Article

Organizational Rhetoric as Subjectification

Jenna N. Hanchey[1] ⓘ and Peter R. Jensen[2] ⓘ

Abstract
Given arguments that organizational rhetoric is disconnected from contemporary and useful trends in rhetorical theory writ-large, we build a case for rethinking organizational rhetoric's founding concept of identification through recent innovations in rhetorical theory. Drawing from theories of psychoanalysis, racialization, and coloniality, we argue for an alternative understanding of organizational rhetoric premised on *subjectification*, where subjectification is the process through which a subject is brought into being on the basis of shifting contexts, relations, and imbrication in forces of power. We highlight three facets of organizational subjectification that can contribute to innovative organizational rhetorical research: differential relations, dependence on Otherness, and uneven mutuality. These facets, we argue, highlight how processes of coloniality and racialization are fundamental to our very being and becoming, providing a means of understanding organizational rhetoric as inherently political.

Keywords
subjectification, organizational rhetoric, coloniality, racialization, psychoanalysis

[1]Communication Studies, University of Nevada, Reno, NV, USA
[2]Communication Studies, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL, USA

Corresponding Author:
Jenna N. Hanchey, Communication Studies, University of Nevada, Mail Stop 0229, 1664 N. Virginia Avenue, Reno, NV 89557-0705, USA.
Email: jhanchey@unr.edu

In the recent *Handbook of Organizational Rhetoric and Communication* (Ihlen & Heath, 2018a), contributors offered an overview of approaches to organizational rhetoric. Of particular interest are the chapters in Part III, entitled "Concepts: Foundations Without Which Rhetoric Could Not Occur" (p. vi). For a field as rich in theoretical diversity as rhetoric, this is a bold claim. Given recent trends in the field, one might expect to see an argument for the necessity of decolonial theory (Hanchey, 2018b; Wanzer-Serrano, 2015), racial rhetorical criticism (Flores, 2016; Houdek, 2018), or psychoanalysis (Davis, 2010; Gunn, 2004). Instead, the chapters contain rhetorical concepts that, though useful, are far from ubiquitous in contemporary rhetorical studies.

Meisenbach (2018) addressed this problem, arguing that organizational rhetoric scholars have continued to use a narrow definition of rhetoric from dated thinkers—almost exclusively white, Western men—long after much of the field of rhetoric has diversified its conceptual foundations and methods of approach. Organizational rhetoric remains mired in a "narrow focus … on explicitly persuasive and formal organizational messages" (p. 474). While Meisenbach noted the importance of identification in shaping our understanding of organizations and organizing, she also advocated for drawing from the vast theoretical resources mainstream rhetorical theory has to offer to bring forth new possibilities for organizational rhetorical study.

In this essay, we take up Meisenbach's (2018) call by presenting an alternate framing of organizational rhetoric as subjectification. We acknowledge that identification continues to provide useful insights into how organizations communicate both internally and externally. However, we also recognize that identification, like all theoretical perspectives, is limited. We view subjectification as an alternative means of thinking about organizational rhetoric, one that not only broadens possibilities but also addresses the fundamental premises of whiteness and coloniality contained within the concept of identification. Identification, as a framework, is ill-equipped to handle difference or alterity, premised as it is on logics of recognition (Gunn, 2008; Oliver, 2001; Towns, 2018b). As such, identification is based in a logic of inclusion, which rhetoric scholars have argued has devastating effects on those who do not fit the assumed norm (Chávez, 2015; Flores, 2016; Lechuga, 2020; McCann et al., 2020; Na'puti, 2019). In part, these effects are caused by the concern for rhetorical effectiveness—a concern that maintains the organizing logics of white settler colonialism (Lechuga, 2020). As Cruz & Sodeke, 2020 demonstrated, organizational communication scholars must examine how the logics that organize their theory and method are rooted in assumptions of Westerncentrism, whiteness, and coloniality. We propose organizational subjectification as a lens that can attend to the processual nature of subject formation under inequitable organizational and cultural conditions as they are imbricated in the rhetorical fabric of organizational life. We view the fabric of organizing as an inherently rhetorical process, and thus this article presumes that all aspects of organizing are in some way rhetorical accomplishments.

We define subjectification as the process by which a subject is brought into being through shifting contexts, relations, and imbrication in forces of power. This process does not rely on recognizing similarity. Subjectification is thus a necessary response to identification for three reasons. First, subjectification provides a means for understanding rhetoric beyond intended messaging assuming separable subjects, allowing for the examination of unconscious and affective facets of persuasion beyond attraction to likeness. Second, subjectification can help organizational rhetoric researchers analyze how organizations, managers, and workers are all mutually imbricated in cultural discourses. Third, and most important, subjectification highlights how processes of coloniality and racialization are fundamental to our very being and becoming (Hanchey, 2018b; Oliver, 2017; Towns, 2018b), providing a means of understanding organizational rhetoric as inherently political. In the wake of #CommunicationSoWhite (Chakravartty, et al., 2018), scholars increasingly recognize racialization and coloniality as vital for communication scholars. Yet, the problems this article addresses are long-standing and overdue for recompense (Cruz, 2020; Mejia, 2020; #ToneUpOrgComm Collective, 2020). Organizational communication scholars must carefully examine their theoretical concepts, methodological processes, analytic strategies, and organizing logics if they are to produce work capable of addressing the needs of all global subjects, rather than only a few.

Subjectification allows for centering difference and Otherness as a conceptual framework in a way that identification, a concept grounded in recognition (Oliver, 2001), cannot. We draw our understanding of subjectivity from theories of psychoanalysis (Costas & Fleming, 2009; Davis, 2010; Gunn, 2004; Hanchey, 2018a), racialization (Carrillo Rowe, 2008; Flores, 2016; Houdek, 2018; Towns, 2018a, 2018b), and decolonization (Hanchey, 2018a; 2018b; Lechuga, 2020; Na'puti, 2019; Wanzer-Serrano, 2015). In part, we do so because these particular theoretical traditions are sorely understudied in organizational communication and have much to offer (Arnaud & Vidaillet, 2018; Cruz & Sodeke, 2020; Harris, 2017). But primarily, we put these three traditions in conversation because psychoanalysis is "crucial for social theory in general, and race theory in particular" (Oliver, 2017, p. 291), and race theory is crucial for decolonizing our understandings of organization and organizing. Each of these theoretical approaches examines how difference conditions subjective possibilities.

In Lacanian psychoanalysis, subjects are fundamentally constituted by a misrecognition of the Self as whole, thus foreclosing parts of themselves from conscious knowledge (Gunn, 2004; Lacan, 2006a, 2006b). No subject can ever be complete, coherent, individuated, or self-knowing (Butler, 2004). Subjects thus internalize fantasies that provide agency by "cover[ing] what is foreclosed through a narrative of possible wholeness" (Hanchey, 2018a, p. 147). Because subjects come into being through misrecognizing themselves in

symbolic networks, subjects are radically dependent upon others and alterity for their being. Thus, psychoanalysis can examine the organizing power of racialization and colonization in Western society. "Colonization is not just an invasion of physical space but also an invasion of psychic space" (Oliver, 2017, p. 296), as many anticolonial scholars have described (Mignolo, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Thiong'o, 1986). Although shallow invocations of subjectivity and psychoanalysis can act to maintain white dominance (Oliver, 2017; Towns, 2018b), considering processes of subjectification more deeply assists in interrogating the ways whiteness and coloniality undergird psychic space. Whiteness and coloniality interpellate white Western subjects into destructive relations with others (Hanchey, 2018a); it is only by interrogating such processes of subject production that subjectification can be thought of in alternative ways. Similar to Lechuga (2020), who rethought assemblage theory toward decolonial praxis, and Cortez and García (2020), who used deconstruction to move beyond the limits of identity-based decolonial struggle, we here repurpose psychoanalysis for decolonial goals.

Scholars of racialization and decolonization demonstrate how subjectification is inherently political. If subjects are dependent on symbolic networks for their becoming, then power is always already imbricated in processes of subject production. Carrillo Rowe (2008) described this as a politics of relation, where "[t]here is no subject prior to infinitely shifting and contingent relations of belonging" (p. 27), and this "belonging is political" (p. 3). Processes of subject formation are underwritten by social forces of racialization and coloniality.

Ahmed (2002) defined racialization "as a process whereby bodies come to be seen, known, and lived as 'having' a racial identity," meaning that " 'race' is an effect of racialization" (p. 47). Racialization differentially produces and distributes racial identities such that the abjection of some raced bodies is used to produce the perceived humanity of others (Towns, 2018a, 2018b). Racialization examines processes of dehumanization, which are intimately tied to coloniality. Coloniality refers to "a constitutive feature of Western modernity that structures exclusionary modes of power, knowledge, and being" (Wanzer, 2012, p. 652). Scholars have noted that though racialization and coloniality are distinct, they cannot be disentangled, and often act to mutually reinforce contemporary systems of power (Lowe, 2015). Without attention to historical processes of colonization and racialization, the presumed "universal" subject only reflects a liberal, bourgeois, masculine conceptualization of what it means to be human, foreclosing racial minorities and the colonized from humanity (Lowe, 2015; Towns, 2018a). Theories of subjectivity must attend to racialization and coloniality for them to be accessible to all.

Reorienting organizational rhetoric toward subjectification offers a means of deconstructing how whiteness, coloniality, and limited understandings of subjectivity have structured past scholarship, opening new perspectives on

how organizational rhetoric both enables and constrains subjective possibilities. We also believe this essay is important for organizational communication in general. Rhetoric "is home to a strong and undeniable coalition of scholars centering racialization, coloniality, intersectional feminisms, queer theory, and trans* approaches in their work … organizational communication … is not" (Hanchey, 2020, p. 122). By retheorizing organizational rhetoric through such coalitional thinking, we hope to open space for other areas of the subdiscipline to follow suit. By building on the work of the #ToneUpOrgComm Collective (2020) and others who demonstrate the importance of race and coloniality in the field (Ballard et al., 2020; Cruz & Sodeke, 2020; Dutta & Pal, 2020; Ganesh & Zoller, 2020; Munshi et al., 2017; Tarin, 2019), we aim to facilitate organizational communication's own "undeniable coalition" of antiracist and decolonial scholars.

This essay unfolds by first pairing three limitations of identification in organizational rhetoric literature with how subjectification shifts or challenges these limitations. Throughout this section, we use two primary examples: 1) changes to the selection process for National Communication Association (NCA) Distinguished Scholars to address the gross underrepresentation of Scholars of Color (NCA, 2019a), and 2) responses to the 2019 Organizational Communication Division Top Paper Panel (OCDTPP), which precipitated a walkout by panelists and audience members in protest of respondent comments that largely dismissed critiques of whiteness in the division (2019 NCA Organizational Communication Top Paper Panel Account, 2019). We then develop our theory of organizational subjectification by demonstrating how it challenges and rethinks the positions of organizational identification outlined by Cheney (1983). We shift Cheney's strategies of identification to argue that scholars of organizational rhetoric should take up three facets of subjectification in their work: differential relations, dependence on Otherness, and uneven mutuality. We conclude with implications of this research for further study.

The Limitations of Identification and Potential of Subjectification

Burke (1966) claimed that every theoretical approach "selects, reflects, and deflects" in its view of reality (p. 45). The lens of identification, while adept at analysis of groups that desire homogeneity, is particularly limited in understanding differential relations. In this section, we outline three constraints of identification, paired with how subjectification can answer them. First, we argue that identification is based in a logic of recognition that presumes whole and separable individuals. We then examine how subjectification attends to the inherent incompleteness of subject formation. Second, we describe how identification normalizes logics of inclusion and citizenship narratives, before

turning to how subjectification opens opportunities for organizing beyond inclusion. Finally, we examine how identification relies on the intention and effectiveness of rhetoric, while subjectification attends to aspects of rhetoric beyond symbolicity.

How Subjective Incompleteness Answers the Problems of Whole and Separable Individuals

Identification is Based in Logics of Recognition That Assume Whole and Separable Individuals. Organizational rhetorical theories of identification have been and continue to be structured primarily on the work of Burke (Cheney, 1983; Ihlen & Heath, 2018b). In constructing his work on identification, Burke (1969) defined identity as a thing's "uniqueness as an entity in itself and by itself, a demarcated unit having its own particular structure" (p. 21). (Importantly, Burke's use of identification is different from that of Lacan. Unless otherwise specified, all uses of "identification" in this essay refer to Burkean thought as it is mobilized in organizational rhetoric research.) Burke thus based identification on an assumption that each individual, before entering into symbolicity, already has a separate and distinctive identity (Davis, 2010).

Burke claimed that identification exists to compensate for originary division, and within organizational rhetoric, this compensation has emphasized the necessity of identification with organizations as central to social life. Cheney (1983) argued that "identification is necessary to compensate for the mystery of estrangement in the division of labor and in other ordered domains of experience" (p. 145). The importance of identification with organizations means that individuals actively seek out organizations with which to identify (Cheney & McMillan, 1990) and that organizations have a vested interest in manufacturing alignment with individuals (Boyd & Waymer, 2011; Sillince, 2006). Work rooted in this understanding has examined how organizations have sought both to foster identification with external stakeholders (e.g., Gill & Wells, 2014; Silince, 2006) and to create a sense of identification among current organizational members (e.g., Golant et al., 2015; Rogers et al., 2011).

However, for theorists of subjectivity, identities (and identifications) cannot exist per se without reference to sociality, and thus some originary connection to symbolic networks precedes the development of identity. Davis (2010) laid out this problem, saying: "Who is this 'individual,' this human being per se who precedes predication and so predates the processes of identification? Who is there, there already, to experience alienation, to desire sociality?" (p. 23). If identities cannot be clearly and originally demarcated from one another as the "A" and "B" of Burke's theorizing, separate and self-complete, then organizational rhetoric needs a different way of thinking suasory connection.

Theorists of subjectivity start by conceptualizing what subjects comprise if not a unitary identity. Davis (2010) retained the term identification but flipped

Burke on his head by figuring identification rather than division as preceding subjects. She explained that subjects come into being through relation, rather than as singular identities.

This perspective aligns with many non-Western epistemologies (Cruz & Sodeke, 2020). For instance, "In most African philosophies on personhood, a person becomes human only amid others" (Asante & Pindi, 2020, p. 225). However, African epistemologies are rarely taken up in the academy writ-large, let alone in communication studies. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) described how this "epistemic injustice" necessarily follows from the "denial of [African] being" as "non-humans do not produce knowledge" (p. 80). By limiting understandings of being to pre-existing individuals who can recognize likeness in one another, identification reinforces colonial understandings of being and personhood. In this manner, the current conceptualization of organizational rhetoric delimits understandings of difference in two ways: by centering logics of recognition, and by assuming individuals are (or can be) whole.

Identification presumes that individuals recognize likeness and are attracted to it. However, as Towns (2018b) related, the "mutual recognition that is assumed in much of Western thought" is a fiction that allows white people to enact "racial violence against black bodies as a central mode through which to enter into humanity" (p. 1). Implicit in the Western notion of identity that grounds identification is its reliance on the foreclosure of the racialized and colonized (Towns, 2018a, 2018b). Lowe (2015) powerfully argued that notions of autonomous subjectivity are fundamentally premised on Westerners' ability to differentiate themselves from racialized and colonized peoples. She wrote, "Social relations in the colonized Americas, Asia, and Africa were the condition of possibility for Western liberalism to think the universality of human freedom, however much freedoms for slaves, colonized, and indigenous people were precisely exempted by that philosophy" (p. 16). Extending this perspective, Towns (2018a) demonstrated how Black bodies "serve a communicative function that classifies the human as largely White and male" (p. 355), acting as part of the medium securing liberal humanist individuality.

Identification similarly supports a fiction of possible wholeness, which may be observed in Hanchey's (2018a) use of Lacanian psychoanalysis as a lens for understanding neocolonial white savior narratives. Lacan (2006a) argued that subjects come into being through a fundamental misrecognition of themselves as whole and complete—a fantasy of identification—relegating a missing piece or lack to the unsymbolizeable Real. Hanchey (2018a) described how, for Western volunteers in Tanzania, part of what they cannot recognize in themselves is their own whiteness and coloniality. Instead, they embrace the white savior fantasy that identification supports—that "the US American volunteer can 'find herself'"—that is, find wholeness,

be complete—in other countries, by saving other people" (p. 147). The problem lies in how this fantasy requires the subjugation of other peoples to function, using Blackness to extend white humanity as Towns (2018a, 2018b) described.

For example, consider the National Communication Association (NCA) process of choosing Distinguished Scholars prior to changes made in 2018 (NCA, 2019b). First, self-nominations were not allowed, limiting the pool to those identified by others as fitting the idea of a "distinguished scholar." Second, once nominated, the committee voting on new Distinguished Scholars was composed only of already-chosen Distinguished Scholars. This process fits a model of organizational identification, whereby there is an organizational identity—in this case, a scholarly identity of the "cream of the crop" (p. 1) in the communication discipline—that is guided by logics of like recognizing like. However, this model is limited by the racial, gendered, and cultural constraints of likeness—before changing selection criteria, over the history of the Distinguished Scholars only one Man of Color and no Women of Color were ever selected. Andrade and Cooper (2019) identified how Distinguished Scholar selection showcased "materially, an anti-Black practice" given "the abundance of Black scholarship that has contributed greatly to communication studies" (p. 25). The changes made to the process in 2018 highlight the ways that understanding how racialization and coloniality condition subjective decision-making better attends to difference, as we explain further below.

Subjectification Attends to the Inherent Incompleteness of Subject Formation. Individual or even subjective wholeness was always a fiction, enabled and bolstered by violence to those afflicted by coloniality. Sandoval (2000) explained that the "fragmentation or split subjectivity of subjection is the very condition against which a modernist, well-placed citizen-subject could coalesce its own sense of wholeness," a sense "made possible only through the concomitant presence of shattered minds and bodies, often beyond survival" (p. 33). In this context, understanding subjectivities as incomplete, rather than wholes that can be recognized as distinct from others, challenges the violence done to racialized and colonized subjects in colonial-modernity. The "promise of happiness" encapsulated in the search for identification—of being autonomous and whole, a perfect liberal subject—is "dependent upon the localization of suffering; others suffer so that a certain 'we' can hold onto the good life" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 195). The "we" of identification is premised on violence.

Subjectification examines how processes of subject formation in relation to organizations and institutions are historically codified, differentially distributed, and managed in ways that maintain the status quo to the detriment of racialized and colonized subjects. For instance, returning to the NCA

Distinguished Scholars, much of the controversy over the decision to rethink the criteria and selection process was based on essentialized notions of organizational identity that may be diagnosed and critiqued from a perspective of organizational subjectification.

In his editorial published in the now-defunct CRTNET, Medhurst (2019) notably opposed "diversity" and "merit" in a manner that made the two seem mutually exclusive. Importantly, he related this false binary to the identity of NCA as an organization:

> As important as the Distinguished Scholar issue is, the far more important issue is what sort of organization the NCA will be. One where selections are made on intellectual merit or one where identity is prioritized over intellectual and scholarly merit?

This false binary has been deconstructed by many others, and we do not need to repeat such arguments here. What is important for our purposes is how this framing of NCA codifies an essentialized notion of what the organization is and who it is for. Although Medhurst recognized (and balked at) the possibility that NCA might change, the process of constructing NCA and the concurrent way the organization depends upon certain forms of subject production is left unaddressed. That is, the historical processes of change that have led to where the organization is now are essentialized into the current form of NCA, and left unquestioned.

From a perspective attuned to subjectification, scholars can interrogate the ways that NCA as an organization and NCA members as subjects have co-constituted each other over the past 100 years, thus creating a contemporary organization whereby nearly all of those named as Distinguished Scholars are white, and most are men.

How Organizing Beyond Inclusion Addresses the Problems of Citizenship Narratives

Identification Normalizes Logics of Inclusion and Citizenship Narratives. It follows that if identification is premised on like recognizing like, then it practices a politics of inclusion. Towns (2018b), drawing from Fanon, stated that "the foundation of Western thought is structured on a raced, colonial framework that becomes important to the epistemological and ontological questions being asked" (p. 4). In situations like that of the Distinguished Scholars, the way of understanding "cream of the crop" scholarship is underpinned by whiteness and coloniality, which structures who belongs. But attempting to redress this problem by being inclusive does not solve the base issue—the structuring logics of whiteness and coloniality. Instead, it retains those logics and the white, Western majority that hold control over decision-making, while

seeking to incorporate others into the violent system (sometimes which is fundamentally based on their exclusion). That is, inclusion without systemic transformation simply places People of Color and non-Westerners within the very same destructive and violent system as before, often to negative subjective effect.

This type of inclusion follows the same principles as what Earle (2015) described as "tolerance" rhetorics:

> Tolerance, in a post 9/11 neoliberal moment, operates not only to position marginalized subjects within national space but also to re-center normative subjects within the national imaginary, affording them the power to tolerate or not, to welcome or cast out, to include or exclude (p. 134).

In systems based on a politics of inclusion, normative subjects maintain control over who is included, how, and to what extent. As Chávez (2015) clearly stated, "projects of inclusion don't rupture oppressive structures; instead they uphold and reinforce those structures by showing how they can be kinder and better without actually changing much at all" (p. 166). Chávez was speaking in particular about the history of rhetoric as a discipline, and the way that its traditional obsession with citizenship narratives codifies rhetoric as a discipline that erases difference. Lechuga (2020) added to this claim by situating "U.S. American rhetoric [as] the way that settler colonialism organizes" (p. 378). For rhetoric to even begin to take part in decolonial projects, it must be completely transformed.

For this reason, Law and Corrigan (2018) argued against a politics of inclusion within already existing canons by advocating instead to "actively exclude those vocabularies that reinforce marginalization of nonwhite scholars" (p. 328). They suggested this is necessary because communication canons often "displace more contemporary theoretical literatures that describe phenomena that [the canons] were unconcerned with" (p. 327). Stretching the canon only serves to extend the same logics of exclusion that are inherent to its construction, replicating the citizenship narrative of rhetoric that has dire consequences for raced and colonized subjects (Flores, 2016; Lechuga, 2020; McCann et al., 2020; Na'puti, 2019). We thereby offer organizational subjectification as an alternative project of organizational rhetoric, one which offers "a rupture in the order of knowing … as the sign of an impossible and productive space" open to alterity (Cortez & García, 2020, pp. 583–584).

For example, Kate Lockwood Harris's (2019) presentation on the NCA Organizational Communication Division Top Paper Panel (OCDTPP)—and the reaction to it—demonstrated the limitations of identification as an inclusively oriented citizenship narrative. The presentation came at a time when NCA as a whole was dealing with the Distinguished Scholars fallout, and the Organizational Communication Division more specifically was surveying its

members to investigate specific ways racism functioned within the subdiscipline. In her presentation, Harris described how calls by Scholars of Color and non-Western scholars to transform organizational communication studies had been blocked, denied, or belittled through the normative mechanisms of the field. She titled her paper "border defensiveness" as a means of highlighting how challenges to the domain and praxis of organizational communication studies are policed, with only the most civil allowed into the fold. Ironically, her presentation was met with the same such white and colonial defensiveness she described from the respondent of the panel, who labeled her work "fiery" and "divisive" (Hanchey, 2020). The respondent further used the progress of white women in academia—noting that she did not "have time" for intersectionality—to advocate for a more patient, less disruptive approach. As this occurred after months of disciplinary conversations about whiteness in the field, and in the context of the respondent having read Harris' full paper prior to the panel, the response felt particularly offensive to many in attendance. The respondent's dismissal led to many panelists and audience members walking out of the panel.

As Harris (2020) suggested in her reflections over the event, such calls to "tone down" from both the respondent and others in the field reflect an inability to conceptualize what organizational communication might be or become if it is no longer based on whiteness, coloniality, and the performance of "emotional labor for the comfort of white supremacy" (p. 149). We conceptualize this as what organizational communication could be beyond the limits of identification. For Chávez (2015), the point is not to "become a more inclusive discipline" but to "become something entirely different: a discipline constituted through non-normative, non-citizen, non-Western perspectives and ways of knowing and being" (p. 163).

Subjectification Opens Possibilities for Organizing Beyond Inclusion. In their response to Medhurst's editorial, LeMaster & Johnson, (2019) described the need to move beyond inclusive logics in communication's disciplinary canons. They discussed how inclusion often takes the form of "canonical exception": "a form of tokenization that leaves room for those in power to claim diverse and inclusive praxes while also justifying exclusion based on a merit-diversity dichotomy" (p. 60). They aimed for and were already performing a future that is "incoherent" (p. 62), or what Kenney (2020) referred to as "an undisciplined queer otherwise" (p. 145). For those invested in disciplinary mechanisms of organizing, incoherence may sound frightening. But that fear, in part, reflects the "fear" of "those who want to avoid the fire of transformation" (Kenney, 2020, p. 149). That is, it reflects the fear of those who are currently comfortable within the norms of whiteness and coloniality, the fear that their comfort might be disturbed for the benefit of those who have

long endured injustices to ensure it. Incoherency is necessary to efface the violent organizing logics of whiteness and coloniality, fearful as it may be for those occupying normative spaces within the discipline. Indeed, many normatively positioned scholars do not perceive that their subjective comfort is premised upon violence against others. As Towns (2020) powerfully noted, "if the structures of chattel slavery and colonialism taught us anything, then it is that the West saw its racial violence against what would soon be Black and Indigenous peoples as benevolent gifts" (p. 77). In many ways, this assumption of white benevolence extends into contemporary academic structures (Corrigan & Vats, 2020).

Subjectification examines the relationship between academic subjects and disciplinary organizations so as to interrogate both the processes that write Scholars of Color and non-Western scholars out of disciplinary subjectivities and how white scholars iteratively recuperate an essentialized notion of the identity of "communication scholar." Subjectification highlights alternative possibilities for (dis)organizing the discipline.

Towns (2020) displayed the connection between subjective processes and organizing beyond inclusion with a simple question and answer: "If we are not the self or Other, then what are we? The answer is exciting, yet terrifying: We are whatever we want to be" (p. 78). When the ever-changing nature of subjectivity is embraced, the ability to form and reform both institutions and selves can lead in exciting new directions. This radical fluidly reflects indigenous epistemologies and understandings of relational connection between subjects, contexts, ancestors, land, and water. Na'puti's (2019, 2020) work on archipelagic and oceanic rhetorics knocked Western sensemaking flat, through "Indigenous epistemologies and Indigenous cultural politics that converge like tidal waters, rapidly churning us in connection and belonging to ancestors, histories, and environments" (p. 19). Similarly, Cruz & Sodeke, 2020 explored how fluidities and liquidities challenge sedimented Western understandings of both organizing and subjectivities. Rather than seeking a comfortable commonality, subjectification centers the discomfort and fluidity predicated on difference, as organizations and their members are continuously making sense of themselves through their relations to one another (Harding, 2007).

How Attention to Affective and Material Contexts Addresses the Problems of Intended Persuasion

Identification Assumes the Possibility and Desirability of Achieving Intentions. Organizational rhetoric's use of identification not only limits our understanding of subjects but also of communication. For Burke (1969), identification is something that the rhetor attempts, and it is something that can be communicatively achieved. According to Burke (1969), action is that

which separates humans from animals and objects. For something to be considered action, it must be purposeful. While many things can be put into motion, without a human will there can be no action. Burke (1969) defined humans as the symbol-using animal that falsely perceives itself as separate from nature due to its capacity for symbolic action (Conrad & Cheney, 2018). In this framework, all symbolic action is rooted in purpose, if not intention.

However, there are limits to an approach rooted in purpose and intent. First, subjects may intend to persuade others, but that intent is never available to full recognition or understanding. As Butler (2004) described, "when we do things or when we act intentionally, we are always in some sense motivated by an unconscious that is not fully available to us" (p. 332). Although Burkean theories do take into account that identification may be conscious or unconscious, they still consider it to be a peculiarly symbolic act (Davis, 2010), eliding affective factors that psychoanalytic theorists would conceive of as residing in the Imaginary or Real (Driver, 2009; Gunn, 2004; Lacan, 2006b). Organizational rhetoric scholars need a theory that goes beyond identification, to understand how "the subject is born into a network of language and uses language but is also used by it" (Butler, 2004, p. 332). Intentions in this sense are part of subjectivity, but not the most productive focus for understanding organizational rhetoric's interaction with the subject. As intentions "are discursive products rather than creations of the autonomous subject" (Hanchey, 2018b, p. 270), the broader context of subject formation is integral to understanding where intentions emerge from and what they mean.

Second, intent is not simply achieved or unachieved. Messages are not transmitted from sender to receiver but are communicatively constituted in relation (Cooren et al., 2011). Thinking of rhetoric as simply the transmission of influence and intent not only "codifies an essential notion of the subject, [but also of] rhetoric itself" (Hanchey, 2018b, p. 270). Organizational rhetoric should instead be "seen as firing off relations and producing texts and subjects in a sticky swirl" (Gunn, 2004, p. 3), and account for factors beyond intent and even symbolicity.

By assuming the possibility of understanding and achieving intents, identification often fails to account for affective, embodied, and other relational factors of the communicative process. This failure has material consequences for marginalized subjects. For example, multiple scholars involved in the walkout of the OCDTPP described the emotional fallout of the event. Both the racially coded language of the respondent and the vulnerability of standing up to it had intense felt effects. The respondent's language, for Cruz (2020), was similar to having wounds ripped open: "And it rips open/My sutures/THE VIOLENCE/THE PAIN" (p. 127). Harris (2020) "couldn't sleep or keep down food" (p. 148) afterward. Jensen (2020) recalled the "faces twisted in anger and hurt" in the hall (p. 138). People walked out of the OCDTPP that day because of the intense pain of

watching how even a clear and detailed challenge to white fragility was still responded to with the same white, colonial structures and assumptions. Many of the scholars involved had long worked to combat racial/colonial disciplinary structures; the culmination of years of daily violence became unbearable, and so they rose and left.

Such affective burdens permeate the entirety of life within Western colonial-modern systems. Given these conditions, rhetoric that is bent on achieving intention—that is, "'effective' rhetoric"—under coloniality is a violence, as achieving the intentions of rhetoric means achieving "the material deployment of a violently racist, colonial history in the United States" (Lechuga, 2020, pp. 381, 378). Women of Color in rhetoric have written movingly of their affective burdens in attempting to disrupt the effectiveness of (white and colonial) rhetoric in achieving its goals: Báez and Ore (2018) described the "affective labor involved in making whiteness strange" (p. 333) and Calvente et al. (2020) stated that they "get sick from the stress…their colleagues have caused" (p. 207). Bahrainwala (2019) recounted multiple occasions in which her only recourse to protect her children from white people was to scream at them:

> These mundane and life-threatening encounters with white fragility turn my anger into horror and elicit screams from my constricted throat. They fill my mouth and register as a taste. My hands shake, my fists clench, leaving half-moon fingernail marks deep in my palms long after the moment is supposed to have passed. It shows up as a broken retainer when I clamp my jaw in my sleep, dark smudges under my eyes, bitten-down fingernails, and knotted shoulders. It makes a home within my body. (p. 9)

Identification as the premise for organizational rhetoric often occludes the intense, visceral, and yet everyday violences that are a normal part of organizing (Kenny, 2010) and are particularly felt by those that structures of whiteness and coloniality push to the margins. Subjectification foregrounds how these violences are not a side-effect but a central facet of organizing.

Subjectification Attends to Material and Affective Aspects of Subject Constitution. Much of what occurs in processes of subject production extends beyond symbolicity. That is, the symbolic aspects of subjectification are inseparable from affect and materiality (Kenny, 2010). Affect describes a state of feeling prior to its codification in language or symbolic interpretation. Once an affect has been articulated or described, it enters the realm of cultural production and becomes an emotion. Affect describes a bodily experience prior to and in excess of symbolic means of interpretation. Subject production

is bound up in the circulation of these intensities that exist beyond interpretable meaning.

The material realms of bodies and geographies also impact subject production. Location and embodiment are central to processes of meaning-making and knowledge production through what is termed geo-body politics (Mignolo, 2007; Wanzer-Serrano, 2015). Geo-body politics radically situates epistemologies in the geographical location and embodied specificity of their design. Location is one aspect central to understanding subjectification from this perspective. For instance, although anti-Blackness has global structures, its effects and forms depend on situated context (Asante, 2016). What may at first seem like a "natural" part of certain subjects is the function of differential production according to colonial-modern power relations (Ahmed, 2002).

Subjectification also provides a means to understand the quotidian violences inflicted against marginalized scholars in the discipline. Wanzer-Serrano (2015) examined how the perception of raced bodies directly connects to material harm: "Colonialism … is felt, literally, on the body through various oppressive mechanisms: genocide, slavery, police brutality, denial of sanitation services, poisoning from lead, forced sterilizations of women, malnutrition, and more" (p. 75). The violence differentially afflicting racialized subjects is not a matter of extremity but of the mundanity of day-to-day organizational life. Instead of conceptualizing these violences as exceptional instances where identification fails, subjectification examines how processes of institutional-to-subject relation undergird and produce such violences. For instance, at the OCDTPP, Kenney (2020) described his feelings before walking out by stating, "Were it not for the people sitting next to me, my disposition that afternoon … I am certain my disciplinary training would have kept me in my seat even as so much of my body protested" (p. 145). Similarly, Gist-Mackey (2020) felt so constrained that she described it in terms of "pain," torn between "professionalism" and acting as she desired. Weighing heavily on her was how her emotionality would be perceived differently as a Black woman, as well as her precarious position as an untenured faculty who was thus vulnerable to the vagaries of white fragility's career-killing expressions. Subjectification processes highlight the differential ways that subjects are produced in relation to the organization, and how those processes can be changed to be more equitable and just.

From Identification to Subjectification

Cheney's (1983) essay adapting Burke's theory of identification for organizations has remained a touchstone for organizational rhetorical scholarship. In his essay, he identified three strategies based on Burke's writings that organizations use to procure organizational identification: common ground,

antithesis, and assumed "we." These ideas remain foundational for much of the academic work on organizational rhetoric. In this section we take Cheney's original argument and reformulate it through a lens of subjectification, demonstrating how the terms of engagement shift. We argue that organizational rhetoric scholars can extend current work through attunement to the following aspects of subjectification: differential relations, dependence on Otherness, and uneven mutuality.

From Common Ground to Differential Relations

Cheney (1983) defined the common ground technique as a strategy "where the rhetor equates or links himself or herself with others in an overt manner" to demonstrate a relationship between the organization and the subject whereby "the corporation shares his or her values" and "offers him or her 'identity'" (p. 148). However, what happens to common ground if there is no originary identity of either manager or corporation with which to identify? If a subject cannot exist prior to symbolic relations with others, neither can a managerial identity, thus destabilizing some potential of managerial control. As Contu et al. (2010) aptly put it, "We are constituted by lack, that is for sure, but let us not think that the Other is magically complete" (p. 311). The subject comes into being by fundamentally (mis)recognizing the Other as themselves—yet the Other is constituted in the same way. None of us can be constituted without some fundamental lack.

Here, we demonstrate how the common ground technique identified by Cheney (1983) can be rethought as differential relations in organizational subjectification. We argue that in the same way that worker subjects cannot be thought of as whole, neither can managers, leading to a "lack" instead of common ground on which to build. What Cheney identified as a strategy now returns as a product of subjectification; common ground is a fantasy allowing some workers to appear as whole subjects. However, subjectification is differential (Sandoval, 2000); not all workers are conditioned in the same way in relation to the organization. Scholars can thus examine differential relations as an integral facet of organizational rhetoric through analyzing how relations of power unevenly distribute subjectification processes.

Of course, we are not denying that finding or perceiving common ground does occur, but recuperating it as the product of subjectification. In this view, common ground reappears as a fantasy through which workers (and managers) attempt to shore up their own false image of themselves as whole. Common ground is a misrecognition that allows some worker subjects to posit themselves as complete. Recognizing common ground as a fantasy allows scholars to examine how workers internalize hegemonic discourses as their own that may be antithetical to their own good.

We purposefully refer to "some" workers above. Subjectification allows scholars access to a dimension of organizational rhetoric foreclosed by the notion of common ground: how it is differentially distributed. Not all subjects are party to the rhetoric that Cheney (1983) described, which openly courts the affinity of certain peoples. Subjectification allows us to explore how the organization and its managers relate to workers often overlooked, such as janitorial staff, who may have a much different relation to the company than skilled employees (Stephens, 2018). Unequal power relations produce differential subjectification.

From Antithesis to Dependence on Otherness

Next, we examine how the strategy of antithesis as elucidated by Cheney (1983) transitions to relational dependence upon Otherness. Through the lens of subjectification, antithesis is a denial of the processes of one's own subject formation and, thus, a refusal of ethical relations with others/the Other. We call on scholars of organizational rhetoric to attend to dependence on Otherness as a means of centering the subject's inherent ethico-political responsibility to those around them.

Cheney (1983) described the strategy of antithesis as that of "uniting against a common 'enemy'" (p. 148). In antithesis, organizations "emphasize threats from 'outsiders'" to "implicitly stress identification with 'insiders'" (p. 148). Antithesis constructs some sort of "us" that is separable from and may be pitted against a "them." Of course, the idea of separable groups is inimical to relational theories of subject production: Subjects are dependent upon that which is fundamentally Other to come into being (Davis, 2010). More important, the denial of our subjective reliance upon Otherness leads to unethical relations with and to others.

The denial of subjective reliance on difference has supported violence. Towns (2018b) described how white people use violence against Blackness "as a central mode through which to enter humanity" (p. 1), even while claiming the universality of mutual recognition. Universality obscures Western white subjects' reliance on Blackness, simultaneously repeating and denying the violences upon which it depends. In a practical example, Hanchey (2019) examined how two different sets of predominantly white, Western medical volunteers in Tanzania related in different ways to their Tanzanian patients, depending on whether or not they understood themselves as subjects dependent upon difference. Those that denied their subjective imbrication acted in ways that denied Tanzanians humanity, agency, and reasonability.

All subjects are fundamentally dependent upon Otherness for being and becoming. For theorists in the psychoanalytic tradition, this means a dependence upon the Other, that which is fundamentally unknowable and unassimilable and yet formative to subjective being (Davis, 2010; Gunn, 2004).

For theorists of racialization and colonialism, this means a dependence upon relation to others, those who are read differently through the intersecting cultural lenses of gender, sexualization, racialization, and coloniality. Subjects are thus dependent both on radical alterity and on racial/colonial difference. Through the lens of subjectification, antithesis denies dependence on Otherness, obscuring how power underlies being.

From Assumed "We" to Uneven Mutuality

Finally, the assumed "we" of identification shifts through subjectification to uneven mutuality. In studies of identification, the use of "we" interpellates workers into managerial discourse; this essay examines how assuming "we" affects subjectification of managers and organizations, as well.

However, it is important to note that calls to mutuality as sameness or likeness have been used throughout Western colonial-modern thought as a means of relegating Black, Indigenous, and other colonized peoples to lesser degrees of humanity (Lowe, 2015; Towns, 2018a, 2018b). Here, we advocate for an understanding of mutuality that disturbs sedimented notions of self and Other (Towns, 2020), instead advocating for an understanding that while subjectification processes occur for all subjects, their bases are radically uneven and inequitable.

The use of "we" in corporate discourse emerges as organizational rhetors assume organizational beliefs, values, and interests of members should be (or are made to) align with those of the corporation (Cheney, 1983). Cheney (1983) argued that the use of the transcendent or assumed we is an appeal to identification "between parties who may have little in common" (p. 149). Individuals here are separable, and desire identification with organizations to complete their social needs (Cheney & McMillan, 1993). For example, management or executives use "we" to appear consubstantial with lower-level employees (Rogers et al., 2011). However, we argue that the use of "we" ironically recognizes our mutual subjective dependence while masking that it is built upon fundamental inequalities. From the perspective of identification, the assumed "we" seems to create a false sense of consubstantiality. Subjectification, on the other hand, turns our attention to the political relations underlying consubstantiality.

"We" discourse reconstitutes the subjectivity of both workers *and* managers/organizations. Subjectification processes are not transmission-based, but rather figure a complex field of relations (Gunn, 2004). Managers and even the organization itself are caught up in those relations as much as workers are. Subjectification questions to whom "we" refers, demonstrating how "we" requires the exclusion of racialized, gendered, classed, and colonized subjects for its constitution (Towns, 2018a). The use of "we" maintains

the fiction of similarity while necessarily neglecting those whose existence would challenge the seemingly homogenous social reality the rhetors wish to maintain (Wanzer, 2012).

The affective plays a vital role in subjects' desire for inclusion in "we." The assumed "we" appears to create a possibility to fill subjective lack (Lacan, 2006a), as the desire to belong masks the ways that desire acts as an avenue for power (Carrillo Rowe, 2008; Driver, 2009). Berlant (2011) argued that affective ties lead to the maintenance of relationships with structures that cause harm even as subjects continue to believe that through perseverance their desires will be met. However, this desire to be worthy of being (mis)identified leads to greater alienation. Even as individuals may feel a fleeting sense of worth in being recognized through inclusion they move toward greater material and subjective alienation (Bloom, 2016).

Conclusion and Implications

We make the case for a rethinking of organizational rhetoric as subjectification in order to challenge the racial and colonial bases of contemporary theories based in identification. Although other organizational communication scholars have also called for a turn toward relationality (Kuhn et al., 2019), our argument is notably different because it underscores that the ontological is always already political (Carrillo Rowe, 2008; Hanchey, 2018b; Wanzer, 2012). By obsuring the politics inherent in subjectivity, other approaches renaturalize power relations and maintain the logics of colonial-modernity that universalize the modern liberal subject (Hanchey, 2018b; Lowe, 2015; Mignolo, 2007; Towns, 2018a; Wanzer-Serrano, 2015). Subjects are not only the products of relations, but of differential relations that unevenly distribute dynamics of power, which fundamentally depend on alterity and difference. As such, a focus on organizational subjectification opens up previously untapped areas of study for organizational rhetoric scholars.

First, centering differential relations draws attention to how (hetero)sexism, racialization, and coloniality inflect processes of subjectification in relation to organizations. Possible studies could examine how organizations act to revivify, negotiate, ameliorate, or challenge the uneven distribution of sexual, racial, and colonial processes. Attending to how organizations are caught up in larger cultural discourses would benefit the study of media in organizational rhetoric (Conrad, 1988; Meisenbach & Feldner, 2019). Practically, attention to differential relations could produce more equitable policies and procedures.

Second, centering dependence on Otherness draws attention to how subjects develop by inclining toward some groups and away from others. Possible studies could examine how understanding the subjective denial of

antithesis could lead toward more ethical relations or how organizations may address this denial in a way that leads toward substantive promotion of diversity rather than lip-service. By highlighting our responsibility toward others (Davis, 2010; Oliver, 2001), focusing on subjective dependence in organizational life could lead to more ethical organizational relations.

Third, centering uneven mutuality responds to affective aspects of relations and co-constitutive processes. Possible studies could examine how managers are resubjectified through their own attempts at garnering identification of employees, or even how the organization itself is subjectified in subjectification processes. This focus would also draw scholarly attention to the way feelings and their politics may be caught up in the maintenance, amelioration, or denial of organizational fidelity. The importance of geo-body politics in understanding mutuality could help organizations attune to knowledges as situated and contextual, as well as to the feelings and embodiment that accompany them.

In conclusion, organizational subjectification draws from contemporary theory to provide new avenues for understanding rhetoric in relation to organizations and organizing. This theoretical lens adds to both organizational communication and rhetoric scholarship. Rhetoric rarely engages the insights of organizational work, even when directly dealing with organizations and organizing. This could, in part, emerge from the disparity between theoretical constructs. By connecting the two subfields through subjectification, organizational rhetoric may have as much to offer to rhetoric scholars as to organizational communication and public relations.

Moving from organizational identification to organizational subjectification provides an opportunity for scholars of organizational rhetoric to deeply interrogate the politics of their work. In the wake of #CommunicationSoWhite (Chakravartty et al., 2018) and #RhetoricSoWhite (Wanzer-Serrano, 2019), there is no excuse not to challenge and complicate our understandings of both the strengths and limits of our current theories. All of us must labor to make the discipline a more just space in which to work, think, and be (come). We hope that organizational subjectification provides one means to do so.

Acknowledgments

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

ORCID iDs

Jenna N. Hanchey ⓘ https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0413-0123
Peter R. Jensen ⓘ https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6749-8489

References

#ToneUpOrgComm Collective (2020). #Toneuporgcomm: A Manifestx. *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, *9*(2), 152-153. https://doi.org/10.1525/dcqr.2020. 9.2.152.

2019 NCA Organizational Communication Top Paper Panel Account (2019). https://docs. google.com/document/d/1SmrkYHByhyiyLZlg8kY1gCOrFGtnyE795pY89fLkcHw/ edit.

Ahmed, S. (2002). Racialized bodies. In M. Evans & E. Lee (Eds.), *Real bodies: A sociological introduction* (pp. 46-63). Palgrave

Ahmed, S. (2010). *The promise of happiness*. Duke University Press.

Andrade, L. M., & Cooper, D. (2019). The imperative of dissecting anti-black and anti-indigenous meritocracy in communication studies and beyond. *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, *8*(4), 23-29. https://doi.org/10.1525/dcqr.2019.8.4.23.

Arnaud, G., & Vidaillet, B. (2018). Clinical and critical: The Lacanian contribution to management and organization studies. *Organization Studies*, *25*(1), 69-97. https:// doi.org/10.1177/1350508417720021.

Asante, G. (2016). Glocalized whiteness: Sustaining and reproducing whiteness through "skin toning" in post-colonial Ghana. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, *9*, 87-103. https://doi.org/10.1080/17513057. 2016.1154184.

Asante, G. A., & Nziba Pindi, G. (2020). (Re)imagining African futures: Wakanda and the politics of transnational Blackness. *Review of Communication*, *20*(3), 220-228. https://doi.org/10.1080/15358593.2020.1778072.

Báez, K. L., & Ore, E. (2018). The moral imperative of race for rhetorical studies: On civility and walking-in-white in academe. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, *15*(4), 331-336. https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2018.1533989.

Bahrainwala, L. (2019). Responding to "White Fragility": A manifesta of screams. *Feral Feminisms*, *9*, 5-9.

Ballard, D., Allen, B., Ashcraft, K., Ganesh, S., McLeod, P., & Zoller, H. (2020). When words do not matter: Identifying actions to effect diversity, equity, and inclusion in the academy. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *34*, 590-616. https://doi. org/10.1177/0893318920951643.

Berlant, L. (2011). *Cruel optimism*. Duke University Press.

Bloom, P. (2016). Work as the contemporary limit of life: Capitalism, the death drive, and the lethal fantasy of 'work-life balance'. *Organization*, *23*(4), 588-606. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508415596604.

Boyd, J., & Waymer, D. (2011). Organizational rhetoric: A subject of interest(s). *Management Communication Quarterly*, *25*, 474-493. https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318911409865.

Burke, K. (1966). *Language as symbolic action: Essays on life, literature, and method*. University of California Press.

Burke, K. (1969). *A rhetoric of motives*. University of California Press.

Butler, J (2004). Changing the subject: Judith Butler's politics of radical resignification. In S. Salih & J. Butler (Eds.), *The Judith Butler Reader* (pp. 325-356). Blackwell.

Calvente, L. B. Y., Calafell, B. M., & Chávez, K. R. (2020). Here is something you can't understand: The suffocating whiteness of communication studies. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, *17*(2), 202-209. https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2020.1770823.

Carrillo Rowe, A. (2008). *Power lines: On the subject of feminist alliances*. Duke University Press.

Chakravartty, P., Kuo, R., Grubbs, V., & McIlwain, C. (2018). #CommunicationSoWhite. *Journal of Communication*, *68*(2), 254-266. https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqy003.

Chávez, K. R. (2015). Beyond inclusion: Rethinking rhetoric's historical narrative. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *101*(1), 162-172. https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2015.994908.

Cheney, G. (1983). The rhetoric of identification and the study of organizational communication. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *69*(2), 143-158. https://doi.org/10.1080/00335638309383643.

Cheney, G., & McMillan, J. J. (1990). Organizational rhetoric and the practice of criticism. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *18*(2), 93-114. https://doi.org/10.1080/00909889009360318.

Conrad, C. (1988). Work songs, hegemony, and illusions of self. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, *5*(3), 179-201. https://doi.org/10.1080/15295038809366702.

Conrad, C., & Cheney, G. (2018). Organizational communication and organizational rhetoric I: The theme of merger. In Ø. Ihlen & R. L. Heath (Eds.), *The handbook of organizational rhetoric and communication* (pp. 17-32). Wiley Blackwell.

Contu, A., Driver, M., & Jones, C. (2010). Editorial: Jacques Lacan with organization studies. *Organization*, *17*(3), 307-315. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508410364095.

Cooren, F., Kuhn, T., Cornelissen, J. P., & Clark, T. (2011). Communication, organizing and organization: An overview and introduction to the special issue. *Organization Studies*, *32*(9), 1149-1170. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840611410836.

Corrigan, L. M., & Vats, A. (2020). The structural whiteness of academic patronage. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, *17*(2), 220-227. https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2020.1770824.

Cortez, J., & García, R. (2020). The absolute limit of Latinx writing. *College Composition and Communication*, *71*(4), 566-590.

Costas, J., & Fleming, P. (2009). Beyond dis-identification: A discursive approach to self-alienation in contemporary organizations. *Human Relations*, *62*(3), 353-378. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726708101041.

Cruz, J. M. (2020). Object. *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, *9*(2), 126-132. https://doi.org/10.1525/dcqr.2020.9.2.126.

Cruz, J. M., & Sodeke, C. (2020). Debunking Eurocentrism in organizational communication theory: Marginality and liquidities in postcolonial contexts. *Communication Theory*, qtz038. https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qtz038.

Davis, D. (2010). *Inessential solidarity: Rhetoric and foreigner relations*. University of Pittsburgh Press.

Driver, M. (2009). Struggling with lack: A Lacanian perspective on organizational identity. *Organization Studies*, *30*(1), 55-72. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840608100516.

Dutta, M. J., & Pal, M. (2020). Theorizing from the Global South: Dismantling, resisting, and transforming communication theory. *Communication Theory*, *30*(4), 349-369. https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qta010.

Earle, C. (2015). Good Muslims, bad Muslims, and the nation: The "Ground Zero Mosque" and the problem with tolerance. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, *12*(2), 121-138. https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420/2015/1008529.

Flores, L. A. (2016). Between abundance and marginalization: The imperative of racial rhetorical criticism. *Review of Communication*, *16*(1), 4-24. https://doi.org/10.1080/15358593.2016.1183871.

Ganesh, S., & Zoller, H. (2020). Putting our own house in order: Research, race, and reflexivity. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *34*(4), 609-615. https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318920951643.

Gill, R., & Wells, C. C. (2014). Welcome to the "Hunger Games". *Management Communication Quarterly*, *28*(1), 26-55. https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318913513434.

Gist-Mackey, A. N. (2020). The pain of performative professionalism. *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, *9*(2), 140-143. https://doi.org/10.1525/dcqr.2020.9.2.140.

Golant, B. D., Sillince, J. A., Harvey, C., & Maclean, M. (2015). Rhetoric of stability and change: The organizational identity work of institutional leadership. *Human Relations*, *68*(4), 607-631. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726714532966.

Gunn, J. (2004). Refitting fantasy: Psychoanalysis, subjectivity, and talking to the dead. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *90*(1), 1-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/0033563042000206808.

Gunn, J. (2008). For the love of rhetoric, with continual reference to Kenny and Dolly. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *94*(2), 131-155. https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630801975418.

Hanchey, J. N. (2018a). All of us phantasmic saviors. *Communication and Critical/ Cultural Studies*, *15*(2), 144-160. https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2018. 1454969.

Hanchey, J. N. (2018b). Toward a relational politics of representation. *Review of Communication*, *18*(4), 265-283. https://doi.org/10.1080/15358593.2018.1519594.

Hanchey, J. N. (2019). Doctors without burdens: The neocolonial ambivalence of white masculinity in international medical aid. *Women's Studies in Communication*, *42*(1), 39-59. https://doi.org/10.1080/07491409.2019.1576084.

Hanchey, J. N. (2020). Beyond race scholarship as ground breaking/irrelevant. *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, *9*(2), 122-125. https://doi.org/10.1525/ dcqr.2020.9.2.122.

Harding, N. (2007). On Lacan and the 'Becoming-ness' of organizations/selves. *Organization Studies*, *28*(11), 1761-1773. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840607082225.

Harris, K. L. (2017). Re-situating organizational knowledge: Violence, intersectionality and the privilege of partial perspective. *Human Relations*, *70*(3), 263-285. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726716654745.

Harris, K. L. (2019, November 14–17). Unlearning border defense, undermining white supremacist violence: Renewing the case for interdisciplinary inquiry in organizational communication [Conference presentation]. National Communication Association 105th Convention, Baltimore, MD.

Harris, K. L. (2020). Time to #ToneUpOrgComm. *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, *9*(2), 147-151. https://doi.org/10.1525/dcqr.2020.9.2.147.

Houdek, M. (2018). The imperative of race for rhetorical studies: Toward divesting from disciplinary and institutionalized whiteness. *Communication and Critical/ Cultural Studies*, *15*(4), 292-299. https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2018. 1534253.

Ihlen, Ø., & Heath, R. L. (Eds.), (2018a). *The handbook of organizational rhetoric*. Wiley Blackwell.

Ihlen, Ø., & Heath, R. L. (2018b). Introduction: Organizational rhetoric. In Ø. Ihlen & R. L. Heath (Eds.), *The handbook of organizational rhetoric and communication* (pp. 3-14). Wiley Blackwell.

Jensen, P. R. (2020). Reflections on complacency and inadequacy in the face of violence. *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, *9*(2), 137-139. https://doi. org/10.1525/dcqr.2020.9.2.137.

Kenney, S. C. (2020). (Un)Disciplining the graduate student, and a queer otherwise. *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, *9*(2), 144-146. https://doi.org/10. 1525/dcqr.2020.9.2.144.

Kenny, K. M. (2010). Beyond ourselves: Passion and the dark side of identification in an ethical organization. *Human Relations*, *63*(6), 857-873. https://doi.org/10. 1177/0018726709345042.

Kuhn, T., Ashcraft, K. L., & Cooren, F. (2019). Introductory essay: What work can organizational communication do?. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *33*, 101-111. https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318918809421.

Lacan, J. (2006a). The subversion of the subject and the dialectic of desire in the Freudian unconscious. In B. Fink (Trans.), *Écrits* (pp. 671-702). W. W. Norton & Company.

Lacan, J. (2006b). Response to Jean Hyppolite's commentary on Freud's "Verneinung". In B. Fink (Trans.), *Écrits* (pp. 746-754). W. W. Norton & Company.

Law, M., & Corrigan, L. M. (2018). On white-speak and gatekeeping: Or, what good are the Greeks? *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, *15*(4), 326-330. https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2018.1533340.

Lechuga, M. (2020). An anticolonial future: Reassembling the way we do rhetoric. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, *17*(4), 378-385. https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2020.18296598.

LeMaster, L., & Johnson, A. L. (2019). An ode to incoherent canons. *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, *8*(4), 57-63. https://doi.org/10.1525/dcqr.2019.8.4.57.

Lowe, L. (2015). *The intimacies of four continents*. Duke University Press.

McCann, B. J., Mack, A. N., & Self, R. (2020). Communication's quest for whiteness: The racial politics of disciplinary legitimacy. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, *17*(2), 243-252. https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2020.1770822.

Medhurst, M. (2019, June 12). *Editorial*. CRTNET.

Meisenbach, R. J. (2018). New vistas in organizational rhetoric. In Ø. Ihlen & R. L. Heath (Eds.), *The handbook of organizational rhetoric and communication* (pp. 471-484). Wiley Blackwell.

Meisenbach, R. J., & Feldner, S. B. (2019). Constructing the ideal worker identity: The rhetorical construction of discursive resources in undercover boss. *Western Journal of Communication*, *83*(4), 403-422. https://doi.org/10.1080/10570314.2019.1566564.

Mejia, R. (2020). Forum introduction: Communication and the politics of survival. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, *17*(4), 360-368. https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2020.1829657.

Mignolo, W. (2007). Delinking. *Cultural Studies*, *21*(2-3), 449-514. https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162647.

Munshi, D., Broadfoot, K. J., & Hall, M. L. (2017). Postcolonial approaches. In C. R. Scott, J. R. Barker, T. Kuhn, J. Keyton, P. K. Turner, & L. K. Lewis (Eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Organizational Communication* (pp. 1-13). Wiley Online Library. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118955567.wbieoc166

Na'puti, T. R. (2019). Archipelagic rhetoric: Remapping the Marianas and challenging militarization from "a stirring place". *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, *16*(1), 4-25. https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2019.1572905.

Na'puti, T. R. (2020). Oceanic possibilities for communication studies. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, *17*(1), 95-103. https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2020.1723802.

NCA (2019a). *Distinguished scholars*. https://www.natcom.org/distinguished-scholars.

NCA (2019b). *Distinguished scholars–Selection process pre-2019.* https://www.natcom.org/sites/default/files/NCADistinguishedScholars-SelectionProcesspre-2019.pdf.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2018). *Epistemic freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and decolonization.* Routledge.

Oliver, K. (2001). *Witnessing: Beyond recognition.* University of Minnesota Press.

Oliver, K. (2017). Psychoanalysis and race. In L. M. Alcoff, P. C. Taylor, & L. Anderson (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to the philosophy of race* (pp. 290–301). Routledge

Rogers, P. S., Gunesekera, M., & Yang, M. L. (2011). Language options for managing: Dana corporation's philosophy and policy document. *Journal of Business Communication*, *48*(3), 256-299. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021943611406501.

Sandoval, C. (2000). *Methodology of the oppressed.* University of Minnesota Press.

Sillince, J. A. A. (2006). Resources and organizational identities. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *20*(2), 186-212. https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318906293587.

Stephens, K. K. (2018). *Negotiating control: Organizations and mobile communication.* Oxford University Press.

Tarin, C. (2019). Buen vivir: Indigneity, environmental activism, and decolonial organizing. In L. H. Hernández, D. I. Bowen, S. De Los Santos Upton, & A. R. Martinez (Eds.), *Latina/o/x communication studies: Theories, methods, practice* (pp. 209-227). Lexington Books.

Thiong'o, N. W. (1986). *Decolonising the mind: The politics of language in African literature.* East African Educational Publishers.

Towns, A. R. (2018a). Black "matter" lives. *Women's Studies in Communication*, *41*, 349-358. https://doi.org/10.1080/07491409.2018.1551985.

Towns, A. R. (2018b). A fanonian philosophy of race. In *Oxford research Encyclopedia of communication* (pp. 1-12). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.572.

Towns, A. R. (2020). "What do we wanna be?" Black radical imagination and the ends of the world. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, *17*(1), 75-80. https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2020.1723801.

Wanzer, D. A. (2012). Delinking rhetoric, or revisiting McGee's fragmentation thesis through decoloniality. *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, *15*(4), 647-658. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/490122.

Wanzer-Serrano, D. (2015). *The New York Young Lords and the struggle for liberation.* Temple University Press.

Wanzer-Serrano, D. (2019). Rhetoric's rac(e/ist) problems. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *105*(4), 465-476. https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2019.1669068.

Author Biographies

Dr Jenna N. Hanchey is Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno. Her work is premised on a politics of decolonization and addresses the intersections of rhetoric, African studies, and critical development studies.

Dr Peter R. Jensen is Assistant Professor of Organizational Communication at the University of Alabama. His research explores how organizing practices reproduce or challenge societal and cultural norms, particularly when organizing in response to social problems.