an ideological subject can come to be recognized in a text. The problem, however, is not just that *some* ideological subject is behind a given text or discourse, but *which* ideological subject — how an ideological subject can be recognized as the identical origin of multiple texts. Essentially, the problem is to analyze the function of the *signature* and its relationship to a particular signing subject which may or may not exist.

Jacques Derrida, in his “Signature Event Context”, quotes Austin’s claim that

[w]here there is *not*, in the verbal formula of the utterance, a reference to the person doing the uttering, and so the acting, by means of the pronoun ‘I’ (or by his personal name), then in fact he will be ‘referred to’ in one of two ways:

(a) In verbal utterances, *by his being the person who does* the uttering
....

(b) In written utterances ..., *by his appending his signature* (this has to be done because, of course, written utterances are not tethered to their origin in the way the spoken ones are). (Austin 60-61, quoted in Derrida 19-20)

The act of signing, and thus identifying oneself, implies a certain kind of *presence*, a being-there, or at the very least an acting ‘body’, since pieces of paper

do not *usually* sign themselves. In signing something, an individual communicates his agreement or approval and, most importantly, he states his knowledge of the contents of the document which he signs — the signature implies presence because it implies contact with the document at hand. It is, in its essence, a replacement for the body which is not physically present, but which is communicated through the presence of the signature. It is precisely the function of the signature to imply this presence of the subject under the conditions where that subject is not in fact present. And, a signed document is also a legally binding document, for the signature is a statement of fact: it says ‘I have read this document and hereby verify that I know and understand what is stated here.’ The signature acts as an acknowledgment of authenticity; in signing a document an individual gives proof of its facticity, of its authentic quality. Thus, the phenomenon of the signature necessitates the existence of a body who *signs*: the implication of presence-in-absence follows from the assumption that the signature-artifact could not have been produced by anyone other than the author whose name is signed, and thus implies the intentional action of that particular subject. Ultimately, the human signature is vouched for by the mediation of subject and intention in the body.

We must wonder, then, how it is possible that an ideological subject, one which by definition lacks a material body, can effectively attach its signature to a discourse. Furthermore, it is necessary, especially in dealing with media discourse, to tease apart the relationship between the signatures of the ideological subject and the signatures of individual human subjects, which can co-exist within the same text.

The signature of the individual subject is easily spotted, and for the most part follows the form which Austin outlines above. In a television news broadcast, the anchorperson (or reporter) is visibly the point from which the utterance issues. Their signature is, in this sense, their own body (or at least their *image* — consider the case of phone-call reports which are accompanied by a headshot of the reporter whose voice is projected over the telephone wires and into our television sets). The case of radio is similar — the signature (and we should make clear that by ‘signature’ we mean, with Austin, that which distinguishes and makes present the origin of an utterance) is the distinctly individual voice of the person who imparts information to us over the airwaves.¹¹ In the case of written discourse in the

media, the signature becomes more complex, but is still easily identified in the case of the individual: the “byline” is the signature’s clearest manifestation in written media. However, we should by no means ignore the fact that in certain cases the signature of the written text is also partially provided by an image — think of the author’s photograph on the back of a book jacket, or the small headshots which often accompany an editorial column in a newspaper. While the signature is a representation of the body, it is often an abstract representation, and, in the eyes of the detached reader, difficult to link with an actual human entity — the function of the author’s photograph is to *make the text a human artifact* by signing it with a human face, which is, in actuality, linking it to an individual body.

However, media discourse also often makes a hermeneutic claim to a supra-individual or ideological subject as its origin. This is a claim to a symbolic, non-material body — an identifiable “individual” which speaks. As in the case of the human signature, the primary method by which this identification proceeds is by the affixation of a name to the discourse; examples include a newspaper masthead or a station identification break. However, the ideological signature cannot, like the human signature, function as the guarantee of the past presence and intention of an acting body/subject. Rather, inasmuch as the ideological signature functions as a label on a discourse artifact, or perhaps as a “calling-card” which precedes its entry into discourse, it makes a claim to the presence of a body which is speaking now — there is no mediation via intentions between the body of the ideological subject and the text or discourse. Rather, we would like to suggest that the ideological subject is in some sense co-extensive with the text which bears its name.

It may also be the case that the text bears both human and ideological signatures. We said above in the case of the singular expressions of individual members of the press that their signatures (whether in the form of their images, their voices, or their names) brought an “absent” form of presence (their individual presence) and a new form of body to their disembodied texts — they project themselves through their signatures. But this presencing of the individual human subject itself can function as part of the construction of the ideological subject in the signature. Since the totality of the medium (the whole newspaper, the broadcast, the talk show) is the estranged body of the ideological subject, the *incorporation* of the presence of the individual via the inclusion of the individual human names,

voices, and images within the ideological discourse allows for the presence of these individuals to testify to the presence of the ideological subject. In other words, the ideological subject is projected through these individuals themselves. What we have here is a situation similar to delegative representation, in which the individual human is charged with the power to speak for or as the ideological projection of the group. The identity of the ideological subject, given in the material unity of the discursive artifact, subsumes and co-opts the individuals whose presence the discourse also testifies to. These individuals, regardless of any intention on their part to do so, by their (signed) presence, act as surrogate bodies for the ideological subject, as *mediums* for its spirit.

Performativity and the projection of the ideological subject

The preceding discussions of the ideological character of both types of collective enunciative subjectivities (pseudo-rational-critical public voices and legal-representation voices) raise the issue of exactly what kinds of speech acts are employed in these kinds of ideological discourses. It is our suggestion that ideology depends upon performativity, in many cases to a greater extent than is reflected in the surface syntax of utterances.

A first simple instance concerns reflexive statements made by the subject which *officially* represents a collectivity. In a speech act analysis such as Searle's "Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts", sentences which express gratitude, congratulations, disapproval, etc. are gathered together under the classification of *Expressives*, where the defining feature is the presupposition of the correspondence of the expressed and held psychological state. But in cases where an utterance is hermeneutically attributable to an ideological subject, we have seen that we cannot make reference to any actually existing psychological states or processes, for the reason that the subject who might entertain these states does not properly exist. It is our contention that an "expressive" utterance attributable to an ideological subject takes on a distinctly performative character, in that such an utterance calls the presupposed attitude into being. The impossibility of psychological sincerity necessitates the performative character of these utterances: when a corporation (or other officially represented collectivity) issues an apology, whatever the attitudes of the people who drafted/authorized/distributed it, the corporation is *officially* sorry.

However, the concept of the performative utterance extends further into all types of ideological discourse than the above remarks indicate. The primary issue here is the performative construction of the ideological subject.¹² Again, Habermas' work on communicative action provides a useful starting point for the development of the analysis.

In his essay on Mead's theory of subjectivity, Habermas argues that first person description of oneself (his example is Rousseau's *Confessions*) is not truth-conditional predication of properties to an object coincident with the self who writes, but "performatively raised claims to one's own identity". In such reflexive discourse, what occurs is not "reports" or "self-descriptions", but "presentations of self". This manifestation of the self in discourse takes the form of a performatively enunciated guarantee whose "meaning has been *completely* grasped by the addressee as soon as he shows that the other is vouching for his ability to be himself. The latter *shows* itself in turn through the continuity of a more or less consciously assumed life history. (Habermas 1992, 169)" According to Habermas, Mead is the first person to abandon the "reflection-model of self-consciousness" as the basis for the formation of the ego/subject, and instead trace the development of the subject in social interaction, a process which can occur only as the kinds of performative claims discussed above are recognized by others. (*ibid.* 170) With the distance introduced in this framework between the internal psychology of the subject and the subject who enters into (social) discourse, it is clear that the ideological subject as we have described it is performatively manifested in discourse in the same way as a personal subject — it is neither deficient nor parasitic upon normal discourse.

When we turn to the relationship of media discourse to its objects, additional performative characteristics can be found. Returning to Habermas' analysis of the transformation of the public sphere, it is interesting to consider the situation of a mass media which exists within a hegemonic structure along with other power-representing, performatively manifested ideological subjects. If all the actors involved in media discourse — the reporters and who they report on — are ideological constructions which exist inasmuch as they are performed, one is led to wonder to what extent the picture of "reality" which is presented through the media has the characteristics of a staged event, a *performance*. Much of what counts as news is precisely this staging of ideological discourse for the cooperative performance (be-

tween reporters and those reported on) of the news event; the most clear examples include the press release and the press conference — but the situation is the same whenever an ideological subject represents itself by entering into media discourse. The ideological subject which “uses” the media for its self-representation and the ideological subject which is attributable to the media discourse itself mutually reinforce each other — in recognizing the non-individual subject, by speaking of the corporation/government/organization, the media subject not only provides for the public acclamation of that subject, but reinforces its own position before the public as the voice of “objectivity” or “truth”, providing information on precisely this performatively constructed realm of ideological subjects.

Objectivity, Individuals, and the Ideological Subject

Earlier we mentioned the idea of individuals acting as “mediums” for the ideological subject. This is not to say, however, that individuals are necessarily *possessed* against their will by the ideological subject. In associating themselves with an ideological subject, individuals must adapt their communicative behaviour for the purposes of this association, but also stand to benefit from the association. This is perhaps most clearly demonstrated through a short investigation of claims to objectivity made within media discourses.

The media in general, and here we are speaking about newspapers, magazines, television news programs and radio shows — in short, the *press* — is in most cases considered to be a sort of information distribution apparatus. We might call it ‘the eyes and ears of the public’, meaning that the media functions as a remote sense-organ for individuals who cannot (or would rather not) experience events first-hand. Viewers, from the comfort of their own homes (or listeners from the comfort of their own cars, or readers from the comfort of their own subway seat), can see, hear, and even feel (in the sense of emotion) aspects of the world which are far divorced from their everyday lives. Or perhaps, in picking up the local newspaper, they can read a report about their neighbors’ secret counterfeiting operation, or perhaps just find out about the upcoming church social. The media extends the reach of the five human senses by seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching *for* individuals who are unable or unwilling to do so themselves, and then reporting back to ‘headquarters’ with the information they have gathered. This

sort of explanation of the media's function in society places the audience — the viewing, receiving public — in a precarious position of power. The audience, in one interpretation, exerts a certain amount of control over the media, because audience members use the media to their own advantage to gain more information about their own world — think of a remote control camera on wheels which travels around the world taking pictures and sending reports back to you at home; the controller device might come in the form of the Nielsen or Arbitron ratings. However, in an alternate interpretation, which is not necessarily mutually exclusive with the former one, the media's power holds sway over the audience and not the other way around. Because the media is the most prominent and perhaps easily accessible remote sense-organ available to audience members, they come to rely upon it as their primary source for information about the world outside their immediate sphere of experience. What is not reported by the media may as well have not happened. If the media should choose, for one reason or another, to carry one story and ignore a conflicting one, or to quote 'this' person instead of 'that', then the choices that are made by the media organizations (and members of the press) are, in a certain sense, the *de facto* choices of the audience. To be quite blunt, the media determines what audience members believe about the world in which they live.

McQuail (1983) suggests that the 'key elements' of mass communication can be outlined in a very basic typology which follows the form of Rosengren's 1980 framework. "[It] involves ... two basic propositions: 'Social structure influences culture' and its reverse, 'Culture influences social structure'. (39)" For the purposes of McQuail's analysis, we are to read 'social structure' as 'social change' and 'culture' as 'mass communication'; for our purposes here in seeking to analyse media discourse, we might further appropriate the analogy by forcing it to deal with the question of the individuals whose shifting worldviews are the result of and cause for social change and state that 'social structure' can be read as 'beliefs about the world' and 'culture' as 'media discourse'. This seems not an unwarranted use of McQuail's and Rosengren's original propositions. The media has a self-proclaimed mission to cover the stories which 'impact the world', issues people 'care about', and information they want or 'need' to know. In this sense, the media is a sense-organ *extraordinaire* — it is remote, accompanied by the latest technology and it is deemed to be *objective*. However, the information distributed by the media can

only be as comprehensive as are the individuals working together to produce the 'news', and the media reserves certain content-related rights. Lew Hill, the founder of Pacifica Radio in the United States, wrote that "the people who actually do the broadcasting should ... be responsible for what and why they broadcast. (Hill)" Hill intended to illuminate the shared responsibilities of journalists and audiences with this statement, but we can easily see how his community-based idea has been co-opted into the mass media's self-imposed authority to determine what is 'news' and what is not. Consider, for example, the trademark slogan of *The New York Times*: "All the News That's Fit to Print". There is an implicit right of judgment contained within this statement, namely that someone must determine what is 'fit to print'. Perhaps the choice of this slogan was, in part, due to the jingoistic tone of the words which effortlessly roll off the tongue, but it is telling that the formulation 'fit to print' is used instead of a more neutral 'available' or 'that we are aware of'. If we read into the statement what is implied (but not stated), it would read: "All the News That *The New York Times* Deems Fit To Print". When we look closely at the slogan's formulation, we are immediately able to fill in what is stated implicitly, but it would not be too far-fetched to suggest that individuals who simply read the paper do not. Because *The New York Times* purports to report 'news', it is deemed to be objective — it is historically objective, in fact, and the importance of an institution's history should not be discounted, for familiarity goes a long way in determining what individuals will and will not believe. Thus, the slogan goes uncommented upon by the greater percentage of *The New York Times'* readers. It is these sorts of implicit claims to a subjective objectivity which make possible the powerful credibility which characterizes the projected ideological subject and the individuals who associate themselves with it.

When *The New York Times* claims to carry all the news that's fit to print, an ideological subject is created and projected to maintain the facade of objectivity. It is not objective for the editor of the newspaper or the CEO of the corporation to decide what is 'fit to print', but it *is* objective for an ideological subject — the totality of *The New York Times* — to do so, because of the unified plurality which is implied in a discourse move like this one. The totality of the institution speaking in one voice, as one subject, is somehow considered to be more objective than an individual subject alone. Too, the association of oneself with the ideological

subject imparts to the individual this same credibility, though to a lesser degree. If 'Jane Adams' calls the head of development of Merck Pharmaceuticals to question him about the company's recent failure to have a new drug FDA-approved, she would be lucky to even speak with the director's secretary. But if 'Jane Adams with *The New York Times*' calls the same company with the same request, she will be granted a different amount of access, varying proportionally with her status at the newspaper and the extent to which she is perceived as associated with the ideological subject, *The New York Times*. Differential access in situations like this is only one of the so-called 'perks' of being a medium for an ideological voice. It also applies to the reception of an individual's ideas by the public-at-large. In the same vein that an individual writing as *The New York Times* is granted differential access to high-profile individuals (and situations — for example the "press pass" which grants not only access but free parking as well), he or she is also granted access to the public. On the most basic level, the individual is granted access to the material means of production — the physical machinery necessary to transmit one's voice (physical and otherwise) to the world. On a more complicated level, the notion of credibility arises again. When an individual writes an article which is transmitted to the world via the pages of *The New York Times*, it is assumed to be factual, well-researched and altogether *true* because it is perceived as a production of the ideological subject and not only as a production of an individual. And, if a reporter from a major media organization should choose to issue a statement or give a press conference or a speech which is, in all actuality, separate from that media organization, she will still be perceived as having a certain amount of credibility because of her past association with an 'objective' ideological subject. Even when individuals who are or have been associated with ideological subjects act on their own, as individuals, their past association grants them a level of credibility which others may find difficult to attain.

This credibility which is granted to individuals because of their perceived 'objectivity' feeds back into the ideological subject, strengthening its own claims to objectivity. We spoke briefly above about the importance of *familiarity* to the public's willingness to believe in the objectivity of the ideological subject. Yet the ideological subject has no body, nothing which is visible or audible, at least, since it exists only in its projection into and out of texts. The ideological subject can

only be perceived as objective based on its various incarnations in individual bodies and voices. *The New York Times*, for example, refers not only to the institution which owns and operates the New York Times Corporation, but to the physical paper itself which is a familiar object or body. There must be something tangible or at least recognizable about the subject to which we attribute credibility. This is where the individual's association with the ideological subject proves beneficial for the maintenance of the latter. We could perhaps refer to this as the 'face you can trust' syndrome — a 'Headline News' devotee may continue to watch and believe the stories reported on that station because he knows the anchorperson. Not personally, of course, but he is, rather, familiar with her and recognizes her voice and face and characteristic way of announcing the day's headlines. The devotee will continue to watch the same program and believe the same anchorperson, or to read the same newspaper and believe the same reporter because she has won his trust and he affords to her a certain amount of credibility. In most cases, the credibility he links to his favorite anchorperson will, by default, extend to the station or program as a whole. This sort of familiarity which implies credibility goes far in reinforcing the credibility of the ideological subject which is projected in the discourse. An even more extreme example is drawn from (personal experience in) a small town in the southern United States: a young woman who had grown up in the town, a child of a prominent family and well-known in the small community, returned after university to work in a television station in a nearby city. After working her way up through the station ranks, she eventually secured a position as an anchorperson on the afternoon news. The station, which had been virtually ignored before, suddenly became *the* source for news in the town and gained an amazing level of credibility in the eyes of the townspeople, because suddenly there was a familiar (and trusted) face that represented the station in the minds of the townspeople, who went so far as to allege that what was reported on the station must be true "because Allison Gardner said it was true." Audience members will almost without fail turn to the station they trust to provide them with their information about the world, and such trust in a media organization is not necessarily something which is based solely upon upstanding journalism. It is also based on the body which transmits the information. Thus, we can return to the question of objectivity and suggest that it necessarily implies the existence of a body, whether it is an individual human

or a plural subject like an institution. For something to be “objective” it must be judged to be objective — simply making claims to objectivity does not necessarily garner credibility. There must be something (a body), to which these claims can be attached — where responsibility and reputation can be lodged. While the purely abstract historical self-identity of the ideological subject can, in theory, fulfill this function, in reality it only does so in relation to the real bodies which make it possible. The most important relation here is the one with actual *human* bodies: the association of individuals with the ideological subject provides a greater level of presumed objectivity and heightened credibility for both parties.

We should also mention here that part of the benefit of associating individuals with the ideological subject comes in the form of the knowledge which the ideological subject is then presumed to have.¹³ We can again use *The New York Times* as an example: if the newspaper signs a document (say an editorial statement), it implies that the document is representative of the opinions, and hence beliefs and knowledge, of the ideological subject, *The New York Times*. But how does one define the knowledge held by a ideological subject? As we have suggested above the knowledge of the collective subject is not reducible simply to the sum total of the individually-held knowledges of its members, because it would be ludicrous to assume that *The New York Times* holds as knowledge what its star reporter had for breakfast, how much the editor’s secretary is paid, and so on. Neither the very personal knowledge of the members (like what they had for breakfast, etc.) nor the internal knowledge of the corporation (the salaries of the employees, etc.) can be construed as part of the base of knowledge that the ideological subject *The New York Times* draws from. This seems to suggest that the knowledge of the collective subject must be, in part, at least, the *shared* knowledge of its members. This could be interpreted in two ways: in one sense this could mean that the knowledge of the collective subject is simply that knowledge which is shared (or perhaps *volunteered*, communicated) by the members with each other in a professional capacity; in the second sense, the statement could be interpreted as the knowledge which is shared with the public (in published material) by individuals under the guise of *The New York Times*. However, neither of these interpretations will ultimately prove sufficient for our purposes. We can easily rule out the first case by calling upon the notion of “off the record” exchanges. A reporter may have contact

with a source who gives some information, or admits to a charge “off the record”, meaning that the reporter is then bound (by a code of honour, in most cases) to secrecy. He or she cannot divulge that information to the public and attach it to the source’s name, and in some cases is not at liberty to repeat the information at all. Yet it is fairly certain that the reporter will share the information with his or her colleagues in the newsroom or at an editorial meeting. One of the primary purposes of trying to obtain information “off the record” as a last resort is gaining additional information to use in the quest to break a story or find someone who *will* confirm the statement. It gives a reporter a certain edge, so to speak, and he or she may then tell other reporters or editors the information as a possible lead or to get suggestions on where to look next. Is this sort of information then held by *The New York Times*? It cannot be, if we understand the code of honour associated with “off the record” interviews. The second interpretation given above is slightly more difficult to break apart, but still proves unsatisfactory, for it does not take into account the great wealth of information *The New York Times* receives on a daily basis yet does not see ‘fit to print’. For example, another organization can send a press release or an announcement of an event to *The New York Times* and the paper may decide not to cover it. Later, however, when something turns a small affair into a major event and the paper is queried, perhaps in a letter to the editor, about its silence on the matter, the paper can respond by writing that “*The New York Times* was aware of the event but chose not to attend,” or something of the sort. It would be possible in the context of this second interpretation to suggest that *The New York Times* (the ideological subject) did not *know* about this event until it published the response to the letter, but this quickly becomes confusing and unwieldy. Too, the public tends to perceive media organizations as having a great deal of “inside” information which is not released or shared with the public¹⁴ — this is a source of the perception of media organizations as extremely powerful. Perhaps, then, it suffices to say that what is held by the ideological subject is that knowledge it is *perceived* to have by individuals. If the ideological subject is in all actuality a phantasmagoric, projected one, then it can only hold knowledge in so much as it is projected and received as having that knowledge. In clearer terms, because the ideological subject does not exist, it cannot be said to *actually know anything*. On the one hand, this definition of the ideological subject allows the

sort of unremarkable, socially-shared common knowledge which underlies language use to be projected unproblematically into the ideological subject — an audience will automatically attribute to any competent speaker the knowledge that dogs are animals, that Europe is a continent, etc. We may view these projected pieces of semantic/analytic/cultural knowledge as the necessary precondition for the ideological subject to be accepted as a functioning participant in discourse. However, besides the attribution of this *a priori* knowledge to the ideological subject, *evidence* can be offered which supports the perception of or belief in the specific knowledges which are held by the ideological subject only inasmuch as that subject enters into discourse: one can say that a newspaper knows something if the newspaper has printed it, but also one can say that a newspaper, properly understood as an ideological subject, knows something if a statement addressed to the newspaper *as ideological subject* conveyed the knowledge in question. An example would be the press release, which provides sufficient grounds for claiming that a newspaper is aware of a fact. Another example is the distinction between on and off the record conversations — statements made on the record are primarily addressed to the ideological subject, and those made off the record are addressed to individuals.

Media, Materiality, and Power

Having outlined a theory which relates texts to their presumed and potentially imaginary origin via a relationship of hermeneutic projection, and examined how such an imaginary origin, what we have called the “ideological subject”, is constituted in the texts produced by the mass media, we now wish to consider how it comes about that the ideological voice says one thing and not another — how is something which does not exist controlled? It may be misleading to speak of the ideological ‘voice’ in this context — the ideological subject may in fact *speak*, but it lacks a voice in the same way it lacks a body. When we talk about the ideological subject speaking in such a way that we can hear it, it is only by way of a human being, who uses his or her own voice (both in the physiological and metaphysical senses) as a medium for channeling the soundless utterances of the ideological subject into audible words. But, as we have seen above, at the same time the individual enables the ideological subject to speak, the latter affords the same privilege to the individual, through the mechanisms of a shared history, differential access, and, perhaps

the most invisibly obvious of all, by the material means of production themselves — which is to say, individuals whose existence depends upon the “existence” of the ideological subject rely not only upon some projected (or imagined) realm of *credibility* but, at the most basic level, upon the physical medium which makes possible the communication of their message. Without the newspaper which arrives on the doorstep every morning, the reporter cannot be heard. Without access to a particular radio frequency, the announcer is silenced. The material means of production — and we refer here to financial capital only in so much as it allows an institution or individual to purchase and maintain the physical foundations of the medium through which the ideological subject is projected — create and control the very possibility of what we have thus far referred to as ‘media discourse’. Because the ideological subject exists only inasmuch as it subsists upon the text, whomever controls the means by which the text is produced, and the access to speak through these means, ultimately controls the voice of the ideological subject.¹⁵

However, in media discourses, the ideological subject is not meant to be understood as the projection of the power of capital, but as a subject which speaks objectively or fairly (given an appropriate ideological interpretation of these terms, of course). This power over the media itself, in order to preserve the image of the ideological subject, must not manifest itself in the discourse in a recognizable way. This power over access to the medium instead often operates such that those responsible for the production of the media text understand what constraints they must heed in their speech in order to retain their access — the enforcement of these constraints is thus kept out of the media text itself.

For example, reporters and anchorpersons are often trained to tailor their discourse according to a set of explicit rules — the “style guide” — by which the voice of the institution is defined. In conforming to these constraints — and others, explicit or implicit, on topics, word choices, and sources — and so transforming themselves, individuals prepare themselves to channel the spirit of the ideological subject. Reasons for doing so may extend beyond remuneration for labor, of course; individuals may judge that the restrictions placed upon their voices do not impede their desires for self-expression, or that the advantages incurred by their association with an ideological subject outweigh the constraints involved.

It is of course also possible that an individual may claim a right to use the

privilege of transmission granted by the institutional apparatus overseeing the means of media production without conforming to the implicit or explicit expectations of that institution regarding the exercise of that privilege. In these cases, the institution can revoke the privilege, thereby re-establishing its control over the self-presentation of the intended ideological subject which had been entrusted to the individual. The power of the institution over the ideological subject and its voice is observable most clearly in the *silencing* of utterances — when a individual’s work is truncated or eliminated altogether as unfit for inclusion in the media text which is intended to construct an ideological subject with reference to the decisions of the institutional apparatus. It is here that the institutional determination of the ideological subject can be even be unequivocally perceived in the media text itself.

Pacifica Radio: Analyzing the Ideological Subject

A History of the Pacifica Radio News Network

Founded by pacifist Lewis Hill in 1946 as a listener-sponsored non-commercial radio station, Pacifica Radio first went on the air as KPFA-FM in Berkeley, California in 1949. From the beginning, the station was committed to the “ethical, intellectual and artistic integrity” that Hill, the Director of the National Committee for Conscientious Objectors during World War II, saw as the pacifist ideal (Whiting). As early as 1944, Hill was making plans for a non-commercial radio station with “the specific purpose of promoting peace, both interpersonal and international. (*ibid.*)” The name ‘Pacifica’, according to John Whiting, referred not to the geographical location of the station (the California Bay Area) but to Hill’s twin guiding principles for the station — pacifism and civil liberties. The station’s original mission statement, written in 1948, included the following premise:

In radio broadcasting operations to engage in any activity that shall contribute to the lasting understanding between nations and the individuals of all nations, races, creeds and colors; to gather and disseminate information on the causes of conflict between any and all such groups; and through any and all means compatible with the purposes of this Corporation, to promote the study of political and economic problems and of the causes of religious, philosophical and racial antagonisms.

(Articles of Incorporation of the Pacifica Foundation, 1948)

Lew Hill's vision of Pacifica Radio was focused around creating a radio space which reflected the diversity of the world in which he lived. In mainstream commercial radio, the idea of a "radio voice" was developed early on: it demanded a certain norm of intonation, inflection and voice modulation which, according to Whiting, was as exacting as the BBC's "standard English" guidelines. Considering the nature of the radio apparatus in the World War II era, these sorts of norms did play a productive role — exaggerated diction and deep tones of voice helped to compensate for primitive equipment and poor reception — but already placed restrictions on the broadcasters which Hill, for one, found unbearable. Hill felt that commercial radio went to great lengths to train broadcasters to hide their own voices and personalities and resulted in a radio space which was devoid of any real meaning or emotion.

In a 1951 essay entitled "The Theory of Listener-Sponsored Radio," Hill explained why commercial radio failed to provide a possible — or even desirable — outlet for the "genuine artist and thinker":

[A standard radio audition procedure] consists of three or four paragraphs minutely constructed to avoid conveying any meaning. The words are familiar and every sentence is grammatically sound, but the text is gibberish. The applicant is required to read this text in different voices, as though it meant different things: with solemnity and heavy sincerity, with lighthearted humor, and of course with "punch". If the judges award him the job and turn him loose on you [the audience], he has succeeded on account of an extraordinary skill in simulating emotions, intentions and beliefs which he does not possess.

The voices and programs on Pacifica Radio should transcend this sort of homogenization which lacks any real connection to a human emotional subject and turns individuals into identical robots uncharismatically simulating the human. Rather than creating a smooth and homogeneous radio station which spoke with 'one voice', Lew Hill's dream was to create a station made up of *multiple* voices and personalities. Rather than having a signature style, Pacifica was simply to have a guiding philosophy — a dedication to pacifism. Hill's vision for the station was not

to create something which would serve as a sort of ‘newspaper for the left’ — that would have implied the complete control over the content by the station and its management. Instead, Hill developed the idea of “listener-sponsored” radio, which ensured that Pacifica’s programming would take into account the demands and requests of the listening public. The idea of listener-sponsored radio transcended the usual boundaries of media/public by bringing the public into the very heart of the organizational structure — the economic realm. Listeners would voluntarily ‘subscribe’ to the station, theoretically because they believed in or enjoyed the programming they heard each day. Subscription thus served as a sort of audience feedback mechanism — whereas subscription usually results in added materials (or access to materials) which are not available to non-subscribers, in the case of Pacifica, subscription was a way of showing support for what was aired on the station, and not subscribing, or canceling one’s subscription was a way of expressing dislike for the material. Listeners were free to *receive* the programs whether or not they paid for them; subscription was simply a way to let the station know that the audience believed in the work being carried out. The idea seems less than revolutionary today, in a world of charities, non-profit organizations and televised pledge-drives, but in post-wartime America, Lew Hill and Pacifica broke the traditional molds which kept listeners and broadcasters on separate sides of their shared world.¹⁶

Along with the economic support from listeners, Pacifica reached out to the community in other ways. The station, the organization behind it — including the management, the broadcasters and the special guests — were all unpaid volunteers at first, and later all paid employees had equal salaries. John Whiting anecdotally relates that community members who dropped by the station at one point or another often found themselves drafted into typing letters or stuffing envelopes. Until 1950, Pacifica’s monthly operating budget was somewhere around \$4000 (Whiting). Hill’s dream for Pacifica was founded on a general faith in humanity’s objectivity, on the presumed ability to work together in good spirits toward a common dream. It didn’t matter to Hill whether or not he was paid a regular salary, as long as the station remained intact. Others, however committed they were to the dream of Pacifica, did not share Hill’s idealism, and in-fights soon broke out among the group, prompting Hill to resign from his own station in 1953. A year later, however, Pacifica struggled to survive without Hill’s charismatic leadership as a guiding light,

and the station's Board of Directors voted to ask Hill to return as President of the board. He accepted, on his own terms. Even then, however, Hill had problems controlling the staff, supporting the station and keeping the listeners happy. And, as the station leaned more and more toward the radical left which would come to characterize Berkeley, California in the 1960s, he found himself questioning more and more whether Pacifica, which had taken to occasionally ridiculing (albeit subtly) right-leaning participants, really respected the fundamental dignity of *every* human being. His already fragile health continued to decline under the stress of managing Pacifica, and he finally told a friend that he was "fed up" and "tuckered out". In August of 1957, Lew Hill committed suicide. (Whiting)

In spite of the conflict that plagued the station, Hill's leadership had established a strong network of individuals who continued to carry out his dream, in one fashion or another. The Pacifica Foundation, which was the non-profit organization which funded KPFA, continued to grow and eventually acquired the licenses to another 4 stations, making up the five Pacifica stations which exist today: KPFA in Berkeley, KPFK in Los Angeles, KPFT in Houston, WBAI in New York and WPFW in Washington, DC. Pacifica stations have, since 1949, been among the only US radio stations to provide liberal, pacifist and above all equal-rights oriented programming on FM radio. From their coverage of the opposition to the Korean War in 1950, to radio shows hosted by Allen Ginsburg and other Beat poets; from Linus Pauling and Edward Teller debating nuclear war in 1958 to Jack Levine's expose of J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI in 1962; from interviews with Bertrand Russell, Che Guevara and Sister Ita Ford to exclusive coverage of the Iran-Contra hearings; from Korea and Vietnam to the Persian Gulf and East Timor, Pacifica has weathered attacks by the American government, major broadcast corporations, right-wing organizations, and the Ku Klux Klan, been investigated by the House Committee on Un-American Activities, the US Supreme Court and been branded either 'groundbreaking' or 'communist'.

Despite numerous internal conflicts regarding financial and organizational matters since the network's inception, the present crisis (dating back roughly 10 years) is especially notable for the extent to which the National Board, and the station management it oversees, has sought to consolidate and maintain hegemonic control over the programming broadcast by the various stations. In 1992, the Pacifica

National Board (PNB) released its “five-year” plan (5Y), which outlined a strategy for increasing the listener base through the expansion of nationally produced programming. This plan also outlined a strategy for the presentation of a “national voice” — requiring more control over local programming by the national board. Although some of the national programming that was developed by this plan, including “Democracy Now!”, proved to be very popular, the steps taken by the National Board and station management in the implementation of this plan regarding the homogenization and mass-marketing of the individual stations were undertaken largely without consulting station personnel or the communities of listeners involved. For example, at KPFA in Berkeley, many programmers who had provided their services to the station for decades were summarily dismissed. Subsequent efforts by the management to define the “national voice” placed increasing the number of listeners above other concerns; for example, efforts were made to moderate the radical political opinions expressed by Pacifica programmers. The perceived authoritarian heavy-handedness of the policy changes, the threat to local station autonomy, and the fear of the ‘sell-out’ or corporatization of the Pacifica network has triggered a downward spiral of dissent and management reaction, generating a tremendous amount of popular opposition to the PNB. The discourses which have resulted from this conflict, both on and off the air, show that what is essentially at stake is the very definition of the ideological subject. By examining discourse fragments from the vast Pacifica corpus (all available online, largely thanks to the efforts of Pacifica “dissidents”), it is possible to analyze the ideological subject not as a hegemonic unity, but as an object of contestation, and, in these moments of contestation, to illuminate the points at which the (struggle to define an) ideological subject has been manifested in media discourse itself.

“Behind the Scenes”: Controlling the ideological subject

While autonomous individuals engaged in cooperative media production can presumably negotiate discursively to arrive at an agreeable vision of the ideological subject that their efforts necessarily project, this negotiation can give way to edicts and coercion when control over the financial, technical, and legal apparatus of media production is vested in an institutional power structure which stands above and apart from those engaged in actual media production. In a typical media discursive

situation, the ideological subject which is projected is *coherent, unified* — that is, logically and rhetorically consistent — because it relies upon internalized directives and non-disclosed (to the public) institutional edicts regarding the content which is to be communicated under a particular ideological ‘umbrella’. In contrast, the Pacifica case (where insubordination against institutional control is rampant and scrutiny of institutional management activities is high) reveals a great deal about the coercive and deceptive strategies which may be employed in the formation of an ideological subject through media discourse.

Before considering a discourse fragment in which the Pacifica National Board (PNB) attempts to use an on-air public broadcast to advance its own interests, it is worthwhile to examine several discourses which have taken place ‘behind the scenes’, as it were, and in doing so illustrate how an institutional structure like the Pacifica Foundation may seek to control the ideological voice it “owns” and manipulatively manage its own self-presentation. Our initial text in this series is an internal memo circulated among Pacifica managers in 1997 and written by the Pacifica Foundation’s newly hired “communications director”. The text is a series of likely questions about the recent problems at Pacifica, and suggested answers for those questions, to be used by station managers and other Pacifica officials when called upon to represent the Foundation and justify its actions to the staff and the listening public: “I call it a ‘cheat sheet’ to help me stay on message and represent the organization accurately and consistently. (CS)” The document was never intended to be made public (it was accidentally distributed or ‘leaked’ to the public) — in fact its effectiveness was acknowledged to hinge upon its secrecy: “While there is nothing in this document that is untrue or incriminating, please do not make and distribute copies to others. (CS)” In all actuality, however, there *is* quite a bit in the document which is incriminating, especially where Pacifica’s methods for defining its own projected image as an ideological subject are concerned. The following excerpt, for example, is markedly manipulative in character; the directions for answering a question differ depending on whether the statement is to be made before or after the board makes a decision (notice that the communications director knows exactly what the decision of the board will be):

Why are you reducing the number of seats on Pacifica’s board of directors for local advisory board members?

[Before release of strategic plan:] Aspects of the strategic plan dealing with governance issues have not been approved and are still flux (sic). We'll be happy to comment after things are finalized.

[After release of strategic plan:] The number of board directors from our five station areas remains unchanged. In fact, two-thirds of our board are required to reside in our five station areas – reaffirming our commitment to remain close to the needs of grassroots community radio. One-third of our board will be elected at-large. (CS)

Additionally, many of the replies given are not mere clarifications of facts, they are also “expressives”, meant to convey the emotion and passion of an imaginary subject — Pacifica. (“Pacifica is proud” “Pacifica is steadfast in its comittment”) The leaked document reveals to what extent this emotion and passion is a deliberate facade employed in the performative construction of an ideological subject. Even the choice of idiom reveals attempts to manipulatively construct the ideological subject:

Are Pacifica and its five stations “selling out” by changing its programming to attract more listeners – and abandoning its historic mission to (fill in blank)?

Hell no! Listen to any of our national programs such as Democracy Now! or the Pacifica National News, and you will find the sort of hard-hitting, alternative voices on which the public has come to depend and expect from Pacifica. (CS)

The suggested “Hell no!” (resonating with the “Hell no, we won’t go!” protest chant) is clearly meant to suggest how managers should, in their public appearances, convincingly demonstrate their fervor and legitimacy (and the legitimacy of the PNB as an ideological subject and institutional structure overseeing Pacifica radio production) to the majority of the Pacifica audience.

Finally, the answers spelled out here clearly demonstrate a desire to obscure the difference between the ideological subject which speaks as the Pacifica Foundation (the national board and the management it appoints) and the ideological subject which speaks over the radio — the same word, “Pacifica”, is used to refer to a conflation of both functions, rather than more specific locutions like “Pacifica

Foundation”, especially in the answers. In the questions, specific locutions are used 6 times, and “Pacifica” is used 9 times. In the answers, specific locutions are used 7 times, and “Pacifica” is used 29 times!

Besides suggestions of this sort which are intended to facilitate the manipulation of the public by the Pacifica management, numerous documents have been released revealing orders which were given to Pacifica programmers regarding what they should and should not say on the air. The most notorious, the “gag rule”, is dealt with extensively below. Amy Goodman, host of “Democracy Now!” (a daily, hour-long news show produced as national programming, perhaps the most unapologetically radical radio news program in the U.S.), has related numerous instances in which she was told to soften the political militancy of her reporting. For example, in a meeting with Pacifica Program Director Steve Yasko and KPFFK manager Mark Schubb, Goodman was told “that audiences don’t want to hear graphic details of police brutality before breakfast. (CD)” This and other criticisms of Goodman’s politics as expressed in her choice of topics was accompanied by (violent) reminders by Steve Yasko that Goodman was his employee (*ibid.*). According to Gil Contreras, another Pacifica broadcaster, the same Mark Schubb “instructed the News Director, Frank Stoltze, to tell me not to pronounce Spanish words in my morning news casts with a Spanish pronunciation. (GC)” Even the particular phonology used to enunciate the media speech act, what Austin would refer to as the “locutionary” act, is relevant to the formation of the ideological subject, and therefore a potential field for the imposition of institutional edict. As mentioned throughout the sections above, every aspect of the individual who acts as a medium for the ideological voice, or through whom the ideological subject is projected, is considered to reflect that ideological subject. Any dissension, any difference can break the unified front which purports to *be* the ideological subject; thus journalists are instructed to regularize their discursive personalities, just as in the radio audition procedure Hill outlined some fifty years ago.

Pacifica and the ideological signature

As we have repeatedly suggested above, the signature is the point at which the ideological subject is postulated or presupposed within the media discourse, where, through the signifier of the proper name, an identity-claim is made connecting the

imaginary origin of the particular text with a historically continuous entity. As one might expect, the connection between the institutional apparatus which produces the media text and the ideological subject here is not intrinsic or necessary — it is possible for signatures to be forged or contested. Furthermore, the ideological subject, which always speaks through the bodies of others, can not refer to itself with a singular personal pronoun (one hears “This is CNN” or “You are watching CNN” rather than “I am CNN”).¹⁷ The explicit signature by which the ideological subject is identified is thus equivalent in formal structure to a label, in that it may be “extraneous” to the body of the text itself. This (potential) separation, and the contestation and appropriation of the ideological subject in discourse it makes possible, clearly demonstrates the tenuous connection holding between institutions and the ideological subjects which they produce and which speak not in their name, but in the name of the public good.

In the Pacifica case, we can see numerous instances in which the connection between the institution and the signature is explicitly challenged. A first example concerns the way in which Amy Goodman (host of “Democracy Now!”, which is produced at Pacifica’s New York studio), began ending her show after the installation of Utrice Leid as Station Manager at WBAI and the unexpected firings of several station employees as well as the physical exclusion from the WBAI studios of both station personnel and members of the public, including a “dissident” Pacifica National Board member, in what has been called the “Christmas Coup”. (CC) After this incident, Amy Goodman began ending her daily “Democracy Now!” broadcasts with the line, “From the embattled studios of WBAI, from the studios of the banned and the fired, from the studios of our listeners, I’m Amy Goodman. Thanks for listening to another edition of Democracy Now! (ZM)” This signoff functions not only as the signature for “Democracy Now!”, but also, by its incorporation in the radio broadcast, as a signature for the station WBAI, and, by extension, the entire Pacifica network. Predictably, the WBAI management viewed this self-deprecating signature, which they were forced to air, as a threat to the institutional hegemony over the definition of the ideological subject. WBAI responded by pre-empting the program in its entirety during its seasonal fundraising drive (PRE).¹⁸

Threats to the hegemonic signature can occur outside of the broadcasts controlled by an institutional structure, as well as from within them. The Austin, Texas

radio station KOOP, a Pacifica 'affiliate' station whose collective management body is strongly pro-union, began airing the following disclaimer at the beginning and end of their rebroadcast of the syndicated "Pacifica Network News":

Pacifica Network News is produced by a unionized work force with a contract, but the Pacifica Foundation is currently in a labor dispute with unionized workers at WBAI/New York and KPFK/Los Angeles. Pacifica is no longer using a consulting firm listed by the AFL-CIO as a union buster for its contract negotiations with the United Electrical Workers [UE]. Pacifica has said they will negotiate with the UE in good faith with the goal of having a fair contract with its unionized workers, but Pacifica has not withdrawn its attempt to exclude 90% of the workers from union protection or other contract proposals that the workers do not consider fair or equitable. KOOP will continue to monitor the situation. (AU)

Although the notification was not broadcast on a Pacifica Network station, and its primary purpose was to report on Pacifica's anti-union activities, thereby defining the *KOOP* ideological identity, its direct association with rebroadcast Pacifica programming threatened the Pacifica Foundation's monopoly on ideological self-definition. After many attempts to encourage KOOP to remove this disclaimer, the Pacifica Foundation inserted the following into the KOOP affiliate contract (as well as the contracts of all other Pacifica affiliates, some of whom had aired similar disclaimers):

Pacifica may terminate this Agreement if ... Station dilutes the good will associated with Pacifica's name. (NL)

Subsequently, KOOP's refusal to sign the new contract resulted in Pacifica revoking their right to rebroadcast their program, notwithstanding the ever-present rhetoric about wishing to *expand* rather than *contract* the listener base via national programming. (FK) Because the signature of the ideological subject exists only discursively, the only way for an institution to maintain control over the identity of the subject is by refusing to allow threatening discourse to take place at all, whether through legal prohibition or through intervention at the point of media production.

The institutional management of self-presentation

As mentioned above, the attempts of the Pacifica Foundation to control the presentation of the ideological subject projected through media discourses on Pacifica stations is not limited to “behind the scenes” encounters between staff and management officials. “Pacifica” — representatives of the Pacifica Foundation, who claim the authority to speak for the unified subject “Pacifica” — have been forced to take to the airwaves in countless attempts to assure the listening public of their commitment to the progressive ideals of the organization’s founder. In these very public attempts to keep up the illusion of a ‘unified Pacifica’, the control which is exerted on discourse and discursive situations at the point of media production is unusually apparent.

The discourse fragment analyzed here is from the period immediately after the termination (‘failure to renew contract’) of KPFA Station Manager Nicole Sawaya and the subsequent firing of KPFA host Larry Bensky for discussing Sawaya’s dismissal on-air, in violation of the “dirty-laundry” or “gag” rule. In the segment in question, the Chair of the PNB, Mary Frances Berry (MFB), and Executive Director of the Pacifica Foundation Lynn Chadwick (LC) host a call-in radio show to address the recent problems at Pacifica, including the unpopularity the decisions of the national management met with from many in the listening audience, 800 of whom had demonstrated against these actions, just six days earlier at the KPFA building.

The program’s format places little to no restrictions on the management’s discursive freedom (although it is overwhelmingly Berry who controls the situation, rather than Chadwick, who is relatively silent). Berry and Chadwick allow members of the listening public to address questions to them, to offer them support or approval, to criticize them and even to (subtly) insult them, on occasion. Yet it is ultimately Berry and Chadwick who control the discourse: Chadwick is responsible for authorizing callers’ participation in the discourse by introducing them and connecting a phone line to the radio signal (or cueing an engineer to do so); Berry is responsible for ending the discourse, cueing the disconnection of a caller with phrases like “Thank you for your views” or “I’ll take the next caller”. It is important to note that these cues do not function only as illocutions or discourse moves, which would (in part) depend upon the other participants’ recognition of

the validity of the action; they also refer to Berry's institutionally authorized power over the technical means of media production. Furthermore, this power is inscribed into the entirety of Berry's discourse — she is speaking not only as a representative of the PNB, but *by virtue of* her status as such a representative. In doing so, she speaks not as an autonomous rational individual but *as* the PNB. Her status as PNB Chair is of course a sufficient condition for claiming to speak as the institution which exists legally as the Pacifica Foundation, owns five radio frequencies, etc., but she clearly makes an effort here to claim the legitimacy of this institution, as well as the congruence of this institutional structure and the ideology (or principles) upon which Pacifica was founded. In her very first turn, for example, she reminds the audience that “[b]oard members serve as unpaid volunteers” and that the Pacifica Foundation is “nonprofit”. She then, after explaining briefly why the program is being aired, goes on:

As you already know, I'm sure, most of you, Pacifica was founded fifty years ago by a group of conscientious objectors that sought a medium in which to speak out against the military force of World War II. I believe that the Strategic Plan of Pacifica, “A Vision of Pacifica Radio, Creating a Network for the Twenty-first Century”, which was developed before I became Chair of the Board, by representatives from each station, the Board and community, and was unanimously adopted by the organization, articulates the goals for achieving the network's mission as set forth by its founders fifty years ago, to promote cultural diversity and pluralistic community expression, to contribute to a lasting understanding between individuals of all nations, races, creeds, and colors, to promote freedom of the press and serve as a forum for various viewpoints, and to maintain an independent funding base. Since I became Chair of the Board and...our current Executive Director have been implementing the Strategic Plan, which in part addresses the need for our stations to reflect the demographic realities of their signal areas, I mean the folks who live in the signal area. (CI)

The claim to legitimacy that is being made here is rather complicated — Berry is both claiming an institutional right to speak (as an official of the PNB) and an ideological one (as a dedicated believer in Pacifica's “mission”). The conflation of

these claims in Berry's discourse advances her (political) position which equates the institutional and media ideological subjects. In fact, her discourse itself represents this position — she does speak both for the board/foundation and as the voice of the ideological media subject. However, it is important to maintain the distinction between *de facto* identification with the ideological subject (anyone whose voice is heard on a radio station can be identified with the imaginary ideological origin of the broadcast) and the strategies which are used to qualitatively structure the (apparent) self-presentation of this subject. While Berry tries explicitly to only project herself as firmly rooted in the ideological "Pacifica", even her choice of lexicon in certain situations belies her association with the institutional "Pacifica". A prime example is her slip into the jargonistic language of radio management when she suggests "the need for our stations to reflect the demographic realities of their signal areas," and catches and corrects herself a moment later, "I mean the folks who live in the signal area. (CI)"

One of the strategies for 'successfully' accomplishing ideological self-presentation in discourse is the selective or untruthful presentation of information: the refusal to say that which would threaten the particular ideological image under construction in the discourse. For example, Berry neglects to mention, in her description of the context surrounding her presence on KPFA's airwaves, the protests which have occurred outside the Pacifica/KPFA offices, presumably because the Pacifica audience has traditionally valued support for popular protest against authority. Perhaps even more telling is her denial that the PNB was considering the sale of any of its extremely valuable radio frequencies:

Frank[caller, first turn]: Oh, hi. Thank you, Dr. Berry, for taking my call. You know, one of the previous callers touched on it, but I just wanted to kind of clarify in my own mind..I've heard from what I consider to be reliable sources that the Pacifica Governing Board is exploring – I'm using the word "exploring" – the possibilities of selling one of the station's licenses to endow the rest of the Pacifica network. I've heard of KPFA and possibly WBAI being one of those stations. And I'd like you to answer if that is a possible plan for KPFA.
MFB: The answer is no, no, no, no. Did you hear me? The answer is no. I'll take another question. (CI)

Berry also asserts at another point, speaking to another caller “we’re not talking about selling any stations. (*ibid.*)” What is most fascinating about these assertions is their blatant disregard for the truth — weeks later, an intercepted memo from PNB member Michael Palmer to Berry was made public: “...I was under the impression there was support in the proper quarters, and a definite majority, for shutting down that unit [KPFA] and re-programming immediately. Has that changed? ... my feeling is that a more beneficial disposition would be of the New York signal as there is a smaller subscriber base without the long and emotional history as the Bay Area, far more associated value, a similarly dysfunctional staff though far less effective and an overall better opportunity to redefine Pacifica going forward. It is simply the more strategic asset. (MP)” (The PNB later admitted that the memo was authentic (*ibid.*)). Without the unexpected release of this internal PNB communication, Berry’s apparent willingness to lie to the public in the interests of ideological self-presentation would not have been apparent. Had PNB secrecy been maintained, Berry’s assertions would have been essentially true for the public. If and when the information which is available to the public about the internal processes of a collective body (like the Pacifica Foundation) is limited to the information which is *authorized* for release by that body, the assertions made about the collective body by the institutionally authorized (representative of the) ideological subject are, until challenged by unexpected/unauthorized actions, essentially performative in character — the public is virtually unable to address them with respect to the (ostensibly) objective claims to validity which they make.

Another control strategy lies in the choice of program format — by allowing public audience members to speak through the institutional apparatus, if only briefly, the image of the ideological subject as one which attenuates toward pluralist access is projected. Characteristically, both sides of the Pacifica conflict value this attenuation as a fundamental characteristic of the ideological foundations which define Pacifica. However, it is interesting to note that in her own discourse, Berry as much as admits that she envisions this pluralism as an image to be projected as part of the ideological subject, and not as a real characteristic of the institutional structure. We see this most explicitly in her suggestion that the Pacifica media voice should function as “a newspaper, sort of like, for the left or for progressives” and not as “a small group of people speaking and having radio stations to use

to express their vision” (CI), a flagrant disregard for the Hill’s original vision for Pacifica. The institution, in Berry’s professed opinion, is charged with guaranteeing the coherence of the ideological voice, not facilitating the communicative efforts of an organically coordinated community of autonomous individual speakers. This vision of ideological coherence apparently includes the elimination of unauthorized use of the ideological voice to criticize institutional policy. As this very radio program shows, the officials of the institution can obtain the privilege of speaking through the ideological voice when discussing station/foundation policy. Meanwhile, the “dirty-laundry” rule (management’s term — those who object to it use “gag rule”) prevents the individuals who should function as the stations’ responsible, politically-engaged, uncensored journalists from reporting on such matters. Berry’s justification for this rule and its enforcement appeals to the right of the institution to control the voice of the ideological subject.¹⁹

This attempt by Pacifica national management to exclude certain speakers and topics from inclusion in the ideological discourse projected by Pacifica radio broadcasts becomes even clearer toward the end of the program when the last caller is Larry Bensky, the recently fired host whose dismissal, in part, necessitated this on-air appearance of management²⁰. Bensky, no longer a Pacifica employee, is therefore no longer subject to the claims of Pacifica as an employer, and should be allowed to discuss matters of station personnel as a member of the public. Almost every previous caller, in some way, refers to the terminations of Sawaya or Bensky (favorably or unfavorably), and Berry never objects to these references. When asked by a caller “What is the reason that Larry was let go?”, Berry answers without objection, explaining both the “dirty-laundry” policy and the ideological considerations which underlie it, couched in terms of the desires of the listeners.²¹

Furthermore, the events and objections surrounding Lynn Chadwick’s termination of Sawaya are explicitly introduced by Berry as the *topic* of the radio program in question. Given these facts, it is easy to see that Berry’s claim that “we don’t want to really to get into a whole lot of personnel issues here on the air” when pressed by Bensky for *factual* information about his own termination rings somewhat hollow (CI).²² This particular move in the discourse (see endnote referenced above) can only really be seen as providing a *cover* for the (attempted) definition of the voice of the ideological subject by the institutional apparatus which controls the means

of media production. The logic regarding the “gag-rule” which is operative in the entire discourse clearly demonstrates that the function of this rule’s invocation is to operate as a cover (or alibi) for institutional determination, and not as a rational justification for the exclusion of internal station matters on the air, despite the fact that it is often communicated as such.

The ideological voice against the institution

The last discourse fragment we will examine is taken from a broadcast of “Democracy Now!” which dealt with the situation at KPFA after Dennis Bernstein, the host and producer of that station’s show “Flashpoints”, was placed on administrative leave after he aired a taped segment of a public press conference given by a group of people who had been arrested for protesting Pacifica’s policies regarding KPFA. The station’s (interim) manager demanded that Bernstein leave the building immediately, and had the newly installed station security guards attempt to forcibly eject him from the premises. Bernstein was subsequently arrested for trespassing when he and others refused to leave the KPFA building in protest (cf. http://www.savepacifica.net/990816_eyewitness.html#dennis).

Whereas the discourses examined above took place largely in accordance with the interests of Pacifica management, the text now under consideration is a clear example of the mobilization of the Pacifica ideological subject or media voice against that institutional structure. From the beginning, the very production of the “Democracy Now!” segment violates the “gag-rule” by discussing the internal situation of a Pacifica station. The space in which this violation occurs is complicated, because the arrests, the press conference, and the subsequent dismissal of Dennis Bernstein have been covered in the mainstream press: Amy Goodman, in introducing the topic of the program, is quick to note “today we’re going to take on some Pacifica news that is making headlines”²³ (DN). Although Goodman and the others producing the program were not subsequently disciplined for the violation, the program itself was never broadcast by several stations in the Pacifica network. After Goodman’s introduction, a recording of a portion of Bernstein’s dismissal is played, consisting of a normal KPFA program which is interrupted by Bernstein shouting at the station manager and the guards who are attempting to remove him. The radio anchor at the board, Mark Mericale, witnessing the confrontation taking

place in front of him in the studio, turned on the microphone. On the taped segment, Mericale explains the situation for the listening public at home and narrates the events unfolding before him as Bernstein is heard shouting, until his connection is finally cut and he is taken off the air. After the tape finishes, Goodman goes on to explain that the station began broadcasting taped material after Mericale was taken off the air, and has been doing so ever since. As we have discussed above, the influence of an institutional structure over the (media) ideological subject is largely silent, and thus is only really to be *heard* within the media text itself inasmuch as the act of silencing is itself an audible event. In this “quoted” or re-transmitted radio broadcast from KPFA on “Democracy Now!”, it is actually possible to hear such silencing — Mericale is clearly cut off in mid-sentence, and is clearly not acting in accordance with the institutional/management vision of what should be broadcast in the name of KPFA/Pacifica at the time he is taken off the air. By merely replaying the clip without polemical commentary, Goodman’s program is able to maintain its structured self-presentation as an objective ideological subject while, at the same time both calling the audience’s attention to the level of institutional determination of the “voice” of Pacifica radio and mobilizing struggle against this determination. The program here acts essentially as an extra-corporeal sense organ of the sort suggested above — an event (the cut-off KPFA broadcast) has transpired, and “Democracy Now!” has presented this event to the ears of listeners who could not have heard it otherwise.

Goodman proceeds to allow Bernstein to tell his story. It is interesting to note that the format is largely that of a radio news program which depends upon the interview as the primary vehicle for the presentation of information. To this extent, the ideological subject presented here is endowed, by the structure of the text, with an apparent will to knowledge — Goodman cues Bernstein to begin by asking, “Can you tell us what happened?”. Note here the apparent multiple identities which are projected by the program. On the one hand, the program, when considered as the sum total of the interchanges which occur on it, expresses an identifiable (with the name “Democracy Now!”, and with the personalities of Goodman and, before his resignation, co-host Juan Gonzalez) political perspective or ideological orientation (against censorship, authoritarianism, militarism, etc.). At the same time, however, the ideological subject which is projected can be understood as grounded not in the

entirety of the discursive exchanges and the intentions manifested in their selection and production, but in the personas of Goodman and Gonzalez inasmuch as they project themselves as objective reporters (and relayers of opinion). This second aspect of the ideological subject underlies Goodman's use of the first person plural — when she asks “Can you tell *us* what happened?”, the pronoun refers not only to the hosts of the program, but to the *intended audience*, the listening public, who are incorporated into the ideological subject. Thus, the program, at the same time manifests a political viewpoint and claims to neutrally or objectively represent those who listen.²⁴ In claiming to represent the public with the use of the second-person plural pronoun, we can perhaps imagine that Goodman acts as an extra-corporeal *speech* organ for the audience, asking the question(s) the audience is unable to ask from their remote location on the receiving end of the radio transmission.

Similar ambiguities abound in the discursive interaction of the hosts and guests. While all personally sympathetic to each other and opposed to the Pacifica management's conduct (excepting, of course, the last guest, Lynn Chadwick (Pacifica's Executive Director), whose loyalties clearly lie elsewhere), there is a marked separation of roles in the discourse. The hosts tend towards objectivity, while the guests tend towards polemical self-presentation. It is fairly clear that this distinction is acknowledged by both hosts and guests in the interests of cooperatively structuring an ideological voice which partakes of both aspects simultaneously. This cooperation, which functions largely on an implicit understanding of the format of the program and the collectively shared political stakes and risks, is also negotiated or coordinated discursively — the hosts employ certain speech acts to present the objective side of the ideological subject and simultaneously cue and structure the more explicitly anti-Pacifica discourse of the guests. These speech acts should be distinguished from “indirect” speech acts, where something is uttered not to mean what is said but to obliquely mean something else. Let us take the question Goodman asks Bernstein to initiate his narration (“Can you tell us what happened?”) as one example of the speech acts in question, ignoring the fact that the surface structure is that of a classical indirect speech act. Because the utterance emanates from two places at once — on the one hand from Goodman, a colleague and compatriot of Bernstein, with whom she is engaged in the cooperative construction of a radio program to accomplish certain shared ends, and on the other hand from the radio

program “Democracy Now!”, whose aim is the presentation of news to its listeners — the utterance functions twice at the same time, constituted simultaneously as a cue from Goodman to Bernstein that he should begin talking and as a request for information asked on behalf of the audience by “Democracy Now!”. It is this split subject, both personal and ideological, that licenses this double functioning in which both meanings are expressed.

We can see other examples of such double functioning later in the program: a fascinating example occurs when Bernstein refers to “the reason I was fired” and Goodman corrects him, saying “You were placed on administrative leave” (DN). Bernstein at first seems angry at the correction, but after two stammered beginnings seems to realize that Goodman’s correction is not a polemical attack, but answers to the demands of objectivity placed upon Goodman/the ideological subject “Democracy Now!”. He finally responds with the dismissive, “[w]ell whatever you want to call it,” and continues his anecdote (*ibid.*). Another interesting example occurs during the interview with Mark Mericale, who emphasizes the incongruity of armed guards, hired by management, inside a radio station founded by pacifists. Juan Gonzalez interrupts him:

Mark, if I could interrupt you for just a second. You seem to be really and obviously distressed by this issue of armed guards being in KPFA. But looking at it from the point of view of the management of Pacifica, haven’t there been in the process of ongoing disputes there some violent incidents including somebody shooting into KPFA that might in their view justify the need for some kind of protection at the station? Although nobody likes it we have to deal with the reality of how some of these conflicts have erupted over the last several months. (DN)

Gonzalez is, in this fragment, actively engaged in presenting “Democracy Now!” as wholly objective by making reference to the management’s (perhaps somewhat plausible) position (although carefully presented as independent of his own position and the position of “Democracy Now!”), yet he also phrases his discourse as a question to which Mericale (who is a guest, and therefore not subject to the restrictions of objectivity placed upon Goodman and Gonzalez) can respond. What is perhaps even more interesting is that we can see how the desired balance between the objective and partisan aspects of the ideological subject is something which

can even be discursively negotiated between the hosts. When Mericale, asked to provide some closing comments, launches into a very polemical and not so informative attack on the PNB/Pacifica management, Gonzalez cuts him off, cueing Bernstein to give his summation, and citing time constraints and the need to get to the other guests as reasons for truncating Mericale's statements. Goodman, however, intercedes at this point, reminding Gonzalez that "we should also point out..." that Mericale had, at the time of the interview, just been released from jail, having been arrested inside KPFA. This presentation of fact also serves to qualify Gonzalez' intervention, expressing (if covertly) solidarity with the strong opinions Mericale was in the process of expressing. Thus, the question of time constraint(s) is manifestly important to the construction of the ideological subject, especially where questions of discursive control are concerned; Goodman and Gonzalez make use of their power to control the allocated time per discourse, as does Mary Frances Berry in her call-in show. The *a priori* control over context of a discursive situation is a privilege afforded to members of the media as an off-shoot of their control over the material (that is, physical) means of production.²⁵

Conclusion

The space of freedom and possibility opened by the existence of the technical means of media production is at once hemmed in by power. In asking "Who speaks (in a media broadcast)?" , one must also ask "Who speaks in that name?" , "Who makes such speaking possible, and how did this come to be?" , "Who decides what is to be said?" . We cannot depend, in theorizing the *meaning* of media discourse, upon our familiar and comforting concept of the human subject as the natural bond between voice and responsibility. In theorizing the ideological subject, we have tried to debunk a type of phantom: the ideological subject does not exist, in that it is impossible and undesirable to seek to ground meaning in what cannot speak except through others, cannot feel except in declarations of feeling, and which cannot, in the last analysis, be responsible for what it appears to say. But the logical demonstration of the impossibility of a phantom is never sufficient to dispel it — our discursive world is such that much of our communicative interaction is structured by this type of phantom. Ridding ourselves of these phantoms is not simply akin to lifting up a sheet to reveal a human subject, pretending to be a

ghost. What lies under the sheet is, as perhaps we have managed to illustrate in our brief treatment of a few concrete discursive fragments from the history of the Pacifica Radio Network, a complex constituted by institutionalized power, coercive strategies, and dissimulation. This non-human ground of meaning upon which media discourse relies is by no means limited to the current crisis at Pacifica — the intrusion of the institution and of the strategic has affected Pacifica since its inception. Furthermore, it is our (perhaps not so controversial) contention, that in all media discourse, no matter what measures are taken to project an unbroken and unproblematic facade through the surface of the media text, similar structures and tensions are to be found behind the simple unity which the surface of the text would have us accept. What is, perhaps, unique about the Pacifica case is the obvious failure of such attempts to obscure the necessary tension between the subjects contributing to the discourses of the ideological subject; by listening to these broadcasts, one can perhaps hear the ideological subject attacking itself. In the Pacifica fragments analysed here, the strategic fiction of an unproblematized “unity” gives way to the individual voices of those subjects who struggle to re-establish exactly that fiction, whether driven by a logic of economics or one of socio-political engagement. But perhaps, on a more concrete level, what can be heard are simply the sounds of the fight to restructure the very framework of the institution itself, in such a way that fictions of this sort will, at some point, at least, no longer be necessary.

Notes

¹On the use of the terms “interindividual” and “intergroup” see Augoustinos and Walker (1995), pages 99-100. They distinguish between interindividual and intergroup behaviour by suggesting that the former is defined by interaction between individuals on the basis of their individual qualities (and ideologies, emotions and histories). The latter is defined by the interactions between people which are governed solely by their group or institutional identities and not by any personal identity or qualities they may display. (Of course, this is already a dubious claim, for, as we will suggest, an individual's position within an institution and the identity which is created by virtue of that position, is always already affected by the individual-as-individual.) Thus, “all behaviour is seen as falling somewhere on a *continuum* from interindividual to intergroup.” What we wish to suggest, however, is that discursive behaviour as it is attributed to media transcends the continuum completely.

²The choice to analyze mediated communication between individuals as an unproblematic relationship between those individuals is by no means a necessarily correct decision. Hans-Georg Gadamer's work on hermeneutic interpretation, for example, suggests that interpretation of texts be geared toward understanding the text itself, and not the original intentions of the author. Jacques Derrida's engagement with Speech Act Theory advocates a more radical position, in which no material signifier, including the spoken word, can make human subjects fully present to each other because the iterability of the signifier inscribes potential absence into all communication.

³It should be noted that the concept of “meaning” used here is primarily one in which meaning is produced at the origin of the text, and not in the reception of the text, as is the case, for example, in Gadamer's hermeneutic system. In suggesting that the author's original intentions can be dismissed, Gadamer locates meaning within the processes of interpretation and understanding. While we do not necessarily *disagree* with Gadamer's analysis, the present paper is meant to focus on the production of discourse (and not necessarily discourse itself), and to deal with the reception of discourse only with respect to the audience's understanding of the *ideological origins* of an utterance which allow it to be interpreted, rather than the process of interpretation itself.

⁴Or perhaps far *less*, since it would be unwise to claim that *The New York Times* counts in its arsenal of facts the personally held knowledge of the basement janitors.

⁵On the discursive formation of the legal subject, see Goodrich, pp. 189-191.

⁶Although we will deal primarily with the sorts of written and spoken texts usually found in media discourse, we also do not want to discount other types of communicative acts through which an abstract subject may be expressed or projected, such as images, signatures, and even the very physical structures which house the institutions that lay claim to an ideological subject. The New York offices of *The New York Times* do as much toward representing that institution as an individual entity as do the actual pieces of paper which arrive on the newsstands each morning.

⁷The “rhetorical persona” is another idea to which our concept of the ideological subject is related to: the “rhetor”, in delivering a rhetorical text, is present in discourse primarily as a

projected persona.(Gill) However, in the construction of the rhetorical persona, the relationship of rhetor to persona is one of projected identity — the ideological subject's relationship to the producer(or perhaps ideologue) is crucially one of non-identity.

⁸This is of course only true as long as we hold such phenomena as thought, feeling, or intention to be exclusively psychological (or at least mental) concepts. If we allow ourselves to attribute such conditions to non-human (and of course non-"sufficiently subtle"-animal) entities like states, corporations, or newspapers, of course, we can retain the analyses presented with little modification, but such a Hegelian interpretation of either Austin or Grice seems unwarranted. Furthermore, to assert the full and real presence of an intention or thought which originates in the non-human seems to obscure any possibility of examining the relationship between the intentions or thoughts of the humans which produce a text and the "imaginary" or "ideological" subject which appears to be the author of the text, and which only appears at all inasmuch as it makes this claim.

⁹Here media should be understood as primarily referring to the *media*, taking CNN or *The New York Times* as canonical examples of the phenomena in question.

¹⁰Here it should be noted that "private" is being used in opposition to "public", and should be taken thus to encompass any social structure which administers a power which does not depend on rational agreement. Somewhat counter-intuitively, perhaps, a state bureaucracy which produces media should be understood as acting in a private, and not public, capacity.

¹¹The phenomenon of 'individual voice' has more than one application to the question of signature. We can speak of the 'voice' as something which is both physiological (in the sense of the physical characteristics which define and identify my ability to communicate something which can be *heard*) and metaphysical (in the sense of my ability to distinguish myself through the *tone* of my communication). Voice in the latter sense is a phenomenon which appears in cases where the signature is not present — if I chance to happen upon a page of a book written by, for example, Derrida, lying on the street, it is quite possible that I will be able to identify Derrida as the author/origin of the text, even if I have not read that particular page before. In this case I may think to myself "this must be written by Derrida, for it *sounds like* him, it has his particular style." This is what is meant by the metaphysical voice: a signature style which makes even more definite the origin of an utterance.

¹²Judith Butler's work on the performative construction of gender would provide a fruitful comparison here, but, as mentioned above, we do not want to broach the issue of to what extent human individuals construct *themselves* as discursive subjectivities.

¹³We would like to stress the use of the word "presumed" here — the ideological subject is a phantasmagoric subject, an illusion which is projected in discourses that have a plural origin which is perceived as singular. However, the ideological subject is personified in its reception by the public as a sort of embodied subject, and intentions and knowledge are attributed to it.

¹⁴At the same time, of course, the public also believes that media organizations are objective

and dedicated to providing 'news'. The relationship between the public and the media is a delicate and complex one, which unfortunately cannot be given great attention here.

¹⁵In the case of the legally-constituted ideological subject which speaks for a group or organization, the means of production on which the ideological voice subsists are largely symbolic, i.e. the codified social apparatus which produces *legitimate* or *official* discourse.

¹⁶This also meant that Pacifica would be divorced from any sort of commercial structure, since the listener contributions would provide the necessary money which would otherwise have to come from advertising revenue.

¹⁷This can be contrasted with an ideological subject which purports to speak *for* a group or an institution — here the first person plural can be used, and is quite common.

¹⁸However, its efforts were to no avail, since the public, outraged over Pacifica's failure to air the extremely popular "Democracy Now!", responded (in *exactly* the way Lew Hill expected) by boycotting the fundraising drive — Pacifica received less than half of the donations it had in previous years. (<http://pacificacampaign.org/wbaitanked.asp>)

¹⁹Interestingly enough, when the issue of the asymmetric conditions of reflexive discourse is brought up in the program, Berry ignores it completely:

Caller: If you are that callously disregarding of the interests and the values of your community. You know, Bensky got fired for talking about it. I listened to his whole show that day — his swan song. You know, he was talking a lot about what happened last December. But when Lynn Chadwick made her public statement that had to get broadcast about Nicole Sawaya's termination, she brought up — she brought up — what happened to Larry Bensky and how public opinion didn't count and all this good stuff and so forth. So she raised the issue on the air! How can you then fire Bensky for responding to what management has said about his situation on the air? That seems grossly, grossly unfair. I'm not impressed by it. That's what caused me to call up and cancel. OK? Nicole was really good. I really liked Nicole. I really....She got me back involved, and she got me contributing, she got me caring. And I think this whole thing has been conducted so callously that I'm profoundly alienated. I am profoundly alienated, and I don't think that I speak for just for myself. You know. But, you know, you don't understand Pacifica's relationship to its audience. You know, you're not Delmonte relating to the people who buy the canned goods off the shelf at Safeway. This is something different. And if you can't understand this, you're leading this system ruin. Thank you.

MFB: Well, well, I thank you very much for your views. To respond very quickly, what you said about a scab — hiring of a labor union lawyer or something — happened under previous management, which no longer exists, and was a short-term thing, as I understand it. If I'd been here I would have agreed it was a mistake. I wasn't here.

The second thing is, you asked if people care about the audience. I care about the audience, and I don't think Pacifica is selling Delmonte fruit, or whatever it is. We have heard from people who both like what has been going on in the last year and people who don't like what has been going on in the last year, and people who have different views on all these things, and we're gonna take into account. The main thing I'm really interested in is, yes, people's views, but also how we can make things better and what we can do in terms of process and how to communicate better, and anything else you want to say. So, I'll take the next call. (CI)

²⁰Bensky has been referred to, in Pacifica dissident literature at least, as "KPFA's signature voice" (PH). The dynamic between individuals and the ideological subject they represent becomes rather complicated in the Pacifica situation. A tentative attempt at an analysis involves distinguishing between justification and signification. When asking "Why is Pacifica left-wing/liberal/objective?" one can proceed by assuming what is, in our opinion, essentially the basic idea behind Lew Hill's Pacifica: the left-wing/liberal/objective discourses of the individuals who are subsumed under the ideological voice maintain their autonomy as a justification for attributing these things to an ideological subject. There is an alternate method of analysis, which is the only one available when individual subjects are no longer more or less autonomous, which involves recourse to signification and can operate at a basic level by attributing these favorable characteristics directly to the ideological subject (cf. Berry's idea of Pacifica as a magazine for progressives). A more subtle form of unjustified signification involves invoking the reputation of individuals subsumed by the ideological subject as left-wing/liberal/objective (not offering their actual activities as evidence, because, by constraining the autonomy of the media voices subsumed, one is no longer offering their discourse). This strategy can be seen in operation in Berry's remarks, in her constant recourse to identifying the PNB's plans with the success of the wildly popular "Democracy Now!" and the efforts of that program's host, Amy Goodman. However, these claims are, in our view, merely the appropriation of individual discourses/reputations, since "Democracy Now!" also faces censorship at the point of institutional control over the media apparatus. For example, when "Democracy Now!" produced a show covering further developments at KPFA, the recorded show was not rebroadcast by several pacific stations. (<http://radio4all.org/freepacifica/hear.htm>)

²¹Kathy: But then, what is the reason that Larry was let go?

MFB: Larry Bensky, as I understand from the Executive Director, was warned three times about using his show, instead of doing what he's supposed to be doing on the show, which is to talk about the issues, just to keep talking about KPFA and what was happening at KPFA. Listeners listened in, as you heard some of them tonight. They wanted to hear about the issues. They weren't interested in hearing internal management things. They can find that out from either Report to the Listener, looking at the website or other news sources. And so, he was warned three times not to do this, and he did it again. And so Larry Bensky, as I understand from the Executive Director, was let go because he did not follow the policy. Now, you may disagree about the policies, or you may have some concern about whether people...

Kathy: [garbled by MFB talking on]

MFB: ...should take up the station time doing that, but that's the reason why. It had nothing to do with anything else. (CI)

²²LC: We have a couple more minutes here, and there's a caller. Larry in Berkeley.

MFB: Uh-huh.

Larry: Hello, Mary Frances. Hello, Lynn. This is Larry Bensky. May I begin by asking you about what you said earlier, Mary Frances Berry, about the three warnings that I was supposedly given before I was fired a fourth time. Were these written or verbal warnings?

MFB: I have no idea...

LC: They're in the record of Larry's employment.

MFB: They're in the record of your employment, Larry.

LB: In other words, you're telling me there are written warnings that I was given?

MFB: I'm telling you anything except that they're in the record. Go ahead and answer him.

LC: Yes, I have...there's, there's...Larry, as you're aware, there's a file, and we don't want to really to get into a whole lot of personnel issues here on the air. I think there's....

LB: Oh, yes, we do, Lynn, because you fired me because of it, and there were no written or verbal warnings. Not one. Not two. Not three. Now, let me ask you another question, Dr. Berry ... (CI)

²³The so-called "gag-rule" supposedly becomes null when and if internal Pacifica issues become topics of mainstream news coverage, for it is at that point that the journalistic responsibilities of Pacifica broadcasters come into play, making it necessary for them to report, as objective journalists, on the issues 'in the news'.

²⁴This conflation of audience and ideological subject is by no means limited to the program in question. However, the claims to objectivity and the representation of the public (interest) made by more prevalent forms of mass media communication often serve to obscure institutional bias; the audience which is appealed to and incorporated is one which is artificially neutral — the entire polis is intended to be represented by the media, and the ideological subject which is projected must therefore not appear to embody a specific political viewpoint. (Consider, for example, the explicit separation of "objective" reporting and editorial opinion in a newspaper.) To the extent that the idealized model of community radio as envisioned by Lew Hill is operative in the functioning of the Pacifica network, the ideological subject which speaks from an engaged political position does not need to be hidden, and so the move made here to conflate this subject and the "objective" audience can actually succeed without deception. We can hear some of this dynamic between the

two aspects of the ideological subject in Gonzalez's justification of why the program in question is about to flagrantly violate the gag rule:

And I would say that generally speaking most news organizations are reluctant to discuss issues that effect the internal workings of the organization, but when it becomes something that's public, as this situation has been, with these arrests, and the continuing battle, it would be, it would be on our part *derelict* if we did not at least attempt to get to some of the underlying issues, and what is this all about, and how does it effect both public broadcasting, community broadcasting, and issues of free speech and progressive politics in the United States. (DN)

On the one hand, this "*our part*" refers, given the "public" character of the events as newsworthy, to the objective media subject which is exclusive of the community at large. But read inclusively, the sentence functions as a call to action following the ideological orientation of this larger community. In the ambiguity of the pronoun, the neutrality of knowledge and its presentation is at once affirmed and denied.

²⁵And this case holds true even for interviews with high-profile individuals who may like to think that they are able to exert a certain amount of control over the media by virtue of their powerful positions. When all is said and done, and the interview completed, it is the journalist (or media organization) who edits the statements together, who decides what to print and what to delete and, ultimately, the impression of the interviewed individual which will be presented to the public. The only power greater than the control over the actual presentation of the discourse to the public in a situation like this is, invariably, the threat of legal retribution.

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