Published by
State University of New York Press

Printed in the United States of America

For information, address State University of New York Press,
State University Plaza, Albany, N.Y. 12246

Production by M. R. Mulholland
Marketing by Dana E. Yanulavich

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Watershed research traditions in human communication theory, edited by Donald P. Cushman and Branislav Kovačić.
p. cm. — (SUNY series, human communication processes)
Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.
ISBN 0-7914-2597-5 (alk. paper). — ISBN 0-7914-2598-3 (pbk. alk paper)
1. Communication—Social aspects. 2. Interpersonal communication.
I. Cushman, Donald P. II. Kovačić, Branislav. 1957-
III. Series: SUNY series in human communication processes.
HM258.W38 1995
302.2—dc20 94-37655
CIP

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Each of us is dedicating this book
to the most important person in his life—
SARAH S. KING AND GORDANA RABRENOVIĆ

They have taught us how to share pleasures and pains through communication, and to appreciate Hugh Prather's advice:
"To have this kind of sharing I cannot enter a conversation clutching myself. I must give myself to the relationship, and be willing to be what grows out of it."

of communication have been presented in the form of three interrelated arguments or theoretical models.

First, *a cultural communication theory* examines the ways culture influences communication. By focusing on speech codes and cultural forms, it unveils interpenetration of the forces of individualism and community. A community's consensus, its sense of shared identity, is created, tested, and restored through three cultural forms that organize and guide recurrent interaction patterns: (1) ritual, (2) myth, and (3) social drama. Through the nonrational consensus ensconced in ritual, a community members sequence communicative interactions to coordinate and align diverse lines of action. Individuals appropriate myths or communal narratives to give meaning to their own lives by expressing in a narrative form their own relationship to society. Social drama provides rules or standards for the ways cultural codes, if violated, are to be negotiated and revised, or reasserted. Social drama thus defines boundaries of a group and reintegrates those members whose acts have tested its boundaries. Second, *a communication theory of culture and society* articulates the ways communication helps constitute culture and society through patterned use and interpretation of symbols, symbolic forms, norms or rules for action, and definitions of social positions, relations, and institutional arrangements. Finally, *a cultural interpretive theory* focuses on models of personhood, society, and strategic action that are embedded in the speech code.

On the practical level, Philipsen and associates use case studies or ethnographies of communication to present communication patterns of action and meaning and rules for speaking that may be legislated, transgressed, remedied, and negotiated in a particular community. In a general sense, this watershed research tradition contributes to our understanding of culturally specific communcative practices. Also, through comparative research, it demonstrates cultural similarities and differences in such practices. Consequently, it makes us aware of the rules for culturally appropriate communication in different contexts. Examples are ethnographies of communication in Teamsterville, in Israel, and other contexts studied by the researchers in this tradition. More important, this watershed tradition makes us aware of the arbitrary nature of cultural recipes for appropriate and effective communication. It also increases our repertoire of cross-culturally relevant rules for communication. There is a direct link between such a knowledge and communicative competence that can be taught, improved, and then applied by different individuals, groups, organizations, and social movements.

10

The Ethnographic Communication Theory of Philipsen and Associates

Donal Carbaugh

The ethnography of communication (EC) is an approach to human communication with its own philosophy, theory, and methodology. The earliest practitioner of EC in the field of communication was Gerry Philipsen, who wrote a series of ethnographic field reports (1975, 1976, 1986), a methodological statement (1977), and a theoretical stance (1989a) for doing such study. Philipsen formulated the approach as a way to analyze communication as a cultural resource, with others in the field using this approach, for example, to investigate communication among Vietnam veterans (Braithwaite, 1990b), among Chinese (Chen, 1990–1991; Garrett, 1993), among Appalachians (Ray, 1987), and among church members (Sequeira, 1993). Many studies in EC have been conducted in the United States, but also the approach has been applied widely in a variety of other countries, for example, in Colombia (Fitch, 1991), Israel (Katriel, 1986, 1991), and Finland (Carbaugh, 1993). Additionally, EC has also been used to conduct cross-cultural analyses of silence (Braithwaite, 1990a), conflict management (Shailor, 1990), and terms for talk (Carbaugh, 1989). EC has been productively used, therefore—within and across cultural communities—as a way to apply and develop communication theory.

EC, as Philipsen (1989a, 1992) sees it, involves a philosophical commitment to investigating communication as something radically cultural, as a patterning of practices among particular people in a particular place. Although this is not the only philosophical commitment of EC, it is a principal one, as EC seeks to know how people communicate in the course of their everyday lives. Philipsen argues that this kind of "situated" knowledge about communication can be developed in a theoretically rigorous way. Practitioners of EC, from this view, then, investigate particular communication practices, and do so in theoretically informed ways.

It is the purpose of this chapter to introduce the basic philosophy and theory of EC, as well as detail some of its developments into cultural

communication (CC). It is impossible to treat all aspects of the approach, so I will focus here only on its basic philosophy and theory, as well as some of its recent developments and applications. Some of the recent topics raised in ethnography such as modes of ethnographic writing, the critical impulse, experimental narration, will not occupy a central place in this chapter, although such concerns are of keen interest to ethnographers of communication, a point I note in concluding. My main purpose here is (1) to characterize EC as an investigative mode of inquiry, (2) to sketch its philosophical commitments about communication, (3) to explicate its basic theory, and (4) to discuss some of its recent developments and applications. But first, following the commitment to particularity espoused by Philipsen (1989a), let us enter our discussion close to the ground, through an example of a routine communicative practice.

Particularity: Investigating Communication Practices

"My NAME is Debbie Miller. I kept my REAL name!" The young woman was reacting to an older man while at a wedding reception in New England, in the northeastern area of the United States. When the older man met her, she had been introduced to him simply as Debbie. In the course of their conversation, he discovered that she was married to Randy Smith. Immediately after this discovery, the older man, a retired schoolteacher, presumed Debbie and Randy shared a last name and thus had expressed his presumed realization to Debbie, "Oh, Debbie Smith." It was this expressed presumption—that the younger woman would share a last name with her husband and thus be a Smith, rather than keep her birth name and thus be a Miller—that precipitated her assertion to the older man that she kept her REAL NAME.

Brought to the surface in this exchange are alternate forms of naming, and through these alternate forms are expressed various competing messages about identity, proper social conduct, social relations with others, and objects of emotion. Two countervoices are audible here. With the shared last name, an identity of the female is constituted as perhaps a "wife" or "mother." With the other, the birth name, an identity of the female is constituted differently, as perhaps an "independent woman." The alternate uses of these forms of naming, and the meanings associated with each, provided the symbolic resources through which this brief yet potent social drama was created.

What means of communication are used when people, like this woman and this man, talk to each other? What are the meanings associated with these various means of communication? What do they enable and constrain? How do these means and meanings get played into particular encounters between particular people? These are the kinds of questions that ethnographers puzzle over. If we cast the questions more generally, thus moving beyond questions

of particular naming devices, we might ask, Through what forms and means of communication is life meaningfully conducted, here? The *here* is important because there is a commitment in ethnography in general, and in particular, to discovering the distinctive communicative means that particular people use, on particular occasions, and thus to exploring those distinctive means in their natural environments, in those particular places. Philipsen (1989a, pp. 258–260) has called this commitment to the distinctive nature and particular quality of communication, an *axiom of particularity.* Reflecting the ethnographer's commitment, he argues that knowledge of communication, of its nature, functions, forms, situations, and meanings, be erected at least partly by attending to local systems of practices. The logic is this: each such communication system requires discovery, and this process of discovery provides access into the communicative life of a people in their place.

Debbie Miller and the retired schoolteacher are in this sense of a deeply particular place, of a distinctive system of communicative practices. All communication can be understood in this way, as from a people or of a place. Understanding the communicative life of people, what is significant and important to them as they communicate, like what New Englanders think they are "up to" or "up against" as they use names, this is a primary objective of ethnographic studies of communication.

Generality

People also use communicative forms that can be understood absractly. For example, ways people address each other personally might involve different forms of first names, last names, or titles, and different meanings for each from intimacy to power. What forms of address are associated with which general dimensions of meaning can thus be understood more generally (see Fitch 1991; Sequira 1993). This double allegiance, to the particular shape and meaning of communication in place (i.e., New England patterns of address) and to what this might suggest generally (i.e., about address forms and meanings abstractly), demonstrates dual objectives in EC research. Investigators in this vein want foremost to know in particular the nature of communication in its place, yet also they want to know what this local way, and other local ways, suggest generally about human communication. This dual attention to local practices and cross-local principles creates a kind of balanced view of communication, an exploration into its particulars of practice and abstractions of the general principles exhibited in those particular practices. "The axiom of particularity" thus suggests listening carefully to the local and particular sounds of communication, yet to do so in ways that enable general knowledge of communication to be built (see Philipsen, 1989a, pp. 261–262).

Basic Philosophy: Assumptions about Communication

The ethnography of communication has been built on a basic philosophy of communication. This philosophy is the result not just of abstract conjecture, but of careful fieldwork that has attended both to the variety of cultural resources of communication and the various forms of life these have constituted around the world. In particular, the ethnography of communication has built knowledge about communication by presuming the following: that everywhere there is communication, a system is at work; that everywhere there is a communication system, there is cultural meaning and social organizations and thus, that the communication system is at least partly constitutive of socio-cultural life (see Philipsen, 1992, pp. 7–16).[1]

Communication Exhibits Systemic Organization

Ethnographic studies of communication have amply demonstrated that, when there is a communication pattern, some systemic organization is at work. The concept pattern, used here, draws attention to a particular and recurrent means of communication that is intelligible to some participants when it is used. An example of a patterned use is the use in New England of one's birth name after marrying. Such use is not random, but orderly, with the order of social life being partly constituted by the choice of this form, such that when it is used, it constitutes a particular organization of social life. The concept system draws attention to the larger communicative situation at play during such use, with this larger situation being something that involves participants, who say some things (rather than other things) to an other(s) about something in a particular way (e.g., language(s), channel, instrument) for specific purposes in some sequence of action on a particular occasion (see Hymes, 1972; Philipsen, 1992, p. 9). Repeatedly, ethnographic studies of communication have demonstrated that the choice to speak or not, in a particular way, to whom, for how long, and so on is not random but patterned and patterned in systematic ways. Communicating generally thus involves patterns of communication, with those patterns exhibiting order as part of social life (see Cushman and Cahn 1985).

Philipsen's studies of Teamsterville (1975, 1976, 1986, 1992) have been exemplary in showing how male members of a Chicago community say that they prefer, among other things, being silent rather than speaking, hitting someone rather than talking with them, exercising influence through intermediaries rather than speaking for oneself. In communicating these ways, community members partake and contribute to a local scene, thereby acting and interpreting actions in a local and systematic way. Preferences as these, Philipsen argues, are more than simply personal matters, they are part of a community's system of communication, in this case, a part that demonstrates ways to "be a man."

Similarly, if we revisit Debbie's exclamation to the older man—that she kept her "real" name—we notice that she chose a verbal means of referring to herself and, in so doing, was heard to react to something the older man had said earlier. Her exclamation says something, it communicates, precisely because participants hear her preferring her birth name over her husband's last name. Each form, her birth name or her husband's name, has its own meanings and constraints, its own significance, with each being used to organize this particular encounter. This example illustrates systemic organization of communication in several ways: it shows how verbal means, or forms, carry meanings; how different verbal means carry different meanings; how the play between means and meanings organizes an encounter between present participants in particular ways; and, how the preference and use of one means over others, in a context, carries significant cultural and social weight.

Such preferences for communication are sometimes characterized by ethnographers and others as *rules* for speaking, with the concept rule being used here to identify ways people account for, justify, or explain their conduct. Communication rules, in this sense, are subject to all the whims of social life, including their legislation, transgression, remediation, and negotiation. This adds an important caveat to our first starting point: to claim that communication exhibits systemic organization is not to say that the system is necessarily rigid or unchanging. Quite the contrary. Parts of systems, as Debbie demonstrates, can be challenged, and modified, or reasserted and solidified. As Philipsen (1992, p. 10) puts it: "To say that speaking is structured is not to say that it is absolutely determined. It is patterned, but in ways that its creators can circumvent, challenge, and revise. Its rules are violated, new rules and meanings are created, and there in play is brought into structure just as structure is brought into play."

Processes like these, and the various beliefs and preferences animating the performance, show a community in communication, the possibility of great diversity in dialogue. So, to claim there is systemic order in communication is not to require a bland uniformity of belief or morality (although that, indeed, is actualized on some occasions), nor does it require social struggle and difference (although on occasions, this also occurs). It does suggest that we be able to hear communication with all of its various forces, from commonality to difference, collusion to conflict, harmony to discord. Painful inequities and various moral, even personal conflicts, if aggravating and perplexing, are nonetheless played together in communication, as are happier moments, in systemic ways.

Communication Is a Socio-Cultural Performance

A second assumption elaborates the first. It assumes that everywhere there is communication, there is to be found cultural meaning systems and social

organizations (see Basso 1979; Carbaugh and Hastings, 1992; Goodwin, 1990; Schneider, 1976). As Philipsen (1992, 124) puts it, to "speak" is fundamentally, to speak culturally.

The logic in this belief can be put simply: if communication has something to do with meaning making, and meanings have something to do with participants' points-of-view, and participants' points-of-view have something to do with their particular cultural orientations, then communication creatively evokes *cultural meaning systems*.

This point is demonstrated forcefully in Philipsen's (1986) cultural interpretation of a passionate public speech made by the late Mayor Daley of Chicago. During his speech, the mayor explained one of his recent political appointments by referring to the appointee as "a son" of "a good mother" who contributed to "this [Daley's] society." He contrasted this act of appointment with the corrupt world of "the university," where a political antagonist of his, "a professor," worked. From one prominent view of Chicago journalists, his speech was heard as a "tirade." From another view closer to Daley's community, the speech was heard as an apt defense of his appointment. Philipsen's interpretation demonstrates the basic principle: ethnographers seek, at least partly, to interpret the culture that speakers (and hearers) like Daley use when they speak (and listen).

Distinctive philosophical commitments are operating here about the nature of communication and ways of inquiring about it. With regard to communication, EC presumes a pattern of action, or process of meaning making that is cultural (i.e., distinctive and meaningful). Further, it presumes that participants can (and do) use this pattern or process to constitute relations among themselves and others. With regard to a philosophy of inquiry, ethnographers are therefore committed to understanding the nature of participants' meanings in or about those processes. What do the participants consider significant and important? The role of the "native view" is thus a fundamental concern, but not the exclusive concern, in an ethnographic view of communication. This commitment distinguishes the interpretive stance of EC from other interpretive theories, such as those more Marxist or Freudian, because participants' meanings are less centrally foregrounded in these theories, if they are considered at all (see Carbaugh, 1991).

With regard to Debbie's assertion of her "real name," we might ask, then, how does this shift of name move participant meanings from one sort to another? Forms of a last name are on some occasions highly potent sources of meanings. These can be a site of communicative struggle. These ignite participants' meanings along dimensions of separateness-connectedness, independence-dependence, strength-vulnerability. These dimensions are associated with the institution of marriage. These meanings are at times greatly magnified with the introduction of the themes family and children. They can carry strong

economic and political overtones. All of this and more exhibit the degree to which communication creatively evokes locally based, historically grounded, cultural meaning systems.

This becomes all the more apparent when contrasting cultural systems. Elsewhere, for example, in Finland, personal names are not so highly expressive and charged, nor are they prominent sites of struggle, nor meaningful in the same ways, and so on. A different if somewhat related system of participant meanings is invoked when names are used in Finland, as elsewhere, when persons marry.

The example between Debbie and the older man and the Finnish example help demonstrate two further principles regarding communication and cultural meaning systems: communication patterns and their meanings are distinctive to cultural people and place; and thus, although general principles of communication may be identified across systems, any practice of communication, its shape and meanings, also varies from cultural system to cultural system. The concepts culture and cultural meaning system help foreground this type of variability in communication patterns.

While creatively invoking cultural meaning systems, communication also socially positions persons (through roles or identities) and creates relations among them (e.g., from egalitarian to hierarchical). In this way, communication is a prominent site for ordering *social life*. With the term *social* knowledge about communication is grounded in these commitments: to the situating of communication in actual contexts; to the interactional dynamics (or social negotiation or conjoint activities) through which identities and relations are constituted; and to the local, moment-to-moment occasions that motivate them. The concept social thus helps ground cultural meaning systems in the specific scenes of social life, its specific interactions, occasions, and events.

As mentioned earlier, this philosophy of communication motivates a philosophy of inquiry that is "close to the social ground." It suggests these questions, How are identities and social relations interactionally accomplished? How are they organized into human institutions such as education, the arts, law, religion, or sciences? How are communication practices played out among participants on different occasions? What precipitates the performance? What are the social workings of institutional life? For example, when Debbie contested the form of last name used by the older man, the interactional dynamics displayed specific identities and relations among those in the exchange (i.e., saying something about those present, Debbie, the man, and how they were, in the moment, related). The exchange moreover carried significance beyond these participants. It said something also more general, to those who share some understanding of the system, about those who promote, or deny, each alternate form of naming. This further implicates models of those who promote or use each type and casts relations between these in particular ways. The drama

of this occasion plays the present identities, relations, and institutions in a particular way for Debbie and the retired teacher, but what is communicated is also partly a cultural story, about men and women, young and elderly, and what it means to be married and to be a person in today's modern world. Identities and relations are thus socially grounded, for they are constantly subjected to an interactive and occasioned process, with repercussions of these being felt not only in, but beyond the present occasion. This demonstrates the social and cultural foundations of communication.

Communication Is Constitutive of Part of Socio-Cultural Life

There is a way of acting, interpreting, and reflecting that is communicational and this way constitutes part of social and cultural life. Particular case studies of communication from around the world demonstrate just how this is so, with the means and meanings of communication being forceful relationally (Carbaugh, 1988c; Katriel and Philipsen, 1981), politically (e.g., Brenneis and Myers, 1984; Huspek and Kendall, 1991; Philipsen, 1992), religiously (Bauman, 1970, 1983), environmentally (Carbaugh, 1992), racially (Kochman, 1981), ethnically (Katriel, 1986), sexually (Goodwin, 1990; Sherzer, 1987; Tannen, 1990), to sample just a few of the studies. Like the particular moment between Debbie and the older man, communication has been shown the world over to be forceful in giving fundamental form and meaning to socio-cultural life. Upon this role of communication, as constituting a basic part of social life, as structuring ways of living, ethnographers build their studies (Hymes, 1972; Sapir, 1931).

Yet, certainly there is more to life than we on occasion communicate. Species biologies, the workings of the physical environment, human psychologies, spiritual forces, such processes and others are, perhaps, on occasion, formative parts of social life. Yet, we cannot and do not say all that we know about all such processes on any particular occasion. But we do, on some occasion, say something of each. What we actually say on occasion, how it is put and what it means, this practice of communication and the system it implies—this is partly constitutive of social life, and it is this that we draw attention to when ethnographers study communication.

This is a potentially thorny issue, because it is obviously possible and sometimes productive to argue that all that is socially efficacious and commonly meaningful falls within the purview of communication, and thus communication is constitutive of all of social life. Yet, these two accents on "the constitutive" role of communication do not have to conflict or breed paradox. The one point, the first, is a point of actuality: simply, that persons indeed communicate, do so in particular ways on particular occasions, and by doing so can constitute a potent form of social life. Such patterns of actual use never exhaust the potential of any communication system nor do they say all there is to say about the various processes of social life. Neither do they construct, literally, the raw physical materials of living (although they do create a shared sense of such physical materials). Thus, communication is constitutive of part of social life.

The second point is a point of potentiality: simply, if something is to be socially efficacious, and commonly meaningful, it must be ably communicated. Such is arguably true, if not actualized on particular occasions. Further, there are parts of social life that are not fundamentally or typically communicative. Take for example some types of social organization that are demonstrated in some of the fascinating studies in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis. These kinds of studies, distinct from but complementing ethnographic studies, show that there are deep levels of social organization in human interaction that are not necessarily or routinely subjected to communication. For example, the ways we pause between utterances, take turns in conversation, or even hold our faces while walking alone in public are socially organized and culturally distinct, but they are not, typically, that is when social life proceeds as usual, sources of messages (Schegloff, 1972; Scollon and Scollon, 1981). Because parts of life as these are socially organized and culturally distinct and because these features are not necessarily communicative, it is a bit bold to declare that all social life falls within the realm of communication. Again, communication is constitutive of part of social life.

The basic philosophy guiding EC, then, holds that communication, when it occurs, exhibits some kind(s) of system or order; that in so doing it constitutes and creatively invokes, in the occasion, social organization and cultural meanings; that it does this in ways that vary from people to people and place to place; that its nature, functions, and structures vary from place to place, thus its patterns and systemic organization need to be discovered (described, interpreted) in each case. These provide the basic philosophical assumptions about communication that guide ethnographic inquiries into communication practices.

Ethnographic Claims About Communication

Philipsen's ethnographic field reports demonstrate how theoretical claims are made on two general levels: One kind of claim is about the way communication is organized in a place by a people. This claim is often of the form: *X* (the cultural practice of communication) is granted legitimacy (if *X* is a norm) or coherence (if *X* is a code) by participants in communication system *Y* (the speech situation or community). This is a claim about the qualities of a cultural *practice* of communication that actually occurs in a context. It is an "emic" kind of claim; that is, making the claim involves a description of the practice and an interpretation of what the practice means to those who participate with it, what it enables for them and what it constrains them from doing. This product

of inquiry demonstrates how communication is being organized by a particular people and seeks to understand the meanings of that practice to those who produce it. For example, Teamster men enact the male role by speaking in symmetrical relations, but refrain from speaking in asymmetrical relations. This carries cultural meanings for Teamsters about maleness and organizes their social relations on a theme of solidarity (Philipsen, 1992). Such a claim is theoretical in that it identifies the general way, the patterned way, a people in a place constitute—conduct and interpret—their communicative lives.

A second kind of claim builds necessarily on the basic descriptive work about communication practices and identifies commonalities across these practices, often through comparative study. This enables more abstract claims or *principles* of communication to be formulated. This kind of claim is often of the following form: these cultural practices (CP_1, $CP_2 \ldots$, CP_n) suggest these general theoretical principles (P_1, $P_2 \ldots$, P_n) about this communication phenomenon (e.g., address terms, politeness, emotion expression). This kind of claim is more general than the previous ones, in that it identifies general principles, dimensions, or standards of communication that operate across cultural practices. For example, Braithwaite (1980, 1990a), drawing upon Basso's (1990a [1970]) earlier work and that of many others, has identified, across cultural uses and interpretations of silence, two universal warrants. Building upon her descriptive fieldwork in Colombia, Fitch (1991) explored the general dimensions operating in personal address. Another comparative work has identified across fifty cultural terms for *talk*, general ways in which communication is organized, when it is talked about, and the dimensions of cultural meanings implicated in such talk (Carbaugh, 1989). Claims such as these are theoretical and general, more "etic," or more abstract, in that they identify, across such communicative phenomena as silence, personal address, and terms for strategic action, general principles and parameters for organizing communication.

These provide examples of two general kinds of theoretical claims made by ethnographers, claims about cultural practices of communication and claims about general principles of communication. But how are these kinds of theoretical arguments generated? How do ethnographers create claims about cultural practices and more general principles of communication?

A Descriptive Theory Used to Generate Claims

These questions suggest that we think about the basic theoretical concept *perspective*, or *descriptive theory*, that is used by ethnographers to generate these claims. Ethnographers typically begin their studies by learning about and then subsequently using during fieldwork a theoretical framework or a conceptual system, a systematic way of asking about and thus analyzing communication practices. Among other uses, the framework provides, in principle, for adequate

descriptions and interpretations or explanations of communication practices and is thus not surprisingly called a *descriptive framework*.

The descriptive theory informing most ethnography of communication research is based upon, or derives from Hymes's programmatic statement (1972). This formulation suggests that, to describe cultural practices and principles of communication, investigators organize their studies around one of various social units such as a speech community, a speech situation, communicative event, act, style, or general way of speaking. Chief among these concepts is the concept of *speech community*, an idea that grounds thinking about communication in a social group and the diverse resources being used by its members to constitute its patterns of social living.

EC studies use a schematic vocabulary of components for analyzing these social units. In other words, whether studying a speech community of Teamsters, a speech situation like the *Donahue Show*, a communicative event like a public conflict, acts of silence, or a style of directness, EC suggests a general strategy of analysis. The technical vocabulary guiding such analyses is nicely summarized with the SPEAKING mnemonic (*Situation* is the setting and scene; *Participants* are personalities, social positions, or statuses, relations; *Ends* are the goals and outcomes; *Acts* are the message content, form, sequences, dimensions, and types of illocutionary force; *Key* is the tone or mode; *Instrumentalities* are the channel, media; *Norms* are of interaction and interpretation; *Genre* are native and formal). Each italicized concept suggests a question about communication, such as, in what situation is it occurring? among what participants? toward what ends?

Over the life of an ethnographic study, the descriptive theory is used in different ways. It can be used as a way of describing communication in its contexts, thus serving as a theory for describing actual communication practices. It can be used also to interpret, where salient, the cultural status or participant view of each concept, thus serving as a theory for interpreting communication practices. For example, with regard to the *P* component, one might ask, how do participants characterize each other (and others) in the course of their social interactions? What do these acts of identification mean? Or, more generally, what is the norm for interpreting (*N*) this concept (e.g., *S*, *P*, *A*)? Further, the theory can be used to develop communicational explanations, as a theory for positing systematic relations among concepts. For example, in Philipsen's (1975) study of Teamsterville men, he found corelations between speaking (the *A*) and symmetrical relations (the *P*) and between not speaking (the *A*) and asymmetrical relations (the *P*). And finally, the theory can serve, as mentioned earlier, as a basis for comparative analyses (see Braithwaite, 1990a; Shailor, 1990). The theory thus has descriptive, interpretive, corelative, and comparative uses.

In addition to these specific uses, the schematic vocabulary of the theory suggests a holistic theoretical attitude with regard to the nature and functions of communication. For example, if one wanted to examine the force of "speech

acts," one could do so by exploring the abstract dimensions and forces in speech that were formulated by John Searle (1969, 1990). If, however, one were designing such study from an ethno-communicative perspective, one would be led, by the descriptive theory, to explore and analyze the force of "speech acts" in communicative situations (e.g., the expression of gender inequality in an American speech community), thus focusing on the *A* part of the system within a social context (e.g., a particular social unit). Further, the vocabulary suggests that communicative acts occur as parts of scenes (*S*, *P*), within larger forms and sequences (*E*, *A*, *K*), through particular contents and domains of meaning (*A*, *N*), according to particular norms for conducting and interpreting conduct (*N*), with culturally targeted goals in mind (*E*). Each such component suggests something that is perhaps of relevance for understanding particular acts of speaking. Speech acts, from this theoretical view, may enact universal dimensions and types of expressive force, but they are conceptualized as something more. They are part of a socially negotiated, individually applied, culturally distinctive, and historically grounded expressive system. The schematic vocabulary, when used, invokes this theoretical attitude, with communication deemed not just generally, but particularly, as constitutive of socio-cultural life.

Consider similarly studies of the media and mass communication. One might want to study print media (e.g., newspapers, magazines) or electronic media (e.g., television). The descriptive theory in ethno-communication inquiry would suggest a conceptualization of these media (the *I* part of the framework) by exploring the various instruments (e.g., spoken words, visual images, singing, music, drumming) and channels being used (e.g., electronic, print). Further, an understanding of these would be grounded socially (e.g., within speech communities, events, situations) and further elaborated with attention to the role of particular media within configurations of participants, act sequences, particular genres, and so on. The media of communication would be conceptualized as part of social and cultural life. As a result, examinations of a particular mediated image out of its communicative context or beginning by generalizing across media productions without attention to particular mediated practices would violate a theoretical commitment of the ethnography of communication. The former, by abstracting images out of sequence, violates the communication of the image as a sequential and sociocultural force. The latter, by generalizing across media productions, fails to penetrate the particular sociocultural practice of each.

The two examples of a theoretical attitude help make the following points about the roles of descriptive theory within ethnography of communication research. (1) Ethnography of communication provides a basic philosophy and theory of communication, not merely a method for studying communication. (2) The theory generates particular claims about cultural practices of communication as well as general principles about communication. (3) The claims

are generated through a perspective that focuses analysis upon particular social units and analyzes those units through particular components. (4) Particular studies of communication, descriptions and interpretations of unique configurations of communicative practices, their affordances and limitations, are designed with the full conceptual framework in mind. Note, then, that the descriptive theory has of necessity many uses, including (1) suggested conceptualizations of particular research problems (e.g., speech acts, personal address, media) (Philipsen, 1993; see also Carbaugh and Hastings, 1992), and (2) a suggested methodological design of research (Philipsen, 1977), (3) which yields local or domain theories of communication (Cushman and Pearce, 1977; Philipsen, 1992) and (4) provides bases for more abstract theoretical claims, across cultural patterns, through comparative studies (Braithwaite, 1990a). Because of the nature and various uses of descriptive theory in ethnography of communication research, it assumes a prominent and indispensable part of this research program.

Some Recent Developments in the Research Program

Recent surveys of the ethnography of communication provide summaries of what it has accomplished since its inception. In various forms, these writings include programmatic statements (Philipsen, 1989a, 1993), schematic reviews (Bauman and Sherzer, 1975, 1990), critical reviews (Sherzer, 1977), and a bibliography of fieldwork (Philipsen and Carbaugh, 1986). Interested readers will want to survey this recent work if interested in the full range of activities involved in the research program. Here, I will focus on the developments of EC. I will give special attention to three recent developments: cultural communication theory, a communication theory of culture, and a cultural interpretive theory. These do not exhaust the contributions of this body of work and are thus selective, but they are nonetheless illustrative of some extensions of the program that some communication scholars have made.

Philipsen's Cultural Communication Theory

In 1987, Gerry Philipsen wrote an essay titled, "The Prospect for Cultural Communication." A longer version of the essay had been presented in 1980 at a conference in Yugoslavia on communication theory. Both versions stimulated considerable thinking and research about communication from a cultural perspective. Its main contributions were to advance a dialectical base for the study of communication systems, to foreground the communal function in some communication practices, to stipulate three cultural forms of communication, and later (Philipsen, 1992) to add the concept of speech codes.

Philipsen opens the 1987 essay with an assumption about a *basic dialectic* that grounds communication systems (1987, p. 245): "Every people manages

somehow to deal with the inevitable tension between the impulse of individuals to be free and the constraints of communal life. . . . Locating a culture on this axis reveals a partial truth about it, a kind of cultural snapshot, but in order to perceive the culture fully, one must also know the culture's direction of movement along the axis and the relative strengths of the competing forces pushing it one way or another." Presumably, cultural communicative systems generally, and patterns for communicating particularly, elaborate some points on this dimension as the "dominant themes and warrants for human thought, speech, and action" (p. 245).

This formulation is highly suggestive. Suggested are a range of cultural communication systems from those that expressively elaborate "individual impulses" to those that elaborate "communal constraints." Note that the suggestion is of a dialectic not a dichotomy, so features of each are presumably parts of every system, even if elaborated differently. Suggested moreover are scenes or styles of communication within cultural systems that play more one way than the other, or play one way against another (see Philipsen, 1992, pp. 43–61). Suggested also is a kind of grand balancing between individual impulses and communal constraints, with hyperamplifications in one direction (e.g., of communal constraints) precipitating corrective actions in the other (e.g., of individual impulses). Recent events in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union provide fertile soil for applying this dynamic. The basic idea is this: a dialectical play is at the base of communication systems, with a "healthy balance [being sought] between the forces of individualism and community" (p. 249).

Some recent studies have been designed that are cognizant of and partly conceptualized on the basis of this basic dialectic (e.g., Carbaugh, 1988a, 1988b; Katriel, 1986, 1991). Another study was designed to investigate this dialectic, including its cross-cultural utility (Carbaugh, 1988–1989).

A second contribution has been to posit the existence, in speech communities, of a *communal function*. How do people constitute communal identities with their communication? The communal function draws attention to this process, to the creation and affirmation of "a sense of shared identity which nonetheless preserves individual dignity, freedom, and creativity" (Philipsen, 1987, p. 249). Or, put slightly differently, the communal function identifies "communication as a means for linking individuals into communities of shared identity" (Philipsen, 1989b, p. 79). This communicative accomplishment is enacted through various communicative forms, with each coordinating social actions and expressing common meanings. Such forms may treat individuality, or constraint thematically or both together, yet, in so doing, link people together as participants who share membership in a social group.[2]

Philipsen (1987) argued that there are three generic *cultural forms* that can serve as interpretive devices for analyzing the various ways in which the communal function is communicated: ritual, myth, and social drama. Ritual provides a structuring to communicative sequences such that the sequence, when conducted correctly, celebrates a sacred object (see also Philipsen, 1992, 1993). Several studies of communication rituals have been produced (Carbaugh, 1988a, 1988b, 1993; Katriel, 1990; Katriel and Philipsen, 1981), and the concept is the central organizing concern in Katriel's (1991) monograph. Myth provides communally potent narrative resources that an individual can use to "dignify and give coherence to" life (Philipsen, 1987, p. 252). As personal stories uniquely appropriate cultural narratives, as young children confess in the style of George Washington, such events can sometimes reach mythic proportions (see Philipsen, 1992, pp. 87–98). The third form, the social drama, drawn from the work of Victor Turner, is a processual form in four phases through which cultural codes are violated, negotiated and revised, or reasserted.

The theoretical importance of identifying a range of cultural communicative forms is significant. It suggests variability in the ways the cultural function is woven into communicative action, but also some generic cultural forms that hold considerable force in many communicative systems. As other forms are identified, further advances will be made in the ways culture animates communication. But further, the inclusion of multiple forms suggests a holistic, natural, and comparative theoretical attitude, as previously: to know a form is to know how it plays out in particular places and how it plays out differently than the other forms within that community (or differently from the same form as it is used in other contexts of a community). Thus, cultural forms of communication help provide heuristic tools from which to identify particular communicative practices and identify the diverse ways the communal function of communication is socially practiced (see especially Philipsen, 1993).

The concept *speech codes* helps elaborate the basic premises that communication is fundamentally a socio-cultural practice and partly constitutive of socio-cultural life. With regard to speaking, Philipsen (1992, p. 136) puts the basic idea this way: "Speaking is inextricably speaking culturally. . . . [It] is a radically cultural medium of human communication." Attending to speech codes helps ethnographers of communication identify a corelation between culture and speaking, such that (1) a distinctive culture carries with it (minimally) a distinctive speech code; (2) a distinctive speech code implicates models for personhood, society, and strategic action; (3) the cultural significance of communication depends partly upon interpretations of these spoken implications (of personhood, society, and strategic action); and (4) such "codes are inextricably woven into speaking" (1992, p. 136). These basic principles of speech codes are built upon careful fieldwork into the two codes of dignity and honor that carry cultural force among the Nacirema and Teamsters (Philipsen, 1992). Related work has described and interpreted similar speech codes as they are used in televised talk (Carbaugh, 1988c) and in intercultural encounters (Carbaugh, 1993, 1994).

The theoretical developments summarized here thus add to the ethnography of communication a basic critical dialectic, a communal function, three generic cultural forms of communication, and the concept of speech codes. Readers interested in these developments will want to consult the studies already cited for the more detailed field based demonstrations and explications of these developments.

Some Elements in a Communication Theory of Culture and Society

Two concepts of particular concern to ethnographers of communication are evident: the ways communication helps constitute *culture* and *society*. These two concepts are conceptualized uniquely and often implicitly by ethnographers. What, then, do ethnographers suggest as elements in a communication theory of culture or society? How can one integrate into communication theory models of culture and society? This of course is a very demanding and often neglected question, and one that requires more space than allotted here. What I can do, however, is briefly sketch ways the program already discussed is responsive to the question, referring the reader to other works that treat the topic at greater length, then hope such a brief discussion provides stimuli for subsequent inquiry.

With regard to the communication of *culture*, attention is drawn to certain basic elemental ingredients in the communication process: symbols, symbolic forms, their patterned use and interpretations. The concepts of *symbols* and *forms* draw attention to the basic materials, or vehicles, of expression in for example a speech situation. The intent is to include all of the possible linguistic and nonlinguistic material of messages that hold force somewhere, whether these are verbal, nonverbal, or visual and whether these are believed to be produced by humans, animals, or trees (see Crawford, 1992). Building upon earlier ethnographic work, these concepts help ground studies in the basic materials of expression (see e.g., Basso, 1990; Geertz, 1973; Schneider, 1976). *Patterned use* refers to the shape of symbols and symbolic forms and the ways these are employed on particular occasions by participants. *Interpretations* refer to the mutually intelligible beliefs or premises and values that are widely accessible to participants, deeply felt by them, and are thus associated with these expressions on the particular occasions (Philipsen, 1992). The communication of culture thus has something to do with the patterned use and interpretation of symbols and symbolic forms on particular social occasions (Carbaugh, 1988a, 1990b).

A communication theory of culture further sees that symbols and their meanings are not floating freely but are of course culturally accessible, historically grounded, socially occasioned, and individually applied (Carbaugh, 1991; Philipsen, 1992, pp. 7ff). This implies that some communicative dynamics, like some patterns distinctive to a particular dyad, are not cultural, in that they are not widely accessible, nor are they transmitted historically. For a pattern

or practice to be culturally forceful, its expressive force would be felt deeply and accessible as part of a historically transmitted, communal conversation (Carbaugh, 1988a, 1988b).

Sometimes the concept of system is used to discuss cultural communication. The theoretical point made with this concept is that a patterned use and interpretation of a symbol is only one part of a larger "galaxy"—to use Schneider's (1976) term—of situations and expressions. To conceptualize culture, then, as a system of expression, is to emphasize that one explores how a symbol or form (like the choice of last name upon marriage) functions within a larger communicative situation; what the symbol or symbolic form is like and unlike in this system; on what various occasions it is used and to what ends; what are its limits of expression; and what ideas and ideologies go along with it or are refracted by it?

A communication theory of culture thus is erected upon the concepts of symbols, symbolic forms, social uses, and meanings, and the theory builds an idea of culture as a historically grounded, socially negotiated, and individually applied system of meaningful expression.

Some basic elements in a communication theory of *society* add to this, the concepts, norms or rules for action, social positions and relations, and institutions (Schneider, 1976). A communication or discursive theory of norms involves hearing norms more as symbolic expressions that actors' can use to evaluate, justify, or explain conduct (see Philipsen, 1989a, pp. 263–265; also Carbaugh, 1990a, pp. 7–9; Hall, 1988–1989). These are the communicative resources that are used to state the ways one should or should not act, to argue what is good in deed. How one can justifiably act, whether one can ably do so, and whether one can justify one's acts—all of this and more creates the basic social materials regarding one's rights and obligations as an actor. Processes as these exhibit the communication of norms.

Other elements in the communication of society are the creation, reaffirmation, or negotiation of social positions (e.g., male, female, boss, employee) and the resulting relations created among participants (e.g., egalitarian, hierarchical). As communication occurs, identities and relations among participants are being managed (Carbaugh, 1994). Furthermore, the concept institution suggests that certain symbols and their meanings, along with a particular system of rules, social positions, and relations, have become fairly robust. The communication of social institution thus implies a complex theoretical claim: that particular symbols, forms, and meanings are operative; that these are justifiable through a normative rule system; that this system of justification, or legitimation, solidifies certain positions for participants and certain relations among participants; and that this configuration is robust socially, relatively durable, and stable.

Taken together, then, these elements provide some elemental and basic concepts for constructing a communication theory of culture and society. Certainly, much further work is to be done, especially fieldwork, with these heuristic concepts at hand.

Interpretive Theory: Cultural Structures in Communication

A large body of ethnographic fieldwork has shown that three cultural structures are prominent in the conduct and interpretation of communication (see Carbaugh, 1989). These three are part of the speech code concept and are models of personhood, society, and strategic action. In other words, as people communicate, they employ symbols and meanings that explicate, or implicate, messages about persons, societal life, and strategic action. Let us examine each in turn.

In his studies of Teamsterville (1992), Philipsen discovered a system of symbolic expressions that constituted, in that community, a proper kind of person, a "man." Wieder and Pratt (1990) have described ways Osage communicate to be recognized as a "real Indian." Similarly, Fitch (1991) described how Colombian ways of addressing each other through terms that derive from *madre* (mother) create a cultural persona of mother and structure social relations in their use. Katriel (1986) described the communicative enactment of the Sabra Jew through a style of straight talk, or "dugri speech." Other studies have described how the person in middle America is symbolized as "an individual" who "has rights" and "makes choices" (Carbaugh, 1988c, 1994). These studies suggest that prominent among the symbols and symbolic forms used for communication are terms and meanings that identify persons, or kinds of persons, as social agents in society. The person one is, and what can and should be done by such, these provide basic materials for the conduct and interpretation of communication.

A second prominent structural feature is the way social relations, and perhaps human institutions, are culturally coded into the communication process. For example, as workers in one television station communicated with each other, they discussed themselves as "three completely different types." Part of the sense of this saying was that "the types" were arranged hierarchically and this hierarchical arrangement was the source of considerable tension (Carbaugh, 1988b). Similar communicative dynamics, although conducted in their own distinctive ways, are found to create solidarity among vets (Braithwaite, 1990b), gender relations among Colombians (Fitch, 1991), and egalitarian relations among Appalachians (Ray, 1987) or among others (see Brenneis and Myers, 1984). What the fieldwork suggests about communication is that the social position(s) one holds (or addresses), the ways it is related to others, the nature of these relations, and their possible solidification as an institutional form provide basic materials for the conduct and interpretation of communication.

A third prominent structure is the way conduct itself is culturally coded into the communication process. In other words, wherever people communicate, they can and do identify some of their cultural communicative actions with their own words. For example, Israelis identify one of their cultural forms of action with the term *griping* (Katriel, 1990). Americans identify certain communicative actions as "communication" and "chit-chat" (Katriel and Philipsen, 1981; Philipsen, 1992), and related others as "being honest" and "sharing" (Carbaugh, 1988c). Appalachians identify a form of action they call "huddling" (Ray, 1987). Such terms identify local forms of strategic action and are readily apparent in ethnographic studies of communication. A comparative study of fifty such terms identified in them messages about persons, society, and strategic action (Carbaugh, 1989). This fieldwork suggests that the kind of action that can and is being done, the actional force it holds for those present—these provide basic materials for the conduct and interpretation of communication.

Taken together, then, the following theoretical principles are operative in this recent ethnography of communication research and could thus be explicitly, if tentatively, formulated:

1. When there is a culture, three cultural structures are prominent in the communication.
2. The cultural structures are the symbols, symbolic forms, and meanings that identify ways of being a person, ways of being organized socially, and ways of conducting action.
3. These cultural structures provide material vehicles for the conduct of communication and general principles for the interpretation of communication.

The third principle needs further clarification. The fieldwork literature suggests two operations of the principle. First, that people on occasions will use symbols and forms that, for example, explicitly identify persons (e.g., personal names) and kinds of persons (e.g., "mother," "worker"). Second, that regardless of the explicit content of the communication, for example, whether it is about persons (social organization, strategic action) or not, it will still nonetheless convey something by way of a message about persons, social organization, or strategic action. This point suggests prominent interpretive domains that can be heard in cultural communication practices and that, when understood, create a kind of ongoing metacommunicative commentary in such practices—about persons, social relations, and strategic action. Such is amply demonstrated in recent fieldwork reports such as those just mentioned, among others (e.g., Baxter and Goldsmith, 1990; Harre, 1991; Scollon, 1992). Similar dimensions are evident in related theoretical work (Sigman, 1987). Being able to hear this ongoing commentary, amplifying its voice, and further refining

this proposed theoretical model of cultural interpretation, this is a task for future ethnographic inquiries into communication (see Carbaugh, 1989, 1990b).

Particular Applications of EC to the Communication Field

The ethnographic approach to communication outlined here has addressed several concerns prominent in the field of communication. For example, explorations in interpersonal communication often ask questions about how identities and personal relationships are created and negotiated (e.g., Cushman and Cahn, 1985). Recent ethnographic work has addressed just these questions with special attention to the ways popular discourse creates models for identity and social relations (see Carbaugh, 1988c; Katriel, 1991; Katriel and Philipsen, 1981). A detailed ethnographic look at ways Osage Indians communicate their identity has also been produced (Wieder and Pratt, 1990). The relationship between the general ethnographic theory of interpersonal communication and others within the field of communication has been discussed (Carbaugh, 1988c, pp. 115–120; Carbaugh and Hastings, 1992), and a theory of identity and social relations that derives from this ethnographic approach has been proposed (Carbaugh, 1994).

Explorations into organizational communication often ask questions about how participants organize themselves to produce a product or service. Recent ethnographic work has examined these processes in a veterans organization (Braithwaite, 1990b) and in a television station (Carbaugh, 1988b). A descriptive framework for conducting such ethnographic work into organizational communication, deriving from Philipsen's 1980 essay, has also been proposed and used (Carbaugh, 1985).

Ethnographic work into political communication has been quite extensive. As Bauman and Sherzer (1990, p. xii) remark: "one of the most fully and richly developed lines of comparative inquiry generated by the ethnography of speaking concerns the nature, forms, functions, and situational contexts of use of political language." They go on to summarize much of that work. In the communication field, such work has also been conducted, drawing attention to the constitution of a "political voice" among blue collar workers (Huspek and Kendal, 1991), to different cultural orientations being used in the conduct of political dramas (Philipsen, 1992, pp. 43–61; Carbaugh, 1992), to the political implications of educational radio designed for children (Katriel, 1991), and to the political grounding of prominent features of an American cultural identity (Carbaugh, 1988c, pp. 21–59). Works as these explore how issues of empowerment and the wielding and distribution of material and symbolic resources are prominent in some cultural communication practices and rich sites for ethnographic study.

Several recent fieldwork studies of intercultural and cross-cultural communication have been collected into a recent volume (Carbaugh, 1990a).

Of particular concern in studies of intercultural communication are the sources of difficulty when one cultural communication system contacts another. With these concerns in mind, Griefat and Katriel (1989) have described how an Arab interactional style of "musayara," which focuses on harmonious relations, differs dramatically from an Israeli style of "dugri," consisting as it does of direct, contentious, even face-threatening utterances. Carbaugh (1993) investigated Russian and American interactional styles used on a single occasion and found Russians foregrounding issues of virtue and collective sentiment, with an American style foregrounding matters of fact and personal disclosure. Recent cross-cultural work has explored communicative silence and universal warrants for its use and interpretation (Braithwaite, 1990a). Leeds-Hurwitz (1990) has also given useful historical perspective to intercultural communication as a field of study.

Studies of mass communication often presume some connection between the media of communication and the culture or society in which the media are used. Foremost in this discussion is the force of television as a communicative channel and its relation to audiences. Some recent ethnographic work has been responsive to this concern, suggesting that some cultural terms, meanings, metaphors, and forms that are prevalent in the social life of a society are also prominent and exploited in some televised forms (Katriel and Philipsen, 1981). Later studies have shown similarly, how mass media can be studied in a way that integrates and perhaps amplifies certain cultural features (Carbaugh, 1988c, 1988–1989). On other occasions, a "spacebridge" television event staged a clash between dramatically different cultural styles of expression (Carbaugh, 1993). Ways media and channels of communication are parts of cultural systems, the different premises assigned to each such media and channel, ways single programs or media episodes get played differently into different cultural systems—these issues and more provide fertile grounds for future ethnographic work.

And finally, a most recent focus of some studies has been the relationship between language, a sense of place, and landscape. Earlier work by Basso (1990) has been followed by others who have examined stories that socially constitute a sense of place (Katriel, 1993; Katriel and Shenhar, 1990), and the different communication codes of economics and ecologics animating a land-use controversy (Carbaugh, 1992). The relationship among culture, communication, and nature is just beginning to be addressed (see, e.g., Cantrill and Oravec, 1992; Carbaugh, 1996).

Even though much ongoing work cannot be summarized or mentioned here, I hope this brief review gives some idea of the breadth of concerns addressed in some recent ethnographic work and the considerable promise it holds for future studies into human communication.

Critical Reflection, by Way of Concluding

As is evident in the variety of work mentioned here, the ethnography of communication is just now being incorporated into many corners of the communication field. Although there are only a few practitioners of the program in communication studies, their contributions evidence a concern for developing communication theory in a way that embraces local forms and the meanings that participants deem significant and important when using these forms. Theorized from this view then, by these practitioners, are the particulars of contexts and conduct of communication, as well as its general principles.

The ethnographic program however has of course not achieved everything. It has limitations and gaps that will require additional work. For example, the limitations in some existing work demonstrate the necessity of focusing rigorously upon social interaction itself, rather than relying only upon reports about it. In other words, we need studies that take observational data as seriously as interview data. This focus is especially crucial in studies of intercultural encounters, single communicative occasions in which multiple cultural orientations are being used. There is very little work in this area and much work to be done. The paucity of studies that examine actual intercultural encounters shows the considerable demands of such study. One needs a robust enough theoretical framework to embrace cultural particularity and variability. Such a framework must be nimble enough to be applied to naturally occurring social interaction, to come to grips with the unique configurations of one cultural system, then the other (and perhaps others) to unravel the interactional dynamic between these systems, to interpret the social relation created in the interaction between each, and to do so from the vantage point of each cultural orientation. Such study, or what quickly becomes a series of such studies, taxes the best theories available to us, especially if done in a culturally sensitive but theoretically rigorous way.

Related to the focus on intercultural encounters are the issues raised between the concepts of difference and dominance. Some presume that understanding a difference (cultural or otherwise) is a positive step toward harmonious relations. For example, by understanding Swedes better, Finns will like them more, or be more willing to cooperate with them, or at least better able to coordinate their actions with them (if not cooperatively). Or, by understanding Teamsters better, liberal Americans will somehow better deal with this difference (Philipsen, 1992). It is often presumed that a more harmonious world will result from this kind of knowledge. This might be the outcome sometimes, even most of the time, but it is not necessary as an outcome. It is at least possible that a better understanding of an Other leaves one predisposed to like that Other less, even better equipped to refute, refuse, or defeat that Other! So, knowledge about the difference of an Other does not *necessarily* create a better relation

between Self and Other (as some divorce counseling has shown). How a better understanding of cultural difference influences subsequent interaction between those who are different is then a question to ask, rather than a panacea to presume. Questions of social relations thus become central as we explore what socio-cultural consequences—be they relations of dominance and subordination, or egalitarian, or some combination—are created by a better understanding of cultural difference. The various ways these dynamics are interactionally accomplished are not yet adequately addressed, nor understood, in an ethnographically informed way. Such work does not require an entirely different kind of study from that reviewed here, only a creative extension of some of the work already done.

Some work is being done to address these issues. Ethnographic field studies that investigate cultural differences in single encounters have been conducted (e.g., Philipsen, 1986; Carbaugh, 1993). Additionally, studies have been conducted that explore political differences in communication, including a working class political vocabulary (Huspek and Kendall, 1991) and the "dueling depictions" that occur between environmentalists and developers (Carbaugh, 1992). In the wake of these and other studies that explore similar dynamics (Carbaugh 1988c, 1988–1989), a theory of dueling structures has been proposed (Huspek, 1993). Emerging from such work is a useful extension of EC and CC into the dynamics of difference and dominance. Whether the most recent work is called *critical hermeneutics* or *cultural pragmatics* matters less than that it gets done, for we need to cultivate a critical reflection about these important concerns in our inquiries (see for example the forum on Ethnography and Critique in *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 1989–1990).

Other future ethnographic work may want to explore the frequency or distribution of some of the cultural practices identified in some of the preceding studies. For example, perhaps the belief that open, supportive communication is good is held more by women than men, more by those of upper than lower classes. Or ideas of what such communication is might vary. This could be studied. Even though studies identified this communication pattern and value, they did not trace its frequency of use across sample populations. Similarly, other such patterns that have been ethnographically described, could be so studied. But such study of frequencies and distributions rely upon the basic qualitative work reported here and thus would not supplant this earlier work but nicely complement it in interesting ways.

A further dynamic not well integrated into ethnographic studies is a kind of dialectical play between various dimensions, such as novelty and conventionality, uniqueness and stability, change and permanence, as well as the temporal playing of past, present, and future. Some studies have made efforts to integrate such dialectical tensions, but many of the more prominent ethnographic studies play the forces of the latter over the former (see Carbaugh, 1990b).

Focusing on particular interactions, demonstrating how culture is in communicative action, there, as in the exchange between Debbie Miller and the retired teacher discussed earlier in this chapter, should help future ethnographers address some of these limitations and gaps in the existing literature. Although much has been done, theoretically, empirically, interpretively, and comparatively, there is still much work to be done, with many ethnographic threads yet to be woven into the fabric of communication theory.

Notes

1. These starting points reflect the assumptions explicated by Dell Hymes (1962) in his seminal essay on the ethnography of speaking. The program of study he evnisioned has produced a large body of work including the early anthologies of Gumperz and Hymes (1972) and Bauman and Sherzer (1990 [1974]) and more recent ones (Brenneis and Myers, 1984; Carbaudh, 1990a). The anthologies and a bibliography of published fieldwork in the ethnography of communication (Philipsen and Carbaugh, 1986) evidence the considerable work motivated by, and empirically demonstrate the assumptive bases formulated earlier by Hymes, and discussed here.

2. See Philipsen (1989b) for a review of "the communal function in four cultures."

References

Basso, K. (1979). *Portraits of "the whiteman": Linguistic play and cultural symbols among the western Apache*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

——— (1990a). To give up on words: Silence in western Apache culture. In D. Carbaugh (Ed.), *Cultural communication and intercultural contact* (pp. 303–320). Hillsdale: Lawrence Eribaum. Originally published 1970.

——— (1990). Western Apache language and culture: Essays in linguistic anthropology. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Bauman, R. (1970). "Aspects of seventeenth century Quaker rhetoric." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56: 67–74.

——— (1983). *Let your words be few: Symbolism of speaking and silence among seventeenth century Quakers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

——— (1992). *Folklore, cultural performance, and popular entertainment: A communications centered handbook*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

——— and Sherzer, J. (1975). "The ethnography of speaking." *Annual Review in Anthropology* 4: 95–119.

——— and Sherzer, J. (Eds.) (1990). *Explorations in the ethnography of speaking*, 2d ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Originally published 1974.

Baxter, L., and Goldsmith, D. (1990). "Cultural terms for communication events among some American high school adolescents." *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 54: 377–394.

Braithwaite, C. (1980). "Cultural uses and interpretations of silence." MA thesis, Department of Speech Communication, University of Washington.

——— (1990a). "Communicative silence: A cross-cultural study of Basso's hypothesis." In D. Carbaugh (Ed.), *Cultural communication and intercultural contact*, pp. 321–327. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates.

——— (1990b). "Cultural communication among Vietnam veterans: Ritual, myth, and social drama." In R. Morris and P. Ehrenhaus (Eds.), *The cultural legacy of Vietnam*, pp. 145–170. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.

Brenneis, D., and Myers, F. (Eds.) (1984). *Dangerous words: Language and politics in the Pacific*. New York: New York University Press.

Cantrill, J., and Oravec, C. (Eds.) (1992). *The conference on the discourse of environmental advocacy*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Humanities Center.

Carbaugh, D. (1985). "Cultural communication and organizing." *International and Intercultural Communication Annual* 8: 30–47.

——— (1988a). "Comments on 'culture' in communication inquiry." *Communication Reports* 1: 38–41.

——— (1988b). "Cultural terms and tensions in the speech of a television station." *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 52: 216–237.

——— (1988c). *Talking American*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.

——— (1988–1989). "Deep agony: 'Self' vs. 'society' in Donahue discourse." *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 22: 179–212.

——— (1989). "Fifty terms for talk: A cross-cultural study." *International and Intercultural Communication Annual* 13: 93–120.

——— (Ed.) (1990a). *Cultural communication and intercultural contact*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates.

——— (1990b). "Toward a perspective on cultural communication and intercultural contact." *Semiotica* 80: 15–35.

——— (1991). "Communication and cultural interpretation." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77: 336–342.

——— (1992). " 'The mountain' and 'the project': Dueling depictions of a natural environment." In J. Cantrill and C. Oravec (Eds.), *Conference on the discourse of environmental advocacy*, pp. 360–376. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Humanities Center.

——— (1993). " 'Soul' and 'self': Soviet and American cultures in conversation." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 79: 182–200.

——— (1994). "Personhood, positioning, and cultural pragmatics: American dignity in cross-cultural perspective." In S. Deetz (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook 17*, pp. 159–186. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications.

——— (1996). *Situating selves*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

——— and Hastings, S. O. (1992). "A role for communication theory in ethnography and cultural analysis." *Communication Theory* 2: 156–165.

Chen, V. (1990–1991). " 'Mien tze' at the Chinese dinner table: A study of the interactional accomplishment of face." *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 24: 109–140.

Conquergood, D. (1991). "Rethinking ethnography: Toward a critical cultural politics." *Communication Monographs* 58: 179–194.

Crawford, L. (1992). "Speaking with trees: A Taoist view of environmental discourse." In J. Cantrill and C. Oravec (Eds.), *Conference on the Discourse of Environmental Advocacy*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Humanities Center.

Cushman, D., and Cahn, D. (1985). *Communication in interpersonal relationships*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Cushman, D., and Pearce, W. B. (1977). "Generality and necessity in three types of communication theory with special attention to rules theory." *Human Communication Research* 3: 344–353.

——— (1989/90). "Ethnography and critique." Special Section in *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 23: 243–328.

Fitch, K. (1991). "The interplay of linguistic universals and cultural knowledge in personal address: Colombian *Madre* terms." *Communication Monographs* 58: 254–272.

Garrett, M. (1993). "Wit, power, and oppositional groups: A case study of 'pure talk'." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 79: 303–318.

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

Goodwin, M. H. (1990). *He-said–she-said: Talk as social organization among black children*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Griefat, Y., and Katriel, T. (1989). "Life demands 'musayra': Communication and culture among Arabs in Israel." *International and Intercultural Communication Annual* 13: 121–138.

Gumperz, J., and Hymes, D. (Eds.). (1972). *Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Hall, B. J. (1988–1989). "Norms, action, and alignment: A discursive perspective." *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 22: 23–44.

Harre, R. (1991). "The discursive production of selves." *Theory and Psychology* 1: 51–63.

Huspek, M. (1993). "Dueling structures: The theory of resistance in discourse." *Communication Theory* 3: 1–25.

——— and Kendall, K. (1991). "On withholding political voice: An analysis of the political vocabulary of a non-political speech community." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77: 1–19.

Hymes, D. (1962). "The ethnography of speaking." In T. Gladwin and W. Sturtevant (Eds.), *Anthropology and human behavior*, pp. 13–53. Washington, D.C.: Anthropological Society of Washington.

——— (1972). "Models of the interaction of language and social life." In J. Gumperz and D. Hymes (Eds.), *Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication*, pp. 35–71. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Katriel, T. (1986). *Talking straight: "Dugri" speech in Israeli Sabra culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

——— (1990). " 'Griping' as a verbal ritual in some Israeli discourse." In D. Carbaugh (Ed.), *Cultural communication and intercultural contact* pp. 99–113. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates.

——— (1991). *Communal webs: Communication and culture in contemporary Israeli society*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

——— (1993). " 'Our future is where our past is': Studying heritage museums as ideological and performative arenas." *Communication Monographs* 60: 69–75.

——— and Philipsen, G. (1981). " 'What we need is communication': 'Communication' as a cultural category in some American speech." *Communication Monographs* 48: 301–317.

——— and Shenhar. (1990). " 'Tower and stockade': Dialogic narration in Israeli settlement ethos." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70: 359–380.

Kochman, T. (1981). *Black and white styles in conflict*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Leeds-Hurwitz, W. (1990). "Culture and communication: A review essay." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 76: 85–96.

Philipsen, G. (1975). "Speaking 'like a man' in Teamsterville: Culture patterns of role enactment in an urban neighborhood." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 61: 13–22.

——— (1976). "Places for speaking in Teamsterville." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 62: 15–25.

——— (1977). "Linearity of research design in ethnographic studies of speaking." *Communication Quarterly* 25: 52–50.

——— (1986). "Mayor Daley's council speech: A cultural analysis." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 72: 247–260.

——— (1987). "The prospect for cultural communication." In L. Kincaid (Ed.), *Communication theory: Eastern and Western perspectives*, pp. 245–254. Orlando, Fla.: Academic Press.

——— (1989a). "An ethnographic approach to communication studies." In B. Dervin, L. Grossberg, B. O'Keefe, and E. Wartella (Eds.), *Rethinking communication*. Vol. 2. Paradigm dialogues, pp. 258–268. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications.

——— (1989b). "Speech and the communal function in four cultures." *International and Intercultural Communication Annual* 13: 79–92.

——— (1992). *Speaking culturally*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

——— (1993). "Ritual as heuristic device in studies of organizational discourse." In S. Deetz (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook 16*, pp. 104–111. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications.

——— and Carbaugh, D. (1986). "A bibliography of fieldwork in the ethnography of communication." *Language in Society* 15: 387–398.

Ray, G. (1987). "An ethnography of nonverbal communication in an Appalachian community." *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 21: 171–188.

Sapir, E. (1931). "Communication." *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 4, pp. 78–81.

Schegloff, E. (1972). "Sequencing in conversational openings." In J. Gumperz and D. Hymes (Eds.), *Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication*, pp. 346–380. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Schneider, D. (1976). "Notes toward a theory of culture." In K. Basso and H. Selby (Eds.), *Meaning in anthropology*, pp. 197–220. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Scollon, R. (1992). "The shifting discourse of American individualism from the authoritarian to the infochild." Unpublished manuscript.

——— and Scollon, S. (1981). *Narrative, literacy, and face in interethnic communication*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.

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

——— (1990). "A classification of illocutionary acts." In D. Carbaugh (Ed.), *Cultural communication and intercultural contact*, pp. 349–372. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates. Originally published in 1976.

Sequiera, D. (1993). "Personal address as negotiated meaning in an American church community." *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 26: 259–285.

Shailor, J. (1990). "Cultural resources for conflict management: A comparative analysis." Paper presented at the Speech Communication Association, Chicago.

Sherzer, J. (1977). "The ethnography of speaking: A critical appraisal." In M. Saville-Troike (Ed.), *Linguistics and Anthropology* (GURT 1977), pp. 43–57. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

——— (1987). "A diversity of voices: Men's and women's speech in ethnographic perspective." In S. U. Philips, S. Steele, and C. Tanz (Eds.), *Language, gender, and sex in comparative perspective*, pp. 95–120. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sigman, S. (1987). *A perspective on social communication*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books.

Tannen, D. (1990). *You just don't understand*. New York: Morrow.

Wieder, D. L., and Pratt, S. (1990). "On being a recognizable indian among indians." In D. Carbaugh (Ed.), *Cultural communication and intercultural contact*, pp. 45–64. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates.