

Introduction

Ellen B. Basso and Gunter Senft

Ritual communication is an undertaking or enterprise involving a making of cultural knowledge within locally variant practices of speech-centered human interaction. The position adopted in this book is that ritual communication is artful, performed semiosis, predominantly but not only involving speech, that is formulaic and repetitive and therefore anticipated within particular contexts of social interaction. Ritual communication thus has anticipated (but not always achieved) consequences. As performance, it is subject to evaluation by participants according to standards defined in part by language ideologies, local aesthetics, contexts of use, and, especially, relations of power among participants.

In this poetic-pragmatic view of ritual language or ritual communication, "meaningfulness" is both a retrospective and a prospective process. Participants use local, inherited understandings and experiences, both collective and personal, to create new events and prospective selves and to project these forward into an anticipation of the future. In all places and times, people appear to describe types of talk, which persons use them, how their use is experienced, their effects and relations to each other, and what happens when they are misused. Although some claim that the actual relationships between rules and consequences are often unclear—uncertain even to the speakers themselves—in fact many resources are available to local speakers for use in new contexts of ritualization. Most important among these resources are narratives about actual conversational and other discursive examples of the linguistic-forms in past practice and of persons who spoke concretely in particular ways in the past. Because they are narratives, these texts also provide considerable information regarding the precursor and subsequent

instances of speech that surround a particular spoken instance and give it a semiotic framing and sociocentric footing. These and other metacommunicative models remind us that people do remember and comment upon ongoing events that are highly marked in both formal and pragmatic ways.

Our consideration of ritual communication as a special mode of semiotic behavior is of course a value-laden sociohistorical artifact, the result of a long history of inquiry, anthropological and otherwise, into the nature of human behavior, beginning with a framework that contrasted European modes of behavior and language use with those discovered among newly colonized people around the world. Though not always known as such, ritual communication has been a long-standing subject in anthropology. Most important, it emerged through a long history of thinking about one of the core themes of Americanist anthropology, the relationship between language and "culture."

The use of "ritual" as a metaphor has much to do with Erving Goffman's "sociology of occasions" (1967: 2), the study of interpersonal gestures, including speech, in which the term served as a trope for the social organization of interaction. Goffman's use of "ritual" emphasized the degree to which ordinary, face-to-face interactions of the everyday are structured and performed. In fact it is not so easy to distinguish this everyday ritual practice (which might be termed "ritualization") from large-scale public ritual events. During our conference, we frequently returned to the examination of similar structural and sociopsychological elements in such events. As various chapters in this book show, ritual involves "formal patterning"—that is, it comprises events that feature heightened, intensified, and "increased code structuring" (Irvine 1979). And as Richard Bauman commented, "formal patterning sets up a dynamic of expectation (or arousal) and fulfillment that elicits participative involvement."

The view of ritualization adopted here also emphasizes its inherent multimodality, in which the human body, temporalization, and formally categorized spatial settings all play crucial roles. Through multimodal events of display, the meanings and values of remembered past events, made manifest through special verbal registers, costuming, and musical activities, offer strategies for constructing links to contemporary social settings, with the aim of constructing new or refigured communicative practices.

Because anthropologists are now far more aware than they once were of the complexity and non-uniformity of social meanings and values, their understandings of ritual events as sites of challenge to

traditions and to existing power relations are furthered by a historically contextualized emphasis. Consequently, over time, the power of Goffman's metaphor has become the source of greater focus upon the participatory, experiential side of ritual events. Ritual is not only something done but also something experienced in the doing. The ritualization of culture has thus come to be treated as a highly "self-oriented" enterprise, in which human imagination and the dialogical figuration of sociality produce important reflexive "sites" or "centers" of semiosis, dialectical segments of a complex network of semiotic pathways (Du Bois, this volume; Silverstein 2004).

Early Boasian writers such as Robert Lowie, Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, as well as Bronislaw Malinowski and the British social anthropologists in the Durkheimian tradition often used examples of joking relations, avoidance between certain kin, and oratory to emphasize what they understood as significant differences between the societies they studied and modernist Euro-American societies. Although some scholars, such as Edmund Leach, understood early on that ritual could be treated as a message-making activity (Parkin 2001: 13368), rarely were such examples of ritual communication truly contextualized in terms of narratives of individual lives or the changing character of interpersonal relations. They were taken "as is" to be representative of larger social patterns or of social "needs" such as the lessening of conflict. Linguistic matters were acknowledged implicitly (Malinowski was something of an exception), but usually ethnographers presented their examples as if they were translations of "texts" or actual events. It is rare in the older literature to find good examples of utterances in original languages, carefully analyzed.

A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, in his essay on the topic (1940), considered joking relations in southern Africa a sociological "problem" insofar as they appeared to contradict rules for appropriate behavior among young and old, men and women. The many discussions of Radcliffe-Brown's "solution" to the problem called field anthropologists' attention to such activities in many other parts of the world. We have now accumulated substantial evidence of the worldwide prevalence of distinctive verbal locutions that follow local standards of comportment and of speaking, a seeming language universal that cries out for theoretical commentary.¹

Even for more recent anthropologists, "ritual" has long been a key category for entry into the understanding of non-Western societies. Among some groups, ritual life was so prominent and pervasive an apparatus for ordering society that it gave those societies, in

anthropologists' eyes, a special definition. Many are represented in the classic ethnographic literature. As anthropologists have written about ritual, it has been received as a rather narrow concept, associated with formal, public, collective activity oriented toward an allegedly transcendent religious ideology. As Rappaport wrote (1999: 404): "To sing or dance in concert or in unison with others, to move as they move and speak as they speak is, literally, to act as part of a larger entity, to participate in it; and as the radical separation of the everyday self dissolves in the *communitas* of participation—as it sometimes does—the larger entity becomes palpable." In this view, common in ethnographic analysis, ritual is treated as something that helps practitioners define the sociopolitical order in which they participate, and it must include language. By this definition, ritual is the medium through which social values are expressed.

Views of Ritual from Linguistic Anthropology

More recent means of understanding communication in anthropology involve subtler and more nuanced concerns about formality, creativity, voicing, stance, power manipulations, and intertextuality. Since the 1974 Wenner-Gren conference on secular ritual (Moore and Myerhoff 1977), newer approaches to "ritual" have separated it topically from "religion" and have involved studying its place in both community and individual practice, creative improvisation, and people's participation in newly emergent communities of practice. Even so, scholars have found the link between ritual and religion useful for understanding relations between emotion and language. For example, Roy Rappaport's model of "effective ritual" linked linguistic practice to certain kinds of emotional effects: it entailed "the union in ritual of the numinous, a product of emotion, with the sacred, a product of language" (Rappaport 1999: 396).

In his review of work on religious language, Webb Keane (1997a: 47) wrote that "the sources of words, as well as the identity, agency, authority, and even the very presence of participants in an interaction, can be especially problematic." We agree, and we understand that this is true of all communicative (ritualized) events. Yet the features of religious language reviewed by Keane turn out to be present in "non-religious" language as well, leading to the unavoidable conclusion that this contrast might not be entirely useful after all. For example, Keane observed that religious situations may involve the suspension of assumptions about participants, because some are "invisible"; a question exists about "who is participating and what counts as the relevant

context of 'here' and 'now'" (1997a: 50). In this volume, Ellen B. Basso describes something similar in regard to Kalapalo leaders' talk. Michael Silverstein (1981: 54) observed that a ritual speech form "serves as metapragmatic figure for the accomplishment of the successive stages of the action being undertaken." Sometimes metapragmatic statements are recontextualized discourse forms that have taken on this function. As Keane put it: "Their linguistic form remains the same, but their function shifts. Rather than being construed as accounts of actions that were carried out in the past, the words are taken as reports on and directives for the action they themselves carry out in the moment of speaking" (1997a: 51). We see the same thing taking place in the data described by Joel Kuipers and Corinne Kratz in this volume.

Finally, Keane described the use of religious genres that involve esoteric knowledge. The use of esoteric forms is also characteristic of Kalapalo leaders (Basso, this volume). Keane noted that scholars have debated questions of intentionality and responsibility in the context of communication with invisible beings. But in the case of Kalapalo leaders' talk, speakers use languages that many visiting observers cannot understand; hence the use of nonverbal codes.

Paying special attention to ritual or ritualized communication is a useful way to examine, comparatively, the cultivation of self, family, and community. This is particularly the case if such matters are treated not as the old Durkheimian "things" of society but as processes and practices of relationship. The separation of ritual from a magico-religious domain of culture also leads to important insights into ritual communication that were not forthcoming in the past. From a focus on symbolic meaning and the relation of beliefs, cosmologies, and the like to ritual practice, as in the classic works of Raymond Firth (1967), Clifford Geertz (1957, 1973), Max Gluckman (1954, 1963), and Victor Turner (1967, 1969, 1975), we have come to look at the *experiencing* of ritual. Indeed, this emphasis comes directly from Turner's work, in which participants' experience became a central focus.

Although the earlier idea of "secular ritual," developed by anthropologists influenced by Turner's "symbolic" approach to ritual, sought to capture the tension between traditional order and contemporary improvisation, conflict, and meaning creation, work along those lines incorporated little data on language. In this book we do not attempt to contrast secular and religious; rather, we consider that ritual involves the interpretation of social reality, and we use the term "ritual communication" to emphasize the linguistic materials used in such interpretation. We are also concerned with more recent theoretical

ideas that go beyond understanding as "interpretation" and that orient the researcher toward practice and experience. We reject the contrast between sacred and profane, as well as between ordinary and ritual communication and between formal and informal communication, which usually sets ritual communication against "strategic interaction" and ritual against "secular" contexts and activities.

To summarize, rather than looking at the objects of what we call ritual communication, as the earlier Boasian patternist and British functionalist anthropologists did, we are concerned with the conditions or contextualizations of such activities as fundamentally historical and even as having important implications for the understanding of human evolution. The features we emphasize integrate questions about the multimodal, the dialogical or interactive, the interpersonal, and the experiential with questions about human history. The pervasive integration of psychological, historical, and linguistic issues in the study of narratives, greetings, protests, and other communicative genres has promoted a new look at ritual communication. Thus we see relatively formalized aspects of speaking such as greetings and departures (see chapters by Ameka and Enfield) and civility registers (Basso, Haviland) linked with narrative discourse (Oakdale), rites of passage (Kratz, Silverstein), forms of theatricality (Hoëm), and political protest marches (Kuipers). Collective social practice is also linked with instances of personal or individual ritual practice (Basso, Oakdale, Silverstein, Du Bois).

Evolutionary Issues with Regard to Rules of Communicative Behavior

In addition to Goffman's metaphoric notion of "micro-sociological rituals," the notion of ritual turns up in the work of a number of writers who have transposed the ethological or the evolutionary with the anthropological (see Rappaport 1999: 24ff.). Julian Huxley's (1966a) notion of "cultural ritualization" crossed the ethological with the cultural, and more recently the evolutionary and the symbolic served Roy Rappaport (1999) for developing his notion of "effective ritual." Other recent important work suggests close connections between strategic communication and ritual communication when they are viewed both from an evolutionary perspective and one of metasignaling and metadiscourse (Urban 2002).

Huxley, in his classic introduction to the symposium "A Discussion on Ritualization of Behavior in Animals and Man" (1966a), discussed the

evolution and the forms of human and nonhuman ritual. Influenced by Huxley and by the (human) ethological approach toward ritual and ritual communication (see Eibl-Eibesfeldt and Senft 1987), Gunter Senft, writing about Trobriand Islanders in chapter 3 of this volume, points out that speakers of a natural language must also learn the rules of communicative behavior that are valid for their speech community in order to understand and duplicate the construction of the speech community's common social reality. The social construction of reality must be safeguarded with respect to possible "sites of fracture" such as cooperation, conflict, and competition within the community. This safeguarding, however, does not always work. Senft characterizes ritual communication as a type of strategic action that, in the Trobriands, serves functions such as social bonding and the blocking of aggression. Aggressive conflict is usually suppressed because of the "general societal requirement to 'be nice' even when people do not feel that way." Through ritual communication, tensions can be calmed, and voicing can be repressed. A society as open as that of the Trobriand Islanders depends on its members' having a strong sense of tact: sometimes one has to pretend not to hear or observe things. It is the general requirement of tactful behavior, the necessity to be nice, and the positive and successful effects of ritual communication that contribute to social harmony in such a society. It remains an open question whether forms of ritual communication can be seen as culture-specific manifestations of universal human interaction strategies, as hypothesized within the framework of human ethology—that is, whether ritualized behavior elements evolved phylogenetically or developed culturally under selection pressure for unambiguous signaling to improve social communication.

Ritual Communication and the Microsocial-Macrosocial Polarity

Some readers might find the contributors to this book to be overconcerned with microanalyzing portions of larger ritual events or with levels of ritual communication that seemingly lie on the margins of such "type-case" rituals. In such a view, "micro" references interpersonal interactions, and "macro" references the social, representational, Durkheimian collective consciousness. A variant of this contrast is that made between "public" and "private," which Judith Irvine (1979: 786) wrote "actually references degrees of centralization of situational focus and positional identities." The ethnographic examples Irvine used,

although varied, were all public occasions, or "meetings," suggesting that anthropologists' own sociocultural ideas about formality tend to exclude more private situations. But might formal properties of code, situation, or model as described by Irvine occur in such microsociological situations? And what about settings in which no more than one person is included? In this volume, a number of contributors critique the association of "formality" with "public" or "macrosociological."

Forms of ritual communication associated with the everyday—joking relations, avoidance practices, greetings, leave-takings, the languages of the marketplace, and chiefly oratory—have become known to every undergraduate anthropology major through the texts of classical modernist ethnography. The modernists understood this incredible variety of ritual communication as central to the development and maintenance of community, as well as to the processes of self-fashioning characteristic of particularly distinct cultures (see Geertz 1957, 1963). Practitioners of the earlier folkloristic and ethnopoetic approaches, in their emphasis on language in ritual as "verbal art," described the linguistic features of the speech of shamans, mediums, and storytellers and of prayer, confession, and dream narratives. This substantial body of data forces us to challenge the contrast between private and public, micro- and macrosociological events.

For researchers in the tradition of Goffman, the category of everyday ritual permeates well beyond these easily recognized microsociological exchanges; they emphasize the ritual nature of just about every move people make in social interaction. Although our contributors differentiate between everyday forms and other, more complex forms of ritual and ritual communication, many of them raise the question of which kinds of communicative events we want to subsume under the label "ritual communication." Some actually challenge the contrast between the everyday and the ritual, proposing that "ritual" events can be described as a cline. Nicholas Enfield points out in this regard that formal ritual and everyday ritual represent regions on a continuum. Using data from the Kri, a Vietic community of upland central Laos, he further differentiates between "ritualized communicative behavior in an ethological sense..., which captures all linguistic and other human symbolic behavior," formal ritual, or "socially marked events" such as weddings and other rites of passage, and everyday ritual, such as greetings and politeness formulas.

Indexicality provides one important means of linking forms of ritual communication. In addition to Enfield's discussion, John Haviland's example, in chapter 1, of a "little ritual" on the road—a greeting ritual

between a respected elder and a passing religious party in Chiapas, Mexico—involves an encounter of experts highly competent in ritual communication. These are the sorts of people whom Richard Bauman, in his commentary during our conference, called "ambulatory centers of ritual semiosis." Haviland illustrates that even in the briefest communicative encounters, the biographies and social histories of the interactants play important roles. He reveals resonances between this brief wayside encounter and the great tradition of highly complex forms of ritual communication, and he elaborates on this indexical linkage between communicative features and the patterns that occur in them.

Another means of linking forms of ritual communication is ideology. In an important paper on Roy Rappaport's evolutionist theory of ritual, Joel Robbins (2001a) discussed the relationship between linguistic ideology and ritual. He referenced linguistic ideologies (ideologies of communication) for understanding variation in ritual performance and the performative indexicality of ritual signs. He was concerned with examining linguistic ideologies in terms of Rappaport's interest in the way a heterogeneous community, including nonbelievers, is united by cumulative ritual activities into a homogeneously committed ritual whole that yields a collective message. In this view, language ideology shapes participants' attitudes toward ritual.

Many of the contributors to this volume suggest that this approach toward linguistic ideologies and ritual performance is somewhat simplified, particularly when considered in light of the ethnographic data concerning cultural "recontextualization." In chapter 12, Maurizio Gnerre discusses two forms of ritual communication that are still performed by the Amazonian Shuar and Achuar, Jivaroan speakers in Ecuador and Peru. He emphasizes the importance of historical processes that modify "specific kinds of ritual communication," sometimes giving them additional strength and efficacy. The genres that Gnerre examines—shamanic chants and privately sung incantations—are deeply intertwined with Jivaroan language ideology. The Shuar highly value individuality, and with it, unique proper names and words. They implement such words in rhetorical performances, in shamans' displays of magical power, and in privately performed songs. The morphology of the language allows for endless innovations through recombination of morphemes, and innovations are taken to enhance the enunciative power of words and to strengthen the efficacy of speech and discourse. This ideology is framed in the Shuar and Achuar attitude of being open to everything new. External influences come from new media, from English, and from contact with speakers of Spanish and Quechua.

The changed sociocultural conditions of Shuar and Achuar life have resulted in new human-to-nature and human-to-human relations. Shifts in demography and in forms of human aggregation have direct consequences on all forms of communication. The changes in the two forms of Shuar and Achuar ritual communication reveal both the anticipatory and the vanguard roles of ritual communication in changing communicative practices.

Continuing the exploration of the microsocial-macrosocial polarity in ritual communication, Felix Ameka, in chapter 5, contrasts complex access rituals with simple, conventional openers and well-being inquiries as a special form of greeting. Gunter Senft, in chapter 3, illustrates simple, special, and extraordinary forms of ritual communication, noting, however, that it is more appropriate to locate specific forms of ritual communication on a cline of structural and social complexity.

Formality and Moral Poetics

The Durkheimian moral essence of society is perhaps best recognized and grasped through its personal implications, by means of formally intensified enactments of the collective conscience and of participants' commitment to it. Such forms of ritual communication are domains of moral poetics: they are display events in which the values of a society are embodied and enacted in an intensified way. They are public behaviors employed to affect others' mental states and statuses. Therefore, the form or manner of ritual communication is constrained by the requirement that it be recognizable to others. In ritual, the manner of an action becomes a sign in its own right. The self-conscious performance of formal behavior then provides an opportunity for moral assessment of the status and identity of participants. Ritual behavior requires cooperation with one's peers in treating something as a natural fact when it is merely a social fact; it requires acquiescence to social conventions and thus constrains interactants' freedom to act. As many of the contributors show in their chapters, this observance of formal constraints is controlled, and not adhering to such conventions is morally sanctioned. Thus, ritual is a site in which the local moral order is displayed, exercised, and contested. If inherent ritual constraints are contravened, the coerciveness of ritual becomes manifest in social sanctions.

As long ago as 1979, Irvine's discussion of "formality" showed that quite different descriptive dimensions were subsumed under that term. As she wrote, some of these analytic dimensions "concern properties of

code while others concern properties of a social situation; some focus on observable behavior while others invoke the conceptual categories of social actors" (Irvine 1979: 774-775). These elements do not necessarily correlate with one another. Nonetheless, they are interdependent properties that "social actors can exploit by altering their behavior to bring about a redefinition of the situation and of the identities that are relevant to it" (Irvine 1979: 785). One particularly important manifestation of interdependence is created through the "emergence of a centralized situational focus in a public ritualized situation" (Irvine 1979: 786). It is this that has led many anthropologists to consider the large-scale public event to be the ritual type case.

In contradistinction, John Du Bois, in chapter 13, discusses individual ritual communication outside of a social context. There we see the important role of formality and formalization in distinguishing ritual communication from other kinds of communicative events. Du Bois explores the dialogical dimensions of ritual voicing through the analysis of a rarely documented kind of discourse that forms a regular part of the lives of many religious believers. A man alone in a room performs a daily ritual reading of calendrically prescribed texts that deal with "the sacred." He then responds aloud in his own voice to the biblical and exegetical texts he has just been co-voicing. This alternation of textual reading and reader response creates a kind of dialogical tension.

Formality and Power

Irvine also raised the issue of how the formality of a social occasion (including code formality) might relate to political coercion. She concluded that "formalizing a social occasion reduces its participants' political freedom ... only in limited ways" (Irvine 1979: 784). In chapter 4, Cliff Goddard writes that the use of English and Malay proverbs in everyday interaction indicates reference to traditional authorities and invokes interdiscursive relationships. These formulaic practices of everyday life claim to be based on a specific moral poetics in representing value judgments that control and legitimate social behavior in present-day contexts, offering strategies for dealing with recurrent situations. Proverbs are small forms of authoritative discourse, formulaic expressions in which language ideologies and social in-group politics are condensed and in a way petrified. Malay proverbs (*peribahasa*) index "Malayness" and thus are used to contextualize culture according to group-specific political interests and ideologies.

Felix Ameka, in chapter 5, provides the cultural ethnopragmatic scripts for complex West African "sitting" visits, with their ritualized and stereotypical opening, central, and closing sequences, and for the ritualized verbal and nonverbal acts and forms of behavior that are appropriate and expected during these social visits. A feature of these encounters is that they involve not only a host and a visitor but also a spokesperson who acts as an intermediary through whom messages are sent from one party to the other. This triadic communication does not involve the usual sender-receiver participant structure. Instead it includes the speaker of the source utterance, the intermediary as first receiver and relayer of this utterance, and the targeted receiver of the utterance, who of course has overheard the source utterance when it was addressed to the spokesperson. That a message which has already been spoken is immediately relayed can be seen as an enactment of the authorization and traditionalization of discourse. It is an act of *metasemiosis* that manifests the interdiscursive, iterative quality of ritual communication. The ritualistic formulas exchanged during these visits do not have just phatic functions but also rich illocutionary meanings. As sites of collective memory, they reinforce ideologies of gratitude, communality, inclusiveness, interdependence, and religious belief in God, but they also enact cultural ideologies of inequality.

Haviland, too, illustrates the coercive interactive effects of ritual forms. Zinacantec shamanic prayer is highly interactive because it implies various sorts of "uptake" from the patient. The curer's words prompt secondary prayer in the patient, partly as echo and partly as response. Shamans can hint that certain actions ought to be performed, but skilled patients can also change the course of the shaman's prayer by their responses.

Voicing and the Experiencing of Ritual Communication

Many of the features described by Goffman and then developed by Du Bois (2007) in his discussion of stance could be used in discussing forms of ritual communication that fall more on the "macro" side of interaction, insofar as large numbers of people are involved and explicit stance-taking may be required of the participants (see also Kockelman 2004). Where the performance and experiencing of ritual take place in a multilingual situation, nonverbal indexes of stance-taking (e.g., music, bodily decoration, gestures) are used (Basso 1985). As we see in the chapters by Basso, Senft, Kratz, and Kuipers, ritual communication

should be thought of as an especially elaborated, multimodal form of behavior, a point made earlier by anthropologists who wrote about music in ritual (Basso 1985; Feld 1982; Hill 1993; Roseman 1991; Seeger 1987).

Initiation and other liminal rituals have long been sources of information about the psychological shaping of ritual experience as well as the psychic struggles of participants engaged in ritual communication (see, e.g., much of the work by Victor Turner). Yet the linguistic features of other kinds of ritual events, such as personal narratives, are also important for helping us understand the problems of voicing (Bakhtin 1973 [1929]; Hill 1993; Urban 1989; Voloshinov 1973), including questions about the multiplicity of a single person's voices, the understanding of different kinds of dialogicality in interpersonal contacts, and phenomena associated with the suppression of voicing in the face of perceptions of power and violence in a relationship.

In chapter 6, Suzanne Oakdale explores the autobiographical and biographical aspects of rituals in several lowland South American societies. Biographical narratives merge with autobiographical ones, narrators assume the identities of ancestral figures, and the identity of the ancestral figure becomes subsumed by the identity of the narrator. The effect of these performances is a kind of circulation of experiences and perspectives among subjects from different time periods and distinct communities. Performances of these autobiographical and biographical narratives, which are embedded in ritual events, are key moments both in the construction of personal identities and memories and in the imagining of emergent kinds of social groups and historicities. The nuanced understanding of the play of voices in interpersonal relations (including, as Du Bois shows in chapter 13, interaction between the voice of a text and that of a living commentator) and the topic of voicing and power together afford a special opportunity for critical scrutiny of autobiographical rhetoric.

The contributors to this volume emphasize newer understandings of the play of voices in interpersonal relations, including the multiplicity of voices uttered by the same speaker. They look at the way images of sociality are foregrounded through stance-taking and the recontextualizing of communicative practices that dispute, reinforce, or elaborate such images. The authors of several chapters are concerned with the suppression of voicing (including its self-suppression, or what Senft calls "tact"), with the open violation of learned discursive forms in the face of perceptions of "rules" (Kuipers, Hoëm), and with the coercive power in a relationship that makes talk about certain subjects taboo (Silverstein).

Images of sociality are thus consequences of newly constituted participation frameworks that serve as "ritual centers of semiosis." Du Bois shows how intersubjective processes of dialogicality frame the voicing of the ritual text. We see that multivocal dialogic sequences between the person as a reader of a ritual text and the same person as commentator on the text are triggered by something in the text that its reader finds salient and that motivates a shift from uttering the words to responding to them. This resonance is sometimes divergent, sometimes convergent. Thus the ritual comes in voices that are able to say many things; the question is whether we want them to speak within us.

Du Bois emphasizes that dialogic voices exist in all kinds of discourses, and he links this insight to the theory of distributed cognition. Full acknowledgment of the implications of distributed cognition demands that we not only expand the concept of individual cognition to encompass its social dimension but also recognize social voicing within the cognition of the solitary individual. This implies that the individual social actor is built for intersubjective cognition within the practice of self-understanding as well as externally, and there is potential for socially distributed agency in any utterance.

In chapter 11, Michael Silverstein focuses on two kinds of private, solitary rituals in two societies. For the Chinookans of North America's Columbia River, the ritual comprises a preadolescent's securing of a "spirit power," and for the Australian Aboriginal Worora, it has to do with the way a man becomes "fecund by-and-with a child," determining the child's "great name." In each ritual a person has a conventionally structured yet out-of-observation encounter with alterity—with non-human spirits or natural substances or species—and comes away from it culturally endowed for a new phase of life. Silverstein deals with the different kinds of voicing that take place in these encounters and with the micropolitical effects the encounters may have for the individual, effects that might even reverberate in macropolitical realms in the public domain if their seeking for power is successful. That such a ritual encounter has taken place is proprietary information, communicable only in restricted contexts, by, for example, demeanors that index life-transforming experiences. Contrary to many other rituals, such private rituals entail anxiety about whether the person will have such an encounter, whether he or she really has had such a ritual experience, and what consequences the encounter will have for the person's future behavior. Rituals and forms of ritual communication can fail, and so it is risky to engage in them (see also Senft, this volume).

Ellen B. Basso's chapter, too, spans the realms of private and public as well as the domains of the micro- and macropolitical. She highlights the coercive power and interactive effects of different forms of ritual communication that are voiced by different interactants. Even simple forms of ritual communication display resonances to more complex forms, thus increasing their pragmatic force and efficacy. Ritual communication is used to reproduce micro- and macropolitical systems of power; it controls people and situations, indexes authority, and gives participants a sense of being in control of a fraught situation.

The resonance of ritual activities in two different contexts is similarly described by Ingjerd Hoëm, in chapter 8. Hoëm explores the reception of a ritualized performance in two different social environments. Polynesian *faleaitu* ("house of spirits") are skits or comedies constituting a conventional genre that can be an instrument of severe social control but also allows for the breaking of social conventions. Its actors play on turning established social roles upside-down and overturn relationships of respect and authority. As a communicative genre it offers protection to those who enter its ritualized space and gives them license to talk about issues "one does not talk about" otherwise. It is a safeguard to defuse and divert potentially dangerous conflicts related to topics that the society consciously suppresses. Thus it allows for the mirroring of, and provides an opportunity to reflect upon, the sometimes difficult sides of village life. People who perform in *faleaitu* try finally to create an atmosphere that brings everyone together in joy and excitement.

The Recontextualization of Culture through Ritual Communication

A number of chapters highlight some of the ways in which ritual communication enables the "recontextualization" of culture, that is, the reconfiguration of meaning and new contextualization of older practices as well as the creation of new forms of ritual communication from historically older forms. The chapters also illustrate the way old ritual practice contextualizes and recontextualizes culture and the way forms of ritual communication cope with rapid social changes in various cultures. These "practices" vary from indexical grammatical features to whole ritual performances.

Affinal civility, discussed by Basso, and the majority of the proverbs discussed by Goddard illustrate conservative strategies that forms of ritual communication in everyday interaction can activate in recontextualizing culture. We have already discussed the way the songs of

the Amazonian Shuar and Achuar (Gnerre) and the narratives and shamanic songs of other South American lowland societies (Oakdale) show how flexible and open for change and innovation even relatively complex forms of ritual communication can be. Historical processes have modified these narratives and songs. Innovations due to cultural changes are reflected and incorporated in the specific semiotic codes of these forms of ritual communication. Even more important, these innovations are understood as providing additional enunciative and performative strength for the narratives and songs. The plasticity of inherited forms of ritual communication helps South American lowland societies negotiate social relations between ethnic groups. The forms of ritual communication remain meaningful because the ancestors' perspectives can be incorporated into the contemporary perspectives of the present-day performers of these rituals.

The Amazonian rituals described by Basso, Oakdale, and Gnerre are not all ritualized to the same degree. The most ritualized events on a continuum of forms of ritual communication show the greatest degree of formal patterning and condensation. As Oakdale shows, lowland rituals encourage a circulation or generalization of a point of view in different ways by drawing on concepts of the "I" in narrative discourse. She differentiates the everyday "I" from the narrative "I" and subcategorizes the narrative "I" into a projective "I," in which speakers speak as if they have become merged with the presented character, and a theatrical "I," in which speakers speak through the character they represent. Moreover, there is an "I" that is almost but not quite projective; in this case, narrators have not completely identified with the character they are presenting, but there is more subjective identification than in theatrical role-playing. Oakdale shows how lowland rituals present images of extreme sorts of sociability by featuring the discourse "I," which allows living persons to partake in the perspectives and stories of others who are unusually distant. They take on the "I" of mythic or deceased ancestors and of enemies, both human and supernatural. This is also true of Kalapalo leaders' talk during large-scale ceremonial gatherings (Basso). In Oakdale's case, the "circulation of experiences" among subjects from different times lends itself to a constructed notion of chronology that has helped preserve the continuity of the indigenous cultures.

Recontextualized rituals have also played a role in the restructuring of communities. In chapter 7, Corinne Kratz discusses parallels and differences between the encouraging addresses (*ceerseat*) given during Okiek female initiation ceremonies in Kenya and addresses offering wedding

advice to young couples, and between Okiek marriage arrangement meetings, men's meetings, and new forms of political meetings. She argues that defining and understanding ritual communication requires not only analyses of the ways various modes of communication are used and combined in particular ritual events but also analyses that trace the historical transformations of ritual occasions and ritual communication and that cut across different events and contexts. She sketches the way different kinds of Okiek speeches and meetings relate to one another in terms of event and participation structures, discursive themes, and pragmatic patterns and processes.

Returning to chapter 8, Hoëm discusses the contrast between the performance and efficacy of a play produced by a Tokelauan theater group in two very different settings: Wellington, New Zealand, and the island territory of Tokelau itself. The performance space in New Zealand is closer to that of a Western theater performance. Hoëm looks at the consequences of the ritualized performance in terms of subsequent group formation, power struggles, and discourse about the definition of Tokelauan tradition.

In chapter 9, Joel Kuipers examines a case from the Indonesian island of Sumba in which the definition of what counted as ritual communication was undergoing rapid change. In 1998, a protest demonstration, or "expression of feeling," that was initially only a challenge to the bureaucratic authority of the district regent, a member of the Weyewa ethnolinguistic group, was reinterpreted by his supporters as a challenge to his person. They in turn organized their own demonstration to support him. Another group, however—Lolinese ritual celebrants who, coincidentally, had gathered near the town for a festival—recoded this counterdemonstration in more traditional terms and interpreted it as a threatening act of territorial violation. Ultimately the two groups clashed, and at least several dozen people died. Later, traditional leaders from the Weyewa and Loli subdistricts organized a reconciliation event in which they delivered orations in ritual speech. Although Loli and Weyewa are different languages, the ritual speech discourse provided a common idiom for expressing their reconciliation. Kuipers shows that the escalation of the events was due to different interpretations of forms of ritualized protest and to changing ideas about the structure and function of ritual communication on Sumba. He understands these events as a dynamic process of metasemiosis in which conflicting ideologies of expression, humility, and ritual etiquette came together in an atmosphere of general crisis. His analysis of the incidents illustrates the way participants in ritual events mutually monitor one another's

uses of local and cosmopolitan models of ritual communication—sometimes with tragic consequences.

Among the Kalapalo, as described by Basso, the affinal civility register, with all its features and strategies, seems to provide the grounding for the ceremonial agency of hereditary leadership expressed in "the leader's talk." This form of ritual communication is distinctive to male Kalapalo hereditary leaders, who engage in these oratory-like speeches during large-scale ceremonial gatherings involving people of more than one community and often more than one language. This is an inherited style that is learned by young leaders, who practice it with older relatives. A speaker's skillful use of the style enables him to connect the present ritual event and its participants with others that took place in the distant past, indexing the continuity of customary behavior initiated by ancestral leaders as well as the specific genealogical underpinning of the speaker's status.

A number of contributors explore difficulties that arise with attempts at recontextualization. In Silverstein's two examples, people are primed and prepared to have private ritual encounters, and the disappointment is great when this kind of encounter "either does not take place or seems to have taken place to no effect." Thus, one can remain powerless (in the Chinookan case) and childless (in the Worora case), unvalidated as "a citizen of a culture one exquisitely understands."

The Communicative Cline

Many of the contributors to this volume discuss models of communication as a matter of degree, organizable as a series of "clines" of features such as the following:

- 1 Degrees of prospective and retrospective indexicality
- 2 The performance focus, which emphasizes how degrees of control over and thus responsibility in speech are effected (Du Bois 1986; Rumsey 2000; Urban 1989)
- 3 Poetic enregisterment: the use of more or less elaborate features of other genres; degrees of difficulty with entextualization; the contrast between things that must be said and what is felt by the speakers (ideological disjunctures, tact, etc.)
- 4 Degrees of illocutionary force (Austin 1962) in the verbal mode of ritual communication
- 5 Degrees of metapragmatic content: reference to the participants, location, and temporality of the discursive contents

Is it the case that all language tends toward ritualization (as Haviland claims for Tzotzil speech), and if so, are there degrees of ritualization of speech exhibited by all speakers in all societies? Are large-scale public ("explicit," "religious"?) events only the most obvious kinds of ritual communication (especially to the anthropological outsider)? Are there in fact many kinds of ritual communications, even in private, micropolitical contexts? Are there communities in which all speech is ritualized? And going further, is all speech actually ritualized, so that our current polarity between "ordinary" and "ritual" speech is due for a serious overhaul? If all talk is ritualized, and if ritualization is a "matter of degree," then understanding the ritualization of language must involve foregrounded communicative phenomena (as on a cline, for example). We believe the chapters in this volume provide important theoretical considerations that can serve as bases for further research geared toward finding adequate answers to these important questions.

Note

1. Although this has become an important issue for the newer evolutionists in our field, comparative linguistic materials to substantiate the numerous claims about cognitive origins and functions are strangely absent (e.g., in Liénard and Boyer 2006, there is a curious absence of anything to do with language). For a discussion of this issue in linguistics, see, for example, Cowie 1998 and Földes and Wirrer 2004.