Language & Communicative Practices

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Chapter 9

Beyond the Speaker and the Text

To SPEAK IS TO ENTER A FIELD in which everything is moving and objects exist in relation to one another. Names, categories, and the stereotypes of common sense allow us temporarily to suspend the animation. But they are no less mutable than the things to which they seem to stick. A table is a table, a paper a paper, but beneath the labels we know that no two are really the same, and the "table" of now was "furniture" a moment ago and will be a "painting project" later. How we identify objects depends upon context, and the meanings of the words we use are so incomplete that they, too, take root in circumstances. In the previous chapter we broke down the notion that a language is a single, unitary system and replaced it with the indexical bonding of forms to utterance contexts, stylistic variation, and different ways of speaking. We underscored the point, made throughout this book, that language is permeated by human experience and that the kind of mediation basic to linguistic relativity is a reflexive one in which verbal practices routinize ways of experiencing, and these in turn make their way into the very categories of the language. This interplay is part of all speech but is nowhere more evident than in the range of metalinguistic evaluations that people make daily. For language, too, is an object experienced in relation to other objects. Its transience is made all the more final in that it can describe itself.

To speak is to take up a position in a social field in which all positions are moving and defined relative to one another. The idealized notion of a solitary speaker giving unified voice to subjective thoughts is vulnerable to the same arguments brought against language as a monolithic code. The same tendencies toward differentiation, context-dependency, and self-reflexivity that play upon language also play upon the speakers who produce it. This is not to equate speakers with language but to say that the two are intertwined. To see this more clearly, we have to separate the "speaker" from the person who happens to be speaking. The former is a social role, whereas the latter is a social agent capable of occupying many roles, some of which involve talk, some of which don't. The relativity hypothesis in its strong form is based on the primordial importance of speaking in social life.

This is one of the linchpins that holds together our understanding of human experience as based in verbal practices. But it is important to remember that between language and persons, however the two are conceived, there is the intermediary level of the various participant roles through which people come into contact with language. The very term "speaker" encodes a grand abstraction, since it applies to promisers, petitioners, liars, debaters, lovers, litigants, poets, cheaters, bullshitters, performers—and all the other more narrowly defined roles tied to speech. Like any generalization, it holds out the promise of common features that unify the differences and justify the single label. But how unitary is speaking really, and is the concept "speaker" the best we can do in describing the producers of utterances? These are the central questions of this chapter, and the short answers are "not very" and "no." The longer answers will take some explaining.

During the time that the ethnography of speaking was taking shape and theories of style and performance were being worked out, similar developments took place in the study of speech production. Goffman's work on "footing" brought into sharp relief the relation between speakers and their utterances. This resulted in the decomposition of the speaker and addressee roles into a set of more basic ones that Goffman dubbed the "production format" and the "participant framework." The result was a more precise but still abstract set of terms for analyzing the relations between parties to conversation. During this period, too, the writings of the Russian linguist Mikhail Bakhtin (who some take to be the same person as Voloshinov, writing under a pseudonym) began to appear in English translation. Bakhtin has theorized speaking in terms of what he called "dialogism." The basic insight behind this term is that when social actors speak, their words are not merely their own but reflect their engagement in a broader ideological and verbal world. Thus what might appear as straight monologue is "dialogized" by its refraction of the social horizon.

The combined result of Goffman and Bakhtin was to explode from within the appearance of a unitary speaker. Complementary to this was a very significant body of sociolinguistic research that expanded the notion of speaker to ever larger social units. These include, in rough order of inclusiveness, the speaker-addressee dyad, the multiparty interaction, the "speech community," the "community of practice," and the multiple "publics" by which an utterance or text is received. Each of these levels raises slightly different issues. It is unlikely that solutions at one level will work just right at the next. This lack of transitivity is one of the hot spots in recent theory. For instance, on the one hand, the human body plays a central role in all face-to-face interaction, which allows us to connect the work of Goffman and interactional sociolinguists with that of Merleau-Ponty. On the other hand, once we reach the level of publics, things like print mediation, broadcasting, and multiple interpretation become consequential. Language mediates among these different levels by circulating through them, but this must not obscure the existence of discontinuities. The fully saturated contextualization of examples like the exchange between Margot and Yuum raises different problems than the ones Jack faces as he reads the newspaper. Scanning the headlines, Jack

engages in an interpretive community of readers, most of whom he will never meet. Though never absent, the role of corporeality is less clear and harder to argue for. We won't resolve these problems—it's too early in the game for answers—but we will work through them in such a way as to lay the groundwork for investigating them. Let's start with the speaker.

From Dialectic to Dialogue

What is the immediate context in which an actor assumes the role of "speaker"? Let's start from the motivational structure of utterances, the "why" of talk. Recalling Schutz's terms, we should distinguish the in-order-to motive from the because motive. Although meaning is never exhausted by a speaker's intentions, utterances are typically performed with certain ends in view. This is all the more evident when we are dealing with strategic interaction in which speech is a means to an end, such as informing an interlocutor, displaying knowledge, making a commitment for future action. But in general we assume that people produce speech in order to achieve some aims, even if these are obscure or hard to rationalize after the fact. We can call this a *prospective* motivation. The inverse is the *retrospective* reason for speaking. What leads up to the utterance, establishing its relevance, setting its immediate background? Perhaps it is a response to a question, a sarcastic comeback, or an interpretation of some earlier remark or experience. This orientation ties the utterance into an earlier time, be it moments or years before. Between these two orientations the utterance exists as a historical fact, far from the pure synchronic potential posited by formalism. Somewhere between the prospective and retrospective dimensions are the myriad simultaneous relations between speech and its copresent context. As we saw in Chapter 7, this context typically includes factors such as gestures coordinated with speech, bodily dispositions and movements, the spatial and temporal present, and the accessibility of objects referred to by speakers. And of course the line between the present and the past or future is a matter of degree. How we define it in a given case depends upon the kind of speech we consider. Promises, warnings, and threats portend results, whereas conclusions, inferences, and reaction reach back to what preceded them. The network of simultaneous relations between acts and contexts is the domain of pure indexicality. Indexical relations, recall, are based on coexistence and contiguity. Along with the motivational context, indexical ties define the *actuality* of the utterance.

The actuality of any utterance is a vortex of value. The motivations of a speaker are values in action, by definition, but the indexical copresent is no less subject to the defining effects of beliefs and values. This is the fallacy of any metric measure of utterance space or chronometric measure of utterance time. Right at the point where the role of value becomes definitive, objective measures intervene, with their false promise of value-free equivalence. The problem is that objectivity is itself a value, a particularly strong one in our scientific tradition, and what it provides by way of supposedly neutral measures are in fact evaluations along one dimension. As we pointed out in the previous chapter, this is one of the points on

which the purely colorimetric study of color terms goes wrong. The red thread of objectivity running through all contexts is a red herring because it seeks comparability by stepping out of the dynamic of meaning production instead of into it. The comparability of temporal, spatial, or color distance lies in finding commensurate relations between the terms and their social contexts. If in one cultural context black signifies mourning and white purity, whereas in another white signifies mourning and black purity, then, in comparing the two, black is equivalent to white. The challenge is similar in defining the present of an utterance. Stopwatches give one kind of measure, but what counts as simultaneity depends upon the temporal span of the phenomenon we are looking at. In a ritual event the present may be so dilated as to include all of history, but in the last leg of a horse race, it may be down to the millisecond. Similarly, in the exchange between Margot and Yuum, the spatial extent of "here" was defined by the household as a meaningful field of interaction and the different relations between the interactants and that field. For this reason, even the three-way division among prospective, retrospective, and simultaneous dimensions of actuality is no more than a heuristic starting point. The three do not have constant values across all contexts but at best indicate a way into the problem. Once we demystify objectivity, we can ask how it is produced and defined under varying conditions.

The same applies to the production of subjectivity through speaking. When Margot told Yuum to go wait for Don Chabo and when Natalia responded to Jack by saying, "It's right on the table," both were expressing their own thoughts. Whereas Margot's directive defined the situation for Yuum and organized his response in no uncertain terms, Natalia's took the form of a simple statement of fact. Both utterances projected their speaker's perspectives on the situation, and both in different ways provided their addressees with a course of subsequent action. This capacity of speech to define situations and indicate a course of action is at the root of Austin's notion of illocutionary force. It is also part of what allows speakers to *realize themselves* through speaking. In a real sense Margot's directive said more about her as an adult Maya woman with the authority and the will to direct Yuum than it did about Don Chabo, its ostensible referent. In the same way Natalia's statement about the paper on the table located her in the scene and expressed her momentary alignment to it and to her mate. The expressive force of speaking is most obvious in emotionally charged utterances and in cases where the speaker appears to be expressing something unique to herself. But these mark the tip of an iceberg, and the construction of self through language is an ongoing process even in the most mundane circumstances.

This is not to say that the realization of the subject through talk proceeds unfettered, limited only by the free will and states of the subject. To posit this would be to ignore the fundamentally social grounding of language, the constraints on what can reasonably be said, and the numerous expectations and responsibilities summarized under the rubric of speakerhood. If Natalia had responded to Jack the way Margot did to Yuum, the result would likely have been conflict. Or if Margot spoke to her father-in-law the way she did to Yuum, there would surely

have been fireworks around the house. In other words, although in the abstract sense any speaker can produce any utterance, in the social sense this is never the case. There are always constraints and consequences to speech. This marks the opposite tendency of subjective projection through speech. In the very same utterance that expresses a speaker, projecting her into the world, the world is introjected into the speaker. As Merleau-Ponty put it, it is in the world that we find ourselves, and when we look within, it is the world that we find. At its strongest, this tendency may reach overt domination, forcing a speaker to speak in a certain way. Or it may be a matter of hegemony, the invisible compulsion whereby context defines the limits of what is thinkable, including the self-image of the speaker. Insofar as language belongs to context, this is the relativity thesis at its most insidious.

We are thus going toward a view of speaking in which utterance production involves a dialectic between the expressive projection of the speaker into the world and the simultaneous construction of the speaker according to the world. In certain cases one or the other pole may be dominant, resulting in speech that is maximally creative or maximally dominated. But most of our daily discourse balances between the two extremes. That we use words charged with value implies that the weight of social context is never absent, just as the freedom to speak or remain silent implies a measure of expressivity. The same factors that constrain the meanings of linguistic forms are also the resources that enable self-realization through talk. The duality of constraint and enablement is part of the same process. In a more immediate sense, speakers rarely if ever produce talk without regard to its reception. One of the most familiar ways that social context pulls a speaker is what has come to be called recipient design. That is, parties to talk, especially effective ones, attend to the effects of their words on their addressees. As the commonsense maxim puts it, know your audience. We saw this clearly in Margot's attending to Yuum's relation to her household and in her awareness that Don Chabo was present as an overhearer to the exchange. Similarly, Natalia's response to Jack builds precisely on her knowledge that he is familiar with the spatial surround of the kitchen and dining room. This is indicated in her word choice, "It's right on the table," in which the "right" and the definite article both presuppose his familiarity with and access to the table. Furthermore, her use of "it" is coreferential with "the paper" in Jack's question. Thus among the many bridges that tie utterances into their contexts, some involve judgments about the addressee's position in the situation. It is virtually never a simple matter of a speaker's producing only her own words without regard to an interlocutor. Insofar as the indexical ground of deictic expressions requires consideration of the relations among speaker, addressee, and referent, the receiver has a role in the production of the utterance. Not only is interpretation a productive process, but *anticipated* understanding is a factor in the forming of utterances.

When people make reference to and describe themselves, the constitutive force of speech appears to be maximum. If context constrains speech, it is also produced by it. Think of an introduction in which one speaker greets another, saying,

"Hi, I'm Jack, Natalia's husband" or "Hi, my name is Andy. I work in editorial." In such cases the words uttered literally present the speaker to the addressee and define his identity for current purposes. The speech event frame is being established with the introduction of new information that can subsequently be presupposed. It is standard to maintain a distinction in linguistic description between the speech event in which talk is produced and the scene or event that is talked about. This is clearest when the two planes are separated by space or time, as in a description of events that occurred elsewhere at some other time. When reference is made to the *current* situation, through first or second person pronouns, present tense forms, or proximate deictics, the two planes are superposed: The event being talked about is (or is part of) the one in which the talk occurs. This kind of reflexivity is at the heart of performative verbs as Austin described them. In uttering "I promise," the speaker describes an event in which he makes the promise, and this event is identified with the current one. The result is that the words appear to have the "magical" effect of creating as a socially binding reality the event that they literally describe. For our purposes, what is most interesting about this phenomenon is that the speaker is simultaneously defining himself or his current situation and being defined by it. Not only does the choice of terms in which to describe oneself depend upon the situation, but the description projects the speaker as a participant in the world talked about. And this anchors the self-expression in the world of objects.

Writing about a similar range of phenomena whereby speech is simultaneously individual and collective, Bakhtin proposed the concept of "dialogism." Whereas "dialogue" is commonly understood as the interactive relation between two people engaged in talk, dialogism is the internal dynamic in the discourse of a single speaker. Although in a general sense much of the foregoing discussion concerns dialogical foundations of speech, we can make it more specific. Consider first quoted speech, in which one speaker reproduces the words of another speaker, with appropriate attribution. Margot later reports to me what Yuum had said: "So he *asked,* 'Is Don Chabo home?'" The italicized portion of her utterance is a metalinguistic verb that frames Yuum's utterance as a question. It is in the third person, past tense, making reference to him and interpreting his speech as being of the category designated by "ask." This much is Margot's interpretation, since he never used the word "ask." What follows within orthographic quotes is presented as a verbatim reproduction of his utterance. In spoken language she would likely attempt to mimic his intonation or use an intonation in which the interrogative force is made plain (e.g., with rising final contour). Although her utterance is, we can assume, part of a dialogue with me (her current addressee), it is also dialogical in the sense of including speech whose author was Yuum and speech whose author is Margot.

At a step removed from direct quotation is indirect discourse, in which the original utterance is recast in the words of the current speaker but retains its original import and at least some of its phrasing: "He asked whether Don Chabo was home." Note here that the tense is past rather than present, according to the temporal relation between Margot's current utterance and Yuum's earlier one. This is

another variant of dialogism, in which different elements of Yuum's speech are retained in Margot's rendition of it. At another remove from the overt dialogism of quotation are cases in which a speaker "borrows" another person's wording or statements without attributing them. This amounts to a kind of revoicing in which the language is presented as belonging to the current speaker, whereas in fact its source is elsewhere. In publishing this can amount to plagiarism if the borrowed language is in any way proprietary and the original author claims rights over it. Of course in much of daily talk, this happens without the clear sense of a single, original author, or if there is one, the revoicing is merely a rhetorical trope. The business manager exhorts her employees, saying, "Ask not what your company can do for you, ask what you can do for your company." The ploy may be tacky or quite effective, but in either case it rests on the recognition of dialogicality. There need not be any particular author, however, and speech peppered with clichés or common formulas is no less dialogical than quotation.

At the far end of the spectrum, a speaker may subtly borrow from traditional or highly valued forms of talk in order to make a point or convince an addressee. This is particularly obvious in the rhetoric of politicians, which must be both original and capable of pushing the right buttons in the electorate. In order for an utterance to be dialogized, it is not necessary that the presence of discourse from another source be recognized as such. For certain purposes, like plagiarism, the aim is in fact to pull off the ruse unnoticed. In Bakhtin's vision *all* speech is dialogized because it draws its value from the ideological horizons of the society. To label a discourse as dialogical therefore tells us little or nothing distinctive about it. What is important is to distinguish among the different kinds and aspects of the phenomenon. Notice that its ubiquity implies that through talk speakers realize not only themselves but also their relations to others around them.

Participation Frameworks

If speakers enter into relations with their world through speaking, it is in dialogue and multiparty talk that this is at its most concrete. In the canonical cases dialogue is based on face-to-face interaction between two individuals. This is the situation on which the standard idealizations of Saussure and others are based, and it is the source of the terms "speaker" and "addressee." In their commonsense meanings these terms designate the two roles of the one producing the utterance and the one receiving it. These roles alternate in the sense that the speaker of one utterance directs talk to the addressee, who in turn becomes the speaker of the response, for which the original speaker is now the addressee. This seems to correspond well to the situation of Jack and Natalia in our opening scenario. Although we have seen that things are virtually never as simple as this makes them seem, there is already an important distinction inscribed in the terms. Namely, "speaker" and "addressee" are roles that social actors occupy for finite periods of time. This is a point we made earlier in this chapter, but here I want to highlight an interesting question that it raises. The roles themselves are usually discussed as

features or, more exactly, formal objects, which are combined in the larger formal object called a speech event or conversation. This way of describing it makes them appear to be synchronic entities whose characteristics are determined solely by the facts of language, the production and auditory reception of sound. But the *occupation* of the roles is a social process, not a synchronic fact. Because of this, we should be on the lookout for indicators of how actors take up the roles, discharge and vacate them, and provide openings for others to assume them or closures to prevent them from doing so. The abstraction inherent in treating the roles apart from the question of occupancy led traditionally to a total neglect of factors based on the body. Corporeality is of course implied by the use of the vocal apparatus to make speech sounds and the auditory apparatus to perceive them. This much was already present in Saussure's talking heads model. But when it comes to occupancy, much more is implied, including posture, gaze, gestures, physical proximity, tone of voice, and timing.

Although Merleau-Ponty's approach to the corporeal schema has had no impact on sociolinguistics, to my knowledge it is right on the mark in these matters. Recall that the phenomenal field subsumes the actor's physical relation to context along with his or her awareness of that relation *and* the intuitive grasp of other potential but nonactual relations. When a speaker talks, this kind of reflexivity and awareness is constantly at play. We can see this precisely in the use of indexical items that require monitoring and encode what we might call "traffic signals" for managing interpersonal relations (see Chapter 8). Thus whatever the general arguments in favor of treating speakerhood as a process, there are also good empirical reasons for doing so.

There is a significant line of research on participant roles in sociolinguistics, including the pioneering work of R. Brown and A. Gilman (1972), Friedrich (1979: chapters 2, 3), M. Silverstein (1976), and students of the ethnography of speaking and even performance studies (see Chapter 8). But the work of Goffman (1983) stands out. Goffman came to this issue primarily out of his reflections on footing. A speaker's footing is her "alignment, set, or projected self" in relation to her words. The difference among direct, indirect, and quoted speech are footing differences in this sense, and the foregoing discussion of dialogism is germane to it as well. Goffman took these phenomena as evidence that the traditional roles had to be rethought and ultimately subdivided into a set of more finely shaded roles. His intuition was basically that a speaker producing quotation is not really a speaker in the same sense as one who produces direct discourse. Thus rather than seeing these (and all the other distinctions like them) as different ways of discharging the role of speaker, he saw them as corresponding to different roles. In place of the "speaker," he posited what he called the "production format" of the utterance. It had three parts, each one a role: (1) The "animator" is the person who makes the sounds; (2) the "author" is the one who selects the words and phrasing; (3) the "principal" is the one ultimately responsible for the opinions and statements expressed. Now these three often coincide, as they did in Jack's question to Natalia and in her response. But what about when a spokesperson delivers a text prepared by someone else, or when one person quotes another after the fact? In these cases the utterer is an animator but neither an author nor a principal. Similarly, if the press agent is charged with presenting the position of his boss to some third party, then he is animator and author but not the principal. Both in face-to-face talk and in structured interviews and public appearances, the roles are often split apart. The noncoincidence of the three is the evidence that they must be distinguished in a general analytic framework.

A similar reasoning applies to the addressee. In the exchange between Margot and Yuum, the words formed a simple dialogue, but the interaction was witnessed by myself and Don Chabo. In Goffman's terms, Margot and Yuum were "ratified participants," whereas Don Chabo and I were "overhearers." It is obvious that most daily interaction takes place in the presence of overhearers, such as bystanders and others not party to an exchange yet privy to it. In Don Chabo's case it was still more involved because he was both an overhearer and the primary referent of the exchange. This also allows us to distinguish speech addressed to an entire group from speech directed to one member of the group in the presence of the others. The overall point is that once we look closely at the relations among parties to talk, it becomes clear that the traditional dyad is an inadequate basis for description. Goffman went on to typologize kinds of talk according to the kinds of participants involved. "Dominating communication" is the main engagement between ratified participants. "Subordinate" communication is nonfocal, perhaps hidden talk among a subset of participants. It is "by-play" if the participants are ratified parties and "sideplay" if they are not. "Cross-play" is subordinate communication between a ratified and a nonratified participant. For our purposes, the details of Goffman's typology are less important than that it pushes beyond the simple dyad and opens up the possibility of a differentiated approach to multiparty talk. Indeed, this became one of the central foci of research by Goffman's students and interpreters (see C. Goodwin 1981, 1984; M. H. Goodwin 1982, 1990; Levinson 1983, 1987).

One thing that comes out clearly in Goffman's framework is the interdependence among the internal subdivisions of participant roles, the external relations among the roles, and the classification of interactions according to type. So long as the simple dyad was assumed to be the natural state of talk, the simplified versions of the roles appeared adequate. As the evidence of language variation and native typologies of speaking mounted, thanks to the work of sociolinguists and ethnographers, it became inevitable that the speaker-addressee dyad would lose its place as the measure of all talk. Thus it is not accidental that the decomposition of the roles into animator, author, principal, addressee, and overhearer was part of a broader push toward the study of different types of interaction, including multiparty talk. Once the boundaries of the dyad were breached, the inadequacy of its two parts became all too obvious. It is also clear in this framework that the relation between an individual and the language he or she speaks is mediated by social roles. This point came out in the preceding chapter, where we recast

the relativity hypothesis in terms of mediation. But it is all the more compelling and concrete now. You simply cannot make inferences from utterance forms to human experience without working through the intermediate level of participation frameworks.

During the 1970s and 1980s there emerged another specialized offshoot of sociolinguistics, drawing on the work of Goffman and Harold Garfinkel. The focus was the microanalysis of routine verbal interaction, which Garfinkel initially dubbed "ethnomethodology" and subsequent scholars elaborated into "conversation analysis." Goffman and especially Garfinkel were deeply influenced by Schutz's studies of interactive relations, commonsense understanding via types, and the situational character of relevance. One of the important insights of this work, as M. H. Goodwin signaled (1990:1ff), is that human interactants continually display to each other, in the course of interaction, their own understanding of what they are doing. In other words, interaction proceeds on two levels at once: the direct engagement of the actors with the world and their evaluations regarding "what is going on here" at any point. This insight dovetails nicely with Rommetveit's proposal, following Wittgenstein, that meaning production in language is guided by the contracts speakers share regarding what kind of "game" is being played. It also builds on the phenomenological insight that actors maintain awareness of their own actions, since it is this awareness that each displays to the other party. In conversational research it led to a major focus on the empirical description of how interactants display to one another the orderliness of their talk. Thus the investigator's task of examining orderliness corresponds to the interactant's task of displaying it. The display, unlike the analytic description, is constitutive in the sense of creating the order itself. We see the same interplay in the difference between metalinguistic function, which is constitutive in situ, and discourse about language at a step removed.

If participation takes place in the social here and now of copresence, then it is subject to rapid change as an interaction progresses. What starts as a perfunctory exchange of greetings builds into a conversation in which new information is produced jointly, memories of prior interactions are brought into play, and future plans are laid. Talk by other people is reported and commented on and so becomes part of the current now. As an interaction emerges, the participation framework emerges with it. Both could be said to be up for grabs insofar as individuals or groups can propose versions that either become fact or don't but that can be contested, ignored, accepted, and so forth—all with their range of consequences and transpositions of perspective. Just as Voloshinov argued that linguistic meaning arises only in the context of utterance themes and Rommetveit argued that what can be made known by an utterance varies with the contextual frames one assumes, so conversation analysis shows that "context" is produced in dialogic and multiparty interaction. It bears the trace of this in the form of sequential organizations inherent to interaction, as well as kinds of participation inherently mediated by language. In a real sense, conversation analysis provides a

new kind of irreducibility, namely, the irreducible laws of conversational interaction and their unavoidable trace on utterance form (see here Levinson 1983, Atkinson and Heritage 1984, C. Goodwin 1981).

Transposition

We started this chapter by saying that to speak is to step into an interactive field in which positions are defined relative to one another and are in constant flux. At that point the assertion may have seemed to overstate the well-known alternation between speakers and hearers typical of orderly talk. By now it is clear that both the simplicity of the roles and the supposed lockstep back and forth of speaking are false appearances. More accurately, they are idealizations devised in order to clear away the detritus of *parole* and lay bare language as a formal, synchronic system. If we push the issue a step further and attempt to join a quasi-formal perspective with the interactive one, interesting things happen. Take the case of reported speech. Neil says to Madeleine, "Meet me here tomorrow," and I subsequently report his utterance to Peter. I can say, "Neil said to Madeleine, 'Meet me here tomorrow.'" In this case I have to spell out to Peter both where and when the exchange took place. Otherwise he won't be able to interpret the deictic "here" or the adverb "tomorrow." Alternatively, I could say simply, "Neil told Madeleine yesterday to meet him there today" or "Neil told Madeleine on Saturday to meet him at the corner of Grace and Greenview on Sunday" or some such. In other words, I could resort to indirect discourse in which I have shifted the indexical elements from the initial context of Neil's utterance to the subsequent context of my own report of it. Or I could attempt to replace the indexicals with descriptive phrases that do not rely so much on the actuality of either the original exchange or the report. In all three versions of my report, I have signaled a shift in footing: I am either the animator, where Neil is the author and principal (direct quote), or the animator and author, where Neil is the principal (indirect discourse).

The problem is not that this account of the thing is wrong but that it doesn't explain much. Knowing that I am the animator but Neil is the author just isn't enough to interpret the indexicals. Neil might have penned the phrase as the opening of a poem or spoken it in jest. He would still be the author, but Peter would be clueless about the relevant references. Like metalanguage, reported speech is a form of objectification. You take an original utterance, with all its selectivity and the density of its ties to context, and you recycle part of it in another context. Whatever gets recycled has been detached and turned into an object that can be repeated. Full recovery of the original actuality is of course impossible, since both the original and the report are so selective. But we have at our disposal linguistic resources that allow us to minimize the loss and keep straight at least some of the references. The choice of metalinguistic verbs, the addition of descriptive phrases, intonation, and other means signal to an addressee what is going on. They provide the kind of displays of coherence that conversation analysts

have emphasized. It is true but insufficient to say, as Goffman did, that these are keys indicating shifts in footing. They are more systematic than that, and they don't all work the same way.

The difference between direct quotation and indirect report is a matter of *transposition*. In the former the deictic term retains both its original referent and its original indexical ground. In our example, when I quote Neil's utterance, the form "here" is interpreted relative to the context of his exchange with Madeleine. The relational feature of the deictic is grounded in that utterance frame and projects a referent in relation to it. So the feature [+ proximate] attaches to Neil's utterance framework. By contrast, in the indirect report, the deictic is shifted from "here" to "there," and this change signals that the referent (the corner of Grace and Greenview) is in a relation of nonproximity. But notice that it is nonproximate *to Peter and me* as we speak. My report says nothing about Neil's whereabouts when *he* spoke. He could as well have been out of the country talking over the phone. With quoted indexical terms, we learn not only what the original speaker said but when and where he was relative to his topic. Not so with indirect report. We lose both the original words and the crucial relations among the interactants and what they were talking about. To put this in different terms, indirect discourse belongs to the participation framework of the report, whereas quotation retains its tie to the framework of the utterance that is reported. The term "transposition" applies specifically to cases like quotation, where a speaker signals that a portion of his current speech is anchored elsewhere. So when I say to Peter, "Neil told Madeleine, 'Meet me here tomorrow,'" I may be doing all the talking, but I have spoken two completely different discourses. The boundary between them comes at the onset of the quote. It instructs Peter momentarily to suspend the indexical ground of our actual present and to transpose himself into the framework of Neil and Madeleine. Other keys, such as intonation and special phrasing, can help convey this message, but none with the precision of the deictics.

These examples imply that the present of speech is a kind of palimpsest, a layering of past, present, and future frameworks all precisely articulated in the actuality of the utterance. You don't have to alternate between speaking and hearing in order to shift the roles around. All of the preceding processes would apply even if I were reminding Peter of something I had said to him in the past. The persons would be the same, but the participation frameworks of the present and the past would be different. And it is important to see that quotation is only the most obvious instance of a more widespread phenomenon. We do similar things all the time. If you think of conversation as a collaboratively produced discourse, transpositions happen each time the role of animator shifts between participants ("I" becomes "you," "this" becomes "that," and so forth). If you think of footing shifts like irony, parody, metaphor, and overstatement, relatively minor transpositions take place between the "standard" discourse and the "special talk." Although less extreme than quotation, these kinds of talk also project participation frameworks different from the ones that precede them. Transposition is basically a rarefied instance of the global capacity of speech to create new contexts on the stage of the

present. We see this especially in narrative, where the skillful storyteller creates a world and moves in and out of it over the course of the telling. The challenge is to identify the varieties of transposition and footing shifts, the formal means whereby they are achieved, and the interactive processes of which they are a part.

Beyond the Face-to-face

So far we have moved from the unitary, solitary speaker to a dialectical engagement with the world, a dialogical engagement with others, and the dynamics of transposition. But even with all this, we have yet to directly discuss the role in talk of *other* social actors not physically present in the event. This is one of the often-cited criticisms of conversation analysis and indeed all phenomenologically derived theories of language: They are biased toward the experiential field of the interactants and provide little by way of analysis of the broader social backdrop. In a sense the criticism is well founded because all of the parties to talk are also parties to a larger world, the vast part of which is nowhere evident in a transcript or even a videotape of their interaction. It is fair to counter this criticism by saying that the focus of such analysis is the present, whose dynamics are more than enough to keep us busy. But this response grants the main point, that phenomenological description must be complemented by something else. The concept of dialogism and the dialectic that we sketched earlier assume a broader world but fail to analyze it in its own terms. Or better, they describe it solely from the perspective of the actual present. Even in the case of transposition, which is by definition a shift from the corporeal field into some other framework of talk, the shift takes place in, and is referred back to, the present. Notice that however elaborate a narrative transposition may be, the semantics of the indexicals always trace a path back to the actual framework in which they are embedded and ultimately interpreted. Metalinguistic frames, as in "Neil said to Madeleine yesterday, '————'" have indexicals, such as the past tense marking of the verb and the adverb "yesterday," that situate the reported speech relative to the present.

Merleau-Ponty's writings also reflect a constant concern with the situatedness of corporeal experience in the world, but it is always the world *as it appears in the phenomenal present*. Nowhere does he suspend his meditation on experience to discuss things like social structure or history apart from their emergence here and now. Ingarden comes close to this in his notion of a work as a history of concretizations, but he, too, stops short. Concretization is a process that takes place in the present, and the history made by successive instances of it always radiates from the perspective point of one or another present. There are good reasons for this, especially in the case of phenomenology. For the alternative seems to be to cut loose from actuality and adopt an objectifying "view from nowhere." This panopticon is the contrary of phenomenology, against which it defined itself, and it is the bête noire of most contemporary critical theories in the humanities. Indeed, what we have repeatedly criticized as the formalist approach to linguistic systems is a version of such a panoptical view, and that is why formalism fails

when applied to the actuality of speech. But we also said from the outset that a purely relational, presentist view of language is doomed to failure. And if we have continued to hammer away at formalism, it is because it remains relevant and cannot be dismissed. The same applies to social and historical factors that transcend the scope of utterance context. To clarify the issue, let's briefly contrast Schutz's typology of social actors with Hilary Putnam's concept of the "division of linguistic labor."

As a phenomenologist, Schutz starts and ends his treatment of the life world with the experiential field of actors. In between these points, as it were, he works through the key concepts of motivation, typification, and the different "zones of relevance" (see Chapter 6). Recall that it was in the context of relevance that he proposed a typology of "sectors" in the life world. The first was the world of "consociates," those people with whom the actor has regular, face-to-face contact. At a step removed were contemporaries, those people living roughly at the same time as the actor, of whom she has knowledge but no direct familiarity. We illustrated this with the employees of the phone company and the manufacturers of objects the actor uses in everyday life. At another step removed are the actor's predecessors, all those historical personages whose existence is taken for granted and integrated into actual experience in a more vague fashion. At the farthest remove was the zone of irrelevance: all those currently, formerly, and subsequently existing agents whose existence has little or no apparent impact on the experience of the actor. Schutz's main concern was to devise a scale of relative anonymity and abstractness of typification, and in Chapter 6 we pointed out several problems with the framework. In the present context I want to stress that this way of dividing up the social world is entirely radial, with the individual actor in the center. Because of this, a contemporary can become a consociate through direct contact with the central individual. I can meet some of the employees of the phone company, who thereby enter into the warm light of consociate relations; similarly, a neighbor can move away and depart from the web of consociates, entering into the now relatively anonymous sphere of contemporaries. This movement into and out of a field of experience is what I meant in saying that the model is radial. For the entire basis for classifying people is the way they relate to the individual.

Putnam's (1975) framework is basically different and illustrates a nonradial way of integrating the broader social field into the dynamics of meaning production. Unlike Schutz, Putnam concentrates on analyzing the different semantic theories and proposing a kind of semantics that avoids some of the pitfalls of classical theories. Recall that the "intensional" meaning of a linguistic form is classically defined as a bundle of features determined according to the oppositions between the form and others related to it. This is close in spirit to Saussure's concept of paradigmatic opposition and *valeur* (see Chapter 2). The standard alternatives to intensional theories are ones based on extension. That is, the meaning of a form is the class of objects to which a term appropriately applies or of which it is "true." So for "table," instead of looking to the opposition between it and other related words, as an intensional theory would do, an extensional theory would

gather together the kinds of things to which the word applies. The general extension of the word is then defined as the necessary and sufficient features common to members of the class. Now Putnam was critical of intensional approaches because they define meaning as a concept that must be known as such by a speaker. According to this, to know the meaning of a term is to be in a certain psychological state. The main justification of intensional approaches lies in the assumption that intension determines extension, that is, you can use "table" to properly describe the thing in the dining room precisely because the word has meaning x, and the thing fits the meaning.

In a move quite congenial to anthropology, Putnam argued that the intensional view was wrong because it ultimately obscured the public and social definition of meaning. This is the key move from which we go to the division of labor. For Putnam pointed out that both the semantic features usually associated with the term and the properties of objects taken to correspond to them must be valid across the linguistic community as a collectivity. In other words, meaning is not a psychological fact but a social one. This does not imply that all sectors of a linguistic community need have exactly the same meaning for a term. On the contrary, to make this assumption would be either utterly naive about social variation or a very limiting definition of what counts as a community. We know that different people understand the same words in sometimes quite different ways. And this is where the division of labor comes in: Every community of speakers uses at least some expressions whose associated features are known only by a subset of the speakers who acquire the expressions and whose use by other speakers depends upon a structured cooperation between them and the specialists (Putnam 1975:228). To put it simply, we all use at least some words whose meanings we don't really know, but we use them in rough accord with the definitions of specialists. Think of terms like "transmission," "front-end alignment," and "fuel injection" in reference to cars. Few of us would be able to provide a precise definition of any of these terms, yet we can converse adequately with a mechanic who uses them in explaining why the hatchback thumps at stop lights, shimmies at 45 miles an hour, or accelerates fast enough to get on the expressway at rush hour. I know enough about my computer to know that the hard drive crashed last month and the file directory was damaged, but I would be hard pressed to explain exactly what a crash is, technically, or how the file directory relates to the operating system. The doctor tells me I hyperextended my right shoulder swimming in waves, and I get the point, but, again, I rely on her expertise to know which muscles, tendons, and so forth are causing the pain. We might try to know as much as possible about the things in our daily lives, but Putnam's point is that we all inevitably use words according to what *we take to be* their definitions. And there is loads of evidence that we know we don't know the technical meanings. Using such words, we pause, hedge, add expressions like "sort of," "whatchamacallit," "doohickey," and "dooter" when the uncertainty gets to be too much. We defer to specialists if they are around and assume that they have the right to adjust our wording if the need arises. In other words, our ability to speak a language is at least partly based on

our ability to participate in the social division of verbal skills. Notice that this makes it unnecessary, and even false, to assume that shared knowledge of a code is what makes communication possible. What makes talk possible is common membership in an interpretive community.

On the basis of these phenomena, Putnam proposed that the semantic value of any expression is made up of four factors: (1) the grammatical markers indicating the kind of expression (cf. "table" is a count noun), (2) semantic markers (cf. "table" is a solid object with a horizontal surface), (3) stereotypical features (cf. "table" is a human-made piece of furniture with a flat surface and a means of suspending or supporting it off the floor, typically used for activities like eating, writing, and so forth), and (4) its extension (i.e., the class of things to which it applies). Although each of these factors is social, the second two are strictly so. The stereotypical uses of a form rely on the kinds of practical typification that Schutz described. They have everything to do with the commonsense understandings both of objects and of the words used to denote them. The extension is actually a range of objects, and the implication of the division of linguistic labor is that this range may have discontinuities. So with the growth of specialist knowledge, the set of objects that a word designates may shift around, and some people may use it with special precision, whereas others use it more vaguely. Think of a word like "life" in relation to the abortion debate. Medical science may determine the precise onset of cell division and may have a definition of human physiology that draws the line differently than would nonspecialist advocates of one or another social policy. In the entire range of technological developments, words like "radio" or "computer" have everyday meanings that may be at variance with the extensional values of the terms when used in a high-tech laboratory. Similarly, with legal terms like "contract," "seizure," and "assault," everyday usage tends to be both broader and only partly overlapping with the technical usage.

We could multiply the examples in reference to medicine, finance, literature, visual arts, linguistics, religion, and virtually any other sphere of endeavor in which specialized knowledge refines, and may ultimately break loose from, the pathways of practical common usage. The point of Putnam's approach is that such disjunction is a feature of most if not all language use. Therefore meanings are based not on individual psychological states but on the participation of speakers in the social formation to which the language is joined. My competence to speak of the hard drive and software of my computer has more to do with my occupying a certain place in the social world, having access to computer specialists, than with my having a certain psychology.

This brings us back, then, to the issue of social organization. Putnam's discussion fails, understandably, to present a general theory of the social division of labor. He was concerned with devising an approach to semantics that tied it in to social settings. But in order to really do an analysis along the lines he proposes, we would have to look closely at social organization, the institutional structures that create specialists and legitimate their opinions, and so forth. Notice that such an account would not be based on relations to a speaking ego, as it was in Schutz's

case, but on the social context directly. What makes a lawyer a specialist in words like "contract" is not her relation to any particular speaker who wants to make a written agreement for a service—not the way that being a consociate *does* depend on having a face-to-face relation. It is her having gone through a certain specialized training, passed a bar exam, and obtained a permit or license to practice in her state. With Putnam's proposal, protean though it is, we move to another level of social fact, irreducible to intersubjective experience. We could say that it *decenters* the issue of participation by proposing a form of organization based on the entire collectivity, not merely centered on the proximate participants in an utterance.

Words, like other valued objects, circulate in social groups. Many may have access to them and use them, but there are elements of their value that only a part of the group will have access to. What makes communication possible is not the perfect sharedness posited by Saussure and Chomsky but the modes of cooperation among different actors. Moreover, one corollary of this premise is that a given word has more than one possible meaning, depending upon the public to which it is directed or the participants who produce it. This is another type of mediation that impinges on linguistic practice: the intervention of social organization as a defining factor in the relation of language forms to their meanings. This intervention, or mediation, introduces a double division among participating publics.

First, we could theorize a division of the public strictly according to the distribution of discourse. Being in the loop and occupying a certain relation to an utterance constitutes one as a de facto participant. Under this view there would be as many different publics as there are trajectories for the utterance. This reintroduces the centered or radial definition of participants by making the utterance (or larger discourse) the point from which participation is defined. Overhearing, witnessing, or otherwise receiving a discourse makes one a participant in it. If we imagine this process at the level of utterances transmitted by radio, television, and print media, we can see how the reproduction and dissemination of language create a network of receivers.

As a corollary, the publics so created would be short-lived. If you missed the discourse as it passed by, then you're not a member of its public. In the limiting case every utterance would define a different public, according to who receives it at what stage of remove from its original production. And since reproduction and distribution are always selective, different parts of any discourse would have different publics, according to whether they were picked up in the process or left behind. All those context-specific aspects of an original utterance that are lost in its subsequent transmission fall away and fail to enter into the public domain. And no single public would last any longer than the circuit of production and reception by which it is defined. Under such a view the social division of linguistic labor is really an interactive division among collective agents, re-created with each new utterance (fragment) and vanishing when the utterance (fragment) ceases to be circulated.

If this were the only way that we had of defining publics, it would suffer from the very same limitations as other theories based solely on radial relations to the speaking center. But it is only half the story. For whatever the trajectory of a discourse in society, it never emerges in a vacuum. Rather, it bumps into and channels through social pathways that preexist it and persist after it has run its course. This is the other principle of division. According to this second way of conceiving publics, they are defined not by the trajectory of any single discourse but by enduring institutional forms. These other forms have their own diacritic features and histories and are driven by forces only partly dependent upon language. When Putnam talks of a division of labor and Bakhtin of ideological horizons, they have in mind social contexts defined by a plurality of factors. And dialogism, like Putnam's stereotypes and extensional classes, reflects the pervasive impact of the social on language, without elevating any act of expression to the privileged position of center. For instance, socioeconomic divisions like class, profession, educational background, and access to economic capital all have an impact on the formation of publics. Access to a discourse is not merely a given in social life but a matter of occupying a position through which the discourse circulates. The position and its occupancy outlive the act of reception. When a lawyer makes an argument before a magistrate, the relevant public goes far beyond those who happen to witness the argument. Depending upon the issue at stake and the impact of the argument, it may involve other legal experts, legislators, and subsequent litigants for whom it may set precedent. In other words, the life span of a public is both longer than the immediate reception of the discourse and structured by many factors external to it.

The duality between this second, decentered and the first, centered view of publics is not unlike the duality between subordinated and creative dimensions of art, as we discussed in the preceding chapter. In both instances the dynamic of meaning production takes place within a field of tension. On the one side the discourse expression projects a world, and on the other it meets up with a world already in full swing. Obviously, the existence of media formations, such as the press, the electronic media, and the networks of people who communicate routinely with one another, all prefigure the paths of reception for any discourse. This is why people speak "on the record," "off the record," "between you and me," "to send out a message," and so forth—because they attend to the quasi-predictable traces their utterance will leave. Once produced, utterances circulate as objects whose meaning and range of reception is beyond the control of the proximate participants.

Participant frameworks take shape, then, in the interplay between the projection of meaning by immediate participants and the more far-reaching reception of discourse by multiple publics. This raises a real question about the units of production and reception. In classical grammatical theory, as we have seen, the speaker is the producer and the addressee is the receiver. As we have progressively subdivided the speaker and multiplied the receiver roles, this picture has given

way to a more global process of interaction. And the vectors of interaction are never determined solely by participation in the loop of senders and receivers. The language forms themselves bear the traces of their distribution, which both dialogizes expression and puts it in a historical context longer than the actual present. In a sense we are recapitulating here some of the classic problems of sociolinguistics, and a thoroughgoing study of these issues would have to work through the notion of the speech community.

In an early article Gumperz stated the tension between the two poles of our dual division of publics. He wrote, "The verbal system can . . . be made to refer to a wide variety of objects and concepts. At the same time, verbal interaction is a social process in which utterances are selected in accordance with socially recognized norms and expectations. It follows that linguistic phenomena are analyzable both within the contexts of language itself and within the broader context of social behavior" (Gumperz 1972:219). Unlike grammatical study, which analyzes utterances in relation to the linguistic code, a sociolinguistic study relates utterances to more general norms of behavior. The relevant universe for the latter is the speech community, which Gumperz defined as "any human aggregate characterized by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shared body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language use" (Gumperz 1972:219). The first part of this quote focuses on what comembers of a community must share, and the latter focuses on the boundary between two or more communities. Unlike traditional grammar, sociolinguistics has always been concerned centrally with variation, and what is shared by the members of a community need not be a single language. On the contrary, it is a verbal repertoire.

A repertoire is the sum of variant codes, ways of speaking, and usage patterns employed by members of the speech community. The variants may be distinguished along two main lines, standardly called "dialectal" and "superposed" variation. Dialectal variations set apart the vernacular ways of speaking of different subgroups within the broader community. These groups may be distinguished by social and economic differences, such as class, education, and occupation, or they may actually involve different languages, such as Spanish, Greek, Polish, Black English Vernacular, and midwestern American English in a city like Chicago. What is important is that from a social standpoint the ways of speaking are distributed in the broader community according to the human groups who speak them. Superposed variation is tied to the different kinds of verbal activity in which members of a single group engage. This can be seen in the kinds of stylistic variation engaged in by a native speaker of Spanish who uses English when dealing with city officials, Spanish at the local market, specialized rhetoric when running for political office, the cadences and imagistic discourse of evangelism when speaking at church, and so forth. The idea of superposed variation is simply that we all speak in a variety of ways in social life depending upon what we are doing, who we are doing it with, and what is expected or effective for our aims. More important than the labels, these two broad axes of differentiation reflect the idea that

when viewed from a social standpoint, language varies both according to who is speaking it and what they are doing as they speak. Whereas a language, like English or Spanish, may be spoken by many groups and is defined fundamentally by its linguistic coherence, a verbal repertoire is by definition tied to a single community but may subsume numerous languages.

But what is a community? This is an exceedingly difficult question to answer. One of the several ways in which recent research differs from earlier frameworks in sociolinguistics is in the basis for defining communities and in how it conceives the relations among members both within and across community boundaries. In their later work Gumperz and his collaborators have sought to analyze the kinds of miscommunication that result from talk between members of different speech groups. The idea is relatively simple in principle but very complex in practice: to speak any language is not only to instantiate its grammar but also to appropriately contextualize utterances. The very same utterance form can mean different or even opposite things depending upon how participants frame it. (This perspective on utterance meaning is wholly congruent with the approach I espouse in this book, and I have in fact been strongly influenced by Gumperz's studies of contextualization.)

Miscommunication emerges when one party to talk frames or contextualizes an utterance in a way different from the one intended by its producer. Suppose in the example of Yuum and Margot that Yuum were actually a Spanish speaker from another part of Mexico or even another country, coming in search of a shaman named Don Chabo whom he didn't know but had heard of. He finds the house and enters the yard to knock on the door and greet whoever responds. He has already made a mistake that could entirely reframe his utterance and get him in trouble. This is because by entering the yard, he has effectively entered the house, and if Don Chabo were not so broad-minded as he in fact is, he could take this as an act of disregard or violation of his privacy—all the more so if the stranger walked directly up to a resident woman and addressed her, rather than waiting respectfully at the outer gate and waiting for a man to come to him. This example involves the unwitting violation of a local standard of conduct that results in the misinterpretation of utterance. Many of the examples Gumperz and his coworkers analyzed involve miscues due to different intonation and phrasing by people who speak the same language but have different ways of contextualizing it. It is like the rudeness a native American English speaker can (mis)perceive in the flat intonation contours of Korean shopkeepers or in the miscommunications so common in other examples of interethnic talk in major cities.

Gumperz's insight is that speaking involves not only the formulation of grammatically appropriate utterances but the use of numerous "contextualization cues" that instruct the receiver how to interpret "what is going on here." Just as the conversation analysts have shown, utterance production requires that speakers display the orderliness of their actions in the doing, and these displays are prone to misconstrual. Notice that a research focus on such miscommunication goes beyond the ideas of dialectal and superposed variation by joining the two analytic

units of groups and activities. An answer to the activity question, "What are we doing here?" often requires a judgment as to who is acting. And moreover, it is in the metalinguistic contextualization, and not the forms themselves, that the breakdown occurs.

To define a community as a group with a common repertoire is to link the collectivity to shared codes. True, not all members have access to the same portions of the overall repertoire, but still it is the repertoire that serves as the basic common element. An alternative definition is based on social organization independent of language. From this perspective, typical of traditional sociolinguistics, the task is to correlate language forms with the groups who use them. In virtue of the correlation, the production of a certain form indexes membership in the corresponding group. The weakness of this view is that it relegates verbal practices to the secondary position of reflecting social facts defined apart from them, and it reifies social structure as something objective and fixed.

A third, more promising alternative has emerged in the literature under the label of "communities of practice" (Lave and Wenger 1991, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992, Wenger 1993). The basic idea is that the community of practice is defined as "an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor" (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992:464). This way of defining community is both smaller than the traditional speech community and more dynamic than the social structure posited by correlational sociolinguistics. It also shifts the ground of definition from either language or social structure per se to the engagement of actors in some project. A family or domestic group is a community of practice in this sense, as is a sports team, a work crew, a neighborhood organization, a church congregation, the crew of a ship, members of an agricultural cooperative, and members of an academic department. Because some endeavors last longer than others, communities so defined clearly have different durations and arise under different circumstances. And because we all engage in multiple group endeavors at any time and throughout our social lives, we are members of multiple communities, simultaneously and over time.

The promise of this approach is that it provides a framework in which to define modes of participation and ways of speaking relative to the processes through which they are constituted. One such proposal was Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger's (1991) concept of "legitimate peripheral participation," which indicates the kind of participation typical of apprentices and learners of a skill. Rather than acquiring a conceptual representation of a process like woodworking, mechanics, or writing publishable academic articles, the learner comes to participate in the process as a legitimate actor, yet with less than the full responsibility for masterful execution. Workshops, practicums, clinical training, clerking for a judge, and other kinds of hands-on learning illustrate this at its clearest, but Lave and Wenger's proposal is more general than that. Adapting it to communicative prac-

tice, it implies that we are all more or less continuously learning new ways of speaking, even in our own native language, as we enter into collective endeavors of various kinds. And this learning does not involve acquiring rules or codes, but ways of acting and different kinds of participation. Furthermore, it is the overall participation framework as an emergent process that "does the learning," just as we have argued here that it is the participation framework in which an utterance acquires meaning that "does the talking."

Conclusion

What happens if we substitute the community for the participation framework as the basic unit of speech production? For one thing, the issue of motivation ceases to be defined in terms of individual intentions and projects and becomes a matter of the interlocking motivations of groups. By motivation in this context we mean both overt goals, such as the securing of political voice and legal rights, and also the aspirations and longer-range objectives of groups that may be less explicit and of which individual members may be less aware. The question of metalinguistic consciousness also shifts from psychological states of knowing, recognizing, and anticipating to a matter of historically formed orientations. The selectivity of individual awareness reemerges as the selectivity of group consciousness, formed by the interplay of sociohistorical position and the capacity for agency. Many of these ground shifts involve tensions analogous to the ones we have seen at the level of the face-to-face, but the intervening factors are a great deal more numerous and complicated. We will explore such disjunctions in detail in Chapter 12, in the context of colonial Maya practices and their trajectories. Although few would propose to entirely substitute the community, the public, or any other social aggregate for the immediate participation framework, still, it is instructive to think about the question.

For one thing, it casts into sharp relief what has become a key question in recent theory, namely, the differences between communicative phenomena at the two levels (and at the potentially many levels in between). In a real sense the traditional notion of a dyad and the more refined notion of participation frameworks fail to provide a basis for studying larger collectivities. Despite the appeal of simplicity, it doesn't make much sense to use the face-to-face as a model on which to describe complex mediated communication. Much as I would like to believe it possible, it is all but impossible that the analysis of indexical systems can explain things like the division of linguistic labor, the institutional settings of discourse reception, or the dynamics of communities of practice. It is a necessary part of a full account, just as analysis of the social field is absolutely necessary to a thorough description of indexical usage. For one thing, many of the spatial, temporal, and objectural divisions signaled by indexicals are predefined by things like architecture, activity spaces, calendars, work rhythms, and the sociocultural values of objects. The two levels of description are necessary, and neither is in itself suffi-

cient. However we define them, social groups are not internally structured the way individuals are, and discursive fields do not typically have the centered, radial structure of a deictic field. A collective agent is neither the sum of many individual agents nor the same as a single speaker position occupied by a group. The dynamics of representation; the tensions among competing factions within the group; ways of gendering practice, power, authority, and access to resources among members of a group; and the consciousness one has of belonging in a group—these are all quite unlike the relation between an individual and his or her expression. By the same token, individual speakers and coparticipants in a face-to-face exchange are more than the reflections of group dynamics writ small.

In this chapter, we have sought to identify basic phenomena such as mediation, multiple reception, and the difference between roles and actors. And we have used such terms as a framework within which progressively to expand the unit of speech production beyond the speaker and the text. But we have reached a point in the discussion at which we must recognize that there are major disjunctions at the different levels of description. No single metalanguage for participant roles will be adequate at all levels. I have no solution to this problem, and it seems unlikely that any will be forthcoming in the near future. Rather, what we can hope to do is to cast our descriptions of face-to-face participation and larger-scale discursive formations in such a way that they intersect—or if not, that the points of divergence are made visible. We have tried to do this with the concepts of a dialectic between individual expression and the social conditions under which it arises, along with Bakhtin's dialogism, the multiparty interaction studied by conversation analysis, transposition, the formation of publics, and the different grounds for community. In the next chapters we will continue on this path, outlining an approach to communicative practice.

Further Readings

From Dialectic to Dialogue

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