

Contemporary Human Communication Test #2 Outline

Chapter 6: Coordinated Management of Meaning

CMM as Practical Theory-Stories from the Field

- Pearce and Cronen present CMM as a practical theory crafted to help make life better for people in a real world.
- Tools will help us understand flawed patterns of interaction, identify critical moments in our conversations, and it should suggest ways to talk that will create a better social environment.
- **Family Therapy**
 - Strange loop- an unwanted repetitive communication pattern- “Darn we did it again.”
- **Mediation**
 - Focusing on attention on other enactments of episodes, relationships, identities, and cultural patterns, mediation helped to show the opportunities for empowerment.
- **Cupertino Community Project**
 - Dialogic Communication- all sorts of views could speak in a manner that makes others want to listen, and listen in a way that makes others want to speak.

CMM as an Interpretive Theory-Picturing Persons-In-Conversation

- Social constructionists- language theorists who believe that persons-in-conversation co-construct their own social realities and are simultaneously shaped by the worlds they create.
- **The experience persons-in-conversation is the primary social process of human life.**
 - Pearce says the core concept runs counter to the prevailing intellectual view of communication as an odorless, colorless vehicle of thought that is interesting or important only when it is done poorly or breaks down.
- **The way people communicate is often more important than the content of what they say.**
 - Parties in mediation, therapy, or ethnic disputes are often stuck in a destructive pattern of interaction.
 - Language is the single most powerful tool that humans have ever invented.
 - Logic of meaning and action- fighting on actions that are not relevant and by the time it is over you forget the topic in its entirety.
 - Logical force- the moral pressure or sense of obligation a person feels to respond in a given way to what someone else has just said or done- “I had no choice.”

- **The actions of persons-in-conversation are reflexively reproduced as the interaction continues.**
 - Reflexivity- means that our actions have effects that bounce back and affect us.
 - We have to live in a world that we produce.
- **As social constructionists, CMM researchers see themselves as curious participants in a pluralistic world.**
 - Curious because they think it's folly to profess certainty when dealing with individuals acting out their lives under ever-changing conditions.
 - They live in a pluralistic world because they assume that people make multiple truths rather than find a singular Truth.

CMM as an Interpretive Theory-Story Told and Stories Lived

- Stories lived are the co-constructed actions that we perform with others.
- Pearce and Cronen note that the stories we tell and the stories we live are always tangled together, yet forever in tension.
- Management of meaning- we're obligated to adjust our stories told to fit the realities of our stories lived- or vice versa.
- **Making and Managing Meaning Through Stories Told**
 - Hierarchy of meaning- a rank order of relative significance of contexts-episode, relationship, identity, and culture that encompass a given story as an aid to interpretation.
 - Story telling is the central act of communication, but every story is embedded within multiple contexts, or frames.
 - Speech Act- any verbal or nonverbal message as part of an interaction; the building block of the social universe people create; promises, insults, compliments, etc.
- **Episode**
 - A sequence of speech acts with a beginning and an end that are held together by a story.
 - Such sequences are nounalbe.
 - What does he think he is doing?
- **Relationship**
 - Emerge from the dynamic dance over coordinated actions and managed meanings.
 - The relationship between persons-in-conversation suggests how a speech act might be interpreted.
- **Identity**

- o CMM holds that our identity is continually crafted through the process of communication and in turn our self-image becomes a context for how we manage meaning.
- **Culture**
 - o People who come from different cultures won't interpret messages exactly the same way.
- **Coordination: The Meshing of Stories Lived**
 - o Coordination- process by which persons collaborate in an attempt to bring into being their vision of what is necessary, noble and good and to preclude the enactment of what they fear, hate, or despise.
 - o CMM theorists enjoy descriptions of rules for meaning and action that are created in families, organizations, and cultures.

CMM as A Critical Theory-Spotting Harmful and Helpful Communication

- The critical edge of CMM separates communication styles that are harmful from those that are helpful.
- Cosmopolitan Communication- coordination with others who have different backgrounds, values, and beliefs, without trying to change them.
 - o Assumes that there is no single truth, or if there is, that it has many faces.

Ethical Reflection: Martin Buber's Dialogic Ethics

- Ethical approach focuses on relationships between people rather than on moral codes of conduct.
 - o "The relation is the cradle of actual life."
- I-It- we treat the other person as a thing to be used, an object that can be manipulated.
- I-Thou- we regard our partner as the very one we are.
- Dialogue is mutuality in conversation that creates the between, through which we help each other to be more human.
- Narrow Ridge- standing your own ground while being profoundly open to the other.

Chapter 7: Expectancy Violations Theory

Personal Space Expectations: Conform or Deviate?

- Jude Burgoon defines personal space as the invisible, variable volume of space surrounding an individual that defines that individual's preferred distance.
- The size and shape of our personal space depend on our cultural norms and individual preferences.
- Proxemics- the study of people's use of space as a special elaboration of culture.