AN ANALYSIS OF THE TRADITIONS OF COMMUNICATION THEORY IN IAN MCEWAN'S *ATONEMENT*

by

JOLANDI BEZUIDENHOUT
2006093401

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Magister Artium (Communication Science)

in the

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION SCIENCE
FACULTY OF THE HUMANITIES

of the

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
BLOEMFONTEIN

January 2017

SUPERVISOR: Dr D. Krige

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work is the result of my own independent investigation. I further declare that this work is submitted for the first time at this university and the Department of Communication Science towards an M.A. degree and that it has not previously been submitted to any other university/faculty/department for the purpose of obtaining a degree.

_____

J. BEZUIDENHOUT

_____

Date

I hereby cede copyright of this product in favour of the University of the Free State.

_____

J. BEZUIDENHOUT

_____

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher appreciatively acknowledges the support of everybody who contributed to the execution of this study. In particular, special acknowledgement is extended to the following people for continuous motivation and never-ending support:

- My parents, Francois and Wilma Bezuidenhout.

- My sister, Nicola Bezuidenhout.

- My friends and co-workers, Annette van Baalen and Jamie-Lee Nortjé.

- The programme director of the Department of Communication Science, Dr Mercia Coetzee.

- The former departmental chair of the Department of Communication Science, Prof. Johann de Wet.

A special word of thanks must be given to the greatest supervisor, mentor, friend, and travel companion in the world, Daleen Krige. The simple truth is that without your guidance and motivation, this study would never have realised. Thank you for always believing in me, even in times when I did not believe in myself. I dedicate this dissertation to you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

SUMMARY

The discipline of communication science is delineated by an intellectual smorgasbord of theoretical perspectives, principles, and assumptions about the communication phenomenon, which originated from interdisciplinary fields such as rhetoric, philosophy, psychology, sociology, semiotics, and many others. The multidisciplinary history of communication theories makes it difficult to establish a coherent, integrated canon of theory. Craig (1999), drawing on historical strands of theoretical thought, classified the complex intellectual heritage of communication theory into seven traditions. Although this constitutive metamodel of the seven traditions of communication theory enables holistic reflection and meta-discourse about communication theories, the complex and abstract characteristics of these seven traditions often remain incomprehensible to communication science scholars.

This study analysed the contemporary novel, *Atonement*, by Ian McEwan, for evidence of the seven communication traditions and the manner in which these traditions are illustrated in the narrative. The purpose of this research is to indicate that modern fiction can be used to make the practical application and comprehension of the multidisciplinary principles and assumptions of the seven communication traditions easier. In order to achieve this aim, this study employed a qualitative research methodology and a two-fold research design. An initial literature study aided the construction of a prior coding framework used during the content analysis to identify textual evidence of the characteristics of each of the seven communication traditions. The results provided evidence of all seven traditions in *Atonement* and illustrated the characteristics of the traditions through examples that resemble real-life communication situations and behaviour. This study demonstrated its premise that a contemporary novel like *Atonement* is an accessible medium for the practical illustration and comprehension of abstract communication theories and traditions.

Keywords

Communication theory; communication traditions; multidisciplinary heritage; characteristics of traditions; contemporary fiction; practical application and comprehension; qualitative content analysis.

OPSOMMING

Die vakrigting kommunikasiewetenskap verteenwoordig 'n intellektuele mengelmoes van teoretiese perspektiewe, beginsels, en aannames rakende die kommunikasiefenomeen, wat sy oorsprong het in interdissiplinêre velde soos retoriek, filosofie, sielkunde, sosiologie, semiotiek, en vele ander. Die multidissiplinêre geskiedenis van kommunikasieteorieë maak dit moeilik om 'n samehangende en geïntegreerde kanon van teorie te vestig. Deur gebruik te maak van historiese stringe van teoretiese denke, het Craig (1999) die ingewikkelde intellektuele erfenis van kommunikasieteorie volgens sewe tradisies geklassifiseer. Alhoewel hierdie samestellende metamodel van die sewe tradisies van kommunikasieteorie holistiese oorweging en meta-redevoering oor kommunikasieteorieë in staat stel, bly die ingewikkelde en abstrakte kenmerke van hierdie sewe tradisies dikwels onverstaanbaar vir kommunikasiewetenskapstudente.

Hierdie studie het die hedendaagse roman, *Atonement*, deur Ian McEwan, ontleed vir bewyse van die sewe kommunikasietradisies en die wyse waarop hierdie tradisies in die vertelling daarvan geïllustreer is. Die doel van hierdie navorsing is om aan te dui dat moderne fiksie gebruik kan word om die praktiese toepassing en begrip van die multidissiplinêre beginsels en aannames van die sewe kommunikasietradisies te vereenvoudig. Ten einde hierdie doelwit te bereik, het hierdie studie 'n kwalitatiewe navorsingsmetodologie en 'n tweeledige navorsingsontwerp gebruik. 'n Aanvanklike literatuurstudie het gehelp met die samestelling van 'n voorafgaande koderingsraamwerk, wat tydens die inhoudsontleding gebruik is om skriftelike bewyse van die kenmerke van elk van die sewe kommunikasietradisies te identifiseer. Die resultate het bewys gelewer van al sewe tradisies in *Atonement* en het die kenmerke van die tradisies geïllustreer deur middel van voorbeelde wat ooreenstem met werklike kommunikasiesituasies en -gedrag. Hierdie studie het sy uitgangspunt gedemonstreer dat 'n hedendaagse roman soos *Atonement* 'n

toeganklike medium is vir die praktiese uitbeelding en begrip van kommunikasieteorieë en -

tradisies.

Sleutelwoorde

Kommunikasieteorie; kommunikasietradisies; multidissiplinêre erfenis; kenmerke van

tradisies; hedendaagse fiksie; praktiese toepassing en begrip; kwalitatiewe

inhoudsontleding.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background

Stories have a central place in human existence. Stories create a universal language that transcend barriers and often communicate powerful truths. People like a good story, although it might be for different reasons, and almost "all communication, whether it is a private conversation or an academic lecture, seems to be most effective and memorable if it is structured like a story" (Bates & Gilbert 2008: 5). Walter Fisher first introduced the world to the narrative paradigm theory and the idea that human beings are, by nature, storytellers, and therefore humans like to create stories to represent and communicate their realities (Fisher 1987: 5; Cragan & Shields 1998: 151-152).

Contemporary novels are popular communication artefacts, indicative of Fisher's theory, which contain realistic, albeit fictional, characters, situations, and events that can communicate more than just a narrative plot. Short and Reeves (2009: 416) wrote that the modern novel provides contemporary content in the form of an accessible medium, which allows for the discovery of various communication theories and also enables the application of these abstract theories to become more comprehensible. "The novel can make scientific theory come alive for students" (De Wet 2011: 108), as it is a very useful way to illustrate underlying abstract theoretical assumptions and principles of communication theory.

Littlejohn and Foss (2008: 15) defined a theory as "an organised set of concepts, explanations, and principles of some aspect of human experience". By nature, theories are human constructions; they represent the various intellectual perspectives from which people see their environment and various other aspects of human experience, including the

complex phenomenon communication (Littlejohn 2007: 2, 5; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 15). The existing body of communication theory, which stems from a long line of interdisciplinary subjects such as rhetoric, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and many others (Beniger 1990: 711; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 4), explains the complexity of human communication in detail, yet it has proven difficult to comprehensively integrate and unify this multitheoretical canon of theory (Craig 1999: 131).

In an attempt to organise the diverse ways of talking and thinking about communication and the various theories it entails, Craig (1999) developed a meta-theoretical model referred to as the seven traditions of communication theory, which comprises the semiotic tradition, the phenomenological tradition, the cybernetic tradition, the sociopsychological tradition, the sociocultural tradition, the critical tradition, and the rhetorical tradition (Craig 1999: 132). These intellectual categories allow theories of similar points of origins to be classified together, while also providing unique theoretical assumptions and conceptualisations of communication (Craig 1999: 120). Although the seven traditions metamodel allows the masses of communication theory to be classified more coherently, a problem remains that communication theories and the seven historical traditions are abstract and complex in nature, often making it difficult for communication scholars to comprehend the practicality of communication theory.

Against this background, the research problem informing this study is that communication theories and the seven traditions are characterised by a complicated multidisciplinary nature which is often abstract and incomprehensible to communication scholars (Boromisza-Habashi 2013: 429). The proposition of this research study is that modern fiction "provides contemporary content in the form of an accessible medium" (Short & Reeves 2009: 416) that can be used for the practical application and illustration of communication traditions and theories. With practical examples resembling real-life situations and communication, the

abstract multitheoretical assumptions and principles of communication traditions can become more understandable for communication scholars.

This study proposes to illustrate this premise by utilising modern fiction in the form of the novel *Atonement* by Ian McEwan. McEwan has been called one of the finest writers of his generation (Matthews 2002). His 2001 novel, *Atonement*, winner of the W.H. Smith Literacy Award, has been named as one of the 100 best novels ever written, and is called "a contemporary classic of mesmerising narrative conviction" (*Ibid.*).

1.2   Research question and objectives

The purpose of this research is to indicate that a contemporary novel, such as *Atonement*, can serve as testimony of the seven traditions of communication theory and that the use of modern fiction can make the comprehension and practical application of the multitheoretical field of communication theories much easier.

The question posed in this research is: Does the novel, *Atonement*, contain evidence of the seven traditions of communication theory, and in which ways are these traditions illustrated in the narrative?

In order to investigate the mentioned research question, the following research objectives were set:

- To define the characteristics of each of the seven traditions of communication theory.
- To identify the seven traditions of communication theory as found in *Atonement*.
- To indicate the ways in which these seven traditions are illustrated in the novel.

1.3   Methodology and research design

In order to satisfy the above-mentioned objectives, this study was guided by the interpretivist paradigm and employed a qualitative research methodology and a two-fold research design. During the first phase, a literature study examined the unique concepts and characteristics of each of the seven traditions of communication theory. The second phase employed content analysis to investigate *Atonement* for evidence of the characteristics of the seven communication traditions and practical examples of the ways in which these concepts are exemplified in the narrative.

1.4   Structuring

Chapter 1 introduces the background and research problem, the research questions, the objectives and aim of the study, as well as a brief overview of the planned methodology and research design employed in this study.

Next, this study comprises a two-part literature study, with the main goal of illustrating the characteristics of the seven traditions of communication theory that emerged from the multidisciplinary history of communication theory. Part 1 of the literature study, Chapter 2, begins by briefly considering the multidisciplinary origins of communication theory and the dominant theoretical principles that inspired the characteristics of the seven traditions. Part 2 of the literature study, Chapter 3, firstly illustrates various failed attempts to classify the un-unified mass of communication theories, before examining Craig's constitutive metamodel of the seven traditions of communication theory.

Following the clearer understanding of the intellectual smorgasbord of communication theories and the various attempts to integrate them, Part 2 continues by examining the characteristics of each of the seven traditions before considering various critiques on and proposed amendments to the seven traditions classification. From the second part of the

literature study a framework for prior coding is constructed for use during the analysis stage of this research study.

In Chapter 4, the methodological framework of this study is explained and detail is provided regarding the research paradigm, choice of methodology, research design, methods of data collection and data analysis, and relevant ethical considerations. Chapter 5 reports the results of this study, and Chapter 6 discusses the implications of the results before finally concluding the study.

1.5   Summary

This introductory chapter briefly contextualised the background and research problem of this study. Against this backdrop, the main premise and subsequent purpose of this research study were identified. This chapter presented the research question and related research objectives, as well as a brief mention of the chosen methodological approach and research design followed to conduct this study. Finally, an overview of the structure of this dissertation was provided. The next chapter addresses the identified research problem in more detail by examining the multidisciplinary origins of communication theory.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE STUDY – PART 1:

THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY ORIGINS OF COMMUNICATION THEORY

2.1   Introduction

"… communication is a – perhaps *the* – fundamental social process. Without communication, human groups and societies would not exist. One can hardly devise theory or design research in any field of human behaviour without making some assumption about human communication" (Berger 1991: 103).

The phenomenon called *communication* is omnipresent, dynamic, and lies at the heart of all human affairs; from individual behaviour to societal structures, languages, cultures, and even artistic expressions (Dance 1982: 244). Human communication is a unique ability that separates and distinguishes humans from other animal species (Littlejohn 1983: 4; Steinberg 2007: 5). Providing one conclusive definition of such an abstract and omnipresent phenomenon is nearly impossible, as each scholar who has ever attempted to make sense of communication has conceptualised it differently (Littlejohn 1983: 5). Hoben (1954: 77) conceptualised communication as the "verbal interchange of thoughts or ideas", while Anderson (1959: 5) noted that communication is a process "by which we understand others and endeavour to be understood by them". Griffin, Ledbetter and Sparks (2015: 6) define communication as "the relational process of creating and interpreting messages that elicit a response", thus incorporating the notions of interchange, process, and understanding previously put forth by Hoben (1954) and Anderson (1959). Berelson and Steiner (1964: 254) specified that communication is an interactive process that transmits "information, ideas, emotion [and] skills by the use of symbols, [which can be] words, pictures, figures, graphs, etc.". Mead's (1963: 107) definition of communication as any human behaviour used

for interaction, was accepted in Gamble and Gamble's (2013: 4) conceptualisation of communication as "the deliberate or accidental transfer of meaning". The purpose of this section is, however, not to seek one comprehensive definition of communication, but rather to illustrate the complex and rich origins of views regarding existing theoretical knowledge of communication.

The fact that there are many diverse ways to interpret and define communication has turned it into a "portmanteau" term inclusive of any and all ideas or meanings about human behaviour (West & Turner 2014: 5), hence Berger's (1991) statement in the opening quote that any theory or research about human behaviour often includes assumptions and explanations about human communication, as a fundamental social process included in all other social activities. It is human nature to seek interpretation, understanding, and explanations of all significant experiences and phenomena, especially those phenomena central to human existence, like communication (Littlejohn 2007: 2). The academic world has an abundance of *theories* because humans need to know, describe, understand, and explain reality that can be linked to the process of communication (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 15).

Craig and Muller (2007: ix) observed that "theorising is a formalised extension of everyday sense-making and problem solving"; hence the idea that theories are human constructions that offer insight into an individual's perspective on aspects of human experience (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 15). These man-made, subjective explanations of reality offer unique observations of the universe that explain how and why events occur (Turner 1986: 5). Because the communication phenomenon has such a ubiquitous nature, scholars have long been researching it and formulated many theories to explain and understand what human communication really is – making it one of the oldest phenomena studied by various academic disciplines (Emanuel 2007: 3).

The academic understanding of human communication, however, does not stem from a single line of enquiry (Littlejohn 1982: 244); instead, much of what is known about the communication phenomenon has been produced through scientific study by a large variety of humanities and social sciences disciplines (Harper 1979: 1; Dance 1982: x; Littlejohn 1983: 300; King 1989: 6; Emanuel 2007: 3; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 4; Craig 2008a: 675). In most of these multidisciplinary fields, communication has been treated as embedded in human behaviour, which consequently means that most of the knowledge and understanding that exists on communication today has "arisen indirectly from the investigation of other related processes" (Littlejohn 1983: 300), with the result that diverse conceptions of communication were independently researched and theorised from the perspectives of these different disciplines (Craig 1999: 121). This resulted in an "intellectual smorgasbord" (Zelizer 2015: 413) of methodologies that were used in an attempt to connect theory to practice.

While this multidisciplinary smorgasbord gives communication scholars a multifaceted understanding of human communication in all its complexity, it also creates a problematic lack of integration, unity, and coherence in communication theory to the point where it was seriously debated whether this field can be granted the status of an actual academic discipline or sub-discipline (Littlejohn 1982: 245; Beniger 1990: 698; Murphy 1991: 832; Craig 2008b: 18; Christians 2010: 140; Boromisza-Habashi 2013: 421). In an attempt to solve this problem, the seven traditions of communication theory was created as a constitutive metamodel that could potentially unify existing theories of communication, despite their theoretical diversity (Craig 1999: 124-126).

This chapter is the first of a two-part literature study which will provide an overview of the multidisciplinary origins of communication theory (King 1989: 6; Emanuel 2007: 3). While it is not the aim of this work to offer a complete historic account of each discipline that

contributed to the conceptualisation of communication theory, it is, however, necessary to consider the relevant historical time periods during which contributing disciplines originated and through which they evolved in order to better clarify the origins of communication theory. History is generally divided into different time periods, of which the oldest is the period of Ancient Greece (776 BCE – 480 BCE), which was followed by Classical Greece (400 BCE – 500 CE), the Middle Ages (400 – 1400 CE), and the Renaissance (1300 – 1600 CE). The Enlightenment (1600 – 1800 CE) was followed by the age of Modernity (17th century), and the age of Postmodernity is classified from the latter part of the 20th century to the present (Rabinowitz 2014). These historical time periods will be used in the discussions of the academic disciplines of rhetoric, philosophy, linguistics, semiotics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and other miscellaneous fields (Bryant 1953: 424; Littlejohn 1983: 300). The origins and subsequent evolution, focus areas, and theoretical assumptions of each of these disciplines will be pointed out to illustrate the multidisciplinary contributions to modern-day communication theory.

2.2   Rhetoric

The first theoretical contributions are considered to stem from the field of rhetoric, in which the first studies about communication originated some 2 400 years ago (King 1989: 6). During the time period of Classical Greece (5th to 1st century BCE), the classical rhetoric period was characterised by the delivery of effective public speeches and verbally persuaded audiences (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 49). Communication was thus seen as a useful tool which, if used correctly, could turn any argument into a believable truth (De Wet 2010: 28). Communication was "the art of speechmaking", and philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle devoted their studies to ways to correct, improve, and perfect rhetorical discourse (Harper 1979: 1; Littlejohn 1983:134; De Wet 2010: 28). It was during this period that Aristotle provided a definition of rhetoric which is still used today: Rhetoric may be

defined as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (De Wet 2010: 29).

The key intellectual contributors during the period of classical rhetoric were Plato and Aristotle, both in fact philosophers who applied their philosophical thinking to rhetoric (Angelo 1998). While intellectual developments in rhetoric heightened during the Classical age, the foundation discipline of philosophy was already well established and thus the theoretical contributions made to the field of rhetoric contain evidence of the cross-fertilisation between the two disciplines (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 50). Further proof of the interchange between rhetoric and philosophy is offered by Kennedy (1980: 16), who distinguished between three divisions in the field of classical rhetoric: technical rhetoric, sophistic rhetoric, and philosophical rhetoric. Technical and sophistic rhetoric focus on the various elements of the communication process, such as the communicator, recipient, medium, and message, and the optimal use of these components in a certain way and at a certain time in order to successfully persuade audiences (De Wet 2010: 27). Philosophical rhetoric, on the other hand, developed from criticisms against this one-dimensional portrayal of rhetoric as the mere skilful manipulation of audiences through the clever use of communication elements (De Wet 2010: 28).

During the Middle Ages, emphasis in rhetoric was placed on the arrangement and style of communication messages (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 50). "Verbal composition" and "artificial elegance of language" were considered enough to delight and move audiences (Bryant 1953: 403; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 50). In contrast to only oral rhetoric, there was also an increase in medieval letter writing as the dominant communication medium and rhetorical discourse expanded to include audience-appropriate salutations, language, and format (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 50).

These characteristics of rhetoric persisted during the start of the Renaissance when humanist scholars rediscovered classical rhetorical texts in terms of their forms or genres and written communication received attention as an art form (Bryant 1953: 403; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 50). With focus on the written word, humanists became considerably more interested in the "power of the word" as a means to discover and disclose rational reality and knowledge, moving away from philosophy as the foundation discipline which has dominated since the classical rhetoric era (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 50). Humanities scholars started studying language and its power and this was the beginning of the academic field of linguistics (discussed further in Section 2.4).

From the latter part of the Renaissance and especially during the age of Enlightenment and onwards, rhetoric became a method to discover ideas and knowledge (Bryant 1953: 412). The age of Enlightenment is characterised by the notion that rationalism and rhetoric is a means to know something absolutely and objectively by determining "what questions to ask" (Bryant 1953: 409). Logic or knowledge was seen as separate from language, yet the only way to communicate the truth once it was known was to use correctly organised language (rhetoric) to share knowledge in such a way to allow rational understanding, which could also affect change in attitudes and behaviours (Bryant 1953: 414; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 50). During these times, rhetoric became a useful method of discovery and was incorporated into various other humanities and social sciences disciplines, such as psychology, cultural anthropology, sociology, politics, and many others (Bryant 1953: 401).

In the current age of postmodernity, rhetorical studies continue to make use of the theories from classical rhetoric to investigate contemporary rhetorical discourse (Bryant 1953: 424; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 51; De Wet 2010: 37), while other postmodern rhetorical studies adopt a more critical perspective to question societal privileges and inequalities found in societal discourse by analysing rhetorical features associated with gender, race, class,

sexuality, and any subsequent social imbalances that might arise (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 51).

Since its origins in Ancient Greece, rhetoric has evolved and has continued to develop theoretical perspectives about communication. While rhetoric is the oldest recorded study of communication, it is, however, not the oldest academic discipline – the oldest discipline, which is discussed next, is philosophy, which originated in the 6th century BCE (Angelo 1998).

2.3   Philosophy

Philosophy has a rich inheritance of theoretical perspectives which seeped into the foundations of other parallel disciplines, such as rhetoric (as mentioned in Section 2.2) and semiotics and linguistics (which will be discussed in the next section) (Angelo 1998; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 50). Much like communication, philosophy is too complex a phenomenon to express with a single definition, yet some common ideas include "pursuit of wisdom", "origin of human learning", and "the effort to understand [human] existence in a rational way" (Angelo 1998). Philosophy deals with the subject matter of human existence and seeks to gain knowledge about it through rational questioning or critical thinking (*Ibid.*).

Although the historical development of philosophy is rich and detailed, the main intellectual trends become evident when dividing the discipline's theoretical development into six general time periods. The first era of Ancient Greek philosophy (600 – 150 BCE) saw the development of the key principles of this discipline, among which was the principle of questioning or wondering, for during this period to philosophise meant to "wonder" about life and all related matters (Redpath 2010: 84). The era called Classical Philosophy coincides with the aforementioned period of classical rhetoric. Philosophy and rhetoric have a cross-fertilising relationship. From a philosophical perspective, rhetoric was seen as much more

than just the "technique of persuasion"; it was rather seen as "the speech which is the basis of rational thought" (Grassi 1976: 202). The period of medieval philosophy was dominated by the development of theology as philosophers such as St Augustine and William Ockham explored the "mysteries of faith" through rational questioning and thought (Angelo 1998). Modern philosophy (14th to 18th century) saw the formation of approaches like rationalism and empiricism.

It was, however, during Postmodernism that the most significant theoretical assumptions about communication emerged from philosophy (Angelo 1998). From this academic discipline, the theoretical notion emerged that communication is paramount in human existence because it is the only phenomenon through which an individual can "authentically express him-/herself" (Jansen & Steinberg 1991: 20; Herrmann 2008: 85). The idea that communication is the means through which meaning is given to human experiences also originated from philosophy (Heidegger 1959: 13; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 39; Hope 2015: 567), along with the notion that meaning is assigned to experiences during a circular interpretation process that draws on prejudgements or preconceptions in order to understand the relevant subject matter (Deetz 1978: 18; Jansen & Steinberg 1991: 34; Matheson 2009: 711). As mentioned before, these and other philosophical perspectives did not only seep into the discipline of rhetoric, but also into semiotics and linguistics, which are discussed next.

2.4   Semiotics and linguistics

Semiotics and linguistics stemmed from such similar intellectual thinking that they are presented here in the same section due to their parallel philosophies about signs and language. As discussed in Section 2.2, an increased awareness of, and interest in, the power of human language was demonstrated during the Renaissance. Even before this

period of increased attention to the power of human language, the importance of language in rhetoric was illustrated by Aristotle's emphasis on the correct arrangement of language (*Dispositio*) and use of appropriate language (*Elocutio*) for effective persuasion in his five canons of rhetoric (De Wet 2010: 33). Similar to a heightened awareness of the power of language, the importance of signs and language in the emergence of meaningful life experiences also influenced the philosophical positions mentioned before in Section 2.3 (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 39; Pencak 2010: 24; Petrilli & Ponzio 2010: 35; Hope 2015: 570).

In this regard, the works of Charles Sanders Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure laid the foundations of both semiotics and linguistics (Leeds-Hurwitz 1993: 4; Redpath 2010: 83). Semiotics contributed various philosophies about signs and symbols, such as the triadic relationship between a sign, its referent, and its meaning (Lyne 1980: 157; Littlejohn 1996: 64; Fabbrichesi & Marietti 2006: x), or the abstract, ambiguous, and arbitrary nature of signs and symbols (Jansen & Steinberg 1991: 64-65), to communication theory. From the field of linguistics developed numerous assumptions about language, its structure, and its meaning, such as the premise that "all humans have an innate capacity for language" (Trenholm 1986: 85). However, in order to reach linguistic competence, people must learn the mental rules which govern language production and reception (Fourie 1998: 31; Călinescu 2012: 93). Furthermore, this discipline contributed the idea that "the meaning of language depends on the context of use" (Littlejohn 1983: 104; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 45). There are many theoretical assumptions about communication that stem from the disciplines of semiotics and linguistics, but it is the discipline of psychology that has provided a generous mass of principles about communication to be known as "the biggest discipline dealing with communication" (Littlejohn 1982: 259).

2.5 Psychology

The discipline of psychology has a much-disputed origin, as some psychology scholars view the start of their discipline as in 1879 when Wilhelm Wundt began the first psychology laboratory devoted to psychological research on sensations and feelings, while other scholars recognise that psychological developments began much earlier in the two parallel streams of Ancient Greek philosophy and physics (Hatfield 2002: 208; Kalat 2014: 15). Psychology has since developed into several specialist branches that each theorises about different psychological aspects, all of which fundamentally involve communication. The fields of experimental psychology, behavioural psychology, cognitive psychology, and social psychology thus contribute numerous important theoretical ideas about communication.

Experimental psychology tests sensations, perceptions, learning, performance, motivation, and human emotions in controlled laboratory settings (Hatfield 2002: 212; Plotnik & Kouyoumdjian 2014: 18) and numerous theoretical hypotheses about these topics and their impact on communication have emerged from this subfield. Like experimental psychology, behavioural psychology is concerned with the human mind and cognitive processes, but this subfield does not use experimental methodologies to investigate these topics (Hatfield 2002: 221; Kalat 2014: 19). Instead, behavioural psychology uses social science methodologies in empirical investigations, and in doing so, this branch laid the foundation for cognitive psychology (Hatfield 2002: 221; Kalat 2014: 20).

Although predominantly concerned with the study of perception, cognitive psychology also includes related cognitive matters like attention, memory, problem solving, thought, and learning (Hatfield 2002: 221; Plotnik & Kouyoumdjian 2014: 19). A large body of ideas about the communication process originates from this field, including theories describing cognitive structures and how people perceive and interpret phenomena during communicative interactions (Trenholm 1986: 61). Another theoretical assumption that emerged from this

branch is the notion that people attribute causes to all human behaviour because they want to understand their own behaviour (which includes communication), as well as the behaviour and communication of others (Littlejohn 1983: 185; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 69).

Cognitive psychology also explains how people use "internal anchors or reference points" based on past experiences and knowledge to judge the communication statements of others (Littlejohn 1983: 144; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 72), and how humans at all times need to experience consistency and balance in cognitive processing (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 78). When people experience feelings of cognitive discomfort and tension, they are motivated to change cognitive elements in order to re-establish balance (Littlejohn 1983: 150; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 79; West & Turner 2014: 110).

Investigations into social problems are labelled as social psychology and many of the social problems investigated in this subfield involve communication (Plotnik & Kouyoumdjian 2014: 18). Social psychologists often provide useful theories about the functions of communication in social interaction (Ness 1955: 29; Hornsey, Gallois & Duck 2008: 751), but this field also studies topics like stereotypes, prejudice, attitudes, group behaviour, aggression, and attraction (Plotnik & Kouyoumdjian 2014: 18). The premise that communication is important in social interactions because it is the only means available to reduce uncertainty and develop relationships is an example of a theoretical contribution from social psychology (Trenholm 1986: 147). Another example is the assumption that people adapt their verbal and nonverbal communication to others in order to accommodate others during social interaction (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 152; West & Turner 2014: 493-494). Social psychology, with its focus on social problems and social interactions, has a more direct and sometimes overlapping association to sociology, and some seminal sociological theories are also influential in social psychological studies (Ness 1955: 29).

2.6   Sociology

The foundation of sociological intellectual approaches emerged in the early 19th century in reaction to the noticeable changes in society that resulted from the Industrial Revolution (Giddens 1976: 705). At that time, the world was already interdependent following the discovery of new worlds during the age of Enlightenment, and with Modernism that followed, numerous scholars began to investigate the impacts of these events on society and social activity (Ferrante 2006: 15).

Sociology as a discipline is especially interested in human relationships and human activity, which are seen to possess several "hidden" levels of meaning. As a result, the focus of sociological studies is on these hidden levels found in society and the variety of social interactions that take place in it, which thus include communication behaviour (Ferrante 2006: 6). Sociologists study "social facts" that exist outside of individuals, but that have the power to coerce and influence their behaviour, actions, and communication when they interact in society. Social facts theory, an original sociological concept developed by Émile Durkheim, includes ideas, emotions, and socially accepted ways of behaving (Järvikoski 1996: 78; Ferrante 2006: 7). Society is conceptualised as a systematic and social phenomenon that is formed by the interactions of human beings, directly or indirectly, with one another (Parsons 1954: 69; Ferrante 2006: 7).

Psychology and sociology, although two separate disciplines with definite borders, contain strands of cross-fertilisation in terms of their topics of investigation as alluded to in Section 2.5. Both sociology and psychology are concerned with human behaviour and the relationships that form through communication in social interactions, although both disciplines approach these subject matters differently. Sociology considers human behaviour as social and it considers communication and interaction as they occur in groups, with added focus on the societal conditions and factors that impact these processes

(Parsons 1954: 68). Psychology, in contrast, is concerned with human behaviour as exhibited by the individual and the individual cognitive factors that impact how an individual communicates and interacts in relationships (*Ibid.*).

Sociological perspectives draw on the theoretical foundations of classical sociology and its three main contributors, namely Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, and Marx Weber (Swingewood 1997: 337). Sociology also developed significant intellectual perspectives such as the conflict approach, the functionalist approach, and the symbolic interactionist approach (Ferrante 2006; Burbank & Martins 2009: 26). Marx's work on communism and class conflict inspired the conflict perspective of sociology (Swingewood 1997: 340; Ferrante 2006: 43; Burbank & Martins 2009: 26) and laid the foundation for critical studies and critical theory developed by the Frankfurt School (which is discussed in Section 2.8.1) (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 333; Burbank & Martins 2009: 26).

Durkheim's theory of social facts and Weber's work on social actions demonstrated the functionalist perspective of sociology, which is based on the assumption that society is structured as a "system of interrelated, interdependent parts" and that each part has a pivotal function to fulfil (Eisenstadt 1990: 244; Ferrante 2006: 34). From a sociological perspective, communication is the means through which societal parts interact and connect with one another in order to form a coherent, functioning system.

The symbolic interactionist perspective is one of the most prominent theoretical perspectives from sociology included in communication theory. Central to this approach is human communication, which is conceptualised as any social interaction during which shared symbols are exchanged and interpreted (Rogers 1994: 170; Ferrante 2006: 49). Symbols form the basic unit of any social interaction (Milliken & Schreiber 2012: 268) and their meanings are determined during social interaction (Wood 2004: 94; Milliken & Schreiber 2012: 268; Griffin et al. 2015: 55-56). A central factor in social interactions is culture and, as

will be illustrated in the next section, the study of culture is the focus of anthropology (Robb 1992: 10).

2.7   Anthropology

Anthropology is defined as the "study of humanity from a broad perspective" (Peoples & Bailey 2010: 2), and originated from early attempts to make sense of "exotic" people and their diverse appearances, languages, daily practices, and ways of life (Layton 1997: 1). The discipline of anthropology emerged involuntarily over the course of extensive historical development, tracing back to the time of Ancient Greece, just like the other humanities disciplines considered previously (Robb 1992: 2; Peoples & Bailey 2010: 70; Eriksen & Nielsen 2013: 3).

The reason anthropology is considered to have originated "involuntarily" is because the earliest anthropological works were in fact the journals of travellers and their stories of other tribes, cities, and people, such as that of Ancient Greek traveller and historian Herodotus, Venetian trader Marco Polo, and various other European explorers who travelled all over the world as part of the expansion of European colonial empires (Robb 1992: 2; Peoples & Bailey 2010: 70; Eriksen & Nielsen 2013: 3).

Before the age of Enlightenment, anthropological reports contained descriptions of people with "strange appearances, not altogether sane or intelligent, with souls to be saved" (Robb 1992: 4). Very quickly, European thinkers and scholars began studying the "primitives" or "savages", commonly referred to as "the Other", with their "different customs", "barbarian practices", and non-religious ways (Robb 1992: 5). The age of Enlightenment brought reason and mechanical, statistical knowledge to Europe, further dividing the "enlightened" Europeans and the primitive Other and fuelling ethnocentric studies (Robb 1992: 6-8; Peoples & Bailey 2010: 70).

The 19th century marked a significant change in the nature of anthropology, with archaeological discoveries of earlier civilisations in Europe itself in the mid-1800s (Robb 1992 6-8; Peoples & Bailey 2010: 70) and the emergence of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution in 1859 (Peoples & Bailey 2010: 71). All humanity was now considered as "rational animals who emerged out of evolution", and the underdeveloped societies of the Other were merely "people at different stages of parallel development", which would ultimately end in civilisation, similar to that of Europe (Robb 1992: 9). Anthropology evolved to become a field of study in which scholars could not only describe the Other, but would also gain knowledge about the Self and its historical development in an attempt to provide a holistic account of the origins of humanity (*Ibid.*).

By the 20th century, anthropology had developed into a comprehensive academic field, with its main focus on culture and cultural differences, as the Other is only different from the Self in terms of their culture (Robb 1992: 10). Herder is considered the father of the anthropological concepts of "culture" and "cultural relativism". For Herder, a *Volk* is a group of people who has had "a shared holistic experience" in a "common history", shaped by the immediate natural environment, which creates a national character (*Volksgeist*), which can only be expressed in language, folklore, and myths (in other words, culture) (Eriksen & Nielsen 2013: 16). It is from Herder's ideas that the important notion of communication as culture springs, because to study culture is to study communication, and to study communication is to study culture (Steinberg & Angelopulo 2015: 59).

The historical development of anthropology as an academic discipline has also laid the foundation for various anthropological areas of study, including archaeological or biological anthropology, cultural anthropology, and social anthropology. Social anthropology focuses on humanity as it manifests in society as a whole and studies "social behaviour, generally in institutionalised forms …, in contemporary societies or in historic societies" (Evans-Pritchard

1951: 5, 11). Societal institutions such as family, political organisations, legal procedures, and religious cults are studied from a holistic perspective, which includes the entire sphere of society and the role communication plays in these societal structures (Evans-Pritchard 1951: 11, 45).

Anthropologists Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski's theoretical contributions to the structure of society and the functions of social institutions form the foundational approach from which social anthropologists aim to "learn more about the nature of human society" (Evans-Pritchard 1951: 91; Applebaum 1987: 3). An important social institution in any society is social relationships, which are "established and maintained by interpersonal communication" (Littlejohn 1983: 164). It is therefore not surprising that the "line of theory known as *relational communication*" originated in social anthropology from the work of anthropologist Gregory Bateson and his fellow researchers, who became known as the Palo Alto Group (Littlejohn 1983: 165).

Bateson and fellow scholars Paul Watzlawick, Don Jackson, and Janet Beavin Bavelas were the key contributors of the Palo Alto Group, and postulated five axioms about communication and interaction in relationships based on their research. The first, and most renowned axiom of the Palo Alto Group, that "one cannot *not* communicate", offered a then ground-breaking theoretical assertion that not all communication is necessarily intentional (Littlejohn 1983: 166; Rogers 1994: 98; Miller 2005: 188-190).

2.8   Miscellaneous fields

As evident from the previous sections, the bulk of the existing canon of communication theory originated from the established disciplines of psychology, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and rhetoric. There are, however, a number of theoretical approaches that originated from fields other than those already discussed, such as information theory and

cybernetics, which evolved from biology, mathematics, and engineering (Emanuel 2007: 3; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 4). There are also certain theoretical approaches that are so universal in character that they are applied in all social science and humanity disciplines and thus cannot identify with only one field of origin, such as general systems theory and critical theory. For these reasons, these miscellaneous theories are presented here to illustrate their place in the canon of communication knowledge.

2.8.1   Critical theory

As mentioned in Section 2.6, critical studies originated with sociological roots in the Frankfurt School, which in turn drew its inspiration from the work of Karl Marx and his direct emphasis on conflict and indirect call for criticism of societal structures (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 47). The original critical theory developed by the Frankfurt School was based closely on Marxist thought until key critical theorists like Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, and Lowenthal developed critical theory to address not only Marxism but also neo-Marxism and contemporary critical theories such as feminist theories and postmodernism (Rogers 1994: 113; Craig & Muller 2007: 85). Contemporary critical studies have thus moved away from the limited scope of the sociological investigation of social classes and conflict to a broader multidisciplinary subject field of "critical self-consciousness of historical subjects in a struggle" (Miller 2005: 69).

Jürgen Habermas, a contemporary critical theorist from the Frankfurt School, developed the theory of universal pragmatics and stated that "communication is essential to emancipation because language is the means by which the emancipator's interest is fulfilled" (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 334). Habermas' critical theory both highlights the important role of communication in the struggle against social injustices and illustrates the general reasoning found in most contemporary critical theories. Critical theories such as feminist theories and

the muted group theory are examples of intellectual critique that drew on communication to create awareness of and allow reflection on everyday "social practices that create or uphold disadvantage, inequity, or oppression" (Wood 2004: 259).

2.8.2 Information theory

Information theory, developed by Claude Shannon (a telecommunications engineer for Bell Telephone Laboratories) and Warren Weaver (an academic from the discipline of applied mathematics and electronics), is often categorised as one of the first theories of communication science (Steinberg & Angelopulo 2015: 28). Shannon and Weaver's information theory originated from a mixture of physics and mathematics principles as applied in engineering (Littlejohn 1983: 115; Steinberg & Angelopulo 2015: 28). Although information theory concerns the element of "information", which is central to the communication process, creators Shannon and Weaver were not concerned with the content of information or the expression or interpretation of its meaning (*Ibid.*). Their main focus was the successful technical transmission of information over the channel of a telephone cable with the least amount of interference or noise (Littlejohn 1982: 270-271; Steinberg & Angelopulo 2015: 28).

Shannon and Weaver's theory included a visual illustration of the communication process, which depicted communication as the linear flow of information from sender to receiver over a specialised communication channel (Wood 2004: 33). While this model of communication was an inaccurate representation of the complex process of communication, its theoretical premise laid the foundation in which other, more accurate communication models were soon devised (Tubbs, Moss & Papastefanou 2012: 9).

2.8.3 General systems theory and cybernetics

The final two miscellaneous contributions considered are the two theoretical approaches of general systems theory and cybernetics. These two approaches are both abstract in nature and share some general assumptions about systems. Rather than being a specific theory explaining a certain phenomenon, these approaches make general statements about phenomena that can be, and have been, applied to any field of study and content area (Littlejohn 1982: 271, 273; Littlejohn 1983: 39). These approaches are thus frequently presented as communication theories since their core principles have often been applied to the study of communication phenomena, but their true origins lie in other academic fields.

General systems theory emerged from the field of biology and influenced intellectual thought in other disciplines such as psychology, anthropology, and even mathematics. General systems theory provides general principles on the "universal principles of order" and related concepts such as hierarchies, processes, and cybernetics (Monge 1977: 20; Littlejohn 1982: 271, 273; Littlejohn 1983: 30-32). Systems theory defines a system as the whole of a number of integrated parts with interdependent functions (Monge 1977: 20; Littlejohn 1983: 30-32). All systems share characteristics of "wholeness, interdependence, self-regulation, balance, and adaptability" (Littlejohn 1983: 30-32). When applying the systems perspective to communication, it is possible to gain an enlightening understanding of the communication process and its complexity (Littlejohn 1983: 29). The communication process, with all its elements such as the communicator, messages, meanings, channels and mediums, and feedback, is a micro-system of unified interdependent parts needed to function in a macro-system of interactions between members of a societal system.

The cybernetic approach draws on the universal principles of systems conceived by general systems theory and places emphasis on one of the key system-related concepts needed for self-regulation, namely feedback (Littlejohn 1983: 33; Rogers 1994: 386).

Cybernetic theory, originating from mathematics, was originally introduced to communication science by Norbert Wiener, who conceptualised feedback as the key component of creating and maintaining balance in a self-regulating system (Littlejohn 1982: 271). Balance is essential for the survival of systems as they cannot, by their ordered nature, exist in chaos. Systems need "order", which is achieved in "a state of balance or homeostasis" (Jansen & Steinberg 1991: 40-41). Feedback thus becomes a mechanism through which a system can control itself and its environment by receiving constant "loops" of feedback about the conditions of the system and its environment (Monge 1977: 20; Littlejohn 1982: 271; Jansen & Steinberg 1991: 40-41).

2.9   Conclusion

This chapter illustrated how, during their historical evolution, the disciplines of rhetoric, philosophy, semiotics and linguistics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and a few other miscellaneous fields indirectly researched and theorised the phenomenon communication. This is by no means an all-inclusive account of *all* academic fields or theories that developed the discipline of communication science, but in essence this chapter aimed to indicate the broad origins of the intellectual smorgasbord that is communication theory today.

There is no denying that the multiple disciplines that indirectly study communication contributed theoretical concepts and principles that are so essential in aiding the academic comprehension of communication that they cannot be disregarded in this field's body of knowledge. Despite the advantage of an in-depth understanding of the complicated process that is human communication, this incoherent body of theories also presents communication science with its biggest challenge: to order and unify the discipline's theoretical foundation. The literature study continues in Part 2 to address this issue.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE STUDY – PART 2:

THE EMERGENCE OF THE SEVEN TRADITIONS OF COMMUNICATION THEORY

3.1   Introduction

"Communication theory is enormously rich in the range of ideas that fall within its scope … [Yet] communication theorists apparently neither agree nor disagree about much of anything. There is no canon of general theory to which they all refer. There are no common goals that unite them, no contentious issues that divide them. For the most part, they simply ignore each other" (Craig 1999: 119).

The previous chapter provided a brief explanation of the multidisciplinary origins of the field of communication theory. The problem is, however, as Craig (1999) pointed out in the opening quotation, that there is no proper organisation of communication theories that can coherently unify the body of communication theory available to communication scholars. Communication scholars have long expressed a need for the "rich intellectual heritage of communication theory" (Craig 1999: 130-131) to be better unified or organised (Murphy 1991: 832; Boromisza-Habashi 2013: 421), although none could find a classification system to accommodate the diversity due to the field's diverse origins. Some attempts of classification were made by examining various aspects of the history of communication science, while other scholars instead tried to divide the field into domains or contexts. None of these efforts, however, proved satisfactory to form a canon of communication theory, as briefly illustrated below.

Richmond and McCroskey (2009: 223), for example, recognised the "long and distinguished history" of the origins of communication theory and divided human communication theory into two groups, namely rhetorical communication and relational communication. Rhetorical communication organises communication theories dealing with influence and persuasion, while relational communication includes communication theories addressing interaction and interpersonal relationships, signs, symbols, and shared messages, and the creation of shared meanings in contexts (Richmond & McCroskey 2009: 223-228). The obvious problem with this two-group classification is that the delineation of the categories is not exhaustive enough to satisfactorily accommodate all the diverse theories on communication and thus proves to be an insufficient classification for communication theory.

Another example of a failed integration attempt is the historical model proposed by Löblich and Scheu (2011), in which three approaches were identified, namely the intellectual, biographical, and institutional. The intellectual approach delineates the cognitive developments of communication theory by exploring origins, paradigms, and methodologies (*Ibid.*). According to this classification, biographical histories weave a narrative thread through the lives of prominent communication scholars, while the institutional approach documents the intellectual contributions from communication research studies by specific academic or research institutions (Löblich & Scheu 2011: 4-5). Classifying communication theories solely according to their historical origin becomes problematic given that numerous theoretical ideas originated from the work of multiple scholars from different academic institutions and fields at approximately the same time in history.

Given communication theory's complicated history, some scholars chose to rather divide communication theory into domains based on the dominant themes addressed by the theories. One example of the use of thematic domains is Littlejohn (1996: 13-17), who classified communication theories into structural and functional theories, cognitive and

behavioural theories, interactionist theories, interpretive theories, and critical theories – to name but a few. A different set of themes were, however, used by Wood (2004: 23-26), who categorised communication theories based on symbolic activity, performance, meaning, relationships, communities, and postmodern thinking. It becomes clear that while thematic domains might prove to be a more useful classification than historical models, the fact that there is no standardised vocabulary of classification to which all communication scholars can refer, adds to the incoherence of the field (Craig 1993: 28).

Some communication scholars adopted a more standardised division of the field by using the contexts of communication as criteria for grouping theories. Theories addressing the individual are allocated to intrapersonal communication or "the self" (West & Turner 2014: 34-35), while theories about interaction or relationships are assigned to interpersonal communication (Trenholm 1986: 18; Griffin et al. 2015: xi). Other popular contexts used for grouping theories are group communication, public communication, and mass communication (Trenholm 1986: 19-21; West & Turner 2014: 35-40; Griffin et al. 2015: xi). Although this contextual classification allows for the use of more universal terminology, this approach is also flawed because the theories divided into different contexts remain unintegrated and separated, while the rich multidisciplinary origins and influences of theories are not acknowledged. It is exactly this disunity to which Craig (1999) referred in the opening quotation when stating that "there are no common goals that unite them".

To address the lack of theoretical unity in communication theory, Craig (1999) developed a metamodel called the seven traditions of communication theory. This chapter firstly considers Craig's reasoning behind the construction of this metamodel, as well as his intended goal for the seven traditions. Following this, all seven traditions are discussed to not only illustrate their core assumptions and theoretical character, but also to indicate how these traditions allow the comprehensive classification of the wide range of existing

communication theories. This literature study concludes by considering various critiques against and proposed amendments to the seven traditions metamodel.

3.2 The seven traditions of communication theory

In 1999, Craig's seminal work, *Communication theory as a field*, offered a meaningful attempt to reconstruct or reclassify the field of communication. Craig (1999) argued that there was evidence of strands of ideas that "emerge, split, recombine, and spread across disciplines", which become evident when examining the multidisciplinary origins of existing communication theories (Craig 1999: 124). Drawing on these historical points of origin, Craig constructed the seven traditions of communication theory. These seven "distinct intellectual traditions" (Cooren 2014: 1) grouped together theories and perspectives with similar points of origin and shared representation of communication (Craig 1999: 120). Each of the seven traditions presents a customised conceptualisation of communication and a specific historical angle or "pre-understanding" (Caldwell 2014: 3) from which questions or potential problems about communication are formulated (Maniglier 2012: 21; Caldwell 2014: 5). These seven traditions are thus "historicised thought" (Craig 2007: 130) that provide a coherent metamodel ideal for "reflecting on the communication field in a holistic way" (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 34).

Essentially the seven traditions of communication theory was designed as a *constitutive metamodel* of communication which can create "a conceptual space" for different theories to engage in *meta-discourse* in order to achieve *dialogical-dialectical coherence* in the theoretically diverse field of communication theory (Craig 1999: 124).

The model is defined as *constitutive* because it "conceptualises communication as a constitutive process that produces and reproduces shared meaning" (Craig 1999: 125). It is also a *metamodel* because it provides the necessary means to communicate about various

theoretical assumptions about communication (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 34). The metamodel allows *meta-discourse*, which refers to formal communication about communication from "several different intellectual traditions" (Craig 2005: 663).

With the construction of this constitutive metamodel, Craig wanted to achieve more than merely a useful classification system to order a fragmented and divided field. The ultimate goals of the constitutive metamodel were, firstly, to present a way to unify the intellectual smorgasbord of communication theory due to "certain complementaries and tensions" between existing communication theories (Craig 1999: 124). Once aware of points of similarity and difference, communication scholars are encouraged to construct arguments between different theoretical stances (Craig & Muller 2007: 66; Chung, Barnett, Kim & Lackaff 2013: 986). When scholars engage in debate and discussion, a dialogue emerges that opens a space in which it is possible to achieve coherence in the field (Cooren 2014: 2). Because of the diverse intellectual inheritance of communication theory, there are many differences, or tensions, between theoretical perspectives. Using theoretical meta-discourse, scholars of the field can "turn back on itself to debate these differences", thereby creating a *dialogical-dialectical* field "unified in theoretical diversity" (Craig 1999: 132).

Besides the creation of meta-theoretical dialogues, Craig further called upon scholars to use the seven traditions as a basis from which existing traditions can be altered and new representations of the communication theory field can be built (Craig 2007: 129). The seven traditions can also be used as a teaching framework in which students can apply the traditions to various communication contexts and problems and develop renewed thinking about communication theory as a coherent academic field (Craig 2015: 357).

While the researcher recognises the variety of possible uses of this constitutive metamodel of communication theory, in this research study the seven traditions are purely used as a classification system which allows in-depth comprehension of the nature of communication

theory (West & Turner 2010: 27), as is in line with the research objectives of the study. Each of the seven traditions has a customised conceptualisation of communication and related understandings of communication problems (Craig 1999: 132; Cooren 2012: 3). Communication problems refer to a "certain point of uncertainty, or problems, that all communicators encounter" and "which form the basis of inquiry" (Trenholm 1986: 24). Each tradition further has tailored discursive concepts that allow one tradition to either link with another, or be separated from other traditions (Craig 1999: 132). Because the seven traditions draw on historical thought and theoretical ideas that flowed from one discipline into another, Craig (2007: 129) identified "rhetoric topoi" or "lines of argument" that are the essential links between the traditions that unify the existing body of communication theory field, while also allowing meta-discursive discourse between the various traditions (*Ibid.*).

The "coherent pattern" created by the seven traditions metamodel (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 34) thus creates sufficient unity in the field so that scholars can examine similarities and differences among the multitude of communication theories inherited from other disciplines more comprehensively (*Ibid.*). It is important to note that the definitions of concepts of the traditions are "open to multiple interpretations" (Craig & Muller 2007: 87) and that the traditions can be "redefined, recombined, hybridised, and subdivided in various ways" (*Ibid.*).

In the following subsections, each of the seven traditions of communication theory will be discussed in more detail; beginning with the rhetorical and phenomenological traditions. Following this, the semiotic, sociopsychological, sociocultural, and cybernetic traditions will be examined, with the critical tradition considered last. Specific attention will be paid to the multidisciplinary roots of each tradition from which its theoretical character, unique conceptualisation of communication, and understanding of communication problems sprouted. The customised theoretical concepts used within each tradition to talk about

communication are also provided, and, where applicable, the points of similarities and differences between traditions will be indicated.

3.2.1 The rhetorical tradition

It is easy to trace the roots of this tradition back to its namesake discipline. As illustrated in Chapter 2, Section 2.2, rhetoric was one of the dominant academic disciplines during the Ancient Greek period (Craig 1999: 135; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 50). Rhetoric evolved through the ages to develop a character associated with public speaking and the persuasion of audiences using strategic language (Craig & Muller 2007: 105). While originally only concerned with constructing verbal arguments for public speeches, rhetoric expanded its scope to include all communication-bearing symbols that can influence or persuade the receivers of such messages (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 49).

The rhetorical tradition conceptualises communication as "the practical art of discourse" (Craig 1999: 135; Macguire 2006: 89; Craig & Muller 2007: 103). This construction implies that human communication is an art form that is often displayed on platforms such as public addresses or in persuasive speeches (Macguire 2006: 89; Craig & Muller 2007: 103). According to this tradition, communication can be used in "strategic, eloquent, and skilful ways" to "develop strong, credible, and convincing arguments" which lead to successful persuasion of audiences (Garcia-Jimenez 2014: 90). When viewing communication from a rhetorical perspective, it becomes clear that words are powerful tools that, when used correctly, can influence or persuade others (Craig 1999: 136). Communication problems, according to the rhetorical tradition, can occur when communicators experience uncertainty during the "artful use of public discourse" (Craig 1999: 135) during social interactions.

The rhetorical tradition can be identified through its meta-discursive vocabulary used to talk about communication, which contains concepts such as "art", "audience", "persuasion",

"argument", "logic", "emotion", "rhetor", "symbol", "public address", and "discourse" (Craig 1999: 133; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 49; West & Turner 2014: 28-29). This tradition also contains some customised constructs such as the *canons of rhetoric*, which refer to the five elements of public speaking developed by Aristotle, namely invention, arrangement, style, delivery, and memory (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 49). The construct of *persuasive discourse* is also associated with rhetorical perspectives and refers to how communication messages must rely on the "power and beauty of language to move people emotionally and to stir them to action" (Griffin et al. 2015: 40). *Critical rhetoric* is a construct used to refer to the unmasking of "the discourse of power" (McKerrow 1989: 91-92), which serves as critique of the ways in which rhetoric (speech) contributes to the creation of social inequalities and instances of oppression and coercion (*Ibid.*).

Table 3.1 summarises the characteristics of the rhetorical tradition, and existing communication theories that are typically classified under this tradition examine topics such as the effective use of symbols in any discourse or public speech (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 51; Cooren 2012: 7), public speaking for mass persuasion (West & Turner 2014: 28), and the perfection of public discourse through critical study and extensive training (Craig 1999: 135). Although theories of the rhetorical tradition mostly originate from the discipline of rhetoric, some theoretical assumptions are also borrowed from other disciplines such as philosophy (ideas on discourse), semiotics and linguistics (ideas on symbols and skilful language usage), psychology (ideas on persuasion), and the critical school (ideas on critical study of public discourse).

Table 3.1: Summarised characteristics of the rhetorical tradition

Summary of the characteristics of the rhetorical tradition
Communication is the artistic expression or public discourse displayed during public address.
Public discourse has the goal of influencing and/or persuading audiences.
Persuasion occurs through strategic, skilful, and eloquent use of language and other communication-bearing symbols.
Strong, credible, and convincing arguments are constructed during public discourse.
Perfection of public discourse is attained through critical study and extensive training.

Because of the cross-fertilised origins of this tradition from multiple disciplines, it is possible to see certain points of similarities and differences between the rhetorical tradition and other traditions. Firstly, the emphasis of symbols in rhetorical discourse provides a point of contact between the rhetorical tradition and the semiotic tradition. When scholars of rhetoric wish to gain a deeper understanding of how symbols work in order to use them more effectively in discourse, they can turn to the theoretical body of the semiotic tradition for clarification of signs and symbols. While these two traditions share a common topic, they also differ on the way they conceptualise symbols. Semiotics maintains that symbols are not mere tools to be used strategically by a communicator, but that their meanings are embedded in the human mind and that people connect different and various meanings to a specific symbol (Craig 1999: 134). Rhetoric, on the other hand, sees any use of a sign or symbol as a rhetorical act (*Ibid*.).

The meta-discursive concept of critical rhetoric illustrates the connection between the rhetorical and the critical traditions. Scholars engaging in critical rhetoric are at the same time adopting perspectives of rhetoric and critical theory by critically reflecting on social injustices contained in rhetorical discourse (Craig 1999: 148). The rhetorical tradition also shares a common argument with the sociopsychological tradition because both these perspectives agree that influence and persuasion are possible through communication,

although they differ on the manner that persuasion occurs. Sociopsychological theories examine psychological elements to establish cause-and-effect relationships, allowing for universal predictions of which factors lead to persuasion (Craig 1999: 133). The rhetorical tradition does not agree with this assumption – claiming that there are more factors that determine the success of a persuasive message than only psychological factors (Craig 1999: 134).

3.2.2   The phenomenological tradition

Phenomenology is a concept derived from the field of postmodern philosophy (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3) and the specific theoretical approach by philosopher Edmund Husserl called phenomenology (West & Turner 2010: 30). Influenced by the philosophical principle of seeking understanding of all human existence (Angelo 1998), phenomenology holds the premise that the meaning of life and existence lies not in physical circumstances but rather in intersubjective participation (Jansen & Steinberg 1991: 51).

The founder of phenomenology, Husserl, saw it as a "method for analysing conscious experience" (Craig & Muller 2007: 217) in which meaning, understanding, and knowledge about human existence can be found (Bodie & Crick 2014: 120). Phenomenological approaches maintain that all experiences are both objective and subjective at the same time as the physical world is always objectively available but can only become known when humans directly and subjectively interact with and experience it (Craig & Muller 2007: 217).

According to the phenomenological tradition, all that humans can really know is that which they experience and personally interpret. Phenomenology is thus an intuitive process of observing phenomena as they objectively are, and assigning meaning to them based on the feelings and perceptions elicited during a life experience (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 38; West & Turner 2010: 30). The character of the phenomenological tradition can be summarised in

three core principles (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 38). Firstly, knowledge about the world lies in the direct experience of it (*Ibid.*). Secondly, the meaning of experiences depends on subjective perception and interpretation (*Ibid.*). Thirdly, phenomenological experiences rely on the active process of interpretation and the hermeneutic circle (*Ibid.*). The hermeneutic circle indicates the way experiences are interpreted by "going back and forth between experiencing an event or situation and assigning meaning to it, moving from the specific to the general, and back to the specific again" (*Ibid.*).

Communication plays an important role in phenomenology because communicative interactions are often at the centre of direct experiences and interpretations, ensuring "production of meaning, dialogue, rhetoric, and representation" (Fourie 2011: 3). The phenomenological tradition views communication as the essential dialogue through which the world and other people can be directly and consciously experienced and interpreted (Craig 1999: 133). Communication in phenomenology is thus dialogue and understanding, but it is further conceptualised as the "experience of otherness" (Craig & Muller 2007: 217), which refers to the role communication plays in the creation and sustaining of "authentic human relationships" (Macguire 2006: 90). The phenomenological tradition thus also defines communication as "openness to others, genuineness, supportiveness, empathy, authenticity, and the encounter with others who are people, not things" (Garcia-Jimenez 2014: 90). From a phenomenological perspective, communicators can encounter problems in the form of an "absence of, or failure to sustain, authentic human relationships" (Craig 1999: 133).

When communication is studied from the phenomenological tradition, it is associated with concepts such as "human experience", "subjective perception", "interpretation", "dialogue", "authenticity", "the self and others", and "hermeneutics" (Craig 1999: 133). As mentioned before, the dominant theoretical premises of this tradition derive from philosophy, but the

notions of interpretation and perception link to theoretical assumptions from the discipline of psychology, while the theoretical ideas of dialogue and subjective meaning coincide with rhetoric and semiotics respectively.

Table 3.2: Summarised characteristics of the phenomenological tradition

Summary of the characteristics of the phenomenological tradition
Communication is essential dialogue for active interpretation of conscious experience of the world and other people.
Interpretation of direct life experiences leads to understanding and knowledge about the world.
Meaning assigned to symbols, events, or people in experiences depends on subjective perception and interpretation.
Interpretation of experiences is an active process requiring the *hermeneutic circle*: artful interpretation moving from the specific to the general and back to the specific again.
Authentic dialogue allows the experience of other people based on shared commonalities and differences, and the construction of authentic human relationships.

Given the characteristics of the phenomenological tradition, as summarised in Table 3.2, communication theories which address topics of life experiences, the process of interpretation, authentic dialogue, and human relationships are typically classified under the phenomenological tradition's scope.

The phenomenological tradition shares several lines of argument with other traditions, including the rhetoric, semiotic, and sociopsychological traditions. Phenomenology and rhetoric connect on the idea that when common ground is established between people, it is easier for them to engage in dialogue. However, the phenomenological approach disagrees with the strategic and inauthentic way rhetorical messages are sometimes communicated, while rhetorical stances refute the idea of "authentic communication" as a myth (Craig 1999: 134).

Phenomenology and semiotics agree on the ideas that signs and symbols are based on subjective interpretation and personalised meanings and that these intersubjective

understandings are often the cause of communication problems (Craig 1999: 133). Phenomenology, however, rejects the semiotic perspective that interpretation is separate from reality and that symbols are mere representations of the world. For phenomenology, interpretation and symbols construct a reality that does not exist before it is experienced (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 38).

Studies of perception are dominant to the sociopsychological tradition and thus phenomenological ideas on subjective perception and artful interpretation (through the hermeneutic circle) are very attractive to sociopsychological studies of human perception. The hermeneutic circle of phenomenology is also frequently used in psychological studies. The sociopsychological tradition, however, differs from phenomenology by maintaining that people are not self-aware of their cognitive processes during interpretation (Craig 1999: 134).

3.2.3   The semiotic tradition

As seen in Chapter 2, Section 2.4, the semiotic tradition emerged from the academic disciplines of semiotics and linguistics, with noticeable influences from the parallel disciplines of rhetoric and philosophy (Craig 1999: 136). Semiotics is concerned with signs, symbols, their meanings, and how these meanings are shared and interpreted through communication (Fourie 1998: 2; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 35). This tradition thus draws on multiple theoretical perspectives about signs and symbols, language, discourse, and interpretation (Leeds-Hurwitz 1993: xvi; Craig 1999: 136) and is characterised by studies which address the use of signs in human interaction (Leeds-Hurwitz 1993: 3; Cooren 2012: 7) and "how people convey meaning" (Leeds-Hurwitz 1993: xv) through sign systems.

At the heart of the semiotic tradition is the sign, which is "everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else" (Eco 1976: 7). Signs are by nature abstract

because they are merely linguistic or symbolic representations of objects or thoughts (Jansen & Steinberg 1991: 66). Signs are also arbitrary as they have no natural relationship to the object or thought they represent, and the meaning of signs are ambiguous and determined subjectively by the user (Jansen & Steinberg 1991: 64-65; Weigand 2010: 537). The meanings of signs are thus in people, not in the signs themselves (Wood 2004: 79), which explains why people have different meanings for the same signs (Littlejohn 1983: 96). Signs and sign systems are used frequently in interactions and only when their meanings are shared socially can understanding be achieved (Cunha & Salgado 2008: 165; West & Turner 2014: 29).

According to this tradition, communication is the "intersubjective mediation of signs" (Craig 1999: 136). As explained, sign systems are "the productive agents of thought" (Craig & Muller 2007: 163) in society and thus people rely on the communication process to bridge the gap between two minds. Through communication, linguistic and symbolic signs come to have socially shared meanings and therefore communication is seen as the "mediator" of understanding between individuals (*Ibid.*). Communication theories that consider aspects such as the "structure of language and other systems of signs, the relationship between language and thought, and the communicative uses of signs" (*Ibid.*) are thus easily classified under the scope of the semiotic tradition.

From a semiotic perspective, problems or uncertainties typically experienced by communicators involve the misinterpretation and consequent misunderstanding of shared ideas, thoughts, and feelings through sign systems (Craig & Muller 2007: 163; Garcia-Jimenez 2014: 90). There are numerous communication theories about misrepresentation, failed transmission of meaning, and subjective meanings that are misunderstood (Craig 1999: 136; Macguire 2006: 89), all of which are thus typically classified under the semiotic tradition.

Important concepts in the semiotic tradition are the terms "sign", "symbol", and "meaning". Other terms also frequently used in semiotics include "icon", "index", "language", "medium", "understanding", and "misunderstanding" (Craig 1999: 133). The construct of the *triad of meaning* is also unique to semiotics and refers to the triadic relationships between an object, a sign, and its meaning, as developed by Peirce (Fabbrichesi & Marietti 2006: x; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 35). Table 3.3 summarises the main characteristics of the semiotic tradition.

Table 3.3: Summarised characteristics of the semiotic tradition

Summary of the characteristics of the semiotic tradition
Communication is the intersubjective mediator of socially shared meanings of signs necessary for common understanding and effective social interaction.
Signs and symbols are the productive agents of thought in society and are used to convey meaning during interactions.
Sign systems are abstract representations of phenomena with arbitrary and ambiguous meanings that are different from person to person, which creates misunderstandings.
Meanings of signs and symbols must be shared and interpreted socially through communication during interactions to eliminate misinterpretation and ensure effective social interaction.

It has already been illustrated that besides the disciplines of semiotics and linguistics, the semiotic tradition also contains influences from the theoretical perspectives of rhetoric and philosophy, and thus there are points of similarities and differences, already discussed, between this tradition and the rhetorical tradition (see Section 3.2.1) and the phenomenological tradition (see Section 3.2.2). It is further possible to connect the semiotic and the cybernetic tradition due to the shared notion of systems. Language, for example, is conceptualised by semiotics as a sign system, although the semiotic tradition disregards the strict functionalist explanations of system parts offered by the cybernetic tradition because it believes instead that subtleties and differentiation can exist in sign systems (Craig 1999: 134).

3.2.4 The sociopsychological tradition

As illustrated in Chapter 2, Section 2.5, many existing theories of communication originated from the subfields of experimental, behavioural, cognitive, and social psychology, and it is these theories that constitute the sociopsychological tradition of communication theory. At the heart of this tradition is a single human with unique personality traits, mental processes (like perception and learning), psychological variables (emotions, attitudes, prejudice, and aggression), and social behaviour, all of which are of interest to scholars subscribing to this tradition (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 42).

Individuals are seen as social beings with unique characteristics that make them think, feel, and behave autonomously. Individuals also have the cognitive ability to perceive, interpret, and generate information (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 42). The strong focus on the individual, characteristic of the sociopsychological approach, allows scholars to theorise about aspects such as behaviour and cognitive processes through the use of empirical and scientific observations or experiments (Craig & Muller 2007: 313). Empiricism is another distinguishing element of this tradition and has delivered numerous tested cause-and-effect relationships that successfully predict human behaviour, including communication (Griffin et al. 2015: 38).

The sociopsychological tradition conceives communication as a social process of expression, interaction, and influence with causes and effects (Craig 1999: 133; Macguire 2006: 89). Causes are related to psychological mechanisms such as emotions, attitudes, trauma, stress, depression, and/or individual traits (Garcia-Jimenez 2014: 90), and produced effects can be cognitive, emotional, or behavioural (Craig 1999: 143). Participants in communication are thus always influenced by both their own unique psychological factors as well as by the effects that the communication interaction might have on them (*Ibid.*).

The sociopsychological conceptualisation of communication as a process of *influence* illustrates the typical communication problems or uncertainties that communicators might encounter. Communicators can effectively manipulate relevant psychological elements to produce the desired behaviour or cognitive outcomes (Craig 1999: 143). Psychological variables that influence behaviour are, however, dependent on the individual and patterns of psychological causes and psychological effects thus vary from person to person (West & Turner 2010: 30).

Table 3.4 summarises the characteristics of the sociopsychological tradition and from the delineated scope of this tradition it becomes clear how communication theories about psychological explanations based on behavioural, cognitive, or social reasons are typically classified under this tradition (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 42), along with theoretical topics about, among many others, the prediction of communication behaviour, accommodation and adaptation of communication behaviour to different situations, the representation of meaning, information in the mind of the individual, and attitude change (*Ibid.*).

Table 3.4: Summarised characteristics of the sociopsychological tradition

Summary of the characteristics of the sociopsychological tradition
Communication is a social process whereby an individual being expresses him-/herself, interacts with others, and exerts influence over others.
Individual expression and interaction are influenced by psychological factors such as emotion, attitude, trauma, stress, depression, or individual personality traits.
Individual influence can result in cognitive, emotional, or behavioural effects.
Individuals are social beings with the cognitive ability to perceive, interpret, and generate information to think, feel, and behave autonomously.
Psychological explanations of human behaviour allow for cause-and-effect relationships that successfully predict communication behaviour such as communication accommodation, symbolic representation of meaning, and attitude change.

The sociopsychological tradition can be appealing to scholars because of its popular postulation that psychological elements such as personality, feelings, and attitudes influence the way communication messages are sent and received (Craig 1999: 143). The meta-discursive vocabulary of the sociopsychological tradition used when theorising about communication includes terms such as "behaviour", "cognition", "emotion", "attitude", "interaction", "influence", "personality", "effect", "individual", "trait", and "variable" (Craig 1999: 133).

Although most of the theoretical assumptions of the sociopsychological tradition originated from psychology, the disciplines of rhetoric and philosophy also contributed to its scope with theoretical viewpoints about public persuasion and human interpretation of life experiences respectively. Because of these multidisciplinary strands of connections, the sociopsychological tradition shares certain similarities and differences with the rhetorical tradition (see Section 3.2.1) and the phenomenological tradition (see Section 3.2.2), as already discussed.

The sociopsychological tradition also correlates with the cybernetic idea that humans are "information-processing systems" (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 42). Because the sociopsychological tradition conceptualises communication as a process of interaction, the cybernetic construction of communication as a system for processing information during social interactions is an ideal point of comparison between the two traditions. The sociopsychological tradition, however, does not agree with the cybernetic tendency of reducing all communication to "information-processing algorithms" (Craig 1999: 134), and maintains that psychological variables like motivation, emotion, and personality influence the communication process (*Ibid.*).

3.2.5 The sociocultural tradition

The sociocultural tradition is a hybrid of theoretical perspectives mixed together from the academic disciplines of social psychology (Chapter 2, Section 2.5), sociology (Chapter 2, Section 2.6), anthropology (Chapter 2, Section 2.7), and semiotics (Chapter 2, Section 2.4) (Craig 1999: 145). This tradition is predominantly concerned with symbolic human interaction in a sociocultural context (*Ibid.*). Based on this scope, all human interaction is social – a theoretical idea borrowed from the field of social psychology. In this tradition, however, interaction is viewed from the standpoint of society and not the individual as it is in the sociopsychological tradition (Craig & Muller 2007: 314). The importance of society and the influence of social facts like conflict and culture on human interaction demonstrate the influence of sociological thought on the sociocultural tradition (Craig 1999: 144). The emphasis on culture in society and the cultural contexts of human interaction draw on anthropological perspectives *(Ibid.*). Finally, this tradition views human interaction not only in a sociocultural context but also considers all interactions and meanings to be socially constructed by using shared symbols, thereby incorporating theoretical stances from the field of semiotics (*Ibid.*).

Scholars who view the world from a sociocultural perspective will characteristically define society as patterns of interaction during which "meanings, roles, rules, and cultural values" (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 44) are determined and communicated. The daily interactions between members of society, based on established cultural and social patterns, are thus responsible for constructing and reconstructing "existing sociocultural order" (Craig 1999: 144). As members of society interact and communicate, they also "produce, maintain, repair, and transform" the social order in which they live (Cooren 2012: 10; West & Turner 2014: 31; Griffin et al. 2015: 43).

The sociocultural tradition supports the premise that reality is a social construction (Garcia-Jimenez 2014: 91), produced and reproduced at the micro-level of interactional processes, language, and symbols (Macguire 2006: 90; Garcia-Jimenez 2014: 90). This tradition views the communication process (during which language and symbols are used) as of central importance in the construction of social realities and the subsequent meanings assigned to social facts like culture, identity, community, etc. (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 44; Garcia-Jimenez 2014: 91).

The sociocultural tradition thus conceptualises communication as the process that allows members of society to interact using symbols that end up creating unique sociocultural patterns (Craig 1999: 144; Craig & Muller 2007: 314). Through the constant creation and recreation of sociocultural patterns, social order and reality are constructed and reconstructed (Craig 1999: 133; Macguire 2006: 90; Griffin et al. 2015: 43). From a sociocultural perspective, communicators typically encounter problems whenever social order cannot be constructed because patterns of symbolic interaction are not shared (Craig 1999: 145). The results of this kind of communication problem usually include social conflict, misunderstandings, and lack of social coordination (*Ibid.*).

Given the diversity of the theoretical approaches incorporated into the sociocultural tradition, scholars of this approach have access to a diverse range of macro- and micro-theories about communication. Macro-theories, which consider the role of communication in society, include the theoretical perspectives of functionalism and structuralism (Craig & Muller 2007: 365). At micro-level, the role of communication in symbolic human interaction can be theorised in more detail (*Ibid.*). Communication theories that are typically classified under the sociocultural tradition deal with concepts such as "social structures, identities, norms, rituals, and collective belief systems" (*Ibid.*). Theories that explain how social meanings and understandings are constructed and maintained during communication (Littlejohn & Foss

2008: 43), or the impact of urbanisation and globalisation on the demise of traditional social order, are further examples of the theoretical body incorporated under this tradition (Craig 1999: 145).

The assumption that "individuals are products of their social environment" (Craig 1999: 146) is one of the dominant assumptions held by the sociocultural tradition. Table 3.5 further summarises the main characteristics of this tradition. The dominant theoretical concepts of the sociocultural tradition include "society", "culture", "patterns of interaction", and "symbolic interaction" (Craig 1999: 133). Other terms related to this tradition are "context", "order", "construction", "reconstruction", "co-construction", and "identity" (*Ibid.*).

Table 3.5: Summarised characteristics of the sociocultural tradition

Summary of the characteristics of the sociocultural tradition
Communication is a social process during which social order is constructed and reconstructed through symbolic human interaction.
Human interaction is social and viewed from the standpoint of society.
Human interaction uses shared symbols with socially constructed meanings that allow members of society to interact in meaningful patterns.
During the patterns of interaction, social meanings, roles, rules, and cultural values are established and communicated.
Patterns of interaction repeated daily create cultural and social patterns that establish the existing sociocultural order of a society.
Human interaction in society is influenced by the existing sociocultural context.

The sociocultural tradition has a universal character because of its mixed origins. The consequence of this tradition's universality is that it has numerous similar ideas and some differences in common with most of the other traditions. Indeed, the sociocultural tradition is used alongside other traditions of communication theory so often that "pure exemplars of sociocultural communication theory" (Craig 1999: 145) are scarce.

The sociocultural conception that human interaction is symbolic and that reality is constructed through symbols directly relates to the semiotic tradition. According to the sociocultural tradition, however, the meaning of signs are not inherent in humans (as the semiotic tradition believes) but they are rather constructed socially during shared communication in society (Craig 1999: 134).

The importance of patterns of interaction in the sociocultural tradition resonates with the cybernetic tradition and the organisation of human society as a system, although the sociocultural tradition differs from the cybernetic tradition by emphasising the importance of the social context of a system (Craig 1999: 134). The sociocultural focus on human interaction also resounds with the sociopsychological tradition, although these two traditions criticise each other's methodologies: the sociocultural tradition holds that it is not possible to create universal cause-and-effect laws about culture and society, while the sociopsychological tradition views sociocultural theory as vague and untestable (*Ibid.*).

The sociocultural tradition's focus on examining various social realities also lends itself to the critical tradition. Sociocultural theories which examine communication problems in society thus easily adopt a critical perceptive by pointing out injustices or inequalities in social structures. The two traditions differ, however, in terms of their approach to society; the sociocultural tradition sees society as a necessary structure that needs unity and consensus to exist, while the critical tradition views society as a negative entity in need of change – which is only achieved through societal conflicts (Craig 1999: 134).

3.2.6 The cybernetic tradition

Norbert Wiener's theory of cybernetics was discussed in Section 2.8.3 of Chapter 2, where it was also illustrated that this philosophy did not originate from one specific discipline but rather from the interchange between fields of biology, mathematics, and engineering, as well

as Shannon and Weaver's theory of information processing and general systems theory. The cybernetic tradition, however, is broader than Wiener's theory and incorporates in its scope not only this theory of cybernetics but also all theoretical perspectives that are in any way concerned with the idea of systems (Craig 1999: 141; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 39).

The core characteristic of the cybernetic tradition is the system; a structure comprising interdependent parts that work together to create a function that is worth more than the sum of the various parts (Monge 1977: 20; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 39). Systems interact with their environment to either receive from it or to give back to it (Monge 1977: 20). Systems also subscribe to the idea of circularity in the form of cause-and-effect interrelations between the parts of the whole system (Krippendorff 1989: 443).

A cybernetic approach inspires theorists to look beyond the basic compositions of systems to matters such as the organisation of system components, networks that form when various systems interact, and how systems regulate themselves, and maintain order and balance with the environment through feedback (Monge 1977: 20; Krippendorff 1989: 443; Jansen & Steinberg 1991: 40-41; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 40). While communication itself can be theorised as a system with interrelated components, like communicators, messages, mediums, and feedback, theorising about communication from a cybernetic viewpoint means looking at the communication process in a systematic and holistic way instead of only at the individual components of the process (Craig 1999: 142; Cooren 2012: 8).

From a cybernetic approach, communication is conceptualised as "a system of information processing" (Craig 1999: 141). It is seen to be the vital link that connects the interrelated parts of a system that allow information to flow back and forth between system elements, allowing the system to function effectively (Craig 1999: 141; Griffin et al. 2015: 39). The goal of communication in a system is thus to ensure that information flows with little or no interference (Macguire 2006: 89).

From a cybernetic perspective, communicators experience uncertainties and problems because systems can malfunction or break down should there be a communication problem like an interruption in information flow, information overload, or other forms of noise that prevent information from being understood correctly (Craig 1999: 141).

Table 3.6 presents the main characteristics of the cybernetic tradition which typically focuses on concepts such as "system", "information", "processing", "feedback", "channel", "interconnectivity", "network", "senders", "receivers", and "noise" when theorising about communication (Craig 1999: 133; Craig & Muller 2007: 261; Garcia-Jimenez 2014: 91). The cybernetic tradition can be used to classify theories about physical, biological, social, or behavioural systems in which communication influences, shapes, and controls the character of the overall system to achieve both balance and change (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 39). Relationships, for example, are complex social systems based on interaction that can only be created and maintained through meaningful communication (Mascareño 2008: 200; Garcia-Jimenez 2014: 91).

Table 3.6: Summarised characteristics of the cybernetic tradition

Summary of the characteristics of the cybernetic tradition
Communication is a vital process that allows information to flow between system parts, allowing the system to function effectively with little or no interference.
Systems are social structures comprising interdependent parts that work together to create a function that is worth more than the sum of the various parts.
Systems interact with their environment to regulate themselves and maintain order and balance with the environment through feedback.
Communication influences, shapes, and controls the character of the overall system and helps the system achieve both balance and change.
Systems can malfunction or break down should there be a problem with the communication.
Systems occur in various contexts, including sign systems, language systems, cognitive systems, and societal systems.

Because of its universal character, the principles of the cybernetic tradition are shared with that of the semiotic, sociopsychological, and sociocultural traditions (as already discussed in Sections 3.2.3, 3.2.4, and 3.2.5). Cybernetics also has significant common ground with the rhetorical tradition because in both traditions human activity is based on "underlying or overarching symbol-processing systems" (Craig 1999: 142). The difference between these two perspectives is that while rhetoric views communication as an artful enterprise, cybernetics merely views it as a mechanism for processing information (Craig 1999: 134).

3.2.7 The critical tradition

Critical studies emerged from the principles of Marxism and became the dominant philosophy of the Frankfurt School, as discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.8.1 (Craig 1999: 147). The premise of critical perspectives is that "conflict, distortion, injustice, and dominion" are an inherent part of human society (Garcia-Jimenez 2014: 91). Critical theorists thus openly question and criticise instances of oppression, power abuse, and discrimination with the goal of exposing social injustices and creating awareness that can ultimately lead to change (Roy & Oludaja 2009: 255; West & Turner 2010: 31; Garcia-Jimenez 2014: 91).

The critical tradition has a ubiquitous character that allows it to be applied in all social sciences and humanities disciplines, including communication science. It is important to note that in this tradition communication is both the object of criticism as well as the means of achieving critical thinking and change (Roy & Oludaja 2009: 269; Cooren 2012: 11); communication is often the cause of social inequalities in cases where social discourses "promote domination, exclusion, segregation, or marginalisation" (Garcia-Jimenez 2014: 91). However, communication also provides the necessary "techniques for resisting or overcoming" these social injustices (Craig & Muller 2007: 430).

One way in which the critical tradition conceptualises communication is as the enabler of critical reflection necessary to recognise social distortions and restore social justice (Macguire 2006: 90; Roy & Oludaja 2009: 269). This view of communication as the potential solution to social inequalities is called "discursive reflection" (Craig 1999: 133). Discursive reflection refers to communicative discourse that "freely reflects on assumptions that may be distorted" and allows for the critical examination of habits, beliefs, and power structures that are usually unchallenged in society. During discursive reflection, communication must be real and honest, otherwise emancipation and justice cannot be restored (Craig 1999: 147). The critical tradition also recognises that communication itself can be the cause of social inequalities (Garcia-Jimenez 2014: 91) and communication is thus a problem when conversation, interactions, and even language support and promote these social distortions (Craig 1999: 147).

Important concepts used to think about communication from a critical perspective are "ideology", "dialectic", "oppression", "resistance", "emancipation", "truth", "deception", and "power" (Craig 1999: 133; Craig & Muller 2007: 425). Table 3.7 summarises the characteristics of the critical tradition, and communication theories that adopt a critical stance on social injustices or inequalities are typically classified under this tradition.

Table 3.7: Summarised characteristics of the critical tradition

Summary of the characteristics of the critical tradition
Communication is critical discourse that provides the means for discursive reflection on recognised social distortions and injustices.
Discursive reflection refers to honest communication that freely reflects on and critically examines habits, beliefs, and power structures that are usually unchallenged in society.
Critical theorists openly question and criticise instances of oppression, power abuse, and discrimination with the goal of exposing and changing social injustices.
Conflict, distortion, injustice, and dominion are inherent parts of human society.
Communication can also be the cause of social inequalities in cases where social discourse promotes domination, exclusion, segregation, or marginalisation.

Points of comparison between the critical tradition and the rhetorical and sociocultural traditions were pointed out in Sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.5. According to Craig (1999: 147), "any mode of communication theory can take a self-reflective, critical turn" and thus it is possible that all seven of the communication traditions can adopt a critical perspective, which allows for hybrid varieties such as critical semiotics, critical phenomenology, and even critical sociopsychology (Craig 1999: 134).

3.3   Criticisms and amendments of the seven traditions metamodel

Craig's seven traditions metamodel has been subjected to some general criticisms related to epistemology and methodology. The metamodel is firstly criticised for "disconnecting theory from research" (Craig 2015: 366) because the traditional conceptualisations of communication used in the model do not always match the common methodological positions of communication (*Ibid.*). Secondly, the traditions are also criticised for adopting epistemological stances which support only relativism and idealism (*Ibid.*).

Several communication scholars have also raised specific points of critique against the constitutive metamodel, like Myers (2001) who pointed out that the way Craig described the proposed metamodel was a misrepresentation from a systems perspective and that the lack of critical assessment of the conceptualisations of communication accepted in each tradition was worrying (Myers 2001: 219, 222-223). Bergman, in turn, critiqued the neglect of "relevant intra-tradition distinctions and debates" (Bergman 2012: 208).

Russill (2004, 2005) criticised Craig's seven-category classification by pointing out that Craig missed a fundamental tradition of communication theory, namely pragmatism (cited by Craig 2007: 131). Russill's criticism is thus also a proposal for an amendment to the seven traditions metamodel to include an eighth pragmatist tradition of communication theory predominantly concerned with the pragmatic role communication plays in society to address

social problems (Bergman 2012: 213; Craig 2015: 361). Rich (cited by Craig 2015: 361) also offered another amendment to the existing seven categories by adding a spiritual tradition to the model. This spiritual tradition is based on the "dualistic distinction" (Craig 2015: 361) between a concrete reality, in which communication is material and practised daily, and a spiritual atemporal space from where communication practices and beliefs about reality can be influenced (*Ibid.*).

Another criticism and proposed amendment to the seven traditions are offered by Vlăduţescu, whose dominant critique was that the traditions are too synchronic and rigid, which makes the task of unifying communication theory difficult (Vlăduţescu 2013: 7; Craig 2015: 368). Vlăduţescu proposed that the seven traditions metamodel be amended to a communication axes matrix standard based on 15 axes of communication (Vlăduţescu 2013: 8). The suggestion to axialise the communication field is based on the premise that "communication is, at the present time, a systematic universe of 15 crossed fields, having different consequences and different levels of cohesion" (*Ibid.*).

Craig himself has criticised the metamodel for not generating sufficient engagement in dialectical-dialogical meta-discourse between communication scholars (Boromisza-Habashi 2013: 423). Except for the attempts mentioned above, most scholars simply adopt the model as a convenient organisational structure of the field of communication theory 'for now' without critically reflecting on the various perspectives offered (Craig 2015: 357). Craig has also alluded to potential new traditions of communication theory, such as the existential tradition (which examines human communication and existence), the feminist tradition (which examines human communication and gender), the aesthetic tradition (which examines communication and artistic elements), and even the economic tradition (which examines communication and economic values) (Craig 1999: 151).

Since these amendments or expansions have not yet been officially incorporated into a new or updated model, Craig's original seven traditions classification is used in this study because the current composition of the model allows the existing mass of communication theories, stemming from disciplines like rhetoric, philosophy, semiotics, linguistics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and others, to be coherently and comprehensibly classified.

3.4   Conclusion

Craig's (1999) constitutive metamodel of communication theory successfully organises and unifies the multidisciplinary smorgasbord of theory by drawing on the historical roots of the communication theory field to formulate seven traditions. Each of these traditions has a unique character and conceptualisation of communication, but there are also common goals and contentious divisions among the traditions, which create the possibility of a meta-theoretical dialogue among communication scholars. This literature review has sketched the background and theoretical framework for this study, and the characteristics of each of the seven traditions that were summarised in this chapter were used to construct a prior coding framework for the analysis of Ian McEwan's *Atonement*. The next chapter will explain in detail how this content analysis was planned and conducted.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1   Introduction

Communication theory is abstract and often incomprehensible to students of the field (Boromisza-Habashi 2013: 429) due to its pervasive and complicated nature, as illustrated in Chapters 2 and 3. The fact that many scholars of communication often struggle to fully conceptualise and comprehend the messy landscape of communication theory thus poses a problem which this study aims to address.

By investigating the potential of a contemporary English novel to serve as a practical illustration of the body of communication theory, this research study aims to prove that practical applications extracted from modern fiction can be used to make abstract multidisciplinary theories more comprehensible to students of communication, thus offering a potential solution to the identified research problem.

With this aim, this study analyses Ian McEwan's *Atonement* for evidence of the seven traditions of communication theory and further describes how these traditions are exemplified in the novel. The preferred type of research to utilise in order to meet the aim of this study is descriptive research, as it systematically describes situations, events, or characteristics of phenomena as accurately as possible (Babbie 1983: 75; Kumar 2011: 10; Treadwell 2011: 27; Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout 2014: 75).

This chapter consists of a detailed description of this study's methodological framework, which includes discussions of the research paradigm, research methodology, and research design followed to conduct this study. Figure 4.1 graphically summarises this methodological framework, which illustrates that the aim, research question, and objectives guiding this

analysis were approached from the perspective of an interpretive paradigm utilising a qualitative research methodology and content analysis as research method. The selected unit of analysis will be explained in this chapter and the steps for data collection and analysis will also be discussed. This chapter concludes by considering applicable issues of credibility, trustworthiness, and other ethical considerations relevant to this research study.

An Analysis of the Traditions of Communication Theory in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*

Research aim: to indicate that a contemporary novel, like *Atonement,* could serve as a testimony of the seven traditions of communication theory, which makes the comprehension and practical application of the multidisciplinary field of communication theory easier.

QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

Phase 1: Systematic literature review for construction of prior coding framework

Phase 2: Content analysis of seven traditions of communication theory in *Atonement*

Research question: Does the novel, *Atonement,* contain evidence of the seven traditions of communication theory and in which way are these traditions illustrated in the narrative?

Research objectives: (1) Define the chracteristics of each of the seven traditions of communication theory. (2) Identify the seven traditions of communication theory as found in *Atonement*. (3) Indicate the way in which these seven traditions are illustrated in the novel.
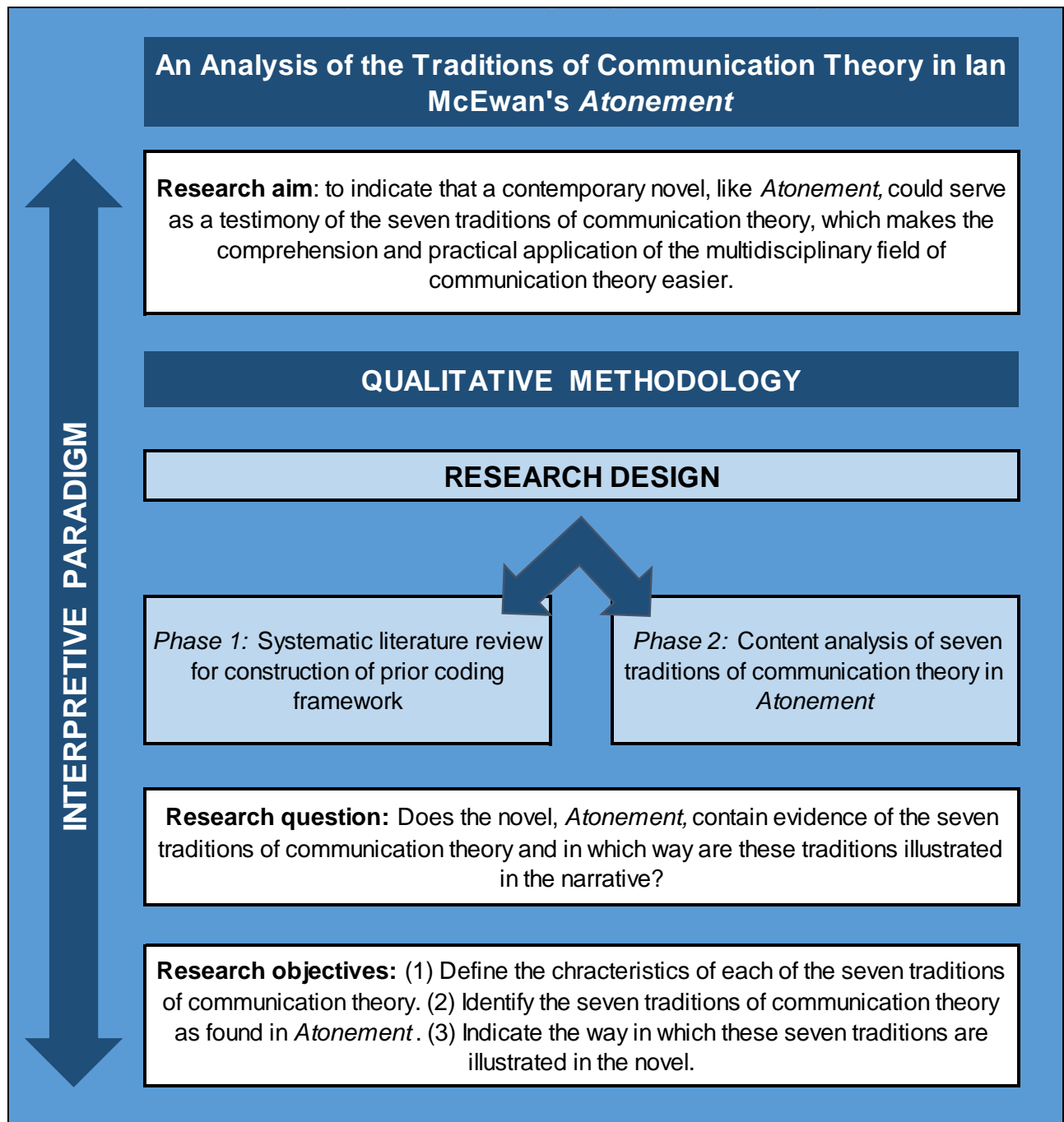
INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM

Figure 4.1: Visual illustration of the methodological framework

4.2   Research paradigm and methodological approach

Research paradigms refer to the various "accepted sets of theories, procedures, and assumptions" (Lindlof 1995: 29; Oliver 2010: 27; Wimmer & Dominick 2014: 117) which scholars adopt as "knowledge about the workings of the world" (Babbie 1983: 7). Paradigms define the intellectual foundation of academic beliefs from which practical prescriptions about the selection, investigation, and interpretation of a research topic are determined (Lindlof & Taylor 2011: 33; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 19). The three dominant research paradigms of positivism, interpretivism, and critical realism thus dictate to researchers not only which research problems to investigate, but also which "beliefs, theoretical propositions, constructs, and models of inferences" (Lindlof 1995: 29) to adopt along with an appropriate research methodology to obtain relevant research results (Oliver 2010: 27; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 23; Wimmer & Dominick 2014: 117).

The research paradigm adopted in this study is the interpretivist approach. This paradigm emerged as an alternative to positivism, with the main goal of obtaining in-depth knowledge about human behaviour and its various meanings (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 27-28). The ontological position held by interpretivists is that reality is not objective and external to the individual, as proposed by positivism, but rather subjective and internal to each human being, which means that multiple realities to be known exist at the same time (Merriam 2009; Creswell 2013: 21; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 34; Wimmer & Dominick 2014: 117). The investigation of human beings can also not be standardised and generalised because each individual is unique and can thus display unparalleled behaviour. Berg (2001: 239) also stated that "human actions can be seen as a collection of symbols expressing layers of meaning", which can thus be interpreted in more than one way as one's interpretation depends on "the theoretical orientation taken by the researcher" (*Ibid.*).

According to interpretivism, the only way to obtain knowledge about human behaviour is to gather unique explanations of how "people in everyday natural settings create meaning and interpret the events of their world" (Wimmer & Dominick 2014: 117). Epistemologically, these realities can become known by using common sense to investigate human behaviour and its meaning (Creswell 2013: 21; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 34).

The interpretivist research paradigm thus prescribes that research be conducted in order to understand and describe meaningful human behaviour (Lindlof & Taylor 2011: 35; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 34). Following this notion, this research study aims to describe the presence of the seven traditions of communication theory in *Atonement* with the result of illustrating the usefulness and significance of this social artefact as an accessible medium through which communication theory can be understood. This study also adheres to the ontological and epistemological positions of this research paradigm by acknowledging that, although the traditions of communication theory can be analysed in *Atonement* with the use of logic and reason, any interpretation of data will be subjective and will be only one of many possible realities.

The interpretivist paradigm not only guides the researcher in terms of philosophical views on knowledge, but also on the choice of methodology. A research methodology, which forms the "practical technology" (Lindlof & Taylor 2011: 4) of a philosophical paradigm, contains underlying assumptions about the entire research process and all relevant research elements and thus presents the researcher with specific conventions to follow when conducting research (Creswell 2013: 21; Wimmer & Dominick 2014: 119). The two dominant research methodologies available are quantitative and qualitative research. These two methodologies differ fundamentally, from their underlying philosophy and approaches to investigations to the methods used for the measurement of variables, data analysis, and even sample size (Kumar 2011: 20).

Qualitative research, which is "pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of people" (Hogan, Dolan & Donnelly 2011), supports the interpretivist assumptions that human behaviour and interaction are sources of knowledge (Lindlof 1995: 21; Merriam 2009; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 30) from which detailed understanding of the "qualities of experience" (Hogan et al. 2011) can be obtained. A qualitative methodological approach thus allows researchers to "explore and describe meanings communicated in particular contexts" (Du Plooy 2009: 35) through inductive reasoning about the various possible realities that exist within multiple sources of knowledge (*Ibid.*).

Because qualitative studies investigate unique human experiences and their subjective meanings, it is not possible to objectively measure and quantify collected data (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 173). Instead, data are turned into findings through the subjective interpretation and description of manifest and latent meanings found in the mass of data (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 229). A qualitative investigation thus lends itself to a more flexible and open approach in order to effectively discover whatever obvious or hidden truths data might hold. This is in stark contrast to the rigid and pre-planned approach of quantitative research which aims to objectively quantify empirical, value-free knowledge into numerical data that are interpreted through statistical analysis (Kumar 2011: 74; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 30-31). Subjectivity in data collection and analysis, ever present in qualitative research, raises questions about data reliability (Hogan et al. 2011; Wimmer & Dominick 2014: 48, 120), but this is not a problem because this methodology, like interpretivism, does not aim to provide value-free results. (Kumar 2011: 74; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 30-31). Despite the "fluid" and "interactive relationship" (Lee & Fielding 2004: 533) between data collection and data analysis, qualitative research can maintain data reliability through strong data management. Researchers who employ a "systematic, coherent process of data collection" and data analysis can ensure reliable results and interpretations (*Ibid.*).

Qualitative investigations are often critiqued because research findings cannot be generalised due to small sample sizes (Wimmer & Dominick 2014: 48, 120). Qualitative projects, however, generally select subjects or cases for investigation on the grounds of specific characteristics of interest to the researcher and not with the goal of producing universal results, thus the unit of analysis is usually selected purposively (Hogan et al. 2011).

Qualitative research can, in short, be characterised as being "textual, interactive, hermeneutic, subjective, constructive, and symbolic" (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 229). This methodological approach is ideal for descriptive data analysis and results that allow in-depth interpretations and understanding of the research topic (Leedy & Ormrod 2005: 134; Wimmer & Dominick 2014: 48). As mentioned, the flexibility of qualitative approaches allows researchers to pursue and discover ideas and themes that emerge from the data (Kumar 2011: 57; Wimmer & Dominick 2014: 48). This research study, guided by interpretivism as research paradigm, subsequently employs a qualitative methodological approach to investigate and describe evidence of the seven traditions of communication theory in the novel *Atonement.* These choices determine all other related aspects of the research process, such as the research design, data collection, and data-analysis methods.

4.3   Research design

In order to identify and provide evidence of the seven traditions of communication theory in *Atonement*, this interpretive study analyses a secondary data source using a two-fold research design (see Figure 4.1). The first phase of the research design involves a literature review during which a prior coding framework is constructed based on the characteristics of each of the seven traditions of communication theory (see Chapter 3). This coding framework is then used in the second phase of the research design to identify and code

evidence of the seven traditions in *Atonement* during the qualitative content analysis of this novel.

Content analysis is a common research method used in communication studies for the systematic "inductive analysis of qualitative data" (Merriam 2009) in order to find "themes and recurring patterns of meaning" in communication messages (Franzosi 2004: 549; Leedy & Ormrod 2005: 142; Merriam 2009). Content analysis can be employed in quantitative studies to measure and count the frequency and number of times a certain word, phrase, sentence, or pattern occurs in a message (Merriam 2009), but the focus of qualitative content analysis is on the meaning, overt or hidden, that can be induced from a text (*Ibid.*).

By its nature, qualitative content analysis, also called textual analysis, is one of the most effective methods for analysing texts and narratives for overt (manifest) or covert (latent) meanings embedded in communication messages (Berg 2001: 242; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 191). It is possible to analyse both the "physically present and countable" (Berg 2001: 242) manifest meanings in a text, as well as the hidden or latent meanings that have to be subjectively inferred and interpreted based on the available symbols presented in the text (Berg 2001: 242; Du Plooy 2009: 219-220).

This research method is also characterised as flexible in design and it is thus possible to conduct content analysis on virtually any form of communication, including social artefacts such as novels (Babbie 1983: 274; Berg 2001: 241; Berger 2011: 205). Qualitative content analysis is concerned with "fracturing data"; breaking the data down into meaningful concepts or themes and assigning the fractured parts to relevant categories (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 235). This process, called coding, involves assigning "single words, letters, numbers, phrases, or colours" (Merriam 2009) to data. Franzosi (2004: 550) noted that "there is no single way of capturing the meaning of a text" and thus content analysis is

flexible as a variety of coding schemes can be designed to match the specific aim and objectives of a research study (*Ibid.*).

This research method is also flexible in the sense that coding can be done either inductively, deductively, or both, depending on the needs of the research design. Emergent coding uses inductive reasoning and allows data to "speak for itself". This form of coding is especially useful when it is not yet known what themes or concept might be embedded in a text. Only during the actual examination of the data does the researcher construct and code the themes that emerge (Babbie 1983: 340; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 238; Wimmer & Dominick 2014: 168). Deductive reasoning can also be used when analysing texts as researchers can construct a conceptual framework of categories from applicable theory prior to starting the actual analysis of the text. This prior coding method then assigns predetermined categories of coding to the data, which is especially useful when it is already clear what themes or concepts are expected in the data (Babbie 1983: 339; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 238; Wimmer & Dominick 2014: 169).

A qualitative content analysis is the chosen research method for this study because it is an ideal "research technique for the systematic classification and description of communication content according to certain usually predetermined categories" (Berg 2001: 240; Berger 2011: 206). Its flexible design allows the researcher to construct a series of customised steps for data collection and data analysis (see Section 4.3.2) using a pre-constructed coding framework to code the latent meanings found in the unit of analysis, namely *Atonement* (see Section 4.3.1). The findings of this qualitative content analysis will thus take the form of subjective interpretations of textual incidents which will allow the researcher to gain in-depth understanding of the manner in which the characteristics of the seven traditions of communication theory manifest in the narrative of the novel (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 191).

4.3.1 Unit of analysis: *Atonement*

A unit of analysis refers to that which is being studied (Babbie 1983: 76). A contemporary English novel, *Atonement*, written by Ian McEwan in 2001, was selected as the unit of analysis of this study. Babbie (1983: 79) identified novels as social artefacts which are "the products of social beings or their behaviour". *Atonement* is only one unit of analysis purposively selected from a larger population of contemporary English novels, all of which are social artefacts that can be analysed for description or explanation of various phenomena (Babbie 1983: 79). This novel was purposively selected for analysis because of the numerous communication theories that were easily identifiable during a preliminary reading of the text. *Atonement* is thus an ideal social artefact to analyse for the purpose of identifying and describing evidence of the seven traditions of communication theory.

4.3.2 Method of data collection and analysis

From the selected unit of analysis, the relevant data were collected during a comprehensive reading and rational analysis of the entire novel. The collected data were then subjected to a qualitative content analysis using a pre-constructed prior coding framework (see Table 4.1) to identify sections of the text which contain evidence of the characteristics of the seven traditions. The coded instances also served as examples of the way the seven traditions were incorporated into the narrative of *Atonement*. This specific study adapted the steps of content analysis as proposed by Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014: 235) and Wimmer and Dominick (2014: 163) and thus this qualitative content analysis will be conducted using the following six steps:

Step 1: Preparing of data

Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014: 236) recommended that all data be prepared and organised in order to make the process of data analysis easier. The data of this study consisted of the

entire novel (*Atonement*). The researcher first converted a hard copy of the novel into PDF documents using a flatbed scanner. Afterwards the PDF files were converted into Microsoft Word documents by using a website called Online OCR (2009-2016) which, using online character recognition software, turns PDF files into editable Microsoft Word files. Next, data were organised into four folders labelled Parts 1 to 4, which are the authentic labels used for the division of the novel. From these folders, the data were imported and saved in the "internals" folder of the NVivo 11 qualitative data analysis software (QSR International 2016). Once stored in NVivo 11, the data first had to be "cleaned up" and reformatted before it could be analysed. The formatting of the data documents downloaded from Online OCR was incompatible with the NVivo 11 program, and thus the researcher had to adjust the font size and spacing of the data uploaded in NVivo 11 in order to make the data easier to read and analyse during Step 4.

Step 2: Defining the coding unit to be analysed

It is important to define the exact coding unit or unit of text that will be coded from the prepared data, whether it be "individual words, phrases, symbols, sentences, or paragraphs" (Treadwell 2011: 181; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 236). This study's unit of analysis, *Atonement*, was divided into four parts by the author as each part of the novel deals with a different section of the overall storyline (as discussed in Chapter 5). The researcher thus retained this natural division of the text and identified the coding unit as any textual incident in all four parts of the narrative that met the coding criteria specified in the constructed prior coding framework. The researcher analysed the entire novel in order to produce adequate evidence of the seven traditions of communication theory to meet the research objectives.

Step 3: Developing a coding framework

As mentioned before, researchers can make use of either prior coding, emergent coding, or both during content analysis (Wimmer & Dominick 2014: 168). This research study adopted

prior coding. As planned in the research design, a comprehensive coding framework was constructed from the literature review in Chapter 3. This coding framework allowed the researcher to analyse the narrative of *Atonement* using the coding criteria specified in the coding framework to establish the presence and examples of the characteristics of the seven traditions of communication theory.

Table 4.1 presents the prior coding framework which contains the main characteristics of each of the seven traditions and related coding criteria that assisted the researcher, who was also the coder, in identifying and coding textual instances from which these ideas become apparent through systematic inductive interpretation. The use of prior coding and a well-constructed coding framework helped to ensure that the data analysis was conducted systematically and consistently.

Table 4.1: Prior coding framework

CHARACTERISTICS	CODING CRITERIA
RHETORICAL TRADITION	
Communication is artistic expression or public discourse displayed during public address.	**Artistic** communication. **Public** communication.
Public discourse has the goal of influencing and/or persuading audiences.	Communication aimed at **influencing**. Communication aimed at **persuading**.
Persuasion occurs through strategic, skilful, and eloquent use of language and other communication-bearing symbols.	Use of **strategic, skilful, and/or eloquent language** to persuade. Use of **other symbols** to persuade.
Strong, credible, and convincing arguments are constructed during public discourse.	**Convincing arguments** based on **credible evidence**.
Perfection of public discourse is attained through critical study and extensive training.	**Critical study** of public discourse. **Training** for public discourse.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL TRADITION	
Communication is essential dialogue for active interpretation of conscious experiences of the world and other people.	**Interpretation** of life **experiences** through **dialogue** with self or others.
Interpretation of direct life experiences leads to understanding and knowledge about the world.	**Interpretation of life experiences leads to understanding** and **knowledge** about the world. **Lack of experience leads to misunderstanding or no understanding of the world**.
Meaning assigned to symbols, events, or people in experiences depends on subjective perception and interpretation.	**Interpreted meanings** of experiences are **subjective**.
Interpretation of experiences is an active process requiring the *hermeneutic circle*; artful interpretation moving from the specific to the general and back to the specific again.	Interpretation is an **active, hermeneutic process**.
Authentic dialogue allows the experience of other people based on shared commonalities and differences, and the construction of authentic human relationships.	**Get to know people** through authentic dialogues. **Form authentic relationships** through dialogue.
SEMIOTIC TRADITION	
Communication is the intersubjective mediator of socially shared meanings of signs necessary for common understanding and effective social interaction.	Communication is a medium for **socially shared meaning**. Social interaction based on socially **shared meaning**.
Signs and symbols are the productive agents of thought in society and are used to convey meaning during interactions.	Meanings are socially shared through **signs and symbols**.
Sign systems are abstract representations of phenomena with arbitrary and ambiguous meanings that are different from person to person, which creates misunderstandings.	Signs and symbols **represent** something else. Meanings of signs and symbols are **subjective and personal**.
Meanings of signs and symbols must be shared and interpreted socially through communication during interactions to eliminate misinterpretation and ensure effective social interaction.	Signs and symbols are **misunderstood** without socially shared meaning.

SOCIOPSYCHOLOGICAL TRADITION	
Communication is a social process whereby an individual being expresses him-/herself, interacts with others, and exerts influence over others.	Communication is a social process viewed from the stance of the individual. **Individuals use** communication for **personal goals**.
Individual expression and interaction are influenced by psychological factors such as emotion, attitude, trauma, stress, depression, or individual personality traits.	**Psychological factors** of the individual influence communication use.
Individual influence can result in cognitive, emotional, or behavioural effects.	One's communication can **affect others psychologically**.
Individuals are social beings with the cognitive ability to perceive, interpret, and generate information to think, feel, and behave autonomously.	People are **psychologically different**. People are **independent beings**.
Psychological explanations of human behaviour allow for cause-and-effect relationships that successfully predict communication behaviour such as communication accommodation, symbolic representation of meaning, and attitude change.	Communication behaviour can be **predicted** based on psychological factors.
SOCIOCULTURAL TRADITION	
Communication is a social process during which social order is constructed and reconstructed through symbolic human interaction.	Society is **(re)created** through communicative interactions. Human interactions are based on **symbols** to share meaning.
Human interaction is social and viewed from the standpoint of society.	Communication is a social process viewed from the stance of **society.**
Human interaction uses shared symbols with socially constructed meanings that allow members of society to interact in meaningful patterns.	The **meaning** of symbols are determined during **social interaction**.
During patterns of interaction, social meanings, roles, rules, and cultural values are established and communicated.	Social interactions form **patterns** with social meaning. Social interactions form **patterns** with cultural values.
Patterns of interaction repeated daily create cultural and social patterns that establish the existing sociocultural order of a society.	Social and cultural patterns create **social order**.
Human interaction in society is influenced by the existing sociocultural context.	Interactions are influenced by social and cultural **contexts**.

CYBERNETIC TRADITION	
Communication is a vital process that allows information to flow between system parts, allowing the system to function effectively, with little or no interference.	Communication **connects** system parts. Information flow allows a system to **function**.
Systems are social structures comprised of interdependent parts that work together to create a function that is worth more than the sum of the various parts.	Each part of the system **contributes** to its functioning.
Systems interact with their environment to regulate themselves and maintain order and balance with the environment through feedback.	Systems **interact** with the environment through **feedback**. Systems are **self-regulative**. Systems need **order** and **balance**.
Communication influences, shapes, and controls the character of the overall system and helps the system achieve both balance and change.	Systems **maintain balance** through **feedback**. Systems **adapt and change** through **feedback**.
Systems can malfunction or break down should there be a problem with the communication.	Systems **cannot function** effectively without communication.
Systems occur in various contexts, including sign systems, language systems, cognitive systems, and societal systems.	Systems are **contextual**.
CRITICAL TRADITION	
Communication is critical discourse that provides the means for discursive reflection on recognised social distortions and injustices.	Discursive **reflection** (Reflection through dialogue). Recognition of **social distortions and injustices**.
Discursive reflection refers to honest communication that freely reflects on and critically examines habits, beliefs, and power structures that are usually unchallenged in society.	Communication **reflects** on habits, beliefs, and power structures. Communication **criticises** habits, beliefs, and power structures.
Critical theorists openly question and criticise oppression, power abuse, and discrimination with the goal of exposing and changing social injustices.	**Criticism** of oppression, power abuse, and discrimination. Attempts to **change** social injustices.
Conflict, distortion, injustice, and dominion are inherent parts of human society.	Society **contains** conflict, distortion, injustice, and dominion.
Communication can also be the cause of social inequalities in cases where social discourses promote domination, exclusion, segregation, or marginalisation.	Social inequalities can be **caused** by communication.

Coding frameworks usually subscribe to the criteria of mutual exclusivity and exhaustiveness (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 238; Wimmer & Dominick 2014: 169). This research study, however, cannot fully meet these criteria due to the nature of the research topic. Firstly, based on the evidence provided in Chapters 2 and 3 of this study, communication theories, by their multidisciplinary nature, cannot be classified into only one exclusive category. The implication of this is that the researcher might have to assign more than one coding criterion to parts of the text in which multiple characteristics manifest. The researcher might thus interpret one textual incident as evidence of multiple characteristics of one tradition, or as a practical example of the characteristics of more than one tradition.

Secondly, the coding categories of the prior coding framework presented in Table 4.1 are only exhaustive in so far as they encompass the scope of all seven traditions of communication theory, as described in Chapter 3. As the focus of this research study is only on the seven traditions as identified by Craig (1999), this coding framework is sufficient to address the research aim. It should be noted that this coding framework is not sufficiently exhaustive to accommodate evidence of other intellectual ideas not characteristic of any of the seven traditions and thus there might be sections of the novel that are not coded because they are not indicative of any of the specified coding criteria.

Step 4: Coding of all coding units

After all the data have been prepared and the prior coding framework has been constructed, actual coding of the units of text begins. There are many different forms of coding available to researchers. Based on the nature of this study, thematic coding was used, which is the process of coding themes or characteristics that are evident from the data (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 241). While some characteristics are manifest and clearly visible for coding, most thematic codes are latent or hidden, which means that researchers will base coding on the subjective interpretation of the underlying meanings of the data (Babbie 1983: 279).

In order to ensure systematic and reliable coding, the researcher made use of qualitative research software by QSR International called NVivo 11 (2016). NVivo 11 is the latest version of this qualitative data analysis software, which allows researchers to collect, analyse, and manage qualitative data easily. This software is ideal for text-based data such as a novel, and allows thematic coding. Coded data can also be reviewed and queries of codes can be compiled. The researcher gained access to NVivo 11 (QSR International 2016) through the University of the Free State's licence to conduct the described prior coding of *Atonement*.

Step 5: Interpretation of coded data

Following the thematic coding of the unit of analysis via NVivo 11, the coded data were interpreted in order to amplify the various inferred and constructed meanings and understandings (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 242). The coded data extracted from NVivo 11 took two forms. Firstly, the frequency of each characteristic was presented in numerical tables; and secondly, complete extracts from the novel were exported per characteristic of each tradition. The first data form resembled quantitative data, but the numbers indicated on the tables were nominal in nature and thus they had no mathematical value besides an indication of the number of times a specific characteristic was coded, which served as evidence that a certain tradition was in fact present in *Atonement*. The researcher could thus interpret and describe the overall representation of the seven traditions characterised in *Atonement* and its four parts by examining the frequency of how often a particular characteristic was identified in the text (Leedy & Ormrod 2005: 144; Du Plooy 2009: 217).

The second data form provided the bulk of the qualitative data of this analysis in the form of exported Microsoft Word documents containing the sections of the narrative in which the characteristics of the seven traditions were interpreted. These excerpts served as practical evidence of the manner in which the traditions of communication theory were represented

in *Atonement*. The researcher systematically reviewed the coded passages and interpreted which of the data served as the best examples of the characteristics of the various traditions. The selected extracts were used to report the findings in Step 6.

Step 6: Reporting of results

The results of the qualitative data analysis are reported in Chapter 5. Using the exported data from NVivo 11, the representation of each of the seven traditions in *Atonement* is presented and described by using numerical tables indicating the number of instances in the narrative in which a certain characteristic was identified. This is followed by extracts from the novel which are exemplary of the various characteristics of each of the seven traditions. Each cited extract is contextualised and interpreted to illustrate why and how it serves as evidence for, and practical illustration of, a particular characteristic and tradition. It is, however, not possible to present every coded example from *Atonement* while reporting the findings and thus the researcher only included those excerpts which were selectively interpreted as being meaningful examples of the characteristics and traditions.

4.4   Trustworthiness

In scientific research, all analysis and interpretations of data must prove to be believable. In order to achieve this, quantitative research adheres to the standards of reliability and validity, while qualitative research adheres to the standard of trustworthiness. The concept of trustworthiness, however, refers to similar ideas of reliability and validity in the sense that qualitative research studies must report on that which they proposed to investigate, with the guarantee that the replication of studies will result in, if not identical, then at least similar results (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 253; Wimmer & Dominick 2014).

The trustworthiness of qualitative research results are determined by the four related criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Merriam 2009; Kumar 2011: 185; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 258). A brief consideration of each of these criteria addresses the state of trustworthiness of this research study:

- *Credibility*: Credibility is achieved when the collected data are reported and interpreted accurately in the research findings. Because this study adopts an interpretivist paradigm, all interpretations of the data are subjective, but this does not mean that credibility must be sacrificed. In order to ensure that all the extracts that are presented as examples of certain characteristics are as accurate as possible, the researcher based subjective interpretations on the theoretical principles discussed in Chapter 3 and included in the prior coding framework. The literature study of this work thus serves a regulatory function which helps to ensure that the findings are reported as accurately and credibly as possible.

- *Transferability*: Transferability allows findings to be applied to similar situations with similar results. Although the results presented in this study drew specifically on the novel *Atonement*, the research premise and prior coding framework can be transferred to analyse other contemporary novels. It can be assumed that a similar analysis of a different communication text will also provide descriptive results of how the seven traditions emerge in that narrative, although the frequency of the different characteristics and the various examples will obviously differ.

- *Dependability*: Qualitative research is dependable when the same results can be obtained during a second analysis of the data. Although the results of this study are very subjective, the use of a systematic content analysis as well as a pre-constructed coding framework based on relevant theoretical assumptions ensures that the data analysis process can be replicated by anyone else with similar results.

- *Confirmability*: When findings and interpretations are supported by the collected data, qualitative results can be confirmed by comparing the data and the findings. The presentation of findings with applicable evidence from collected and coded data is included in Step 6 of the qualitative content analysis and thus the standard of confirmability is also met in this research study.

4.5   Ethical considerations

Scientific research becomes trustworthy when a study was conducted and the results were analysed and interpreted in an ethical manner. Ethical considerations in qualitative studies typically involve data collection and analysis (Merriam 2009). This research study contained a text-based analysis, which did not involve any research participants. As such, no formal ethical clearance was needed before conducting this study – as delineated in the research policy of the University of the Free State. In addition to this, the absence of research participants also lessened the amount of ethical considerations applicable to this study. Applicable ethical issues thus relate specifically to the researcher of this study in terms of falsifying information, the distortion of results, and the influence of bias during data interpretation.

- *Falsifying of information*: When researchers deliberately falsify or change data, it is considered unethical (Oliver 2010: 135; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 269). The researcher undertook not to falsify or change any of the collected data and to use extracts of *Atonement* exactly as written originally by the author, Ian McEwan.
- *Distortion of results*: When data are quoted out of context or the importance of data is over-emphasised, data distortion occurs (Kumar 2011: 247; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2014: 270). The researcher ensured that all quotes extracted from *Atonement* included brief descriptions of the correct context so as to avoid out-of-context

quotations. In addition, no extract was assigned more importance than others and all coded themes were equally important evidence needed to meet the specified research objectives.

- *Biased interpretations*: Qualitative and interpretive research is often accused of being biased due to the subjective nature of investigations. However, subjectivity does not automatically lead to biased results. Kumar (2011: 246) distinguished subjectivity from bias by defining bias as "a deliberate attempt either to hide [results] or to highlight something disproportionately to its true existence". While the researcher subscribed to interpretivism and subjectivity, personal biases were avoided as best the researcher could.

4.6 Conclusion

The theoretical principles associated with the seven traditions of communication theory, which emerged from the intellectual works of multiple other disciplines (see Chapters 2 and 3), can be abstract and difficult to comprehend. The premise of this study is that by using a contemporary narrative like *Atonement*, the theoretical characteristics associated with each of the seven traditions can be practically applied and illustrated, which enables greater comprehension. In order to achieve this, a descriptive study was planned, as illustrated in the methodological framework described in this chapter.

Following an interpretivist paradigm ensures that the narrative of *Atonement* can be analysed in depth for obvious and hidden meanings, and the multiple available meanings can also be interpreted subjectively, as guided by the theoretical framework from the literature study. A qualitative methodology and two-phase research design proved best suited to explore and describe the various ways in which the characteristics of the seven traditions become evident in the narrative. Phase 1 of the design involved constructing a

prior coding framework from the literature study in Chapter 3 to guide the subjective interpretation and coding of the many characteristics of each of the seven traditions. A qualitative content analysis of *Atonement* was conducted in Phase 2 following six customised content analysis steps. This systematic analysis and interpretation of the coded data ensured that the results of this study were trustworthy and ethical. The next chapter presents the results of the data analysis as planned during the final step of the qualitative content analysis.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

5.1   Introduction

As described in Chapter 4, this study made use of the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 11 to analyse Ian McEwan's novel *Atonement* for evidence of the characteristics of each of the seven traditions of communication theory. In order to contextualise the findings of this content analysis, a brief overview of the narrative of *Atonement* will first be given. The remainder of this chapter will reflect the results of this study, which include the illustration of the presence of the characteristics of the seven traditions in the novel, as well as textual evidence of the manner in which these characteristics became apparent in the narrative.

5.1.1   The narrative of *Atonement*

McEwan's (2001) novel, *Atonement*, tells the story of protagonist Briony Tallis who, following a juvenile misunderstanding, falsely accuses a man of a crime for which he is wrongly imprisoned. Briony's actions ruin her relationship with her family, as well as the potential future happiness of her sister and the victim, Robbie, and she spends the rest of her life trying to atone for her childhood crime. *Atonement* is divided into four parts. This original structure was retained during the analysis of the novel. Figure 5.1 outlines the main events of the four parts of the narrative which were used to identify the characteristics of the seven traditions.
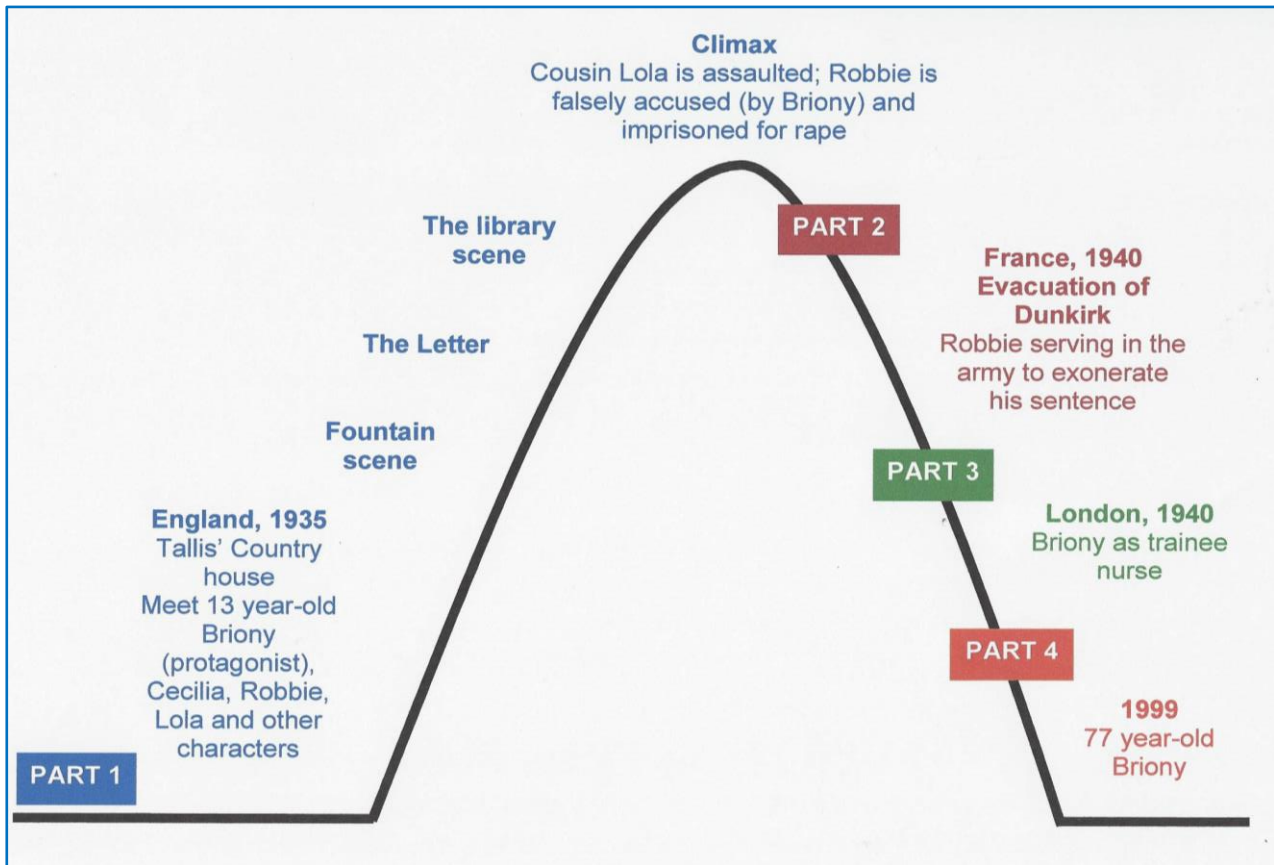
Figure 5.1: **Atonement** *(McEwan 2001) plot outline with the main events of the different parts*

Part 1 of the novel depicts the initial setting and events at the Tallis' country house in England in 1935 and explores the central characters of the story and their various relationships. Readers are introduced to Briony, a 13-year-old girl with a great imagination and love for creating fictional stories about the fascinating yet unfamiliar world of adulthood. Briony is the youngest of the three children of Jack and Emily Tallis. Leon Tallis, the eldest, is friends with Paul Marshall, a chocolate entrepreneur. Briony's older sister, Cecilia Tallis, grew up with Robbie Turner, the son of a Tallis employee, Grace Turner. At the start of the novel, the Tallis family is playing host to their cousins, Lola Quincey and her twin brothers Jackson and Pierrot (McEwan 2001).

The events of Part 1 centre around Briony's juvenile misinterpretation of a series of adult events that ultimately lead to the climax of the novel. These events, identifiable as the

fountain scene, the letter scene, and the library scene (see Figure 5.1), concern Cecilia and Robbie, who find themselves confronted with unfamiliar feelings as their relationship changes from childhood friends to lovers. The fountain scene contains the initial interaction between Robbie and Cecilia, where they become aware of their changing feelings for each other. This scene is witnessed by Briony from an upstairs window. Following the encounter at the fountain, Robbie writes several drafts of an apology letter to Cecilia, including one expressing his physical desire to be with her. Robbie gives the wrong draft to Cecilia. When Robbie asks Briony to deliver the letter to her sister, Briony reads the letter and is faced with the yet unknown world of sexual desire, which she misinterprets as a physical threat instead of an expression of love. Briony's fear is, according to her, confirmed when she walks in on Cecilia and Robbie sharing a passionate private moment in the library after they have expressed their true feelings for each other (McEwan 2001).

The climax of the narrative is reached when Lola is physically assaulted. Briony scares off Lola's attacker, and although it is too dark for her to see him clearly, she convinces herself and Lola that it was Robbie, based on the previous events at the fountain, the letter, and the scene in the library. Briony accuses Robbie of raping Lola and her testimony is accepted as the truth by her whole family – except Cecilia, who vows to love and wait for Robbie as he is taken to jail (McEwan 2001).

Part 2 of *Atonement* takes place five years later, during World War II. After three years in prison, Robbie joins the army in exchange for exoneration from his sentence. Robbie and two corporals are making their way to Dunkirk for evacuation. Robbie is physically seriously injured and mentally suffering from both the atrocities of the war and his wrongful imprisonment for a crime he did not commit. As they walk towards Dunkirk, Robbie reflects on the effects of Briony's false accusation on his life, future, and his relationship with Cecilia.

While waiting to be evacuated from Dunkirk, Robbie succumbs to his wound and dies in his sleep (McEwan 2001).

The narrative of Part 3 shows 18-year-old Briony as a trainee nurse in London at the same time as the evacuation of Dunkirk. Briony has in the meantime realised that she had made a mistake, as it was Paul Marshall, not Robbie, who assaulted Lola. Briony experiences first-hand the horrors of the war and she struggles with her guilt, which is made worse when she witnesses but does nothing to prevent Lola and Paul's wedding. Briony reaches out to her estranged sister and Robbie to tell them she wants to recant her statement accusing Robbie of Lola's assault and she promises to follow their instructions to clear Robbie's name (McEwan 2001).

The final part of *Atonement* takes place in 1999 when it is revealed that Briony is the narrator of the story. Briony confesses that she did not actually see Cecilia or Robbie in 1940 and that they both died during the war. Briony instead wrote a novel in which she reveals the truth of what happened in 1935. In her novel, however, Briony kept Cecilia and Robbie alive in a final attempt to atone for the devastating consequences of her childhood crime (McEwan 2001).

5.2   The seven traditions in *Atonement*

Based on the constructed prior coding table, evidence collected during the qualitative content analysis illustrates that all seven the traditions of communication theory are present in *Atonement*, although these representations vary in terms of the number of coded instances from the text. Figure 5.2 illustrates the presence of each of the traditions in the whole narrative. As can be seen from this figure, the most dominant tradition in the entire novel is the phenomenological tradition, with 410 instances.

The tradition that is the second most represented in *Atonement* is the cybernetic tradition, with 193 instances, followed by the sociocultural tradition, with 187 instances. These numbers of coded instances are very close and thus these two traditions can be said to be more or less equally represented in the narrative of *Atonement*. The semiotic tradition is the fourth most represented in the story, with 155 instances, with the sociocultural tradition following closely with 135 instances. The tradition that is the least evident in *Atonement* is the critical tradition, with only 35 instances in the entire novel.
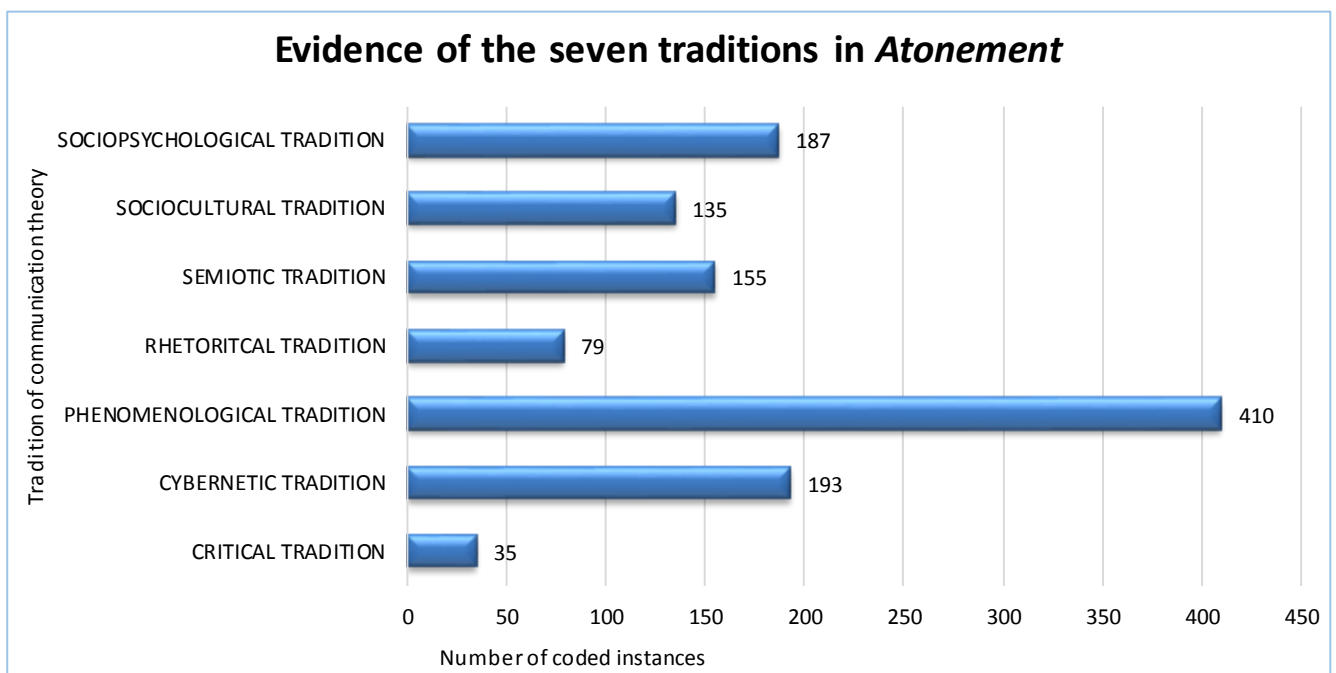
Figure 5.2: Summary of the representation of the seven traditions in Atonement

Although it is evident from the findings that the seven traditions are differentially represented in *Atonement*, the results also illustrate the variety in representation of the seven traditions in each of the four parts of the novel. An overview of the presence of the traditions in the four parts of the story is presented in Figure 5.3.
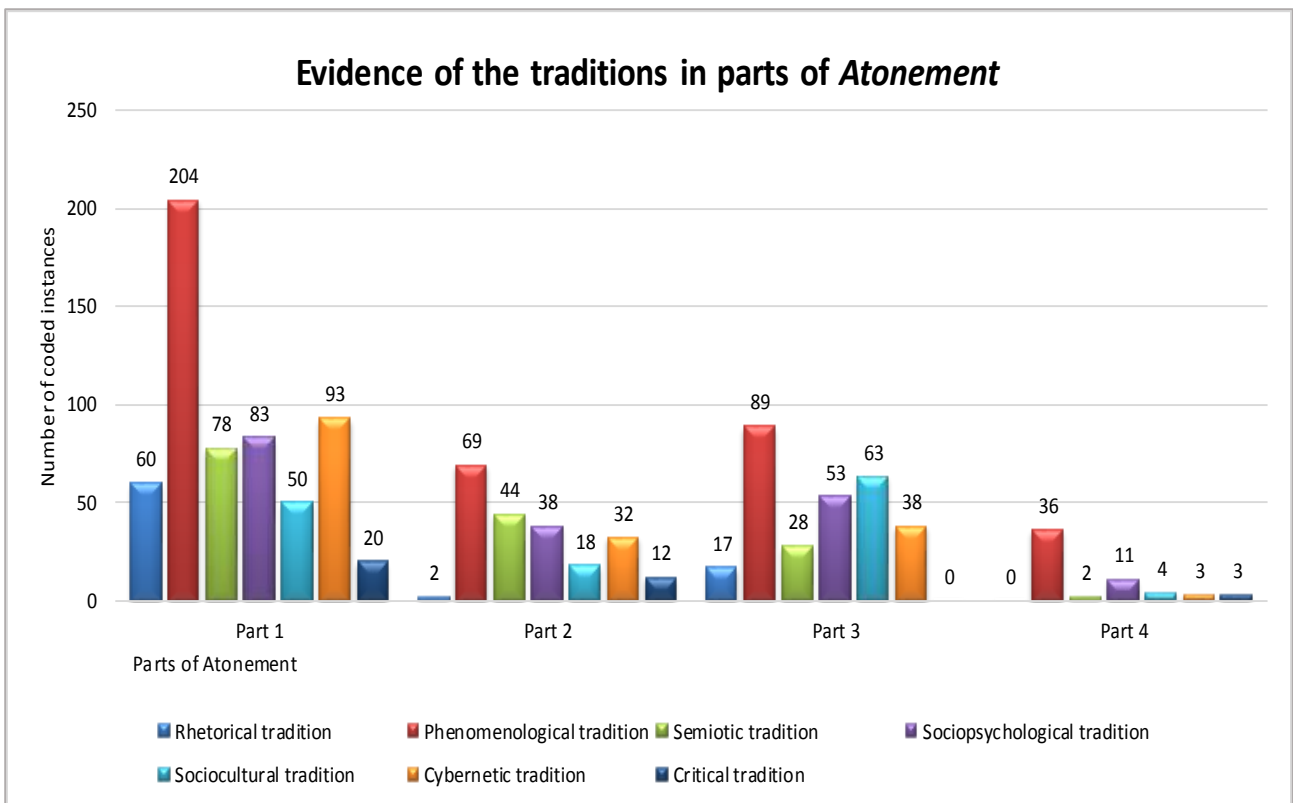
Figure 5.3: Summary of the representation of the seven traditions in the four parts of Atonement

The phenomenological tradition, identified as the most dominant tradition in the entire novel, is also the most dominant in each of the four parts of the novel. In comparison to the other traditions, this tradition is vastly more present in Part 1 of the novel, with a total of 204 coded instances, but this large differentiation lessens in Parts 2 and 3 of the novel. Part 1 demonstrates a similar representation of the semiotic tradition (78 instances), sociopsychological tradition (83 instances), and cybernetic tradition (93 instances). These three traditions again have a similar presence in Part 2 of the novel, with 44 instances coded in the semiotic tradition, 38 instances coded in the sociopsychological tradition, and 32 instances coded in the cybernetic tradition.

Part 3 sees a more prominent representation of the sociocultural tradition, with 63 coded instances, while the critical tradition is completely absent in this part of the narrative. Although Part 4 is the shortest part of the novel as the narrative concludes, there is still

evidence of six of the seven traditions, with the phenomenological tradition still dominant in this final part of *Atonement* and only the rhetorical tradition not represented.

The results presented above provide an overview of the representation of all seven communication traditions in *Atonement.* The following sections will reflect how each of these traditions is represented in the novel, along with textual references to the manner in which each tradition manifests in the narrative. These results for each tradition are presented in the same order that was used in Chapter 3, which in turn is based on the more or less historical order in which the seven traditions emerged from the multidisciplinary origins.

5.3 The rhetorical tradition in *Atonement*

The rhetorical tradition, present in especially Part 1 and Part 3 of *Atonement*, while absent from Part 4 of the novel (see Figure 5.3), was the second least represented tradition in the novel.

Table 5.1 indicates the number of instances for each of the characteristics of the rhetorical tradition in *Atonement*.

Table 5.1: Number of coded instances of the characteristics of the rhetorical tradition

RHETORICAL TRADITION IN *ATONEMENT*					
Characteristics	**Number of coded instances in:**				
	Atonement	**Part 1**	**Part 2**	**Part 3**	**Part 4**
Communication as artistic expression.	6	3	1	2	0
Communication displayed during public address.	4	3	0	1	0
Communication with the goal of persuading others.	20	17	0	3	0
Persuasion through other communication-bearing symbols (not words).	6	5	0	1	0
Persuasion through strategic, skilful, and eloquent language.	26	20	0	6	0
Convincing persuasive arguments based on credible evidence.	6	5	0	1	0
Communication with the goal of influencing others.	8	5	1	2	0
Training for effective public discourse.	3	2	0	1	0
Critical study of public discourse.	0	0	0	0	0

The rhetorical tradition is best identified in *Atonement* through the characteristics of communication messages with the goal of persuading recipients (20 instances in total) and usually using strategic, skilful, and eloquent language (26 instances); with most of the textual evidence for these two dominant characteristics found in Part 1 of the novel. One example from the narrative from which these rhetorical characteristics clearly emerged is an instance found in the climax of the novel (in Part 1) where Lola is raped by a stranger in the dark. Briony comes across them and her presence scares Lola's attacker away. Although it is too dark for Briony to clearly see the perpetrator, she believes it to be Robbie because she had seen him in the library earlier where he was in fact making love to Cecilia. In the extract[1] below, Briony comforts the traumatised Lola and claims that she saw the attacker:

'I saw him. I *saw* him.'

'It was him, wasn't it?'

'It was Robbie, wasn't it?'

The maniac. She wanted to say the word.

Lola said nothing and did not move.

Briony said it again, this time without the trace of a question. It was a statement of fact. 'It was Robbie.'

She said, 'You saw him.'

'How could he,' Briony moaned. 'How dare he.' Lola placed her hand on her bare forearm and gripped. Her mild words were widely spaced. 'You saw him.'

Briony drew nearer to her and covered Lola's hand with her own. 'You don't even know yet what happened in the library, before dinner, just after we were talking. He was attacking my sister. If I hadn't come in, I don't know what he would have done.'

'But you saw him. You actually saw him.

'Of course, I did. Plain as day. It was him.'

…

'Listen to me. I couldn't mistake him. I've known him all my life. I saw him.'

…

'Well I can. And I will.' *I can. And I will.* (McEwan 2001: 165-167).

---

[1] All extracts from *Atonement* were taken directly from the novel and have not been modified.

In this extract, Briony's goal is to persuade herself and Lola that it was Robbie who attacked Lola, because she had seen him "attacking" her sister earlier in the library. In this persuasive effort, Briony uses language strategically: she emphasises the word "saw", she changes her question to a factual statement, and she repeats the statement "I saw him." Briony further persuades herself and Lola that she would be able to name Robbie as Lola's attacker by repeating the words "I can. And I will." Briony again uses strategic language when she later gives her statement to the police inspector. As can be seen from the extract below, Briony first tries to change her language use to "I know it was him", but when this does not persuade the police officer, she goes back to her more powerful and persuasive statement, "I saw him."

> At this early stage, the inspector was careful not to oppress the young girl with probing questions, and within this sensitively created space she was able to build and shape her narrative in her own words and establish the key facts: there was just sufficient light for her to recognise a familiar face; when he shrank away from her and circled the clearing, his movements and height were familiar to her as well.
>
> 'You saw him then.'
>
> 'I know it was him.'
>
> 'Let's forget what you know. You're saying you saw him.'
>
> 'Yes, I saw him.'
>
> 'Just as you see me.'
>
> 'Yes.'
>
> 'You saw him with your own eyes.'
>
> 'Yes. I saw him. I saw him.' (McEwan 2001: 180 -181).

Part 3 of *Atonement* also provides evidence of language used skilfully and strategically to try to persuade recipients of false realities. Set during World War II, the narrative of Part 3 refers to various newspaper reports about the war effort. From these textual instances it can be seen how the British government relied on the news media to persuade citizens that the

war effort was going well with the skilful use of statements such as "The British army in northern France was 'making strategic withdrawals to previously prepared positions'" (McEwan 2001: 284), and words such as "miracle" and "heroism" to describe the disastrous evacuation from Dunkirk: "They were bitter about the newspaper celebrations of the miracle evacuation and the heroism of the little boats" (McEwan 2001: 318).

Besides evidence of the two dominant characteristics of the rhetorical tradition illustrated above, the narrative of *Atonement* further provides evidence of the other characteristics of this tradition (see Table 5.1), such as persuasion through the use of other communication-bearing symbols (six instances), as well as the construction of convincing persuasive arguments based on credible evidence (six instances). Following the attack on Lola in Part 1 of *Atonement*, Briony tells her whole family and the police that it was Robbie who raped Lola. Briony not only gives an account of the attack, but she is also able to show the adults where she had interrupted Cecilia and Robbie making love in the library earlier that night. In addition to this, Briony gives the policeman a letter that Robbie wrote in which he expressed strong sexual desires towards Cecilia. The three extracts below are thus indicative of Briony using other symbols besides her words to persuade her family and the police of Robbie's guilt, and some of these symbols also become concrete evidence in the case against Robbie:

> *It was him. I saw him.* Her tears were further proof of the truth she felt and spoke, and when her mother's hand caressed her nape, she broke down completely and was led towards the drawing room. (McEwan 2001: 174).
>
> Since she was able to show them the precise location of Robbie's attack on Cecilia, they all wandered into that corner of the bookshelves to take a closer look. (McEwan 2001: 179-180).

> She crossed the room towards her brother, but when she arrived in front of the three men, she changed her mind and put the folded sheet of paper into the hands of the policeman. (McEwan 2001: 177).

Briony cries when giving her statement to the police, symbolising her distress, and later she backs up her account by showing the adults the exact spot in the library where Robbie and Cecilia had made love, which Briony interpreted as a physical attack. Briony also retrieves Robbie's letter and hands it to the adults as final proof that she is telling the truth about Robbie. All of these symbols provide credible evidence that makes Briony's accusation of Robbie even more convincing.

The rhetorical tradition is not only characterised by persuasive attempts, but also by communication messages that simply aim to influence recipients (see Table 5.1). This characteristic is mostly evident in Part 1 of the narrative, and especially in one instance where Briony explains her purpose behind the play she had written for her older brother, Leon. Thirteen-year-old Briony loves writing her own original stories and sharing them with her family. At the start of the narrative, readers learn that Briony has written her first play, *The Trials of Arabella* (McEwan 2001: 4), in order to persuade Leon to move back to the countryside and also to influence his admiration of her, as well as his choice of a girlfriend and future wife. As can be seen in the following extracts, this play is meant to influence her brother emotionally and cognitively:

> Her play was not for her cousins, it was for her brother, to celebrate his return, provoke his admiration and guide him away from his careless succession of girlfriends, towards the right form of wife, the one who would persuade him to return to the countryside, the one who would sweetly request Briony's services as a bridesmaid. (McEwan 2001: 4).
>
> The piece was intended to inspire not laughter, but terror, relief and instruction, in that order… (McEwan 2001: 8).

This play Briony wrote for her brother is also an example of the characteristic of communication as artistic expression associated with the rhetorical tradition (see Table 5.1). Furthermore, Briony's *The Trials of Arabella* (McEwan 2001: 4) is meant to be performed for the adults with the help of the three Quincey cousins, who are called to rehearsal by Briony the moment they arrive at the Tallis' house: "'I've got your parts, all written out. First performance tomorrow! Rehearsals start in five minutes!'" (McEwan 2001: 9). Although there are many more examples of these characteristics of public communication that must be practised and perfected during training, not all these coded instances can be presented in this chapter. It should be noted that the only characteristic of the rhetorical tradition that is completely absent in *Atonement* is the critical study of public discourse.

5.4 The phenomenological tradition in *Atonement*

As mentioned in Section 5.2, the phenomenological tradition is the most dominant tradition that emerged from the narrative of *Atonement* (see Figure 5.2). Given the vast representation of this tradition in the narrative, there are numerous instances that can be cited from the text (see Table 5.2), of which only a few examples will be presented in the following section.

Table 5.2: Number of coded instances of the characteristics of the phenomenological tradition

PHENOMENOLOGICAL TRADITION IN *ATONEMENT*					
Characteristics	**Number of coded instances:**				
	Atonement	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4
Life experiences are interpreted through dialogue with the self and others.	**124**	49	24	32	16
Interpretation of direct experience leads to understanding and knowledge about the world.	**27**	25	1	0	0
Interpretation is an active, hermeneutic process.	**68**	35	16	7	6
Meanings assigned to life experiences are based on subjective perception and interpretation.	**132**	58	26	32	14
Lack of experience leads to either misunderstanding or no understanding of the world.	**40**	30	1	9	0
Get to know people through authentic dialogue.	**10**	3	0	5	0
Form authentic relationships through dialogue.	**9**	4	1	4	0

The most dominant phenomenological characteristic (see Table 5.2) evident from the narrative is the assignment of meaning to life experiences through a subjective perception and interpretation process (132 instances in *Atonement)*. This dominant characteristic is closely followed by the associated ideas that dialogue, whether with oneself or other people, is a central part of the interpretation process (124 instances) and that the interpretation process is a circular hermeneutic activity (68 instances). These three phenomenological characteristics are best illustrated in the main events of Part 1 of *Atonement.* The plot summary in Section 5.1.1 (see Figure 5.1) illustrated how the events at the fountain, Robbie's letter to Cecilia, and the library scene all contributed to the climax of *Atonement* in Part 1 where Lola is assaulted and Briony names Robbie as Lola's attacker. The fountain scene, witnessed by Briony from an upstairs window, places Cecilia and Robbie at the garden fountain where Cecilia wants to fill a vase of flowers with water. When Robbie tries to help her, a struggle ensues and the vase breaks, causing Cecilia to angrily take off her dress and jump into the fountain to retrieve a piece of the broken vase. Feeling awkward and guilty about the encounter at the fountain and the broken vase, Robbie writes several drafts of an apology letter to Cecilia, including one expressing private sexual desires. Robbie accidentally takes the wrong draft and asks Briony to give it to Cecilia, but Briony reads the letter first. Before dinner, Briony walks in on Cecilia and Robbie making love in the library after they have expressed their true feelings for each other (McEwan 2001). Each of these main events of Part 1 is thus witnessed by Briony, who subjectively interprets the meanings of these events through dialogue with herself and Lola.

The following textual reference illustrates how Briony subjectively makes sense of both Robbie's letter and the fountain scene by thinking about these events and their meaning. Thirteen-year-old Briony, with little experience and understanding of the adult theme of sexual desire, interprets Robbie's letter as "brutal" and "criminal", and she also perceives

Robbie and his dark desires as a threat to Cecilia. Briony, who originally interpreted the events at the fountain as incomprehensible and shameful (McEwan 2001: 38-39), reconsiders her initial meaning of this scene through a circular interpretation process that matches the new information in Robbie's letter to her existing interpretation of events, resulting in her reinterpreting the fountain scene as an "ugly threat":

> With the letter, something elemental, brutal, perhaps even criminal had been introduced, some principle of darkness, and even in her excitement over the possibilities, she did not doubt that her sister was in some way threatened and would need her help.
>
> …
>
> She needed to be alone to consider Robbie afresh, … The scene by the fountain, its air of ugly threat, and at the end, when both had gone their separate ways, the luminous absence shimmering above the wetness on the gravel - all this would have to be reconsidered. (McEwan 2001: 113).

When Briony later shows the letter to Lola, the two girls engage in a dialogue about Robbie's character and, through a circular process during which they consider what they know about Robbie and what the new information means, they subjectively perceive him as a "maniac". Shortly after this dialogue, Briony walks in on Cecilia and Robbie making love in the library, and she hermeneutically interprets this act as a physical attack because "what she saw must have been shaped by what she already knew" (McEwan 2001: 123).

> 'Thinking about it *all the time*?'
> Briony nodded…
> 'How appalling for you. The man's a maniac.'
> A maniac. The word had refinement, and the weight of medical diagnosis. All these years she had known him and that was what he had been.
> …
> 'D'you know, on our first afternoon I though he was a monster when I heard him shouting at the twins by the swimming pool.'
> …

'He's always pretended to be rather nice. He's deceived us for years.' (McEwan 2001: 119-120).

But she had seen Robbie's letter, she had cast herself as her sister's protector, and she had been instructed by her cousin: what she saw must have been shaped in part by what she already knew, or believed she knew. (McEwan 2001: 123).

When Briony comes across Lola and scares away her attacker, Briony is convinced that it was Robbie who raped Lola because her subjective interpretation of these new events was "consistent" and "symmetrical" with her existing subjective meanings of the fountain scene, the letter, and the library. As illustrated by these extracts, the narrative of Part 1 is indicative of a young girl's phenomenological experience of the adult world of love and lust, and *Atonement* shows how her ultimate misunderstanding of events due to subjective hermeneutic interpretations leads to the false conviction of an innocent man.

Now she saw, the affair was too consistent, too symmetrical to be anything other than what she said it was. She blamed herself for her childish assumption that Robbie would limit his attentions to Cecilia. What was she thinking of? He was a maniac after all. Anyone would do. (McEwan 2001: 168).

The narrative of *Atonement* contains evidence that a lack of experience can lead to misunderstanding of symbols, events, or people (40 instances) (see Table 5.2). This characteristic of the phenomenological tradition is especially evident in Part 1 of the story when 13-year-old Briony reads Robbie's letter addressed to Cecilia and comes across a word that represents "the yet unthinkable sexual bliss" (McEwan 2001: 9). Due to her lack of experience with this adult theme, Briony proceeds to misinterpret not only the meaning of the word, but she also wrongly perceives Robbie as a maniac and she misinterprets events that follow, as already explained in the previous extracts.

Naturally, she had never heard the word spoken, or seen it in print, or come across it in asterisks. No one in her presence had ever referred to the word's existence, and what was more, no one, not even her mother, had ever referred to the existence of that part of her to which — Briony was certain — the word referred. She had no doubt that that was what it was. The context helped, but more than that, the word was at one with its meaning, and was almost onomatopoeic. (McEwan 2001: 114).

Besides Briony's clear subjective interpretation of the events of Part 1, another example of the phenomenological characteristic that the meanings of experiences are determined subjectively by the individual is found in Part 2 of *Atonement.* The following extract further demonstrates how the active interpretation of experiences allows one to gain knowledge and understanding of the world (27 instances). The narrative of Part 2 depicts Robbie as a British soldier fighting in France during World War II. Following his wrongful conviction, Robbie spent several years in prison before joining the army in exchange for a reduced sentence. While on assignment, Cecilia writes several letters to Robbie, including one in which she admits that she no longer has any contact with her family as a consequence of Briony's false charge of Robbie as Lola's rapist. The following extract indicates Cecilia's subjective interpretation of the events that followed Briony's accusation of Robbie:

'They turned on you, all of them, even my father. When they wrecked your life, they wrecked mine. They chose to believe the evidence of a silly, hysterical little girl. In fact, they encouraged her by giving her no room to turn back. She was a young thirteen, I know, but I never want to speak to her again. As for the rest of them, I can never forgive what they did. Now that I've broken away, I'm beginning to understand the snobbery that lay behind their stupidity. My mother never forgave you your first [degree]. My father preferred to lose himself in his work. Leon turned out to be a grinning, spineless idiot who went along with everyone else. When Hardman decided to cover for Danny, no one in my family wanted the police to ask him the obvious questions. The police had you to prosecute. They didn't want their case messed up. I know I sound bitter, but my darling, I don't want to be. I'm honestly happy with my new life and my new friends. (McEwan 2001: 209).

This extract is evidence of how knowledge and understanding of the world lies in direct experience and consequent subjective interpretation of it. Cecilia directly experienced her younger sister accusing her lover of assaulting their cousin, and she interpreted Briony's actions as a result of her childish silliness and hysteria. Cecilia furthermore understands that Briony is not the only person to blame for Robbie's false conviction and that the rest of her family is also to blame, as they encouraged Briony's story because of their "snobbery" and "stupidity". Cecilia also experienced and thus understood that the justice system was not always effective and that the police "didn't want their case messed up" by investigating other potential suspects. From Cecilia's subjective stance, this specific life experience awarded her with clearer knowledge and understanding of her respective family members' characters to the point where she could honestly say she no longer wanted to be in contact with, and would never forgive, any of them.

Other phenomenological characteristics evident in the narrative is how authentic dialogue allows one to get to know people for real and form authentic relationships (10 and nine instances coded respectively). These characteristics are represented in an extract from Part 1 of *Atonement* during which Cecilia and Robbie finally talk openly about their changing feelings for each other. From the start of the novel, readers note that there is an awkwardness between Cecilia and Robbie. Cecilia is annoyed with Robbie's presence, although she cannot understand why. Robbie notices Cecilia's unease around him, and cannot make sense of it. Because of the uneasiness between them, Cecilia and Robbie do not engage in any meaningful dialogue about their feelings. It is only when he reflects on Cecilia's actions during the fountain scene that Robbie realises he is in love with her, and it is only when he expresses this love to her in his letter that Cecilia understands her own feelings. The following extract illustrates how Cecilia and Robbie engage in an authentic,

honest dialogue about their feelings, which allows them to establish an authentic relationship.

> 'It's been there for weeks . . .'
>
> Her throat constricted and she had to pause. Instantly, he had an idea what she meant, but he pushed it away. She drew a deep breath, then continued more reflectively, 'Perhaps it's months. I don't know. But today . . . all day it's been strange. I mean, I've been seeing strangely, as if for the first time.'
>
> …
>
> 'I know it's there because it made me behave ridiculously. And you, of course… But this morning, I've never done anything like that before. Afterwards I was so angry about it. Even as it was happening. I told myself I'd given you a weapon to use against me. Then, this evening, when I began to understand - well, how could I have been so ignorant about myself? And so stupid?'
>
> She started, seized by an unpleasant idea.
>
> 'You do know what I'm talking about. Tell me you do.'
>
> …
>
> He moved nearer. 'I do. I know exactly.'
>
> (McEwan 2001: 133-134).

5.5   The semiotic tradition in *Atonement*

The semiotic tradition is apparent from the narrative of *Atonement* in which a total of 155 instances were coded, mostly in Part 1 and Part 2 of the novel (see Figures 5.2 and 5.3). This tradition is primarily identified by the typical use of signs and symbols as a representation of other phenomena or meanings (54 instances), as shown in Table 5.3. There are various instances in the narrative where certain words are used to signal a complex set of social meanings, like "The Parents" (McEwan 2001: 12), "divorce" (McEwan 2001: 57), and "maniac" (McEwan 2001: 158), as will be illustrated.

Table 5.3: Number of coded instances of the characteristics of the semiotic tradition

SEMIOTIC TRADITION IN *ATONEMENT*					
Characteristics	**Number of coded instances:**				
	Atonement	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4
Communication is the medium through which meanings are socially shared during interaction.	**11**	7	3	1	0
Meanings are socially shared during interaction by using signs and symbols.	**27**	15	11	1	0
Signs and symbols are abstract representations of phenomena.	**54**	23	15	14	1
The meanings of signs and symbols are personal and subjective.	**43**	19	13	9	1
Ambiguous meanings of signs and symbols must be shared and interpreted during social interaction to avoid misunderstanding.	**12**	9	0	2	0
Effective social interaction relies on socially shared meanings and common understanding of the signs and symbols used.	**8**	5	2	1	0

In Part 1 of the novel, Uncle Clem's vase is identified as an important symbol in the Tallis family. Uncle Clem, who died heroically during World War I, was Jack Tallis' brother and this Meissen porcelain vase was given to him as a sign of gratitude for saving several civilian lives in Verdun. This vase was delivered to Jack by Uncle Clem's regiment in memory of his late brother.

> The vase was respected not for Höroldt's mastery of polychrome enamels or the blue and gold interlacing strapwork and foliage, but for Uncle Clem, and the lives he had saved, the river he had crossed at midnight, and his death just a week before the Armistice. (McEwan 2001: 24).

As can be seen from the extract, the vase is a symbol of a beloved relative and this personal association makes it more valuable to the Tallis family than its artistic acclaim, which also illustrates another semiotic characteristic, namely that the meanings of signs and symbols are usually ambiguous and subjective (43 coded instances in *Atonement*).

One instance in Part 1 of *Atonement* illustrates the semiotic characteristics of representative symbols with highly subjective meanings particularly well. Briony gets very angry when she

realises that she has to cancel the performance of her play, *The Trials of Arabella*, written especially for Leon, because her cousin Lola had taken the main role of Arabella and the twins proved to be terrible actors once rehearsals started. In her distress, Briony flees from the house to the surrounding park and proceeds to beat a nettle bush. The following extract illustrates how each of the nettle branches symbolises a highly subjective element of Briony's imagination and misery:

> A tall nettle with a preening look … – this was Lola, and though she whimpered for mercy, the singing arc of a three-foot switch cut her down at the knees and sent her worthless torso flying. … When Lola had died enough, three pairs of young nettles were sacrificed for the incompetence of the twins – retribution was indifferent and granted no special favours to children. Then play writing itself became a nettle, became several in fact; the shallowness, the wasted time, the messiness of other minds, the hopelessness of pretending … Flaying the nettles was becoming a self-purification, and it was childhood she set about now, having no further need for it. Planting her feet firmly in the grass, she disposed of her old self year by year in thirteen strokes. (McEwan 2001: 73-74).

The nettle branches symbolise Lola, the twins, the play, and Briony's childhood. Each of these are cut down because of the personal meanings they hold for Briony: Lola is too clean and innocent for Briony's liking, the twins are incompetent actors, playwriting is a messy art form, and childhood is a silly condition that she no longer adheres to.

The semiotic tradition is further evident in *Atonement* in 27 instances where signs and symbols are used during social interactions to share private meanings (see Table 5.3). Part 1 of *Atonement* sees Lola, Jackson, and Pierrot Quincey coming to stay with the Tallis family because their parents are getting divorced. The Quincey family has its own signs, symbols, and custom meanings and, as illustrated in the extract below, the term "The Parents" has a very threatening meaning for the three Quincey children, even after their

parents are separated. One quick reference to this source of authority by the eldest, Lola, is enough to ensure compliance and obedience from the two small boys:

> 'You'll be in this play, or I'll speak to The Parents.'
> …
> 'Remember what The Parents said? We're guests in this house and we make ourselves – what do we make ourselves?'
> 'A-mendable,' the twins chorused in misery…
> The Parents. Whatever institutionalised strength was locked in this plural was about to fly apart, or had already done so, but for now it could not be acknowledged, and bravery was demanded of even the youngest. (McEwan 2001: 12).

The Quincey family situation also provides evidence of another semiotic characteristic by illustrating that effective social interactions rely on socially shared meanings and common understanding (eight instances). In Part 1 of the narrative, Jackson uses the word "divorce" when referring to his parents' relationship. The reactions of his brother and sister indicate that this word is not used lightly during social interactions, especially when children are present, as its social meaning is clearly offensive and disgraceful in 1935 English society, as illustrated in the extract below:

> He paused to gather his courage. 'It's a divorce!'
> Pierrot and Lola froze. The word had never been used in front of the children, and never uttered by them. The soft consonants suggested an unthinkable obscenity, the sibilant ending whispered the family's shame. Jackson himself looked distraught… (McEwan 2001: 57).

The semiotic characteristic that meanings of phenomena are socially shared during interaction through the use of signs and symbols is coded in 27 instances in *Atonement*. One example of this semiotic feature occurs when Briony shows her cousin Lola the love letter Robbie wrote to Cecilia in which he vividly expresses his sexual desires. The two girls talk about Robbie and his expressed desires and during this interaction Lola uses a symbolic

word to represent Robbie's character by calling him a "maniac" (McEwan 2001: 119). This shared symbol contains a wealth of associated meaning, and when Briony again thinks of Robbie as a maniac, the related meanings of "man, mad, axe, attack, accuse" (McEwan 2001: 158) stir in her mind.

> … turn out to be a maniac! Lola's word stirred the dust of other words around it – man, mad, axe, attack, accuse - and confirmed the diagnosis. (McEwan 2001: 158).

The following example from the narrative illustrates how signs and symbols, ambiguous in nature, can easily be misunderstood without socially shared meanings (12 instances). Part 3 of *Atonement* shows 18-year-old Briony training as a nurse in London. New to the profession of nursing and its custom symbols, Briony fails to understand the meaning of the "N" on her name badge until its social meaning is pointed out to her by her superior, as can be seen in the following extract:

> She had gone up to the sister to point out courteously that a mistake had been made with her name badge. She was B. Tallis, not, as it said on the little rectangular brooch, N. Tallis. The reply was calm. 'You are, and will remain, as you have been designated. Your Christian name is of no interest to me. Now kindly sit down, Nurse Tallis.' The other girls would have laughed if they had dared, for they all had the same initial, but they correctly sensed that permission had not been granted. (McEwan 2001: 275).

Briony soon learns that nurses never go by their Christian names but only by their family names. This specific symbolic use of the title "Nurse" as a name is indicative of the professional ethics of nursing and implies a social meaning that nurses are not individual people, but rather a body of caregivers dedicated to the service and assistance of others.

The semiotic tradition is further represented in *Atonement* by the distinguishing notion that communication is the medium through which meanings are shared socially during interaction (11 instances). One example of this characteristic is found in Part 2 of the novel in Cecilia

and Robbie's letters to each other. Although physically torn apart first by Robbie's imprisonment, Robbie and Cecilia continue to regularly write letters to each other. These letters are, however, intercepted and read because of the nature of Robbie's conviction. He had been clinically defined as "morbidly over-sexed" (McEwan 2001: 204) and thus his letters are censored for unwanted stimulation. Unable to express their feelings freely, Cecilia and Robbie resort to using personal signs and symbols to communicate various hidden messages and meanings, as can be seen from the extracts below. The written communication medium of letters becomes the means through which these two lovers can continue to share their true feelings and emotions for each other through clever symbolic references.

> So they wrote about literature, and used characters as codes. (McEwan 2001: 204).
> …
> Mention of 'a quiet corner in a library' was a code for sexual ecstasy. When she wrote, 'I went to the library today to get the anatomy book I told you about. I found a quiet corner and pretended to read', he knew she was feeding on the same memories that consumed him every night. (McEwan 2001: 204-205).
> …
> When she described a happy outcome, that moment when the battle was over and an exhausted mother took the child in her arms for the first time, and gazed in rapture into a new face, it was the unspoken call to Cecilia's own future, the one she would share with him, which gave the writing its simple power … (McEwan 2001: 207).

It is evident that the semiotic tradition is present in *Atonement*, and there are many other textual references from the novel in which signs and symbols are used to create subjective meanings sometimes shared with other characters during communicative interaction.

5.6 The sociopsychological tradition in *Atonement*

The sociopsychological tradition is the third most represented tradition in *Atonement*, with 187 instances coded, of which the most cases are found in Part 1 (83 instances) and Part 3

(53 instances) of the narrative. Table 5.4 displays the distribution of this tradition's characteristics in the novel.

Table 5.4: Number of coded instances of the characteristics of the sociopsychological tradition

SOCIOPSYCHOLOGICAL TRADITION IN *ATONEMENT*					
Characteristics	**Number of coded instances:**				
	Atonement	**Part 1**	**Part 2**	**Part 3**	**Part 4**
Communication is a social process viewed from the stance of the individual.	**17**	7	4	6	0
Psychological factors such as emotions, attitude, trauma, stress, or individual personality traits influence an individual's communication.	**70**	26	20	20	4
Psychological influences on communication behaviour create cause-and-effect relationships that predict future communication behaviour.	**17**	8	6	2	1
Individuals use communication for personal goals of self-expression, and interaction with or exertion of influence over others.	**49**	24	5	15	4
One's communication can affect others psychologically, resulting in cognitive, emotional, or behavioural effects.	**17**	8	1	7	1
People are psychologically different.	**8**	5	1	2	0
People are independent beings that think, feel, and behave autonomously.	**9**	5	2	1	1

The sociopsychological tradition is best identified through the application of its dominant characteristic (70 instances) that an individual's communication is influenced by that person's psychological factors, such as their emotions, attitudes, stress, or other personality traits. This characteristic is exemplified in the following extracts from Part 2 of *Atonement* where the trauma and distress of both the war and his wrongful imprisonment affect Robbie's intrapersonal and interpersonal communication:

> Exhaustion made him vulnerable to the thoughts he wanted least. He was thinking about the French boy asleep in his bed, and about the indifference with which men could lob shells into a landscape. Or empty their bomb bays over a sleeping cottage by a railway, without knowing or caring who was there. (McEwan 2001: 202).
>
> But still sleep would not come, or came only in quick plunges from which he emerged, giddy with thoughts he could not choose or direct. They pursued him, the old themes. (McEwan 2001: 204).

> Tiredness and pain were making him irritable, but he said nothing and tried to concentrate. (McEwan 2001: 215).
>
> His lack of sleep exaggerated his hostility. Today their teasing needled him and seemed to betray the comradeship of the night before. In fact, he felt hostile to everyone around him. His thoughts had shrunk to the small hard point of his own survival. (McEwan 2001: 217).

The brutality of the war is intensified for Robbie by his exhaustion and he repeatedly thinks either about the atrocities he witnessed in the war, or he dwells on the "old themes" of his wrongful imprisonment that caused him to miss all the opportunities and experiences a young man could have had. Robbie's psychological state further makes him irritable and hostile, and thus he limits his interaction with his companions.

According to the sociopsychological tradition, communication messages are not only influenced by psychological factors, but communication is also a means through which people express themselves, interact with others, and exert influence over others. This sociopsychological characteristic is identified in 49 instances (see Table 5.4) where characters in *Atonement* use communication for their personal goals. The communicative behaviour of Briony in particular illustrates this notion in a number of instances from Part 2, Part 3, and Part 4 of the narrative. The following extract from Part 2 is presented to readers through Robbie's memory as he reflects back on his interaction with the girl who wrongfully accused him of rape. This example indicates how a young Briony once used communication ("I wanted you to save me") and behaviour (jumping into the river) to tell Robbie that she was in love with him. In this scene, Robbie takes Briony for swimming lessons in the river after which she uses her words and actions to express the childhood crush she has on him:

> She said, 'If I fell in the river, would you save me?'
> 'Of course.'
> …

> 'Thank you,' she kept saying. 'Thank you, thank you.'
>
> 'That was a bloody stupid thing to do.'
>
> 'I wanted you to save me.'
>
> …
>
> 'Do you know why I wanted you to save me?'
>
> 'No'
>
> 'Isn't it obvious?'
>
> 'No, it isn't.'
>
> 'Because I love you.'
>
> She said it bravely, with chin upraised, and she blinked rapidly as she spoke, dazzled by the momentous truth she had revealed. (McEwan 2001: 230-232).

Briony again uses communicative behaviour for her own personal goals in Part 3 of *Atonement* when she attends Lola and Paul Marshall's wedding. Having received a letter from her father informing her that Lola and Paul are getting married, Briony uses her day off and goes to the wedding uninvited. Her goal in going is not to share in the couple's celebration, but rather to evoke an emotional and cognitive reaction in them. At this point in the novel, Briony has realised that it was Paul Marshall, and not Robbie, who raped Lola five years ago. By going to their wedding, Briony wants Lola and Paul to know that she, the only other person who knows the true identity of Lola's rapist, witnesses them getting married and that she thus knows that they are further covering up Paul's crime. When she arrives at the church, Briony does not speak to anyone, but rather uses her mere presence as a witness of their marriage as an attempt to affect the couple:

> She wanted to be seen, but not quite so clearly. There would be no missing her now.
>
> …
>
> All she wanted was for Lola to know she was there and to wonder why. The sunlight made it harder for Briony to see, but for a fraction of a moment, a tiny frown of displeasure may have registered in the bride's face. Then she pursed her lips and looked to the front, and then she was gone. (McEwan 2001: 326-327).

A powerful example of Briony using communication as a personal means of expression and influence is found in the extracts below from Part 4 of *Atonement* when Briony reflects on the last novel she wrote. In the following extracts, a 77-year-old Briony, now an acclaimed writer, admits that she had ulterior motives for writing this specific novel besides professional advancement. The narrative of *Atonement* at this point reveals that Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3 of the novel were in fact written by Briony and that this story is both a confession of and atonement for her childhood crime:

> I've been thinking about my last novel, the one that should have been my first. The earliest version, January 1940, the latest, March 1999, and in between, half a dozen different drafts. The second draft, June 1947, the third . . . who cares to know? My fifty-nine-year assignment is over. There was our crime – Lola's, Marshall's, mine - and from the second version onwards, I set out to describe it. I've regarded it as my duty to disguise nothing – the names, the places, the exact circumstances - I put it all there as a matter of historical record. (McEwan 2001: 369).
>
> Who would want to believe that they never met again, never fulfilled their love? … I couldn't do it to them.
> …
> The answer is simple: the lovers survive and flourish. As long as there is a single copy, a solitary typescript of my final draft, then my spontaneous, fortuitous sister and her medical prince survive to love. (McEwan 2001: 371).

Briony used her last written communication to tell the truth about who really attacked Lola in 1935 and how Briony herself contributed to the imprisonment of the innocent Robbie. Briony further uses her narrative to create the life that Cecilia and Robbie did not get to have. In reality, Robbie died in France before he was evacuated from Dunkirk and Cecilia died during the Blitz bombing of London shortly afterwards. However, instead of initially admitting to the readers that these two lovers never reunited, Briony uses her story to keep them alive as her final act of atonement.

The sociopsychological tradition is further represented in *Atonement* by 17 instances of evidence that the influence of psychological factors on communication behaviour results in cause-and-effect relationships that can be used to predict future communication behaviour (see Table 5.4). Briony's personality is described in Part 1 as "an orderly spirit" with a "passion for secrets" (McEwan 2001: 5), which is in part the reason why she loved writing:

> She was on course now, and had found satisfaction on other levels; writing stories not only involved secrecy, it also gave her all the pleasures of miniaturisation. (McEwan 2001: 7).

It is therefore not surprising, and indeed predictable, that Briony would always love writing, and the following extract from Part 3 is indicative that five years later a grown-up Briony is still using writing to order her spirit ("…preserve her dignity") and maintain secrecy ("… writer in disguise"):

> At the time, the journal preserved her dignity: she might look and behave like and live the life of a trainee nurse, but she was really an important writer in disguise. It was what she had always done. (McEwan 2001: 280).

Other characteristics of the sociopsychological tradition are also evident in the narrative, such as, for example, the notion that an individual's communication messages affect others either cognitively, emotionally, or behaviourally (17 instances). This notion is illustrated by the hopeful effect of Cecilia's promise on Robbie: "And there was hope. *I'll wait for you. Come back.* There was a chance, just a chance, of getting back" (McEwan 2001: 202-203). There is also evidence in *Atonement* that people are independent beings (nine instances), as illustrated by Robbie in Part 2: "He didn't owe them explanations. He intended to survive, he had one good reason to survive, and he didn't care whether they tagged along or not" (McEwan 2001: 193). The following extract, which illustrates Briony and Pierrot's different attitudes about plays, serves as evidence of the sociopsychological characteristic that

individuals are psychologically different (eight instances); one does not like plays because they are too dramatic, which is exactly the reason why the other likes them a lot:

> Briony said reasonably, 'How can you hate plays?'
> 'It's just showing off.' Pierrot shrugged as he delivered this self-evident truth.
> Briony knew he had a point. This was precisely why she loved plays, or hers at least; everyone would adore her. (McEwan 2001: 11).

Another defining feature of the sociopsychological tradition that sets it apart from all other traditions is the typical view of the social process of communication from the stance of the individual (17 instances). This characteristic is also evident in *Atonement* (see Table 5.4), especially in the following extract where the individual stances of the characters are described during a social setting where everyone is gathered around the Tallis' dinner table in Part 1 of the narrative:

> Emily Tallis had always been incapable of small talk and didn't much care. Leon, entirely at one with himself, lolled in his chair, wine bottle in hand, studying its label. Cecilia was lost to the events of ten minutes before and could not have composed a simple sentence. Robbie was familiar with the household and would have started something off, but he too was in turmoil … Briony could think only of what she had witnessed, Lola was subdued both by the shock of physical assault and an array of contradictory emotions, and the twins were absorbed in a plan. (McEwan 2001: 126-127).

5.7   The sociocultural tradition in *Atonement*

The sociocultural tradition manifests in 135 instances in *Atonement*, and sociocultural characteristics are especially evident in Part 1 and Part 3 of the narrative with a total of 50 and 63 coded instances respectively (See Figures 5.2 and 5.3). Table 5.5 presents the coded characteristics of this tradition.

Table 5.5: Number of coded instances of the characteristics of the sociocultural tradition

SOCIOCULTURAL TRADITION IN *ATONEMENT*					
Characteristics	**Number of coded instances:**				
	Atonement	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4
Communication is a social process viewed from the stance of society.	**11**	2	2	6	1
Meaning is shared through symbols during interaction.	**13**	2	1	9	1
Meanings of symbols are determined during social interaction.	**18**	5	3	9	1
Interactions are influenced by social and cultural contexts.	**22**	5	3	13	1
Social interactions form patterns with cultural values.	**8**	3	1	4	0
Social interactions form patterns with social meanings.	**22**	13	4	5	0
Social and cultural patterns create social order.	**31**	15	3	13	0
Society is constructed and reconstructed through communicative interactions.	**10**	5	1	4	0

The sociocultural tradition is dominantly identifiable in *Atonement* by the characteristic of social and cultural patterns of interaction that create a specific social order (31 instances). Part 1 of the narrative introduces the Tallis family, whose day-to-day functioning provides evidence of a socially ordered paternalistic family, bound by the rules and conventions associated with the English upper class during 1935. The following extract illustrates how the mere presence of Jack Tallis ensures that social order is maintained throughout the household:

> When her father was home, the household settled around a fixed point. He organised nothing, he didn't go about the house worrying on other people's behalf, he rarely told anyone what to do – in fact, he mostly sat in the library. But his presence imposed order and allowed freedom. Burdens were lifted. When he was there, it no longer mattered that her mother retreated to her bedroom; it was enough that he was downstairs with a book on his lap. When he took his place at the dining table, calm, affable, utterly certain, a crisis in the kitchen became no more than a humorous sketch; without him, it was a drama that clutched the heart. (McEwan 2001: 122).

This sociocultural element of social order is further supported with evidence from the narrative that illustrates the correct social interactions that contain specific social and cultural meanings (22 and eight coded instances respectively). The twins cannot, for example, get anything to eat even though they are hungry because "it would not be proper to go down now and ask for food" (McEwan 2001: 56). At dinner, Robbie is embarrassed by Paul Marshall's conduct that breaks the rules of social convention as "it was inappropriate, at the beginning of the meal, for Marshall to turn away from his hostess and begin a private conversation" (McEwan 2001: 127).

The sociocultural order established in Part 1 of *Atonement* determines the social or cultural context of interactions (22 instances), and all social interactions are thus subjected to the rules of these established contexts, as illustrated in one example where "Pierrot began to sob, but quietly, still mindful of being in a strange house where politeness was all" (McEwan 2001: 57). The following extract further illustrates how patterns of interaction are easily formed and followed in a specific sociocultural context. Based on the social and cultural context of English society in the 1930s, Lola's assault is treated as a terrible violation that must be kept quiet. Interactions between various members of society thus follow a specific pattern and it is socially established that this event will not be talked about out loud in public:

> This quiet consultation was typical of the hours to come. Each fresh arrival was briefed in this way; people – police, doctor, family members, servants – stood in knots that unravelled and reformed in corners of rooms, the hallway and the terrace outside the French windows. Nothing was brought together, or formulated in public. Everyone knew the terrible facts of a violation, but it remained everyone's secret, shared in whispers among shifting groups that broke away self-importantly to new business. (McEwan 2001: 174-175).

Various instances from Part 3 of *Atonement* provide evidence of the sociocultural characteristics (see Table 5.5) that social interactions construct and continuously

reconstruct society (10 instances), and that human interaction relies on symbols to create shared meaning (13 instances). During Briony's training as a nurse, she quickly learns about the social order and social meanings of being a professional nurse, and the specific meanings of "hygiene", "obedience", and "discipline" are clearly established in her mind through repeated communication during her training, as can be seen from the following extracts:

> The probationers were initiated into the cult of hygiene. They learned that there was nothing so loathsome as a wisp of blanket fluff hiding under a bed, concealing within its form a battalion, a whole division, of bacteria. The everyday practice of boiling, scrubbing, buffing and wiping became the badge of the students' professional pride, to which all personal comfort must be sacrificed. (McEwan 2001: 272).
>
> It was the time of adapting to unthinking obedience, of learning to carry bedpans in a stack, and remembering a fundamental rule: never walk up a ward without bringing something back. (McEwan 2001: 275).
>
> It was never said, but the model behind this process was military. Miss Nightingale, who was never to be referred to as Florence, had been in the Crimea long enough to see the value of discipline, strong lines of command and well-trained troops. (McEwan 2001: 276).

The strict meanings of nursing signs and symbols are determined (18 instances) during communicative interactions, which take the definite stance of society and not the individual (11 instances). Briony not only learns what real hygiene means, but also how to act correctly in the militaristic sociocultural context of nursing in war circumstances. There are numerous other examples of the sociocultural tradition from *Atonement* which are not included here.

5.8 The cybernetic tradition in *Atonement*

With 193 instances evident in *Atonement*, the cybernetic tradition is the second most represented tradition in the novel (see Figure 5.2).

Table 5.6: Number of coded instances of the characteristics of the cybernetic tradition

CYBERNETIC TRADITION IN *ATONEMENT*					
Characteristics	**Number of coded instances:**				
	Atonement	**Part 1**	**Part 2**	**Part 3**	**Part 4**
Systems are contextual (signs, language, cognitive, social).	**46**	24	6	10	1
Information flow allows a system to function.	**13**	10	2	1	0
Systems are self-regulative.	**18**	6	4	4	1
Systems interact with the environment through feedback.	**20**	8	3	6	0
Systems maintain balance through feedback.	**11**	6	1	3	0
Systems need order and balance.	**10**	4	3	1	0
Systems adapt and change through feedback.	**27**	9	5	8	1
Each part of a system contributes to its functioning.	**21**	16	3	0	0
Communication connects system parts.	**19**	8	4	3	0
Systems cannot function effectively without communication.	**8**	2	1	2	0

As presented in Table 5.6, this tradition is mainly identified by examples of contextual systems in the narrative (46 instances), which include the system of Briony's play, and the social systems of family and war, which are presented below. These contextual systems are identified by their interdependent functioning parts (21 instances) between which information flows back and forth (13 instances) so that the systems can successfully regulate themselves (18 instances). These systems interact with their environment through feedback (20 instances) in order to establish and maintain order and balance (11 instances).

The different parts of the systems are connected through communication (19 instances) and through feedback the systems adapt and change as necessary (27 instances) as they cannot function effectively without order and balance (11 instances). In one of these contextual systems, at least, it becomes evident that a system cannot function without effective communication (eight instances).

The cybernetic tradition, with its distinctive focus on systems, is identifiable in various instances in *Atonement* (see Table 5.6), and is especially evident from Part 1 of the novel

where Briony's play, *The Trials of Arabella*, is described. This play contains all the features of a system: it has different parts such as characters (Arabella, the count, the innkeeper, the prince, and the vicar), actors (Briony, Lola, and the twins), a script, and a rehearsal room (McEwan 2001: 10). These different system parts are interdependent and each must fulfil a specific function in order for the system to work. As can be seen from the following extract, there is a limited number of actors and thus it is expected of some actors (like the twins) to portray more than one character:

> … Briony slipped away to the empty rehearsal room … considering her casting options. On the face of it, Arabella, whose hair was as dark as Briony's, was unlikely to be descended from freckled parents, or elope with a foreign freckled count, rent a garret room from a freckled innkeeper, lose her heart to a freckled prince and be married by a freckled vicar before a freckled congregation. But all this was to be so. Her cousins' colouring was too vivid – virtually fluorescent! – to be concealed. The best that could be said was that Arabella's *lack* of freckles was the sign… of her distinction. … There was a further problem with the twins, who could not be told apart by a stranger. Was it right that the wicked count should so completely resemble the handsome prince, or that both should resemble Arabella's father *and* the vicar? What if Lola were cast as the prince? Jackson and Pierrot seemed typical eager little boys who would probably do as they were told. But would their sister play a man? (McEwan 2001: 10).

This specific extract also contains evidence of some imbalance received through feedback that threatens the stability of the system: once the Quincey children arrive at the Tallis' house, Briony sees them and their red hair and freckles for the first time. This information creates problems for the success of the play because it is implausible that the black-haired Arabella should have red-haired, freckled parents and that her father looks the same as the wicked count, the handsome prince, and the vicar. In order for the play system to restore internal balance, it therefore has to adapt to the feedback in which communication will play

a big part as Briony will have to talk to her cousin Lola to hear whether she would be willing to play the prince or not.

The novel further contains evidence of the cybernetic tradition and systems in specific contexts in the two social systems of family and war that are dominant across the four parts of *Atonement*. In the Tallis family system, the cybernetic characteristics that each part of a system contributes to its functioning, and that a system cannot function effectively without communication, are especially exemplified. Textual references in Part 1 of the story indicate the various roles and functions of the Tallis family members: the father's "presence imposed order and allowed freedom" (McEwan 2001: 122); Emily "lay in the dark and knew everything" (McEwan 2001: 66); Cecilia was "everyone's mother" (McEwan 2001: 107), while Leon lived carefree in London; Briony was "the baby of the family" with "a strange mind and facility with words" (McEwan 2001: 6). Part 3 of the narrative reveals that, due to the aftermath of Briony's false accusation of Robbie, the Tallis family system experiences less communication from Briony, who "sometimes wrote her own concise letters home which conveyed little more than that she was not ill, not unhappy, not in need of her allowance..." (McEwan 2001: 277). Cecilia, in turn, "had not spoken to her parents, brother, or sister since November 1935 when Robbie was sentenced. She would not write to them, nor would she let them know her address" (McEwan 2001: 208). As proof that the Tallis family system could not function effectively without communication because communication is essential for a system to function successfully, Part 4 of the narrative reveals that the family formally broke apart and that Jack and Emily got divorced: "… past the house where my father lived after his second marriage …" (McEwan 2001: 355).

In *Atonement*, World War II is characteristic of a system in a social context, and various textual references refer to the various parts of this social system. In Part 1 of the narrative, for example, Jack Tallis is a Ministry employee working on "Eventuality Planning" (McEwan

2001: 122) in the case of an outbreak of war. He thus represents the British government in the war system. Part 1 also indicates the system part of military provisions in the form of Paul Marshall, a chocolate magnate who is in negotiations with the British military to supply troops with *Army Amo* bars in their military packs (McEwan 2001: 50). Part 2 of *Atonement* provides evidence of the soldiers (including Robbie) and other parts of the war system, as well as textual indications of the cybernetic characteristic of information flow between the system parts, and the system adapting and changing based on feedback received from the environment, such as the retreat of all British troops to Dunkirk for evacuation from German-occupied France (McEwan 2001: 200-201).

In Part 3 of the narrative, the war system is expanded to include the medical treatment of wounded soldiers in London hospitals. It is possible to contextualise the hospital where Briony trains and works as a nurse as a system on its own, with doctors, nurses, ward sisters, and patients as the interdependent parts connected by communication and feedback. However, the hospital system cannot ignore its immediate environment, which, in Part 3 of *Atonement*, becomes World War II, and thus this micro-system quickly becomes part of the macro-system of war. Textual references from Part 3 thus contain evidence of how the hospital system must adapt and change in order to establish and maintain balance and control following the imbalances caused by the war. The following extracts illustrate these attempts of self-regulation:

> For the first time in her training, Briony found herself addressed by a doctor, a registrar she had never seen before.
> 'You, get on the end of this stretcher.'
> The doctor himself took the other end. (McEwan 2001: 291).
>
> Without being assigned, without removing their boots, without baths and delousing and hospital pyjamas, they were climbing onto the beds.

'You must get up,' she said as the sister was upon her. She added feebly, 'There's a procedure.'

'The men need to sleep. The procedures are for later.' The voice was Irish. (McEwan 2001: 293-294).

With senior nurses seconded to casualty-receiving hospitals further out in the hospital's sector, and more cases coming in, the qualified nurses gave orders freely, and the probationers of Briony's set were given new responsibilities. (McEwan 2001: 295).

In the days that followed, the reversion to a strict shift system dispelled the sense of floating timelessness of those first twenty-four hours. (McEwan 2001: 315).

The turnover among the dead was high, and for the probationers there was no drama now, only routine: the screens drawn round the padre's bedside murmur, the sheet pulled up, the porters called, the bed stripped and remade. (McEwan 2001: 317).

When the hospital system is first faced with the chaotic war environment, all rules and procedures are abandoned at first; doctors directly address probationers and carry stretchers themselves, soldiers are allowed to lie on beds and sleep without the normal procedures followed, nurses are allowed to give orders without input from doctors, and trainee nurses are given new responsibilities. The system then manages to slowly regain control and balance, and the hospital starts to function normally again with strict shifts and non-dramatic routines.

5.9   The critical tradition in *Atonement*

The critical tradition is the least represented of all seven the traditions, with a total of only 35 instances identified in *Atonement*, with most of these appearing in Part 1 of the novel (see Figures 5.2 and 5.3).

Table 5.7: Number of coded instances of the characteristics of the critical tradition

CRITICAL TRADITION IN *ATONEMENT*					
Characteristics	**Number of coded instances:**				
	Atonement	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4
Society contains conflict, distortion, injustice, and dominion.	**12**	8	4	0	0
Recognition of social distortions and injustices.	**9**	6	2	0	1
Communication criticises habits, beliefs, and power structures.	**2**	2	0	0	0
Communication reflects on habits, beliefs, and power structures.	**2**	2	0	0	0
Discursive reflection (reflection through dialogue).	**2**	1	0	0	1
Social inequalities can be caused by communication.	**6**	1	4	0	1
Attempts to change social injustices.	**2**	0	2	0	0
Criticism of oppression, power abuse, and discrimination.	**0**	0	0	0	0

The narrative of *Atonement* does not criticise oppression, power abuse, or discrimination, but the critical tradition is still identifiable in 13 instances where the novel indicates the existence of social conflict, distortion, injustice, or dominion (see Table 5.7). This critical characteristic is most evident in Part 1 of the novel, with textual references to the male-dominated English society of 1935 where social injustice and dominion in the form of gender inequality were "as self-evident as natural justice" (McEwan 2001: 46):

> She lit up as she descended the stairs to the hall, knowing that she would not have dared had her father been at home. He had precise ideas about where and when a woman should be seen smoking: not in the street, or any other public place, not on entering a room, not standing up, and only when offered, never from her own supply – notions as self-evident to him as natural justice. (McEwan 2001: 46).

The patriarchal society in which *Atonement* is set further illustrates gender inequality with textual references to female education and employment. In Part 1 of the narrative, Cecilia is "mocked for her poor degree" (McEwan 2001: 27) and her attempt at an education from Girton College, "not that they actually awarded degrees to women anyway" (McEwan 2001: 27). Even Cecilia's own mother thinks that women's education is "childish" and an "innocent

lark" (McEwan 2001: 65). When Leon tells his sister that she must come to London to get a job, his statement reflects the social reality of female employment in 1935: "D'you know, there are girls getting all sorts of jobs now. Even taking the Civil Service exams" (McEwan 2001: 107).

An example of the critical characteristic of recognising social distortions and injustices (nine instances) is evident in the following extract:

> Occasionally, they passed in the street and smiled. She always seemed to find it awkward – That's our cleaning lady's son, she might have been whispering to her friends as she walked on. He liked people to know he didn't care – there goes my mother's employer's daughter, he once said to a friend. (McEwan 2001: 79).

Robbie, the son of the Tallis' maid, grew up among the Tallis children, and Jack Tallis paid for his education at Cambridge. Despite these circumstances, Robbie and Cecilia are not able to ignore the social injustice caused by social class, and Robbie is able to clearly recognise this social distortion and its awkward effect.

The critical tradition is also represented in social inequalities caused by communication (six instances), and evidence from *Atonement* indicates that inequality can manifest in the way one communicates or in the words one uses (see Table 5.7). The manner in which Robbie speaks to Cecilia during the struggle over a vase of flowers during the fountain scene in the following extract is indicative of the aforementioned male dominance of English society. Although Robbie was trying to help Cecilia, his tone is clearly registered by Cecilia as a command and she takes this as a sign of his "masculine authority", with which she is familiar, having regularly been subjected to male privilege in her life:

> But he said, 'Look, I've got it.' And he had, tightly between forefinger and thumb. 'Your cigarette will get wet. Take the flowers.'

> This was a command on which he tried to confer urgent masculine authority. The effect on Cecilia was to cause her to tighten her grip. (McEwan 2001: 29).

Social inequality is further created in the military where titles are used to create and maintain a system of rank. This system is, however, not always fair; in Part 2 of *Atonement*, Robbie, a lowly ranked private soldier, is followed by two men ranked higher than him as corporals. In an attempt to correct this social injustice, the two corporals give Robbie another title:

> 'So, which way, Guv'nor?'
> They called him that to settle the difficult matter of rank. He was lower in rank, but they followed and did everything he suggested, and to preserve their dignity, they teased him. (McEwan 2001: 192).

The presence of the critical tradition is finally also evident in parts of the narrative where, through discursive reflection and communication, social injustices and power structures are identified (see Table 5.7). Cecilia, for example, reflects and realises that despite her education, she is still unable to challenge or defy her father because she was raised in a patriarchal household and society and this power imbalance has become part of her beliefs and habits:

> Three years among the sophisticates of Girton had not provided her with the courage to confront him. The light-hearted ironies she might have deployed among her friends deserted her in his presence, and she heard her own voice become thin when she attempted some docile contradiction. In fact, being at odds with her father about anything at all, even an insignificant domestic detail, made her uncomfortable, and nothing that great literature might have done to modify her sensibilities, none of the lessons of practical criticism, could quite deliver her from obedience. (McEwan 2001: 46).

Part 4 of *Atonement*, set in 1999, also contains evidence of ever-present social injustices as illustrated in the following extract:

> Finally, the colonel, who began his letter by addressing me as 'Miss Tallis', allowed some impatience with my sex to show through. What was our kind doing anyway, meddling in these affairs?
> 'Madame (underlined three times) – a Stuka does not carry "a single thousand-ton bomb". Are you aware that a navy frigate hardly weighs that much? I suggest you look into the matter further.' (McEwan 2001: 360).

From this letter from a colonel to Briony, it becomes clear that social distortion and power imbalance still exist long after World War II, and Briony is able to deduct from this soldier's communication that war is a masculine business, and that women should not "meddle in these affairs" of men.

5.10   Conclusion

This chapter reflected the results obtained from the qualitative content analysis of *Atonement*, which indicates that all seven the communication traditions are present in the narrative, although they are represented by a different number of textual instances. The results include an indication of the specific characteristics of the seven traditions identified in the novel, along with textual evidence of the manifestation of these characteristics in the narrative. These results will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, after which concluding remarks on this research study will be offered.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1   Introduction

Communication is everywhere, and it is because of this ubiquitous character that theoretical knowledge about communication stems from multiple academic disciplines (Harper 1979: 1; Dance 1982: x; Littlejohn 1983: 300; King 1989: 6; Emanuel 2007: 3; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 4; Craig 2008a: 675). The theoretical context of this research study, which was explored in Chapters 2 and 3, views communication as a "fundamental social process" (Berger 1991: 103); an omnipresent phenomenon found in all human affairs and activities (Dance 1982: 244). However, the theoretical complexity of the field of communication theory initially led to an incoherent, un-unified body of communication theory (Littlejohn 1982: 245; Beniger 1990: 698; Murphy 1991: 832; Craig 2008b: 18; Christians 2010: 140; Boromisza-Habashi 2013: 421), until Craig (1999) conceptualised seven intellectual traditions based on the multidisciplinary strands of theory that emerged from the field's origins (see Chapter 3). The seven traditions of communication theory allows for the classification and unification of the existing canon of theoretical assumptions about communication (Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 34; Griffin et al. 2015: 38).

Despite this useful means to organise the intellectual smorgasbord of communication theory, the theoretical principles of the seven traditions remain abstract and difficult to comprehend without some practical contextualisation (Boromisza-Habashi 2013: 429). The premise of this research study is thus that the intellectual ideas of the seven traditions and the existing canon of complex, multidisciplinary communication theories can become easier to comprehend when practically applied to and illustrated through examples from real life (Short & Reeves 2009: 416). This study chose to analyse a contemporary fictional work for

practical examples of the theoretical principles of the seven traditions of communication theory because contemporary novels, despite being fictional, often convincingly represent reality.

A contemporary novel like *Atonement* contains references to real-life events like World War II, along with an accurate, albeit imaginary, representation of English society and related events and social interactions. The characters in the novel illustrate authentic human behaviour and communication, and the situations the characters find themselves in resemble life-like experiences and consequences. The narrative of *Atonement* thus provides a believable story to which abstract theoretical principles can be applied for realistic practical examples, and humans tend to like stories because storytelling is central to human existence (Fisher 1987: 5; Cragan & Shields 1998: 151-152).

This study set out to firstly define the broad characteristics of each of the seven traditions of communication theory. Next, these characteristics were used to identify evidence of the seven traditions in *Atonement* and to indicate the way in which the traditions were illustrated in the narrative. Each of the traditions has a unique theoretical identity and conceptualisation of communication (see Chapter 3), and by analysing a social artefact of modern fiction like *Atonement* for practical illustration of these characteristics, the abstract characteristics of these traditions become more comprehensible. The qualitative content analysis (see Chapter 4) conducted in this study provided results (see Chapter 5) that successfully addressed the research question and objectives of this study by presenting evidence of the presence of all seven traditions in the novel and descriptions of how these traditions manifest in the narrative of *Atonement.* These textual illustrations from *Atonement* allow theoretical understanding and practical application of the abstract theoretical assumptions of the communication traditions within a specific storyline and context. This final chapter discusses the implications of the evidence from the results in more detail before concluding the study.

6.2   The traditions of communication theory in *Atonement*

Although the results indicated that all seven traditions can be identified in *Atonement*, the seven traditions are not necessarily equally represented in the novel, simply because the nature of this and other novels lends itself to certain traditions' theoretical vantage points more than others. The phenomenological tradition, for example, is dominant in *Atonement* because this specific novel tells the story of how a series of significant life events are directly experienced and subjectively interpreted by the characters Briony, Robbie, and Cecilia. Author Ian McEwan also narrates from the individual perspectives of the different characters, allowing readers insight into their personal thoughts and feelings, thus the sociopsychological tradition is the second most represented tradition in this novel. The critical tradition, on the other hand, is the least represented tradition in *Atonement*, and this can be attributed to the fact that this novel does not adopt a particularly sharp critical stance on social injustices, power imbalances, social inequalities, and/or societal conflicts (although there is clear evidence of these societal imbalances in the story), because it is not in the nature of this work to be critical, although this might well be the main function of another piece of modern fiction. It is thus important to note that while contemporary narratives provide realistic vehicles for the demonstration of the presence of the communication traditions, the nature of the novel very much determines which traditions will be represented in the content.

The qualitative results of this study further provided detailed examples of the way in which each of the seven traditions was represented in *Atonement*. The practical and contextualised examples from the narrative illustrate the theoretical character and assumptions about communication of each of the seven traditions. It is further possible to see from these practical examples how the theoretical ideas of multiple traditions merge to become applicable to the same communication situation, thus providing further evidence of the

cross-fertilisation of theoretical ideas when the seven traditions emerged from the multidisciplinary history of communication theory. The overall implication of the results, discussed below, is that a contemporary narrative like *Atonement* contains ideal practical examples of the characteristics of the seven traditions, while also illustrating how these intellectual traditions overlap in certain contexts.

The results of the representation of the rhetorical tradition in *Atonement* imply that this tradition is mainly illustrated in the novel by its characteristics (refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1) of public discourse used to persuade audiences through the skilful use of language and other communication-bearing symbols, as evident from the climax of *Atonement* (see Chapter 5, Section 5.1.1) where an innocent man goes to prison because a 13-year-old girl was able to persuade her family and the police of his guilt. Specific evidence of Briony's language and symbolic use in her persuasive attempts is given in Chapter 5, Section 5.3. This specific narrative incident was interpreted as rhetorical in nature due to its illustration of the use of discourse to persuade others, but it can also potentially be interpreted as a semiotic incident if one is to rather focus on the symbols and language used during persuasive communication. This incident can also be classified under the sociopsychological tradition because it is possible to focus on the psychological effects of the persuasive attempt on others. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1, the theoretical assumptions of rhetoric are cross-fertilised by other disciplines such as semiotics, linguistics, and psychology, and it is because of this multidisciplinary influence that the rhetorical tradition has points of contact with other traditions. An important implication of this is that the main premise of the research is strongly supported when examples, as above, practically illustrate the characteristics of one tradition while also providing evidence of other overlapping traditions, thus allowing greater comprehension of complex theoretical principles.

As mentioned before, the nature of the narrative of *Atonement* lends itself to the exploration of direct life experiences and its subjective interpretation, thus implying that the phenomenological tradition is easily identified in the narrative through the phenomenological characteristics (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2) of human experiences being hermeneutically interpreted in order to achieve personal understanding of the world. This illustrates this tradition best in the narrative. Once again, the climax of *Atonement* (see Chapter 5, Section 5.1.1) provides realistic evidence of how young Briony's personal interpretations of her experiences when witnessing the fountain scene, the letter, the library scene, and her cousin Lola's physical assault, lead to her gaining subjective understanding of the world in the form of a conviction that Robbie is the guilty party (see Chapter 5, Section 5.4). This incident also illustrates the phenomenological characteristic that life experiences are easily misinterpreted because of the subjective nature of perception and interpretation, as the narrative later reveals that Briony's interpretation of these significant events was incorrect and that it was Paul Marshall, not Robbie, who raped Lola. While the events leading up to and including the climax of *Atonement* are used as an example of the phenomenological tradition, it is also possible to examine these incidents from a psychological perspective with more focus on the cognitive processes of perception and interpretation, thus allowing them to also be exemplary of the sociopsychological tradition.

The results indicate that the semiotic tradition is evident in *Atonement* through the semiotic characteristics (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.3) of the use of signs, symbols, and language with subjective meanings during social interactions. Practical examples from the narrative illustrate how various words (like "The Parents", "divorce", and "maniac") and symbols (like Uncle Clem's vase or the nettle bushes) have personalised meanings which have to be shared socially through communication to avoid misunderstanding (see Chapter 5, Section 5.5). These examples can also be illustrative of the sociocultural tradition or the cybernetic

tradition; the semiotic and sociocultural traditions connect through the theoretical assumption that meanings are determined socially within a specific social or cultural context, and thus it is possible to examine the sociocultural influence on the meanings of words like "The Parents" and "divorce". The words and symbols in *Atonement* can also be evident of the cybernetic tradition if they are viewed as interdependent components in a larger linguistic system which is used during patterned social interactions. Again, examples of a theoretical overlap between different traditions imply practical evidence of historical cross-fertilisation of theoretical assumptions in support of the research premise.

Practical real-life examples, like protagonist Briony's emotions, personal motives, and cognitive processes, and their impact on her verbal and nonverbal communication (see Chapter 5, Section 5.6), imply that the sociopsychological tradition is mainly illustrated in *Atonement* through the typical influence of psychological factors, such as emotions, attitudes, personality traits, and even personal motives on an individual's communication (refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.2.4). Because of the cross-fertilisation between the disciplines of psychology and rhetoric, Briony's written communication can also be illustrative of the rhetorical characteristic of artistic communication that is shared with a larger public audience, such as the readers of her novel. Principles of the cybernetic tradition can also be applied to illustrate Briony's cognitive reasoning as an example of an information-processing system.

The setting of *Atonement* in a realistic English society during the 1930s provides various illustrations of the sociocultural tradition. The results of the representation of the sociocultural tradition (see Chapter 5, Section 5.7) imply that this tradition is best exemplified by characteristic social and cultural patterns of interaction that are based on the established social roles and cultural values of the British (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.5). The narrative contains clear references to the paternalistic values of the typical upper-class English family

and society in which gender roles are clearly established, and conservative English society where the values of decorum and tradition are upheld without question and social scandals like divorces and crimes like rape are kept very quiet. Although England in the 1930s provides examples of a very conservative society of the time, in the sociocultural tradition, it is also possible to examine this society from the perspective of the critical and cybernetic traditions due to the emergence of the critical perspectives from sociology and the cross-fertilisation between sociology, anthropology, and the systems perspective.

The cybernetic tradition is represented in *Atonement* through evidence of various contextual systems, whether they be semiotic and linguistic systems, cognitive systems, or social systems (see Chapter 5, Section 5.8). This tradition is thus clearly illustrated in the narrative through social systems consisting of interdependent parts that interact with one another and with the immediate environment through communication feedback (refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.2.6). The Tallis family and World War II are truthful examples of typical systems in *Atonement* that allow the practical application of all cybernetic characteristics. English society of the 1930s, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, can also be examined from a cybernetic perspective to provide practical evidence of interdependent societal parts – like social roles, social institutions, and social values – that interact with one another through social communication to establish and maintain social order and balance.

The critical tradition is illustrated in the novel through instances of social injustices and inequalities (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.7), although these social distortions are not clearly criticised in *Atonement*, as mentioned before. The sociocultural context of the narrative discussed above also provides evidence of gender inequality and division of social classes, and it is these typical topics that are indicative of the critical tradition in the narrative.

As illustrated in the discussion above, the realistic practical examples of the characteristics of the seven traditions, along with illustrations of overlapping theoretical ideas between the

traditions obtained from the qualitative content analysis of *Atonement*, imply that a contemporary narrative, with realistic characters, events, and contexts, can be used to practically illustrate the theoretical assumptions of the seven communication traditions, which allows these abstract and complex ideas to be comprehended easier and better.

6.3   Limitations

This research study was not subjected to any time or financial constraints. While conducting the literature review on the seven traditions of communication theory, the researcher found that the number of available academic sources that provide detailed explanations and discussions of the theoretical assumptions and intellectual characteristics of each of Craig's seven traditions, were limited. Most scholars tend to mention Craig's seven traditions classification and then refer to his article, *Communication theory as a field* (1999), for explanation of the different traditions. Due to this limitation, the researcher also had to largely rely on Craig's works, along with that of a few scholars who offered their own discussions of the traditions, to construct the characteristics of the seven traditions (as seen in Chapter 3).

The planned research design was executed without any restraints, and the results of the qualitative content analysis addressed the research question and objectives. The researcher is, however, aware that by adopting an interpretivist paradigm, the coding process employed during the content analysis was constrained by subjective interpretation, and thus absolute exact replication of the reported results will most likely not be possible. The very specific scope of this study, with the focus on evidence of Craig's (1999) seven traditions of communication theory in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*, also limits the applicability of the results, although it was never the aim of this study to produce universal results.

6.4   Conclusion

The omnipresent phenomenon communication has inspired a multitude of theoretical explanations from multiple social sciences and humanities disciplines (Beniger 1990: 711; Littlejohn & Foss 2008: 4). The existing body of communication theory is so complex and diverse that it is difficult to order the field in a coherent manner. Although the multidisciplinary origins of communication theory are the source of the field's disunity, it is also within the historical roots of these theories that connecting points can be found (Craig 1999: 120; Craig 2007: 130). Craig's (1999) constitutive metamodel drew on these multidisciplinary theories to construct the seven traditions of communication theory, which allows for the non-exclusive classification of communication theories in either one or more than one of these traditions – however, with a definite focus – as per tradition.

From this theoretical background, the aim of this research study was to indicate that a contemporary English novel, namely *Atonement* by Ian McEwan (2001), can serve as testimony of the seven traditions of communication theory to make the comprehension and practical application of the multidisciplinary field of communication theories and the traditions easier.

The results of the qualitative content analysis have shown that it is possible to identify all seven traditions of communication theory in *Atonement* with textual evidence of the manner in which these traditions are represented in the narrative. The results of this study further contribute to a better understanding of the seven traditions metamodel of communication theory and the emergence of the intellectual smorgasbord of communication theory from its multidisciplinary roots, as exemplified in certain contexts, as portrayed in the novel.

In conclusion, contemporary and realistic stories found in modern fiction are an attractive vehicle for discovering abstract theoretical assumptions through practical examples, which can enhance comprehension of the multidisciplinary nature of the field of communication theory (Short & Reeves 2009: 416; De Wet 2011: 108).

REFERENCE LIST

Anderson, M.P. 1959. What is communication? *Journal of Communication* 9(1): 5-7.

Angelo, R.W. 1998. *The Origins and Branches of Philosophy*. [Online]: Retrieved from: http://www.roangelo.net/logwitt/philosophy-origin.html [Accessed May 2016].

Applebaum, H. 1987. *Perspectives in Cultural Anthropology*. State University of New York Press: USA.

Babbie, E. 1983. *The Practice of Social Research*. 3rd edition. Wadsworth: USA.

Bates, P. & Gilbert, P. 2008. "I wanna tell you a story": Leaders as Storytellers. *The International Journal of Leadership in Public Services* 4(2): 4-9.

Beniger, J.R. 1990. Who are the most important theorists of communication? *Communication Research* 17(5): 698-715.

Berelson, B. & Steiner, G.A. 1964. *Human Behavior*. Harcourt, Brace and World: New York.

Berg, B.L. 2001. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. 4th edition. Allyn & Bacon: Boston.

Berger, A.A. 2011. *Media and Communication Research Methods: An Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. 2nd edition. Sage Publications: London.

Berger, C.R. 1991. Communication theories and other curios. *Communication Monographs* 58: 101-113.

Bergman, M. 2012. Pragmatism as a communication-theoretical tradition: An assessment of Craig's proposal. *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy* IV(1): 208-221.

Bodie, G.D. & Crick, N. 2014. Listening, hearing, sensing: Three modes of being and the phenomenology of Charles Sanders Pierce. *Communication Theory* 24: 105-123.

Boromisza-Habashi, D. 2013. Which way is forward in communication theorizing? An interview with Robert T. Craig. *Communication Theory* 23: 417-432.

Bryant, D.C. 1953. Rhetoric: Its functions and its scope. *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* XXXIX(4): 401-424.

Burbank, P.M. & Martins, D.C. 2009. Symbolic interactionism and critical perspective: Divergent or synergistic? *Nursing Philosophy* 11: 25-41.

Caldwell, M. 2014. Transmission and dialogue in the problematic of communication. *Communitas* 19: 1- 21.

Călinescu, M. 2012. Chomsky's biolinguistic approach to mind and language. *Linguistic and Philosophical Investigations* 11: 91-96.

Christians, C. 2010. On living in Nirvana. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics: Exploring Questions of Media Morality* 25(2): 139-159.

Chung, C.J., Barnett, G.A., Kim, K. & Lackaff, D. 2013. An analysis on communication theory and discipline. *Scientometrics* 95: 985-1002.

Cooren, F. 2012. Communication theory as the centre: Ventriloquism and the communicative constitution of reality. *Journal of Communication* 62: 1-20.

Cooren, F. 2014. Pragmatism as ventriloquism: Creating a dialogue among seven traditions in the study of communication. *Language Under Discussion* 2(1): 1-26.

Cragan, J.F. & Shields, P.C. 1998. *Understanding Communication Theory: The Communicative Forces of Human Action*. Allyn & Bacon: Boston.

Craig, R.T. 1993. Why are there so many communication theories? *Journal of Communication* 43(3): 26-33.

Craig, R.T. 1999. Communication theory as a field. *Communication Theory* 9: 119-160.

Craig, R.T. 2005. How we talk about how we talk: Communication theory in the public interest. *Journal of Communication* 55(4): 659-667.

Craig, R.T. 2007. Pragmatism in the field of communication theory. *Communication Theory* 17: 125-145.

Craig, R.T. 2008a. Communication as a field and discipline. *The International Encyclopedia of Communication.* Volume 2. Blackwell: Oxford.

Craig, R.T. 2008b. Communication in the conversation of disciplines. *Russian Journal of Communication* 1(1): 7-23.

Craig, R.T. 2015. The constitutive metamodel: A 16-year review. *Communication Theory* 25(4): 356-374.

Craig, R.T. & Muller, H.L. 2007. *Theorizing Communication: Reading Across Traditions*. Sage Publications: London.

Creswell, J.W. 2013. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 3rd edition. Sage Publications: Los Angeles.

Cunha, C. & Salgado, J. 2008. Being human: Experiencing and communicating. *Integrative Psychological & Behavioural Science* 42: 164-170.

Dance, F.E.X. 1982. *Human Communication Theory: Comparative Essays*. Harper & Row: New York.

Deetz, S. 1978. Conceptualizing human understanding: Gadamer's hermeneutics and American communication studies. *Communication Quarterly* 26(2): 12-23.

De Wet, J.C. 2010. *The Art of Persuasive Communication: A Process*. 3rd edition. Juta: Claremont.

De Wet, J.C. 2011. The Outsider: Making the existential tradition of communication theory come alive. *Communitas* 16: 95-111.

Du Plooy, G.M. 2009. *Communication Research: Techniques, Methods and Applications*. 2nd edition. Juta: Cape Town.

Du Plooy-Cilliers, F., Davis, C. & Bezuidenhout, R. 2014. *Research Matters*. Juta: Cape Town.

Eco, U. 1976. *A Theory of Semiotics*. Indiana University Press: Bloomington.

Eisenstadt, S.N. 1990. Functional analysis in Anthropology and Sociology: An interpretative essay. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19: 243-260.

Emanuel, R. 2007. Communication: Humanities' core discipline. *American Journal of Communication* 9(2): 4-7.

Eriksen, T.H. & Nielsen, F.S. 2013. *A History of Anthropology*. 2nd edition. Pluto Press: London.

Evans-Pritchard, E.E. 1951. *Social Anthropology*. Cohen & West: London.

Fabbrichesi, R. & Marietti, S. 2006. *Semiotics and Philosophy in Charles Sanders Peirce*. Cambridge Scholars Press: UK.

Ferrante, J. 2006. *Sociology: A Global Perspective*. 6th edition. Thomson Wadsworth: Belmont, USA.

Fisher, W.R. 1987. *Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value and Action*. University of South Carolina Press: South Carolina.

Fourie, P.J. 1998. *Introduction to Communication. Course Book 3: Communication and the Production of Meaning*. Juta: Kenwyn.

Fourie, P.J. 2011. Thinking about mass communication research. *Communitas* 16: 1-14.

Franzosi, R.P. 2004. Content Analysis. In *Handbook of Data Analysis*, edited by M. Hardy & A. Bryman. Sage Publications: London.

Gamble, T.K. & Gamble, M. 2013. *Communication Works*. 11th edition. McGraw-Hill: New York.

Garcia-Jimenez, L. 2014. The pragmatic metamodel of communication: A cultural approach to interaction. *Studies in Communication Sciences* 14: 86-93.

Giddens, A. 1976. Classical social theory and the origins of modern sociology. *American Journal of Sociology* 81(4): 703-729.

Grassi, E. 1976. Rhetoric and Philosophy. *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 9(4): 200-216.

Griffin, E., Ledbetter, A. & Sparks, G. 2015. *A First Look at Communication Theory*. 9th edition. McGraw-Hill: New York.

Harper, N. 1979. *Human Communication Theory: The History of the Paradigm*. Hayden Book Company: New Jersey.

Hatfield, G. 2002. Psychology, philosophy, and cognitive science: Reflections on the history of philosophy of experimental psychology. *Mind and Language* 17(3): 207-232.

Heidegger, M. 1959. *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Yale University Press: New Haven.

Herrmann, A.F. 2008. Kierkegaard and dialogue: The communication of capability. *Communication Theory* 18: 71-92.

Hoben, J.B. 1954. English communication at Colgate re-examined. *Journal of Communication* 4: 76-86.

Hogan, J., Dolan, P. & Donnelly, P. 2011. *Approaches to Qualitative Research: Theory and its Practical Application – A Guide for Dissertation Students*. Oak Tree Press: Cork. [Electronic]. ProQuest ebrary.

Hope, J. 2015. Heidegger and the signs of history. *Semiotica* 207: 567-581.

Hornsey, M.J., Gallois, C. & Duck, J. 2008. The intersection of communication and social psychology: Points of contact and points of difference. *Journal of Communication* 58(4): 749-766.

Jansen, N.A. & Steinberg, S. 1991. *Theoretical Approaches to Communication*. Juta: RSA.

Järvikoski, T. 1996. The relation of nature and society in Marx and Durkheim. *Acta Sociologica* 39: 73-86.

Kalat, J.N. 2014. *Introduction to Psychology*. 11th edition. Cengage Wadsworth: USA.

Kennedy, G.A. 1980. *Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*. Croom Helm: London.

King, S.S. 1989. *Human Communication as a Field of Study: Selected Contemporary Views*. State University of New York Press: Albany.

Krippendorff, K. 1989. Cybernetics. *The International Encyclopedia of Communication.* Volume 1. Blackwell: Malden.

Kumar, R. 2011. *Research Methodology: A Step-by-step Guide for Beginners*. 3rd edition. Sage Publications: London.

Layton, R. 1997. *An Introduction to Theory in Anthropology*. Cambridge University Press: UK.

Lee, R.M. & Fielding, N.G. 2004. Tools for qualitative data analysis. In *Handbook of Data Analysis*, edited by M. Hardy & A. Bryman. Sage Publications: London.

Leeds-Hurwitz, W. 1993. *Semiotics and Communication: Signs, Codes, Cultures*. Lawrence Erlbaum: New Jersey.

Leedy, P.D. & Ormrod, J.E. 2005. *Practical Research: Planning and Design*. 8th edition. Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall: New Jersey.

Lindlof, T.R. 1995. *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. Sage Publications: London.

Lindlof, T.R. & Taylor, B.C. 2011. *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. 3rd edition. Sage Publications: London.

Littlejohn, S.W. 1982. An overview of contributions to human communication theory from other disciplines. In *Human Communication Theory: Comparative Essays,* edited by F.E.X. Dance. Harper & Row: New York.

Littlejohn, S.W. 1983. *Theories of Human Communication*. 2ⁿᵈ edition. Wadsworth: Belmont, CA.

Littlejohn, S.W. 1996. *Theories of Human Communication*. 5ᵗʰ edition. Wadsworth: New York.

Littlejohn, S.W. 2007. The nature and evolution of theory. In *Explaining Communication: Contemporary Theories and Exemplars*, edited by B.B. Whaley & W. Samter. Lawrence Erlbaum: London.

Littlejohn, S.W. & Foss, K.A. 2008. *Theories of Human Communication*. 9ᵗʰ edition. Wadsworth Cengage: USA.

Löblich, M. & Scheu, A.M. 2011. Writing the history of communication studies: A sociology of science approach. *Communication Theory* 21: 1-22.

Lyne, J.R. 1980. Rhetoric and semiotics in C.S. Pierce. *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66: 155-168.

Macguire, K.C. 2006. Making sense of the seven communication traditions. *Communication Teacher* 20(4): 89-92.

Maniglier, P. 2012. What is a problematic? *Radical Philosophy* 173: 21-23.

Mascareῆo, A. 2008. Communication and cognition: The social beyond language, interaction and culture. *Integrative Psychological & Behavioural Science* 42: 200-207.

Matheson, D. 2009. Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and journalism research. *Journalism Studies* 10(5): 709-718.

Matthews, S. 2002. *Bibliography: Ian McEwan*. [Online]. Retrieved from: http://literature.britishcouncil.org/ian-mcewan [Accessed February 2012].

McEwan, I. 2001. *Atonement*. Vintage Books: London.

McKerrow, R.E. 1989. Critical rhetoric: Theory and praxis. *Communication Monographs* 56: 91-111.

Mead, G.H. 1963. Mind, self, and society. In *Sociology*, edited by L. Broom & P. Selznik. Harper and Row: New York.

Merriam, S. 2009. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation Revised and Expanded from Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. Jossey-Bass: Somerset, USA. [Electronic]. ProQuest ebrary.

Miller, K. 2005. *Communication Theories: Perspectives, Processes and Contexts*. 2nd edition. McGraw-Hill: New York.

Milliken, P.J. & Schreiber, R. 2012. Examining the nexus between grounded theory and symbolic interactionism. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 11(5): 684-696.

Monge, P.R. 1977. The systems perspective as a theoretical basis for the study of human communication. *Communication Quarterly* 25(1): 19-29.

Murphy, M. 1991. No more "What is communication?" *Communication Research* 18(6): 825-833.

Myers, D. 2001. A pox on all compromises: Reply to Craig (1999). *Communication Theory* 11: 218-230.

Ness, O.G. 1955. From the discipline of social psychology. *Today's Speech* 29-32.

Oliver, P. 2010. *Understanding the Research Process*. Sage Publications: London.

Online OCR. 2009-2016. [Online]. Retrieved from http://www.onlineocr.net/ [Accessed 2016].

Parsons, T. 1954. Psychology and sociology. In *For a Science of Social Man: Convergences in Anthropology, Psychology and Sociology*, edited by J. Gillian. MacMillan: New York.

Pencak, W. 2010. Charles Pierce's understanding of the four ages of his own place in the history of human thought. *Semiotica* 179(1): 23-31.

Peoples, J. & Bailey, G. 2010. *Humanity: An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology.* 9th edition. Cengage Wadsworth: USA.

Petrilli, S. & Ponzio, A. 2010. Semiotics and philosophy: Working for a historical reconstruction of human understanding. *Semiotica* 179(1): 33-45.

Plotnik, R. & Kouyoumdjian, H. 2014. *Introduction to Psychology.* 10th edition. Cengage Wadsworth: USA.

QSR International. 2016. *Nvivo 11.* [Computer program].

Rabinowitz, A. 2014. It's about time: Historical periodization and linked ancient world data. *Study of the Ancient World Papers.* [Online]: Retrieved from http://dlib.nyu.edu/awdl/isaw/isaw-papers/7/rabinowitz/ [Accessed August 2016].

Redpath, P. 2010. Platonic reflections upon four ages of understanding. *Semiotica* 179(1): 83-101.

Richmond, V.P. & McCroskey, J.C. 2009. Human communication theory and research: Traditions and models. In *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*, edited by D.W. Stacks & M.B. Salwen. Routledge: New York.

Robb, F.F. 1992. Beyond anthropology. *Systems Practice* 5(1): 1-18.

Rogers, E.M. 1994. *A History of Communication Study: A Biographical Approach.* The Free Press: New York.

Roy, A. & Oludaja, B. 2009. Hans-George Gadamer's Praxis: Implications for connection and action in communication studies. *Communication, Culture and Critique* 2: 255-273.

Short, J.C. & Reeves, T.C. 2009. The graphic novel: A 'cool' format for communicating to Generation Y. *Business Communication Quarterly* 72(4): 414-430.

Steinberg, S. 2007. *An Introduction to Communication Studies.* Juta: Cape Town.

Steinberg, S. & Angelopulo, G. 2015. *Introduction to Communication Studies: For Southern African Students.* 2nd edition. Juta: Cape Town.

Swingewood, A. 1997. Marx, Durkheim, Weber: Formations of Modern Social Thought by K. Morrison & Understanding Classical Sociology: Marx, Weber, Durkheim by J.A. Hughes, P.J. Martin and W.W. Sharrock. *The Sociological Review* 45(2): 337-340.

Treadwell, D. 2011. *Introducing Communication Research: Paths of Inquiry*. Sage Publications: Los Angeles.

Tubbs, S., Moss, S. & Papastefanou, N. 2012. *Human Communication: Principles and Contexts*. McGraw-Hill: UK.

Turner, J.H. 1986. *The Structure of Sociocultural Theory*. 4th edition. Dorsey Press: Chicago.

Vlăduţescu, Ş. 2013. A completion to the traditions matrix-standard – R.T. Craig. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research* 3(10): 6-12.

Weigand, E. 2010. Linguists and their speakers. *Language Science* 32: 536-544.

West, R. & Turner, L.H. 2010. *Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Applications*. 4th edition. McGraw-Hill: New York.

West, R. & Turner, L.H. 2014. *Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Applications*. 5th edition. McGraw-Hill: New York.

Wimmer, R.D. & Dominick, J.R. 2014. *Mass Media Research: An Introduction*. 10th edition. Wadsworth Cengage Learning: USA.

Wood, J.T. 2004. *Communication Theories in Action: An Introduction*. 3rd edition. Thomson Wadsworth: USA.

Zelizer, B. 2015. Making communication theory matter. *Communication Theory* 25: 410-415.