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Cultural Studies of Media Production: Critical Industrial Practices

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“Nobody knows anything.”

William Goldman (1983) summing up the theoretical and intellectual incompetence of Hollywood

A dull and tedious tome . . . Downright silly . . . Most of it could have been put together by any Hollywood correspondent in two weeks.

Variety mocking the naïvety of academic Hortense Powdermaker’s (1950) anthropological study of Hollywood (Bierstadt, 1951: 124)

It would be difficult to imagine a more resolute institutional divide than that which recurs between academic culture on the one hand, and the cultures of media production on the other. The agitated skewerings of Goldman and *Variety* above are merely the tip of a very extensive historical and rhetorical iceberg, one comprised of rifts, write-offs, and accusations whenever academics try to “seriously” study Hollywood, or when industry players publicly imagine themselves to be prescient theorists. Part of this rift is based on anxieties about who knows what in Hollywood (and what can be known about the place); and part of it results from an overdetermined cultural “mystique” that continues to assign to the industry an almost medieval authority, fashioned over decades, about how the industry works and what it means. Yet other cultures and tribes and industries and social groups also deploy and cultivate mystiques, but this fact has seldom derailed serious cultural studies research in the way that Hollywood has managed to do.

As I demonstrate in the essay, part of the reason for the distance between cultural studies formulations of the industry – and the industry – has to do with the fact that media industries themselves invest tremendous resources in producing knowledge (and critical knowledge) about the industry. Viewing this kind of industrial knowledge production, furthermore, as mere public-relations, marketing, bumpf, promotion, context, or even backstory is shortsighted and misguided given the extensive and convoluted nature of the contemporary mediascape. In this essay, and in the larger study from which it comes (forthcoming), I examine such meta-critical knowledge as “critical industrial practice,” and consider ways that the layers of industrial self-theorization provide both challenges for cultural studies research and distinctive opportunities for more fully understanding the ideologies and behaviors at work in something as convoluted, contradictory, heterogeneous, and as ostensibly monolithic as “*the industry*.”¹

The account that follows may seem a little ecumenical to some, since it includes as many references to popular and industrial studies of the industry as it does to academic research on the same phenomenon. This breadth is valuable for a number of reasons. Given the relative lack of critical work on the cultures of media production available today, and the ways that knowledge about the industry is reflexively postulated, managed, and interrogated in the commercial sphere, these reflexive industrial accounts stand in fact as forms of what I have termed “low theory” (1993), “industrial semiotics” (1994, 1995), and “theorizations-in-practice” (2000). These terms are very close to Ellen Seiter’s (1999) concept of the critical competencies of audiences as forms of “lay theory.” Yet because media production industries, unlike audiences, are by nature comprised of professionals, the term “lay” seems less adequate as a qualifier here than other frameworks, including Phil Agre’s (1997) formulation from AI and computer and cognitive science of “critical technical practice.” The relative absence of a sustained tradition of cultural studies research on contemporary media industries means that the field would benefit from opening up the very models that have dominated it since its aggregation around and following the influential work of the Birmingham Centre and (what has come to be known as) British cultural studies research in the 1970s. In this tradition, cultural studies has generally focused on cultures of reception and consumption (on audiences, users, subcultures, the working class, publics, or “the people”) while less extensive work has been undertaken in the systematic study of media production

cultures. This inclination has resulted in part from the field's theoretical launch as a reaction against top-down theories of culture and the Frankfurt School's model of the culture industry in the 1970s (Horkheimer, Adorno), Raymond Williams's work (1974) on the history of "social uses" of technologies and the nature of "mobile, privatized consumption," Louis Althusser's (1971) theory of "ideological state apparatus" (ISAs) as understood through spectatorial/subject "interpellation," and Stuart Hall's (1980a, 1980b) notion of "resistant" and "negotiated readings," all located largely outside of the corporate and industrial sphere.

Even field-setting applications of Gramsci's (1971) theory of "hegemony," while articulating the role of the state, also placed a renewed emphasis on the role of subjects, citizens, and consumers in the creation of consent – and in the misconstrual by subjects that audience and industrial interests are congruent. Ethnography emerged in media studies outside of anthropology departments during this period as a privileged and useful methodology appropriate for the analysis of cultures of domesticity and consumerism (Morley, Brunsdon, Gray, Gillespie, and Seiter, among others). However, ethnography has not achieved the same sort of success and visibility in the study of media production cultures. Nor has any other research paradigm for that matter. I intend to consider this lack and provide suggestions about how cultural studies might more effectively engage media production and the industrial formation.

Despite the radical, interdisciplinary, boundary-crossing objectives of its formative years, cultural studies has emerged (in many universities) as a dominant, sanctioned, and bounded scholarly discipline. In achieving this institutional inertia, various attempts have been made to "map the field" of cultural studies. Considering but one of these projects – the ambitious international cultural studies conference at Urbana in 1990 and its resulting publication (Grossberg, Nelson, and Treichler, 1992) – makes unavoidable questions about the absence of media industry studies. Of the 40 chapters in this important work, only one dealt substantively (albeit indirectly) with a culture of media production – Jody Berland's "Angels Dancing: Cultural Studies and the Production of Space." This contribution built on the work of Hennion (1990) on interactions in a French recording studio. All of the other contributors placed far more emphasis on meta-theorizing cultural studies, and reflecting on the problematic of cultural studies methodologies, agency, and significance.

The binary categories that cultural studies deployed in forming the field – even beyond the subject-user emphases of Hall, Althusser, Williams, and Gramsci – may also have legitimated a working disinterest in media industry. The easy and repeated caricaturing of “aesthetics” as antithetical to cultural studies stands as but one example. John Fiske (1986: 254) defined cultural studies, for instance, as a “political” framework, something set in polar opposition to a study of culture’s “aesthetic” products; something that concerns a “way of living.” Ian Hunter drives home the same founding principle: “The cultural studies movement conceives of itself as a critique of aesthetics” (Hunter, 1992: 347). While nineteenth-century aesthetics is an easy mark, contemporary aesthetic practice is not. One of the inevitable, but perhaps unintended, consequences of this field-defining anti-aesthetic is that the field looked beyond the very *cultures* and *lived communities* that produce and circulate aesthetic media forms. The anti-aesthetic straw-man imagines that objects are still the chosen target of aesthetic analysis. Yet contemporary aesthetic practice has been theorized in much more inclusive terms, and is comprised and perpetuated by a complex aggregation of social communities and professionals; practitioners that are guided by codified patterns of behavior. Their interactions and cultural commitments together form temporarily consensual alliances that are regularly deemed “the industry.” Even as we grant that cultural studies concerns “ways of living,” scholars must not overlook the fact that “ways of living” also define media professionals and their various industrial subcultures.

This situation suggests several potentially valuable correctives for cultural studies. If the anti-aesthetic helped blind cultural studies to industry, then the incomplete application of new methods in historiography, from works like E.P. Thompson’s *Making of the English Working Class* (1963), caused scholars to only partially apply what it means to study cultures “from the ground up.” Media practitioners also make culture “from the ground up”; and media practitioners can be productively studied “from the ground up.” The material that follows also suggests other shifts in approach: that producers are also audiences; that encoders are also decoders; that industries are also cultures; that practitioners, like audiences, have agency; that commercial practitioners, like audiences, can and do employ strategies of resistance and negotiation. The constellation of behaviors and competencies invoked here – considered broadly under the view of industry as a lived and theory-driven culture – can be usefully considered as forms of critical industrial practice. With decades of scholarship invested in research on the “pro-

duction of culture” – usually (and ironically) considered from the perspective of its impact on subject-users – cultural studies would benefit by considering more fully as well the specificities of “cultures of production.”

Methodologies/Faultlines

I want to convey not only how and why I think the networks do what they do, but a sense of the ambience and texture of the industry's life-as-it-is-lived.

Todd Gitlin (1983: 14), on his method of interviewing and studying Hollywood television

The least satisfying feature of the book is that the material on the program creators reads like network press releases. I know all too well that that most producers are essentially salesmen, liable to begin sentences with “Can I be honest with you on this?” They are also capable of creating their own mythology and spreading the myths with joy.

Lawrence Laurent (1993: 88) criticizes the naïvety displayed by an academic book of interviews with primetime producers

As television critical and cultural studies were formalizing their presence in the academy in the 1980s – by synthesizing feminist, psycho-analytic, and ideological theory with audience and textual analysis – a few books attempted “industrial” interventions into the ways that television is studied (Gitlin, 1983; Newcomb and Alley, 1983; Marc and Thompson, 1992). All three works made available to readers lengthy interviews with scores of primetime television producers, creators, and/or executives. This was novel stuff for a field that had grown out of literary and cinema studies, and imported European “high theory”; but it was also (apparently) suspect material. For to “allow producers to speak for themselves about the making of television art” (Brown, 1984: 53), seemed to give the high-ground back to the very people who were responsible for perpetuating the dominant ideology on television. The books seemed, that is, to be a reversion to older forms of “top-down” formulations of the culture industry. I recall being corrected a few years back, when I remarked on the laudable “thick description” of Gitlin’s work, and the valuable access to “behind-the-scenes” discourses he provided to readers and scholars. Todd Gitlin

merely came to LA, I was told, and “was taken to lunch.” Producers and executives take people to lunch for a living, and do so everyday. That’s their profession. They spin and legitimize their decisions as they talk and socialize, and even socializing is part of the professional craft. According to this view, Gitlin didn’t realize he’d been hustled by self-serving myths.

Granted, perhaps Gitlin *was* “fooled” by his informants, even as sociologist Leo Rosten had been fooled by his informants in 1938 and anthropologist Hortense Powdermaker had been fooled by her Hollywood “insiders” in 1946. Laurent, in the epigraph above, nearly likens the culture of primetime producers to sales in a used car lot, where admissions of “honest” and “from-the-heart” disclosure actually mean just the opposite, and *caveat emptor*. Yet Gitlin himself raised this issue when he remarked that the industry works by “telling” (14) and by “taking meetings.” In fact many of the early efforts to study the industry included evidence and awareness of knowing reflexivity. Powdermaker defended herself in print by noting that she – unlike trade writers, who always seemed to have a job application or screenplay in their back pockets – was not in anyway secretly interested in employment or stature in the industry (Powdermaker, 1950: 3–4; Kent, 1992: 2). Newcomb and Alley, far from simply providing an anthology of un-edited interviews, couched their producer texts within a three-part theoretical model of television as a cultural forum and the participatory, interactive process of industry–audience “liminality.” Although any interview may be problematic, these were not just press releases scammed on earnest outsiders.

Surveying the littered trail of industry studies like these over the past half-century shows a repeated pattern: access granted, stories told, behind-the-scenes knowledge made available, scholar challenged or written off. One did not have to go to Derek Freeman’s indictment of Margaret Mead’s lifework to find the pattern. What began to interest me, however, was not the issue of truth or falsity of informants, or motives, or vested interests, or the “truth” behind the screen and its spin – but the *process* of informing, the workaday *narrative forms*, the interpersonal *rituals* used to establish moral high-ground, the *genres* of disclosure, and the *regulatory structures* that managed critical knowledge about the industry and its players. The fact that the write-offs of scholarly studies were typically so agitated and unequivocal suggested that these scholars had stepped into a minefield; had uncovered, that is, industrial concerns of great importance and investment. I would argue

from this that it is these processes, forms, rituals, genres, and regulatory structures that offer keys to contemporary media industries. These forms of mediation should not be viewed as mere flak for the truth-bound ethnographer digging for some deeper key to industry. As I hope to show in what follows, in many ways these mediations *are* the industry.

Media ethnographies emerged as an antidote to the abstractions of media and cultural studies that had been built on acutely delimited forms of textualism or provocative (but always slightly suspect) theoretical speculations. Ethnography promised scholars more concrete conditions for analysis, “real” versus interpellated or positioned spectators, and engagement with lived identity and class formations rather than purely (or casually) theorized ones. As they flocked to the audience, the new media ethnographers of the 1970s and 1980s characterized other methodologies, either implicitly or explicitly, as forms of “naïve textualism” or speculative and naïve theorization (Morley, 1992: 122). Yet I would argue that the kind of media industrial practices that I have broached here place the “common sense” assumptions of ethnographic method (at work even in ethnographies framed by the complications of post-structuralism) similarly in doubt. “Naïve ethnography,” that is, proves to be as problematic as naïve textualism in accounting for cultures of media production. Having access, and informants, and backstory information on industry may by themselves position the industry scholar as a “text” being written by the industry – for this is the very same relationship that characterizes the industry’s relationship with its vast audiences. After all, in the age of digital and via ubiquitous forms of “multi-purposed” content these audiences also daily seek out critical knowledge about the industry.

To fully engage the deep practices of the media production industry, cultural studies scholars would do well to consider the perspectives of other scholarly traditions of research that are active in the same hunt. Since the 1970s industrial studies have emerged from vastly different intellectual traditions, and have seldom acknowledged any direct linkage to the field of cultural studies per se. Political economists (Schiller, 1999; McChesney, 1999; Balio, 1996), sociologists (Gitlin, 1983; Streeter, 1997), humanities scholars (Newcomb, 1974; Newcomb and Alley, 1983; Marc, 1985), and mode of production historians (Neale and Smith, 1998; Bordwell, Thompson, and Staiger, 1985; Schatz, 1983, 1988; Alvey, 1997; Anderson, 1993) stratify production culture in very different ways; many times from distant vantage points provided by

archives, financial reports and records, trade accounts, and/or on-screen texts and narratives. Even a cursory sojourn through the industry (whether as an ethnographer, journalist, intern, or production assistant) quickly shows the importance of these perspectives and materials. That is, as I have argued elsewhere (Caldwell 1995, 2000, 2001, 2004), it is impossible in the digital era to talk of industrial cultural or aesthetic practices without talking about the stuff of political economists and sociologists: marketing, economics, conglomeration, professional practices, and community formation. Although they are not “determining,” such things now arguably are involved in “authoring” contemporary media texts. Likewise, it is now impossible to talk about marketing or distribution or the global economy without also talking about how industries creatively produce semiotic and aesthetic forms of difference (the traditional province of humanities scholars). And it is impossible to talk about media content without considering the industry cadres involved in demographic, marketing, and audience research (the stuff of quantified social science research).

Part of the resistance to effective analysis of the production culture is due to the fact that the industry (far from being an inert, locatable object for analysis) excels at publicly generating over-arching metaphors, figurative paradigms, and master narratives that constantly frame and re-frame the production industry. The commercial age of digital, for example, now promotes and sanctions three new and resilient master narratives for both industry and culture: conglomeration, globalization, and convergence. While these are posed and hyped pervasively as neat and ostensibly inevitable outcomes, they are far from it. In fact, the more “total” the paradigm, the more the industry must work discursively, narratively, and socially to marshal the heterogeneous aggregation of interests it represents into consensus. In the same manner, there can of course be no credible master narrative for cultural studies research of the production industry as well. But the mode-of-production historians, mentioned earlier, do offer some useful possibilities for making even contemporary industrial fieldwork more viable. The stratified and diversified nature of the classical Hollywood system that Neale and Smith, Schatz, Bordwell, Thompson and Staiger, Anderson, and others detail is *not* the same system as contemporary transnational media conglomeration, but there are a number of points of continuity and congruence alongside the cultural and industrial breaks that have occurred over the past five decades. Studio system and mode-of-production studies (although historical rather than contemporary)

provide more holistic models of interaction, along with terms and perspectives from which the contemporary mediascape can be engaged and better understood. Yes, print and moving image archival sources, trade and professional publications and codes, studio structures, labor practices, marketing, and distribution and professional rituals shore up these histories, but such things also inevitably inform the decisions of contemporary practitioners, whether they are informants, interview subjects, or objects of workplace participant observation. Ignoring the logic of such factors is a failing that contemporary cultural studies of the production industry need not make.

Since the 1990s a series of new works suggest that a broader-based dissatisfaction with the reception/consumption bias in cultural studies has emerged. Several books on television provide potential models for the analysis of production culture. In *Watching Race* (1995), Herman Gray further developed and situated the interviewing mode of Newcomb and Alley, Marc, and Gitlin by integrating the insights of producers across his critical, theoretical, and textual readings of racial formation in American television. Jostein Gripsrud's *The Dynasty Years* (1995) drew both from interviews with producers of the American primetime soap series and from personnel in the Norwegian television industry that programmed the series as components of his transnational study (the series in international distribution), and for his evaluation of critical theoretical practices in the field. Julie D'Acci's *Defining Women* (1994) represents a model for television scholarship, as it adds access to the development process and producers' meetings, and participant observation to a wider discussion of gender politics in American culture of the 1980s, and the logic of feminism for primetime programmers. Whereas D'Acci examines these dimensions in the rise and fall of a single series, Jane Shattuc's *The Talking Cure* (1997) uses many of the same methods – interviews, access to producers' meetings, site observations, and an emphasis on the construction of femininity – as a way of clarifying insights from a vast textual sample of an entire genre: daytime talk and tabloid television of the 1990s. Barry Dornfeld's *Producing Public Television* (1998) adds a dimension to this emerging oeuvre of industry studies given that he served two simultaneous roles in the production of the series: he was both an academic researcher for the producers and a production assistant for the production company. This dual role was criticized as counter-productive and possibly self-defeating by some scholars (see, for example, Curtin, 2000), but it raises again the issue broached earlier in this essay: how does access and

insider knowledge either enhance or compromise analysis? Justine Cassell and Henry Jenkins' *From Barbie to Mortal Kombat* (1998) creates a multi-authored work on gender and experience in computer games, and features in-depth interviews with professional computer game developers. Many of the more recent studies and the methodologies that underpin them are listed in Table 5.1.

This brief summary indicates just how important three impulses have become in recent studies of production culture: first, to provide space for producers to "speak for themselves" (via interviews or transcripts); secondly, to integrate more "empirical" forms of fieldwork of into critical cultural analysis (site observation, audience participation); and thirdly, to maintain reflexivity and critical distance in analysis. Some of the writers collect industrial data and critically integrate it from critical positions outside of the industry (Gray, D'Acci, Shattuc). Others work to cooperatively author accounts by allowing informants/practitioners to have some say over the final form of the study (Dornfeld). Unlike some earlier studies, all of the studies cited here would, I believe (because of various forms of reflexivity and disclosure), fulfill the kinds of parameters that Seiter (1999) has articulated for "situated ethnographies." Yet what I find most interesting in this group is the extent to which site access usually depends upon a (high-level) producer or executive contact (essentially a corporate gate-keeper), a situation that inevitably raises the issue of how much and to what extent the researcher is beholden to that producer. It is worth considering more closely two of the studies in this regard, *Making and Selling Culture*, and *From Barbie to Mortal Kombat*. Both books are multi-authored and multi-vocal, and both books involved inviting or luring key figures from their respective producing cultures (industrial spaces) to academic spaces and symposia. What results are much livelier forms of disclosure, avowal and disavowal, than one might find in an industrial space. Elizabeth Traube (1996) and Michael Curtin's (1996) critical summaries are particularly good at placing the kind of animated dialog and divergent talk that ensues at these university forums into meaningful cultural and political-economic contexts respectively. I think what is particularly good about the above studies is the way they all attempt to "triangulate" industrial analysis from several discrete methodologies, and the fact that each of the scholars is adept at textual analysis.

One way to build on these works is to find ways to gain access to industry other than the executive or "producer's gate" (which inevitably brings with it top-down perspectives and pressures). In many

Table 5.1 Recent production culture studies and their methodologies

<i>Recent production culture studies</i>	<i>Integrated methodologies</i>
<i>The Producer's Medium</i> (1983)	Interviews framed by theoretical introduction and critical essays used to comment on interviews.
<i>Designing Women</i> (1994)	Site observation and practitioner interviews in study of cultural construction of feminism in programming.
<i>Watching Race</i> (1995)	Interviews integrated into societal/ industrial study of racial construction as programming strategy.
<i>Televisuality</i> (1995)	Observation of technical and production practice integrated with textual and cultural analysis of industry.
<i>Dynasty Years</i> (1995)	Practitioner interviews as background in transnational media study and critique of theory.
<i>Making and Selling Culture</i> (1996)	Practitioner interviews in academic space, interposed with critical texts from academic colloquium.
<i>The Talking Cure</i> (1997)	Site observation and practitioner interviews integrated with extensive textual analysis of genre.
<i>Producing Public Television</i> (1997)	Ethnographer as practitioner in industrial space. Participatory authoring with company oversight of account.
<i>Barbie to Mortal Kombat</i> (1998)	Practitioner interviews in academic space, interposed with academic texts from symposium.
<i>Latinos, inc.</i> (2001) ^a	Ethnographer in commercial, advertising sphere, tied to critical race theory and transnational economics.

Table 5.1 Continued

<i>Recent production culture studies</i>	<i>Integrated methodologies</i>
<i>Consuming Youth</i> (2003) ^b	Scholar's multiple roles include community worker, ethnographer, and alternative media production.
<i>The Other Woman</i> (2005) ^c	Scholar integrates "below-the-line" interviews, with labor/gender analysis, and imaginative workshops.

a See Arlene Davila, *Latinos, inc.: The Making of a People* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

b See Vicki Mayer, *Consuming Youth, Producing Dreams* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003).

c See Miranda Banks, "The Other Woman: Gendered Production Work and the Female Action Hero," dissertation, UCLA, 2005.

cases the "below-the-line" crafts, professional associations, and ancillary work-spaces provide a better – or at least different – understanding of the complex fabric of the production culture. A second way to build on these recent developments in industrial scholarship is to consider forms other than the word-driven rhetorical interview for analysis. Practitioner artifacts, technologies, spatial utilization, professional practices, studio design schemes, and workplace organization all help break the interview-centric predilection of critical scholars seeking access. Third and finally, enough industrial work has been completed that scholars would benefit from "comparative" ethnographic and workplace studies. For example, while both Shattuc and D'Acci examine some of the same broad issues, they do so from very different genres, practitioners, and dayparts; and both of these "worlds of production" are vastly different from the "public intellectual" aspirations of Dornfeld's PBS producers and academic researchers. Likewise, Ohmann and Traube reveal a far more skeptical and/or contentious interchange between the high-end film and television producers and academics in their project, than Cassell and Jenkins reveal in their interchanges between computer game developers and critical academics. Why is this? What are the institutional differences between the videogame world and motion pictures that encourages differing valuations of

critical knowledge? All three of these broad issues (forms of access and identification, forms of evidence and data, and reflexive meta-critical analyses of industrial study as a field) inform my proposal that follows for research on “critical production practice.”

Some very good work on the media production culture has also emerged from outside of film and television studies. This work helps inform the analysis that follows, and it is to this work that production culture studies might profitably look. Considering research on “non-media” workplace cultures, that is, allows one to mitigate the institutional inertia that has built up within the disciplines of both film mode-of-production studies and British cultural studies. Research on the social construction of scientific practice and the “actor-network” theory (Latour, 1986) on workplace “cultures of computing” by communications technology scholars (Starr, 1995), on AI, computational technologies and human experience (Agre, 1997), on “situated” and “distributed cognition” (Clancey, 1997), on regional and comparative studies of high technological industries (Scott, 1988, 1993; Scott and Soja, 1996), and on aesthetic and cultural geographies and public policy (Storper and Salas, 1997; Moloch, 1996) offer particularly good models that might profitably inform a film/television production culture researcher. Together such projects suggest ways to approach the culture industry *on terms other than its own – even as one acknowledges fully the extent and force of industrial critical figuration*. I will return to these possibilities in the pages that follow.

Critical Industrial Practice

Having been a marketing analyst in Hollywood before becoming an academic professional, Justin Wyatt is especially well qualified to examine the rise and dominance of high concept filmmaking in Hollywood.

Tim Coleman (1995: 653) on the “insider” authenticity of “outsider” academic Justin Wyatt (1994)

He has always worshipped the people about whom he has written. . . . After interviewing Dawn Steel in her office, he is still so transfixed that he barely got home without hyperventilating; she has the intensity of a star.

Nicholas Kent (1992: 2) on the “outsider” inclinations of “insider” veteran trade writer Paul Rosenfield

Many studies of production culture, including those cited above, raise the issue of authorial identity vis-à-vis the industry. Sometimes this is done via self-disclosure (the author an “insider” or “outsider”). At other times industrial studies are criticized for lofting generalizations from the outside (the academic as amateur or naïve). Some industrial accounts are taken to task as missives from the “sour-grapes” genre, which account for their skewed perspectives (yes, an insider, perhaps, but with an axe to grind). Other accounts are lashed – in an industry noted for its obsession with accelerated change, cyclical fashions, ageism, and twentysomething management trainees – for their obsolescence (the author as over-the-hill and out-of-touch, an obsolete and now-marginalized “player”). These forms of disclosures and outings are, of course, obligatory in modern, post-structuralist anthropological writing as well, which requires reflexivity in method and text (Clifford and Marcus). But such self- and othered-disclosures are also part and parcel of Hollywood – the way that wannabes, and up-and-comers work cocktail parties and receptions, or hustle agents or producers to take meetings. The scholar may disclose (as an effort at authenticity or legitimacy) the presence of his or her own media experience and “credits” or not. The industrial informant on the other hand – inevitably well-versed in scanning name-tags while working a room or a market in order to quickly move and gauge the mobility-potential of any contact – will also consider the value that this interrogator may have for their own career or fortunes. While the “any news is good news” notion does not satisfactorily explain informant requests to go “off-record,” or threats made to deny disclosures after interviews, industrial informants know that scholars now ply their wares on an extensive, web-like landscape of meta-media discourse, one that includes many of the same publishing and public forums frequented by their own marketing departments.

Because insider knowledge is *always* managed, because spin and narrativization define and couch any industrial disclosure, and because researcher–practitioner contacts are always marked by symbiotic tensions over authenticity and advantage, cultural studies must move beyond restrictive and bounded forms of textualism *and* ethnography. The layers of discursive and semiotic management at work in the culture of production mean that researchers would benefit by shifting emphasis to what I term the contemporary *industry’s* “*deep*” *texts, rituals, and spaces*. My aim in this section is to find and suggest concrete ways by which cultural studies can reconsider itself in the face of an

Table 5.2 Critical industrial practices

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- 1 **Deep Texts** (tools, technologies, artifacts, icons)
 - 2 **Emic Interpretations** (industrial narratives, genres, self-portraits)
 - 3 **Critical Industrial Geographies** (sanctums, borderlands, contact zones)
 - 4 **Liminal Industrial Rituals** (mentoring, pitching, summits, retreats, trades, mergers/marriages, divestitures/divorces)
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industry that is increasingly preoccupied with “*embedded*” forms of critical and cultural analysis.

1 Deep texts (tools, technologies, artifacts)

Most cameramen are not used to talking without a tool in their hands . . . One way or another (Willis) has tamed his tools . . . He talks like a lion tamer – eyes wary, whip in hand, always sensing the animal (the film emulsion) sensing him.

DP [Director of Photography] Gordon Willis’ primal tool talk (McDonough, 1985: 68)

When he speaks of the “literature of light”, shoptalk turns lyrical. His interview is impassioned, semi-mystical; you can smell the steam rising from his neglected plate of pasta.

DP Vittorio Storaro’s theorizations on cinematography (McDonough, 1985: 69)

How do material objects in the production culture convey meaning? How do practitioners deploy and rationalize their artifacts and tools? Comprehensive answers to these questions, and an exhaustive account of critical industrial practice in the production culture is, of course, beyond the scope of this chapter. I would like, however, to introduce symptomatic examples in each of the four parts of this model (a framework that delineates material, narrative, critical, and ritualistic forms of “embedded knowledge”). The first strata in this scheme – “deep texts” – includes a variety of contemporary material artifacts, including: (1) production tools; (2) user-iconographies (imagery and texts that manage use); and (3) cultural technical-encasements (like demo tapes).

1(a) *Technical Encasements*. In reaction to the totalizing theories of the “cinematic apparatus” in the 1970s (Baudry, 1974; Comolli, 1986), critical studies scholars have largely abandoned or de-emphasized

studies of production technologies. Yet local technologies, and the specific uses to which they are put, suggest a range of embedded cultural investments. I would like to reopen questions of the technical apparatus, not as an “ideological” “one-size-fits-all” straightjacket, but as a form of *material* critical and cultural practice. Here I take as models the work of both Clifford Geertz and Sally Hacker. Geertz (1985: 4) raises the possibility of viewing media machines as forms of embedded knowledge: “Sorting through the machinery of distant ideas, the shapes of knowledge are always ineluctable, local, indivisible from their instruments and their encasements.” Hacker (1990: 213) suggests how the design and use of machines should be seen as part of an entire network of social relations and identity: “Some think that technology refers merely to machinery (as sexuality might refer to genitals), while others insist it means the entire set of social relations within which the machinery is designed, developed, and used.”

Although seldom considered in the same context, issues of both sexual identity and political economy animate the world of contemporary film/television production technology and practice in workaday ways. My interest in how such factors inform and regulate the production community and its technical culture follows from a set of basic assumptions. First, although far from being determining or causal, industrial and institutional relations do in fact work to predispose and cultivate specific kinds of screen experience through widely circulated promotional icons and Geertzian technical “encasements” (machine artifacts that serve as “local” forms of knowledge). Secondly, industrial iconography – secondary representational texts (demo tapes, editorial photographic illustrations, photographs of machines) – function in the proprietary world of television and new media to conceptualize technologies, to normalize specific user interfaces, and to invest in and privilege certain modes of production. Finally, the “machines” of the technical culture can also be viewed in a sociological sense as “machineries for status ranking.” Locked in a symbolic tension with eroticism (at least since the Neolithic era according to Hacker), technologies have been used to gender, organize, and maintain relations of power in society. The technical cultures of film, television, and new media are simply among the flashiest and most adept at leveraging mere media machines into social machineries of status, power, and subordination. They are also, however, social worlds managed by public performances of sentiment and heart; group behaviors that critical theorists and political economists tend to ignore.

Television's current technical practice – from highly fluid and mobile stylistics in cinematography to painterly and montage work in digital effects (fx) – is now marked by the accelerated development of new technologies across the full range of production uses. Mapping this kind of technical practice along the registers that Geertz and Hacker propose – as social and psychic geographies – raises several general questions. Is there, for example, a meaningful relationship between the micro-geographies of the *production* culture – now geared to a “probe aesthetics” that is characteristically invasive and immersive – and the “pipeline”-obsessed “push” programming now championed in electronic media *distribution*? Secondly, what social and political-economic factors might help explain the recent shift in technical and production practice toward “probe aesthetics” and “push programming”? The general preoccupation by media cultural studies with audience pleasures and identities (to the exclusion of industrial ones) can only be justified if one disregards the flood of discourses that introduce and greet each new media technology on- and off-screen today. It seems time, that is, to reconsider media machineries as both highly privileged and socially instrumental cultural and psychological constructions as well. So to Patricia Mellencamp's (1992) thesis about television (as now imbricated in the repetition and contradiction-induced compulsive “anxieties” of consumer culture), I want to raise the issue of the social psychology of industry – as it is evident in the stressed, and compulsive social practices of a very “anxious” culture of production. To Lynne Joyrich's (1997: 69–98) theorization from screen form and spectatorship of “critical and textual hypermasculinity” I'd like to suggest, in the section that follows, two other kinds of performance: “industrial and technical hypermasculinity.”

1(b) *Iconographic User-Manuals*. The introduction of new production tools has upset traditional models of work and crew relations. It has also, I would argue, exacerbated the sense of uncertainty that has historically defined the production culture (at least since the advent of subcontracting as a governing principle). In this regard, it is worth considering more closely the nature of specific technical encasements via the iconographic practices that accompany the technologies. First, an entire genre of ancillary video production circulates in and around the production world in the form of “demo tapes”; these are calling cards, if you will, used to snag projects, make bids, sell equipment, and pitch services. Every DP, editor, and effects artist worth his or her salt hawks these, as do the specialty production boutiques that

offer individual services, looks, and stylistic sensibilities. If the whole point is to individuate and differentiate, then these demo tapes are crucial forms of currency in a system of exchange that has little time for the rituals of pre-electronic business: face-to-face meetings or the patient screening and review of complete sample works.

Demo tapes, however, are more than just advertisements that connect unique looks to names. They are also “primers” of new videographic technique; “user-guides” that explicate stylistic options for each new type of production technology; and “lexicons” that schematize and conjecture on meanings and uses. Demo tapes, at least in the sense that scholars like Andrew (1976), Agre (1997), Clancey (1997), Stam et al. (1992: 123), and Hayward (1996: 380–4) have defined “theory,” are essentially workaday forms of theorization about the medium. As practitioners jockey for position and compete for projects they also circulate knowledge and figurative analogies about stylistics in a semiotic sense. Demo tapes show the industry constantly speaking to itself; boasting about stylistic prowess even as demo producers struggle to legitimize themselves. Leverage depends on establishing a consciousness of “influence” among practitioners, and each new demo tape that circulates reacts to those that are already stacked in producers’ offices and post-production suites. The business and merger “synergies” that litter the trades (e.g., project-specific linkages between Disney, PDI, Pixar, ILM, etc.) really mirror the atomization and “boutique” individuation that now rules the production world as a whole. Demo tapes, in effect, codify corporations and individuals as synergistic “chunks.”

Structural changes in the corporate world make demo tapes far more pervasive in the industry today than they were two decades ago. This has as much to do with the important role that the commercial advertising industry has had on television as anything else. Commercial spot production along with music television, as I have argued elsewhere (1995), has “taught” network television in more ways than one: it is a hungry proving ground that rewards new, risk-taking production talent; it provides *de facto* research-and-development of new production technique and technologies; and it has taught television to conceptualize in stylistically intense short-form segments, all this even as it works to “de-narrativize” much that issues from the multi-channel spectrum. The demo tape is part of the lingua franca that facilitates these levels of exchange.

1(c) *Cultural Technical Encasements: the Military–Identity Complex*. Both historical precedence and new manifestations in contemporary practice

predispose the mode of Hollywood television production to characterizations of “militaristic” masquerade. The marshaling of crew and cast on soundstage or location by autocratic directors, at least since Eric von Stroheim, has been a legendary part of the gloss on Hollywood. Consider the ways that the production industry continues to militarize its professional rituals and identities: Location shooting literally involves rapid mobilization, and the occupation of territories in submissive neighborhoods. Armed guards cordon off high security areas. Studio film and television carries its own war-like semiotic, housed as it is behind fortress-like walls with armed sentries. Even as the vertical structure of labor relations map a command-and-control scheme on the creatives, the rhetoric of those in the hierarchy suggests hardened sacrifice. DPs, for example, talk proudly of “coming up through the ranks.” Evidence of a semiotic “war-footing” is everywhere. Militaristic production tropes stand as the most aggressive symbolic figures for claiming cultural space, for defining the production enterprise, and for establishing a spatial relationship and logic between the production cadres on the one hand and the world and its filmic subjects on the other. This symbolic marshaling is encased both in machines, and announced in secondary promotional theorizations.

For Panavision, one of the leading suppliers of motion picture technology for primetime television and film, production *is* war. Panavision marketed its prowess in 1993 by reference to the bloody Iwo-Jima flag raising in World War II.² The production struggle in this icon is waged in a completely homosocial space by anonymous, hardened bodies and teamwork. Feature film origination on Panavision evokes primetime. Marshaling the Panavision “way” (a dedicated team struggle, by a highly competent technical cadre, doing it the “hard way”) flags cinematic programming above other, more mundane, video forms. Even for non-Panavision users – journeymen and assistants in camera departments everywhere – the imagery aims to stroke a sense of professional pride; a battle cry for quality. *Semper Fi* Panavision.

Field production, and electronic news gathering – more like search-and-destroy missions – offer smaller tactical efforts than 35mm film origination. Yet video equipment manufacturers sell the process, and the practitioners, on the use of heavy armor. Sony mounted its Betacam SX campaign with explicit linkage to military field armor, boasting that Sony offered “the best weapon in the field.” High technology electronics, here, in the age of smart weaponry, are offered with the “go-anywhere” portability of all-terrain warfare. Firepower tropes

extend from production field tactics to the bunkered world of the post-production suite, as well. Quantum marketed its heavyweight hard drives (actually very small metal boxes used in non-linear editing systems) as large-scale incendiary threats. This tableau – a fantasy stretch of the corporate technical community – is informed by both the big-screen production values of an action-pic, and the (crash-prone, disk-error) iconography of violent carnage. Beneath its breath, Quantum seems to intone: “We are not the lightweight keepers of digital data that we may seem.”

Wescam is a diversified production technology company that packages the variants of its “projectile eye” for features, for primetime, for reality shows, and for local news. It markets its gyroscopically controlled airborne cameras with tropes more typical of an airborne assault than simply descriptions of axis movements and “coverage.” Consider the helpful, dystopian, critical rhetoric in its demo tape: “The city . . . at night . . . exciting . . . a dark haven for criminals . . . infrared surveillance from 3,000 meters above earth.” From the symbolic construction of electronic culture as a Darwinian landscape, to the call to master and mount the space with immersive technologies, probes, and ocular projectiles, comes the explicit and unabashed call-to-arms of those that rent and sell the tools and weapons like Wescam. Militarism still serves as the time-honored trigger to corporate media success, studio reputation, and market dominance. Acute representations of gender are also ground up in the militarized/masculinized enclave of the technical culture.

2 *Emic interpretive frames (industrial narratives, genres, self-portraits)*

A poor Jewish boy growing up in Texas, Spelling was regularly beaten up until he had a nervous breakdown at age nine. That gave him the opportunity to read, which he says led directly to a career in television. Poor childhood out of the way, Spelling takes a stab at just how rich he is today.

Aaron Spelling’s “life story by justification” (Cooper, 1996: 1873)

In jaunty Tom-Swift prose, Walker writes a careening, gee-whiz, one-after-another narrative. Here he is warming to the story of his 1919 expedition to the wilds of Northern Canada . . .

DP Joseph Walker’s narrative of technological development (McDonough, 1985: 69)

Industrial knowledge is regularly narrativized and generically framed in accounts like the ones cited above. The “big” public statements in memoirs and tell-alls drag out the usual narrative-structure suspects: Horatio Alger, Tom Swift, rags-to-riches, “dues-paying” sojourn-in-the-wilderness-before-making-it, phoenix-from-the-ashes (or -rehab or -studio layoff), score-settling revenge, or primal scream therapy. Far more ubiquitous than these master genre arcs is the workaday deployment of anecdotal exchange. To some degree quantification in the form of box-office, ratings, and revenues does play a role in promotional narratives and attributions of status, but the authenticity of any “players” is established not simply through the accounting department’s numbers, but rhetorically, through a process of storytelling, one involving short-form anecdotal “chunks.” “Pitching” (the process of distilling feature-length narratives to 2–3 punchy sentences) is, after all, what film/TV practitioners must do to land projects, agents, gigs, and development deals. The “pitch aesthetic” (Caldwell, 2004: 57–9), that is, is far more than a summary device used in the world of screenwriting and producing. Anecdotes set the tone of meetings, mark territory and credibility and status in the pecking order, and establish common ground for “deals” before the “suits” are brought in to finalize legal contracts in print.

Examining the short- and long-form narratives that circulate around production practice provides what linguist Kenneth Pike (1954) would refer to as an “-emic” (internal or subject) rather than “-etic” (external or analyst) understanding of such practices (as in the difference between “phonemic” and “phonetic”). Sociologists would refer to this as a focus on meaning inside the group, as the “ethno-logic” of the social subjects being studied. This subject-centered logic is, of course, something that anthropologists have nearly always valued. In the production culture, narrative provides keys to the ethno-logic of media practitioners, and does so in ways that conscious disclosures by “indigenes” or “informants” cannot. Consider how the following secondary accounts quickly de-construct the narrative structure and meaning of one recent, and grandiose, industrial summa by an entertainment writer:

It will come across rather like a collection of anecdotes on index-cards ... Again and again Biskind will tell a story: x fires or curses at or beats up or pulls a gun on or bankrupts or sodomizes y. And then will follow his little disclaimer: “x has no memory of the event.” Or,

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sometimes, “y has no memory of this event.” At times this may literally be true, since all the major figures in this history seem to have been drugged up to the frontal lobe most of the time. (narrative structure of Biskind’s *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* [Bowman, 1998: 78])

Biskind can work without acknowledgment from his tightly-wound-Eastern-Jews-coming-undone-in-California template. (ethnic genre definition of industry in Biskind’s tell-all trade history [Kent 1998: 65])

Academic industrial research – as my earlier survey of the diverse academic disciplines that pursue it suggests – produces results that are sometimes difficult to generalize from. “Trade” publications (along with memoirs, autobiographies, and “behind the scenes” looks), on the other hand, suggest just the opposite, that the industry is generalizable, and do so in an overdetermined way. Trade narratives also serve to promote and validate the “aura” and notion of an elite space inside the locked worlds of Universal, Time-Warner, and Spelling. The relative believability of the inner-space constructed in such texts functions to anoint and authenticate such accounts. Anecdotal practices and autobiographical accounts tend to shift the focus on production culture from the spatialized world of industrial relations to the temporal logic (and narrative arc) of the authoring personality. While such tales establish the myth of a player’s value based on cross-corporation human/career development and potential, such accomplishment is usually situated within an off-limits space (the corner executive office, parties, the studio lot at Sony, etc.).

Emic self-interpretations also inform industrial visual iconographies. Less narrative arcs or plots than self-conscious depictions of an ideal or “alternate world” (one prerequisite for narrative), visual tableaux in equipment ads and trade promotions key the reader/viewer into favored practitioner interpretations. There is, for example, an acute investment in “working” identity and disclosure even in corporate production logos and brands. Many of these play upon a favored trope: that the age of digital and the cyber-production artist is also, somehow, like the industrial age of the manual worker. An array of corporate production logos – from the Film Worker’s, Serious Robots, and Horizons – all utilize the same rock-chiseled, primitive effect: chunky production man-locked-in-geometric-form. The Horizons company brands itself, for example, as chiseled-man holding planet. The Modern Digital

company leaves no doubt as to the implications of this iconographic trend. Its corporate promotion for computer imaging apes the (apparently?) allied task of 1930s-era steel construction workers. The WPA stock footage company also goes retro. It represents itself in Stalinist-inspired social realism: as a well-muscled foundry worker pounding steel with a sledge and anvil. The Center City Film/Video company uses a similar 1930s graphic to show itself as King-Kong like; as both technically strong, and (somehow) “sensitive.” Other trades show video effects editors, locked into head-gear (à la *Clockwork Orange*) as slaved worker-machines. The digital audio company Sonic Foundry, in both its logos and trade promotions, builds its corporate image around the primordial molten magma and flying sparks of a steel-mill and forge.

What traits do these icons share? A tremendous urge to physicalize a creative task that has become essentially cerebral. But why? There is, then, a persistent conceptual compensation at work here, given the actual task of pushing buttons or stylus. But lest we denigrate the fantasies of concrete productivity here (in a world that produces only “symbolic” or entertainment capital), it is important to note that these practices also evidence a desperate affirmation, and legitimacy, of the workers’ tasks. Even if their final product is purely visual or fleeting, it is nevertheless produced by real human labor.

The desperate attempt to affirm digital work-for-hire as somehow concrete, muscular, and productive – and as somehow involving sweat and sinew – has a darker side as well. Much of the iconography evokes “performance anxieties” and physical masochism. A whole series of current production and technical images suggest that this iconography is produced for an “anxious” industry; one fueled by masculinist anxieties. In one want-ad campaign in the technical trades, for example, multinational giant Sony solicits their vision of the engineer of the future: a Caucasian, cyberman lost in angst-meditation. Illustrated technical advertisements, for example, depict single male figures, pulling and twisting frames, or – under headline imperatives that bark: “Get Real” – being propelled at high speed. One post-production house calmly boasts that “We can do anything”; a capacity ironically illustrated by a classical engraving of a man locked into a Rube Goldbergesque torture contraption. The Bogen company launched the marketing campaign for its “Avenger Grip Equipment” using photos of raging men on steroids, exerting extreme physical pressure in an attempt to destroy the product. Other companies exploit Edward Muybridge’s sequence photographic studies to draw analogies between their performance as

media artisans, and the semi-nude men trapped in Muybridge's experimental cages. The fat and traumatized bodies of men people other technical ads. One shows a "before" picture of a grotesque, fleshy, male body, followed by an ironic, hand-washing, company "after": "We won't promise you . . ." Anxiety, isolation, stress, and rage permeate explicit representations of production work and products.

However, contemporary industrial iconography is not limited to masculine physical anxieties and mental stress. There is also a recurrent genre in the technical trades that exploits masochism and mutilation in order to explain the production task. Since all of the icons, images, and discourses that I am examining are forms of self-representation, this tendency to symbolic self-mutilation is worth considering in more detail. In what is surely a strange marquee for corporate promotion, the operative iconographic truisms at work here are violence and bodily pain. Non-linear hard-drive manufacturer Quantum symbolizes its technical capacities in full-color spreads of incendiary apocalypse that hurtle male victim-bodies through the air. Trades like *Digital Video* featured articles mouthing fairly common clichés from production trade shows: "Serial Ports on Steroids." Such references to production gear and testosterone are illustrated with editorial images celebrating sado-masochism: men in cable-choked bondage, with pectorals and jugular veins bulging. The S&M genre runs a gamut of variations, with strapped-down and tortured production boys loaded to the gills with logistical paraphernalia and technology. The Toronto Film Commission lures work north of the border with the torqued body and pavement-placed head of a wannabe-director scouting with a viewfinder. Micropolis hawks its products by showcasing a trapped geek-boy. Qualcomm marketed itself in 1997–98 with huge, dismembered and distorted eyeballs. Non-linear giant Avid keyed its marketing campaign for the new Xpress with the promise "Xpress yourself," against which young male bodies (in mismatched primary-colored plaids) torque and twist in airborne trauma. The Sound Forge company further developed the "launched" male body trope by thrusting its model-man through the plastered walls of its illustrated masonry studio. While the projectile-bodies of Avid and Sound Forge evoke an extreme and deadly pain (ostensibly bordering on production pleasure), other corporations celebrate and extend the trope temporally as torture. Copy for the digital device Houdini, for example, verbally touted its "flexibility," but showed off such prowess by twisting the legs and arms of its user into impossible (and dislocat-

ing) configurations behind his head and back. Heavyweight Boss Studios made sure the torture/mutilation genre carried its own explicit critical interpretation. Their user-artist holds high-voltage electrodes to either side of his balding and aging skull; promising to “jump-start” the creative process through suicide by electrocution. An editorial illustration in *New Media* cracked the male skull open even further, to show creative shots (applications) exiting the brain’s gray matter into the bloodless world of the atmosphere. Performance anxieties, compulsive work-habits, and stress in the lower levels of the technical iconography here face a far less ambivalent but no less recurrent obsession. Male masochism and bodily mutilation now apparently stand as accepted public symbols of technical creativity and corporate advantage.

An overdetermined performance of identity pervades these industrial discourses, technical encasements, icons, and promotional rituals mentioned here. Such practices ratchet up symbolic aggression, hypermasculinity, and the tortured male body as keys to understanding the technical demands of the production enterprise. Since these practices are located in industry trades and technical literature, this kind of performativity functions less as an attempt to persuade the culture at large (viewers, spectators, or consumers), than as a way in which the industrial community speaks to itself; makes sense of itself; critically positions itself and members of the tribe.

An aesthetic of force seems to drive contemporary production practice. On the one hand, “probe technologies” (Wescam, Steadicam, jib-arms, fiber-optic finger lenses, etc.) are identified with the mode of cinematic television (primetime and commercial production) and arise out of what many might still deem the “old-boys” network of Hollywood television production. In this milieu, bankable production value is now tied to an aesthetic of invasive spatial practice, and force; typically rendered or depicted as if in real locations and landscapes and stages; typically produced by groups of laborers working in dedicated, hierarchical teams. Digital and videographic television, on the other hand, stands as a kind of “new-boys network”; a homage to the myth of the isolated male artist locked to his computer-imaging workstation. His anxiety with work, and physical pain, is visualized as a component of his isolation; and a key to his creativity. The trope of the long-suffering male artist finds in the digital age an update: the surging, torquing, self-mutilating – but always hip – artist on electronic steroids.

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3 Critical industrial geographies (sanctums, borderlands, contact zones)

My field techniques had some similarities to and some differences from those I had used on an island in the Southwest Pacific . . . I took the inhabitants of Hollywood and the South Seas seriously, and this was pleasing to both.

Anthropologist Powdermaker (1950: 3–4) on studying the natives of Hollywood

Travel for (the director) becomes an adventure that no tourist can buy. Wherever he goes, he becomes involved with the natives at the locations.

TV Commercial Director Ben Gradus on contact with non-professional “natives” (Gradus, 1981: 4)

It may come as a surprise to some that “distanciation” and analytical “estrangement” are cultivated not only by critical theorists and social scientists (like Brecht and Powdermaker) but also by practitioners (like TV director Ben Gradus). Of course, the practice of distancing – of making the locals strange and exotic – is not just about attributing interpersonal *identities* to those on the outside of the respective professional circles of either the anthropologist or director. The practice seems also to reinforce an institutionalization of *space*. Following the work of Lefebvre (1984), Foucault (1977, 1979), and Soja (1989), these industrial geographic predilections provide keys to the play of power and pleasure in the production culture as well.

Insides, Outsides, Access, Borderlands. Because the corporate sphere is proprietary, access for research has generally been difficult to achieve, and scholarship frequently suspect because of the vested interests that manage access. A graded hierarchy of access has emerged along practitioner caste lines. Since the production culture is fueled by socioprofessional “networking” relationships among and between these castes, space is constructed in socially symbolic ways. Consider the spatial metaphors that inform both sociological and industry accounts:

Hollywood is comprised of three concentric circles. The largest circle embraces all of the thirty thousand movie workers and movie makers; the middle circle encompasses the movie makers alone (“the movie colony”), the producers, actors, directors, and writers who participate in Hollywood’s social and professional life; and the smallest circle, the one

at the center of power and prestige, encloses the movie elite, some two hundred and fifty persons ... (sociologist Leo Rosten's [1941: 33] cultural geography: the concentric space of the Hollywood "colony")

Club Rule Fifteen: To succeed in the club and to last, you need more than one dimension. (trade writer Paul Rosenfield's [Kent, 1992: 2] geography: the rule-governed, limited access "club")

Anthropologist Powdermaker viewed Hollywood as an "island," sociologist Rosten viewed Hollywood as a "colony," and trade writer Rosenfield viewed Hollywood as a "club." These diverse paradigms perhaps make sense given the roots that inform each analysis: respectively, ethnography, sociology and economics, and gossip journalism. Despite the differences dramatized between the approaches – Professor Rosten's supporters savaged Professor Powdermaker in academic journals (Bierstadt, 1951: 124; Raglan, 1952: 44); and competing show-biz writers ripped Rosenfield in print (Kent, 1992: 2) – all three paradigms are very much alike in terms of their formulations of and dependence upon notions of space. Island, colony, and club are, that is, all spatialized social phenomena, bounded and cut-off from surrounding groups and cultures. All three metaphors, furthermore, heighten the importance of tropes of interiority, the center, and the (island/colony/club) elite. By extension, all three metaphors also thereby invest significance into: (1) possibilities for access into these bounded worlds; and (2) travel between the regulated zones, from outside to inside. I would argue that this kind of spatiality actually dominates many workplace, industry, and professional practices today as well. But while many industry chroniclers and analysts perpetuate these same spatial metaphors, most such accounts (including these three) "say very little" (Rosten, 1941: 33) about the ubiquitous worlds of media production work (the "outer circles") in order to expose the social significance of the elites, the powerful, and the "players" (of the "inner circle"). While this emphasis may have made some sense during the studio era in film, and the network era in American television, it misses the mark and fails to account for the culture of production in the age of multi-media and mergers. The outer rings of the concentric paradigm – the "below-the-line" crafts, unions, digital boutiques, manufacturers, dot-com alliances, and socioprofessional interactions – make available to scholars provocative avenues of research into contemporary technological, cultural, and economic changes. All sorts of cultural practices – the performance of identity,

desire, hybridity, alterity, resistance, negotiation, and sexual politics (the traditional foci of cultural studies) – are daily “acted-out” in these outer and intermediate zones of the production culture.

In arguing this approach, I build on and respond to the important, recent work of both Nick Couldry (2000a), and Anna McCarthy (2001), on media space. Couldry is particularly good at demonstrating the flaws of postmodern theory, which tended in figures like Baudrillard (1983), to “erase” space as a meaningful category. A close examination of the deep spatial texts from industry that I’ve referred to above underscores, to use Couldry’s terms, media’s “complexification” – rather than “erasure” – of space as a meaningful category. Far from offering mere simulations, industrial rituals and demo tapes betray an obsession with space and place, often reinforcing the notion that production spaces are physical, tangible, robust, and demanding. Whereas Couldry (2000b) elaborates the physical boundaries, symbolic boundaries, edges, and journeys by lay audiences to and from industrial space, I take as my focus the faux- and modified public and private spheres that are constructed for professional community members “inside” those boundaries and edges. McCarthy’s work, in turn, serves to unseat the traditional privilege given the domestic sphere in accounting for television by showing how site-specific uses of television outside of the home transform and mediate audiences in ways that complicate gender, class, and consumption. The kinds of industrial, spatial, and textual practices that I examine more fully elsewhere similarly complicate viewership and agency – but do so for *practitioners* rather than lay audiences.

Recurrent professional rituals, workplace practices, and exchanges of industrial texts and icons all, in some way, theatricalize the production space for practitioners. They also regularly negotiate what it means to make media, what it means to form alliances, and what and how changes in economy, technology, and public taste stand both as threats to career and corporation, and as forces that can be “leveraged” by foresighted and resilient artisans. Space and depictions of space invariably serve as terms used to rationalize, understand and make sense of change.

As a starting point, it is useful to recall the recurrent metaphor and practitioner self-representation examined in the preceding section: the sense that the media and digital artisan labors alone, in the darkness, in anonymity; cut off from human contact, and driven to anxiety by long hours of desperation. A number of demo tapes (“Blue,” 1997,

“Tektronics/Lightworks,” 1997, “NAB Convention TV,” 1997, “Promax,” 2001) bring this spatial “self-portrait” to life. The “digital sweatshop” topoi at work in these tapes is but one in a wide range of spatializing self-representations. The narrative contexts and arcs emerge from and help demarcate a graded taxonomy of social spaces – a geography of the production culture, if you will. This geography, which is more fully articulated elsewhere (Caldwell, 2003: 35), can be summarized as follows, and includes a series of highly stratified – but interconnected and self-bounding – spatial worlds.

- The *highly proprietary private sphere* of the pitch and the development meeting.
- The *therapeutic private space* of the corporate retreat.
- The *faux-private space of the workplace* or studio, or soundstage, whereby constant discursive interventions from management create instability through implicit surveillance.
- The *faux-public space*, or the *sequestered public sphere*, created at professional trade shows, conventions and meetings where ostensible contestation and celebration is staged for professionals in the community as if they were witnessing and participating in a public sphere.
- The *semi-public spaces of professional events* awards shows, season preview meetings, and press junkets where a place for access is extended from the industry to sanction audience consumption from a specific, regulated vantage point. The public nature of these “stages” as ocular key-holes is overproduced by public-relations, even as the aura of consensus covers over severe contestation and dissensus in the industry.
- The *contact-zones for mentoring* emerge at moments in which those with insider knowledge venture out to half-way spaces to share personal insights on making it in Hollywood, how the business works, and how to start a career.

Having established an inside – outside binary as the central ideology delineating these zones, travel or movement between zones is set-up and hyped as key or crucial moments via industrial rituals, framing narratives, and visual iconographies. These theatricalized moments of professional movement are promoted as interventions during which the industry (or its players) consciously intends to negotiate the very boundaries and barriers they have previously established and

sanctioned. This staging of industrial space and travel – in order to traverse it – gives the geography of the production culture a self-fulfilling dynamic.

4 Liminal rituals (mentoring, pitching, summits, retreats, marriages, divorces)

You'll never eat lunch in this town again.

Socioprofessional downside of Julia Phillips's (2002) "slash-and-burn" industry genre

When a studio executive says "I love your work!" it means "Who let you past the guards." "We're going to make your movie!" means "Six months from now you'll read in Variety that we're making a cheaper movie just like your idea." And "This is the best first draft I've ever seen!" means "You're fired."

Summary of screenwriter William Goldman's theory of meetings and industrial communications (Friend 2000: 134)

Cultivation Rituals. Ex-producer and executive Julia Phillips and screenwriter William Goldman presuppose, as have many others before them, that activity in the culture of production is facilitated and governed within the slippery world of meetings, face-time, and conversational rhetoric. Understanding the significance of these forms of social interaction means considering the structure of the industry and the stakes of its players. The film, television, and digital media industries, for example, are characterized by an extreme stratification and division of labor, and "winner-takes-all" business plans. Yet many of the favored industrial rituals act blind to the group-based contestation that defines the enterprise, and work instead to promote the idea that the industry is unified, personal, and humane. Yet the industry is far from user-friendly, unified, or monolithic. To achieve the illusion of access, unity, and consensus, therefore, the industry makes overdetermined efforts: first, to imagine and underscore the many critical "private" moments and spaces that drive effective producing and content development; and secondly, to bring those critical moments of privacy "out into the daylight" in enabling gestures intended to "help" others in the field. That is, the appetite for "behind-the-scenes" information and "secrets" are not unique to fandoms and show-biz reports on *Entertainment Tonight*, *Extra*, or *Inside Hollywood*. Rather, the same appetite-fulfillment

circulates in professional spaces, in the form of semi-public panels on “how to make it in the industry,” and in various mentoring and apprenticeship schemes.

A full examination of socioprofessional interactions in the culture of production is beyond the scope of this chapter, and would include everything from network “up-front” meetings, affiliate meetings, trade shows, conventions, program syndication markets, studio mergers or “marriages,” and corporate/executive “divorces.” Yet even a provisional consideration of a range of socioprofessional practices that I term “cultivation rituals” (recruitment, sponsorship, mentoring, and hazing) reveal determined attempts to establish and construct the notion that the industry is humane, caring, and helpful. Many of the “experts” and seasoned “veterans” of Hollywood tend to explain success – in staged public events – with all of the rhetorical tools that a motivational speaker or revivalist might use. Face-time, humanity, integrity, and personal vision are all regaled on hungry aspirants in “transition” or “how-to-make-it” events sponsored by the DGA, the WGA, the ASC, the Academy, or SMPTE. Even those players now infamous for years of dissolved productions, hubris, and exit strategies due to “irreconcilable creative differences” (Griffin and Masters, 1996) assume in these “half-way spaces” (guild halls, industry conventions, universities), the guiding hand of wise sage and noble moralist. In actuality, high-level show business interactions are highly proprietary and essentially bunkered away from all of the wannabes. But these “cultivation” events ostensibly expose professional “secrets” to the light of day.

One of the best examples of this impulse to theatricalize the intensely private is the “pitchfest.” After a lengthy and wearying day on the floor of NATPE2000 selling and buying syndicated programming, 800–1000 professional (and, I would argue, semi- and marginal-professionals) gather for an evening in a convention auditorium. These “participants” comprise an ostensible “audience,” and wait to hear whose number has been chosen at random to participate in the pitchfest. As each number and name is called, the audience watches as members (game-show style) “come-on-down” to pitch to heavy-hitter agents on stage from CAA, Universal, and William Morris. The resulting performances on stage and under the severe constraints of time-clock and mocking emcee, provide a riotous range of show, series, and genre pitches, all in an attempt to sell and seduce the big men on stage. If the pitchers are not “gonged” (*Gong-Show* style) and asked to cease, each agent critiques the program concept, offering advice on where to take and how to

develop the show or series. A few of the 25 pitches are uniformly praised and awarded, with winners invited to “real” pitch meetings with agents and producers back in Hollywood. Yet many of the other pitches betray the utterly heterogeneous, regional, local, and small-budget competencies of the participants that make up *the* “syndicated programming” production culture. Although NATPE2000 was cast as a high-point of industry “convergence,” faux-public “coming-out” events like this show just how contentious and desperate the coalitions of buyers and sellers are on the floor during the day.

As with the “how-to-make-it” and semi-public mentoring events, public pitchfests construe the powerful in moments most candid; now merely sensitive and caring lay colleagues willing to share secrets, and provide the kind of “face-time” never possible in the overpopulated, agent-scarce world of Studio City and Hollywood. Although such pitchfests reveal professional/amateur faultlines at work in professional organizations, the “sharing of secrets” at such events also functions like gossip traditionally has in urban and suburban neighborhoods. Special disclosures of this sort serve as a way to create solidarity and a (perhaps false) sense of empowerment through organizational or guild knowledge.

In addition to cultivation rituals, another set of socioprofessional rituals also work to fabricate solidarity and consensus. “Maintenance rituals” include yearly meetings by networks to cultivate alliances with advertisers (upfront meetings), nervous affiliates (affiliate meetings), and fence-sitting but influential TV critics associations (TV Critics meetings and press junkets). Press tours and the talk show circuit, for example, exploit both the cultivation and maintenance mode, by bringing the hidden spaces and personalities of the production culture into the daylight; in essence, providing face-time for the lay, but implicitly hungry populace. Affiliate and upfront meetings do the same sort of thing for nervous local stations and ad-agencies that hope to be comforted about the financial prospects that come with their contractual and corporate relationships, or the program “pipeline” for the season ahead. These recurrent attempts to solidify and create consensus, however, always play out in a climate of less-hyped socioprofessional interactions that achieve the opposite effect.

Monitoring Rituals. Solicitation, cultivation, and maintenance rituals all work in public relations to build consensus, solidarity, and a sense of commonality, and by so doing cover over the anxieties that threaten

productive corporate relations. Other workaday rituals in the production culture, however, work in antithetical ways by producing and instilling *anxiety* in the community of production professionals. The process of “giving notes” occurs when an executive or producer sends suggestions to directors or writers about how to “improve” the direction of an ongoing project, program or series. While such incursions by “the suits” into the aesthetic domain rankle most directors, the process has a far more fundamental function. The now-ubiquitous ritual of giving notes underscores the sense that the proprietary and private world of the studio and soundstage is actually very much in doubt, monitored as it is daily by an amorphous but ever-expanding ensemble of seldom seen but always present producers, executives, and their assistants. Production personnel internalize this sense of being watched, much as the prisoners of Bentham’s “panopticon” (Foucault, 1977) are disciplined by the continual threat (real or imagined) of always being under surveillance. Curse the notes if you will, but you are being watched and evaluated.

Other monitoring rituals always keep the production space and enterprise from stasis and balance. Many independent program productions involve the daily reconciliation of costs spent versus projected budget estimates. The obligatory production and post-production meetings during works-in-progress also inculcate the personnel with the sense that the project is always “incremental”; that their future is always tied to successfully meeting projected benchmarks throughout the shooting schedule. Most independent program productions also contractually tie financial disbursements to the necessary approval of each major stage in the production by executive producers, or studios. Television ratings, like box-office, have also become an ever-present monitoring ritual – terra firma for all competitors, for accurate viewing numbers and demographics are the basis for rationalizing the success or failure of a show or series. For this reason, endless ways are devised to spike or hypo ratings across the country. The high season for this kind of ritual interchange occurs three times a year during “sweeps weeks,” where viewer numbers are codified as the basis for ad rates for the months that follow.

Other monitoring rituals spin out from these kinds of ever-present forms of ritualized surveillance. Each May and June, after the Fall season has been unveiled for advertisers and affiliates, bets are taken on which network programming heads will roll first. This sense of an

“executive revolving door” ritual further underscores that fact that, despite all of the overdetermined attempts to build consensus among industrial participants, the daily spaces of the production and producing worlds are characterized by great instabilities and anxieties about duration of employment. Inculcating this impending sense of inevitable temporariness works perfectly to legitimize the vast system of “contract” rather than employee labor that has come to be known as the “Hollywoodization” of American business.

Spatially, monitoring rituals unsettle the ostensibly private and proprietary nature of studio and production space. Studio and soundstage walls evoke walled-off privacy. But note giving, ratings, endless in-progress production meetings, daily budget reconciliations, incremental production funding and disbursement, and the executive revolving door all betray just how “porous” those proprietary walls are. This porosity – providing a one-way vantage point to those controlling both the bottom-line and the possibility of project green-lighting – serves to discipline the community of production in cost-effective ways.

While maintenance rituals transport the truly private and proprietary executive suites out into a semi-public space of reconciliation, monitoring rituals do not need ritualized reconciliation, for the complicated network of contract labor that defines Hollywood knows just how precarious their futures are and will be as long as economic conditions remain the same.

Therapeutic Rituals. In *Come On, Trust Us* (2000) – a feature film that played on the low standards of a local television station – a character played by John Travolta attempted to explain to his employee what a corporate retreat was: “I’m not sure what a retreat is . . . I think it’s a religious thing.” Although played for comedy, the off-handed remark showed how trends in management development have infiltrated popular depictions of media and business. In recent years, the alienations and antagonisms of neo-Fordist production, contract labor, technical obsolescence, and ageism have taken their toll on popular perceptions of industry management practice. As a result, a new phalanx of business consultants and corporate players has begun institutionalizing therapeutic discourse into corporate practice. Retreats, for example, promise above-the-line and producer personnel the chance to “escape” the claustrophobic confines of the offices and executive suites in Hollywood and Century City for the group sessions, mud-baths and clear air of Palm Springs. Retreats promise to allow media players to “step-outside-of-the box”; to brainstorm; to make creative decisions

that are innovative, and/or to find the inner child. Much less discussed is that retreats also provide an implicit escape from the contentious division-of-labor obligations that undergird the studios and soundstages back in Los Angeles. By turning a cadre of individualist, office-bound executives and producers into a group therapy session, media corporations work hard to produce an industrial space that makes possible creative intimacy and career re-birth. This, of course, is a far less sinister intervention than the panopticon inherent in monitoring rituals. Instead of constantly underscoring the possibility of surveillance, therapeutic rituals are far more deceptive. For while the official bedside manner may be that of psychological “enabling,” the discussions and brainstorming nevertheless also proceed under the effaced forms of surveillance. Retreats, that is, look far more benign than the practice of giving notes. But both ritual forms circulate within the constraints of the corporate gaze and sponsorship. Having to deal with network “notes” and soundstage intrusions merely produces less of a tan, and more cynicism than male bonding, than do therapeutic rituals or the corporate retreat.

Conclusion: Industrial Critical Competencies

Tinker credits the 18th century Irish playwright Richard Sheridan for giving him a “standard by which to judge literate comedy designed for a mass audience. Sheridan’s style was very close to that of the best three-camera comedies on television, the kind on which MTM would later be founded.”

Aesthetic references for MTM sitcoms (Katzman, 1994: E5)

What is real, really?

Philosophico-industrial analysis by Broadcasting and Cable (Schlosser and McConnell, 2001: 12)

I see my background in semiotic theory as the main reason why I’ve been able to cross-over from such a radical avant-garde position to such a commercial medium . . . Godard meets Monterey Pop is my ideal.

Director Michael Oblowitz (1989) on the industrial utility of high theory

Academics have historically denigrated television for its commercialism and its middle- and low-brow aesthetic and intellectual predilections.

While MTM's workplace application of eighteenth-century dramaturgy may stand in stark contrast to the various radical practices that have enamored cultural studies scholars in the past, a systematic study of the development of primetime forms – one that considers the conscious industrial deployments of aesthetic and cultural principles – would do much to lay bare the cultural capital and “class” dimensions that have been so near and dear to the heart of cultural studies. Similarly, *Broadcasting and Cable's* musings on the “what is reality?” conundrum may smack of an introductory Philosophy 101 survey, but the actual industry discussion it represents raises all kinds of useful complications for the scholarly study of reality television. By critically arguing the distinctions between “rigging,” appearance shots, establishing shots, and recreations – and their impact on regulatory and legal bodies – the trade publication actually suggests ways to pursue or integrate an “institutional study” of the reality aesthetic.

Most cultural studies of production culture fail to acknowledge that the object of academic research (the industry) is also a critical, research-driven enterprise. Although it comes as no surprise to media management, media production cultures are *also* fundamentally guided by critical and cultural analysis. This chapter has considered ways that industry creates a critical understanding of itself through public practices (organizing, marketing, and promotion). Methodologically, the chapter stands between, and at times synthesizes, two approaches that are typically seen as divergent: ethnography and textual analysis. Arguing that either approach fails to account for important aspects of spatial practice (with ethnography susceptible to vested disclosures by industrial informants, and textualism typically blind to industrial and technological determinants), the chapter set out to map the critical spatial practice of production through the close examination of “deep industrial texts.” Many of these workaday or “low” texts – visual icons, social and professional rituals, demo tapes, recurrent trade and union narrativizations, and machine designs – circulate in a greatly delimited public sphere, but a public sphere nevertheless, as promotional and industrial artifacts and professional events. All of these “deep texts” precede and pre-figure the kinds of film/TV screen-forms that scholars typically analyze, and all offer dense and overdetermined interpretive schemas that serve to regulate and make sense of the meanings and significance of the space of production, and the space of culture.

The industrial competencies that I have described here – and my argument that a great deal of what viewers see in film/TV critically mediates or de-constructs other examples of screen content – may suggest that the newly convergent and conglomerated industry now leads by hyping and selling its critical sophistication and agency to viewers. But this is far from the case. In fact, although deep texts and practices show a constant churn of critical and theoretical ideas among practitioners, actual cases of public disclosure by industry players typically work to deny or disavow any agency or pretense. Far from being crass movers-or-shakers who exploit cultural trends, industry players talk about themselves as simple, honest, and direct men; screenwriters in touch with the universalism of Aristotle's three-part drama and well-rounded characters; producers responsively creating what the common person wants; executives couching even lowest-common denominator programming as opportunities for reflection, consensus, and release. In trade talk, screenplays and films are never ideological, television shows are never racist or about race, and producer-creators never have a cultural axe to grind. But as these recognizable public-relations bells peal to announce that the industry is only about basic human values, "emotional transport" (Guber, 2001) and "entertainment," the deep texts, the socioprofessional networking, and the engineering of new technologies and stylistic methods all show something very different. A constantly changing coalition of sub-groups, competitors, and skilled practitioners stand as a collectivity held together by "willed affinity" – but only until the next economic crisis or technological change forces the collective to re-configure once again. Although the same sort of statement could be made in many places, a recent remark by a writer-producer on the long-running primetime series *The Simpsons* demonstrates that this bifurcated culture of public disavowal alongside private-professional critical deployment does very much exist. In rejecting the notion that anything profound was engineered into or intended by the series, senior writer Tom Martin suggests that most of the critical-theoretical barbs in the 12-year history of the series were purely the result of "accident." "People think it's mostly a result of some deep effort. Mostly it's just about trying to be funny" (Lobdell, 2001: b20).

Even as creative practitioners assume the same recognizable, but effaced, "aw-shucks" posture, the series itself has generated immense amounts of critical writing that seek to lay bare and address the dense cultural and intellectual intertexts that form the very fabric of the

Table 5.3 Manic Disclosure/Non-Disclosure

DISCLOSURES / AVOWALS	NON-DISCLOSURES / DISAVOWALS
<i>(understood via intentional discourses)</i>	<i>(understood via embedded industrial practices)</i>
Industrial Disclosures Top-down Intentionality Informants, Interviews	Deep Textual Analysis Actor–Network Performance Technologies, Iconographies, Narratives, Rituals
<i>Myth-cliché from producers</i> <i>// Marketing Objective</i>	<i>Forms of disavowal from producers</i> <i>// Industrial Logic Elided</i>
“Nobody knows anything...” CHANCE	Disavowal of RATIONALITY by execs claiming artistic credit (in industry that is <i>heavily</i> rationalized and continuously researched)
“Everyone in the industry lies...” SELF-SUFFICIENCY, against all odds	Disavowal of COOPERATIVE nature of work by “players” (when everything career-wise depends upon “who you know”)
“All information is spin...” PERSUASIVE abilities	Disavowal of basic INDUSTRIAL NEED for producer’s product (when media content fills manufacturing need and corporate logic)
“I’ve developed a ‘feel’ for winners...” zones INTUITION and magic-touch	Disavowal of HIERARCHICAL pecking-order in public contact (industry works via “inside deals” and exploitation of work conditions)
“I only produce projects I care about...” INTEGRITY	Disavowal of BOTTOM-LINE imperative (even though industry driven by “bottom-feeders” and profit margins)
“Our only goal is entertainment...” RESPONSIVENESS	Disavowal of CRITICAL INTENTION by successful producers (when artifacts and texts, explicitly deploy theoretical knowledge)
“Hollywood is a state of mind...” MYSTIQUE legitimized	Disavowal of LEGALIZED CORPORATE RELATIONS (when legal contracting rules corporate business plans)

series. These include books addressing it as a systematic philosophical treatise (Irwin, Conard, and Skoble, 2001) and as an intervention in theological enquiry (Pinsky, 2001). The process of disavowal can, in fact, be recognized as a rhetorical perspective employed systematically across discursive, technical, and textual registers in the production culture. In many cases, acts of disavowal tame industrial complexity and churn in order to efface economic and ideological dimensions of media on the one hand, and to legitimate long-standing industrial mythologies on the other. Such mythologies have proven lucrative as cultural (and economic) capital over the past century. Interviews with producers and executives tend to reinforce these recognizable mythoi. Critical industrial practice, as I've suggested here however, offers other ways to understand the cultural and ideological significance of practitioners and the culture of production (Table 5.3).

Coming to grips with the extent of the critical industrial competencies considered here challenges some of the favored presuppositions of cultural studies scholars: i.e., that deconstruction necessarily serves a “counter” critical function, that industrial texts must be mined to make visible ideological contradictions; that agency, hybridity, desire, and performativity are subject/audience/user functions. In the new era of media re-conglomeration and multi-channel diversification, industries employ deconstruction, meta-critical textuality, and performativities of identity (racial, ethnic, sexual, hybrid, nomadic, and otherwise). The culture of production acts out these cultural performativities on a daily basis in the contact zones, bounded sanctums and semi-public spaces of the film/video workplace.

Notes

- 1 Concerning definitions, throughout this chapter I will use the term “the industry” as it is commonly used by practitioners and critics in Los Angeles; that is, as a term that construes “Hollywood” as a geographically situated cultural phenomenon. Of course, “Hollywood” itself is a misnomer and a construct, since it is typically used to reference a comprehensive set of media activities: the film, television, and digital media activities networked across the greater Los Angeles region. Obviously, there are *many, many* other “cultures of production” apart from Hollywood. So I am choosing to frame my study of “the Industry” and/or “Hollywood” as the study of a very local and specific cultural site; albeit one that expends great effort in promoting and constructing itself as a global production culture.
- 2 The following discussion of ad campaigns draws on various ads from Panavision (1993), Sony (1997), Quantum (1997), and Wescam (1997).