"Cultural" Concepts and the Language-Culture Nexus[1]

by Michael Silverstein

Events of language use mediate human sociality. Such semiotic occasions develop, sustain, or transform at least part—some have argued the greater part—of people's conceptualizations of their universe. Reserving the term *cultural concepts* for such sociocentric aspects of human cognition, this article sketches linguistic anthropology's methods for discovering truly cultural conceptualizations, illustrated at the polar extremes of ritual efficacy (Christianity's Eucharistic liturgy) and of everyday conversational language games. Knowledge schemata structuring cultural concepts, here termed *-onomic knowledge*, turn out to be "in play" in interaction, made relevant to it as interactants use verbal and perilinguistic signs in the work of aligning as relationally identifiable kinds of persons. In interactional experience, -onomic knowledge anchoring cultural concepts is always implicit and is even sometimes part of largely abstract cultural patterns only indirectly experienceable by people such as the cultural "edibility" of fauna in Thai villagers' cultural concept invoked by use of terms denoting animals. Furthermore, beyond unique micro-contextual occasions of interaction, one discerns a macro-sociology of -onomic knowledge. Privileged ritual sites of usage anchor such a multiplex social formation; their emanations constitute power—frequently politicoeconomic— to warrant or license usage of particular verbal forms (e.g., American English "wine-talk" register) with particular meanings germane to certain interested ends of self- and other-alignment, closing the circle of analysis.

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Whenever languages and other, perilinguistic semiotic systems are used in their ubiquitous human habitats, cultures as well as people can be said to be communicating. In discursively mediated interaction, whether as "native" users or as analyst-investigators, we perceive ourselves to be sending and receiving messages to and from so-called real or fictional individuals; we communicate about states of affairs concerning all manner of experienceable and imaginable things. But we are at the same time experiencing culture by communicating through this exemplar, medium, and site: language-in-use. I want to demonstrate here how linguistic anthropologists "listen to" language analytically in this second mode in order to "hear" culture.

I want to point out, in particular, that we can "hear" culture only by "listening to" language in a certain way. This channel, I would maintain, is made available by contemporary semiotic pragmatism in its theorizing the "conceptual" nexus linking language to culture, for such study, in passing, investigates and clarifies the nature of truly *"cultural" concepts*, as I hope to explicate here.

To be sure, all human activity centrally engages conceptualization in one or another respect. And, further, language is a semiotic complex most visible to our individual reflexive gaze precisely for its instrumental role in explicit, task-oriented conceptualization. Yet the argument here is that there is a realm of what we might justly term "cultural" concepts to be discerned from among concepts in general and specifically among other conceptual codings manifested in language. These "cultural" concepts define and reveal what is culturally specific about human discursive interaction, seen both as itself human activity and as mediating semiotic "relay" (Barthes 1968:11) of all other human activity.

It is a truism that cultures are essentially social facts, not individual ones; they are properties of populations of people who have come to be, by degrees, tightly or loosely bounded in respect of their groupness, their modes of cohering as a group. Cultures are historically contingent though, as experienced, relatively perduring values and meanings implicit in the ways people do

things and interact one with another. Such doings, as events, have value and meaning only insofar as they are patterned—the textually oriented word is "genred"—so that even as they are participating in them, people in effect negotiate the way that events are plausibly and (un)problematically instances of one or more such patterns. So, culture being manifest only in such sociohistorical facts, anything "cultural" would seem to depend on the contingencies of eventhood that, in complex ways, cumulate as genred norms of "praxis" or "practice." Yet, in the event culture is always presumed upon in the course of that very praxis, even as it is always potentially transformed by people's very doings and sayings.[2]

And yet, we feel—do we not?—that cultures, like languages, are fundamentally ideational or mental—or *conceptual*[3]—insofar as in communicating people seem (at least at first) to be giving evidence of knowledge, feeling, and belief, even creating, sharpening, and transforming knowledge, feeling, and belief in themselves and others. What, then, is the sociological condition of existence of such—as we should term them—"cultural concepts" of which cultures are constituted in the face of the very individual-centric assumptions that our own culture persists in having about knowledge, feeling, and belief? How can we see that language as used manifests such cultural concepts, ones specific to a sociohistorical *group*, not-

2. On this sentence's bland statement of the issue, perhaps most theorists could agree. Things become immeasurably more contentious when one tries to say how, precisely, "practice" (plus or minus human "subjectivity," "intentionality," or "agency") relates to "culture" (as "system," "structure," or "norm") in the real-time functioning of social action. Structuralists and structural-functionalists, for example, have tended to see practice merely as a working or "execution" of the underlying or immanent system (thus Saussure's [1916] *parole* and *langue* in respect of language itself). By contrast, praxis theorists from ethnomethodology to deconstructivism have tended to see normativity and/or systematicity as a mere emergent, even as an epiphenomenon of instances (or, incoherently, of genres) of practice. As to the dynamics of how, over a longer real time, cultures or languages (*langues*) change, even a Saussurean structuralist would be forced to admit that diachronic system change begins in the synchronic functioning of the system, in actual practices (*parole*). Yet it is never clear, within the terms of this framework, how such changes in practice in effect accumulate and percolate "up" to the norm level (*langue*) of language or culture change. (Various *dei ex machina*, to be sure, populate accounts in this style.) Similarly, in pure praxis approaches, the selectivity and seemingly structured "drift" of historical cumulation and normativization are left completely unaddressed except by invoking—circularly, it turns out—such Hegelian (often misread as Marxist!) essences as "power." The dialectical semiotic pragmati(ci)sm espoused here as a positive project, I think, avoids the worst of these dead ends, both that of the pure structuralist and that of the pure praxiologist or reductive functionalist.
3. I intend this term to be inclusive, thus not making the distinction between "cognition" ("ideas") and "affect" ("passions") that seems to be a very local sociocultural legacy of European, especially (post-) Enlightenment, discourse about the mind, the first being equated with ultimately formalizable representationalism, the second with perturbations in organic physiological pharmacology and such. A group's concepts, furthermore, are manifested through any and all semiotic arrangements through which members participate in events, not, of course, just through language and language-like "codes."

withstanding the "freedom" we think we manifest in saying what we want, as a function of what we, *as individuals*, "really" believe we want to communicate about? Is there, in short, a *sociocultural unconscious* in the mind—wherever that is located in respect of the biological organism—that is both immanent in and emergent from our use of language? Can we ever profoundly study the social significance of language without understanding this sociocultural unconscious that it seems to reveal? And if it is correct that language is the principal exemplar, medium, and site of the cultural, then can we ever understand the cultural without understanding this particular conceptual dimension of language?

The reorientation of linguistic anthropology over the past few decades has made real progress in these matters in good part by comprehending three lessons heretofore scattered in many literatures about language and culture, following them out and integrating them into its analytic approach to revealing the "conceptual"—hence, "cultural"—in language.

The first of these lessons is that discursive interaction brings sociocultural concepts into here-and-now contexts of use—that is, as I hope to explain, that interaction indexically "invokes" sociocultural conceptualizations—via emergent patternings of semiotic forms that we know how to study in the image of the poetics of ritual. Precipitated as *en*textualizations (by-degrees coherent and stable textual arrays) in relation to *con*textualizations (how texts point to a framing or surround for the text), such "text-in-context" is the basis for all interpretative or hermeneutic analysis. Both the comprehensibility and the efficacy of any discursive interaction depend on its modes and degrees of "ritualization" in this special sense of emergent en- and con-textualization (see Silverstein and Urban 1996).

The second lesson focuses on the underpinnings and effects of the denotational capacity of the specific words and expressions we use that gel as text-in-context. This is the complex way in which, on occasions of their use, words and expressions come specifically and differentially to "stand for," or *denote*, things and states of affairs in the experienced and imagined universe. Yet integral to the very act of denoting with particular words and expressions, it turns out, is the implicit invocation of certain sociocultural practices which, in the context of discourse, contribute to how participants in a discursive interaction can and do come to stand, one to another, as mutually significant social beings. The most interactionally potent components of denotation seem to function in at least two ways: first, to be sure, as contextually differential characterizers of some denotatum but second as indexes of users' presumed-upon (or even would-be) relational positions in a projective social distribution of conceptual knowledge. So individuals in effect communicatively "perform" a here-and-now interactional stance in relation to such knowledge by the phraseology and construction in which they communicate the substance of what is being "talked about." We read such interactional stances (cf. Goffman's [1979] notion of "footing" and Bakhtin's [1982] of "voicing") as ritual fig-

urations of social identity come to life, interactionally activated in the here-and-now of discourse for the inter-subjective work of creating, maintaining, or transforming social relations.

Given these first two points, the third lesson is that there are wider-scale institutional "orders of interactionality," historically contingent yet structured. Within such large-scale, macrosocial orders, in-effect *ritual centers* of semiosis come to exert a structuring, value-conferring influence on any particular event of discursive interaction with respect to the meanings and significance of the verbal and other semiotic forms used in it. Any individual event of discursive interaction occurs as a nodal point of a network of such in a field of potentially conflicting interdiscursivities across macrosocial spaces that may be simultaneously structured by other (e.g., political and/or economic) principles and dimensionalities as well. Viewed in such a space, every discourse event manifests, by degrees, authoritative, warranted, or heretofore uncountenanced or even contested entextualizations licensed from centers of value creation. Here, human subjectivity and agency come to their potential plenitude. The flow of value thus comes to be mappable as a felt effect or adjunct of interlocutors' strategic positionalities—presupposed or entailed—in such complex macrosocial space and of people's stasis in and/or movement through its ever-changing configurations.

In showing how the cultural concept is key in bringing together these three cumulative insights of contemporary linguistic anthropology, I hope to elaborate, in turn, on all three. Let us focus first on the matter of *interaction ritual*, to use the late Erving Goffman's (1967) term, and show how the reorientation of linguistic anthropology over recent decades—what we can call *the pragmatic-poetic turn* in its study—provides the entry point to an account of specifically cultural conceptualization.

Discourse as Interaction Ritual

We can engage the problem of the kinds and degrees of textuality in discourse by considering an example of a staged though nonscripted conversation.[4] Figure 1 shows a minimally adequate, standard-orthography transcript

of a snippet of a conversation videotaped in ca. 1974 between Mr. A, then a second-year student at the University of Chicago Law School, and Mr. B, then a first-year student in the same university's School of Social Service Administration. Mr. A was, in other words, the "future lawyer," we might say, and Mr. B the "future social worker." Each had been instructed by my colleague Starkey Duncan, then interested in "nonverbal" communication, to have a conversation with another graduate student whom he had not before encountered.

This bit of conversation reveals Mr. A to be in the middle of a (lawyerly?) line of questioning. Like all "questions," Mr. A's is the first of a two-part, basic rhythmic unit of alternating conversational participation—the so-called adjacency pair in conversation analytic terms (Levinson 1983:303–8, 332–39). In and by the current speaker's utterance there is strongly entailed a symmetrical, interactionally coherent "reply" or "response"[5] from the original addressee, subsequently become a sender (as the original sender becomes an addressee, exchanging roles). The first turn-at-talk in the transcript is Mr. A's sixth question to Mr. B about where Mr. B "came from" "before."[6]

Before when? What is the *culturally relevant framework* of *temporalization* and of sequential relationships within it? And what kind of a stipulation of a "there" in Mr. B's past would satisfy the line of first pair-part questions about "coming from" someplace as sufficient—even satisfying—second pair-part answers? In other words, what is the relevant framework of *spatialization*—physical and/or institutional—that corresponds to the temporal sequence? To what degree is each of Mr. A's conversational moves, as a phase in an ongoing social praxis, constraining, in any cause-and-effect way, of Mr. B's moves (and vice versa)? How do such linkages allow Messrs. A and B interpersonally to create before our transcriber's very eyes a precipitated text (-in-context) that we can understand to be culturally coherent? My point is that the problem of informational "relevance" and the problem of how discourse comes to some kind of segmentable textual "form" as *effective social interaction*

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4. I have treated this at some technical length in two earlier papers. One (Silverstein 1985) presents a construction-by-construction syntactic and lexical analysis of the poetic form in the denotational text (= "what has been/will have been said" in the way of reference and modalized predication). This is shown to facilitate an interpretative theory of what is happening, segment by segment, on the intersubjective plane. A second paper (Silverstein 1998) shows that the denotational information appears to be metricalized—given poetic form in a dimensionalized measure-space—by *deixis*, the various categories by which one "points" to things and situations from the ever-moving discursive here-and-now that the interactional participants inhabit. Such a metricalization allows us to map the unfolding denotational text into a maximal interactional text (= "what has been/will have been performed-in-talk" in the way of interactional "moves" in genred discursive social action). Assertions made here about the interaction thus presume upon these two prior, somewhat technical accounts, to which the methodologically interested reader is referred.

5. See Erving Goffman's (1976) brilliant demolition of conversation analysis and its attempts to consider "responses" as units of uninterpreted interactional "form" or mere earlier-to-later sequential position. Goffman showed both the defeasibility of any particular pragmatic entailment as such as well as the unlimited possible event-defining meanings of "next turns-at-talk" in culturally genred but innovatively nuanced ways.

6. Each of these (type-level) expressions is inherently deictic (i.e., its characterizing effect for denotation presumes upon the contextual conditions under which a token of them occurs). Come from indexes an end point of "movement-to-which" that is relatively close to the here-and-now stipulated in co-occurrent text or, by default, presumed to be the here-and-now of the communicative context of the sender. Similarly, (temporal) before again indexes an end point aligned either in or relatively closer to the now explicitly stipulated or, by default, pragmatically presumed.

$$\underline{A}$$

(1) Hu?úh, An' Q_{A6} how do you$_i$ líke Chicago compared [to Ø]

Q_{A7} did you$_i$ go to school thére ór uh, [wa]

[Óh], uh-húh

Óh, uh-húh

(2) Q_{A8} An' you$_i$ wént to undergraduate Ø hére ór

(3) Óh Óh Óh Óh Óh I$_j$ 'm an óld Jesuit boy myself$_j$, [unfortunately]

(4) R_{A1} Ø [at] Georgetown, down [in Washington]

(It's) too bád
Í$_j$ - [710 msec]

(5) R_{A2} Úh Yéah Wéll thís is my$_j$ second yéar here

[And], uh, Í$_j$ don't know,

It was níce

{χ$_1$}

I$_j$ sorta enjóyed it -

I$_j$

Thís place is réally réally - di dífferent -

Í$_j$ mu' -

I$_j$ must sáy

Bút, uh, [710 msec]

Í$_j$ don't know,

Í$_j$ I$_j$ enjoyed the educátion there

{χ$_2$}

And it réally was góod

It [wasn't]

(6)

[overwhélming]

$$\underline{B}$$

... there ...

R_{B7} [I$_i$] díd go to school there

I$_i$ went to school hére álso, [úm]

um, so I$_i$ came back kind of

I$_i$ wa[s]

R_{B8} Ø in Chicago át, uh, Loyola

[Oh áre ya$_i$ Ø Q_{B1} Where'd] you$_i$ gó [to Ø]

[Ó:h yéah], yeah

Q_{B2} Did you$_i$ finish Ø

Óh, úh-[huh]

Yeah

[I$_i$ think] -

Jésuit edu[cation chánged [700 msec] a]

lót in the lást five or six yéars

An' I$_i$ think

I$_i$ just caught

I$_i$ caught the tail end of uh - óf the - really óld

schóol -

Ít was

I$_i$ - was really

I$_i$ mean -

'cause Í$_i$ Í$_i$ did my$_i$ úndergraduate work

I$_i$ fínished that líke four yéars a [690 msec] go

fíve years ago

Ànd -

I$_i$ think

Nów - próbably Loyola is a lót different

an' a lot bétter [690 msec]

y'$_i$ knów

a lót more - variety of courses

being offered et cetera

ánd -

yóu$_i$ know

I$_i$ - I$_i$ ...

FIG. 1. *Transcript of a conversation between two American university students (Silverstein 1998:283, fig. 12,* ©*1997 by the Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., Westport, CT, reprinted by permission).*

are interrelated and cannot be either productively stated or solved independently.[7]

Most important, how would we go about achieving and justifying our "reading" of the interactional text abuilding here between Messrs. A and B? It appears at first to be an instance of "getting to know you," a familiar genre, or recurrent schema, of interactional text. Indeed, all bourgeois Americans have indulged in this genre with otherwise unknown people, for example, in airplanes or to more pointed purpose in clubs, bars, and similar watering holes. Messrs. A and B seem to be playing it in the immediate context of Mr. Duncan's video camera lens on that day in 1974, in the small room behind the Law School auditorium, south of 60th Street, on the campus of the University of Chicago, in the South Side neighborhood of Hyde Park, in the city of Chicago, in the County of Cook, dot-dot-dot—as Thornton Wilder so well set out the limitless possibilities of nested contextualization in *Our Town* some decades ago.

It is *context*, we can see, all the way out from the microscopic here-and-now. But which part of the context "counts," as it were, is "relevant" to moving this interaction along? How are culture and hence the interactional participant's mind as informed precisely by culture central to giving this verbal happening its distinctive form as genred interactional text?

Just as those familiar with the culture recognize the interactional text to be an instance of "getting to know you," the more subtle amongst us will also recognize that we have happened upon an instance of a game of *one-upmanship* in the process of being embarrassingly foiled or undone by the antagonist's own hand (= tongue). What is the role of our involvement in more or less the same culture as the two participants in our coming to this recognition of interactional genre? And how does the specific cultural system of value that an analyst may lay bare in working from the transcript help to indicate something of the interactional form that Messrs. A and B seem to be inhabiting? Let us look more closely at the interactional form that is emerging.

Down to segment 3 in our transcript, Mr. A has been the question initiator and Mr. B the respondent. Indeed, the denotational text, the "information structure," that they have generated between them has come to constitute Mr. B's interaction-relevant biography. It is in the form of a schematic of how he moved from "there," "then" to "here," "now" in various domains of what we might term descriptors of personal experience, attributes of social individuals constituting aspects of their narratable identi-

ties. As Mr. A anxiously presses on with the inquiry, the flow of such biographical information about Mr. B in the emerging denotational text is congruent with the obvious social-structural status asymmetry between them—lawyer versus social worker—at the moment of the discursive interaction—"here," "now," that is, at the University of Chicago. Mr. B's emergent biography augments that asymmetry in the past and projects it out to their respective futures, for it turns out that the current interactional status asymmetry of future lawyer/future social worker in fact continues the terms of a comparable schema of their respective "old school ties." Mr. B's college, "Loyola [University of Chicago]" (R_{B8}), contrasts with Mr. A's, "Georgetown [University], down in Washington" (R_{A1}), from their respective pasts. The status-relevant asymmetrical structure of what is indicated as the interactants' pasts and presents thus remains a constant over the course of biographical time from the narrated past up to the present moment (and implicated future).

Things change, however, in turn 5, when Mr. A makes the interactional move of "opening up" a bit—or so at first it seems—to reveal seemingly highly personal information: that he is drowning at the University of Chicago Law School, which he describes with the vernacular pejorative "different," whereas he had sailed along as a happy undergraduate at Georgetown. Whether consciously or not—consciousness being, in fact, a somewhat irrelevant dimension for seeing cultural form-in-motion—Mr. B seizes on this revelation of Mr. A's "opening up." He presents a denotationally incoherent but interactionally subtle and effective description of changes over time at Loyola University of Chicago, the erstwhile déclassé urban commuter school, the institution from "then" to "now" going in a contrariwise, "bad" to "good"—even "better"— direction.

Interactionally—note, not denotationally—Mr. B has registered the undoing of any witting or unwitting success Mr. A may have gained at one-upmanship up until turn 5. In fact, it seems that Mr. B begins after this turning point to inhabit in earnest the identity of social worker, asking all further questions to the end of the videotape recording of the conversation. He seems to treat Mr. A somewhat like a client in distress asking for help at an intake interview: in effect, "Do you think you can handle the rough-and-tumble of corporate law after this?"—seeming almost mercilessly to twist the knife by exaggerated concern.

But how do we know that this is a plausible—even, I would claim, the best—interpretation of the dynamic cultural form of this interaction (not, note, of each individual's actual momentary motivational and other subjective states) of which the transcribed snippet preserves a denotational record? To answer this theoretical question, we move to a slightly different kind of text, the old anthropological chestnut "ritual text." When we understand ritual text, we understand the principles underlying the way in which every interactional text—including that of Messrs. A and B—mobilizes cultural signs to discursive effect. We ask, then, what really characterizes ritual text, universally?

7. Note, by contrast, the at best culture-internal and post-hoc reconstructions of interlocutor intentions that go into Gricean doctrines of "relevance" (e.g., Sperber and Wilson 1986, following on Grice 1989 [1967]). The starting point of such analyses is the communication of a propositionally valuated grammatical sentence, an Austinian (1975 [1962]:109) "locutionary act." This necessitates postulating convoluted would-be chains of (logical) inference, including the ad-hoc reconstruction of (propositional) descriptions of "context," to map what is said in a turn-at-talk onto what is communicated in and by it—all with a rudimentary and rough-and-ready concept of interactional acts and events, if any.

The Semiotics of Explicit Ritual

The presumptively shared knowledge and beliefs of a group are accessed in a society's rituals under *dynamic gestural (indexical) figuration*. Ritual works in a kind of pictorial or iconic (specifically, diagrammatic) mode.[8] Ritual as enacted traces a moving structure of indexical gestures toward the knowledge presupposed to be necessary to its own effectiveness in accomplishing something. In ritual, participants spatiotemporally manipulate signs of these beliefs and areas of knowledge in their uttered words and their actions with each other and with objects. And it is the overall "poetry" as well as the particular forms of such manipulation of signs that count toward performing a ritual correctly. What is performed in this way—though always at the risk of misfire or other failure—is the culturally specific "competence" or knowledge that renders the context of performance accessible to someone we might term the believer or group adherent—whose adherence to a particular belief may of course be a normative presumption only.

Ritual can be verbal or nonverbal or, as is usually the case, a combination of multiple modalities of figuration played out in an orderly—the technical term, as in poetry, is "metricalized"—space-time envelope of participation. The very hypertrophic orderliness of multiple metricalizations thus bounds the performed text of ritual, giving it a semblance of formal plenitude-in-itself. In and by this property of seeming to self-entextualize, to stand as formally autonomous totality, a ritual text as a whole traced over space-time projects as its contextualization that which it dynamically figurates along a "cosmic axis," an axis of knowledge or belief. Such dynamic, directional spatiotemporal movements in ritual entail in this fashion the causal (re)ordering of cosmic conceptualizations as figurally indexed, such as aspects of sacred or foundational knowledge, feeling, and belief, made figurally "real" in the here-and-now of experienceable semiosis.

A person officiating at the service of the Eucharist, for example, bounds off a ritual space of objects at a table, an altar in the space-time of liturgical rite—wine poured from a cruet into a chalice, wafers or pieces of bread on a paten or ceremonial plate, both comestibles at a ritual table between him- or herself and a congregation of co-participatory onlookers. He or she begins to tell the story of The Last Supper of Jesus and the Apostles,[9] specifically quoting in the transposed here-and-now of first-person figural narration and, at the appropriate places for ostensive reference (pointing to the objects of the congregation's perception and the officiant's narration), gesturally holding up in turn the ritual objects: the congregants are informed that "This is my body," and instructed "Partake ye thereof!" and likewise "This is my blood," "Drink ye of it!" just as were the Apostles, according to the liturgical order of the fateful Passover Seder that constitutes, by belief, actually the first or authorizing occasion of the ritual in which the officiant and congregants are participating in unbroken (indexical) chain. The diagrammatic figuration thus is [In the here-and-now] Officiant : congregant :: [At the sacred initiating moment] Jesus : Apostles. The first is experienced, the second part of the cosmic order of sacred belief.

The specific figurational equivalences—the ritual baptism of objects with names—will have been stated by someone whose authority goes back—"indexically," as we say—in presumptively unbroken line to Jesus himself via a causal chain of authorization. The ritual action to follow with these now figurating signs has thus also been given figurational value within the bounds of the ritual form. And, ritually "transubstantiated" as these comestibles now have become,[10] to eat and drink—to consume or incorporate, we should say—is mystically followed by an equal and opposite or greater incorporation. As one consumes or incorporates the host in turn, first the officiant him- or herself and then the totality of individual congregants figurationally resacrifice "the lamb of God" in the "new covenant" so as to be incorporated through the figure of mutual participation into the body-and-blood of Jesus made institutional on earth, to wit, the church and its spiritual corporation. The individual act of faith, incorporating so as to be incorporated, figurates an aggregate becoming a collectivity "in Christ," as one says with a pregnant metaphor of containment made literal—as is the case for metaphor in all ritual—in the Eucharistic mystery.

This central ritual of Christian faith, moreover, is a brilliantly compact structure of action; it is chiastic as classical rhetoric would see it, named for the Greek term for a marking with the letter chi, *chiasmós*, a criss-cross reciprocation figurating, of course, the cross. Here, the

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8. We have already been using the Peircean notion of "indexical" semiosis in the sense of a "pointing-to" relationship between a sign and some co-occurrent thing that it stands for. Here, we move more decisively into the Peircean scheme (see Peirce 1931–58:2, 134–73), in which, among the types of "iconic" signs (that is, signs in virtue of a "likeness" to what they stand for) are "diagrams," analogies of structured relations of parts, as in the floor-plan of a house in relation to the actual spatial division experienceable in the dwelling in other modalities (e.g., by walking around). All analogies, insofar as they are representable by the formula $A_1 : A_2 : \ldots :: B_1 : B_2 : \ldots$, feature diagrammatic relations between the two sides of the equation. For this whole area of study, see the brilliant systematizations of Peirce in Parmentier (1994:1–44 and 1997).

9. In the Gospels, one finds the parallel narrative passages at Matthew 26:26–29, Mark 14:22–25, and Luke 22:17–20. John 6:48–58 articulates the mystical equivalences that underlie the liturgical figuration in the Eucharistic service. For example, "And as they were eating Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Then he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. . . .' " (Matthew 26:26–28). "Then [Jesus] took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body which is given up for you—do this in my remembrance.' Likewise he took the cup after they had eaten and said, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is poured out for you' " (Luke 22:19–20).

10. Of course, the precise nature of such transubstantiation has been a theological doctrine of some controversial nature over the centuries over which churches have split.

90-degree perpendicularity of the iconic cross is dynamically figured by reciprocal action, a back-and-forth whereby a small ingestion figurating incorporation is tantamount to (i.e., results in) a large counterdirectional incorporation into a mystical corporate union or fellowship. This is literally an act—as in "social act"—of renewal of individual faith in the divine, selfless, self-sacrificing agency of Jesus who became the sacrifice on the cross, this act the foundation for the faithful of Christianity-as-lived.

The point for analyzing ordinary, everyday discursive interaction—relating to others through the medium of the most ordinary-seeming language—is this: An interaction—even everyday, ordinary conversation—is to be analyzed as the "ritual" event through which its various participants are allocated ascriptions of adherence to or at least role-alignment with the cultural beliefs that underlie and thereby provide the stuff of sociality. This is figuratively accomplished through the entextualization of patterns of usage of words and expressions in the context of interaction. We as analysts "read" the interactional text of what is (denotationally) said in the social context of role relationships in the same way that we as participants "understand" what "social text" is being enacted (above and beyond what is being denoted). Thus to "read" or "understand" is in effect to reconstruct a piece of text as the realization of one or more genres of typically "ritualized" triangulation: denotation—dynamic figuration—context of sociocultural knowledge. The text of what is said (= denotation) gesturally figurates a framework of cultural values (= "cosmic" context) associated with denotata. Dynamically this constitutes the crux of the social relationships of participants over the (real-time) course of interaction. This more inclusive "text"—the "interactional text" of social relationships in progress here-and-now—is what we read from the figurational dynamics of denotational material, the words and expressions of discourse.

Discourse is a by-degrees "cooperative" (cf. Grice 1989 [1967]:26–31) activity or praxis insofar as participants, whatever they intend, manage to precipitate an interpersonal, intersubjective, denotational text-in-context. With respect to such an emergent, real-time structure of meaningfulness, participants can mutually align their contributions so as to align their personae in a socially significant event. Such text-in-context is what we can artifactualize in a transcript, ready for *in vitro* (as opposed to *in vivo*) study as a record of an interaction. If, however, the participants in an interaction are informed by disparate and only implicitly metricalized genres, events can fail by degrees to achieve such intersubjective coherence. By contrast, official ritual is authoritatively effective at figurating terms from a system of cultural beliefs because it is highly—even hypertrophically—and explicitly metricalized into a "poetic" organization such that to participate at all is to participate metrically.

For example, in figure 2 one cannot help but be struck by the poetics of the ritual text transcribed some years ago by James Fox (1974:74) among speakers of Rotinese on Roti (Indonesia). It is (internally) structured as a de-

notational textual message, in terms of a tight poetics of parallelism around the terms *goat*, *front*, *neck*, *hair* and *cock*, *rear*, *tail*, *feathers* as oppositional sets introduced in parallel in lines 1–2 and 3–4, respectively, along with personal and place names. The dynamic figuration here—the diagram emergent over the real time in which the message is articulated—is, of course, what makes this ritual text "work" as effective social action. The parallel, dyadic messages about the cutting or plucking of the animal's valued beauty (lines 5–6 and 9–10) are followed by the regeneration of the value (lines 7–8, 11–12), "still perfect as before/and ordered as at first" (lines 13–14). It is the ritual text of a speech that occurred at the moment when, on the death of an old political leader of the clan village, a young successor (lacking an achieved glory of beard or plumage, we might say) was installed. "Don't worry," the ritual speech soothes; "things will right themselves to the status-quo-ante."

Dynamic figuration in ritual, then, depends on a tight metricality within the "literal" or denotational text to effect its goal or end, to bring about something in the field of socially deployed symbols. In transcript, and especially as the chart of parallelisms that graphs it, you see the diagram (the type of Peircean icon involving analogy of parts) of that which the denotational language is "doing" at *this* very moment, namely, bringing into *this* spatiotemporal envelope of interactional context the longed-for reality of authoritative soothing because, figuratively speaking, one's inhabiting a "severed" social condition leads inevitably, the speech observes, to one's reinhabiting a resumptively "regenerated" one. The iconic diagram applies to this context, here-and-now: over discourse time, the time of talk, it indexes (i.e., invokes as contextual parameter) the political situation faced by the people of the group as going from "needing soothing" to "soothed," we might say. The literal form of ritual text is always such an *iconic index*—a picture made real in the here-and-now—of that which it accomplishes, patently or transparently mapping the diagrammatic figuration of its denotational language in what we might appreciate as its "literal" interpretation into its interactional import, or effect.

Interaction Ritual in Virtual Metricalized Discourse Space

The interaction ritual of Messrs. A and B may not seem transparent to us in its formedness, though we can intuitively interpret or understand what is going on. However, to model the interactional text here is the methodological problem. It requires us to recognize that each of the operative semiotic forms—each quantal coding of communicated denotational or conceptual information that plays a semiotic role in the interactional story line—does not just occur by itself; the units of effective semiosis are not, for example, simply words or lexical forms given in advance, as folk analysis might assume. Nor does any interactionally relevant sign occur purely

Rotinese:

1.	Oe No Dain bɨɨn	The goat of Oe No from Dai
2.	Na bɨɨ ma-pau henuk	The goat has a yellow-necklaced beard
3.	Ma Kedi Poi Selan manun	And the cock of Kedi Poi from Sela
4.	Na manun ma-koa lilok	The cock has gold-stranded tailfeathers.
5.	De ke heni pau bɨɨn	Cut away the goat's beard
6.	Te hu ela lesu bɨɨn	Leaving but the goat's throat
7.	De se lesun na pau seluk	That throat will beard again
8.	Fo na pau henu seluk;	And the beard will be a yellow necklace again
9.	Ma feä heni koa manun	And pluck out the cock's tailfeathers
10.	Te sadi ela nggoti manun	Leaving only the cock's rear
11.	Fo nggotin na koa seluk	That rear will feather again
12.	Fo na koa lilo seluk.	And the tailfeathers will be gold strands again
13.	Fo bei teman leo makahulun	Still perfect as before
14.	Ma tetu leo sososan	And ordered as at first.

structure:
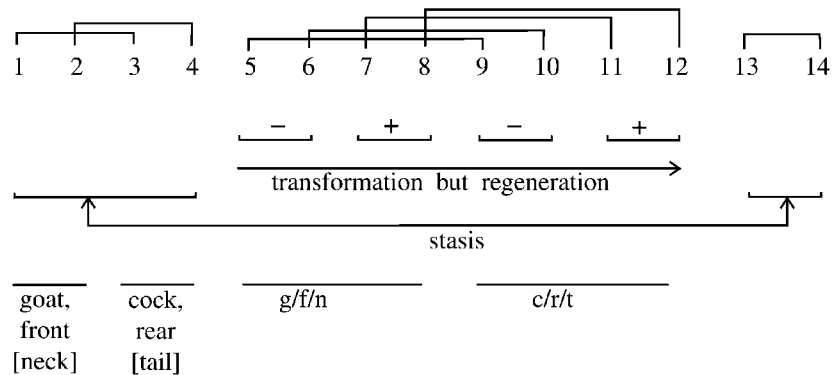
parallelisms: bɨɨ 'goat' : manu 'cock'
koa 'tailfeathers' : pau 'beard'
henu 'yellow-beard' : lilo 'gold-strand'
feä 'pluck' : ke 'cut'
Oe No : Kedi Poi '[personal names]'
Dai : Sela '[place names]'

FIG. 2. *Dynamic figurational structure of a Rotinese oration* (bini) *for a situation of succession (Fox 1974:74, reprinted by permission of Cambridge University Press).*

as a function of the linguist's sentence grammar or the one-sentence-at-a-time reconstructions of denotational text done by linguistic philosophers or conversation analysts (though of course everything can be nicely parsed according to English syntax and sense semantics [see Silverstein 1985]). Each contributory bit of information, rather, fits into an emerging multidimensional array of repetition, comparison, and contrast, an organization of denotational information that is interactionally effective because it comes to entextualized formedness in a particular way in the course of conversation.

But the operative structure in such ordinary conversation is not a transparent poetic organization of the de-

notational text, as in our two "real" ritual examples above. In ritual poetics, the semiotic material is simultaneously measured out into foot, line, verse, and other recurring chunks, allowing us to locate every operant sign with respect to every other along dimensions of figurated interactional meaningfulness. This creates a complex "space" akin to a multidimensional crystalline structure through which the interpreter of an entextualization must move to "get the [ritual] point" being inscribed through the metrical semiosis of participants.

In everyday conversations like this one, by contrast, the operative structure occurs in an immanent conceptual poetics—the conceptual material organized into a

virtual metricalized space of points that are themselves denotationally created as the referents of deictic categories and otherwise indexed by systematic categorial forms. These include such pragmatic operators as lexically coded paradigms of opposed deictic spatializers such as English <u>here</u> versus <u>there</u> and adverbs such as English <u>now</u> versus <u>then</u>, the inflectional expression of category paradigms such as English "tense" categories of "present" (= "nonpast") versus "past," and so forth. These organize information into a conceptual metrics, in addition to the explicit poetics of metrical repetition, constructional parallelism, and lexical ligature. Looking at the transcript in figure 1, we can observe, thus, how in Q_{A8} ("An' you wént to undergraduate [school] hére, ór" –) in 2, Mr. A uses the "past tense" of the verb go- in the idiomatic phrase go- to [school] that predicates this relationship between "you" (= Mr. B) and some "here," a "place" category deictic being used, in the flow of discourse, for "Chicago" (cf. R_{B7}). Q_{A8} is straightforwardly a propositional schema of the rough-and-ready canonical form "$f(x,y)$", "go-to-undergraduate-school (Mr. B, [Chicago])" within the spatiotemporal framework of Mr. B's dialogically elicited biography-in-progress— and of his life, including the moment of interaction!— that is explicitly deictically signaled by "here" and "past tense," schematically here$_B$–then$_B$.

Figure 3 presents the results of such a retranscription of the explicit metrical transcript in the framework of what we might term the *deictic metricalization* of propositional (denotational) content. A rough schematization reconstructing the propositional information in each turn is presented in the lefthand column, while in the righthand column are listed the deictically anchored spatiotemporalizations seemingly in discursive focus at that very utterance interval of the conversation. At R_{B8}, Mr. B has introduced a distinction between a university-institutional framework of location, coded with small capital letters (thus: "THERE$_B$" for Loyola University of Chicago), and a city-geopolitical framework of location, coded with lower-case letters (thus: "here$_B$" for the city of Chicago). At the bottom of the retranscription, I schematize the denotational content of Mr. A's first pair-part in turn 5 and its corresponding second, Mr. B's turn 6. It will be immediately seen that in turn 5 Mr. A describes a situation that, for him, goes from good to bad; by contrast, Mr. B in 6 describes a situation that, for him, goes from bad to good, an overall reverse direction along an evaluative dimension that is, nevertheless, closely parallel to Mr. A's earlier statement.

In figure 4 I have charted what is intersubjectively shared between Messrs. A and B about the roles and biographical attributes of each of them at two points in interactional time, according to the various frameworks that are contrasted along "there" : "here" and "then": "now" deictic differentiations of role inhabitance and denotational information emergent in the transcript. The first point is where our transcribed snippet begins; the second is where it ends.

The various frameworks, it will be noted, are realms of knowledge about the world and about the interaction ongoing. In each frame are grouped together the pieces of intersubjective biographical knowledge that have emerged by that phase of interaction. There are fuller and more precise propositional descriptions of curricular participation and of university affiliation for each participant by the conclusion of the transcribed interval. The talk has been directed to, in effect, filling in the boxes for Messrs. A and B within the deictically and lexically differentiated frameworks. Further, at the conclusion of this segment the interactional roles of initiator (of questions) and respondent (to them) have decisively reversed (something that would, in fact, become clear only by examining the rest of the transcript). This creates a multidimensional array of information—here about Messrs. A and B themselves, as it turns out, because the descriptive content is frankly about these two people's narratable relationships of "living in," "attending or matriculating at," etc., with reference to certain named entities such as states and cities and universities that inhabit shared cultural space.

Down through turn 4, Mr. A and Mr. B have been constructing conversationally usable biographies, first of Mr. B under Mr. A's relentless questioning and second of Mr. A as Mr. B reciprocally obliges by asking for his undergraduate institution. When, in 5, Mr. A, elaborating on his answer, ventures a negative comparison of his experiences at Georgetown and Chicago, Mr. B, in 6, launches into a description of all of the changes for the better that his undergraduate institution, Loyola, has undergone in the five or six years since he matriculated there. But what we can describe in this merely sequential fashion is densely structured into pieces of information organized by "placing" each with respect to other pieces of information through the use of syntactically co-occurring deictics implying dimensions of comparison and contrast in various cultural realms of knowledge.

The conversation is organized in this way into three parts, the first, starting even before the stretch in the transcript, building up the biography of Mr. B, the second ever so briefly giving the interactionally relevant biography of Mr. A, and the third composed of the two denotationally disconnected evaluative judgments that count, however, as the moment of real interactional reversal for Mr. A and Mr. B, as shown.

The more general principles of interaction ritual are, then, in a way the same as those in "real" ritual. In each case, our interpretations or understandings of and strategic self-alignments to interactional text—in short, our interested modeling of it—are always through the lens of available denotational form. Certain partials of denotational text—what one is saying—"count as" (or at least contribute to "counting as") instances of performing a certain kind (or genre) of socially consequential act in emerging interactional text—what one has (or will have) socially done or accomplished in and by saying something. And any determinacy in accomplishing this depends on the dynamic—though orderly and intersubjective—indexical-iconic figurative value of verbal descriptors set into frameworks of knowledge structured in the here-and-now by deictics and other indexicals. In

Schematic analysis of tropes of conversational rhemes:

	"objective"	deictic
Q_{A6}	$[\text{Iowa}_B]$: Chicago_B	$[\text{there}_B\text{-then}_B]$: $[\text{here}_B\text{-now}_B]$
$Q_{A7}R_{B7}$	go-to-school$_B$([Iowa$_B$]); " ([Chicago$_B$])	here$_B$- then$_B$ > there$_B$- then$_B$ > here$_B$- now$_B$
Q_{A8}	go-to-undergraduate$_B$ [school] ([Chicago$_B$])	here$_B$- then$_B$
R_{B8}	... (Chicago$_B$; Loyola$_B$)	[here$_B$- THERE$_B$- then$_B$]
(3)	[Jesuit (Loyola$_B$)] = Jesuit (X_A)	THERE$_A$- then$_A$
Q_{B1}	go [-to-undergr.-sch.]$_A$(X_A)	"
R_{A1}	... (Georgetown$_A$; Washington$_A$)	[THERE$_A$- there$_A$- then$_B$]
Q_{B2}	finish$_A$ ([Georgetown$_A$])	"
R_{A2}	$\geq$ 1 yrs.$_A$ (here$_A$ - [now$_A$])	[HERE$_A$-] here$_A$-now$_A$
(5)	nice$_A$ (Georgetown$_A$)	[THERE$_A$- then$_A$]
	A-enjoy$_A$ (G_A)	"
	different$_A$ (HERE$_A$)	HERE$_A$- now$_A$
	A-enjoy$_A$ (education-THERE$_A$)	THERE$_A$ - then$_A$
	really-good$_A$ (["])	[THERE$_A$ - then$_A$]
	[overwhelming$_A$ (HERE$_A$)]	[HERE$_A$ - now$_A$]
(6)	change$_B$ (Jes. educ.$_B$)	[THERE$_B$ - then$_B$] > [THERE$_B$ - now$_B$]
	B-catch$_B$ ([Jes.-educ.$_B$-THERE$_B$- then$_B$])	[THERE$_B$ - then$_B$]
	B-finish$_B$ (")	"
	4< $\underline{n}$<5-yrs ([THERE$_B$-then$_B$])	"
	different$_B$ (Loyola$_B$)	THERE$_B$ - now$_B$
	a-lot-better$_B$ (["])	"
	a-lot-more-courses$_B$ (["]) ...	"

(5) A: good$_A$(THERE$_A$ - there$_A$ - then$_A$) : bad$_A$(HERE$_A$ - here$_A$ - now$_A$)

(6) B: bad$_B$(THERE$_B$ - here$_B$ - then$_B$) : good$_B$(THERE$_B$ - here$_B$ - now$_B$)

FIG. 3. *"Objective" and deictic components of propositional information communicated in the conversation of figure 1, with schema of dynamic figuration at turning point. To represent the propositional content of talk, a schematic "predicate-argument" is followed in the lefthand column, roughly "predicate-about (referent/topic)."* [ ], *material not uttered in the turn at talk but carried over from prior turn(s);* A, B, *indexes of participants' explicit sentence-subjecthood or implied subjectivity;* X, *as yet unspecified propositional argument;* HERE/ THERE, *university differentiated as deictic object (versus* here/there, *all other place-deixis).*

the case of explicit ritual, the hypertrophied formal metricalization of denotation makes it transparent to the accomplishment of "acts" relative to frameworks of knowledge, including beliefs. In the case of everyday interaction ritual, the figuration depends on deictically mediated orderings of denotation that have the force of conceptual metricalizations. The semiotically operative figurations of relational stance of participants in inter-action are conceptually metricalized along dimensions given by deictic usage in addition to the way they may be explicitly metricalized by *cotextual* structures of parallelism, repetitions, etc.

Thus, for Messrs. A and B, Mr. B's nonsequitur in 6, his denotationally—that is, logically or propositionally—incoherent description of the reverse direction of change of Loyola University, *his* emblem of identity, interac-

		Mr A	Mr B
[Conv. Role]:	'here-now'	[Initiator]	[Respondent]
	:	:	:
	'there-then'	["]	["]
Experiment:	'here-now'	this-exper. conversation	
	:	:	:
	'there-then'	previous-exper. conversation	
Curriculum:	'here-now'	Law School	Soc ServAdmin
	:	:	:
	'there-then'	[ ]	[ ]
[University]:	'here-now'	[(University of) Chicago]	
	:	:	:
	'there-then'	[ ]	[(U of)] Iowa?]
City/Town:	'here-now'		[Chicago]
	:	:	:
	'there-then'		not Amana
State:	'here-now'		[Illinois]
	:	:	:
	'there-then'		Iowa

$$\downarrow \Delta t$$

		Mr A	Mr B
[Conv. Role]:	'there-then'	[Initiator]	[Respondent]
	:	:	:
	'here-now'	[Respondent]	[Initiator]
Curriculum:	'here$_A$-then$_A$'	Law School-1	[?]
	:	:	:
	'here-now'	Law School-2	SocServAdmin1
University:	'there$_B$-then$_B$'		Loyola-Chicago
	:		:
	'there$_A$-then$_A$'	Georgetown	[(Univ of?)Iowa?]
	:	:	:
	'here$_{A\text{-}B}$-now$_{A\text{-}B}$'	The University of Chicago	

FIG. 4. *Transformation over conversational time of already intersubjectively shared information about participants laid out in deictically differentiated frameworks (Silverstein 1998:290, fig. 12.2, ©1997 by the Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., Westport, CT, reprinted by permission). [ ], information not uttered in the turn at talk but carried over from prior turn(s) or from nonverbal context;* $_{A,\ B}$, *deixis within the biographical spacetime of participant indicated.*

tionally comes to "count as" a third phase of the interactional segment transcribed here. It is the registration of foiled one-upmanship and the beginning move in his metaphorical self-transformation into the participant holding the better interactional position—truly a role-relational reversal from what had been good-naturedly going on up to this point.[11]

Verbalized Knowledge and Social Positionalities

Occasions of talk like the chat of Messrs. A and B make conceptual information intersubjective ("on record") in real time through layers of form of organized text. Such form, we have seen, mediates how participants come to stand one to another and how an interaction is a dynamic of assuming and transforming relational stances. But we must go farther and ask of the conceptual information communicated and made intersubjective, what is its nature? How is it anchored to language? Where, as *cultural* knowledge, does it "live," so to speak, in society?

In addressing this issue, we come to the second important differentiating dimension of contemporary linguistic anthropology, for we have discovered that *interactionally relevant concepts indexed* (cued) *by words and expressions in text are cultural concepts* that have

11. The methodological importance of this analytic focus via what I term the "sign's-eye view" of ritualization cannot be overestimated. It unites the traditional linguist's concern for formedness of messages (utterances, texts, . . .) with concern for the contextualization conditions of messages—semiotically, their indexicalities or conditions of co-occurrence with various factors of the communicative situation. From the sign's-eye point of view, in a situation in which, at any moment of interactional time, there are multiple interpersonal possibilities "in play," the gradual coming into being of a determinate text-in-context is the gelling of one special kind of indexicality, cotextuality, of a privileged set of signs with respect to the rest of what is significant. Cotextuality determines a special, central cohesive structure, the "text," in a larger and dynamic field of indexicality, namely, all that the occurrence of that text points to in the way of its surrounding contextualization. Ritual proper (as anthropologists no less than its practitioners would identify it) and interaction ritual differ, of course, in the degree—not kind or mechanism(s)—of compulsive obtrusiveness of cotextuality for both participants and analyst. In our own culture, this cotextuality is first and foremost understood—by participants no less than by analysts within the culture of language—to center around the "what is said" aspect of semiosis, what we term the *denotational text*. Therefore, it is our task to open up this denotational text in interactional terms to show that Messrs. A and B's interaction one with another, like that of all people within this culture, is not direct but mediated by the denotational text that emerges between them as an intersubjective fact about structured—and in particular, mostly deictically structured—information. Thus, "understanding" a discursive interaction such as that between Mr. A and Mr. B is, in effect, being able to model it as a denotational text-in-context that, as interaction ritual, figurates the interactional doings between them as it entails them, such figuration always summoning to context cultural values as the stuff-at-issue of social interaction. To study the effective form of interaction, then, we work through its mediating denotational textuality. This is why all cultural study is hermeneutic (and dialectic) in nature, seeking to interpret the interactionally significant (i.e., efficacious) "meanings" of denotational text.

a special status among the several components of meaningfulness of language. (Hilary Putnam [1975] termed them *stereotypes* about the world.) It is important to see that such cultural concepts, as opposed to all the other kinds of meaningfulness associable with the words and expressions used by Messrs. A and B, play the decisive role in bringing this conversation to formed significance and effectiveness.

In effect the participants' use of certain expressions in particular metrical positions of a developing textual form indexes—invokes—structures of knowledge about the world. For example, use of names such as "Georgetown" in parallelistic relation to "Loyola (of Chicago)" indexes—brings to the intersubjective denotational textual microcosm—nodes in the "taxonomy" of Jesuit universities in the United States, just as the juxtaposition of these names of institutions concurrently invokes the denotata (for the cognoscenti) as an ordered set, or "serial structure," by their rank on a scale of institutional prestige giving value to their graduates' credentials (or degrees). Any time one uses a word or expression it indexes specific values or nodes within such knowledge schemata. Each such schema of conceptual information is now made "relevant" to discursive interaction as a framework projected from it (as well as now indexically anchored to it here-and-now); in other words, it is specifically indexed (pointed to, gestured at) as the in-play focus of figuration (in our sense of ritual[ization]) in the interactional work being done.

What type of person, with what social characteristics, deploys such knowledge by using the expressions that normatively and actually index (invoke) it in a particular configuration of cotext? With what degrees and kinds of authority do interactants use expressions (reflecting knowledgeable familiarity from the social structural position of the user with respect to ritual centers of authority that "warrant" their use)? To whom is authoritative knowledge ascribed, and who can achieve at least a conversationally local state of authority with respect to it, if not a perduring authority stretching beyond the instance of interaction? In such ways the variability of linguistic usage presumes upon—and points to (indexes)—the *nonuniformity* of knowledge within a community. Importantly, nonuniformity in what people know or are at least allowed to manifest knowledge of is a function of numerous types of social categorizations of people and people's membership in groups of various sorts, of which, then, using certain words and expressions becomes a direct or indirect indexical sign.

We understand what is going on in the conversation between Mr. A and Mr. B as we can discern the centrality of the participants' predicating the "went-to-school (= college)-at" relationship between, respectively, Mr. A and Georgetown (oldest, richest, almost Ivy—though Catholic—Jesuit university at the center of national power), and Mr. B and Loyola of Chicago (located in a Midwestern manufacturing and commercial center, in 1974 a generic, commuter school with not much of a traditional campus). Such associations become intersubjective facts at particular points in interactional time

through the verbal accounts of the biographies of the interactants, in effect placing Mr. A and Mr. B in serially structured value positions within the overall taxonomy of Jesuit institutions. Their respective social selves have been in effect wrapped in these culturally widespread *emblems of identity* (Singer 1984:esp. 105 and references there) with entailments for dynamic figuration; indeed, such emblems are "old school ties" in American male, bourgeois professional society.

Of course, there is a process of essentializing that underlies and results in the emblematic power of such indexed positionalities, as I shall show in detail in the last section below (since emblems are "naturalized," that is, essentialized icons indexically deployable). Various complex and dialectical institutionalized processes yield similarly emblematic values for their own sorts of signs in identity politics, priestly incumbencies of expertise, "brand"-allegiance groups, and other forms of group formation around emblems at least deictically locatable on or in respect of persons and even bodies (think, further, of people even wearing school insignia or colors on their clothing, of the class-differentiated wearing of gang colors, of the flying of national flags on the portals of homes and even on vehicles).

The interactional text of what Messrs. A and B have "really" been doing in the way of a cultural event as they were talking about this and that thus becomes clear. Mr. A has, we can now infer, been providing opportunities, through relentless first pair-part questioning of Mr. B at the outset of their conversation, long before and up until our snippet begins, for Mr. B to predicate in second pair-parts of adjacency pair structures such a "went-to-school(= college)-at" relationship for himself, so as to reveal his emblem of identity; and finally, in adjacency pair 2 at R_{B8}, with some hesitation, Mr. B accedes, explicitly disambiguating "here$_B$," that is, Chicago, from Loyola of Chicago (= "there$_B$"), his university alma mater ("in Chicago át, uh, Loyola"). Then Mr. A has his moment "one-up," announcing—note the descriptive framework of taxonomy he explicitly invokes as now "in play" for self-other comparison!—that he, too, is a "Jesuit" college product (for in stratified American society, below the level of the traditional male prep-school WASP rich, it is generally one's undergraduate [Bachelor's degree] institution that counts).

In the flow of talk, this creates an asymmetry of characterization between participants in the co-constructed intersubjective space, for they both now know Mr. B's biographical emblem of Jesuit-institutional value but do not know Mr. A's. The gap can only be filled by Mr. B's asking his now good-natured return question Q_{B1}, "Where'd you gó [to school]?" This will open the space for Mr. A to predicate the equivalent information about himself. While all he needs to do from a denotational point of view is to give the institution name as descriptor, he makes his formulation symmetrical with the one Mr. B has earlier used. In response R_{A1} he predicates of himself having gone to "Georgetown [University] (= "there$_A$"), down in Washington (= "there$_A$")." (Mr. B doesn't even wait for this last piece of locational infor-

mation before launching into his next turn at utterance, it should be noted, so superfluous an added specifier is it in the in-group universe of "old Jesuit boys" that both he and Mr. A belong to.)

Deploying such biographically contingent cultural knowledge—here, for example, knowing about named Jesuit institutions—constitutes the central modality of establishing and transforming qualities of social relations. Having such cultural knowledge is group-relative: it is, as Hilary Putnam put it in a famous 1975 paper, echoing Durkheim (1893), based on a sociolinguistic "division of labor" in which the fact of social distribution of conceptualization is an essential characteristic of words and expressions insofar as the way in which they become meaningful identity signs deployed in interaction underlies their very capacity to denote—just as was my writing "Durkheim" and not "the great master of French sociology, Emile Durkheim (1858–1917)," in the immediately preceding passage.

Thus, particular words and expressions emerge in metricalized text as indexical differentiae of a discourse participant's having—or seeming not to have—certain conceptual structures and distinctions, which are brought to bear on denotation at that point of discourse time precisely as a function of the use of a certain form. This is, as we shall see below, tantamount to indicating group or category membership of participants in a discursive interaction, both as a presupposed fact about a social world indexically anchored to the here-and-now and as a fact entailed (performatively created) for such a world in and by the very textually organized use of certain words and expressions at that moment. As Putnam and others have pointed out, for any denoting word or expression the preponderance of its "meaning" lies in just such concepts as are revealed in usage and its co(n)textual indexical patterns, somewhat independently of the meanings signaled by formal grammatical aspects through which sentence constructions are shaped.

The use of certain words and expressions at a particular point in discursive real time therefore does more than contribute straightforwardly to denotational text. It marks (indexes) the user as a member of a certain group or category relative to the groups or categories of persons, things, etc., already in play through contextual and cotextual indexicalities up to that point (see the concept of "membership analysis" in Schegloff 1972). It thereby indexes—points to—an in-group including that user within which one can presume a sharedness of specific conceptual schemata such as taxonomies, partonomies, paradigms, seriations, etc., that begin and end in occasions of talk and their intertextual, interdiscursive qualities in a whole economy of verbal usage in social life.[12]

Consequently, when I have had occasion to talk to international audiences about Messrs. A and B (see Silverstein 1998)—recognizable, highly locatable social personae of American bourgeois culture—it has necessitated a vast labor of explication on my part of the frameworks within which what the two men are saying is culturally informed and culturally coheres in figurating an interactional text that can be made analytically transparent. I have had to become, in other words, a cultural informant revealing what is communicatively specific here in the way information-bearing words and expressions, the very denotational currency of this interpersonal exchange, index group memberships that come to interactional realization in the instance.

It is clear that at least some interlocutors in these international audiences had enough competence in English to follow the denotational text of what Messrs. A and B were saying and my own exposition. However, the fact that they missed all this indexical meaningfulness (or at least needed laborious explication of it to show its systematicity in frameworks of knowledge about particular worlds) is, of course, the demonstration par excellence of "culture" immanent in language. Messrs. A and B appear to be operating with—pointing to and identifying each other with positions within—these schemata of cultural concepts without losing a cotextual beat, so smooth is the interactional textuality with which they chat. But one can imagine an outsider's seeing nothing of the nature of this interaction because knowing nothing of the stereotypic knowledge schemata indexed by the use of specific words and expressions from culturally loaded pragmatic paradigms of not merely denotational but indexical and emblematic value. Messrs. A and B deploy this knowledge like identity-linen by hanging it out interpersonally and intersubjectively not only in explicitly metricalized poetic turn-taking but in a second, more subtle layer of deictically structured conceptual space—"here's" Chicago; "there's" Loyola; etc. They thus surround their respective conversational personae with these emblems of personal identity, negotiating and coconstructing a deictically denoted field with the polar-coordinate geometry common to any such indexed re-

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12. The study of such structures in a number of practical domains of conceptualization has long been the province of self-styled "cognitive anthropology" and congeners, though with a dubious understanding of "meaning" and virtually no understanding of grammar (see the collection of papers in Tyler 1969 and, notwithstanding, the very useful discussion of "ordering functions and vocabulary structure" surveying the types of knowledge schemata in Tyler 1978:255–300; see also the oddly triumphalist account of

D'Andrade 1995, written against all the gains in epistemological subtlety won in the postpositivist study of language and other cultural phenomena and resolutely set against all of it). Within the cognitive anthropology literature, Frake (1969 [1964]), in particular, has succeeded in showing how discursive coherences involving words and expressions over sequential adjacency-pair (Q;A) routines find their explanation in various "-onomic" structures of knowledge that are, by hypothesis, presupposed by the responding consultant to be the conceptual frameworks giving coherence to such dialogue—hence his "notes" on the suitability of various types of domain-specific "queries" (and their responses). At the same time, the -onomic structures invoked are creatively useful to the anthropologist by virtue of the apparent ability of speakers relationally to structure various denotational terms at issue by such metasemantic descriptors as "is a type of," "is a part of," and the like. The way in which particular words and expressions substituting in such diagnostic frames of conceptual relations in coherent pairings of dialogic (Q;A) discourse metricalizations of various sorts reveals interesting networks of terminological—hence, cultural-conceptual—relations.

gion surrounding an origin point (here-and-now) in the person or persons communicating.

Now, such stereotypic or cultural concepts are invoked in and by the use of tokens of words and expressions to which they are attached. Arrayed in deictic-poetic real time, these concepts constitute the denotational space of play that gets figurationally mapped in the practical work of interactional textuality, of inhabiting and "defining" this social event as starting in some state of social relations and winding up in another. Such cultural knowledge *lives and dies in textual occasions*. We create it on occasions of use of particular words and expressions in particular cotextual arrays one with respect to another, as much as, on subsequent occasions of use of them, we try to presume upon the knowledge previously experienced and, perhaps finding our presumption being questioned, have to create it again or modify it for some new interlocutor. The doing of all this denotational textual work, at the same time, figurates interactional textuality, the participants coming to stand in social relation one to another, and therefore the cultural conceptualization on which interaction turns can never be neatly abstracted from its dimension of interactionality. Rather, such textual occasions—occasions for language to be used to describe phenomena in the universe of experienceables—are occasions when people (indexically) associate specifically patterned words and expressions with specific, valuated pieces of conceptual knowledge that people invoke as interlocutors in such-and-such kinds of social event. Interlocutors thereby bring that knowledge into interpersonal social space and make it relevant to their ongoing interactions, all in the very moment of seeming to fashion an individual thought.

The use of some particular word or expression at a moment in denotational text-time thus comes differentially to invoke—to summon to the here-and-now—some specific cultural concept in a schema of such. (I will return later to the issue of whose indexical associations and schemata "count.") But it does so in a way that is dependent on sociocentric and interactionally locatable patterns of language use both as themselves constituting social action in the way I have demonstrated and as associable with other modalities of social action. [The distinction between these and other aspects of the conceptual content of language is clarified in the electronic edition of this article on the journal's web site.]

Lexically Explicit "-onomic" Structures versus Cultural Concepts beyond Lexicalization

The way we denote what we consider "real-world" things by lexical expressions reveals at least one kind of knowledge, for example, that certain plants and animals are members of a category and that members of that category have certain properties. These denotata are or can be conceptually interrelated in various by-degrees socially shared and/or perduring schemes of discursive

knowledge about them; they "go together" in a classification that can be revealed in explicitly metasemantic (sense-characterizing) discourse. The fact of such classificatory knowledge can be revealed by special kinds of metalinguistic conversations with (Q; A) participant-role structure. Consultants as respondents can coconstruct "-onomies" in response to the query-based stimulation of a friendly anthropologist: "A T-shirt is a kind of shirt" within the domain denoted by "clothing," of which "shirt," to be sure, is a kind, and so on.[13]

Such induced lexicalized -onomic structures are precisely what, more explicitly, underlie an older philosophical view of Western "science." Stipulated networks of scientific terms are interrelated by in-essence term-defining theory the fashioning of which constitutes, then, a privileged, in-essence "ritual" site of discourse. One should thus be able to measure the coherence of any denotational discourse that emerges under such a theory by whether or not the critical terms defined or entailed by theoretical texts are used consistently with what the ritual center prescribes or at least does not proscribe. It is not difficult to see the analogy long lurking in studies of culture-as-mentality that a culture is like a totalizing folk-scientific "theory"—or implicit "view"—of the world (*Weltanschauung*) that provides folk-scientific terms to its users (the culture-bearers), methodologically systematizable in terms of -onomies that one can explicitly induce in the metalinguistic mode.

To investigate a culture's concepts, in this approach, one tries to extract or induce the semantic consistencies in such lexical usage and model them in terms of -onomies. If one can, one tries to give the intensional principles of conceptual classification that lie behind such an -onomy's structure, more or less identifying these principles with the conceptual meanings—senses—of the critical theoretical terms, the lexical labels of the systematizable culture. Unfortunately, cultural concepts of the kind we are focusing on here just do not work in this fashion; they are indexically invoked in and by the use of certain language forms in context, but the concepts will never be systematizable by the approach that sees culture as a "(folk-scientific) theory of the world."

A revealing example of the difference between structures of lexically explicit -onomization and actual cultural conceptualization appeared some years back in one of Stanley Tambiah's (1985 [1969]) contributions to the long-running though in my opinion ill-conceived "debate" on other peoples' rationality in classification by

13. See Frake's (1969 [1964]) demonstration of the method. This exercise, if metasemantic (i.e., truly sense-characterizing), depends entirely on discovering a language's privileged set of text-forming metasemantic operators such as "is a kind of (X,Y)" (for X,Y denoting lexical expressions of some language), which, transitively iterable across pairs of expressions, generates a so-called taxonomy. From this term, I have generalized the term "-onomies," intending to include all types of knowledge structures thus revealed or generated in these and other metasemantically regimenting textual occasions, for example, partonomy, paradigm, and serial (linearly ordered) structure.

cultural concepts.[14] Tambiah described the apparent—practically evidenced and verbalizable—beliefs of Thai villagers about differences of "edibility" of the universe of lexically nameable faunal types. Each time a particular faunal nominal expression is used in discourse, from among an elaborately taxonomized set of such, such beliefs are, of course, potentially cued as contextually relevant cultural concepts about the named fauna (in Putnamian terms, differentially indexed as stereotype cultural beliefs about the denotata of fauna terms). The problem for us in a curious way is that local ascriptions of "edibility"—a projected "property," to be sure, predicable as true or false of every type of named creature in Thai villagers' belief—seem to be askew from two points of view.

On the one hand, as shown in table 1, when we construct careful taxonomies of types of animals according to the Thai villagers' own verbalizable "is a kind of" relationship, this categorial structure bears no transparently direct relationship to the ascribed property of "edibility." If such a property is shared stereotypic knowledge, it is communicated indexically, constituting in this way—but *not* as a taxonomic principle of discourse coherence—much of the direct as well as figurative discursive rationality of text-making use of animal names (in unproblematically smooth discursive interaction focused on human relations to potential faunal foodstuffs, for example). Among nonhuman creatures (*tua*) and in particular animals (*sad*), some domesticated animals (*sad baan*) are "edible" and some not; some forest animals (*sad paa*) are "edible" and others not (and similarly for water animals [*sad naam*]). At the same time, "edibility" proscriptions, restrictions, preferences, or prescriptions have little "natural" basis beyond local cultural beliefs. For example, there seems not to be a relation to what is in some physical sense readily "available" or biochemically "harmful" or explicable by any of the myriad Western a priori optimizations or minimax calculi that inform various crypto-rationally reductive theories such as per capita protein capture or energy expenditure as the "really real" meaning of the only apparently (mystified) cultural concept of "edibility."

As Tambiah's data show (table 2), the concept of "edibility" is a degree concept that peaks in the middle of an abstract cultural structure of homologies across inhabitable and indexically anchored role relations with fauna and others. This homology draws together stereotypically conceptualized animal habitat and stereotypic animal behavior with two other systematizations

14. The debate is framed in precisely the same terms as the question of the universality versus "cultural relativity" of various aspects of linguistic form and function, to wit, the universality versus "cultural relativity" of "rationality," "moral sentiment," etc. Are every culture's classifications of the phenomena of the experienceable world "rational" in some sense? Note, among others, the lines of philosophical and anthropological worry in the twentieth century from Boas and Lévy-Bruhl on through to Sahlins and Obeyesekere. Notable way stations, in terms of which Tambiah's involvement can be construed, include Leach (1964), Lévi-Strauss (1966), Douglas (1972), Wilson (1970), Hollis and Lukes (1982), and Tambiah (1990: 84–139).

TABLE 1

Edibility Ascriptions of Domesticated and Forest Animals among Thai Villagers

Sad baan (Domesticated Animals)	Sad paa (Forest Animals)
	Wild counterparts of *Sad baan*:
Khuay (buffalo)—edible with rules	*Khuay paa* (wild buffalo)—edible
Ngau (ox)—edible with rules	*Ngua paa* (wild ox)—edible
Muu (pig)—edible with rules	*Muu paa* (wild boar)—edible
Maa (dog)—not edible (taboo)	*Maa paa* (wolf)—not edible
Maew (cat)—not edible	*Chamod* (civet cat)—edible (ambiguous)
Kai (chicken)—edible	*Kai paa* (wild fowl)—edible
Ped (duck)—edible	*Ped paa* (wild duck)—edible
Haan (goose)—edible but rarely eaten	
	Other animals:
	Kuang (deer)—edible
	Faan (barking deer)—edible
	Nuu paeng, nuu puk (forest rat)—edible
	Kahaug (squirrel)—edible
	Kadaai (hare)—edible
	Ling (monkey)—not edible
	Animals of the deep forest, rarely seen:
	Saang (elephant)—not edible
	Sya (tiger)—not edible
	Sya liang (leopard)—not edible
	Mii (bear)—not edible

SOURCE: Tambiah (1985:table 5.1, Copyright © 1985 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College, reprinted by permission.)

of inhabitable domains of Thai village life. One is kinship, articulated in terms of ascriptively legitimated versus performatively legitimatable marriageable persons in an exogamous though cognatic kinship universe. The other, anchored to a local, house-centered understanding of concentric social and cosmic spaces, is the stereotypic spatial perquisites of humans of various classificatory categories.

"Edibility" as an implicitly communicated concept that Thai villagers have about nameable fauna turns out to be (1) indexically anchored in the cosmos via a point of connection in this world, (2) the reflex in animal-type ascriptive projections of a more abstract structure of conceptual relations across a number of domains, and (3) a degree concept much like "incest" and other seriously relational matters. Whatever it seems to those who invoke the concept, "edibility" is clearly not merely a property to be projected as inherent in objects themselves—not a property of the individuable denotata of a lexicon of folk-scientific fauna terms. And whatever taxonomy or other kind of semantic structure can be induced on the set of such terms, these orderings are independent

TABLE 2
Parallelism across Rules of Human Exogamy, Rules of Human Domestic Access, and Rules of Edibility of Animals among Thai Villagers

Human series	*Blood siblings*	*First cousins (second cousins are ambiguous)*	*Classificatory siblings beyond second cousins*	*Other people*	*Outsiders*
Marriage and sex rules	Incest taboo	Marriage taboo; sex not condoned	Recommended marriage (and sex)	Marriage and sex possible	No marriage
House categories	*Haung phoeng and huang suam*	*Huean yaai (sleeping room)*	*Huean naui (guest room)*	*Saan (platform)*	*Compound fence*
Rules relating to house space	Sleeping rules separating parents from son-in-law and married daughter	Rights of entry but not sleeping	Taboo to cross threshold into *huean yaai*	Visitors wash feet if invited in	Excluding outsiders
Animal series	*Domestic animals that live inside the house*	*Domestic animals that live under the house (and have been reared there)*	*Domestic animals belonging to other households*	*Animals of the forest: counterparts, deer, etc.*	*1. Powerful animals of the forest 2. Monkeys*
Eating rules	Inedible and taboo	Cannot be eaten at ceremonials	Eminently edible at ceremonials	Edible	Inedible and taboo

SOURCE: Tambiah (1985:table 5.2, Copyright © 1985 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College, reprinted by permission.)

of this important—and, for fauna, ubiquitous—cultural concept.

As for indexical anchoring, this cultural concept of "edibility" is dependent upon a radial distance function from a center point. This becomes apparent in the locally structured conceptualization of zones of a village microcosm-to-macrocosm organized first around the internal structure of the living quarters of the house of a head of household and then around the various corresponding locations of the house's undercroft. Then it includes the village of several houses, its surrounding land for flooded rice cultivation, its surround in the (uncleared) forest, and finally what may lie beyond. The stereotypic house itself, as shown in figure 5, *top*, is in effect linearly zoned starting from the point on the northeast corner of the sleeping room where the Buddha's statue and ritual altar connect the house—and its head of household—to the cosmic realm. The line moves next to the west of that *origo* or anchoring point, then to the south out to the entrance platform and down to the undercroft (fig. 5, *bottom*), duplicating the arrangement, then outside and into the macrocosm of the village, and then beyond to other villages.

Privileges of access to these zones are isomorphic with an egocentric kinship structure centered on the stereotypic male head of household (not on a marriageable child). Marriage and thus legitimated nonincestuous sexual relations for a young woman of such a household and ultimately a son-in-law's access to the sleeping room (west side) are permissible, indeed stereotypically expected, in the mid-range of the kinship classification in the homologue of table 2.

The abstract structure of analogies anchoring ascriptive "edibility" to other kinds of experienced social relations follows in the realm of relations of humans to animals. In fact, the implicit conceptual metaphor—"edibility" (as ego's comestible) is homologous to "(available) sexuality" (as ego's legitimate marriage object)—is, as we might expect, ritually literalized as "figuration" and thus made experiential in cases where expiation is necessary for an incestuous (too close) marriage in this cognatic system. Both parties to a relatively more incestuous union have to "eat" from the same "tortoise shell" (a pun on the older lexeme for "vagina") in public, a metaphor, it is thought, of the sexuality of "omnivorous" dogs. The spouses indexically-iconically perform this public act of self-mortification to overcome the taboo they have violated by marrying (Tambiah 1985 [1969]:172–73, 175).

It is to be expected, of course, that an abstract concept that is culturally normative is thus anchored in the figuration of ritual, such practice authorizing its default invocation as knowledge of the world in the everyday usage of the linguicultural community; whether any individual who uses a faunal term "believes" is, of course, not to the point. The abstract structure authorizing this cultural concept is made flesh, as it were, in this ritual site, (re)authorizing its experienceable force in everyday life—itself experienced in a space that is orderly and indexically anchored in the house altar.

"Edibility," as a degree concept, moves across a space of animal types designated by the various faunal terms—a culturally stipulated serial structure, then—according to stereotypic habitat along the microcosm-to-macrocosm-ordered path from the *origo* of cosmic anchoring. The animals of the innermost household realms (according to the distance function implied), such as cats, are taboo for eating—disgusting, in fact; buffalo, normally kept in the space under the highly regulated sleeping quarters, can be eaten only with ritual circumspec-
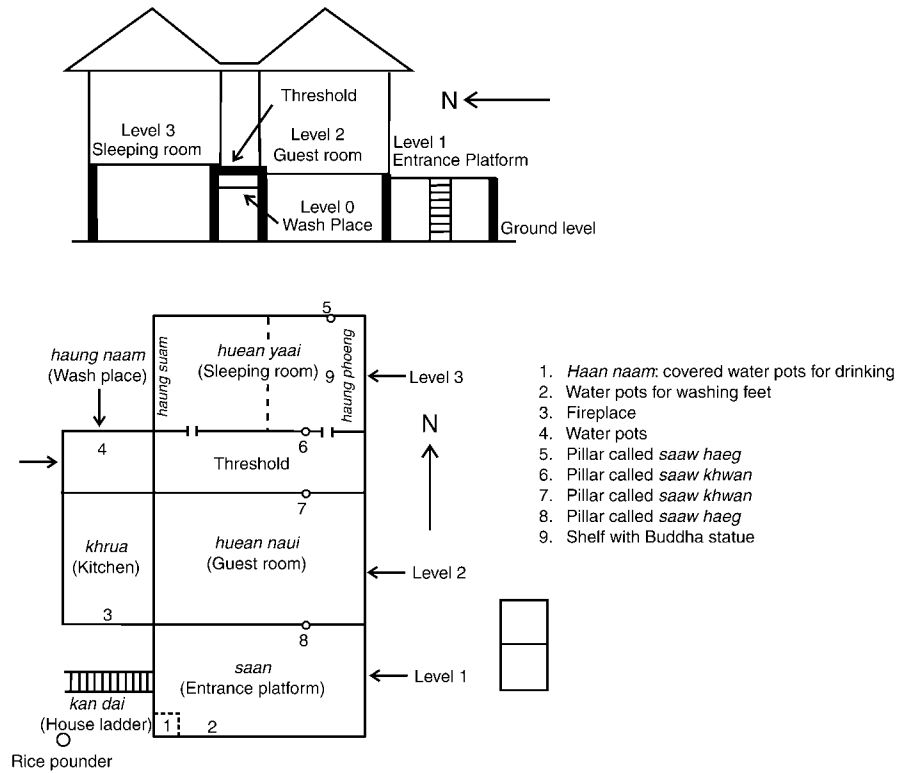
Figure 5.1. Top: Plan of a Thai house (living space on a raised floor). Bottom: Profile of house showing levels
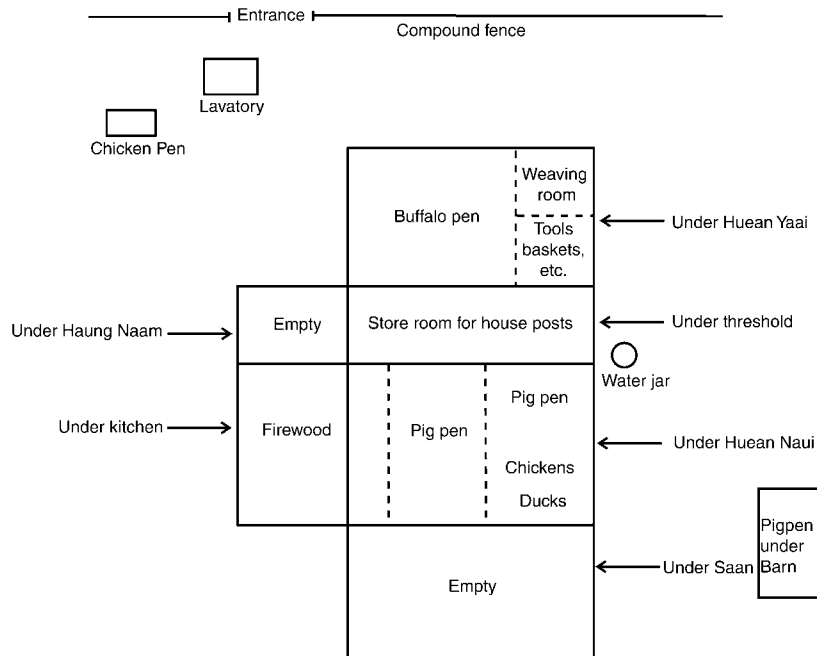
1. *Haan naam*: covered water pots for drinking
2. Water pots for washing feet
3. Fireplace
4. Water pots
5. Pillar called *saaw haeg*
6. Pillar called *saaw khwan*
7. Pillar called *saaw khwan*
8. Pillar called *saaw haeg*
9. Shelf with Buddha statue

Figure 5.2. Space under a Thai house (ground floor)

FIG. 5. *Plan of Thai villager's elevated house* (top) *and of its ground-level undercroft (Tambiah 1985:figs. 5.1 and 5.2, Copyright ©1985 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College, reprinted by permission).*

tion; chickens and ducks are edible; bears, elephants, and tigers, at the opposite extreme, are "inedible," as are monkeys, who correspond iconically in the deep-forest macrocosmic realm to humans in their microcosmic, house-centric realm, the empirically lived-in village. (There is, in fact, a whole iconic logic of correspondences of edibility and nonedibility across major spatial realms, as Tambiah shows.)

So cultural concepts turn out to be just that, revealed in cultural practices—among them the always indexical social action of using language—and in a nontrivial way. They are empirically investigable once we abandon the idea that they are analogues in "folk-science" to lexically coded concepts of one particular view of theory-based Western science. Thai villagers do not have an articulated "theory" as such of "edibility," but they know which fauna are relatively "edible" and which not, as the organization of their social practices made clear to Tambiah. And I have been concerned to show through this example that it is this presumptively shared knowledge that people rely on. They indexically access it and experientially renew it each time words and expressions are used in the emerging "poetic" structures of denotational and interactional textuality, especially as the form of interaction ritual figurates role identities of social action in relation to it.

This is what Messrs. A and B are relying upon in their culturally fluent interaction: the mutual knowledge in fact of two University of Chicago professional-school graduate students from Catholic backgrounds with Jesuit college degrees and some understanding of the professional worlds for the ultimate functioning in which both are pursuing degrees. Hence, the shared, even teachable, schemes of social differentiation, of institutional differentiation, generate the specific stereotypes that are made emblematic through the use of terms that come to bear/bare them. Such is the result of socialization and enculturation, which we can see are themselves achievements of discursive and other forms of interaction (Ochs 1988, Schieffelin 1990). Thus do cultural concepts become useful to ritualized self- and other-positionings in the interaction: *stereotypes* (truly cultural concepts) *come to life and are renewed in and by interaction ritual.*

Dialectical Production of Cultural Concepts of "Kinds" and of Inhabitable "Identities"

Having considered how specific occasions of discursive interaction invoke cultural concepts of the world and renew them, we now move to our third issue in contemporary linguistic anthropology, the more general consideration of how the macrosocial variability of concept-coding denotational language is at the same time a system of identity formation. In a somewhat larger sense, that is, we should step back and ask ourselves, is the kind of interactional text generated in, for example, Messrs. A and B's encounter specific in any way to these "kinds" of people? What do we mean by a "kind of" person, in an apparent scheme of social differentiation of inhabitable identities?

Are Messrs. A and B, for example, exemplifying—instantiating—identities of proto-"lawyer" and proto–"social worker" as well as "bourgeoisness," "maleness," incipient "friendship" or "enmity," or other fleeting or perduring aspects of ascriptive and achievable identity? The discursive interaction of the two men is fluent when measured by their unproblematic coconstruction of a flow of segmentally coherent interactional texts. This achievement would seem to indicate that they implicitly understand their own and the other's more enduring positionalities along many macrosociological dimensions of identity and are operating in terms of normative expectations for such identities. All evidence leads us to see that these positionalities become relevant to their relational roles as interlocutory partners for Starkey Duncan's data-gathering occasion. A mapping from the macrosociologically positional to the indexically centered microsociological clearly underlies what we term their recruitment to interlocutory role not merely as individual intentionalities but as social "kinds." And in this way we reach what I think is the third major area in which language is now seen to lie "in" culture as well as vice versa.

Discursive interaction (and the aspects of language central to its accomplishment) is *the very site of production/maintenance/contestation/transformation of social identities and interests in society*, notwithstanding that such identities and interests lie in the plane of the macrosociological. The fact is that stereotypic meanings—cultural concepts—attached to words and expressions exist in a complex space between authorizing and authorized discursive engagements of the people in a population, and such stereotypes are not uniformly distributed across the population. Cultural knowledge is, in part, intuitive knowledge of such biases of distribution, essentialized as "kinds of people"; such implicitly "meta-cultural" knowledge is itself biased in distribution by the dynamics of the very processes of communication.

In discursive interaction, participants indexically presume upon, project, and even contest these stereotypes of bias as the very stuff of "identities" in "contexts" in which their semiotic signaling is realized in a precipitated text. As receiver, one always has an "Aha!" of recognition: "So-and-so talks like a———!" (fill in the category of identity). And one always endeavors to project a self-identifying intersection of categorial alignments for others to discover about oneself as sender. We can understand the cultural concepts of social identity that inform specific interactional events only by studying the interdiscursive structures of usage with the tools of the perspectives outlined above. From such a perspective, the "macro" level of sociality is always already immanent in the "micro."

To investigate the contextualization of language, then, is additionally to follow out the politics, the interested contestation of identities, that may not at first be ap-

parent in a particular interaction but becomes apparent in a more enveloping (contextualizing) order of phenomena for which any particular interaction must be seen as the very site of manifestation. As diagrammed in figure 6 (reproduced from Silverstein 2003*a*:201), the categories of identity we can inhabit in the microcontexts of interaction are licensed or authorized by conceptual partitions of macrosocial space associable with values. Like all schemata of value, these are made convincingly real to us from cultural essentializations (frequently naturalizations) that are manifest in and at functionally ritual sites of potent figuration. (Recall here how the structure of homologies underlying the Thai villagers' concepts of the relational "edibility" of fauna was made ritually visible in expiation of incest.) Such values percolate through a social formation along paths that connect interactional experiences of them as values at nodal points, that is, sites of manifestation in which they are invoked and so made relevant to achieving interactional textuality. Understanding the macrosocial is essential to understanding the microcontextual.

Any microcontext of interaction draws on principles of recruitment to role, where, indexically, one's inhabiting particular interactional positionalities points to and is mapped from such schemata of (macro-) social identity: "Who"—what kind of person in a social partition made relevant in this genred mode of entextualization— can inhabit a particular kind of interlocutory role using such-and-such expression forms? (As speaker? As addressee? As audience? As overhearer?) The very inhabiting of an interpretable interlocutory role at some given phase of interaction using interpretable expression forms performs or constitutes the recruitment, the making-relevant, of the cultural schema of social differentiation. This performative or constitutive process is, of course, all the more apparent in sites of relatively explicitly ritualized import in society. From these, the inhabitable categories that emerge in the ritual poetics suffuse the social space, enveloping all discursive interactions authorized by the ritual center.

Messrs. A and B are, thus, socially locatable not only to each other but to others in their society (a society many of us still share up to a certain point, of course, even after 25 years) and—after much further collateral study in the ethnographic mode—socially locatable by any outside linguistic anthropological analyst of that society. There have been accounts of "male"-"male"—note the identities!—conversational or interactional style, seen as a genre of interactional text, which would make plausible the fact that this conversation leads in the direction of one-upmanship. It is interesting here that Mr. A seems to be tending that way from the first, while Mr. B resists for a long time before launching into the game, too, ultimately seeming to hold the upper hand over Mr. A. In this way, too, we can understand the denotational focus on college affiliation as the semiotic site under construction in achieving mutually intersubjective biographies in the conversation, for alma mater is also socially locatable as a kind of perduring emblem always already available as a focus for interactional work.
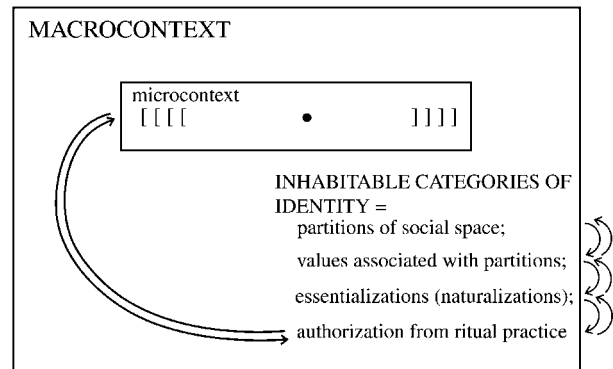

FIG. 6. *Micro-/macrocontextual relations (Silverstein 2003a:fig. 3).*

There is, then, a larger-scale macrosociological reality implied here. Being a process caught in motion, of course, "society" as a macrosocial form might be reconceptualized from the semiotic point of view as a perduring virtual communicative economy.[15] It is the reconceptualization that Mikhail Bakhtin (1982) adumbrated with his concept of the discursively manifested social formation as a "heteroglossia" of identities. One enters this condition, always already in shadow (= virtual) conversation with identities in it, on any occasion of use of one's language. Any such occasion, for Bakhtin, becomes as well a potential site for the "polyphony of 'voicings' " of the self and other(s) (Silverstein 1999:103–8), the multiple virtual heteroglossic conversations or dialogues indexically invoked and made relevant to the interaction at hand.

This processual and communicative reconceptualization of society puts cultural beliefs and values—which show themselves only as they are indexically invoked in and by use of language and derivative semiotics—at the risk of language use, sometimes even use of language on a single, powerfully ritual occasion of interaction. Institutional sites of culture are, thus, sites of struggle, contestation, domination, resistance, hegemony, etc. From this point of view, moreover, when we say "language" as a technical term we mean the conditions under which a heteroglossic population is dynamically orga-

15. Already in 1931, Sapir wrote of this virtuality in an extraordinarily pregnant way in dealing with the most subtle kinds of communication, which he labeled "social suggestion"—"the sum total of new acts and new meanings that are implicitly made possible by these types of social behavior." He went on to observe that "the importance of the unformulated and unverbalized communications of society is so great that one who is not intuitively familiar with them is likely to be baffled by the significance of certain kinds of behavior, even if he is thoroughly aware of their external forms and of the verbal symbols that accompany them. It is largely the function of the artist to make articulate these more subtle intentions of society" (1949[1931]:106).

"Sure, they drank it—but did they get it?"

F i g. 7. *Anxieties of status-conscious oenophilia, illustrated (cartoon by William Hamilton,* New Yorker *cartoonbank.com cartoon image no. 42156, reprinted by permission).*

nized around certain implied norms of communication (including rules of grammar in the strict sense).

In some sense, then, Mr. A does not have to call himself explicitly "an old Jesuit boy" for us to know, as members of the society, that this is a male speaker of American English of a certain background and class outlook and to expect that matters such as undergraduate institution are, culturally, close to hand in encountering and getting to know another like individual. Or *does* he? Even to investigate and answer such a question, we have to examine the intercontextual, interinstitutional mutual animation of voicings in language use, a macrosocial *order of interdiscursivity* immanent in microcontextual discursive interactions the study of which takes us into political economies and even franker politics of signs no less than into their grammar.

Enregistering Identity

What I like to call oinoglossia, "wine talk," reveals something about how language, in contemporary American society, works as such an interdiscursive vehicle for self- and other-fashioning (see also Silverstein 2003*a*:222–27). We can glimpse the complex interdiscursive space of oinoglossia, where, perforce, a macrosociological regime of commodified identity is at issue that calls upon people

to voice an orientation of proclivities, desires, and abilities with respect to it.

In figure 7, a young, well-heeled dinner-party host gathers up and gazes intently at the empty bottles from which he has presumably served wine to his now-departed guests: have they "gotten" the wine, as one "gets" an artwork or the point of some other carefully fashioned aesthetic text? Perhaps the guests could not properly or adequately verbalize their own reactions to the wine, leaving the host wondering whether he and his consort— dutifully off in the kitchen doing the heavy clean-up— have wasted the wine by serving it to aesthetically underrefined and hence undeserving guests.

Like every other social institution, the yielding up of the identity (the "status") of "wine connoisseur" (avocational or professional) is centered on tightly structured ritual, which includes a verbal component. The ritual is called the "tasting"; its verbal expression is a highly organized text, the "tasting note." This is the interactional context that performatively authorizes identities—of both wine and taster, as it turns out, eucharistically— and to which a Bakhtinian voicing-laden literary *renvoi* (or interdiscursive indexical back-reference) is being implicitly made by degrees each time one knowingly uses a wine term in connected discourse.

The ritual discourse accompanies the experience that is structured as an orderly aesthetic event the phased

structure of which I have laid out in figure 8. Exposing one's aesthetic sensorium to the object is a ritually authorized construal of the object as well as a verbal construction of it, with two relational directionalities of effectiveness or "illocutionary force." The aesthetic dimensionalities of the art object to be experienced are defined (constructed) through the orderliness of one's educated experiencing of those dimensionalities, just as the experience tests and further refines one's abilities at discernment (construal) of them. It is akin to the inherently temporal mode of engaging with any complex sensuous text, such as the totality of a painting or sculpture, not all of the compositional, thematic, and iconographic dimensions of which can be analytically attended to simultaneously. For wine, the actual aesthetic object is approached in phases or stages, along an ordered structure of dimensionalities of perceptual encounter, with a "peak" or seemingly closest stage toward which and away from which all the other stages seem to proceed. The curvilinear intensity of the observer's perceptual experience is shown in the diagram.

As diagrammed, a (I) visual stage of looking for brilliance, color, and cross-sectional gestalt of a glass's contents gives way to (II) an olfactory stage in which one is smelling the wine for its scents, its grape-dependent "aroma," and its vinification-dependent "bouquet." The aesthetic experience peaks in (III) the gustatory stage after taking some wine in the mouth, in which its on-the-tongue characteristics of tactile weight or "body," tannin-derived "harshness," and "acidity" can be gauged. This is the perceptual closest point in terms of the constructive semiosis of the aesthetic object; stage III dimensionalities are generally commented upon even in the most summary (telescoped) tasting note. For stage III, moreover, the lexicon of the register has the greatest number of special descriptors. Moving away from this

close encounter of the third phase, by opening the mouth so as to take in some air over the mouthful one reaches what I have termed (IV) the internal olfactory stage, by which a wine's volatility and aftertaste are judged. And finally, spitting out (or swallowing) the wine allows one to judge its "finish" in (V) the vaporization phase of the encounter.

Figure 9 presents examples of three professional tasting notes by Michael Broadbent (1983:91, 189, 259), taken from among thousands reviewed for textual structure in guides for consumers. I have reproduced the language of the tasting note in the occurring textual order, readable top-to-bottom and left-to-right, but I have separated the descriptors that make up the text expressions into two columns, putting those that use the special oinoglossic terminology for evaluation in the right column and the more stylistic, colorful, nonterminologized descriptors and modifiers in the left column, insofar as possible.

What we find is that the tasting note does, indeed, have a mimetic or iconic textual form, in which the descriptors in text-time in general move along as though presupposing the ritualized organization of the tasting encounter. The operative units of such a text are not merely elements of a (Saussurean-Bloomfieldian grammatical) lexicon, much as popular belief even among some linguists would so construe it; it is words and expressions bearing Putnamian stereotypes a.k.a. cultural concepts, as they form part of denotational (and thence, interactional) text properly cohesive and thence coherent. I call specific attention to the descriptors in the left column, which are not elements of the self-consciously used specialist's vocabulary but seem to be essential to the artful construction of the text that one communicates in the register of oinoglossia.

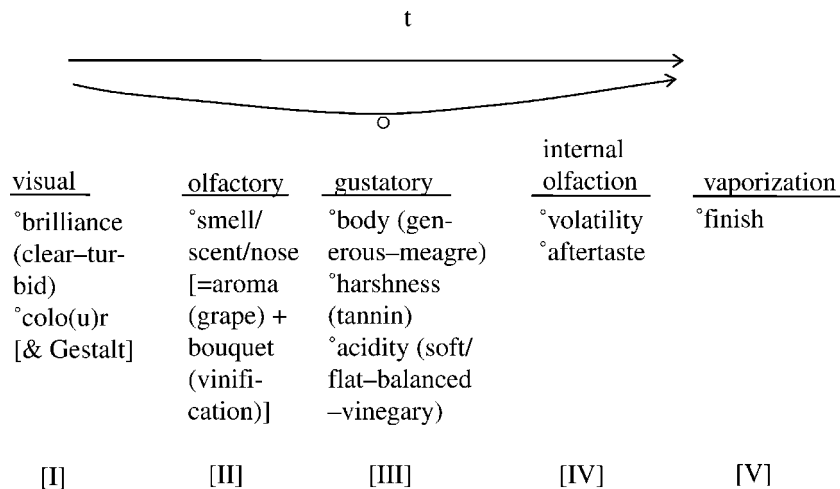We immediately see two things in each of the dia-

	visual	olfactory	gustatory	internal olfaction	vaporization
	°brilliance (clear–turbid) °colo(u)r [& Gestalt]	°smell/ scent/nose [=aroma (grape) + bouquet (vinification)]	°body (generous–meagre) °harshness (tannin) °acidity (soft/ flat–balanced –vinegary)	°volatility °aftertaste	°finish
	[I]	[II]	[III]	[IV]	[V]

FIG. 8. *Phases of wine-tasting, with their dimensions of evaluative construal of the object of aesthetic perception (Silverstein 2003:223).*

Château Haut-Brion 1961:

[A. Placement in history of acquaintance/connoisseurship:]
First tasted in 1963.

[B. Perduring characteristic of such occasions --- summary notes (stage III):]
Surprisingly soft and lovely on the palate even in the mid-1960s

[C. Tasting note per se:]

[*II:*]	but the nose curiously waxy and dumb, developing its characteristic
	hot, earthy/pebbly bouquet only latterly
	Ripe, soft

[*III:*]

lovely texture, but not as
demonstrably or obtrusively
a '61 as the other first
growths.

[D. Summary:]   Fine [cf. finesse]
gentlemanly, understated.

***

Château Haut-Brion Blanc 1976:

[*I:*]	Very pronounced yellow;	
[*IIa*		honeyed *Semillon* uppermost,
+*b:*]	beautifully complex	bouquet;
[*IIIa*		dry, good body
+*b*		and flavour,
+*c:*]	assertive backbone	of firm acidity.

***

La Tache 1974:

[*I:*]	Deeper colour than the St.-Vivant [note immed. prec.];	
[*IIa*	curious	singed nose,
+*b:*]		some fragrance,
	trying hard;	
[*IIIa*		minimum dryness
+*b*		and body,
+*c:*]		slightly pasty/acidic texture
[*IV:*]		and finish.

FIG. 9. *Analytic presentation of three wine-tasting notes of a professional connoisseur (Broadbent 1983:91, 189, 259, quoted in Silverstein 2003a:225, reproduced with the permission of the author). Bracketed material annotates the significant segments of the texts according to the scheme of figure 8.*

grammatic presentations of figure 9. First, the words on the left are potentially anthropomorphizing metaphorical (figurative) usages of an evaluative characterology and/or seem to be dealing with matters of "breeding." Their use by the speaker (taster) bespeaks (indexes) an evaluative stance with respect to the qualities of the object being described that is therefore indexically grounded—"voiced," in Bakhtinian parlance—to the extent that it presupposes the basis for evaluation in the speaker's intentionality and especially the speaker's identity. What kind of a person, coming from what kind of background, would be concerned with "character" and "breeding"? What are the target denotational realms about which such concepts are generally used, other than wine?

Thus, second, read as interactional figurations of identity, the left-side descriptors are similar to those used in prestige realms of traditional English gentlemanly horticulture and especially animal husbandry of prestige creatures such as dogs, racehorses, and other things that " 'show' well." Hence, the connoisseurship indexed in microcontext by the use of such evaluational terms is an identifiable and inhabitable one; it is macrosociologically locatable through its being indexed by a register in a cultural schema of sociolinguistic differentiation. The terminology as applied to wine dates, in fact, from the marketing of county family identities in this way to the upwardly mobile urban wealthy of London, who were able from 1863 onward to buy wine in bottles from city merchants (as opposed to importing barrels or casks to one's country estate for domestic bottling).

But further: the basis for authoritatively using this verbal paraphernalia of such inhabitable figurations is the fact that, in essence, "it takes one to know one." There is, in other words, a consubstantiality of inhabited/figurated essence between the intentionality or subjectivity (interested social persona) doing—and reporting—the evaluation and the object of the evaluation. It is, ideally, a "match," as it were, of the fineness of an aesthete's gentlemanly sensorium that emerges from whatever the culture allows. Like other forms of aesthetic sense, it is seen by some to depend on "breeding"—the elite, exclusive, and absolutist stance. Perhaps, as others assert, it can be achieved by "training"—the stance of upward mobility in which the education of connoisseurs' sensoria will result in authoritative entextualization of the register's terminologies of evaluation. This second stance is useful to aggressive commercial interests who want to "create a market" among the anxious *haute bourgeoisie*. Or, third—as in some accounts of the acquisition of grammar—one might manifest naïve virtuosic "trainability" that reveals "natural" breeding (after all!).

Interestingly, in macrosociological terms, the farther someone is from the institutional sites nodally close to the (professional or avocational) ritual context, the more the characterological words and expressions constitute people's ideas of what "wine talk" is, conceptualized as an unordered lexical register of terms and evoking strong (positive and negative) stereotyping reactions of people's beyondness: "It is a naïve domestic burgundy without

any breeding, but I think you'll be amused by its presumption," joked James Thurber some decades ago.[16] All the humor comes from the concatenation of terms in what would be the lefthand column of our display of entextualization structure. Why? What interesting anthropological point is contained here about the political economy of oinoglossia and its mode of cultural existence in various places in contemporary Anglophone American society?

We can see immediately that, given our observations above, wine tasting and its all-important entextualization in the tasting note (and all the usages penumbrally derivative from it) is culturally eucharistic. Used in context, the lingo has the entailing effect or creative power to index consubstantial traits in the speaker. As we consume the wine and properly (ritually) denote that consumption, we become the well-bred, characterologically interesting (subtle, understated, balanced, intriguing, winning, etc.) person iconically corresponding to the metaphorical "fashion of speaking" of the perceived register's figurations of the aesthetic object of connoisseurship, wine. The eucharistic exercise is a powerful microcontext of indexical authorization and reauthorization laid into a complex interlocking set of macrosociological institutional interests.

These bring about a recognizable social form, a market of production-circulation-consumption of the by-degrees aesthetically constru(ct)ed objects, with all the complexity of "taste"—in short, a value process lying at the intersection of displayable comestibles and aesthetic connoisseurship. Producers, shippers, importers, distributors, retailers, purchasers, consumers, all backed by an "applied science" of one or another sort, compete to found the market on its bedrock of (pseudo-)science. There has been input recently from the applied science of oenology in the form of attempted systematic -onomic standardization of wine "aroma" terminology (Noble et al. 1987), just as is done for standard measure terms defining units in physics and chemistry at places such as the U.S. National Bureau of Standards or the Paris Bureau of Weights and Measures.[17] The chart has since been reprinted widely in the avocational and popular press and calqued—perhaps humorously—for such things as sake and beer. It is, of course, a semiotically ironic example of attempted empirical extensional fixing of denotational terminologization run amok (compare older excesses of "cognitive anthropology"!). It is, however, important to take into account because of the attempt at scientific denotational backing for what is, after all, the oinoglossic currency of ritually centered interests that attempts to

16. This Thurber cartoon caption has become a "classic"—the founding text for a whole industry of indexical *renvoi*. For example, in the current television age, "Naive and yet . . . chubby. No, hold on: It's a naughty little wine that should be taken around the corner and spanked!" says Ellen Degeneres's television character Ellen Morgan at a wine tasting (quoted on Vinbonics 101 web site).
17. This calls to mind Lehrer's (1975,1983) studies of the oinoglossic lexicon as a collection of scientifically extensionalizable denoting terms with fixed sense in the image of applied aesthetic science and her discovery that the register fails to conform.

maintain what has been a priestly charisma of such aesthetic connoisseurship by seeming to transform it on the basis of "objective science."

In effect, all such social institutional forms are brought together in the indexical value of oinoglossic words and expressions, whether used in proper textual genre or not, whether used "straight" or with a superposed (even higher-indexical-order) wink—this last showing not only knowledge of and familiarity with the oinoglossic viticultural and oenological world but transcendence of it.

Thus we are subject to an inevitable self-placement in relation to the social structure of the wine world whenever we use a word or expression form that can be taken to lie within the enregistered set. Depending on who is speaking, this is true both of the lexicon that is professionally terminologized and of the characterological figurations penumbrally entextualized for those at the center, yet indexically of somewhat greater or wider potency among the non-cognoscenti. Elites and would-be elites in contemporary society seek to use these enregistered forms, communicated positively (literally) or negatively (by a decipherable trope of avoidance/substitution); using them—or using them with a knowledge-indicating wink—confers (indexically entails) an aspect of eliteness before prestige commodities.

Furthermore, the world of prestige commodities, especially prestige comestibles, is more and more an authorizing one in the First World and its economically globalizing beyond, with generative "fashions of speaking" all based on oinoglossia, on the Anglophone wine-tasting note itself, which structures these derivative forms of discourse to varying degrees. The wine note has in effect become an originary historical site of higher-order entailments for identity, now a merely competing/replacive presupposed indexical of identity at the macrosociological center of consumerist influence sometimes called "Yuppiedom." One need only go on a food-shopping expedition in any affluent urban neighborhood. In the specialty prestige-comestible shops one sees coffee and tea tasting notes, cheese tasting notes, pâté tasting notes, etc., prominently displayed to orient (and reassure) the elite consumer that these are the paraphernalia of the correctly indexical "lifestyle" (identity). High-priced chocolates, perfumes, microbrewery beers, and so forth, are all constru(ct)ed as prestige comestibles by use of this "fashion of speaking," as each now comes with its tasting notes or equivalents.

The moral is that you are what you say about what you eat. Lifestyle commodities exist verbally in constant dialectic tension from above the plane of mere standardization of language, and the trope of aboveness bespeaks the anxiety of "distinction," as Bourdieu (1984) would have it, that is hegemonic for those most caught up in their indexical values. Marketing in contemporary America oscillates between the—as the critic Paul Fussell (1983) would say—post-"prole" warm-and-fuzzy advertising vocabulary of "fresh," "light," "clean," etc. (cf. health food and the new green or eco-Puritanism of bourgeois whiteness in America), and the traditional terms

for comestibles, the latter mostly at relatively more expensive levels of the retail market.

The professional or avocational connoisseur would not be caught dead using terms except in constructional phraseologies that bespeak experience in making wine-tasting notes and their equivalent. However, the farther one goes sociologically away from these identities, the more one sees the extraction of certain terms, certain lexical forms—the ones from the left side of our structural diagram of the poetics of discourse—as the indexically communicated essences of wine as a cultural experience to the "outsider" (see the hapless outsider discourse in the late Jeff MacNelly's *Shoe* cartoon reproduced in figure 10). These terms are evaluative terms of character and (social) pedigree which to the outsider construct wine as an anxiously approachable reflection of selfhood—rather like being suddenly called upon to express a critical opinion on cutting-edge contemporary art. It is important to see that there is a whole inflection of identities around the prestige-comestible commodity insofar as discourse about it places one with respect to its complex institutional framework—from tasting note to certain terms sprinkled in discourse that is otherwise communicated quite out of register. These usages are the site of the identity work understandable in terms of macrosociological class formation—something local to British and especially American English and dating only from the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Conclusion

In this way studying language has become once more central to making real progress in understanding the nature of truly cultural concepts, those that are irreducibly indexical and dialectic as the distinctive roots of human conceptualization in the state of having languages such as we do. This is the cultural in language, it seems to me—its mode of connection to language form always caught between the two orders of contextualization we have analyzed. We have begun by theorizing different aspects of a Jakobsonian "poetics" of discourse in the "interaction order," as Erving Goffman (1983) termed the microsociological, seeing such cultural knowledge as the very stuff "made flesh" in figurational forms of discourse come-to-structure as text. In such analysis, the two indexical relationships come into view, the one that defines the structuredness of entextualization "within" a text, cotextualization, and the other constituted by the more obvious and widely appreciated indexicality of contextualization. Understanding such immediate context necessitates, however, moving out to the wider "order of interactionality," as we might correspondingly term the macrosociological, which is reconstructed or reviewed as event-punctuated and ritually centered communicational process.

We see that any schemata of cultural conceptualization are ultimately anchored and given felt or intuited "presence" for their users by the authorizing or regimenting forces that emanate from ritual centers of in-
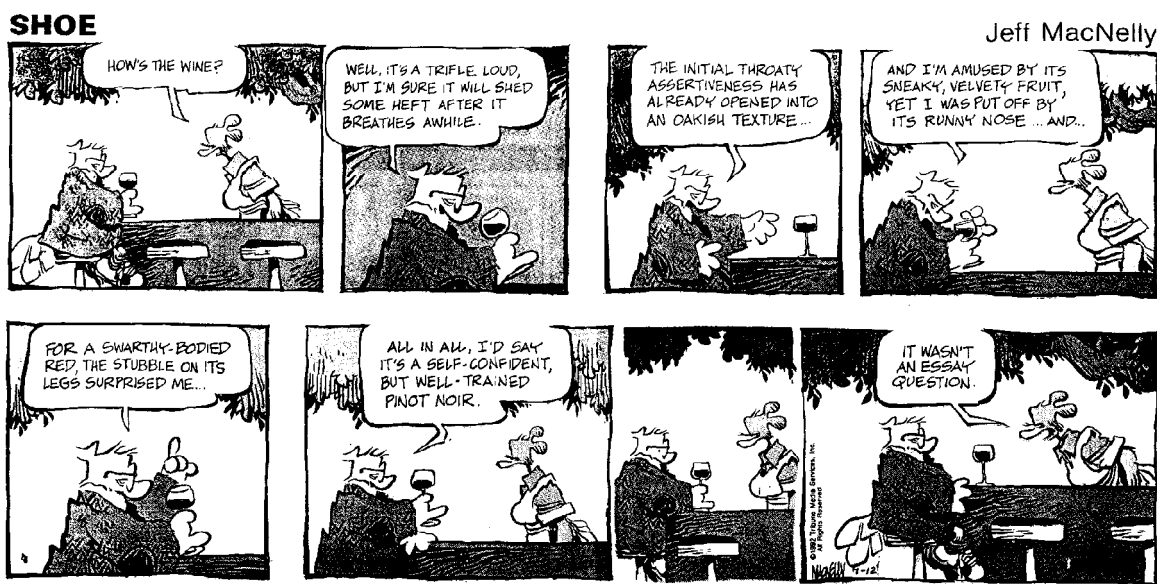
FIG. 10. *Oinoglossic terms used by speakers remote from institutional sites of ritual warrants for their use (cartoon by Jeff MacNelly, Copyright 1992, Tribune Media Services, reprinted by permission).*

stitutionality—whether in congruent, mutually reinforcing ways or in noncongruent or even contradictory ways. Such sociohistorical forces, institutionally channeled, act as a kind of meta-interactional level or layer of meaning that permeates and is immanent in the microcontexts where denotational words and expressions, bearing their cultural concepts, are used to make interactional text-in-context. And yet in the communicational view of society these forces, too, arise only in and by the situated use of language and other semiotics on occasions of discursive interaction. Thus cultural semiosis is seen to be a phenomenon forever in dialectical process. And culture is, in this limited sense, performatively enacted, always indexically (re)created in context by the simple fact that to understand as well as to participate in an interaction one must presuppose such culture to be conceptualizations of the "what" and "who" in communicative context that are always already both shared and in the instance precipitated.

Comments

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It is rare to read a paper in which every word counts. Silverstein's paper is a dazzling attempt at (literally) reconceptualizing a vast field of approaches in the domain of language-in-society. The scope is perplexing: Silverstein reformulates central concepts from interactional sociolinguistics (contextualization), conversation analysis (sequential interaction), ethnosemantics (folk taxonomies), and finally sociolinguistics (the relation between micro-instances of talk and macro-identities). En route he makes innovative use of two other crucial anthropological concepts: poetics and ritual. Cultural concepts emerge as stereotyped meanings unevenly distributed among people and primarily indexical in nature in the sense that they organize the social field in which a particular interaction takes place.

I find the recasting of sequential interaction and the Gumperzian notion of contextualization particularly appealing. Using indexicality as the focus of his analysis, Silverstein conceives of a stretch of talk as "a ritual poetics" and a metric of indexical meanings-in-forms by means of which the participants produce several effects at the same time: they "have a conversation," develop a "topic" in that conversation, and construct identities by means of valuated indexical elements which in turn invoke a stratified social world which lends impact to what happens in the interaction. The analysis on which these insights are based is terribly dense and complex but rewarding for those who delve into it. We see a whole set of new or renewed notions and images of language at work there: form, function, meaning, and social effect all combine into indexicalities, and the patterned, genred, and enregistered exchange of such indexicalities produces a layered, heteroglossic poetic event which revolves around the bartering of valuated (hence, socially anchored) terms—cultural concepts.

The critical impact of this redefining attempt is quite considerable. Where contemporary conversation analysis still strongly relies on analyses of the "mechanics" of ordered talk, Silverstein provides the ordered nature of talk itself with an indexical backbone (orders of interdiscursivity). And to the extent that conversation analysis still relies on explicitly articulated—denotational—elements in order to accept and ratify constructions of identity and so still sees identity as the *outcome* of interaction, identity work is here made part of the interaction itself: as the *cultural structure*, so to speak, of interaction. We get a very rich account of contextualization here, one that solves a number of questions regarding form, interactional deployment, explicitness, contextuality, and culture that have consistently come up in discussions of contextualization.

I am less fascinated by Silverstein's comments on the macro-social order and its connection to interaction events. Here I see an uneasy relationship between, on the one hand, comments emphasizing the "real" economy of behaviour and meanings and comments tending to dematerialize such economic aspects and referring to a "virtual communicative economy." The theoretical account tips over to the latter, while the example he gives tips over to the former.

In passages reminiscent of Roland Barthes's *Quia ego nominor leo* example, Silverstein argues—rightly—that access to certain forms of identity depends on unequal access to the rituals, texts, and emblems that index it. This is not just a virtual economy but a real one, and he demonstrates it. In his "oinologia" case we see discursive practices that derive a lot of what they mean from interdiscursive links sustained by linguistic-generic-registered artefacts such as the tasting note, in turn an artefact that is embedded in complex—real—economies of commodities which enable the interdiscursive rituals of "oinoglossia." The bourgeoisie is indexed by small, peculiar rituals, and these rituals and the indexicalities they invoke (or in which they are caught up) may be what Barthes meant by *norme bourgeoise*—something that operates primarily through (implicit) indexicalities but is sustained by unequal, privileged access to the kinds of indexable commodities and activities that then provide the "prestige" pharmacopoeia of social (indexical) life. The orders of interdiscursivity are sustained by, and index, material orders. Reggae fans in the townships of urban South Africa can acquire only so much rasta slang from contacts with peers; if they want to adopt a speech style that comes close(r) to Jamaican creole they need to get access to Bob Marley records or cassettes and enter a real economy of commodities.

Some more work is needed here. The analysis of "oinoglossia" is accurate, illuminating, and amusing but remains a bit too microcosmic to demonstrate principles and structures: the obviousness of its internal structuring (obvious, that is, as soon as Silverstein has demonstrated it) obscures the fact that it is in itself packed into layer upon layer of "macro" factors. There is a whole world of fascinating topics to be empirically explored regarding the connection between material and cultural economies, between access to objects and activities and access to the indexable symbolic repertoires they offer. But the building blocks are in this paper.

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A canonical diagram in the *Course in General Linguistics* depicts two identical-looking individuals facing each other, one labeled A, the other B, engaged in what Saussure (1915) describes as "an individual act" within the "circuit of speech." They reappear in Silverstein's paper, except that the allusion to Saussure—whether intentional or not—is now deeply ironical. For one thing, Mr. A and Mr. B are social individuals even if their biographies are only minimally known to us, whereas in Saussure's text they are generic of the roles of speaker and hearer and little else. For another, they are in a dialectical relationship with each other in the act of speaking and not merely, as in Saussure, a "circuit" or "relay" of instantiation or execution. By "dialectical" is meant what Bakhtin (1982) developed in his writings on "dialogicality."

At stake is the demonstration of the fundamental theoretical claim, which arguably goes as far back as Sapir, that culture does not exist as a disembodied and ungrounded "system of symbols and their meanings" and is not simply instantiated in action as Saussure claimed for the system of linguistic signs but is always grounded in discourse—though the crux of the problem is understanding what is meant by that term. Building upon his intersubjective and interactive model of language (which is far more so than the Jakobson [1960] event model, with its six communicative functions, that has long been the cornerstone of linguistic anthropology), Silverstein proceeds to draw out three lessons from linguistic pragmatics by which he hopes to demonstrate his claim that "cultural concepts" emerge (often unconsciously) in communicative interaction.

The first of these lessons has to do with the ways in which a text is constituted as an ontological entity (entextualization) while simultaneously being grounded in a context of communicative interaction (contextualization). To demonstrate these joined discursive processes, Silverstein has developed a "poetics" of ritual action that represents an original contribution to both the linguistic theory of the poetic function as elaborated by Jakobson and the discursive theory of ritual in anthropology (for example, Tambiah). Jakobson did not connect his insights into the indexicality of verbal categories to a narrated event (contextualization) with his insights into the building up of a poetic text through parallelism (entextualization), but it is precisely this connection that Silverstein makes. For those working in the field of poetics (and Paul Friedrich must be counted among them) it is a brilliant demonstration of the poetic function and its

signal importance to the emergence of unconscious (and also imagined) concepts of culture.

The second lesson from linguistic pragmatics concerns the construction of subject positions (or emergent biographies) through the indexical use of signs in contexts of social interaction. Though Silverstein does not say so, this lesson might be applied to the reflexive practices of fieldworkers as much as to those of their informants in the construction of a "positionality." From a more linguistic theoretical standpoint, what is important is the insight that denotation is always contingent upon the "social distribution of (cultural) conceptualization," a Durkheimian point of utmost importance, and not the other way around.

The third lesson concerns wider social institutions and politico-economic processes in which semiotic interactive events are embedded. Here one might expect most cultural anthropologists, concerned as they are with global processes, to consider whether linguistic pragmatics might relate to their own interests in culture. Yet, it is precisely this lesson that seems less fully or convincingly developed for that particular audience. Concerned as we have been with the micro-analysis of linguistic form and function, which dazzles the linguistically inclined as much as it dazes the uninitiated, we have fallen short theoretically. This may be because our method of analysis has been to start with the empirically concrete, interactive event and then work outward to ever wider contexts to develop our insights into the connections between language and culture, rather than to start with a theory of that connection which in a sense delineates the object of study that can then be scrutinized empirically with the full semiotic apparatus at hand. For example, most of the terms in which the lesson is cast seem to echo an earlier functionalist sociology (institutions, norms, macro-micro contexts, roles), and the otherwise extraordinarily subtle analysis of wine tasting does not even pretend to come to grips with questions that might immediately spring to mind for anthropologists concerned with the commodification of culture. An understanding of the processes of commodification within a global wine industry that affect the creation of labels and their denotation to begin with, not to mention qualitative categories of taste, and so forth, is a precondition for the analysis of discursive processes in which wine tasters are constituted as certain kinds of social beings. Would it not be more prudent at this juncture in the continuing conversation with cultural anthropologists to admit that linguistic pragmatics has some lessons to learn as well as to impart?

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Silverstein's work raises some fundamental, hence "abstract" and "philosophical," issues of current anthropology that we must face squarely, especially if we find our discipline still suffering from what Bateson, following Whitehead, called the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness."

Starting with a highly abstract observation, one may note that, crosscutting epistemology, praxiology, and aesthetics, "man" has been *the* subject in the "hot," dynamic culture of the critical age called modernity, constituted by constant dialectics between the pragmatic (empirical) and the conceptual (transcendental, ideological). This figure, "man," is constructed around norm-setting ritual centers such as "autonomous," that is, empirical and transcendental, post-Lockean sciences, governments, and even arts *of, by*, and *for* man, in which, for example, man transcendentally studies him*self* as empirical object, anthropologically. Historically, this *reflexive* regime of culture, characterized by the anthropocentric constitution of man as *empirical-transcendental doublet*, came into being when the transcendental norm of the theocentric cosmos began to move from the static and eternal "there and then" (e.g., heavenly, nether, or other sorts of mythico-symbolic "otherworld") to the empirical universe of man, which was organized around the dynamic and ephemeral *origo* of discursive interactions taking place "here and now" and ritually presenting themselves as replicas of otherworldly cosmic prototypes through indexical-iconic semiosis. Certainly, as Silverstein has shown in his explications of "oinoglossia" and linguistic nationalism, the tropic play of indexical icons is still a major means in the semiotic construction of our cosmos, but the basic trope of modernity is, as he has also shown, Bakhtinean "free indirect speech" and other devices that construct empirical-transcendental subjects by making invisible the cosmic boundary between the symbolic, transcendental "narrated universe" of (once mythico-folkloric and otherworldly but now thisworldly and realistic) "characters" and the empirical, indexical universe of "authors"/ "readers." Such tropes are found not only in the modern novel and other aesthetic genres but also in the post-Kantian (empirical-transcendental) sciences of, by, and for man and the modern practices of law, government, etc. (cf. Weberian-Foucauldian man's internalization of transcendental norms ["gaze"] in himself, who is a merely empirical being yet thus becomes an empirical-transcendental subject).

Indeed, since the 1960s, developing the works of Sapir, Peirce, and Jakobson, Silverstein has demonstrated that the Boasian, (neo)Kantian "universal grammar"—as understood or used in the modern empirical-transcendental order—consists of the systematic *interlocking of the symbolic* (formal-semantic, conceptual, transcendental) *and the indexical* (pragmatic, discursive, empirical; cf. the noun phrase referential hierarchy). In this endeavor, what has turned out to be crucial is "denotational-indexical duplexes" (shifters), for example, demonstrative deictics, which diagrammatically show the constitution of modern humans, including modern scientists, as empirical-transcendental doublets.

Moreover, exploring other "sciences of man," especially concerning "mind" and "culture," Silverstein

again finds the crucial nexus between the conceptual and the pragmatic in denotational-indexical duplexes and other metapragmatically-functioning signs (e.g., indexical-icons such as quoting, Bakhtinean *renvoi*, speech genres, frames, event/action-types), which serve to integrate empirically, contingently happening indexicals (practices) and transcendental, more perduring concepts, as demonstrated in his semiotic explications of (1) Vygotskian social psychology (cf. metapragmatic, co-referential textualization of "inner speech," ontogenetically located between pragmatic actions and metasemantic codes; metapragmatics is the link that integrates [first-order] pragmatics and metasemantics [grammar and cultural semantics] and (2) the problem of "human culture," which lies at the heart of the modern human sciences. This has resulted in a series of brilliant texts, including the one presented here, that reveal the essence of "culture" in the modern sciences. Everything we wanted to know about humans (language, mind, culture) is now shown, if only as a diagrammatic outline with prototypic exemplars, to be completed by Silverstein and his followers. Thus, at least the epistemic telos of the centuries-long incomplete project of modernity has, at last, become apparent.

If so, the critical question, befitting our reflexive age, is, What does this "working-out" (perfection) of the neo-Kantian, anthropo-semiotic project mean: "the end of man," "the exhaustion of modernity," and/or the coming-of-age of the Weberian "last man" ("a postmodern" age even beyond yuppiedom)? Does Silverstein's universal semiotic science of language, mind, and culture—which shows that metapragmatic signs such as empirically occurring indexical icons re-present transcendental, cosmic symbols "here and now" (perhaps more typically characterizing nonmodern societies) and that indexicals and conceptual symbols are tropically integrated to create metapragmatic signs such as deictics, linguistic structure, and even reality and verity (perhaps most typically characterizing modernity)—signal, like the owl of Minerva, the (upcoming) end/perfection of modern anthropology and modernity and the arrival of a new regime of "signs" or pseudo-signs in which the semiotic order of symbols (virtual-systemic), indexicals (real), and icons (imaginary), or the figure of man, finally disappears, as is suggested by his recent treatise on the spurious culture of pseudo-reality and pseudo-concept in contemporary America, *Talking Politics* (Silverstein 2003)? This is a question one might raise (as) to the master figure of the modern semiotic craft.

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Silverstein's handling of cultural concepts points in the direction of a paradigm shift. This piece constitutes an intellectual culmination, meaning by that a synthesis and not an end point.

Peirce's (1955) breakthrough consisted primarily in deconstructing the closed universe of Cartesian dualistic philosophy, replacing it with a phenomenological monism, and in allowing signs to be simultaneously pregnant, by degrees, with all their modes of existence (symbols, indexes, icons). This shattered confidence in the dominance of symbols, since, to echo Hegel, "the symbol is the murder of the thing." Indexes and icons therefore bring us back to the analogical firstness and secondness of the heat of the actual communicative situation in the here and now. But Peirce remains an *equalizer* of sorts. No *evaluative* priorities are set up as to the weight and the role of the various sign modalities. Silverstein, on the contrary, introduces a *hierarchical semiosis* in pragmatic-semiotic anthropology. This means that, the emergence of denotation out of our Saussurean-structuralist realm notwithstanding, deep down we are all immersed in social indexicality. Furthermore, Silverstein is *non-isolationist*. His is a sociological-political pragmatic semiosis by rigorous analysis whereas for Peirce, even though his pragmatism launches a concern with instrumentalism and use, a division is still visible between the semiotic and the social. For Silverstein a *dynamic figuration* linking, through indexical diagrammatic icons, a cosmic realm with the here and now brings to the center of analysis *interaction order* at the micro-level in a dense dialectic with the *order of interactionality* at the macro-level. By degrees, explicit metricalized poetics (classical ritual) comes into contact with the immanent poeticality of everyday discourse. True, in any kind of parallelistic structure in ritual, denotation is there (Fox 1974), but ritual would not be effective without contextualization (for instance, divination has to go through dialogicality to fulfill its goals [Kuipers 1990]. To echo Voloshinov (1973), no social semiosis is possible with meaning alone; we also need the theme. As a consequence, "cultural concepts" are not cognitively prefabricated in the cryptic realms of the mind but become socially "domesticated" and appropriated by actors in the give-and-take of discursive practice. We, as agents, reconstruct, reenact, and reinvent the inherited schemata through indexical figuration, exactly as our wine terms *as used* construct our negotiable positionalities on a ladder of social distinction or our dialogically built biographies make contact with social stereotypes. This is the spirit in which, I claim, this paper is the culmination of a long-standing concern of the author with a critical view of structuralism-functionalism, positivism-formalism, and the neo-Kantian glorification of free-floating text artifactuality (Jameson 1981).

As a corollary and component of the hierarchicality mentioned above, Silverstein deals with reference denotation in a manner similar to the extensionalist Putnam's, who has recourse to social expertise as an arbitrator of meaning rather than to its conceptualization as an asocial and agrammatical source expressing the Cartesian-plus-Austinian intentional individual. Silverstein interrogates referential denotation as Putnam (1992) interrogates Fodor's work on meaning-tokening by proposing a reintroduction of context-boundedness and in-

terest relevance, proving thus that theories of meaning (at least the most enlightened of them! [see Horkheimer and Adorno 1994]) suffer from an impermissible reductionism.

Cultural concepts, as the first, longer part of the paper and its (indexical) linguistic backing (the excursus) have it, are products and instigators of complex processes of semiosis emerging among interested agents. Denotation, divorced from its enabling indexicality, throws a (politically) murky cloud (disguising as transparent) on praxis and frequently undoes what a range of practical and discursive consciousnesses has achieved. For example (see Tsitsipis 2001), we all (semantically) sense a difference and, at the same time, an identity between the following sentences:

1. Colombia buys 500 helicopters from the U.S.A.
2. The U.S.A. buys 5,000 tonnes of rice from Vietnam [incidentally, notice the essentializing reductive stereotype: Vietnam = rice].

Componential analysis would point to the following feature (among others; *significata*, as the behaviorist Morris would have it) of the verb TO BUY [+ free−will transactional activity]. You can be pushed to buy and still be a buyer. But things are not so simple, since if the free-will component is mitigated, expressions such as pushed to . . . forced to . . . are tagged to the lexical-semantic nucleus. This much of culture is enabled by denotation. Commonsense practical-historical information is available, however, telling people that Colombia, the U.S.A., and Vietnam do not bargain on equal terms. Subtle speakers remind us of this inequality as they build their discursive poetics. But referential readings of equi-structural constructions, from simple parsings to θ-roles, erase a large part of this background knowledge by reestablishing at the heart of the semantics the equalizing free-will (actually inoperative) blanket component.

Silverstein's achievement is the replacement of "universalist" understandings of cultural concepts with interpretations of the historical contingencies of their emergence in praxis.

Reply

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Each of these generous comments is a productive intervention as *meta-text* to the authorial text. Each colleague's meta-text contextualizes the paper—and indeed, its author—in various relevant genealogies, intellectual and disciplinary, of which, as Tsitsipis characterizes it, the paper represents "an intellectual culmination." In this respect, I am pleased that the readers of CA can glimpse the cumulative strands and collective state of the overall linguistic anthropological project in which we all participate, with its connections to issues in the wider anthropological, social scientific, and even philo-

sophical frames in which the understanding of language has played and must still play a central role.

Indeed, my aim is to show how contemporary linguistic anthropology illuminates several of the central, long-standing issues in each of these frames by showing their necessary interrelationships when focused upon language in use. These are issues that have, cyclically, come to prominence and faded and come back again over recognizable academic generations, perhaps because they have been addressed serially and separately rather than cumulatively and integratively. That is why I ask the reader to take yet another look at a venerable problem or two, such as the "cultural" nature of knowledge and how words and expressions in use summon such knowledge to social significance. And as well I ask the reader to reexamine with me data long in the literature such as various explicitly terminologized systems of classification and the commodity-linked nature of contemporary First World elite identity in the consumptive regimes of late capitalism. My hope is through the lens of a theoretical perspective perhaps new to the reader to reveal relationships heretofore unnoticed and integrative conclusions useful beyond the subject matter specifically treated. And for these various problems or data my point is to start from what, borrowing a medical analogy, we might term a "presenting" conceptualization of them, using a particular descriptive vocabulary perhaps familiar to the reader. I hope to show that bringing semiotic analytic concepts and methods—nowadays, perhaps, increasingly, if not, as Caton wryly notes, soothingly familiar—to bear on them reconceptualizes the phenomena themselves in productive ways.

So I start with the intuitive notion of two people having an "unscripted (or casual) conversation" and show in detail how, over the time-course of their discursive interaction, there emerges an at least locally normative intersubjective reality giving structure to the social space they come to inhabit in this interactional event. From our own biographies of participation in unscripted discursive interaction, we, too, have intuitions of degrees of coherence of interaction, of an almost elusive lability of genre flowing across interactional time that still allows us actually to "do [=accomplish] things with words," moving in and out of phases of social relational indeterminacy and determinateness. As we become outside analysts of communicative experience, these intuitions persist; our professional task is to convert them into explicit analytic method, if we can, which I propose to do by charting dynamically genred interactional form—in short, readable *interactional text*—in the image of empirical "ritual."

Now ritual, too, is one of the standard anthropological presentational categories, much as is casual conversation to our everyday self-awareness. Like the 1964 U.S. Supreme Court in respect of the concept of the pruriently obscene, we recognize ritual when we are before it but are, if we stick only to the presentational, hard-pressed to "define" it—except, I argue, if we place presentational "ritual" and "casual conversation" along a cline of differentiation that comes into view under careful semiotic

analysis of the latter in terms of the former. This allows us to recognize that "ritual" everywhere has the culturally foundational semiotic property of being an indexically iconic (or iconically indexical) interactional text. Ritual form semiotically strives for metapragmatic self-grounding and self-separation from mundane context, thus preaching its own autonomy as a text. Ritual itself "works" to the degree to which, participants' intentionality and consciousness (not to say "meaningfulness" to participants) notwithstanding, ritual action, as organized into segments, emerges as a figurative (tropic) diagram in the spacetime of performance of its outcome in the culturally real universe from which ritual signs derive their power/value and in which their power/value counts.

All we need to see this is the right conceptual metalanguage—which we can develop, in fact, starting from the semiotic concepts of poetics of the long line of aesthetic theorists culminating in my teacher, Roman Jakobson. To give a poetics of the Goffmanian "ritual" that is everyday conversation, we additionally need a precise semiotic-functional analysis of denotational language—one not generally offered by the contemporary linguistics of the abstracted sentence form. In this way we get to see how propositional content is organized for communication by the plethora of deictic (indexical-denotational) grammatical and lexical forms that saturate every meaningful utterance in every known language, determinately framing and mapping the strictly semantic from-and-to actual contexts of communication. (Such a reorientation to how language presents its "form" in communication is itself a culminative systematizing of post-Saussurean, indeed Peircean insights from Jakobson, Jerzy Kuryłowicz, and Emile Benveniste, among major figures of twentieth-century linguistics. My 1976 account spelling out the entailments of these commonplaces of their teaching was, to my astonishment, at that time taken to be programmatic, retrospectively revealing to us today just where disciplinary consciousness of language was at the time.)

But here, precisely, is the payoff that redeems our intuition that culture is a kind of or, rather, an aspect of our knowledge but one which has heretofore lacked adequate methods of study—misguided by bad, linguistically naïve philosophy left over from positivism, cognitive rationalism, self-styled "post-" movements, and the like. Interactional "ritualization" emerges within such a cultural universe of people's knowledge, partly explicitly articulable but mostly implicit. I claim to have shown how people externalize that knowledge via language, precisely in the sense of making it the crux of interaction. They indexically invoke such knowledge as the here-and-now metrically and deictically structured *tertium quid* mediating their ability, as interactants, to coordinate one with another in social action. Interaction is the *bricoleur* of bits and pieces of knowledge derived from precisely the many kinds of schematizations that ethnoscientists and cognitive anthropologists have long been interested in but have not really had the methods for studying as such (arranging decontextualized words

and expressions just won't do). Knowledge is as integral to social action, then, as social action—with all its asymmetries and biases, its "division of labor" over a population organized by it—is a component of the kind of knowledge involved in mutual coordination. This is, definitionally now, "cultural" knowledge, the "concepts" of which are inherently sociocentric in this sense, manifest by indexical invocation in and by social action that creates and sustains groups—whether fleeting or perduring—out of individuals.

And here, briefly, is another culminative payoff that I am concerned to point out in response to Blommaert and Caton in particular, who take the interactional focus of the paper as a sample of the intellectual wares offered by linguistic anthropology. These two colleagues appear to buy into them as nothing more than new semiotic wine in old *micro-sociological* bottles—inadvertently reghettoizing linguistic anthropologists within sociocultural anthropology for treating the "discourse" of wine. Sociocultural anthropologists ought—certainly, want—to be studying the "global processes" (Caton) or "layer upon layer of 'macro' factors" (Blommaert) making up the cultural, for example, in "complex—real—economies of commodities" (Blommaert) "within a global wine industry" (Caton).

But here again, my invocation of the presentationally *macro-sociological*—"echo[ing] an earlier functionalist sociology" (Caton)—is precisely to locate these global cultural processes in the real-time chains of semiotic (communicational, verbal) events where they intersect. The indexical relations among such events are precisely what relationally confers cultural, including "economic," value on the communicators' identities (as people in role relationships of multiple, institutionally perduring sorts), on the communicated-about (here, wine in relation to all sorts of other comestibles and commodities), on the communicated-to (clients, customers, anthropologists), etc. A virtual communicative economy, then, is an emergent configuration of tiered, dynamic processes in real time, composed of events of semiosis. We treat the presentational micro/macro divide, then, to demonstrate its nonexistence except as a perspective on orders of abstraction by which we recognize semiotic process. This approach categorically rejects any terms of analysis that would see discursive process in the first, micro, box and nondiscursive structure in the second, the macro, or that would consider economies as virtual in the first box and real in the second, functional synchrony in the first box and structural diachrony in the second, or any similarly nondialectical partitions that a presemiotic view of the matter would suggest.

How speakers of American English denote wine-as-comestible reveals an immanent macro-social formation of conceptual as well as lexical differences among them; the semiotic character of such differences is just a highly complex version of what we have seen in other examples of cultural concepts, with mutually constitutive implications for both "real" and other economies (they are one and the same). Talking about wine places someone in this order of interdiscursivity that is vivified in myriad

contributory verbal and other acts. We can discern the forces on any particular event in this order of interdiscursivity, which is organized by the intersecting performative radiations from several institutionally potent ritual centers—privileged social sites of text-making-in-context that I enumerate in the paper. Depending on who is using the language where and when, then, there emerges in any communicative act a particular weighting of these indexical warrants, sustaining (and maybe transforming) the social identifiability of those who are within the complex social field and who give verbal expression to thinking about such stuff as wine and we are made of.

Finally, I am particularly concerned that in my analysis of oinoglossia I not be read—by Koyama or by others—as giving an inherently disparaging critique, as presuming that the fact of the "cultural" constructivity of our concepts is a "fault" of—or a joke on—modernity, going Baudrillard (and Derrida and Latour?) one better. My point is not to present an exposé of our late-capitalist "pseudo-reality" lurking only projectively like a hologram behind commodity/signs-as-simulacra, ideologically (culturally) backed now only by "pseudo-concepts" as well!

If there is a practical lesson in this analytic unraveling of one of our own orders of interdiscursivity in which cultural concepts of wine—and the verbal register of oinoglossia—live, it is this. It is the one that all varieties of realism have been urging with less or more explicitness for a long time: that we should learn to relax about the "cultural" condition of all human "conceptual" life, not to be shocked anew or dejected by each fraught revelation of unattained—unattainable!—Cartesian purity. Semiotic realism, which is a positively constructive enterprise, would have us, then, accept the inherently reflexive, sociocentric component of coming to conceptual grips with the universe of even "objective things," those valued in discourses of Science with a capital S. Thus might we become comfortable with the fact that the "Science of Humanity," anthropology, is itself endeavoring to conceptualize an aspect of that universe very much from within.

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