# Dialogue: Life and Death of the Organization

*Kenneth J. Gergen*
*Swarthmore College*

*Mary M. Gergen*
*Penn State University*

*Frank J. Barrett*
*Naval Post Graduate Academy*

There is a pervasive tendency in organizational studies to view acts of communication in terms of the individual agent. It is the individual who speaks, writes, gestures, and so on; it is the individual we credit for effective speaking, just as it is the individualís ineffective listening that invites discredit. This tendency to focus on individual acts of expression is indeed unfortunate because it suppresses perhaps the central feature of such actions, their function within relationships. Indeed, as we shall soon make clear, it is from the relational matrix that the very possibility of individual sense making comes into being, and without the existence of ongoing relationship communicative acts lose their status as communication. As the editors of this Handbook have made clear, organizational worlds are created and sustained through discourse. This chapter makes it equally clear that it is through relational process that discourse acquires its significance. More broadly stated, it is by virtue of relational processes that organizations live or die.

## The Centrality of Dialogue: Early Intimations

In this chapter we focus on the dialogic dimension of relational process in organizations. Although dialogue as a topic of study has been little mentioned in traditional handbooks of organizational study, its importance to organizational functioning has been subtly apparent since the inception of the science. Even the earliest research in organizational development attests to the importance of dialogue in organizational change. For example in Lewin's ( 195) groundbreaking research, the attempt was to enlist housewives in serving unfashionable meat products (e.g. beef hearts, kidneys) as a contribution to the war effort. Comparisons were made between groups exposed to persuasive information and groups that received the information and then discussed its implications. The results revealed that the discussion groups were far more likely to purchase the meats. In effect, "involved participation" in decision making was critical to change. Yet, while this study is often credited with spawning the field of action research, we actually know very little about the essential process of dialogue

itself.

Later studies continued in much the same vein. Classic research at Detroit Edison in 1948 aimed at improving work processes (Baumgartel, 1959). Again the researchers contrasted traditional training methods with group discussions. They conclude that "Intensive, group discussion. . . can be an effective tool for introducing positive change in a business organization." (p. 6). In their oft cited experiment, Coch and French (1953) experimented with organizational change in a clothing factory. In one group management informed a group of machine operators about changes in their job. In this group "resistance developed almost immediately after the change," resulting in grievances, quitting, and lowered productivity. In the experimental condition, groups discussed how working methods could be improved and how to eliminate unnecessary operations. In this case there were no signs of resistance. These early studies have stimulated a robust line of inquiry (see Porras and Robertson, 1991). And yet, because of the exclusive focus on outcome rather than process, we learn little about the actual process of dialogue.

## Organization of the Chapter

In the present chapter the process of dialogue takes center stage. The discussion is composed of four parts. As a necessary precis we shall explore the myriad meanings of dialogue and develop what we view as a useful orienting platform: dialogue as *discursive coordination*. This orientation will enable us to consider the practical consequences of various forms of dialogic action. We then turn to the pivotal function of dialogue in the organizing process. We shall be especially concerned with developing a vocabulary of discursive action with practical consequences for effective organizing. After considering the uses of dialogue in creating organizaton, we turn to the problematic potentials of dialogue. A contrast between *generative anddegenerative* dialogue enables us to explore how certain forms of coordination ultimately lead to organizational demise. Indeed, the very forms of dialogue required for organizational well-being may also establish the grounds for deterioration. In the final section we turn to dialogic practices that may restore vitality to the organization. Here we focus on transformational dialogue, that is, dialogic practices designed to break through naturally occurring barriers to communication.

## Dialogue as Discursive Coordination

In recent years scholars and practitioners have become increasingly excited about the potentials of dialogue for creating and transforming social worlds. However, such broad excitement is accompanied by a certain vagueness as to what is meant by dialogue. Choruses now sing hosannahs to dialogue, but seldom stop to consider that their praise may be directed toward entirely different practices. On a simple level, The American Heritage Dictionary offers the culturally common definition of dialogue as "conversation between two or more people." However,

virtually no scholarly work on dialogue shares this definition; scholars of dialogue are not at all interested in mere conversation. Nor do such scholars typically share definitions with each other. In our view, the primary definitional criterion of most contemporary analyses of dialogue is derived from a vision of an ideal form of relationship; dialogue is defined in terms of the favored ideal. For most contemporary analysts, merely having a conversation does not constitute true dialogue.

It is primarily the particular vision of the ideal that sets various dialogic scholars apart. David Bohm's (1996) popular book, On Dialogue, defines dialogue as a form of communication from which something new emerges; participants must evidence a "relaxed, non-judgmental curiosity, with the aim of seeing things as freshly and clearly as possible." (p. ix) Yet, Robert Grudin's On Dialogue is not so much interested in relationships that create novelty as he is in a ìreciprocal exchange of meaning...across a physical or mental space. (p. 11) In contrast, Putnam and Fairhurst (2001) are not centrally concerned with either generating novelty or exchanging meaning, but rather with the creation of convergence in views; they define dialogue as ìa mode of communication that builds mutuality through the awareness of others,(p. 116), and it does so through the ìuse of genuine or authentic discourse, and reliance on the unfolding interaction.(p. 116). At the same time, for L. C. Hawes (1999), the central ingredient of dialogue is conflict reduction; for him dialogue is "praxis for mediating competing and contradictory discourses." In further contrast, while many of the above scholars assume that dialogue is among equals, Eisenberg and Goodall (1993) are chiefly concerned with enhancing the voices of minorities. They see dialogue as "providing parties with a chance to speak and be heard and to challenge the traditional positioning of authority.. " Quite distinct from all these orientations, Isaacs (1993) defines dialogue as "a sustained collective inquiry into the processes, assumptions, and certainties that compose everyday experience." (p. 25). Finally, for Tullio Maranhao (1990), it is not everyday life that dialogue should throw into question but all certainty of knowledge. For him dialogue is a logic of "stating and questioning," with the aim of generating the kind of skepticism that invites continuous inquiry. For Maranhao, dialogue is a form of "anti-epistemology."

With such differing views of dialogue, each saturated as it is with values and visions, any general characterization of dialogue becomes perilous. In order to establish a more comprehensive analytic frame, while not sacrificing valuable distinctions embedded in these various accounts, it is useful to separate the normative from the descriptive. Rather than equating the term "dialogue" with any particular vision of ideal interchange, we offer an elemental descriptive definition. Variations in the specific patterning of interchange may thus reflect the various ideal forms sought by differing scholars. In this way we return again to an elemental formulation, but leave room for broad expansion in specific forms and functions. We do not propose a return to the view of "dialogue as conversation," as it does not serve our analytic ends here. The term "conversation" is both

ambiguous and conceptually thin. Rather, for present purposes we propose to define dialogue as discursive coordination in the service of social ends. To amplify this view and its implications, we propose the following:

1. **Dialogue originates in the public sphere.** In understanding dialogue many theorists have drawn from the individualist tradition in which language is a reflection or expression of the individual mind. On this account, dialogue is a form of inter-subjective connection or synchrony. The public actions are derivative of private meanings. In the present account we bracket the realm of subjectivity, and focus on the public coordination of discourse. This enables us to avoid a number of intractable philosophical problems (e.g. the relation of mind to body, the problem of "other minds," and the hermeneutic problem of accurate interpretation), and to focus on the relational function of various utterances within ongoing conversation. We are informed here, in part, by J.L. Austin's How to do things with words (1962), in which the performatory character of speech is illuminated. Utterances are essentially actions performed with social consequences.

   This orientation does not exclude psychological inquiry. However, it is to say that significant analyses of dialogue can ensue without recourse to psychological explanation. Effective analysis of dialogue need not refer to states of individual understanding, subjective biases or inattention, personality traits, and so on. This possibility was initially demonstrated in Garfinkel's (1963) groundbreaking work on ethnomethodology, and now more copiously in various forms of discourse and conversation analysis (Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001a, 2001b). If psychological inquiry is to proceed, our orientation here is most congenial with Vygotsky's (1986) view that higher order psychological processes are reflections of social process. This is to say that the process of thought is essentially public discourse carried out on a private site. This is essentially the view adopted by Bruner (1990) in Acts of Meaning, and by Harre and Gillette (1994) in The Discursive Mind. In our view, however, it is most useful to focus on the forms of public coordination that originate, sustain, transform, and potentially terminate what participants take to be meaning.

2. **Dialogue is a form of coordinated action.** In foregrounding the concept of collaboration we mean to call attention to the relational foundation of dialogue. That is, meaning within dialogue is an outcome not of individual action and reaction, but of what Shotter (1984) calls joint-action, or the coordinated actions of the participants. In this sense, the meaning of an individual's expression within a dialogue depends importantly on the response of his or her interlocutor - what has elsewhere been called "a supplement" (Gergen, 1994). No individual expression harbors meaning in itself. For example, what we might conventionally index as a "hostile remark" can be turned into "a joke" through a response of laughter; the

"vision statement" of a superior can be refigured as "just more BS" through the shared smirk of the employees.

In this context, Wittgenstein's (1963) metaphor of the language game is also useful. The metaphor calls attention specifically to the coordinated or rule-governed activities of the participants in generating meaning. The words, "strike" and "home run" acquire their meaning by virtue of the participation of the interlocutors in the rule constrained talk of baseball. Words invented by a single individual (a "private language" in Wittgenstein's terms) would not in themselves constitute meaningful entries into dialogue. In this sense, the traditional binary separating monologue and dialogue is misleading. The term monologue cannot refer to the language of one person along, for such a language would fail to communicate. The meaning of any utterance depends on its functioning within a relational matrix. Thus monologue is better understood as an extended (or dominating) entry of a single voice into a dialogue; in this sense monologue is an unevenly distributed dialogue.

3. **Dialogic efficacy is bodily and contextually embedded.** While our orientation to dialogue emphasizes discourse, we do embrace linguistic reductionism. Spoken (or written) language may be focal in our analyses, but other than for analytic purposes, we do not wish to separate out such language from the remainder of the life sphere entering into the production of meaning. Clearly the efficacy of spoken words within dialogue is fastened to the simultaneous movements of the speakers' bodies, tone of voice, and physical proximity. Further, dialogic efficacy cannot ultimately be separated from the world of objects and spaces ñthe material context. The efficacy of one's words may importantly depend, for example, on whether one is clutching a gavel, a dagger, or a bouquet of flowers. In the same way, the meaning of words within the dialogue may depend on whether they are expressed in an executive suite, in a bar room, or over the internet. Again to draw from Wittgenstein (1963) the language games in which we engage are embedded within broader forms of life. Thus, the meaning of "strike" and "home run" do not only depend on the rules of baseball talk, but on their function within a form of life that includes balls, bats, bases, fields, players, umpires, hotdogs, and so on.

4. **Dialogic efficacy is historically and culturally situated.** The contribution of any particular act of speech to dialogic coordination is contingent on its placement within a cultural context. In part this emphasis acknowledges Saussure's (1974) distinction between the synchronic and diachronic study of language. While we may effectively focus on contemporary forms of dialogue and their accomplishments (synchronic study), we must also be prepared for temporal transformations in what and how various ends are accomplished. For example, "the boss's orders" were once very effective within Western organizations, but they are slowly losing their power to generate activity. As concerns with workplace democracy, diversity, and

organizational flattening become popular, an authoritative "top-down" voice may become dysfunctional (Yankolovich, 1999).

Bakhtin (1981) also draws our attention to the heterogeneous cultural traditions that typically contribute to the shared language of a nation. This analysis prepares us for the possibility that partners in a dialogue may be polyvocal, capable of shifting from one mode or form of dialogue to another across the course of conversation (Hazen, 1993). At the same time, the focus on cultural heterogeneity prepares us for the difficulties that may be encountered when participants do not share discursive traditions. As the mounting literature on cross-cultural (mis)understanding makes clear (see for example, Rahim, 1994; Pearce, 1989; Ting-Toomey and Oetzel; 2001; Jandt, 2001) such dialogues may be frustrating and ineffectual. The dialogic moves effective for achieving goals within one tradition may be counterproductive in conversations with those outside the tradition. Similarly, even within the same culture the dialogic forms effective in one condition may not carry over to another. (See for example, Well's, 1999, discussion of optimal forms of classroom dialogue.) Whatever is said about dialogic efficacy within organizations must thus be tempered by consciousness of contingency.

5. **Dialogue may serve many different purposes, both positive and negative.** Finally, by viewing dialogue as discursive coordination we attempt to avoid conflating normative and descriptive commitments. Coordination in itself is neither good nor evil. From our definitional framework, heated argument is as much a dialogue as an attempt to gain an appreciative understanding of another's "point of view." This is not to abandon concern with the kinds of ideals central to most contemporary analysts. Rather, it is to invite differentiation among forms of dialogue in terms of the ends they serve. Thus, while certain forms of dialogue may indeed succeed in reducing conflict, other moves in language may enable authority to be challenged, multiple opinions to be expressed, or taken-for-granted realities to be deliberated. Drawing again from Wittgenstein (1963), "Think of the tools in a tool-box: there is a hammer, pliers, a saw, a screw-driver, a rule, a glue-pot, glue, nails, and screws. - The function of words are as diverse as the functions of these objects" (6e). From this perspective, inquiry is invited into the specific forms of dialogue required to achieve particular goals of value.

It is important to note here that the value placed on dialogic outcomes may vary significantly from one standpoint to another. For example, a vigorous argument, from an outsider's perspective, may seem aggressive and hostile. For the participants, however, such skirmishes can be enlivening fun, much like a game of chess. By the same token, the outcomes of any particular dialogue may be simultaneously both positive and negative (see also Thatchenkery & Upadhyaya, 1996). One may be pleased that a given

dialogue succeeds in establishing intimate bonds with another, but simultaneously realize that certain critical capacities are simultaneously suspended. And too, what is accomplished in a dialogue may be judged differently in terms of what ensues at a later point in time. Many organizations have been disappointed by training exercises that generate immediate joy and communal good will, only to find that with Monday morning life returns to dull normal.

## Generative Dialogue and the Organizing Process

If we understand dialogue as the process of relational coordination, it is immediately clear that certain forms of dialogue are essential to the process of building organizations. As people's words and actions become coordinated so do forms of life come into being ñ friendships, marriages, families, and organizations large and small (see also Weick, 1995, Yankelovich, 1999; and Taylor, 2000). In this sense, there is no inherent difference in the process by which two children create a sand castle, a family eats Sunday dinner together, a strike is planned, or the Ford motor company produces automobiles. Processes of dialogic coordination are at work in every instance. Yet, while we acknowledge the significant implications of understanding dialogue as relational coordination, we are still left without the kind of detailing essential for creating and sustaining an effective organization. Invited, in particular, is an account of those dialogic moves that facilitate the process of organizing. What moves contribute to what might be called generative dialogue, dialogue that brings into being a mutually satisfying and effective organization?

A full treatment of generative dialogue would require an examination not only of bodily movements, gestures, and gaze, but of the environment and the objects available to people in relationships. A focus on historical conditions contributing to various forms of generative dialogue would be helpful, as well as an account of cultural variations in effective dialogue. However, given limited space and the emphasis of the present volume on discourse, let us focus in particular on spoken and written language in the contemporary Western organization. This is no insignificant matter, as language is the chief means by which such organizations come into being and are sustained. However, it is important to be sensitive to the limitations of such an analysis.

Further, what we offer here may be viewed as a "first cut." That is, we work here without the benefit of a well grounded literature specific to the topic. We must piece together significant ideas from a number of disparate areas to offer a preliminary scaffolding. At the same time, we hope that this unfinished structure will enable more detailed elaboration as future study moves in this direction.

It should be noted that we are guided in our present treatment by a social constructionist orientation (Gergen, 1994, 1999). In effect we place a strong emphasis on the way in which discourse functions to structure both a sense of the

real and the valuable within relationships. From the relational matrix, then, both ontology and ethics ñ agreement on what is, and what ought to be ñ can grow. And, as these agreements are cemented to action, local traditions (sub-cultures) emerge. In terms of generative dialogue, then, the central focus is on those kinds of dialogic moves that may bring realities and ethics into being and bind them to particular patterns of action. With above provisos notwithstanding, we propose the following as central components in generative dialogue:

**The Pivotal Act of Affirmation**

As proposed above, because meaning is born in relationship, an individual's lone utterance contains no meaning. Rather, it provides the potential for meaning, a potential that can only be realized through another's supplement. The supplement of affirmation may stand as the key building block to creating conjoint realities. To affirm is to ratify the significance of an utterance as a meaningful act. It is to locate something within an expression that is valuable, to which one can agree, or render support. Merely responding to the question, "How are you?" with "Fine, thank you," is to render the question meaningful as a ritual of greeting. To respond with a blank stare would be to negate its significance as communication. In the act of affirmation elements of the initial utterance are also sanctioned as "real" and are given rudimentary value. The response of "Fine, thank you," simultaneously grants "personal health" an existence in the world and places value upon it.

Affirmation is important for other reasons as well, partly deriving from the individualist tradition and the presumption that thoughts and feelings are individual possessions. As we say, "It is my experience that...," or "These are my beliefs." To affirm such utterances is to grant worth to, or to honor the validity of the other's subjectivity; failure to affirm places the identity of the other in question. Finally, in affirming an utterance one also sanctions the relationships from which it derives. If one dismisses a speaker's opinions, it is often to disparage the range of relations in which this opinion is embedded. To embrace a novel idea is to embrace new relationships, and to possibly to threaten old ones.

Affirmation may take many forms depending on conversation and context. At the simplest level, careful or sympathetic attention provides a beginning. Curiosity or question asking also serves as a simple form of affirmation, as it grants to the speaker's preceding utterance meaningful significance. To "be moved" by another's expressions is a high form of affirmation. In her volume, <u>Conversation, Language, and Possibilities</u>, Harlene Anderson (1997) speaks for many change agents when she proposes that therapy becomes effective when, "the therapist enters the therapy domain with a genuine posture and manner characterized by an openness to another personís ideological base his or her reality, beliefs, and experiences. This listening posture and manner involve showing respect for, having humility toward, and believing that what a client has to say is worth hearing." (p. 12) More broadly, affirmation may be roughly equated with what many researchers call "mutuality" in dialogue (Markova, Graumann, and Foppa,

1995), and finds parallels in mother-child interaction as well as relations with non-human species. It should finally be noted that we are not proposing here that generative dialogue requires full agreement among interlocutors. Affirmation is not assent, a point to which we shall return momentarily.

**Productive Difference**

While affirmation is of critical significance in building organization, it is important to draw a distinction between affirmation and duplication. At the most rudimentary level affirmation ratifies the reality and value of a preceding utterance. However, it functions in this way primarily against the backdrop of a contrasting possibility, or domain that is negated. If another agrees with you, this agreement serves as an affirmation primarily when the other is apprised of what is not being affirmed or valued. When one shows signs of deliberating the issues, and then agrees, affirmation is achieved. If one is prepared to agree no matter what is proposed, we have duplication as opposed to affirmation.

The distinction is important in virtue of a more general theoretical point: The conjoint creation of meaning depends on the generation of difference. In the same sense that the meaning of a single word depends on its differing from other words (e.g. bit, bat, but), so does the meaning of any utterance in a dialogue acquire its meaning from its difference from other utterances. To echo each utterance spoken by the other is to destroy the meaning of these expressions. Thus, in a more general sense, generative dialogue depends on the continuous generation of differences. The meaning making process is rendered robust by virtue of distinctive voices (See also Hazen, 1993).

With this said, however, a further distinction is essential between productive as opposed to destructive difference. Dialogic entries that sustain or extend the potentials of a preceding utterance may be viewed as productive; utterances that curtail or negate what has preceded are destructive. They essentially impede the process of constructing a mutually viable reality. For example, to offer an example of what has just been said, to add an associated idea, or to ask about how an utterance might apply in a particular situation will typically function in a productive way. Adding new voices to the conversation may also make a robust contribution to productive difference. See also Barbules (1993) on ìbuilding statements.î}. In contrast, to announce that another's utterance is "just plain wrong," unintelligible, or outrageous will typically bring dialogue to a halt. This is not at all to say that disagreement is essentially destructive. There are conversational conditions under which argument and mutual critique are both anticipated and welcomed (see Billig, 1987). A properly conducted debate, for example, may vitally extend the range of relevant considerations for effective decision making.

**The Creation of Coherence**

The combination of affirmation and difference makes a potent contribution to the emerging world of the real and the good. However, in the same way that the meaning derived from a paragraph in a novel is highly dependent on its relationship to preceding paragraphs, so does meaning in dialogue depend on what precedes any particular turn-taking segment. To create a sustainable world thus requires dialogic acts that engender what is commonly termed conversational coherence (Craig and Tracy, 1983; Duck, 2002). Such acts enable preceding expressions to create a singular, ordered world about which to organize. Among the common dialogic inputs contributing to coherence are repeating conversational topics (topoi), offering comments relevant to a recognized issue, and providing answers to preceding questions (Barbules, 1993; Wells, 1999).. On a more subtle level, we wish to call attention to *metonymic reflection*. as a means of generating coherence. Metonymy refers to the use of a fragment to stand for a whole to which it is related. Thus, "the golden arches" are used to signify the McDonald's restaurants, or the British flag (the so-called Union Jack) to indicate the United Kingdom. In the present case, metonymic reflection occurs when one's actions contain some fragment of the other's actions, a piece that represents the whole. If an interlocutor expresses doubts about a given policy, and her colleague responds by asking, "What's the weather report for tomorrow?" the expression of doubt fails to be represented in the reply. The reply fails to include some element of the initial utterance. If a response includes a metonymic fragment of what has just been said, then the interlocutor finds him or herself carried in the other. Collaborative coherence is achieved.

**Narrative and Temporal Integration**

As dialogue develops it leaves in its wake a repository of discourse and associated action. This repository may serve as both a resource for sustaining generativity and a potential threat to continuation. Its major contribution to the process of organizing stems from its integrative properties. That is, as interlocutors set about constructing a world of the real and the good, materials are required for solidification. This world must become compelling, reliable and significant. One major means of solidifying this world is through integrating materials from the past - accounts of events that can fortify the present, fill out its contours, add to its dimension, and/or ratify its value. Although all past events can be used in this way, the most important resources for such solidification come from events common to the interlocutors themselves. By inserting accounts of the past into ongoing dialogues, the interlocutors also create a reality with historical depth (Thatchenkery & Upadhyaya, 1996). They cease to speak in terms of "what we are presently creating," but see the present as rooted in the past. The shaky quality of "here and now" is replaced by the concept of "tradition." Evanescence gives way to a sense of temporal lodgement. For additional insights into the ways in which narratives serve as organizing devices see Boje, 1991; Cszarniawska, 1997; Gabriel, 1995; Boje, 2001).

# Expanding the Arena of Generative Dialogue

These four insertions into dialogue - emphasizing affirmation, productive difference, coherence, and temporal integration - may be viewed as central to creating the forms of reality and value necessary for effective organization. At the same time, these are only entry markers in a scholarly effort of extended duration and scope. For purposes of inviting collaborative expansion, we share here several additional contributions of significance:

**Repetitive Sequences.** Generative dialogue may be compared to the fluid and synchronized movements of dancers. A key to the success of the dance is a history of practice. Yet, this is not the practice of isolated individuals, but of the collaborative unit. Their practice together readies each of them for the movements of the other. The slight pressure of the male's hand may send his partner into a swirl, at the end of which his open arms are prepared to receive her return. And so it is in the case of generative dialogue. If effective organization is to be achieved so must there be repetitive scenarios of relationship, sequences of action that form a reliable core. This is not to propose that all relational sequences should move in the repetitive direction. The result would be a stagnation of meaning and the loss of flexibility. However, without major contributions to repetition, organizational efficacy will be lost. A significant degree of dialogic ritual is essential.

**Reflexive Punctuation**. As dialogues unfold and repetition becomes more frequent, agreements will emerge as to what is real and good. However, because the meaning of what has been achieved is inherently ambiguous - subject to alteration as the conversation moves on - effective organization may require periodic reflection on what has been accomplished. Such punctuating insinuations into dialogue serve to collect and organize the sedimented realities and aspirations of the participants. Comments concerning "what we have agreed to" "our objectives," or "our current plans," may all have this solidifying effect. Metaphors may play an especially important role in this case, as they have the capacity to tie together many disparate facets of conversation and action into a coherent whole. See also Weick (1995) on significance of "retrospective sensemaking.

**Constructing Bonds and Boundaries.** Participants in an organization will often speak in the singular: "my opinion.." "what I think..." "my hopes in this case..." In effect, such dialogic inputs construct the reality of isolated individuals. If fully sustained, such dialogue may invite division, alienation, and destructive competition. Favored for generative dialogue, then, is a shift from a discourse of individual entities to a collective "we." In speaking of "our opinion," "what we think" "our hopes," the "imagined community" becomes a reality (Anderson, 1997). The result will be a bonding among the participants, the creation of an exterior to the organization, and an increased focus on the relations among participants.

In closing this discussion it is important to note that none of the discursive moves

outlined here achieves its function until affirmed by one's interlocutors. While linguistic tradition forces us to single out specific "moves," "utterances," or "speech acts," this tradition simultaneously obscures the conjoint creation of their meaning as moves, utterances or speech acts. Thus, for example, a narrative is not a narrative until another ratifies it as such. One may tell what conventionally counts as "a story of a past success," but its reality as such depends on the affirmation of the listener. If the listener indexes the offering as a "manipulative ploy," or "a misleading distortion" the "story of past success" is destroyed. In this sense, the analysis of dialogue is not congenial with strategic views of communication competence. The success of a given move does not depend on the rational calculus of the actor, but on its relationship to what that which has preceded and follows.

## Dialogue and Organizational Dysfunction

While dialogic process is critical to the achievement of organization it is also clear that not all forms of dialogue function in this way. The preceding discussion has attempted to pinpoint dialogic contributions that seem pivotal to organizing around a shared reality. Here we turn to the problem of organizational dysfunction. First, we inquire in a more general into what forms of dialogue undermine or destroy organizations. Then we turn to the more subtle and ironic ways in which organizing processes themselves lay the groundwork for disorganization.

We shall not belabor the topic of dialogic dysfunction. In part this is because organizational failure is implied by the absence or inverse of the various dialogic moves just outlined. The failure to affirm, for example, can lead to within a relationship; failing to create coherence can undermine concerted action. Further, most of us well understand the destructive forms of dialogue by virtue of our participation in the rituals of everyday life. Common experience is perhaps our best teacher. However, two contributions to dysfunctional dialogue should be singled out for their ubiquitous deployment:

**Negation.** Echoing our discussion of destructive difference, the negative move within a dialogue is one that essentially destroys the meaning making potential of a preceding utterance. This is not simply a failure to affirm, but the active obliteration of the utterance as a candidate for meaning. On a subtle level, active inattention serves as negation. Turning away from an interlocutor, reading a document, starting another conversation, or interrupting without acknowledging what has been said all serve as forms of negation. More blatantly, hostile critique or volatile arguments against the interlocutor's utterances can function as negation. Again, this is not to imply that critique and argument are always dysfunctional. As indicated above, much depends on the form (including tone of voice and bodily posture). However, it is to say that the latter forms of discourse must be employed with care and sensitivity. As suggested earlier, in the Western tradition one's words are virtually expressions of personal essence. To attack another's views is

not, then, a mere linguistic exercise; it is to invalidate the originary essence of the self.

On a more subtle level, monologic discourse may function as negation. As previously proposed, we view monologue as an unevenly distributed form of dialogue. If extended indefinitely it eliminates the space for the other's supplementation. In effect, the speaker preempts the affirmation process, placing the affirmation into the mouth of the otherwise mute listener. In this way, monologue subtly denies the listener participation in the creation of meaning. There is no recognition of a worthy essence within the other. Here we are sensitized as well to the relationship between dialogic forms and organizational structure. Monologic communication is traditionally a prerogative of rank. Indeed the presumption remains in Western culture that the more senior the individual in the organization the more knowledge he or she should possess. In this sense, the failure to display monologic prowess may be viewed as a sign of weakness. However, monologic speech remains effective only so long as the senior commands the kind of respect necessary for the presumption of affirmation to find assent. In the wave of recent support for workplace democracy and diversity initiatives, such a presumption becomes questionable. Further, as organizations grow more complex and confront an increasingly chaotic world of meaning, monologic discourse seems increasingly counterproductive (Anderson, et al., 2002).

**Individual Blame**. From the Western ideology of "the individual self," also sprouts the concept of individual responsibility. If individual minds are originary sources of action, then we may sensibly hold the individual responsible for his or her deeds - both good and bad. Such assumptions make their way into our institutions of law, into the application of rule systems within organizations, and into the rituals of daily life. In all cases, there is longstanding legitimation for blaming the individual for his or her untoward actions. Yet, in significant respects acts of individual blame function much like negations. They symbolically assault what is taken to be the center core of self. Resistance is thus invited, a resistance that is further exacerbated by the typical sense of righteousness. From the present standpoint individuals function within shared visions of the real and the good; there is no place in such worlds for "choosing evil." Such actions would be incomprehensible. From the personal standpoint, then, all actions are justified - "right at the time." Acts of blame, then, often seem unjustified, gratuitous, and alien to those who are accused.. In terms of dialogue, the challenge is to locate alternative conversational entries that may serve sanctioning purposes without resorting to acts of blame (see McNamee and Gergen, 1999).

## Organization as Disorganization

Negation and individual blame may seriously impede the process of generative dialogue. However, there is a more subtle and ironic narrative of disorganization that requires special attention. To be succinct, we propose that successful

organizing establishes the grounds for disorganization. To elaborate, consider Bakhtin's (1981) important distinction between dialogue that functions centripetally (bringing language into a centralized form of organization), as opposed to centrifugally (disrupting or disorganizing centralized forms of understanding). In this sense what we have characterized as generative dialogue essentially functions centripetally to create effective organization. However, dialogue that brings organizational participants together into a shared space of understanding, also functions in such a way that the dialogic traditions in which they are otherwise engaged are disrupted, suppressed, or in a word, disordered. Essentially the participants may come to embrace a particular reality, set of values, and practices that cut them away from other forms of life. The tendency is to become a "company man," "a bureaucrat," "a true believer," or ìone dimensional.îThe result is a subtle negation of that which lies outside the shining sphere of organization. The centripital process simultaneously functions centrifugally. (Also see Baxter and Montgomery, 1996, on dialectic change as inherent in dialogue.)

This problem is exacerbated by a small group pattern long familiar to the social sciences, namely that of "in-group/out-group" formation. From the early work of Sherif (1966) to more recent accounts of group identity (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1991), researchers have noted a strong tendency for organized groups to become alienated from or hostile to those outside the group. In-group members come to celebrate their way of doing things, their ideals, and their members; other groups form a devalued exterior. They are discredited and suspicious. In more contemporary terms, Foucault's (1980) views of power/knowledge are apposite. As groups develop a shared vision of the real and the good, they tend to incorporate or suppress alien discourses. The hegemonic thrust of discursive communities tends to marginalize or alienate those who fall outside. Or, in more practical terms, as organizations become larger, more complex, and more geographically extended, so will multiple discursive communities emerge, each with a particular construction of the world, each with a potential distrust or animus toward the others. Pockets of local organization - effective for carrying out the daily duties as understood within - carry with them potential resistances to other enclaves of meaning within the organization. The marketing division fails to appreciate the problems of Sales, Sales does not believe R&D is functioning effectively, the French subsidiary believes the home office in the U.S. is irrational, and so on. In sum, wherever dialogue is successful in organizing, there is a subtle undoing of organization, and unleashing of potentials for intergroup negation.

## Toward Transformative Dialogue

In preceding sections we have focused on specific moves in dialogue that may contribute to both organization and disorganization. We turn finally to dialogic practices that may bridge the gap between alienated realities. Required here are moves in conversation that may sometimes differ substantially from those congenial to creating and sustaining a given reality, morality, or way of life. The

challenge is that of bringing into productive synchrony groups that share solidified visions of the real and the good. We may speak, then, of transformative dialogue, a relational accomplishment that creates new spaces of meaning and enables the organization to restore its generative potentials (Gergen, McNamee, and Barrett, 2001) . In what follows we will consider two forms of organized practice specifically focused on crossing boundaries. In each case we shall attempt to isolate those particular dialogic moves central to bringing about restorative change.

**The Public Conversations Project**

The Public Conversation Project, founded in 1989, seeks to create an alternative to polarized debate by creating constructive dialogues between parties (see Chasin and Herzig, 1994; Chasin, Herzig, Roth, Chasin, Becker, and Stains, 1996). Typically the group works with groups that have a history of marginalizing, demonizing and even eliminating the other. In some of their most important work, activists on both sides of the abortion debate were brought together in small groups for a 2-day meeting. The meeting began with a dinner in which participants were free to talk to another about any issue except the issue of abortion. The dinner gave way to guided conversations in which - during the subsequent days - participants specifically addressed the following questions:

1. How did you get involved with this issue? What Ìs your personal relationship or personal history with it?
2. We would like to hear a little more about your particular beliefs and perspectives about the issues surrounding abortion. What is at the heart of the matter for you?
3. Many people we've talked to have told us that within their approach to this issue they find some gray areas, some dilemmas about their own beliefs or even some conflicts. Do you experience any pockets of uncertainty or lesser certainty, any concerns, value conflicts, or mixed feelings that you may have and wish to share?

The first question enabled the participants to tell personal stories about events that shaped their views Often they shared experiences from their own lives or the experience of a family member at a crisis moment. The second question gave participants an opportunity to express their personal, core beliefs about the abortion issue. Finally, participants were able to speak of their uncertainties or ambivalence. Participants in this and other projects have been almost univcoal in their praises. Interestingly, in January 2001, six Boston women - public leaders from both sides of the abortion debate - revealed that they had been meeting in secret for six years after their participation in the project (Fowler et. al., 2001). Among other things the participants felt they learned to abandon polemical language; continued meeting enabled them to see "the dignity and goodness" of the those they opposed. While not eschewing their original positions, they reported that they "learned to avoid being over reactive and disparaging the other

side and to focus instead on affirming (our) respective causes."

What are the discursive moves that enabled the boundaries of animosity to be traversed? At the outset we find that the practice included certain generative moves in dialogue and avoided two more destructive possibilities. In the generative case, both the conversation at dinner and the session in which participants spoke of the "heart of the matter" for them, their "opponents" were cast in the role of respectful listening. The act of listening without responding with contentious questions subtly served an affirming function. At the same time, by steering the conversation away from uncompromising theoretical issues, few destructive differences entered the conversation. Finally, the dialogue was arranged in such a way that acts of blame were not permitted. However, the public conversations format also points to the importance of:

**Narrative Revelation**. Listening to the first person narratives of those to whom one is otherwise opposed seems to have a powerful ameliorating effect. The reasons are several. First, such narratives are easily comprehensible; from our earliest years we are exposed to the narrative form common in personal storytelling, and we are more fully prepared to understand this form as opposed to abstract arguments. Further, stories can invite fuller audience engagement than does the explication of abstract ideas. In hearing stories we generate images, thrive on the drama, suffer and celebrate with the speaker. Finally, the personal story tends to generate acceptance as opposed to resistance. If it is ìyour story, your experience,î then the audience can scarcely say ìyou are wrong.î Narratives do not invite opposition but indulgence.

**Self Reflexivity**. One unfortunate aspect of traditional conversation is that we are positioned as unified egos. That is, we are constructed as singular, coherent selves, not fragmented and multiple. To be incoherent is subject to ridicule; moral inconsistency is grounds for scorn. Thus, as we encounter people whose positions differ from ours, we tend to represent ourselves one dimensionally, ensuring that all our statements form a unified, seamless web. As a result, when we enter a relationship defined by our differences, commitment to unity will maintain our distance. And if the †integrity or validity of oneís coherent front is threatened by the other, we may move toward polarizing combat. In this respect the invitation to explore one's "gray areas" or doubts releases the demand for coherence. In Baxter and Montgomery's (1996) terms, we demonstrate one of the most important dialogic skills, namely the ìability to recognize multiple, simultaneously salient systems.î More broadly, self reflexivity may be only one member of a family of moves that will inject polyvocality into the dialogue. For example, in their conflict work, Pearce and Littlejohn(1997) often employ "third person listening,"in which one member of an antagonistic group may be asked to step out of the conversation and to observe the interchange. By moving from the first person position, in which one is representing a position, to a third person stance, one can observe the conflict with other criteria at hand (e.g. "Is this a productive form of interaction?"

"What improvements might be made?").

**Appreciative Inquiry**

Appreciative inquiry (AI) is a second and highly effective transformative practice. Developed by David Cooperrider and his colleagues in the 1980's (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider, Sorensen, Whitney, & Yaeger, 2000; Fry, Barrett, Seiling, & Whitney, 2002; Ludema, Cooperrider, & Barrett, 2000) it is a method that aims to transform the capacity of human systems for positive change by deliberately focusing on positive experiences and hopeful futures. Traditional action research, they claim, has been constrained within a problem solving ethos and girded with a deficit orientation in which participants are encouraged to notice and talk about breakdowns and plan action around solutions that address these problems. AI claims that organizations are not problems to be solved but are "centers of infinite relational capacity, alive with infinite imagination, open, indeterminate, and ultimately - in terms of the future - a mystery." (Cooperrider and Barrett, 2002; p 236).

AI practitioners begin with the belief that topic choice and question formation are the most important moves in shaping dialogue. Much effort is made toward creating questions around positive topics that guide attention toward peak experiences and strengths. The challenge is to ask questions that deliberately focus on those factors that contribute to the systemís operating at its very best. Questions are designed to encourage participants to search for stories that embody these affirmative topics. Participants are encouraged to develop an appreciative eye, to appreciate the possibility that every human system, no matter how dysfunctional or conflictual, has elements of beauty, goodness, and value.

Although AI practices are frequently used to stimulate organizational change, they are particularly applicable to cases in which groups are locked in spirals of negation and vengeance. One case study in particular conveys the value of appreciative inquiry as a mode of creating transformative dialogue in a system under siege. (For a fuller description, see Barrett and Coopperrider, 1991). In the early 1980's, The Medic Inn, a one star hotel facility, was taken over by a larger enterprise and given the mandate to transform itself into a first class, four star facility. The parent company invested in the property and upgraded the physical facilities. However, the quality of service was slow to change. Managers were locked in cycles of interpersonal conflict and interdepartmental turf wars. Interpersonal tension and competition were seemingly insurmountable obstacles to overcome. It was clear to the consultants that the managers needed to engage in a different kind of dialogue in order to overcome conflict and move toward a new standard of excellence.

The consultants in this case created a task force of managers to take a collective journey to Chicago's famous Tremont Hotel, one of the premier four star properties in the county. Here they interviewed managers about the factors they

felt contributed to excellence. A typical question was: What were the peak moments in the life of the hotel --the times when people felt most energized, most committed, and most fulfilled in their involvement. Later, the participants interviewed one another about their own peak experiences in their hotel, and then began to articulate aspirations for their a possible future. In these discussions there were no traces of the cycles of blame and turf protection. The group returned to their hotel with a new cooperative spirit and a renewed capacity to generate consensus. They continued the dialogue that had begun with the appreciative inquiry at the Tremont and within a few months developed a collective strategic plan for excellence. Within a few years they had achieved a four star rating from the Michelen rating service.

Appreciative inquiry seeds transformational dialogue in many ways. There is a premium placed on *mutual affirmation*; *productive differences* are encouraged, *individual blame is avoided*, and *personal narratives* create a strong sense of mutuality. At the same time, AI offers one highly significant addition to a vocabulary of transformative dialogue:

**The Co Creation of New Worlds**. As outlined earlier, transformative dialogue is essentially aimed at facilitating the collaborative construction of new realities. Needed in the dialogue are what might be called imaginary moments in which participants join in developing visions of common good. These imaginary moments not only sow the seeds for constructing a common reality and vision of the good, but also shift the position of the participants from combative to cooperative. As participants move toward common purpose, so do they redefine the other, and lay the groundwork for a conception of "us." This is precisely what is achieved as AI participants engage in designing new futures.

To be sure, the work of the Public Conversations Project and appreciative inquiry practitioners do not exhaust the possibilities for transformative dialogue. The interested reader is directed as well to the important work of the Public Dialogue Consortium (see Pearce and Pearce, 2001; Spano, 2001) on community change. Further, a rich reserve of resources may be located through several websites, including: www.uia.org/dialogue www.thataway.org/dialogue , and www.studycircles.org, www.un.org/Dialogue.

## In Conclusion

In the 1987 edition of The Handbook of Organizational Communication, there is no index entry for "dialogue," nor does significant discussion of dialogue appear in any of the included chapters. We hope that the present chapter will signal a significant shift in attention, and serve as an animating springboard for new lines of inquiry. As we have attempted to demonstrate, dialogue is essential to the vitality of an organization, and neglect of dialogic practices can create internal schisms and ultimate collapse. In the present chapter we have developed a view of dialogue as discursive coordination, and within this framework moved on to

consider dialogic practices that bring organization into being, that destroy organization, and that enable conflicting domains of meaning to be re-coordinated.

Yet, these are only beginnings. We have already noted the lack of attention in this analysis to non-verbal forms of discursive action, to material context, to cultural and historical variations. However, a full treatment of dialogue should also be attentive to issues of power. Deetz (1992) warns us that the institutions of the ordinary - and particularly the relations of power - may preclude the kind of dialogue from which organizational change may ensue. In the same vein, we have not discussed the many possible relational configurations in which dialogue may take place. Various configurations of gender, age, kinship, friendship and the like might well reveal differing forms of effective dialogue (Duck, 2002.) Further, Myerson (1994 ) draws our attention to "double arguability," essentially a distinction between the interactions of the interlocutors in a dialogue and the specific issue at stake. Ultimately we must consider the relationship between what is said, the way in which it is said, and the form of relationship (Taylor, 1999). The present analysis has focused exclusively on the former domain, while neglecting potentially significant issues of dialogic content. Finally, our analysis has failed to make contact with issues of dialogic ethics. Should there be ethical imperatives for effective dialogue (see for example, Habermas, 1993; Krippendorff,1989; Baxter and Montgomery, 1996); are there ethical assumptions already implicit, or is it possible that ethical imperatives may interfere with the contextual necessities and generative potentials of dialogue? We favor, then, an infinite unfolding of the dialogue on dialogue.

## References

- Anderson, B. (1983 ) Imagined communities. London: Verso.
- Anderson, H. (1997). Conversation, language, and possibilities: A postmodern approach to therapy. New York: Harper Collins.
- Anderson, H., Cooperrider, D., Gergen, K. J., Gergen, M., McNamee, S. & Whitney, D. (2001). The appreciative organization. Swarthmore, PA Taos Institute Publications.
- Austin, J.L. (1962). How to do things with words. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Barbules, N.C. (1994) Dialogue in teaching. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Baxter, L. and Montgomery, B. (1998) Relating: Dialogues and Dialectics. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Bakhtin, M.M. (1981). The dialogic imagination: Four essays by M.M. Bakhtin. (Ed.) C. Emerson & M. Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Barrett, F. J. and D. Cooperrider. (1990). "Generative Metaphor Intervention: A New Approach to Intergroup Conflict." Journal of Applied Behavioral Science.Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 223-244.
- Baumgartel, H. (1959) ìUsing Employee Questionnaire Results for

Improving Organizations: The Survey ëFeedbackí Experiment.î Kansas Business Review, December, pp 2-6.

- Billig, M. (1987). Arguing and thinking. Cambridge: Cambridge University
- Bruner, J. (1990). Acts of meaning. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bohm, D. (1996), On dialogue, (Edited by Lee Nichol). New York: Routledge.
- Boje, D.M. (2001) Narrative methods for organizational and communication research. London: Sage.
- Chasin, R. and Herzig, M (1994). ìCreating Systemic Interventions for the socio-political Arena.î In B. Berger-Gould and D. Demuth (eds). The Global Family Therapist: Integrating the personal, professional and political. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Chasin, R. Herzig, M., Roth, S., Chasin, L., Becker, C., and Stains, R. (1996). ìFrom Diatribe to Dialogue on Divisive Public Issues: Approaches Drawn from Family Therapy.î Median Quarterly, Summer Issue 13:4.
- Coch, J. and R. P. French. (1948) ìOvercoming Resistance to Change,î Human Relations, Vol. 1, No. 4.
- Cooperrider, D. L., Sorensen, P. F., Whitney, D. & Yaeger, T. F. (2000). Appreciative inquiry: Rethinking human organization toward a positive theory of change. Champagne, IL: Stipes.
- Cooperrider, D. L., & Srivastva,S. (1987). Appreciative inquiry in organizational life. In W. A. Pasmore & R. W. Woodman (Eds.). Research in organization change and development , (Vol. 1, pp. 129-169). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Craig, R.T. and Tracy, K. (Eds.) (1983) Conversational coherence. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Czarniawska, B. (1997) Narrating the organization. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Duck, S. (2002). Hypertext in the key of G: Three types of "history:" as influences on conversational structure and flow. Communication Theory, 12, 41-62.
- Deetz, S. (1992) Democracy in an age of corporate colonization. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Eisenberg, E. M., and Goodall, H.L., Jr. (1993) . Organizational communication: Balancing creativity and constraint. New York: St. Martinís Press.
- Foucault, M. (1980) Power/knowledge. New York: Pantheon.
- Fowler, A., Gamble, N., Hogan, F., Kogut, M, McComish, M., and Thorp, B. (2001). ìTalking with the Enemy.î The Boston Globe, January 28.
- Fry, R., Barrett, F., Seiling, J., & Whitney, D. (2002). Appreciative inquiry and organizational transformation: Reports from the field. Westport, CT: Quorum Books.
- Garfinkel, H. (1965).Studies in Ethnomethodology.. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Gergen, K.J. (1994) Realities and relationships. Cambridge: Harvard

University Press.

- Gergen, K.J. (1999) An invitation to social construction. London: Sage.
- Gergen, K.J., McNamee, S. and Barrett, F. (2001) Toward transformative dialogue. International Journal of Public Administration, 24, 697-707.
- Grudin, R. (1996). On dialogue: An essay in free thought. New York, Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Habermas, J. (1993) Justification and application: remarks on discourse ethics. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Harre, R. & Gillette, G. (1994). The discursive mind. London: Sage.
- Hawes, L. C. (1999), The dialogics of conversation: Power, control, and vulnerability. Communication Theory, 9, 229-264.
- Hazen, M. A. (1993). Toward polyphonic organization. Journal of Organizational Change Management, 6, 15-26.
- Isaacs, W. N. (1993). Taking flight: Dialogue, collective thinking, and organizational learning. Organizational Dynamics, 22, 24-39.
- Jandt, F.E. (2001) Intercultural communication. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Krippendorff, K. (1989) On the ethics of constructing communication. In B Dervin, L. Grossberg, B. O'Keefe, and E. Wartella (Eds.) Rethinking communication. V.I Paradigm issues. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Lewin, K. (1951). Field theory in social science. New York: Harper
- Ludema, J.. D., Cooperrider, D. L., & Barrett, F. J. (2000). Appreciative inquiry: The power of the unconditional positive question. In P. Reason, & H. Bradbury (Eds.). Handbook of action research (pp. 189-199). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Maranhao, T. (Ed.)(1990). The interpretation of dialogue. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Markova, I, Graumann, C.F. and Foppa, K. (Eds.) (1995) Mutualities in dialogue. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McNamee, S. and Gergen, K.J. (2001) Relational responsibility. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Medvedev, L.P.N., & Bakhtin, M.M. (1978). The formal method in literary scholarship: a critical introduction to sociological poetics. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins.
- Myerson, G. (1994) Rhetoric, reason and society. London: Sage.
- Pearce, W. B. (1989) Communication and the human condition. Carbondale, Ill: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Pearce, W. B. andLittlejohn, S. (1997). Moral Conflict: When Social Worlds Collide. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pearce W. B and Pearce, K. (2001). ìExtending the theory of the coordinated management of meaning (CMM) through a Community Dialogue Process.î Communication Theory.
- Putnam, L.L., & Fairhurst, G.T. (2000). Discourse analysis in organizations. In F. M. Jablin & L. Putnam (Eds.). The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods. (pp. 78-136). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Rahim, S. A. (1994) Participatory development communication as a dialogical process. In S. White, K. Sadanandan Nair and J. Ascroft (Eds.) Participatory communication, working for change and development. New Delhi: Sage.
- Rodriguez, A. (2001) Diversity as liberation (II): Introducing a new understanding of diversity. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton press.
- Saussure, F. de (1974). Course in general linguistics. London: Fontana.
- Sherif, M. (1966). In common predicament: Social psychology of intergroup conflict and cooperation. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Shotter, J. (1984). Social accountability and selfhood. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Spano , S. (2001). Public Dialogue and Participatory Democracy. Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton, Press.
- Tajfel, H. (1981). Human groups and social categories: Studies in social psychology. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, J. R. (1999). What is ëorganizational communicationî?: Communication as a dialogic of text and conversation. Communication Review, 3, 21-63.
- Taylor, J. R., & Van Every, E. J. (2000). The emergent organization: Communication as its site and surface. Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum.
- Thatchenkery, T.J. & Upadhyaya, P. (1996). Organizations as a play of multiple and dynamic discourses: An example from a global social change organization. In . D. J. Boje, R.P Gephart, & T. J. Thatchenkery (Eds.). Postmodern management and organization theory. Pp. 308-330. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ting-Toomey, S. and Oetzel, J.G. (2001) Managing intercultural conflict effectively. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Turner, J. C. (1991). Social influence. Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). Thought and language. (Alex Kozulin, Translator). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Weick, K.E. (1995) Sensemaking in organizations. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Wells, G. (1999) Dialogic inquiry, Towards a sociocultural practice and theory of education. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wetherell, M, Taylor, S., & Yates, S. J. (2001a). Discourse as data: A guide for analysis. London: Sage & The Open University Press.
- Wetherell, M, Taylor, S., & Yates, S. J. (2001b). Discourse theory and practice. London: Sage & The Open University Press.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1963). Philosophical investigations (Translated by G. E. M. Anscombe). London: Blackwell.
- Yankelovich, D. (1999). The magic of dialogue: Transforming conflict into cooperation. New York: Simon & Schuster.