Exploring Saturn

Sharryn Kasmir, assistant professor of anthropology at Hofstra University, is the William S. Vaughn Visiting Fellow and visiting assistant professor of anthropology. She is the author of The ‘Myth’ of Mondragón: Cooperatives, Politics and Working Class Life in a Basque Town (SUNY Press 1996). She participates in this year’s Fellows Program, “Inventing Work,” and researches the revision of work at the Saturn Corporation in Spring Hill, Tennessee. She recently discussed her research with Letters.

LETTERS: What makes the new forms of work at Saturn important to study?

KASMIR: I am interested in how new forms of work at Saturn remake workers, how they make new working-class subjects. If we think about the production of work-based subjects over time, surely it is a continuous process, but surely there are also particular moments, historical conjunctures, in which we see more dramatic transformations. Early nineteenth-century industrialism presented such a moment, when work, how people thought about work, how people thought of their own identities vis-à-vis work, and how they became social and political agents in relation to work all changed. The meaning of work changed in the broadest sense. I think we live in such an epoch. We are living in a moment that is common enough in capitalism and the relationship, showing the assembly line and the worker, and promise those contradictions. The commercial satirizes the unrealistic claims made by competitors for the Saturn plant and positions Loves Park and its superhero mayor as making a more modest but reasonable offer. This and other texts from the period are reminders of the ravages of de-industrialization on historic industrial centers and indicate the array of cultural productions that surrounded the Saturn project. GM’s participation with these productions suggests that the corporation used the state- and local-level ferment around the project to its advantage. In the summer of 1985, when GM announced its choice of Spring Hill, a novelty song entitled “Saturn” was released by a country music promoter.

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In 1985, when General Motors announced its search for a site for Saturn, states and municipalities competed for the facility, which was to be the largest single industrial investment in U.S. history. Several governors appeared with GM CEO Roger Smith on the Phil Donahue show to pitch their states. Comic artist Dick Kulpa, former alderman of Loves Park, Illinois, sent the “It’s Loves Park!” comic to GM. After receiving it, GM sent him head shots of company executives, from which he drew characters in “Race for Saturn,” a four-page comic book. This comic satirizes the unrealistic claims made by competitors for the Saturn project and positions Loves Park and its superhero mayor as making a more modest but reasonable offer. This and other texts from the period are reminders of the ravages of de-industrialization on historic industrial centers and indicate the array of cultural productions that surrounded the Saturn project. GM’s participation with these productions suggests that the corporation used the state- and local-level ferment around the project to its advantage. In the summer of 1985, when GM announced its choice of Spring Hill, a novelty song entitled “Saturn” was released by a country music promoter.

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While I was there, workers, work, and
forms of industrial organization, here came a commercial that con-
structed an image of a new work-
force. The commercial also
invited viewers to think and even
care about the work process. In
the back of my mind, I thought
that Saturn would make a great
next project.

LETTERS: Are you interested
more in the production or the
marketing of Saturn?

KASMIR: In both—they are
tied together for me by the no-
ton of subjectivity. Workers as
subjects are configured in adver-
tising, on the shop floor within
the corporation, in management
and public relations discourses
within the corporation, and in
union discourses. As an anthro-
pologist, particularly one who
tries to combine the political-economic and symbolic traditions of
my discipline, I am interested in
all of these.

LETTERS: What makes work at
Saturn unusual?

KASMIR: The model of the
Saturn plant is closely related to
coo-determination in Europe, es-
specially as practiced in Germany
and Sweden. There is union rep-
resentation at every level of deci-
sion-making within the plant.
Every council or planning body
in the factory has United Auto-
mobile Workers (UAW) represen-
tatives. This responds to periodic
movements within the U.S. labor
movement calling for workplace
democracy. There are fewer job
categories at Saturn than in other
industrial workplaces, so there is a
flatter hierarchy. I imagine this
would change how blue-collar
and white-collar workers view
their employment. The coopera-
tive labor-management accord at
Saturn changes the way managers
do their jobs and how they envi-
sion labor-management relations.

production process, and the next
person in line does his or her
task, and so on. In recent efforts
to restructure factory work, in
what is often called the post-
Fordist regime, workers work in
teams. A team is responsible for
a set of tasks or a segment of a pro-
duction process, and it manages
and monitors itself. A team sends
its part of the process or the prod-
uct it has made to the next team,
which it considers a customer. It
has to meet the demands of that
customer in terms of quality,
price, and product, in ways that
bring market forces and business
mindedness to the shop floor.
This team- and quality-centered
production and emphasis on in-
tra-corporation entrepreneurial-
ism not only characterizes Saturn,
but it makes Saturn, in a sense,
quintessentially post-Fordist.

LETTERS: Teamwork and qual-
ity have positive connotations,
but they seem like they could add
a lot of pressure for workers.

KASMIR: This is an empirical
question for the particular case of
Saturn, and I do not know yet.
But there are critiques of total
quality management and team-
work from union perspectives that
have a lot to say about the pres-
sures that accompany these aspects
of post-Fordist production.

For example, a team is a self-
managing unit that has to set
quality and production goals for
itself within the guidelines of
what the factory needs to produce
and the quality standards it needs
to meet. There is pressure for
workers to stand by their team-
mates and to achieve the team's
goals. On the one hand, team-
work is positive, because it creates
opportunities for camaraderie. On
the other hand, critics say it cre-
ates a managerial function among
the workers—some workers man-
tain, by their very definition,
cross standard job descriptions. A
lot of the power of unions stems
from the fact that unions regulate
jobs. So if you are a machinist
class 1, you do a given job. If you
are a machinist class 2, you do
another job. You do not do both
jobs. For proponents of the team
concept, this is a welcome re-
placement for outmoded union
bureaucracy. For critics, a team
breaks down the job classifica-
tions that have traditionally been
what unions have policed on a
shop floor; so team-based produc-
tion looks like an attack on an
important source of union power.

A focus on quality also creates
stress. A problem in quality is a
team’s problem, not manage-
ment’s problem. This responsibil-
ity makes team members’ jobs
much more difficult. One cri-
ticism is that signs of increased
stress, like high blood pressure
and anxiety, are evident in total
quality plants. But supporters say
that this kind of production of-
fers a lot more job content, while
work in a standard assembly line
is dull, repetitive, and alienating.
For every case study that shows
that total quality management
and teamwork are good for work-
ers, there is a case that shows they
are bad for workers. The jury is
still out.

LETTERS: How does Saturn’s
type of production affect sub-
jectivity?

KASMIR: I am investigating
whether Saturn workers’ subjec-
tivity is affected because they
work differently, have a different
union contract, have moved to a
new area of the country, and have
thereby been uprooted from
friends, kin, and older forms of
industrial culture. Social theory
that looks at how work relates to
identit, class, and communit

Sharryn Kasmir

The South is consi-
idered a political leader-
ship that formed Saturn’s
move. The town itself has
been transformed since G
awners announced that
would locate in HILL/Columbia area.
boom in real estate was a flu-

One of the things esting and different is that the UAW-Sat
GM workers. Local
For me, fieldwork is a compelling, intimate, and rigorous way of knowing.

than their share of layoffs and plant closings. The UAW saw Saturn as an opportunity to recoup some of the jobs that had been lost in GM. Thousands of workers moved to Spring Hill, which was a very small town, and the surrounding area, mostly from northern cities. Recently in The Tennessean, there was an article about the North/South cultural conflicts that were present early on when the workers first began to come to Saturn. Much of that has died down, but I want to document, ethnohistorically, the transformation of the local area.

**LETTERS:** What are you learning about Saturn's marketing?

**KASMIR:** Extensive popular and business literature has focused on the phenomenon of creating the Saturn brand, a process that includes everything from advertising to choosing the styles of cars. This literature suggests that Saturn is remarkable for how quickly it won brand recognition and how well people remember key features of the brand. The advertising is working. When I talk about the project, people respond positively. They are interested because they know about Saturn from the advertisements.

From talking to people in New York (where I come from) and Nashville, I have consistently found that people have a favorite commercial and can describe its narrative. They remember the characters in the commercial and sometimes have some strong emotions about it. I do not know if the specific technique of representing workers has been an effective sales strategy, but certainly the sum total of the advertising campaigns has been effective. The popularity of the commercials is one of the ways Saturn’s impact is greater than its local effect in workers' representation of work and workers.

**LETTERS:** Could you explain how anthropology affects your approach to this project?

**KASMIR:** Anthropology wants to be able to say that it is a discipline that studies the human condition in all its physical and cultural manifestations. Given that industrial, advanced industrial, and post-industrial societies are parts of the human condition, anthropologists want to be able to say these are parts of our purview. Yet as a discipline, we are still enamored with the “exotic.” I push on this boundary of the discipline.

One of the things that distinguishes anthropologists from sociologists and urban geographers is our methodology. We do prolonged fieldwork in a setting where we live, and try to take on the habits of an ordinary life there to the degree that this is possible. Something about that experience transforms one’s way of knowing. For me, fieldwork is a compelling, intimate, and rigorous way of knowing.

I also draw on cultural studies, sociology, and political theory. I am learning a lot more about literary studies in the Fellows Program, which enriches my analysis of the images and texts that I find in the advertising, managerial, and academic writing about Saturn.

**LETTERS:** How does this project relate to your first book, which examined production in the Basque region in Spain?

**KASMIR:** My Basque research was an ethnographic study of a world-famous system of industrial organization called the Mondragon cooperative system. It was considered an alternative model to standard capitalism. It was one of the most, if not the most discussed owned the factories. The system seemed to solve what in the 1970s and 1980s were considered the crises of capitalism, such as de-industrialization, worker alienation, and lack of worker participation.

I began to think about the ways in which, in the ‘80s in particular, unions were looked upon in academia and the media as stodgy, part of the past, incapable of representing workers’ interests, and unable to respond to the pressures of world competition. People discussed the Mondragon cooperatives in large part as an alternative to unions and as offering private ownership to the working class. I began to look at the Mondragon model as an ideology of post-Fordist capitalism.

I was also interested in the relationship between forms of work and national identity. That was a minor theme in my last book, and is a theme that I want to develop in this project. One of the earliest and most repeated stories told about Saturn is that it would save U.S. industry, be a model for U.S. industrial revival, and show that U.S. auto manufacturers were able to compete with the Japanese. Saturn was announced in the ‘80s when Japanese imports became an important part of the car market. Patriotism, Americanism, and an “American identity” were framed and mobilized within the Saturn concept in really interesting ways that run parallel to the way in which Basque identity and nationalism were mobilized in the Mondragon cooperative setting.

Saturn and its cars were supposed to symbolize a new way of doing things and were positioned as the hope of U.S. industry. The name “Saturn” was taken from NASA’s Apollo program, which was supposed to conjure up an image of U.S. competition with the

For me, fieldwork is a compelling, intimate, and rigorous way of knowing.
Jumping the Dragon Gate: Storytellers and the Creation of the Shanghai Identity

Laura A. McDaniels, assistant professor of history, participates in the 1998/99 Fellows Program, "Inventing Work." She describes her current research in the following article.

In 1875, a local Shanghai pictorial newspaper ran an article about the prevalence of storytelling beggars in the Chinese part of the city. The article described these beggars in the following manner: "These pitiful creatures are usually driven to this lowly profession by disability, but this is not their only problem. They are hungry and diseased, and most of them are so filthy and covered with sores that you can’t bear to look at them." Crowds of gawkers were attracted to these beggars by lurid curiosity, and once a sizable number of people had gathered round, the beggar would pull out a small stringed instrument and sing a portion of a well-known epic tale. When he had finished his tale, the beggar would walk around to each of his listeners, holding out his cupped hands to solicit donations.

This newspaper article and countless others like it give us an indication of the abjectness of storytellers in late imperial China. Virtual beggars by trade, often driven to their profession by disablement, criminal records, or homelessness, they faced perpetual poverty and discrimination. In the official hierarchy of professions, storytellers ranked even lower than prostitutes in terms of social and political status. Their itinerancy made it difficult for them to marry, settle down, or even find a steady source of income; as a result, they were considered threatening to the social order, and they had little, if any, access to traditional Chinese scholarship.

In 1998/99, the author embarked on a two-year project to explore the life and work of the Shanghai storytelling community. This research on storytelling in Shanghai suggests that the storytelling profession has undergone a significant transformation since the 1870s. The rise of modern urban China has brought about changes in the social status and economic prospects of storytellers. While they still face discrimination and poverty, some storytellers have managed to improve their social mobility and social status through storytelling venues and performances.

The author describes the transformation that it dwarfed the other cities and towns in the region, and provided storytellers with new physical and cultural spaces in which to establish more respectable reputations. Shanghai’s earliest storytelling venues, all located in the oldest section of town (called the “Chinese City”), were actually tea-houses with the bare minimum in terms of furnishings and amenities. In this sense, performing at a teahouse in Shanghai in the late nineteenth century was no different from performing at a teahouse in any of the other cities and towns in Zhejiang and Jiangsu at this time. It was at the turn of the century that the storytelling venues of Shanghai began to move into the more modern “foreign concession” areas and to distinguish themselves from the other storytelling venues in the region.

First, there was an explosion in terms of numbers: the last thirty years of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century saw the rise of numerous storytelling venues in Shanghai. These new storytelling houses were run by professional storytellers who managed to attract a wide variety of audiences, and to make storytelling a respectable profession.

Electricity enabled house owners to light their establishments well past sunset, introducing not just the new technologies to the town but also the new audiences that came with them. By the 1920s, storytelling houses were thriving in Shanghai, and the profession had become respectable enough for storytellers to marry, settle down, and even find employment in other parts of the city.

The author discusses the impact of modernization on storytelling in Shanghai, and how the storytelling profession has adapted to the changing social and economic landscape. In the end, the author concludes that storytelling in Shanghai has not only survived, but thrived, despite the challenges it faced.

Ciro’s Dance Hall, one of Shanghai’s most prestigious venues for daytime and early evening storytelling performances.
The distinction between guild “insiders” and “outsiders” was starkly apparent.

By the 1930s, the expression “jumping the dragon gate” had entered into the lexicon of storytellers and, indeed, into the popular imagination. To “jump the dragon gate” (tiao long men) was, in the jargon of storytellers, to land a job in one of the storytelling venues of Shanghai’s foreign concessions. Storytellers had a particular fondness for self-comparison to scholars, and so it is interesting to note that this expression has its origins in popular lore about the imperial examination system. A popular Chinese proverb speaks of the ability of a common carp to “jump the dragon gate” and transform himself into a dragon (liyu tiao long men) as an allegory for commoners who succeed in the imperial examinations. To “jump the dragon gate,” then, was to catch the golden ring of success and fame. For storytellers in the Zhejiang-Jiangsu area, this could be achieved only in Shanghai’s foreign concessions.

Those storytellers who did “jump the dragon gate” worked very hard to shore up their newfound status through affiliation with highly territorial storytellers’ guilds. These guilds emerged at the turn of the century as one of the most important factors in creating a class of “professional,” elite, well-paid storytellers with clear urban affiliations and in distinguishing this group from their untrained, poor, itinerant, rural-based counterparts. The distinction between guild “insiders” and “outsiders” was starkly apparent to performers and spectators alike in the storytelling houses.Guild leaders paid heavy dues to storytelling-house owners in order to claim to these establishments, and these monopolies were reinforced with bribes, extortion, and physical violence. The simple truth is that if you were not a member of one of two storytellers’ guilds in Republican-era Shanghai, you had no chance of finding employment in any of Shanghai’s 500-plus storytelling houses.

One gained entrée into a reputable storytellers’ guild by completing a long apprenticeship with a senior member of that guild. But in order to promote the impression that storytelling was a professionalized, elite line of work that was not open to street ruffians, many storytelling masters made a show of being exceedingly choosy about potential students. What seems to be the case is that every storyteller who attained any degree of fame in late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century Shanghai became apprenticed to his or her teacher through connections with friends or family. The hearty disapprobation of “outsiders” to this system is evident from an article that appeared in a storytelling newspaper called Robinson in 1943. The author of this article complained that the storyteller Xu H ansheng randomly accepted untrained itinerant storytellers as his “apprentices” in exchange for payment, and allowed them to advertise themselves as his students (and thus as guild members) without actually giving them any training. Most successful storytellers frowned upon such practices, in large part because they deplored Shanghai’s storytelling guilds of the financial rewards and quality-control privileges inherent in the apprenticeship system. “If they are allowed to throw him out!” – distress over the despising the storytelling profession, however, because of Shanghai-area storytellers not originally from Shanghai thus overwhelmingly “country bumpkins” in a geographic sense.

The implicit argument was that storytelling was a prestigious profession, one that provided income, a sense of community, prestige, and distinction for those who practiced it. The professional storytelling guilds affiliated with the foreign concessions. In 1933 based storytelling wrote to one of the storytelling fan newspapers in Shanghai to complain of the unrefined, uncultivated performance among such storytellers. “We are being refashioned from Chicago to wholesale, and we have to compete with the foreign concessions to impress our audience with refined, cultivated performances,” he lamented. This was a small town outside where he had just moved, and the previous week he had seen the same story told by two different storytellers. The first was an older man who spoke in a fast, clipped manner. The second was a younger man who spoke in a slow, measured manner. The first used a lot of slang and swear words, while the second used proper Chinese. The audience laughed at the first, but was captivated by the second. The professional storytellers were appalled at this lack of refinement and distinction, and they did everything they could to discourage such behavior among their members.
In the 1930s and 1940s, storytellers were “nobodies.” Shanghai was what made them “somebodies.”

of employment opportunities, storytellers further demarcated the distinction between “urban” and “rural” people by playing on this dichotomy in the content of their stories. The image of Shanghai that appeared in the stories and songs of most storytellers in this region was one of opulence and modernity, as in the following song by Wang Gengxiang:

The ten-li foreign enclave is extravagant, Featuring only the best in clothing, food, housing and transportation, Families live in high-rise apartment buildings, And drive automobiles when they go out. Most comfortable of all are the rich young mistresses of these families, They are modern girls who consider shark’s fin and sea cucumber to be just ordinary dishes, And they do nothing all day but dress up in the latest fashions.

The stereotypical Shanghainese man brought to life in the stories of the 1930s and 1940s was wealthy, modern, fashionable, and heavily influenced by foreign trends. He usually owned an automobile, which could be used at a moment’s notice for a quick shopping spree on Nanjing Road (the main thoroughfare). He lived in an opulent foreign-style mansion and dined on delicacies every day, and his wives and daughters paraded up and down the wide avenues of Shanghai’s foreign concessions dressed in the latest fashions, their high heels making distinctive clicking sounds on the pavement and the smell of expensive perfume wafting through the air behind them.

Of course, such images were far from being descriptive of the reality that everyone experienced in Shanghai, but they were presented to the listener as a Chinese version of the “American dream” qualities also as something that was within reach for newcomers to the city. One of the most amusing stories that promoted the Shanghai identity as glamorous but within the grasp of the “little people” was the story of “The Little Nun Who Came Down the Mountain,” by Zhu Yaoxiang and Zhao Jiaqiu. The story of the little Buddhist nun who abandoned life at her convent on the hill to indulge her desire for sex had been a popular and well-known one for years. But Zhu and Zhao gave this story a new twist: in their version of the story, the little nun is overcome not by sexual desire but by a yearning to shop and to be like Shanghai’s “modern girls.” “Where can I indulge my desire to wear powder and blusher?” the little nun wonders. “Where can I adorn myself in silk and satin? The more I think about it,” she sighs, “the more my heart aches!” In the end, the little nun leaves her convent and comes to Shanghai to indulge herself in makeup and expensive clothes. Incidentally, she also finds herself a husband there.

Another way in which the content of these stories helped to create the Shanghai identity was by explicitly defining what it meant to be “not Shanghaiese.” In the Jiangsu, then Jiangbei migrants were at the opposite end of the spectrum, the ultimate self-delusional losers. The caricature of the Jiangbei migrant was, of course, just as much an invention as the Shanghai dweller; but its existence helped to reinforce popular faith in the Shanghai identity. The Jiangbei migrant became the “Other” against which the Shanghai elite defined its own identity.

The Jiangbei migrant who appeared in the songs and stories of Shanghai’s early twentieth-century storytellers was basically a buffoon. In contrast to the elite Shanghai dweller, dressed to the nines in the newest fashions, the Jiangbei migrant became the “Other” identity for themselves. The Jiangbei migrant of popular songs and stories was inevitably shabbily dressed in clothing that identified him as a country bumpkin. He dressed as a non-urbanite, with pants and shoes, and with minimal makeup and expensive clothes. While these were ordinary dishes, and the Jiangbei migrant was mainly a bumbling fool and this was often
Teaching the Holocaust

Beginning in the fall of 1999, the Warren Center will be home to a project entitled "The Holocaust, Genocide, and the Teaching of Ethical Values." The project, funded by the Zimmerman Foundation and the Tennessee Holocaust Commission, will develop guidelines for teaching at the secondary and post-secondary level about the Holocaust and other acts of genocide, as well as the teaching of ethical values that will help to prevent similar inhumane acts in the next century. With the Holocaust growing more distant in time from students early in the twenty-first century and the death of survivors and witnesses, the distinctiveness and relevance of the Holocaust may begin to lose its hold on educational priorities. With other acts of genocide continuing to occur in various parts of the world, the teaching of the Holocaust can provide an historical benchmark by which to judge genocidal acts and to develop both an early warning system and an ethos of prevention.

The project will be directed by Peter Haas, associate professor of religious studies and Jewish literature and thought, and Helmut Smith, associate professor of history. The seminar will include up to ten scholars from throughout the state of Tennessee who will be chosen by the project's advisory committee though a process of application. The participants will meet regularly during the 1999/2000 academic year. University Chaplain Emeritus Beverly Asbury will serve as a consultant to the project and as a liaison between the Warren Center and the Tennessee Holocaust Commission. In addition, two high school teachers will join the seminar in order to provide necessary guidance regarding high school instructional materials. The seminar participants will also have funds available to bring in outside speakers and consultants who will add their expertise to the collective scholarly enterprise. The core group of scholars and teachers will establish basic principles for teaching about the Holocaust and other acts of genocide and recommend materials to be included in the curricula, whether secondary school or college.

During the summer of 2000, an intensive three-week seminar for high school teachers will be held at the Warren Center to continue developing curriculum materials for the secondary school. Ten middle Tennessee school teachers will be chosen to create the Tennessee Holocaust Commission. In addition, two high school teachers will join the seminar in order to provide necessary guidance regarding high school instructional materials. The seminar participants will also have funds available to bring in outside speakers and consultants who will add their expertise to the collective scholarly enterprise. The core group of scholars and teachers will establish basic principles for teaching about the Holocaust and other acts of genocide and recommend materials to be included in the curricula, whether secondary school or college.

The collaborative between the Warren Center and the Tennessee Holocaust Commission will provide the opportunity for teachers from throughout the state of Tennessee, to exchange ideas and sustained intellectual will result in important educational contributions to teaching about the Holocaust and other acts of genocide.

Lecture on Southern Letters

On Friday, October 9 the Warren Center and the Tennessee Humanities Council jointly sponsored the inaugural Robert Penn Warren Lecture on Southern Letters. Held in conjunction with the Council's annual Southern Festival of Books, the premier lecture was presented by author Elizabeth Spencer and was attended by an audience of approximately 350 at the Crowne Plaza in downtown Nashville. Also that evening, the Southern Book Critics Circle presented the Southern Book Award for fiction to Charles Frazier for Cold Mountain, the Southern Book Award for non-fiction to Edward Ball for Slaves in the Family, and a Distinguished Achievement Award to the University of Georgia Press.

The Tennessee Humanities Council's Southern Festival of Literatures is the largest literary festivals in the nation, I can say with ease that it is, by a good distance, the most elegantly organized and realized that I know of," said author Reynolds Price. The addition of a distinguished lecture named after one of the nation's finest literary figures adds luster to already impressive public humanities event.

The inaugural speaker, Elizabeth Spencer, is a distinguished creative writer whose southern roots (she grew up in Carrollton, Mississippi) remain at the core of her writing. In her most recent book, Landscapes of the Heart: A Memoir, she recounts her experiences growing up in Mississippi and her subsequent moves to Italy, Canada, and back to the southern United States. In Ms. Spencer's lecture, as in her memoir, she recounted her friendships with Eudora Welty, Saul Bellow, John
Saturn, continued from page 3

eity, and nervousness as a cultural theme. I want to understand how it shapes modern consciousness, people's subjectivity, and their feelings about who they are.

One of the most important transformations that we are undergoing is the way in which we understand time, our place in time, the availability of time to us, and what counts as valuable or wasteful uses of it. I think about this from a broad historical perspective. I think about the way in which the first industrial towns brought an industrial time clock to what had been a rural or agrarian sense of time, and what a dramatic cultural and personal shift must have implied. I think we are right in the midst of that same caliber of shift. I think that in the last decade or two, we have been making a transition to a new kind of time. In addition to the changes in the way that we work and the amount of time that we work, there have been technological innovations in computers and telecommunications that change the structure of time and its meaning to us.

These broad shifts in concepts of work and time have implications for Saturn where the corporate discourse constructs Saturn as a different kind of company. One of the ways in which Saturn is different is that it cultivates a family atmosphere. People I have spoken with in Spring Hill have said that Saturn does have that atmosphere and that people really do feel connected to their workplace. I want to know the extent of that connection, what it means for workers, and what it means for life outside of the factory. Saturn workers are on a difficult work schedule. They are on rotating shifts, which have an impact on family scheduling and create a kind of “Saturn time” that differs from other kinds of time.

Letters: Have other corporations or companies tried to emulate Saturn?

Kasmir: Saturn's level of union participation in decision-making is pretty unusual. But the teamwork, just-in-time production, emphasis on quality, and mobilization of workers' emotions and intellects to improve production have become widespread. But what is becoming apparent, particularly during last summer's big GM strike, is that Saturn has not borne the kind of fruit one might have expected. In the transformation of GM's corporate culture, the democracy, includin

agement/labor accord participation in m have been less signific

success of the Saturn name, image, customer and the way the de

business. In a sense, m more than Saturn's suc

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