

Living Narrative: Creating Lives in Everyday Storytelling. Elinor Ochs and Lisa Capps. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001. xi + 352 pp., figures, notes, references, index.

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In *Living Narrative*, Elinor Ochs and Lisa Capps revisit and extend the theoretical and methodological implications of their 1995 exploration of an agoraphobic woman's narrative construction of panic (*Constructing Panic: The Discourse of Agoraphobia*, Harvard University Press, 1995). This new volume retains the clarity and originality of approach that characterized that collaboration between a linguistic anthropologist (Ochs) and a psychologist (Capps); at the same time, the authors move considerably beyond that study to consider evidence for cross-cultural similarities in narrative structure and, more centrally, the way in which everyday storytelling contributes creatively to social lives.

Living Narrative is particularly outstanding in two respects. First, the authors weave together a coherent theory of narrative structure and narrative meaning, utilizing diverse sources culled from literary criticism, psychoanalysis, folklore, and linguistic anthropology. Second, their use of cross-cultural conversational data to support this theory is both persuasive and refreshing. With this book, Ochs and Capps at least partly redress the overwhelming emphasis in narrative theory on written and monologic narratives.

The authors state that their primary focus is on *conversational narrative*, a narrative form that, as they define it, runs counter to ideals of organized, linear narratives presented by a single individual speaking alone and uninterrupted by interlocutors. The authors place at the center of their analysis narratives that are coconstructed and that may appear to be temporally disorganized and filled with contradictions and reversals. By doing so, they, first, privilege the ongoing dialogic construction of meaning in everyday interactions over rehearsed narrative performances, placing the social role of narrative at the core of their theory of storytelling, and, second, identify everyday conversation as the location where individuals strive to make sense of events through social interaction. Indeed, in example after example, Ochs and Capps make clear that when narrators tell their stories they open up those

stories to conarration and cointerpretation from conversational participants.

In each of *Living Narrative's* eight chapters, the authors offer a substantive contribution to the cross-cultural study of conversational narrative. In the first chapter, "A Dimensional Approach to Narrative," Ochs and Capps lay the theoretical groundwork for subsequent studies in situational or structural narrative elements. This chapter is not, however, solely theoretical in focus; the authors illustrate each theoretical point by drawing on a range of examples from their own research as well as data collected by scholars in other fields.

Ochs's and Capps's comparative approach becomes immediately apparent in the first chapter as they consistently emphasize cross-linguistic commonalities in narrative over variation in narrative form or content across languages. They do not use the word *universal*; instead, their analyses highlight the cultural and contextual situatedness of all narratives. At the same time, they argue convincingly for the crosslinguistic and cross-situational relevance of certain elements that contribute to narration. In taking this approach, Ochs and Capps avoid the ethnocentric pitfalls of defining narrative *per se*; instead, they "stipulate dimensions that will always be *relevant* to a narrative, even if not elaborately manifest" (p. 19). Although narrative conventions and expectations may vary across communities, Ochs and Capps argue, storytelling everywhere is structured around similar aspects of narration, and everywhere it serves parallel social and psychological purposes—to create sense and meaning out of personal experience.

In chapter 2, "Becoming a Narrator," the authors provide a second cornerstone to their approach. Although they present their study as being about narrative in general, throughout the volume they show a clear interest in the links between language development and language socialization. In this chapter, Ochs and Capps provide an excellent review of research into how children's narrative skills develop. Their comparative material is particularly valuable to the authors' focus on commonalities of narration across languages and cultures. They offer evidence for the relevance of learned features to social and psychological development by evaluating conversations of young storytellers, noting how interactions between children and adults often clarify how

narrative structures and techniques are learned behaviors.

In the middle three chapters of the book, Ochs and Capps examine the progression of a narrative from the conversational challenge of "Launching a Narrative" (ch. 3); to the "Unexpected Turn" of events that a storyteller struggles to explain (ch. 4); to the "Experiential Logic" (ch. 5) that organizes narrative along principles that may conflict directly with ideals of clarity, temporal linearity, and orderly plot development. The fine-grained structural focus of these central chapters offers a solid background for the broader social questions that the authors consider in the last third of the book.

In the final three chapters, Ochs and Capps consider the social meaning of conversational narratives, focusing on the power of storytelling to create meaning in social spaces. In chapter 6, "Beyond Face Value," they examine how participants in storytelling interpret specific events in the broader framework of collective understandings. In chapter 7, they offer an interesting interpretation of storytelling as a way of creating existential meaning through the narration of everyday events. Finally, in chapter 8, they consider "Untold Stories" and approach the important question of truth in narrative. Here again, a central theme reemerges—uncertainty and ambiguity in interpreting events and experiences. Ochs and Capps conclude on this note, discussing how a study of narrative may only highlight, and not resolve, questions of selfhood, memory, and the influence of experience shared and made social through storytelling.

Blueprints for a House Divided: The Constitutional Logic of the Yugoslav Conflicts. Robert M. Hayden. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000. xi + 208 pp., notes, references, index.

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Numerous scholars recently have tried to explain the reasons for the brutal conflicts that accompanied the breakup of the former Yugoslavia (1991–95) and the war for Kosovo (1997–99). Robert Hayden, an anthropologist and lawyer, has chosen a legalistic approach to this subject.

In 1988, Yugoslavia, officially known as the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, consisted of a strong federal government with broad legislative, executive, and judicial powers; six constituent republics (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Macedonia); and the autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo. Each republic had a constitution that was supposed to be subordinate to and in harmony with the federal constitution. Hayden argues that in 1989 when Slovenia, followed by Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina (B-H), and Macedonia, amended their constitutions, they transformed Yugoslavia from a federation into a confederation—a political entity composed of fully sovereign states and a weak federal government. Furthermore, the newly amended constitutions enshrined a form of ethnonationalism that discriminated against minorities. Hayden argues that the process whereby non-Serbian political leaders destroyed the Yugoslav federation and made their own ethnic groups politically supreme in their own republics was rational and logical. They intentionally used legislative means to achieve these results. Yugoslavia's 1990 elections were won by strongly nationalist parties or coalitions in each of the republics. By 1991, these republics had seceded from Yugoslavia, proclaimed their own independence, and thereby dissolved the Yugoslav federation. Hayden refers to this confederating logic as the "fetishism of (ethnic) national sovereignty" (p. 145).

Hayden offers a detailed analysis of constitutional transformations of the former Yugoslavia and his interpretation of their consequences. His objective is to explicate the constitutional circumstances under which Tito's socialist ideology of unity and brotherhood gave way to the creation of ethnonational states in territories that had been ethnically heterogeneous. Although Hayden does not focus on the Serbian politics that most writers claim drove the non-Serbian states to secede, he does assign some blame to Serbia when he writes: "The political pressures that led the Slovenian government . . . to start the dissolution of the Yugoslav constitutional order were largely caused by the rise of Serbia's militant nationalists and aggressive president Milosevic, coupled with domestic pressure from Slovenia's own nationalists" (p. 52).

Although Hayden refuses to concede that he is offering a Serbian side to the story of Yugoslavia's