Interrogating Culture

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Abstract

As scholars increasingly pursue engaged research and learning experiences around the globe, questions arise about the ways in which can be interrogated for cross-cultural, intercultural, and transnational dialogue. In this paper, power and ethical stances are implicated in processes that are iterative, dialectic, and dialo gic. Some strategies for interrogating culture are presented.

Keywords: Culture, dialogue, ethics, intercultural communication

Introduction

Last summer (2009), there was a conference in Istanbul, Turkey, that centered on the meanings, practices, and research in intercultural dialogue. As I know the same will also be said about our own conference in "Culture, Communication and Adaptation in Global Context" here in Guangzhou, China, the setting in Istanbul was breathtaking, the conversations were intellectually stimulating, and the presentations were enlightening. As always happens, some details fade as we move on with our lives. However, one presentation from last summer remains with me today.

This presentation was by Katérina Stenou, the Director of the Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue, for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Ms. Stenou talked about many things — attempting to change the global political landscape through policy agendas, working toward emancipation of different groups, handling moments of global crisis, building ways to enact peace in the minds and hearts of men and women, and working within nation states' quest for cultural identity within and beyond national frontiers. Her talk stretched from cultural boundaries and public spaces to ambiguities in languages that offer opportunities but also can prevent dialogue.

Dialogue. It is dialogue on which Katérina Stenou primarily focused. Ms. Stenou noted that if people bring themselves together, something might change. She noted that this time, this moment in history — indeed, our participation in this conference today on "Culture, Communication and Adaptation in Global Context" — is exciting because people understand the huge importance of soft power and of dialogue. But the meanings and processes of dialogue remain obscure. Ms. Stenou argued that humans need an epistemology of dialogue. The political and cultural landscape needs communication. The work toward peace lies within dialogue, culture, and intercultural communication.

Since that time, I have been pondering "dialogue." Intercultural and cross-cultural communication scholars already know that the Western emphases on dialogue as engaged

conversation is vastly insufficient. Our communication scholars also recognize that motivations to converse often are underscored by attempts to persuade others (and not oneself). Aligning dialogue with human rights creates conceptual and pragmatic problems.

So what happens in dialogue? Borrowing from but extending Ms. Stenou's words, I conceptualize *dialogue* as communicative processes that transcend the here and now to create understandings in new ways and in content that we don't yet know. I would add that it is not an exercise but a process permanently etched into our interactions with others. It upends our convictions and forces us to question our values. It requires that we engage in sensemaking (for sensemaking, see Weick, 1995) as some elemental level whereby we engage in our mutual right to and need to connect.

For the remainder of this paper, I link dialogue with the topic of interrogating culture. In doing so, I discuss: (a) what is meant by interrogating culture; (b) what are some core strategies for interrogating culture; and (c) how might the work of cultural interrogation and dialogue proceed to benefit all of us. I would also like to note that many of these strategies and processes are borrowed from diverse disciplines and approaches — management, organizational communication, gendered and feminist communication, psychology, organizational development and change management, ethics — and are consistent with existing work in cross-cultural and intercultural communication. However, I want to use them differently from their creators' original intents or contexts. In doing so, I want to enlarge our thinking about and repertoires of strategies and processes for engaging in dialogue and culture. As such, I hope that these strategies and processes offer further possibilities for engagement with others in different contexts.

What is Meant by Interrogating Culture?

Most commonly, interrogation is associated with witnesses, victims, and political or criminal activities. But I am certainly ***not*** equating the role of intercultural scholars with that of police, military, or intelligence investigations! I am, however, using the phrase "*interrogating culture" to convey an unrelenting pursuit or commitment to understanding culture and engaging* in *dialogue*.

To me, *interrogating culture and engaging in dialogue are co-processes.* Jameson (2007) argued that researchers should look beyond constructions of collective identity based on broad national cultural characteristics to examine the ways in which individuals seek *to understand the impact of their own cultural background and changing cultural identities in different situations*. Relational, collectivistic-individualistic, national, and individual cultural knowledge and identity constructions inform this process (Wang & Chen , 2010; see also Dai, in press).

Dialogue is manifest as ongoing choices and communicative processes that involve the unraveling of our own and others' taken-for-granted realities to create greater depth and breadth in cultural understandings. These understandings cannot help but result in change. Change might involve the questioning of normative behaviors, a reconsideration of values, a greater motivation to reflect upon cultural learnings, and engagement in transnational exchanges. These communicative processes may occur in face-to-face situations but also might be mediated by technology in virtual environments.

As one example of interrogating culture, I would like to describe a research project whose findings alone do not fully indicate the kind of process in which we engaged. My colleague, Dr. Suchitra Shenoy, and I literally questioned every word, line, grammatical pattern, intonational patterns, and other paralinguistic and linguistic cue to figure out where our sensemaking of passages uttered by Indian women differed based on our backgrounds, particularly our cultural expertise. We stated our understandings. We challenged and argued with each other. We drew upon what phrasing might mean in our own cultures. We described what meanings and phrasings might be nonsensical or, at best, odd from our own perspectives. We wove all of these discussions together into patterns that revealed our outcomes but not the exciting and laborious process in which we engaged.

More specifically, in our collaborative project, we have been investigating the meanings of work for Hindu Indian women in three economic and class strata (Shenoy & Buzzanell, 2010). From street sweepers to physicians and chief financial officers, these women indicated that work had meaning if it served Indian society, engaged the physical self, enabled standing on one's own feet, and helped fulfill one's role-related *kartavya* (responsibilities, obligations). We found that there were strong influences of Hindu religious and philosophical constructs — notably *dharma* and *karma* — in the work values of Hindu Indian women participants.

For instance, Priya, a street sweeper, said, "Now these *warkaris* are going to visit. So many *warkaris* visit our Pune. They create so much filth still we clean it. We just think we've found God by doing our job." Arati also commented about the blessed nature of a job that many would consider "dirty." She said: "They [*warkaris*] sit anywhere, eat anywhere and throw things around. We clean it all up. We just assume we found *Pandurang* [native word for God] in cleaning up after them. We just assume we actually see Him."

To understand these words, one would need to know that *warkaris* are annual pilgrims who come to Pune city on their way to Pandharpur, a holy city. *Warkaris* walk for 21 days as part of a procession that carries the *padukas* or sandals of the Saint they worship. *Warkaris* rely on the citizens and government of Pune for necessities, such as food and shelter. The street sweepers referred to their work as *punya*.

In the case of *punya* and other cases, it was challenging to locate English words that accurately captured participants' meanings given that a number of interviews were conducted in Marathi and Hindi. Even though, literally, the word *punya* means the opposite of the English word, "sin," this translation does not do justice to the depth expressed by "*punya.*" To contextualize its meaning, we coded this word as *service* by using discourses surrounding its use. We also linked its meanings to being blessed, giving back to society, seeing God in work — as evidenced in *The Gita* (Swami Prabhupada, 1986). *The Bhagavad Gita* or *The Gita* (literally, 'The Song of the Lord') is considered a religious Hindu text by many. Chapter Five, Verse One of *The Gita* especially encourages people to see work as devotional service. Either directly by the work itself (e.g., priests) or indirectly through the people served (e.g., sweepers), participants considered their work a blessing and a way to achieve divine grace. These understandings of work were not limited to street sweepers or other members of the lowest income level in Suchitra's study. These work ethics were apparent across socioeconomic strata and were embodied by women in their relation to the doing of their work, the contexts

in which their labor was performed, the ways in which they used their physical selves, and the instruments that aided their tasks. Their symbolic meanings of work and its meaningfulness for their very existence could not have been derived had we not engaged in dialogue.

Coming to an understanding of work for these different Hindu Indian women meant that Suchitra and I engaged in long conversations about what each word, phrase, object, contextual clue, and grammatical pattern meant. We "interrogated culture" or engaged in cultural inquiry through dialogue. It truly was the "dialogue" itself that has enriched our lives much more than the findings themselves. Neither of us could have predicted where this interrogation process took us.

What Are Some Core Strategies for Interrogating Culture?

There are a number of different practices that might be incorporated in "interrogating culture" and that draw from inquiry across the communication discipline and other disciplines (see Table 1 in the Appendix). Some of these practices and starting pointsfor engaging in and representing the results of cultural interrogation and dialogue include: invitational rhetoric (see Buzzanell et al., 1997; Foss & Griffin, 1995), presentational expertise (Foss & Foss, 1994), think aloud protocols (Lewis, n.d.), integrative case studies (D'Enbeau, Buzzanell, & Duckworth, in press), and feminist discursive ethics (Buzzanell, 2011). Table 1 is not intended to be exhaustive but, rather, a suggestive assortment of possibilities and entrée points into dialogue and cultural interrogation processes and results dissemination. However, I would like to focus more extensively on four additional strategies and examples. These four processes are: *(a) critical empathy, (b) contextualized interviewing/ translation, (c) collaborative questioning/ reversing the "Other,"* and *(d) appreciative inquiry.*

Critical Empathy

First, ***critical empathy*** is more than relating to or understanding another, the usual way in which many approach "empathy." In typical notions of empathic responses, a person sorts through talk, interactions, and other experiences to try to grasp what another person's life is like. Often, this process involves "walking in another's shoes" or moving physically, affectively, and cognitively through the spatio-temporal environment in which others exist. Empathy can be seen as reactionary insofar as it engages the heart after knowing another person or community, but it also builds capacity to embrace others more swiftly over time and different experiences. In these respects, empathy seeks to build shared understanding, but it also is conceptualized as a skill (e.g., Ponterotto, 2010).

In contrast, as Dr. Robyn Remke (2006) notes, critical empathy is the deeply profound realization that one could never ever truly and deeply know the life of another, particularly another person from a different culture. As Remke (2006) conceives of critical empathy, it is both an investigative lens for uncovering deeply divisive assumptions and limitations and a stance for co-orienting, not coordinating or harmonizing, with others. The "burden" for building some kind of relationship and understanding lies in difference not attempts to locate similarities and shared understanding. She writes:

Critical empathy acknowledges the methodological attempt to understand another's experience but does not demean the subject's experience by trying to duplicate it or adopt   it as the researcher's own — which again, I suggest is ultimately impossible. Additionally, critical empathy does not try to downplay or explain away the distance between researcher and participant. Rather, the researcher uses the distance and difference in an analytic way to help reveal and illuminate taken-for-granted forms of oppression and constraint. The research analysis develops out of the researcher's relationship to her participants, informed in part by her descriptive understanding of the participant's experience. Empathic awareness is thus present. But by sustaining a critical distance, the researcher remains attuned to forms of oppression that might otherwise be obscured were she to literally assume the participant's point of reference. (p. 101)

Remke's research was conducted in a rural location of extreme poverty and diversity in race, ethnicities, physical health, and support from others. She came to this work as a well-educated, white, fashionable, upper-middle-class woman desiring to do good. She left the research field as someone with profound respect for the teachers of the U.S. federal social service agency program who sought to work with parents and children to create, not remake, a better life for all of them and the community as a whole.

Remke maintained that in many cases, "building a relationship and demonstrating that I was non-threatening was very difficult and would involve more than me simply telling the participants that I could be trusted" (see also Dillard, in press). Remke said that she eventually did gain the trust of some women — *not* because she became one of them or like them. It was because she was so different from them and because she built trust, that they witnessed the need to educate her. Remke describes the process of critical empathy as follows:

This process begins by first *noticing* the outside, becoming aware of it and recognizing its value and its worth. This is empathic awareness. In this process I notice that the other is "not me," and this awareness creates my *own* sense of otherness in the face of *their* otherness. In recognizing the subjectivity of the other I am also acknowledging the social constructedness of her existence. . . . The critical research process is one of multiple dynamic subjectivities interacting, influencing, and therefore changing each other while pursuing knowledge . . . (Remke, 2006, p. 104)

At the conclusion of her research project, Remake noted,

I was able to see beyond their daily activities and even their words and actions and relate to them, which enabled me to understand them, their motivations, their position in the world. I still do not know what it is like to be them. But I relate to them. And in this relationship I understand what is important and valuable to them. I am therefore able to articulate their needs to an audience to which they do not have access. With the knowledge I now have, I am able to instigate and facilitate change, regardless of how small, and thus my feminist/critical research process is complete. (pp. 106-107)

Contextualized Interviewing/Translation

Second, I suggest that ***contextualized interviewing/translation*** is a process of translation and cross-cultural or intercultural research that involves simultaneous online or face-to-face interaction with translators. The goal is to understand the context of the interview, the person who is the research participant, the different social identities invoked by participants as they describe their lives, and specific linguistic choices.

Through *working with a translator,* the hope is that all would become better attuned to the subtle meanings in texts. For instance, when my colleagues, Drs. Brenda Berkelaar and Lorraine Kisselburgh and I were working with texts from focus groups with very young children in China, we realized that the translations frequently needed to be supplemented with cultural and contextual notes to understand anything about the text (see Buzzanell, 2009; Kisselburgh, Berkelaar, & Buzzanell, 2009). We needed to know the names and designs of cultural icons, popular after-school games, and popular names for academic activities. We had to know what these children might have been watching on television or what building construction they might have witnessed to figure out how and why they expressed what they did.

To preserve the cultural integrity of the data and avoid using our own cultural frames, we collaborated with translators and trusted colleagues in each country to write contextual memos and margin notes. We literally sat with our translators and worked through each turn of talk to add notes, make links to other materials, and insert different interpretations of words and contexts. We interrogated culture insofar as we attempted to enter into the world of participants not merely through translated texts but through a visualization of their worlds. My visits to these children's schools and the surrounding areas in China, to their classes, and to the homes of colleagues and friends where we engaged in hours of conversation helped me to understand how the children's worlds represented and created their worlds.

Collaborative Questioning/Reversing the "Other"

Third, ***collaborative questioning/reversing the "Other"*** is similar to the interviewing/ translation process described above but here we focus on making both parties vulnerable by asking the reasons, historical-cultural understandings, and rich context as we enter the worlds of research participants and ourselves as researchers. Leeman and Wasserman (in press) engaged in processes like these when they worked with managers and people who are homeless in the Appalachian United States. They called their approach dialogic storytelling with the emphases on creating a space where both parties could connect through the stories of their lives. They did so in their attempts to find sites where people without homes could reconnect with themselves, other individuals and groups, and a local community as a whole through paid employment. However, the example I use for this section involves a series of email exchanges about online data produced by girls in India.

Dr. Vinita Agarwal and I started a series of conversations about ourselves and other women from developing and developed nations with regard to the lived conditions in their countries of origin. As our conversations continued and we discussed some online diaries of female adolescents (see Agarwal & Buzzanell, 2008a, 2008b; similar process used for Bridgewater &

Buzzanell, 2010; Pal & Buzzanell, 2008), our roles as (then) doctoral student and professor, research expert and nonexpert, cultural nonexpert and expert, insider and outsider, postcolonial subject and colonizer, East and West, and persons of specific racial/ethnic and classed backgrounds shifted, stabilized, reversed, and emerged differently. We were, as Best (2003) notes about individuals conducting research, "actively engaged in doing race" (p. 895). But we were doing so in ways that "capture[d] and evoke[d] the complex, paradoxical, and mysterious qualities of subjectivity" (Ellis & Flaherty, 1992, p. 5). Our subjectivities were and still are "situated such that the voices in our heads and the feelings in our bodies are linked to political, cultural, and historical contexts" (p. 4). We adopted multivocal identities that shifted in and out of the texts that we were exploring — texts of readings, online journals, observations, others' conversations, classroom interactions, and our real and imagined spaces as we sought to carve out a means of bringing ourselves into conversation with each other.

We interwove our data with self-reflexive and prolonged discussions. Through these discussions, we explored our individual perspectives, our reflections on cultural and other influences on our lives, and our desires to teach and learn. In the end, we brought these conversations into our classrooms and continued the process of "reversing the 'Other' for dialogic transformation. Our goal was to explore a technique that we have found useful for engaging in change, diversity, and dialogue that does *not* rely on the "Other" or non-dominant group member to instruct dominant societal members. By reversing the "Other," we situated the onus of responsibility for change on both parties in a collaborative space.

So, what did this dialogic process of collaborative questioning/reversing the "Other" look like? As one example, I provide an excerpt of our online dialogues with myself (Patrice) noted as "P" and my colleague, Dr. Vinita Agarwal abbreviated as "V." In this conversation, "*Sarai's Cybermohalla project*" (Bagchi, 2002) is the site of our explorations as we enter the girls' worlds and text through sensory, linguistic, and imaginative means. The *basti* is the local and temporary neighborhood in India that we enter. The following are excerpts from my journal and from the *Cybermohalla* project itself.

P: I was struck by the vivid sights, smells, sounds, maneuverings, and instances of violence associated with living conditions in the *basti*.
> *The sound of cars. The sound from the cluster of six to seven houses opposite ours, where some 35 people live together. Seven rooms huddled around a tiny courtyard.* (Azra, in Bagchi, 2002, p. 178)

P: I imagine a place much different from my middle-class Midwestern existence. The roads and houses were crowded with human bodies in all shapes and sizes — perspiring, hot bodies that crawled to the top floors of their residential buildings for some relief from the heat. The buildings are so close together that they can talk to each other across roof tops and see what each other is doing. The notion of privacy is vastly different from what I encounter with my closed office and bedroom doors. I don't know if privacy as I understand it exists. I imagine that it is so hot that I can almost not breathe.
> *It was five-thirty in the evening. I climbed onto the roof. . . . Our roof is the lowest in our colony, and everyone else's is quite high. And some even have two or three storied*

houses. . . . Many people, boys, children, were on their roofs. The sound of decks playing in different places could be heard. Also could be heard the sound of girls chatting and laughing. (Neelofer, in Bagchi, 2002, p. 186)

P: I wonder if my imaginings and fascination continue because the India of the *basti* and *cybermohalla* diaries seem so exotic to me in sexual, spatial, and temporal ways (as they are to many Westerners, see Gaines, 2005) yet spatial relations of social control and gender are very familiar. I wonder how notions of space and safety have meaning in the *basti*? I wonder about the ways living encroaches on supposedly public spaces like roads and walkways around the roads. Are there walkways? I imagine a constant tension or flux between what is and is not demarcated as the city was being built, as some resources belonged to all (e.g., water) while others (e.g., lanes and roads) were appropriated for certain people's use in ways that disadvantaged others (girls). I was struck both by *basti* residents' resilience amidst everyday chaos, death, and violence and the dreams of nature, sunshine, and goodness to which they cling in the final entry.

Vinita engaged in discussion about these points, clarifying, elaborating, posing her own questions, and responding to mine. As one example of our research notes, Vinita wrote:

V: In older parts of Delhi, the urban landscape is very different with all the rooftops adjacent to each other so in the evening the children can jump across to their neighbors, and women can talk as they hang out the laundry … there is also a greater feeling of community because of the often close relations with the neighbors and the joint family structure of some families … I am sure it is changing now. The newer half of Delhi is much the same as any other urban landscape — more space, less interaction with neighbors, walkways. There may still be the stray animals on the road, but life is more segregated and sanitized (to the extent that the pollution and the dust allow it to be!). It is also a lot less crowded comparatively. There is more traffic, which I know appears somewhat chaotic to the lane-driving tradition, but has its own rhythm under the madness! There is a lot less greenery overall, partly because it is so dry and hot most part of the year, and partly because of the water shortages the city faces. . . . one of my strongest first memories of the U.S. is the amount of sky and horizon that I could see and how often the sun was in my eyes . . . I am not sure when I last had the sun so low that it got into my eyes while driving in Delhi — I believe never! . . . the sense of space here [in the U.S.] is overwhelming… it literally defines the landscape and is so tangible that you can sense it sweep over you… after all these years, I still notice the space and the feeling of stillness or movement and individual identity it seems to wrap each person with.
Delhi particularly seems very aggressive because of the crowds that are always present … and the fact that it is hard to walk through public spaces without rubbing elbows or shoulders with other people! One had to be prepared to brave the commute to office and still have enough energy left over to give to a day's work. I believe because of the direction in which the winds blow during most part of the year, they carry a lot of sand and dust from Rajasthan's desert to Delhi. As with most temporary urban immigrant spaces, the sense

of community in the *basti* is very different than that of other neighborhoods in Delhi . . . although I find it very reassuring that they still have so much order and civic infrastructure — school buses, electricity, water, and repair of street lamps — also touching to me is the structure of relationships between neighbors and the sense of neighborly commitment that caused Mama to lodge a police complaint on behalf of the Pakistani neighbor . . . I like that the girls go to school, that the rickshaw-wallah pedals them there, that they have such close family ties. . . it seems that they have a sense of self that seems to accommodate so much unpredictability and lack of control over their circumstances, and that at the center of it all are the relationships that ground them — their families, their friends, and their routine.

P: It is their relationships embedded in their spaces and in the architectural design that is so compelling and evocative. Permanence-transience dialectic seems to run throughout their life-death narratives, lanes-roads, temporary home-permanent cities, illegitimate-legitimate presence… they begin with structures built overnight on some packed dirt lane that allows only a single person's passage. Over time that lane may become a road with busses, vendors, people rushing about — but it also might be leveled to make way for buildings or parks sanctioned by the government. . . and it might narrow when people build onto it.

We discussed the material relationships shared among the *basti* residents as they filled their jugs with water from the community tap. We watch them coming home from work or shopping and feel their wariness as they approach others who may intend to do them harm. We feel the transience, fears, hopefulness, insecurities, and changing senses of selves and relationships with others and with their physical environments.

Collaborative questioning, or reversing the Other, enables both parties to "chain" or link thoughts, ideas, emotions, remembered smells and touches, personal experiences, observations of others, and so on to create new meanings. Collaborative questioning, or reversing the Other, challenges the identities, experiences, and knowledge of both parties involved in cultural inquiry and interrogation.

Appreciative Inquiry

In ***appreciative inquiry,*** a facilitator uses the power of positive questions to identify moments of success within an organizational or institutional context (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Cooperrider & Sekerka, 2003; Harter, Gerbensky-Kerbe, & Patterson, in press). The set of questions values what is best in the current system (appreciating), considers what might be (envisioning), and engages in discussions about what should and will be (dialoguing and innovating) within the overall assumptions that positive relationships and stories of success can enhance empowerment and collaboration. The main difference between appreciative inquiry and other forms of dialogue and individual or organizational change is that the person or matter under consideration is not viewed as a problem to be solved. Rather, change and understanding build on successes or on future possibilities through specific conversational patterns.

Of importance for our discussion about interrogating culture are the Barge and Oliver's (2003) conversational structures for working with appreciation. They suggest that there are several ways to enhance reflexivity, such as positioning voices, taking perspectives, future talking, and observing interactions between people. Although appreciative inquiry is a generative organizational development or change management process, it can foster dialogue by imagining the kinds of worlds in which participants want to live through egalitarian discussion and generation of new knowledge and action (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Watkins & Cooperrider, 2000; Watkins & Mohr, 2001).

Examples of appreciative inquiry take place whenever we share our hopes and visions for the intercultural landscape that we have the power to bring about in our lives. This particular practice offers a different entrée point into dialogue because it engages the imagination in dreams rather than in the lived conditions of our own and others' existence.

Summary of Interrogating Culture

In summary, the processes involved in interrogating culture combine to form a different way of experiencing data and life. *Critical empathy* provides the stance that researchers can take with *contextualized interviewing/translation* offering a technique for recording and reflecting on the communicative processes. *Collaborative questioning, or reversing the Other*, changes our views of our worlds and those of others. And appreciative inquiry offers a space for imagining a dream or vision of intercultural dialogue that can fulfill Ms. Stenou's hopes.

I would maintain that the process of interrogating culture and engaging in cultural dialogue becomes integrated into the fabric of our souls, hearts, and behaviors. We listen differently. We think differently. We no longer realize how much we know about another culture because it becomes tacit knowledge. It becomes part of our being and we can't reverse our new cultural understandings. I was intrigued by Professor Dan Landis's (2010) talk, "Whither Goest Intercultural Communication…" on the first day of our "Culture, Communication and Adaptation in Global Context" conference because I wondered whether these ways of thinking, behaving, and knowing that I am discussing are integrated into brain patterns. It would seem so.

How Might the Work of Cultural Interrogation and Dialogue Proceed?

According to some personal correspondence with Dr. Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz (June 2, 2010; see also Leeds-Hurwitz, in press),

> Cross-cultural and intercultural communication folks in the U.S. don't normally look at dialogue — in fact, they often don't even look at people from different cultures interacting. . . . part of the idea of focusing on intercultural dialogue for the center is that it's such a hot topic everywhere else, especially in Europe but also some parts of Asia. And we need to get U.S scholars to change what they study.

I would maintain that we require global emphases on cross-cultural, intercultural, and dialogic communication. Although there are many ways to continue the work of cultural

interrogation, I mention only one. The work of ***Intercultural Dialogue Catalysts*** can offer a way of modeling engagement in cultural dialogue and interrogation.

   Intercultural Dialogue Catalysts is a variation of "deviation amplifiers" or "positive deviants". Barbara Waugh (2001) is a c hange agent. She engages in amplified positive deviance — "finding and then amplifying people inside the organization who already embody and are living out the 'desired' future state — or want to" (pp. 30-31). These people are not those whom we ordinarily would name as the leaders on our campuses or in our countries and professional associations. They are simply people working on issues that matter to them. Waugh's strategy is: identifying the problem, locating those who deviate from the status quo in desirable ways, recruiting them as co-conspirators, and finding ways for them to carry their message to others. Gladwell (2008) in the popular book, *Outliers*, labels "positive deviants" as those outlier individuals (and organizations) who practice and facilitate edifying and productive relationships through engagement with others.

   Intercultural Dialogue Catalysts would be those who already engage in intercultural dialogue and interrogating culture and who are then willing to work with and reinforce others' behaviors. Every time we stop to explain the meaning of a work or event in our own cultures and seek understanding of phrasing, ways of behaving, or aspects of living, we are acting as Intercultural Dialogue Catalysts. [1] As we observe, reflect, engage, and seek commentary about the ways we interact with others in multicultural experiences, we seek understanding of ourselves and others. Our discussions might differ based on the behavioral expectations and value systems under consideration. But we can begin to understand culture more fully and, hopefully, what is considered valuable, taken for granted, and authentic in specific cultures. As such, intercultural communication scholars contribute more fully to engaged scholarship, or problem-centered inquiry (Putnam, 2009), as well as calls to investigate, theorize about, and promote dialogue.

Conclusion

   Many of these processes outlined in this presentation coincide nicely with ideas and research already being conducted by cultural, cross-cultural, and intercultural scholars. They also coincide with many of our conference presentations over the past few days. We have been privileged to hear reports from all parts of the world on intercultural, cross-cultural, and cultural research, teaching, and engagement processes. Some of these presentations offer evidence of effective dialogic and cultural strategies, and others note the frustrations and difficulties involved in interrogating culture. It is in light of our ongoing work to develop a theoretical

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[1] My use of Intercultural Diversity Catalyst is somewhat different from the Diversity Catalysts who are engaging in institutional transformation as part of Purdue University's NSF ADVANCE grant (see http://www.purdue.edu/discoverypark/advance). The Purdue Diversity Catalysts are known leaders in campus and in their academic fields who are committed to equity, inclusion, and success of underrepresented group members, particularly female faculty of color in the STEM disciplines, namely, science, technology, engineering, and math.

framework for dialogue and uncover processes that can facilitate such interrogation that I note some limitations of the approach I have taken in this paper.

To begin, I address neither how we as intercultural scholars can recognize dialogue in our research project data nor how we as societal members committed to greater inter- and cross-cultural competence can recognize dialogue during the course of our own interaction. It is quite possible that dialogue does not merely consist of the somewhat utopian view that I have presented in this paper, but is constructed of different nested minicycles of conflict and avoidance, inauthentic engagement, genuine connection, profound insights, unintended bias and behaviors based in frustrations, and other processes that we do not often consider to be dialogue. Moreover, the outcomes of and processes inherent in dialogue may not always seem as positive as depicted in my paper. Clearly, if we truly engage others and venture in uncharted intersections, we must question ourselves. With humility, compassion, and recognition of all parties' vulnerability, we must interrogate our own motivations, our inability to truly and fully empathize, and our ironic unawareness of our own complicity in complicating, constraining, and contesting the agency of others — all in the name of doing good and building bridges to others.

However, it is in "interrogating culture" and "dialogue" that intercultural and cross-cultural communication scholars might fulfill the hope of Ms. Katérina Stenou of UNESCO as well as promise of our own conference in "Culture, Communication and Adaptation in Global Context" here in Guangzhou, P. R. China.

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Appendix

Table 1. Communicative Processes Whereby Intercultural Scholars Can Interrogate Culture

Process	Description	Connection to Cultural Interrogation and Dialogue
Invitational Rhetoric (Foss & Griffin, 1995, p. 14)	Offers the possibility of understanding others' lives based on action consistent with values: * Equality--"commitment to the creation of relationships of equality". * Immanent value--as a belief that "every being is a unique and necessary part of the pattern of the universe and thus has value". * Self-determination--"recognition that audience members are the authorities on their own lives" and have the "right to constitute their worlds as they choose".	According to invitational rhetoric, maintaining these values enables speakers to suspend judgment and engage in dialogue without imposing their world views. Similarly, invitational leadership focuses on leadership that pulls people into a vision and way of responding that offers opportunities to engage but does not push people to participate or align beliefs and actions according to the aims of leadership. Invitational leadership coincides with participatory practices that operate dynamically within dialectic tensions such as individual-collective, power over-power with, inequality-equality, and autonomy-interdependence (see Buzzanell et al., 1997)
Presentational Expertise (Foss & Foss, 1994, p. 40)	Adheres to a mode of presenting others' experiences that foreground the person embedded in context. Experts utilize their skills to highlight others' interpretations rather than imposing their own. Issues with which researchers, speakers, and/or facilitators contend: * to use their "critical and analytic training to clarify problems; to organize accounts; to locate relevant theories, materials, and funding; and to access publishing outlets" (p. 40) * to make the choices among others' accounts for presentation.	In making choices about the ways to best represent the issues with which others must contend given the material conditions of these others' lives and their perceptions about these conditions, experts engaged in dialogic presentational processes attempt to frame others' views and use linguistic choices accurately.

Think Aloud Protocol (Lewis, n.d.)	Have been used in computer science software designs to insure that the programs are user-friendly and adapted to the needs and interests of specific groups of people. These protocols ask potential users to talk through what, why, and how they are doing particular tasks (Lewis, n.d.). The individuals who think aloud provide reasons, affective reactions, and interpretations of their actions.	In interrogating culture and dialogue, it is often difficult to know how, what, and why others react as they do. Think aloud protocols enable those trying to understand others' lives to see what these others take for granted and hear how they might maneuver through a task or hypothetical situation. Here, it may be used less for prototype design than for entrée into lived experiences. However, prototypes of policies under construction and policy use might benefit from this type of trial run to run through the ways particular stakeholders might be (dis)advantaged in ways no one usually can anticipate (e.g., crisis responsiveness plans and emergency relief policies).
Integrative Case Studies (D'Enbeau, Buzzanell, & Duckworth, in press)	Involve creating and analyzing case studies using actual data from research participants but placing these people (with their identities masked and pseudonyms used) within an imaginary space, designed by the case authors, where the participants could interact. By positioning people from very different life contexts into the same space and by using their own words, a juxtaposition of world views, implicit theories about life, and assumed ways of living and relating to others are exposed.	These case studies contribute to dialogue by enabling anyone who reads or hears the dialogue to admit that participants live in very different worlds, such that they may not even know how different or how to express these deep or fundamental differences. Similarities are also exposed and lend themselves to further questioning, as do the differences.
Feminist Discursive Ethics (Buzzanell, 2010)	Explores the assumptions and consequences of artificial boundaries between justice and care and between public and private. Arguing that the pervasiveness of these justice/care and public/private images prevents the kind of flexible and creative thinking that is necessary to deal with moral dilemmas in everyday life, a feminist ethical process situated in discourse but also incorporating materialities as admissible evidence follows an iterative processual pattern: * social constructing context * promoting dialogue through human values * designing vision * reframing * embedding iterativity * making processes and outcomes transparent and sustainable	When used, this process challenges all stakeholders in ethical dilemmas to sort through their own cultural and assumptional biases. This process also mandates that much data about context and others be analyzed to prevent premature resolution.