

On Dialogue Studies

Donal Carbaugh

The study of dialogue is a way to open several intellectual arenas for investigation while at the same time offering insights into multiple scenes of practical yet culturally diverse human practices. This article reviews several such arenas including studies of dialogue as a culturally distinctive form of communication, dialogue as an approach to understanding social practices, dialogic ethics and also dialogue as an integrative view of not only cultural practice but also natural environments. Throughout, dialogue studies are cast as a broad field with distinct disciplines within it, as holding deep value for understanding diversity in peoples' practices, as a potential aid in helping diverse peoples coordinate their efforts together through policies, government actions, and other institutions, and as a way of monitoring not only interactions among people but also their ecological environments. In the end, the promise of dialogue studies must proceed cautiously and humbly with the assumption that human endeavors are always limited to particular peoples and places. And move onward we will, dialogically informed.

Key words: dialogue, dialogue studies, intercultural dialogue, cultural discourse, ethnography of communication, dialogic ethics

On Dialogue Studies

Dialogue has become a powerful term and form of action in many academic, linguistic, and cultural communities. Over the past few years, several conferences have been convened to examine dialogue, intercultural dialogue, dialogic communication, or dialogic approaches to inquiry. Examples of these groupings are many including the Center for Intercultural Dialogue and the Dialogue Society, as are the conferences convened in the past decade by the European Union, the International Communication Association, and so on. All invite us to reflect upon and develop our notions of 'Dialogue' or 'Intercultural Dialogue.' As a key term

Donal Carbaugh is Professor and Director of the Graduate Program in Communication at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and recipient of the university's Samuel F. Conti Faculty Research Fellowship.

The invitation to write this article has created an opportunity to bring together several threads of the author's and his colleagues' earlier works into one paper. The first and second sections draw explicitly on various earlier works cited below (especially Carbaugh, Nuciforo, Saito, and Shin 2011, 87-88, 101-106); the fourth section from a part of a longer paper presented and published in China (Carbaugh 2012); and the fifth from several papers published over the years which are focused on Native American, Blackfeet communication and thoughts those studies have created concerning an integrative view of nature and culture (e.g., Carbaugh 2005, 82-119; 2007). The author thanks the editor and staff for this opportunity.

'dialogue' has assumed a prevalence, prominence, and potency in its meanings, and in its frequent declaration as a preferred form for human action. Who, indeed, would be against 'dialogue'?

In spheres of international activities, we have heard calls for a Dialogue concerning War or Peace, a Dialogue on Poverty, Violence, Climate Change, or a Dialogue on Globalization and Free Trade. Within nations, we have been asked to engage in a Dialogue on Race, or on Education, or here in America on, indeed, what it is to be an American. Similarly in Europe with the creation of the European Union, dialogue has been created among its participants wondering in one direction what it means to be a union and in the other what it means to be a nation, now, relative to the union. Dialogue can thus bring to the fore politics, economics, religion, history, ethnicity, medicine, law. Part of the plea is drawing these dynamics out, forthrightly, to place them into an arena for shared discursive scrutiny.

In various spheres of intercultural relations we have asked, as we have been at the above conferences and similar gatherings, to enact 'dialogue,' to engage each other as such, but further these spheres invite us to reflect upon new ways of thinking about dialogue, of actually doing it, especially with those different from or in conflict with us. These pleas, calls, and reflective capacities for 'dialogue' are important to consider and to heed.

Yet also, each specific call brings with it very specific ideas about 'dialogue.' What is it presuming as important or as particularly necessary as a form of human engagement, for communication? What is it as a valued type of social action? What is it targeting as a set of goals; what does it assume as various rules for conduct? What is presumably advocated as a proper tone, mode, and structuring for such a practice? In this social process, a variety of moral qualities are brought into play, often unknowingly, when pleas are made to 'Come and Engage in Dialogue.' Because of this, one plea for 'dialogue' may not match another, resulting at times in strained relations, misapprehension of social circumstances, mis-attribution of intent of one about another, and so on. Nothing may be as disillusioning as gathering under the umbrella of dialogue, to find a different sort of storm there, one gust of dialogue blasting against another.

So, we can ask: what indeed is Dialogue, exactly, as a form of action? What motives for such action are at play? What meanings does it activate? We ask further, how might this be studied? And what good might come of it?

This article responds to these questions by charting some terrain in a field of dialogue studies. It is only one modest move, a very early one at that, eagerly anticipating additional responses, but one nonetheless which seeks to say a few things about

dialogue as a subject matter and as an approach to subject matters. The remarks here are organized in four ways: to discuss dialogue as a specific form of human practice, to discuss dialogue as a general approach to various subject matters, to say a few words about dialogic ethics, and to reflect upon an oft neglected form of dialogue with nature. By the end, my hope is to capture and cultivate some of the excitement in the field of dialogue studies, to advocate for its utility in human and environmental affairs, and to invite all interested parties to join the conversation. There is considerable excitement and opportunity here, difficult labor intellectually, religiously, politically, but with a cultivation of our dialogic capacities, including the engagement of our conflicts, we may join together toward social betterment.

Dialogue as Culturally Distinctive Forms of Communication

As individual practitioners of dialogue, we tend to believe rather firmly in our intents and purposes. We trust our ability to act with others and to act with good will, with others' interests in mind. Yet, any such action always occurs in a specific social space, and every such space has its cultural tradition(s) and historical trajectory(ies). What happens when our presumed best ways are at play with others' in unknowing or invisible ways? It may be at times like bringing a cricket bat to a game of baseball without understanding how odd the bat looks and how it is ill-suited to the game at hand. At others, it may be less subtle, responding to a lob over the tennis net with a home run. In other words, the dialogic game we presume may not be the one being played by others. Let us consider only a couple of examples of this in a little bit of detail.

In Russian, there is a particular discursive domain being activated when something like 'dialogue' is being advocated. This can include several particular features only some of which are '*ponimanie*' (a kind of collaborative meaning-making leading to understanding), '*beseda*' (peaceful conversation which may include an admonition in a non-confrontational way), '*razgovor*' (verbal exchanges of information and opinions which are usually linked to serious and sometimes difficult discussions on issues important for the participants), '*razgovor po dusham*' (communing with an open soul or soul talk) or Bakhtin's formulation of '*dialogicheskoe obshenie*' (turning in talk to other people), '*peregovori*' (negotiation or official exchanges of opinions in order to reach a common goal), and '*dogovarivatsya*' (a way of settling matters down verbally or any official, or unofficial, exchange which has sought a common goal, or reached a common purpose through negotiation). Each Russian term brings with it its own features or meanings to an understanding of dialogue.

A dialogic dynamic that can get particularly complicated is when a bi- or multi-lingual participant assumes a discursive sphere for dialogue – like the above

Russian one – when using a second language, frequently English. As a result, we have introduced dialogic dynamics in two directions, one is between languages – in this case between Russian meanings through English words; the other is between participants within the dialogic event itself as when, for example, Russian and Japanese speakers interact in English. A Russian who values ‘*razgovor po dusham*’ (‘open or soul talk’) can easily activate its Russian features, its expectations and preferences, even when using English with a second party. And of course the example goes the other direction as well. Assuming the second party is a native Japanese speaker, preferred features and expectations for proper dialogic interaction can and do vary from the Russian’s, as we will see next.

In Japanese, there are two principal terms which come close to the meanings of ‘dialogue’ in English, *taiwa* and *hanashiai*. To a great extent, these are interchangeable when used colloquially. Their implied meanings include mutual understanding, agreement, and a particular type of social arrangement. *Hanashiai* literally means talking together with each side’s talk matching the other. *Taiwa* literally means people facing each other and talking about particular issues. *Taiwa* is *hanashiai* in which harmony, mutual understanding, and respect are promoted. In Japanese, *hanashiai* is a form of communication with roots in the Edo Period (1603-1886). *Hanashiai* includes a premium on face-work or relational work, facing each other about particular issues but doing so within the group’s goals. The specific cultural premises in this activity involve the virtues of collaborative action, a charming personality, sincerity, magnanimity, caring, and respect. Interactional goals are harmony, shared understanding, and cooperative trust. The form spans various social, political, educational, and historical contexts.

The particular Japanese features including the considerations of harmony, charm, and matching talk, may play less than harmoniously into others as Russians preferring an ‘open soul’ or ‘soul talk.’ The all too brief introduction of Russian and Japanese features of dialogue, and their hypothetical play together, demonstrate, I hope, the degree to which dialogue as a form often activates locally or culturally distinctive expectations, motives or preferences for conduct; I hope further to have illustrated how this sort of dynamic can get quickly complicated.

Several colleagues and I have been studying cultural forms and meanings of dialogue like these in several languages over the past few years (e.g., Carbaugh, Boromisza-Habashi, and Ge 2006; Carbaugh, Nuciforo, Saito, and Shin 2011; Wierzbicka 2006). The languages include Blackfoot, Chinese, English, Finnish, Hungarian, Korean, Japanese, and Russian. We have also begun study of others including Arabic and Turkish. There is certainly plenty of work to do. We were motivated to such work by the important practical task of having different people sitting together to achieve some goal, but their best manners and intentions for

doing so were being frustrated. Our studies have suggested there is of course some common ground possible when coming together in dialogue, but also there can be important – socially enacted, culturally distinct, individually applied - differences. How do we understand this?

Our preliminary analyses of these interactional dynamics, in these languages, reveal what we call cultural discourses of dialogue (e.g., Carbaugh 2005; 2007). In our inquiries we have asked: is there something like ‘dialogue’ in each language, as a cultural concept and as a form of practice. For each cultural discourse we explored both the relevant terms relating to dialogue AND the practices being referenced with those terms. Our findings are that these discourses, considered together, reveal a wide variety of possible features that are active when ‘dialogue’ is being advocated, mentioned, translated, or conducted.

I will briefly summarize those here as we look across these discourses on dialogue. In the process, I will make several observations which reiterate and slightly revise our earlier findings cited above (especially Carbaugh, Boromisza-Habashi, and Ge 2006, 41-42; Carbaugh, Nuciforo, Saito, and Shin 2011, 100-104)¹. The summary is intended to identify the general range of features potentially active across languages and communities when ‘dialogue’ or something like it is an interactional concern. The summary is structured by the theoretical framework we used to study such ‘terms for talk’ and the practices they reference. We have used this framework to identify possible similarities and differences across discourses (e.g., Japanese hanashiai and Korean daewha share meaning about verbal face-to-face, verbal co-production between participants, but differ in the meaning about channel of communication and structuring norms). The findings are useful as questions to ask in each case: of these features, which – and what further - is being assumed here, by these people, for dialogue?

That framework is itself an empirically derived finding based upon the study of fifty cultural terms for communication in eleven societies (Carbaugh 1989). What I discovered when studying such terms, in a nutshell, is this. As people use terms about their talk, like dialogue, they are saying something explicitly about communication itself, how it is expected to be structured, its presumed tone, how important it is,

1 My observations here are based upon our earlier studies (Carbaugh, Boromisza-Habashi, and Ge 2006; Carbaugh, Nuciforo, Saito, and Shin 2011). The formulation here follows closely the wording of the earlier formulations as it both confirms the findings we presented there, yet it also slightly revises the earlier findings based upon subsequent dialogic studies especially Carbaugh, Nuciforo, Saito, and Shin 2011, 87-88, 101-106 . The process is evidence of the cumulative and collaborative possibilities of ethnographic work into discursive dynamics of dialogue as discussed by Hymes (1996) with each case providing a point for reflection of the earlier findings.

and whether certain subject matters are to be discussed directly or less so. This is clear enough on the face of it. But what I also discovered was this: these terms can be very rich in their meanings. As people use terms for communication, they are saying much more, rather implicitly, about social identities, social relationships, and social institutions. They are also saying much more about proper conduct as a person, what motives are being targeted, and its preferred styles for action. What is the upshot of the findings? As people talk about talk like dialogue, they not only say something about communication as such, they also say much more about sociality and personhood. In diagram form, this can be put in this way:

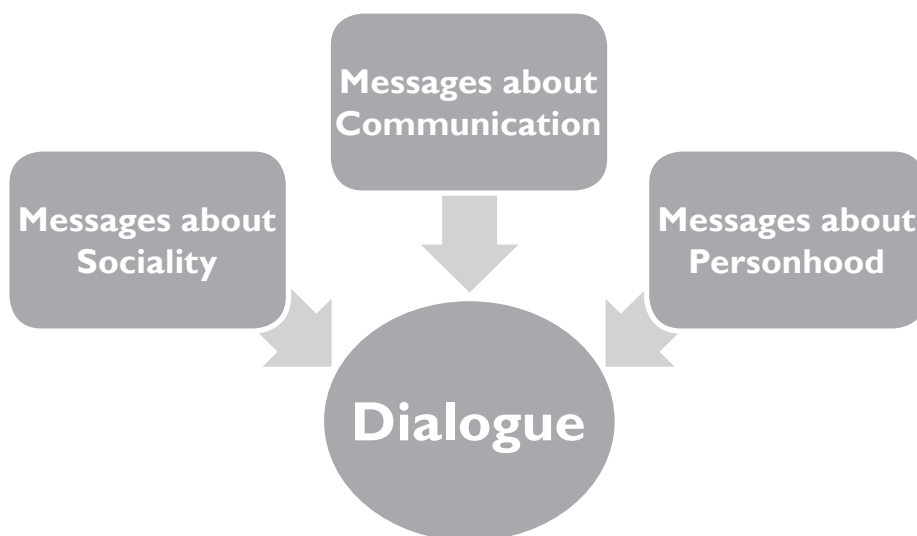


Figure 1. Modeling a Term for Talk, Dialogue, and its Range of Meanings

What follows is a summary of each part of the model applied to ‘dialogue’ in some detail, across various languages, with additional bracketed examples following from the above in Japanese (J) and Russian (R).

In Dialogue: Messages About Communication Itself

First, multiple features about communication practices are being expressed through the various linguistic terms for, and cultural discourses about, dialogue. Our summary begins with the most literal and explicit meanings about communication action at play in this discourse:

1. The terms refer primarily to face-to-face, verbal co-productions, between two or more participants or parties [as in Japanese (J), *hanashiai*; Russian (R), *dialog*, *beseda*, *razgovor*, *diskussia*, *peregovorī*];

2. The practices being referenced range from cooperative interactions which share a common goal, to competitive debates [J *hanahsiai* but not 'competitive debate'; R *dialog, beseda, razgovor, diskussia, peregovori*];
3. An ethos of mutuality of exchange (or motivated interdependence) pervades these practices [J *hanashiai*; R *dialog, beseda, razgovor, diskussia, peregovori*];
4. The predominant tone or feeling is social cooperation, but this varies from being serious and formal to informal [J *hanashiai*; R *dialog, beseda, razgovor, diskussia, peregovori*];
5. While the predominant channel is face-to-face verbal exchange, this may also include other channels such as writing, scripted and spontaneous practices, as well as various electronic media (e.g., digital, newsprint, internet, radio, television) [J *hanashiai*; R *dialog, beseda, razgovor, diskussia, peregovori*];
6. Structuring norms include speaking in a sincere, informative, and ably expressive way about one's views; and listening in a way that is open to learning additional information, including to the emotions of others [J *hanashiai*; R *dialog, beseda, razgovor, diskussia, peregovori*];
7. Goals of the practice vary widely from producing harmony, to winning a verbal contest, to informing participants about issues, problem-solving, clarifying the nature of the issues, presenting a range of views, developing shared understanding, mutual trust, resolving a conflict in a mutually satisfying way, transforming social circumstances, establishing a common goal, affirming and/or repairing social relationships, establishing future actions [J *hanashiai* except 'winning a verbal contest'; R: *dialog* except for 'winning a verbal contest'];
8. The practices of 'dialogue' are conceived as being of varying importance, but most are deemed highly efficacious, yet the locus or site of the practice varies: in some cases, the primary salient issue is the relations among the participants (as more important than the information exchanged); in others, it is in the topic being addressed (as presumably weighty e.g., societal issues, political or economic matters); in still others, the primary concern is the value of the form of the communication activity itself (and is not so much focused on relationships or the topic of discussion); or further, the primary salience is in the balance between clarity of the information expressed, the agreement being forged, and the emotion involved in its expression [J *hanashiai*; R *dialog*].

Messages About Social Relations, Institutions

In addition to the above meanings about the communication practice itself, the cultural discourses of dialogue also express more implicit meanings about sociality. These are meanings about social life and its organization which participants hear in these cultural discourses about dialogue and thus they are active in a more metaphorical or figurative way. In other words, as people call for and discuss 'dialogue,' they are not only talking about a kind of communication practice but also, as part of their meta-cultural commentary, they are saying something about social identities, relations, and possibly institutions. We formulate these features as follows:

1. The dialogic form of practice activates multiple possible social identities: some are political or social opponents; some are high status participants, for example scholars or official representatives; others are guests and hosts, disputants and intermediaries, employers and employees and so on [J *hanahsiai*; R *dialog*];
2. The form may presume social relations are already in an important way equal, or are moving towards equality along some dimension;
3. The form can activate various social institutions: These can be political-governmental, religious, educational, medical, legal, friendship, therapeutic, related to entertainment media (hosts, guests, and radio, television, theater, opera organizations) [J *hanashiai*; R *dialog*];
4. The dialogic form is designed to balance relations among people including, within social scenes, their social and emotional self; and within relationships rational and emotional concerns [J *hanahsiai*; R *dialog, razgovor*].

Messages About Personhood

Finally, cultural discourses pertaining to dialogue offer a range of meanings or premises about personhood. As with the meanings above concerning sociality, these features are largely implicit, taken-for-granted, and as a result are being expressed rather metaphorically. The first three formulations, below, operate as an interactional exigency, or as an occasioning antecedent condition for dialogue as a social form of action itself. We introduce the three here as a way of capturing a sequential movement or flow in cultural meanings about persons which can motivate dialogue as a form.² These can be formulated as follows:

2 An analogous set of premises could be introduced above yet these would require more careful attention to other folk forms of communication which would unduly complicate the focus on dialogue I wish to maintain in this paper.

1. Persons can act poorly, be insincere, conniving, or inappropriately (in) expressive [J many terms; R *dialog*];
2. Persons can act on the sole basis of selfish interests, or on the basis of an imbalance of power, or in other unbalanced ways – as in being too individualistic or too socially constrained [J many terms; R *dialog*];
3. The above are ultimately of limited value, immoral, or bad [J ‘*hanashiai ni naranai*’ does not become ‘*hanashiai*’; R *dialog*];
4. Persons need a form of social interaction which is sincere, informative, expressive of their views, AND, receptive to the views of others [J *hanashiai*; R *dialog*];
5. Persons need a form of social interaction which is educational (disseminates information widely) and socially productive (thereby advancing mutual interests, and social relationships in socially productive ways) [J *hanashiai*; R *dialog*];
6. Persons need a form of social interaction which balances informational needs and social care or individual and communal concerns [J *hanashiai*; R *dialog*];
7. These needs are attached to distinctive philosophical, literary, and cultural traditions (on the bases of axioms of particularity and of actuality) [J, *hanashiai*, Buddhism and Shintoism; R, soulfulness, potential for ‘understanding’ if ‘*obslenie*’ is properly done].

The meanings above help us identify a range of general features that are potentially active when any one plea is made for ‘dialogue.’ When doing so, one is inevitably using, working within, or between specific cultural discourses, each with its own distinctive features about what is being advocated both in the practice of dialogue being requested, and the meanings that are activated when conducting oneself in that way, or in those ways. As we find, a mention of ‘dialogue’ may motivate, and foreground one form of communication here (e.g., matching talk in Japanese, agreement in Russian), and another there (e.g., clarifying information in Russia; or a harmonious self-relational care in Japan). Combined with our earlier studies, we note that such a form can invoke preferred relations of equality, but not necessarily in any one cultural discourse (e.g., it is not necessarily present in Japanese and/or Russian). It can invoke specific aspects of multiple traditions within a society as Buddhism and Shintoism in Japan, or one in particular as in Korean. Further, the plea can signal change within a society in what is deemed proper as public dialogue. This is evident explicitly in the Russian case and its recent importation of ‘dialogue.’ In contemporary Finland, also, we earlier noted movement from the more traditional Finnish ‘*vuoropuhelu*’ (taking turns in talking about an important

topic) to *'keskustelu'* (where value in the interactive quality of the exchange is amplified over the clarity of the topic being discussed) (see Carbaugh, Boromisza-Habashi, and Ge 2006, 38-39).

One arena for dialogue studies could productively explore actual local cases of 'dialogue' in this way. Such studies are crucial for understanding how human action is being cast in each particular communal scene, region, or nation. This sort of knowledge may help each understand the specific conditions being presumed or advocated for engagement. Knowledge as this is useful for any human institution from the United Nations to each particular institution of law, education, or medicine. Policies for each can be better advanced on the basis of such local knowledge, and by knowing what action is not possible. In any case, some of our works can, along the dimensions discussed here, productively explore dialogue as a distinctive linguistic and cultural form of action.

Dialogue as an Approach to Understanding People and Their Practices

Dialogic study has also been advanced not only by studying particular forms of communication in communities, but also by studying human discourse dialogically. In this sense, the focus of study moves from a unique form of human activity (i.e., dialogue itself) to an approach to any human activity (i.e., a dialogical view of human practice). To illustrate the approach I will discuss some of the ideas of Mikhail Bahktin, although other theorists or philosophers could be used as well such as John Gumperz, Dell Hymes, and Gerry Philipsen, or Karl Otto Apel, Hans Georg Gadamer, Plato and Socrates, respectively, among many others.

One focal concern of Bahktin was the study of spoken action or speech genres, what he called 'relatively stable types of utterances' (1986, 60). With a focus on 'utterances' Bahktin was proposing that we examine actual uses of language in contexts, rather than sentences or other abstract formulations. But the utterance cannot be considered alone; it is a 'real unit of speech communion' (67) and as such, it is in an 'active response position' (86). In other words, each utterance is, knowingly or not, responsive to some set of prior utterances while at the same time each utterance anticipates future responses to it. Bahktin conceptualized the former responsiveness as 'dialogic echoes'. With this concept, we are invited to hear in utterances echoes of prior conditions, discussions, or stories. Similarly, each utterance is potentially consequential as it anticipates responses, a kind of 'actively responsive understanding' (86). Approaching human action as such equips one with a dialogic stance, hearing in utterances echoes of previous actions and the anticipation of future responses. In this way, a dialogic approach is taken to spoken action.

Bakhtin develops his ideas in multiple ways, one involving a principle of addressivity, that is, the idea that an utterance is designed not simply for everyone, but is 'being directed to someone' (93). As we formulate what we say, we have an audience in mind, and we shape our utterances by directing them to some people and not to others. This is a way of acknowledging a situated constraint, or a socially interactive event, as central to a dialogic understanding.

Furthermore as we utter, we do so in anticipation of certain broader sorts of understanding. This brings into view a whole-part relation between a specific utterance (the bedrock concern) as a situated activity among participants, and, 'a particular sphere of communication' (e.g., concerning science, law, or religion). In other words, our utterances work dialogically in at least three ways: they echo prior concerns, they project forward into others, and they activate particular spheres of meaningful practice. For Bakhtin, the latter meaning of an utterance or spoken word reflects an 'echo of the generic whole' with this meaning being active because of a larger semantic value understood in the use of the utterance. In this way, our utterances, knowingly or not, are responsive to what came before, (and what after), with each attached to practical spheres of meaning or 'dialogic overtones' (92).

Through such a process of dialogical analyses, we can begin hearing how utterances usher forth from socio-cultural conditions, how they play into the flow of societal actions, and how spheres of cultural meanings are in dialogic action, so conceived. Bakhtin was keen to emphasize that such action does not simply replicate what has come before, but is a primary site of 'changes of speech subjects' (93). As utterers we are not only played by our social and cultural conditions, we can be reflective players in their change.

Bakhtin understood diverse meanings to be part of our formulation and interpretation of utterances, with each playing more broadly through dialogic echoes, possibly into multiple spheres of communication. His interest in heteroglossia or heterogeneity in speech genres embraced diversity in meaning and style (60). He treated matters of the boundaries of utterances (76-77), as well as stylistic variation and compositional structure (63-64). He distinguished primary genres of simple and routine utterances from secondary genres which are more complex, deeply grounded in history, and ideologically loaded (61-62). In so doing, he provides us with an exemplary dialogic approach, one which insists upon understanding utterances largely by considering their prior and subsequent actions, as well as spheres of conduct drawn upon in producing them.

In an intriguing moment he wrote, each epoch is characterized by its characteristic primary and secondary genres with this being a process of 'restructuring and renewal' (66). A fascinating demonstration of this point is provided by Tamar

Katriel (2004) and is focused on ‘dialogic moments’ in contemporary Israel. If not Bahktinian explicitly by design, this study is so in practice. Dialogic moments, understood indeed as such, can reveal much about epochs of prior times as well as our own (see also Baxter 2011).

Whether one takes a Bahktinian view of matters, or another, there are key perspectival moves at play in implementing a dialogical approach in our studies. One such move is a commitment to situating knowledge in the flow of social practice. Any act has some prior action that has come before it as a ‘precipitate’ of it. Or in a different term, an action has an ‘exigency’ which makes it relevant as something to do. And on the other side, an action has potentially some consequence, or some framing of subsequent action. A commitment to understanding practice as socially situated and interactive, as Bahktin does, demonstrates some of the key moves in a dialogical approach. And further, as Linguists might remark, our perspective on such study need not be only focused diachronically (across time) or as Ferdinand de Saussure wrote, focused on an axis of succession, but it should focus also on an axis of simultaneity as well; it should explore the radiance of meanings into spheres which are immanent in our utterances. In other words, our dialogical perspectives can work horizontally across time as well as vertically into semantic space.

Studying through these sorts of theoretical ‘moves’, our dialogic approaches can listen carefully to the flow of social interaction, to prior and subsequent utterances, and to layers of cultural meanings, explicitly in and implicitly of the utterances. In these ways, a dialogical approach offers much in developing an understanding of peoples’ practices together, their assumed models of personhood, their sociality, and their cultural meanings. Such dialogic studies carry promise as a way of contributing to our social betterment together.

Dialogue and Ethics

A positive thought about an ethic might follow Aristotle as a ‘way of fulfilling moral virtues.’ In this sense, there are goods such as courage, gentleness, truthfulness, justice in a society, social group, or community which are to be considered when acting and one’s actions, one’s ethical actions, should seek to fulfill them. In this sense, an ethical stance provides a positive sense of what to do. Another side of the ethical coin suggests what not to do and is in this sense a negative view. When his Holiness the Dalai Lama says an ethical act is one ‘which refrains from causing harm to others,’ or when the Hippocratic oath declares to health practitioners, ‘keep them from harm and injustice,’ we hear a negative form of an ethical stance, of what not to do, not to create harm or injustice.

Theorists and practitioners of dialogue can be understood as espousing an ethic in

positive and in negative form, as statements of what should, and what should not be done. Two such theorists and practitioners were Martin Buber and Carl Rogers. Examining their views about the ethics of dialogue, as many others like them, as well as those in the culturally distinctive forms and approaches introduced above, should contribute to our understanding of the various ethical commitments that can be associated with dialogue.

In 1957, a now well-known exchange took place in the United States at the University of Michigan between these two famous intellectuals. Both scholars' works took shape through the term 'dialogue'. The conference between them was designed to celebrate the one, the Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber who was well-known internationally for his conceptualization of an 'I-thou' relationship – rather than an 'I-it' relationship - as an ethical possibility in human social interaction. Conference organizers wanted to bring Buber together with another theorist of dialogue, American psychologist Carl Rogers, who was also well-known internationally for his theory and practice of 'person-centered therapy'. Both saw dialogue as an ideal worthy of considerable human effort, but also as perhaps difficult if not impossible to achieve. The famous exchange between the two has been recorded and discussed in a book nicely edited by communication scholars Rob Anderson and Kenneth Cissna (1997).

In examining this exchange, one can ask, as I have in an earlier paper (2005b), what is dialogue in this exchange, as practiced by these famous participants?

Listening carefully to the American therapist, Carl Rogers, we hear him say these words, '[dialogue is] an effective moment in a therapeutic relationship.' His way of characterizing participants is as 'individuals' who are 'equal' and are, as a productive result of dialogic interaction, moved to 'change'. When he elaborates effective qualities of dialogue, he says each person should be speaking as a separate and whole person, who hides nothing. One should be immediate, in the moment, attentive to one's relation with another. One strives to accept the other, giving permission to the other to be the person she or he is. Both views - the therapist's and the client's, in therapy – are, according to Rogers, given equal authority. The objective is to gain clarity in order to change one's self to a better person.

The philosopher, Martin Buber, speaks in this exchange with a different accent on dialogue. From his view, participants are inevitably a part of social circumstances which are somewhat beyond a person's control. These conditions are relatively stable and as such operate to constrain what can be done. He indicates that persons can speak as two separate persons, yes, but do so within a common social situation, in which both should be heard. His view in this exchange with Rogers, is that, in the social situation of therapy for example, the roles of therapist and client are different

from each other, limited in what each can do, and are in some sense unequal. In Buber's view, the roles to some degree rightly dictate and constrain the interaction. As in all such social situations, Buber acknowledges that there are limits – from history, social structures, and cultural positions - that cannot be readily changed. Constraints as these must be acknowledged as part of any dialogic situation. Put in terms of our theory above, Buber makes the point that every act of dialogic communication has its own structuring norms, its own standards of sociality and personhood, each being active within a socially situated, culturally distinctive form.

For Rogers, ever the optimist and perhaps exemplary of some American ideals, dialogue can be a way to conquer problems, personal, societal, and political. A stance toward the other, according to Rogers, was to be one of 'unconditional positive regard'. The other is assumed to have moral worth and in treating him or her in this way, and listening to each person empathically, this enables the possibility of change. For Buber, ever the realist and perhaps an exemplary reminder of devilish anti-Semitic constraints, dialogue is a meeting between people with this being done in rather exacting circumstances which allow some movement, but does so within limits. Nonetheless, one tries to dialogue within an 'I-thou' relationship as an empathic turn to another given the constraints of current social and cultural circumstance.

In this recounting of the exchange, both Rogers and Buber champion an ethic of personal integrity, empathic understanding of another, engagement for mutual benefit, and enduring commitment to action, that is, in targeting these goals we enact proper dialogic action. In the process, Rogers represents a voice of optimism, of personal betterment, and psychological clarity, just as Buber reasonably reminds us of the constraints of social, personal, and historical circumstances. Both exemplify important historical trajectories in understanding discourses of dialogue, the ethical standards at play within them, the effort to move toward something better, and the fact of doing so within the practical constraints of specific circumstances. Certainly the study of dialogic ethics, those espoused and those enacted, hold a crucial place in our dialogue studies.

Dialogue as Integrating Culture and Nature

Contemporary uses of 'dialogue' are predated by other ancient based forms which are prominent, potent, and powerful for some today in their daily routines (e.g., Basso 1996). This ancient form of dialogue extends communication of participants beyond human to other means of expression, including nonverbal channels or instruments of communication (Carbaugh 2005; Carbaugh and Boromisza-Habashi 2011; Scollo 2004). Through this sort of dialogue, not only humans, but the world speaks, making itself expressively available to us, if we 'just listen'

(Carbaugh 1999).

This sort of dialogic practice is active among many indigenous communities, like the traditional Blackfeet people in northern Montana, USA. Let me give an example. A Blackfeet elder, a cultural ambassador, stood on a prominent hill-top, gesturing to the plains, mountains, stream, cottonwood trees, and cawing raven. He had agreed to show several people around his homeland. We stood with him. The winds softly blew across our bodies, the sun warmed our faces, and the sounds of the water and raven rose to our attention. As we stood together, we could notice the cliff across the meadow in front of us, the valley bottom by the stream, and the tranquil scene invited our minds to reflect upon this place, its history, and the moment before us. Then he softly said: ‘we listen to all of this.’

The elder invoked in his few words a form of dialogic action which is deeply familiar to him and those who practice traditional Blackfeet ways. It involves a complex range of activities: a short verbal statement is referring to a nonverbal form of being-with-nature-and-others; this nonverbal form presumes a way for people to be in-place and to learn from that place; this way is deeply tied to feelings of identity; this way opens features of the natural world and the environment as spiritual participants in a dialogic process. Let me say a few words about this latter part.

There is an ancient story from the time before time which is deeply familiar to traditional Blackfeet people. The narrative says: if you are troubled or experiencing difficulties, go away by yourself, or if you would like, cry aloud for help; then you must listen. A participant in the world before you may reply, such as an eagle, a bear, a buffalo, the water, or the wind. If you listen, an answer may come, and in this way, you may receive comfort in a troubled time or an answer for your difficulties.

Note how the active form of participation here is based less upon speaking and words, more upon listening and nonverbal sounds; note how the focus on one’s consciousness is turned more to an immediate physical place or nature and less to one’s internal thoughts; note how helpful revelations may come through attentiveness to non-human agents in addition to other humans. Further activated in this deeply historical form of communication is a sacredness of ‘mother earth’ and ‘father sky’, in how the world nurtures and guides us. All of this can operate in mysterious ways. For these and additional reasons, we all should listen carefully.

This dialogic form is somehow not quite brought into view with the above discussions of dialogue. Without it, we lose sight (or sound), I think, of a communicative potential many of us may risk losing, if we have not lost it already. Such a form cultivates our deep abilities to be vigilantly observant of the world around us, to

what it is saying to us, a wise sort of attentiveness which may help address problems and difficulties in ways we cannot without it. It reminds us that we share a world and need its air, water, soil and so on to survive together.

This sort of addition to the arena of dialogue studies may stretch the boundary too far for some readers, and I can understand that reaction. However, if that is your thought, please reserve closure on the matter until you have studied this possibility seriously. The arena of dialogue from culturally distinctive practices, from Buber to the Blackfeet, and Thoreau to Tolstoy, includes such a practice. It offers correctives we cannot quite access so well in any other way.

Uses of Dialogue Studies

There is a rich range of studies which may be brought together in the study of dialogue. Only some are treated here in a rather broad way by focusing on culturally distinctive versions of dialogue, a dialogic approach to practices, dialogic ethics, with a bid to include dialogic forms which link people to nature, place, or the environment. A variety of academic disciplines can and should be involved in our efforts including anthropology, communication, linguistics, literature, as well as professional studies in education, law, medicine, religion. Many theoretical perspectives can contribute to our efforts including Conversation Analysis, Discourse Analysis, Historiography, Narrative Studies, and so on. There are key features however, across such disciplines and perspectives, which make studies dialogic. These involve the focus fundamentally on social interactional dynamics, multiple means of expression, motives presumably in that action, meanings being presumed by participants in those actions or practices. Following the findings summarized above, we might anticipate in actions called 'dialogue,' co-participation, common goals, an ethos of mutuality, and so on. Some configuration of these features offers an entry into, or limited scope to dialogue studies.

What good would such studies do? My first thought on this matter would be: how can we do without them? I will mention here only four diverse applications of such work knowing there are hundreds of others that could be mentioned. Following the lead of Derek Miller and Lisa Rudnick, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in Geneva designed a dialogic procedure for understanding 'security needs' in local communities. The procedure was called the Security Needs Assessment Protocol (or SNAP). This general approach included listening to local participants to understand their meanings about such matters, then working with an understanding of those ways in moving forward to enhance their security (Miller and Rudnick 2008; 2010). When applied in Ghana, one Ghanaian said about the SNAP team, 'you were the first [outsider] to listen to us.' The approach can help advance common goals of the UN and local communities, help enhance the

effectiveness of workers in achieving those goals, can help create practices more satisfying to local communities, and can help those practices endure longer.

A second use of such studies involved the study of Native People and non-Native people who inhabited the eastern Rocky Mountain front of Montana. While living in the same geographic location together, these people made sense of their landscape in deeply different ways. By exploring dialogic acts of place-naming and storytelling, and putting these in dialogue with each other, we were able to make visible differences in where people thought they were, the moral guidance they assumed for living there, the affective charge of the landscape to them, and the consequences of the one largely ignoring the other. Studies as these introduce new ways of designing policy and practices so to achieve mutuality in future practices (e.g., Carbaugh and Rudnick 2006).

A third use is perhaps less morally laden but illustrative of a rather unique application. It involves the study of the ways humans interface with machines (e.g., cell phones, computers), exploring the culturally diverse ways people conceive of and use their automobiles. In this case, with colleague Ute Winter from General Motors, we explored diverse cultural ways people interact with their cars including their ideas of what would be the best ways for the 'dialogic flow' in the car to be designed, and if it was deemed a flaw, how it could be corrected. On the face of it, such study appears perhaps beyond the boundaries of dialogue studies, yet when one considers machines are used by people in interactive ways, that these ways are based upon local conceptions of dialogic action, that these ways influence how we live alone and with others, and these ways are subjected to our own sense of good living, they come into the purview of at least some sorts of dialogic studies (e.g., Carbaugh, Winter, van Over, Molina-Markham and Lie 2013).

A fourth use illustrates the value in understanding cultural foundations of education, or knowledge, in human dialogic practice. Where some might see in educational practices traditional knowledge, others can see their cultural identity and tradition being supplanted or even subjugated to imperialist powers. Certainly such dynamics as these, sometimes advanced in the name of 'higher education' need our utmost attention and scrutiny (e.g., Carbaugh 2005; Covarrubias 2008; Witteborn 2010).

In these ways, and in many others, in all sorts of human institutions including education, government, law, medicine and religion, our dialogic studies can help develop better practices and policies because this type of knowledge builds on the bases of interactional dynamics, an ethos of mutuality, and an understanding of cultural variability in the world today. A one-size fits all, or a general mono-design simply will not do.

One more point, I believe, is crucial. In our interactions together, we can come to difficult points because our preferences (or requirements) are not being met immediately. At one grand level, this can occur when an absolute requirement for speaking truthfully (and the firm belief there is a truth to be told) confronts another absolute requirement for people to get along (and the firm belief that getting along together is foremost among other objectives). This can result further in confrontations not only about what truth needs to be told, or how relations are to be managed, but also in which of these should be given priority, the truth of the matter, or the relational need of getting along together. If one cannot work with another in such a situation, dialogue, and its features of sociality and personhood, can break down. What, then, can we do? I think it is a mistake to claim one knows the answer for certain, in an abstract or general way. In a real and pragmatic sense, it comes down to the particulars of peoples' practices in places. That is where dialogue happens. There is much, here and there, about such dialogic processes to indeed study. And there are many distinctive forms, approaches, ethics, and natured places to consider. Let's learn together how best to keep our dialogues going!

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