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Para Nancy humanizadora, Cordialmente Francisco Recife, 6/10/97

Department of Anthropology
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903
30 August 1993

Dr. Francisco Gomes de Matos, Chair
Graduate Program in Letters & Linguistics
Federal University of Pernambuco
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Dear Dr. Gomes de Matos,

Thank you very much for your letter of August 24, and for the materials.

I am glad that you have called attention to the communicative dimension, and have associated it with human rights. Linguists concerned with preservation and maintenance of languages certainly have in mind their continued use, as a right of those who speak them, but I do not think that the notion of 'language' itself is adequate. The term 'communicative' brings into clearer focus the use of languages, and the meaning of that use.

So far as I know, you are the first person to connect the communicative dimension directly with the notion of peace. Of course, the peaceful solution of human problems is of central concern to Habermas and his use of the notion of communicative competence, and many people would regard communicative problems as barriers to peace. But the sharp conjunction of the phrase, 'Communicative Peace' seems to go farther, and even to suggest a conception that not many may be ready to accept. It begins to suggest not only mediation, but meditation, the achievement of a peace within persons that is more than absence of conflict, but a state of being.

I do fear that the limitations of the earth, the pressure of population against them, may make the next century more horrible than the present one, if there is not a radical change, if governments and peoples do not abandon much of what has seemed desirable, possible, necessary until now. If we are not able to share the world, we will surely live in unending violence. Perhaps attention to the conditions of communicative peace may help achieve the social and personal requisites for such sharing.

Sincerely yours,