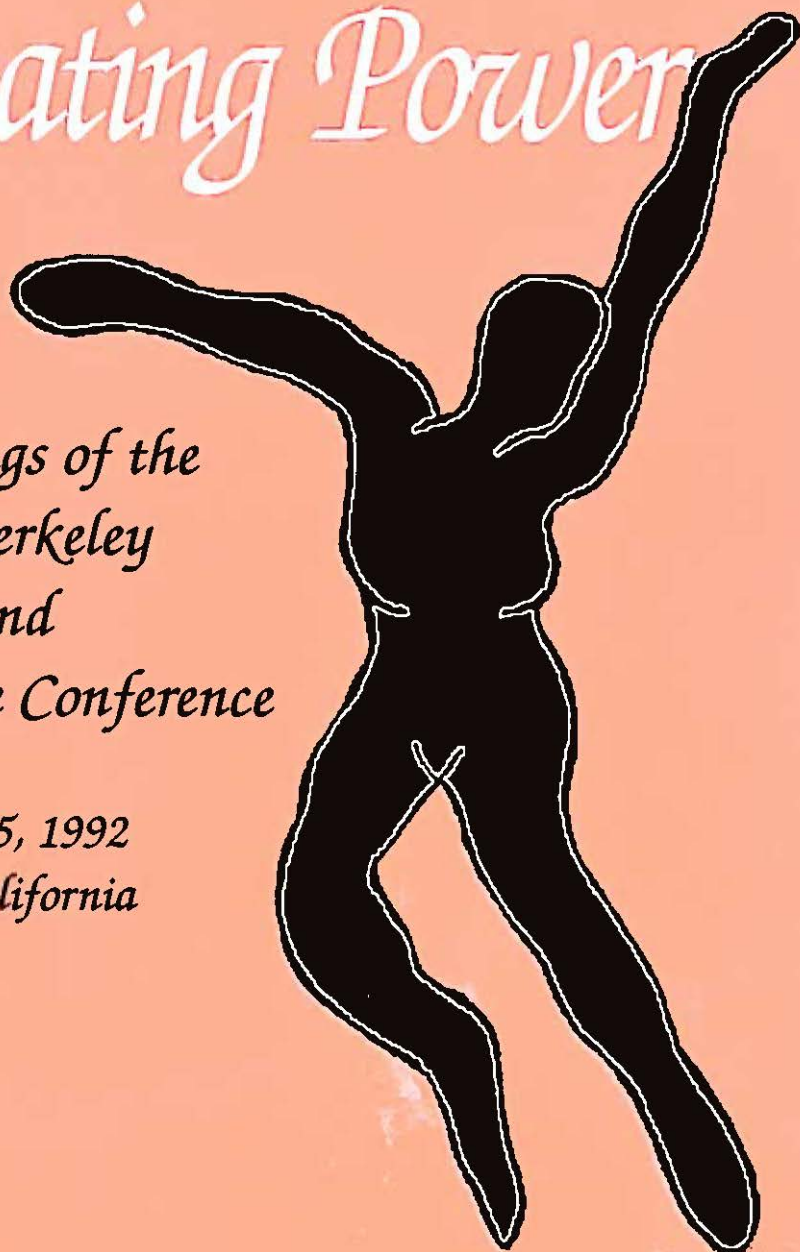


Locating Power

*Proceedings of the
Second Berkeley
Women and
Language Conference*

*April 4 and 5, 1992
Berkeley, California*

Volume 1



*Edited by Kira Hall, Mary Bucholtz,
and Birch Moonwomon*

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Berkeley Women and Language Group
University of California
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Preface

The theme of the second Berkeley Women and Language Conference, "Locating Power," emerged from the recognition among feminist researchers of language that although we have a wealth of analytical resources to draw upon in linguistic work, we lack a similar range of tools for doing social analysis. Of particular concern to feminist scholars is the fact that linguistics as a discipline has yet to theorize power.

The papers that resulted from the 1992 conference move us toward a richer understanding of the work we have still to do. Some of these papers offer critiques of earlier attempts to construct the relationship between language and power, a relationship that is central to feminist linguistics. They remind us that the task ahead permits no facile explanations or reductive models of the articulation of the linguistic and the social. Other papers assess the terrain that we have covered and clear a space in which we can initiate new research, by pointing to the wealth of the data that have already been uncovered and developing new theoretical frameworks within which to view these data. Still other papers engage with the new frameworks in producing innovative work on gender and language. They demonstrate that the complexities of social interaction defer closure and resist simplistic solutions. Perhaps most importantly, they locate and excavate the power that women have found in language. Fostering this power must be central to the project of feminist linguistics.

We are far from producing a definitive statement of the nature of power; indeed, the work in these two volumes argues that power is situated in a variety of social contexts and hence cannot be defined in essential terms. Its contingency is shown again and again. We can do no more than examine, case by case, how power is produced, sustained, and challenged in the workings of everyday life. The following papers, then, theorize not a monolithic power but a multiplicity of powers, both hegemonic and subversive, institutionalized and privatized, located in silence, speech, and writing. We come to realize that there are as many forms of power as there are subject positions, practices, and discourses within society. Such manifestations of power are oftentimes contradictory, fragmented, and partial. What is presented here is therefore less a unitary theory of power than a vision of what a feminist linguistics rooted in these understandings might look like. It, too, as will be seen in the intertextuality of these papers, must necessarily be contradictory, multiplex, and partial.

The 1992 conference developed around a question of theory: can politicized gender and language research take place within linguistics as it now exists, or do we need to expand the boundaries of linguistic analysis to encompass feminist-centered approaches to language? Clearly, the papers in these volumes push the boundaries of our discipline even as they incorporate aspects of its theory and methodology. They demonstrate that our research can and should more inclusively define what counts as linguistics, without abandoning intellectual rigor—or political commitment. In striving to balance linguistic theory with a social theory that is as fully developed, the researchers in *Locating Power* work toward an alternative

linguistics that expands the present paradigm of the study of language. We offer the proceedings of the 1992 conference in the same spirit. It is hoped that they will serve as a catalyst for new analyses of the arrangements of gender, language, and power, inspiring research that refuses the theoretical limitations that have constrained such work in the past.

MARY BUCHOLTZ
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Accruing power on debate floors

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INTRODUCTION

Conversational strategies of turn-taking and topic selection in turns have been frequently examined in order to map the intersection of language, gender, and power (e.g., Coates 1986; Fairclough 1989; Zimmerman & West 1983). The length of each conversation is treated as a pie that if halved represents equality in power and if unequally cut represents inequality. Within a turn the successful interrupter is also assumed to have more power because they are capable of affecting the length of the speaker's turn. Finally, the ability to select and maintain the topic of a turn and of succeeding turns is also viewed as an indicator of power. Women have typically been reported as talking less, interrupting less, and having a difficult time maintaining their topic in mixed-sex interactions because of their less powerful positions within the culture. Explanations of exceptions to this behavior often make reference to women's emphasis on actively supportive conversational styles (Adams & Ware, to appear; James & Clarke, to appear; Tannen 1990).

A genre like televised political debate foregrounds issues of power and the floor and allows the opportunity to see whether women and men treat turn-taking strategies as having the same relationship to concepts of power. The formal structure of televised debates treats the concept of power on the conversational floor as an equally divided pie. However, candidates in debates regularly violate this equal-floor principle. This paper uses 30 same-sex and mixed-sex televised political debates to evaluate turn-taking strategies as reflections of different concepts of power by looking at violations of turn length, preallocated turns, and preallocated topics.

The debates under consideration here are for a variety of offices from different parts of the United States. They include presidential and vice-presidential debates, and debates for the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives, for gubernatorial and state legislative seats, as well as for mayoral and city council seats in major cities in the states of Arizona, Connecticut, Indiana, Maryland, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, New Jersey, New York, and Texas.¹

The Female/Female data consist of seven debates. Three are between the same two candidates, so there are ten different speakers involved. Female/Female debates are difficult to obtain, especially for higher offices. The Male/Male data similarly consist of seven debates. One has three candidates, so there are 15 different speakers. The Female/Male data consist of 16 debates. Four debates have two male candidates and only one female candidate, so there is a total of 20 male speakers and only 16 female speakers in the mixed-sex debates.

In televised political debates in the United States most aspects of the turn-taking system for the candidates are preallocated. The order of speaking is prearranged as

called, we also see a difference between male and female candidates. In the M/M debates candidates spoke on the average an additional 12 words per violation. Individual violations went up to 43 words over; in total violations, one candidate gained 148 extra words overall as compared to his opponent's 27 extra words. He did this by continuing to talk even after his microphone was turned off. Some candidates in the M/M debates gained significantly more floor space through such violations. The 148 extra words mentioned above, for example, is the equivalent of a 30- to 40-second rebuttal.

In the F/F debates, the women spoke on the average an additional 10 words, slightly fewer than the men, but none of these violations exceeded 18 words. Only one female candidate made what might be called flagrant violations of the kind described above for the males. She violated several more turn lengths than her opponent did and got 59 extra words in comparison to her opponent's 13 extra words. What is most interesting about this candidate is that she was characterized by her opponent in her opening statement as a radical feminist who was unsuitable to represent the constituency in question, so her lack of traditional sex-role orientation might also be an issue here.³

In the mixed-sex debates, the same pattern shows up: males continue longer than females once the violation is called. While the upper limit of the range for these turn continuations was not as high as in the M/M debates, they were still consistently longer than in those of the women.⁴

One might indeed argue that for women in mixed-sex debates and same-sex debates turn-size violations are not significant as a strategy for gaining an advantage over one's opponent. It appears that for women a more valuable strategy is to obey the spirit of the rules and to show themselves as good citizens during the debate. This includes stopping in mid-sentence when one's turn is up. On the other hand, it appears that at least some male candidates are quite likely to take advantage of violations to further themselves in the debate. That is, they follow the pie metaphor: the more space one occupies, the more advantage one has. This is especially true in debates with other male candidates.

Other examples of the treatment of turnspace support this pattern. In one mixed-sex debate the female candidate had remaining time and was encouraged to take it. Her response was, "I'll give my minute and a half to Senator Quayle," a move that demonstrates an uncontentious approach to the floor space. In an all-female debate another female candidate returned the floor space to her opponent so the latter could finish her point.⁵ This occurred in spite of the fact that they were involved in an extremely heated debate. On the other hand, when a male candidate was similarly asked if he wanted his remaining time and refused it, his male opponent, in an uninvited turn, said immediately, "I'll take it," demonstrating a view of the floor space as a valuable commodity. In addition, in the first debate Senator (now Vice-President) Quayle actually complained in a joking manner that he did not get the extra time his female opponent had offered to him. And one male candidate, prior to violating his turn length, noted that he was going to do so and asked not to be penalized for it:

Dukakis: ... But, I hope you won't take my five seconds away from me,
but [I will say this=
Moderator: [Your two minutes was up, Governor.
Dukakis: =if he's serious about (*continues for several more lines*)

This strategy again shows a willingness to infringe upon turn boundaries and stands in opposition to a female candidate who several times spoke noticeably faster in order to answer a question before the bell rang and then cut herself off in mid-sentence and announced that time was up.

UNINVITED TURNS

Let us now turn to another violation of the rules, uninvited turns. The purpose of uninvited turns (UNTs) in a debate can be to correct a mistaken interpretation, to defend oneself, to add more information, to attack one's opponent, to clarify and challenge the floor structure, or to make a joke.

In addition, many UNTs are part of adjacency pairs of apologies, thanks, greetings, and question-answer sequences. Thus UNTs can be used to further one's status in the debate or simply as friendly interaction.⁶

Women in the F/F debates made the same number of UNTs as the males in the M/M debates and made more UNTs in the mixed-sex debates, but in both debate types women made the same number or more uncontentious UNTs than contentious ones. This contrasts with the male candidates in both debate types, who were much more likely to make contentious UNTs. Table 2 shows the distribution of these violations.

The contentious UNTs occurred in only two of the F/F debates. One debate had only two violations, one right after the other at the end of a candidate's turn. The other six contentious UNTs were between two women who had known each other for a long period of time. One candidate was a reporter who had written critical articles about the incumbent long before the race in question. The six UNTs that were made included two unsuccessful attempts to get the floor for rebuttal, which were stopped by the moderator. Five out of six of the contentious UNTs were made by one candidate, the incumbent.

TABLE 2. *Uninvited turns*

	% of candidates violating turns	% equivalent to preallocated turn	% contentious turn violations	% uncontentious turn violations
Female/Female	43 (6/14)	6 (16/258)	50 (8/16)*	50 (8/16)
Male/Male	47 (7/15)	6 (20/336)	65 (13/20)	35 (7/20)
Mixed-Sex:				
Female	63 (10/16)	13 (34/253)	44 (15/34)	56 (19/34)
Male	50 (10/20)	7 (22/307)	78 (18/23)	22 (5/23)

* Two of these were unsuccessful.

Of the eight contentious UNTs, only three came in the middle of the other candidate's turn, and these were all done by one candidate. This pattern contrasts sharply with that of the males in the M/M debates. Eighty percent (12/15) of the

contentious UNTs in these debates occurred as interruptions in another's turn. Only one woman made such interruptions in the all-female debates, while four men interrupted their opponents in the M/M debates. In the mixed-sex debates, males also were more likely to make contentious UNTs in the other candidate's turn than were the female candidates (75% versus 60%).

TABLE 3. *Types of uninvited turns*

Female/Female	Male/Male
7 criticize opponent	5 criticize opponent
6 accept time limits	4 accept time limits
1 secure a turn	4 self-defense
1 joke	3 criticize/clarify information
1 name repair	2 thanks and greeting
	1 support the moderator
	1 joke
Mixed-Sex: Female	Mixed-Sex: Male
7 make or respond to joke	5 accept time limits
7 accept time limits	5 self-defense
6 self-defense	5 criticize opponent
5 criticize opponent	3 add information
2 secure turn	2 joke
2 discuss debate rules	2 secure turn
2 praise colleague	1 correct opponent
1 add information	
1 correct opponent	
1 discuss value of voting	

The reasons for uninvited turns for each debate type are listed in Table 3. The three most common reasons are (1) to criticize opponents, (2) to accept time limits or other information from the moderator, and (3) to defend oneself. The greatest variety of UNTs comes from the women in the mixed-sex debates, where the leading reason for UNTs was to make or respond to jokes. The jokes of the female candidates were almost always about themselves or other issues. They were not typically against their opponent, unlike those of the male candidates, one of whom made fun of another candidate's hearing disability.

UNTs typically are a jointly constructed feature of mixed-sex debates. In the mixed-sex debates there were no instances of females making contentious UNTs on their own and only one instance of a male candidate doing this. The same is true of the contentious UNTs in F/F debates, so that if one female candidate made an UNT the other candidate would make one at some point. But this pattern does not occur in the M/M debates; in the five debates with such examples, four of them had only one male candidate making UNTs.

MOVES

The last category of violations to be discussed is moves. Moves are a special characteristic of debates in which the number of turns and their topics are

preallocated and UNTs are typically discouraged. They solve the issue of how a candidate can enter onto the floor a topic they want to discuss when it is not preallocated and may not become the topic of any other preallocated turn. Moves are used for such things as reintroducing a prior topic one wants to continue discussing, for introducing a new topic, for changing the tone of the debate, or even for refusing to answer.

TABLE 4. *Types of moves by (a) percent of moves and (b) percent of turnspace*

(a) % moves	Thanks	Value of debate	Audience involv.	Total
Female/Female	37 (20/54)	9 (5/54)	13 (7/54)	59
Male/Male	36 (16/44)	0 (0)	0 (0)	36
Mixed-Sex:				
Female	36 (13/36)	6 (2/36)	0 (0)	42
Male	39 (13/45)	2 (1/45)	6 (3/45)	38
(b) % turnspace	Thanks	Value of debate	Audience involv.	Total
Female/Female	11	17	19	18
Male/Male	9	0	0	9
Mixed-Sex:				
Female	8	37	0	13
Male	4	6	8	5

TABLE 5. *Topic shifts by percent of moves and percent of turnspace*

	% moves	% turnspace
Female/Female	9 (5/54)	64
Male/Male	30 (13/44)	50
Male/Female		
Female	11 (4/36)	29
Male	9 (4/45)	61

Most candidates make some kind of move⁷ and often make more than one move per turn, especially in openings and closings. The most common type of move in openings and closings is thanking individuals, organizations, and voters and speaking about the value of debate and universal suffrage and to praise the state's voters in some way. Looking first at thanking moves, one can see that these moves appeared with about the same frequency in same-sex and mixed-sex debates. The average amount of turnspace given over for thanks ranged from a low of 4% by the males in the mixed-sex debates to a high of 11% by females in the same-sex debates. The females spent more time thanking than the males in both debate types.

Let us now consider the general comments about the value of debates and the greatness of the state and its electorate.⁸ These two types of moves plus the thanking moves in the F/F debates account for 59% of the move violations, for an average of 18% of the turnspace. In the M/M debates, men did none of the additional two types of moves, so the total amount of space devoted to these types of moves remains the same as for thanking moves alone, 9%. In the mixed-sex debates women also did more of these three types, for an average of 13% of their

turnspace, over twice that of the males at 5%. Women also thanked people in turns where it might be unexpected, e.g., in answers to questions rather than openings and closings.

In these cases, women made many violations for significant parts of their turns, but these violations were not for furthering their own political stands. They were violations made to build a kind of good citizenship by recognizing their indebtedness to others, by stressing the importance of the voting process, and by drawing connections between themselves and the audience.

This pattern of moves for accruing power by being a good citizen may contrast sharply with that found more frequently among the male candidates of taking what space one can for one's position. An example is the closing turn of a female candidate who spent almost her whole turn praising universal suffrage. Her strategy contrasted in a jarring fashion with that of her male opponent who followed her. He spent his turn discussing campaign issues and made her turn look uninformed or at least out of role. She seemed more like a moderator, whose role often includes giving thanks and talking about the value of the ensuing debate. Her appearance as an opponent was lessened.

Another common move is shifting the topic back to one that has been brought up before. This type of move was found most frequently in the M/M debates. It represented 30% of the violations in the M/M debates and between 9% and 11% in all the other cases. While seven of these moves were located in one M/M debate, they occurred in several other M/M debates as well. In the first debate, the seven topic returns occurred while the two candidates continued arguing on one topic through several other turns and part of their closing statements. This pattern began to arise in another M/M debate, but the female moderator warned against such violations. She was the only moderator to treat these as real violations; the male moderator in the debate where seven of these violations occurred said nothing. Topic returns are in many ways a safe violation to make because they do not violate turn order but do allow control over the topic. Males, particularly in M/M debates, took advantage of them.

It is important to note one other move, an out-of-role kind of behavior, even though it occurred less frequently than the other categories of moves mentioned above. This behavior was refusing to take a turn that was given and refusing to use it for the purpose for which it was intended. In the same-sex debates, only in the F/F debates did opponents refuse a rebuttal. All three examples occurred in one debate, the same one in which a candidate offered her turnspace to her opponent so she could finish what she was saying. This was a very contentious debate and the unwillingness to continue the attacks is interesting. Each candidate refused one thirty-second rebuttal after being permitted to ask each other direct questions. The other refusal occurred with the following explanation:

- (FC1) Brunetto: I have no further comments. I see that I can't have a dialogue with Mrs. Roukema on human rights.
 (FC2) Roukema: Please do, please do. (*Uninvited turn*)

In the mixed-sex debates one of the females in a very contentious debate also

refused a rebuttal, but later expressed frustration about the number of issues that she and the male candidate disagreed over. Women candidates are likely to violate a preallocated turn by refusing it when it appears that there is no common ground for discussion or no opportunity for moving their opponent on an important issue.

Two male candidates also refused rebuttals but in a different pattern of interaction. When they were offered the opportunity to directly question their female opponent, the two male candidates made moves by refusing to ask serious questions of their female opponents. Both of them brought up the World Series instead and avoided challenging questions. When it came time for rebuttal they turned down the opportunity. These moves, while not giving the male a chance to challenge, avoided direct conflict with the female candidate but also took away the female's opportunity to act like a real opponent. The male candidates changed the rules on their female opponents and violated their preallocated turns as well. Women candidates did not do this. The women only refused a rebuttal in a contentious context when they chose not to continue pursuing the opponent. This took away from their own time as an opponent but did not affect the opponent's turn. The women's refusal because of a lack of common ground also contrasts sharply with the M/M debate described above where the two candidates continued arguing about a topic over seven extra turns. Again the males were using control over turnspace to continue to assert their opinions.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this genre-specific study of multiple violations of the preallocated system allows observation of a range of behaviors, the frequency of their occurrence, and the motivation for their occurrence. Because the debate genre consists of a preallocated turn-taking system, it puts all candidates on an equal floor. While similar structural violations are employed by female and male candidates, attitudes toward these violations and the reasons for their use show a difference between the male and female candidates. Women candidates can and do use the principle that more of the floor means a greater advantage: e.g., they talk beyond their turnspace, they take uninvited turns in someone else's turnspace, and they make moves. But another strategy is at work as well. This one takes the equality of turns and the debate rules seriously. It uses only the preallocated turnspace or however much of it is necessary. In this case, less is more; it is a way of accruing power by obeying rules. Therefore, stopping when one's turnspace is finished and not violating another's turnspace—i.e., refusing only those turns that do not affect the other candidate's turn—are valuable strategies. This strategy also assumes that violating one's own turnspace, especially if it is for issues that are other-directed and for the benefit of the debate, is a positive way of being a good debater and accruing power on the floor.

NOTES

1. These debates were acquired in a variety of ways. For some local Arizona races, I taped the debates and then obtained permission to use them. I also scanned the *New York Times* for races that looked interesting, and colleagues contacted me about races in their state. I then contacted the

relevant television stations throughout the country. The stations often made available other debates. The national headquarters of the League of Women Voters was the single most helpful source. They made available several tapes from their own library. I also contacted all state Leagues of Women Voters by mail and many responded with helpful information. Funds to pay for copying tapes, equipment, help to do tabulations, and release time have come from a Faculty Grant in Aid, an Arts/Social Sciences, Humanities Grant for Tenured Faculty, and a Humanities Release Time award from Arizona State University. I thank these various offices of the University for their support.

2. How turn violations are noted and responded to varies with the moderator. Occasionally turn-size violations are redressed in that the innocent candidate is offered an equal amount of additional time or the guilty candidate has that time deducted from a later turn, but the normal response is merely to cut the candidate off.

3. The exact quote made by Linda Chavez was "No single episode in her term in Congress raises more questions about Ms. Mikulski's suitability to be a United States senator than her hiring a woman five years ago who, according to the *Evening Sun*, used Representative Ms. Mikulski's congressional office to promote what one staff member called 'fascist feminism' and another described as 'Marxist and anti-male.' Ms. Mikulski herself said of this woman's social philosophy that it had 'her complete support and had become a blueprint for her congressional work.' ... And is this what Marylanders can expect from my opponent if she is elected senator?"

4. One male candidate made a very long violation, but it was hard to tell when exactly in the course of this violation the moderator first asked him to stop. The alternative numbers represent averages with and without the benefit of the doubt.

5. An extreme example of giving up floor space came in a debate not included here but discussed in Adams and Edelsky (1988). An inexperienced woman allowed the male candidate to take over a topic in which she was to challenge him on various issues. Instead, she accepted his topic and spent her turn explicating and praising one of his programs.

6. UNTs may be taken as single utterances as well as being part of a series of UNTs between candidates. In Edelsky and Adams (1990) it was argued that men were more likely to make single utterance UNTs, but these data do not support that interpretation.

7. Of the four who did not, three were men, but probably more significant was the fact that all of those who did not make moves were not incumbents and most of them were inexperienced campaigners.

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Gender versus group-relation analysis of impositive speech acts¹

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INTRODUCTION: CURRENT HYPOTHESES

Most research into female and male discourse patterns is in agreement that the sexes employ different strategies when conversing. Men are believed to be power-oriented, whereas women are considered cooperative (see Cameron 1985; Coates 1986; James & Drakich, to appear; Tannen 1990, and the numerous references cited therein). Thus, the majority of the studies support such claims as that men talk more than women in mixed conversations, disrupt others more often, and control topic shifts. Women, on the other hand, are claimed to have other objectives. Indeed, they were found to be supportive in conversation, smiling (Deutsch 1990 and references cited therein), giggling (Giora, in prep.), supplying more numerous minimal responses to their interlocutors, and manifesting more politeness. Thus, mainstream feminist theories diagnose cooperation as a specifically feminine style of discourse and dominance as a specifically masculine style. Such a gendered account attributes different behaviors to women and men, despite emerging conflicting evidence (see James & Clarke 1990; James & Drakich, to appear).

One important, though relatively neglected, argument against the gendered account of women and men's conversational differences has come from the attempt to view such differences as deriving from power/status distinctions (James & Drakich, to appear; O'Barr & Atkins 1980). In such a view, women do not employ feminine strategies, but rather strategies characteristic of powerless members of society. Similarly, men do not employ masculine conversational strategies, but rather, strategies characteristic of those in power.

Our approach is congruent with the second theory, namely that female and male discourse patterns derive from their respective statuses in society rather than from their psychological makeup (be it innate or socialized). However, we will suggest that although some cases of so-called gendered discourse strategies have to be accounted for by relative social power, the conversational styles of the sexes should primarily be considered against the background of ingroup-outgroup relations. Sociopsychological research into intra- versus inter-group relations has indicated that people are prejudiced in favor of their own group members, while discriminating against outgroup members (Stephan 1985; Tajfel 1978; Wyer & Gordon 1984, inter alia). In this view, power is a behavior that should be

exercised on an outgroup member, while cooperation is a behavior that should be practiced among ingroup members. Given ingroup and outgroup biases, we should expect group members to exert power on outgroup members and to cooperate with ingroup members in conversations.

Such a prediction, however, contradicts the inherently female- and male-pattern hypothesis mentioned above. Regarding men, while the gender hypothesis predicts that men should be powerful, group-relation theories predict that they should not be powerful towards ingroup members, i.e., men. Also, while the gender hypothesis claims that men should not be cooperative, group-relation theories expect them to cooperate with men. Regarding women, while the gender hypothesis predicts that women should not be powerful, group-relation theories predict that they should exercise power over outgroup members, i.e., men. Moreover, the gender hypothesis claims that women are always cooperative, but group-relation theories expect them not to cooperate with men more than with women.²

We intend to examine the gendered hypothesis against the group-relation theory. Within the group-relation theory we expect each sex to be self-biased. Note that unlike gendered theories, group-relation theories do not form predictions about speakers out of context, but rather about speakers with respect to addressees' sex. In order to decide between the competing theories, we have chosen to focus on impositive speech acts (see Green 1975). Impositives such as requests or commands are obvious examples of powerful speech. Begging, on the other hand, manifests speaker's powerlessness. Other impositives (e.g., advice, invitation) are related (also) to cooperation and support for the addressee. Note that power and cooperation are not mutually exclusive. Begging is not cooperative yet it manifests weakness, whereas a mutual command such as "let's go," when uttered by an officer to a subordinate, suggests power although it is cooperative. In this study, impositive speech acts are therefore classified and graded as to their relative powerfulness and whether or not they are cooperative.

GROUP-RELATION PREDICTIONS

Redefining femininity and masculinity in terms of group relations, we take feminine behavior, speech included, to manifest bias in favor of women and against men, and masculine behavior to manifest bias in favor of men and against women. The notion of self-bias thus predicts that women and men will not exercise different behaviors. Rather, they will exercise the same behaviors (power and cooperation, in our case), but under different circumstances, i.e., relative to the sex of the addressee.

To examine our hypothesis with regard to power, we have developed four power parameters, some of which are based on Brown and Levinson (1987):

Power parameters

- (1) Number of impositives. As is currently assumed, holding the floor reflects speaker's power.
- (2) Speaker's relative status vis-à-vis addressee. Where speaker is superior to addressee she is powerful. Where she is equal, she is not, and where she is subordinate, she is weak.

- (3) Rate of compliance by addressee. Where speaker manages to have her will complied with, she is taken to be powerful.
- (4) Speech act power. The speech act power is a function of linguistic aspects measured against contextual background:
 - a. Linguistic components:
 - i. Strength of illocutionary force, graded as below:
 - a. Threaten, command (+3).
 - b. Demand, request, warn, reprimand, suggest, advise, instruct, indirectly command, indirectly request, indirectly suggest, mutually command, order (as in a restaurant), soothe (0).
 - c. Mutually suggest, mutually advise, invite, offer, ask for permission, remind, beg (-3).
 - ii. Mitigators and intensifiers—the former indicating weakening, the latter indicating strengthening of speech act power. Thus, *please*, for example, signals relative weakness, while prodding (e.g., *come on*) implies speaker's sense of power.
 - iii. Repetition of speech act. Repetition reduces the power of the speech act. It implies lack of compliance and hence lack of power.
 - iv. Justification of speech act. Justification implies that the speech act on its own is too weak and will not be complied with.
 - b. Contextual background:
 - i. Speaker's relative status vis-à-vis addressee. The power of the speech act depends on whether it is uttered by a superior to an inferior or vice versa. In the latter case the same speech act would be perceived as more powerful.
 - ii. Interpersonal relations. Intimacy versus distance between interlocutors. Thus, a command issued to an intimate is less powerful than when the recipient is a stranger.
 - iii. Necessity in performing the action expressed by the speech act. Thus, the necessity of putting out a fire justifies a powerful address, while the necessity of closing the door when one leaves the room is much lower, and hence does not justify the use of a powerful speech act. An act of low necessity when imposed by a powerful speech act is relatively powerful.
 - iv. Degree of imposition required in order to comply with the speech act. A speech act which is highly imposing indicates a powerful speaker. Thus, the same command, e.g., to bring some water, puts the addressee into more trouble in the desert than in the kitchen. The more troublesome the imposition the more powerful the speaker.³

To measure cooperation we calculated the number of cooperative speech acts out of the total number of impositives performed. This constitutes the cooperation parameter. Recall that some of the impositive speech acts indicate cooperation regardless of their relative power. They are cooperative in that they are addressee-oriented and reflect the speaker's concern for the addressee's interests (e.g., advise, suggest, remind, mutual command).

Given speaker-addressee relations, there are seven possible relevant comparisons between the sexes:

- (5) Possible comparisons
 - a. Male speaker = female speaker
 - b. Male speaker-male addressee = female speaker-female addressee

- c. Male speaker-female addressee = female speaker-male addressee
- d. Male speaker-male addressee = female speaker-male addressee
- e. Male speaker-female addressee = female speaker-female addressee
- f. Male speaker-male addressee = male speaker-female addressee
- g. Female speaker-female addressee = female speaker-male addressee

We used these seven possible comparisons to construct our notion of self-bias, since our predictions are that each sex will be biased in favor of its ingroup members, while discriminating against outgroup members. The specifications of self-bias will be exemplified by the notion of female bias in (6) below (the male bias is its exact counterpart, and will not be specified for lack of space). Note that not every comparison examined yields predictions for all the parameters we postulate:

(6) The female bias

- a. Power: Everybody should exert power over males
 - i. In general, women should exercise power more often than men.
 - ii. Men should exert power over men more often than women over women.
 - iii. Women should exert power over men more often than men over women.
 - iv. Women should exert power over men more often than men over men.
 - v. Women should exert power over women more often than men over women.
 - vi. Men should exert power over men more often than over women.
 - vii. Women should exert power over men more often than over women.
- b. Power: Amount of talk
 - i. In general, women should talk more than men.
 - ii. Women should talk to women more than men to men.
 - iii. Men should talk to women more than women to men.
 - iv. No prediction.
 - v. No prediction.
 - vi. Men should talk to women more than to men.
 - vii. Women should talk to women more than to men.
- c. Power: Compliance
 - i. In general, women should be obeyed more often than men.
 - ii. No prediction.
 - iii. Men should obey women more often than women should obey men.
 - iv. Men should obey women more often than they should obey men.
 - v. Women should obey women more often than they should obey men.
 - vi. Men should obey men more often than women should obey men.
 - vii. Men should obey women more often than women should obey women.
- d. Cooperation: Everybody should cooperate with women.
 - i. No prediction.
 - ii. Women should cooperate with women more often than men with men.
 - iii. Men should cooperate with women more often than women with men.
 - iv. No prediction.
 - v. Men should cooperate with women more often than women with women.
 - vi. Men should cooperate with women more often than with men.
 - vii. Women should cooperate with women more often than with men.

FINDINGS

To confirm our predictions, we checked female and male exchanges in seven recent Israeli film scripts by females and males (see list of sources). Out of a total

of 673 impositives, 367 were found for the female scriptwriters, and 306 for the male scriptwriters. The findings in Tables 1 and 2 below and in Tables 3 through 12 in the appendix reflect two different world views: male scriptwriters exhibit a masculine outlook, whereas female scriptwriters are significantly less biased in favor of women.

TABLE 1. *Female and male biases*⁴

Criterion	Female scriptwriters	Male scriptwriters
Social status	male bias	strong male bias
	male bias	strong female bias
	strong male bias	strong male bias
	strong male bias	strong male bias
	strong female bias	strong male bias
	female bias	strong male bias
	strong male bias	no bias
Number of impositives	female bias	strong male bias
	female bias	strong male bias
	female bias	strong male bias
	inapplicable	inapplicable
	inapplicable	inapplicable
	female bias	strong male bias
	no female bias	strong male bias
Power of speech act	male bias	no male bias
	strong female bias	strong female bias
	male bias	no male bias
	male bias	no male bias
	strong male bias	strong male bias
	female bias	female bias
	female bias	strong female bias
Compliance	male bias	male bias
	inapplicable	inapplicable
	male bias	male bias
	male bias	no male bias
	no female bias	strong male bias
	male bias	male bias
	male bias	strong female bias
Cooperation	inapplicable	inapplicable
	female bias	strong male bias
	female bias	male bias
	inapplicable	inapplicable
	female bias	strong female bias
	strong female bias	male bias
	female bias	strong male bias

Though group-relation theories predict that both males and females will be self-biased, the results confirm this prediction only as far as the male scriptwriters are concerned. Overall, male writers adopt a masculine point of view. Most of their

criteria reflect self-biases. Of particular significance is the fact that most of their self-biases are strong. As expected by group-relation theories, males practice both power and cooperation. They cooperate mostly with each other and they exert power mostly over women.

The picture that emerges from the females' scripts is not as uniform. The female writers seem to be ambiguous about adopting their own point of view. The number of self- as opposed to other-biases is identical (14). Only three times do they manifest a strong female bias. The female writers thus do not fulfill the expectations of group-relation theories. They do not fully adopt a feminine point of view. True, they cooperate with each other, but they fail to exercise power over men. These findings as to the ambivalent world view of females, as opposed to the uniform masculine outlook of males, echoes previous findings with respect to other linguistic parameters (Ariel 1987, 1988; Ariel & Giora, in press; Giora, in prep.).

A summary of the findings in terms of self- as opposed to other-biases appears in Table 2:

TABLE 2. *Self- and other-biases of female and male scriptwriters*

	Females	Males
Strong self-bias	3	14
Self-bias	11	5
No self-bias	2	5
Other-bias	10	1
Strong other-bias	4	5
Total	30	30

CONCLUSION

With respect to group-relation theories, results show that males practice more self-biases than females. While only 14 self-biases were found for the female writers (46.6%), male writers adopted the masculine point of view 1.36 times more (19, i.e., 63.3%). Focusing on strong self-biases, we see that males outnumber females by 4.66 times. With regard to other-biases, while the males only have 6 other-biases, the females entertain 14 other-biases, 2.33 times as many. In other words, contrary to our expectations, female scriptwriters do not tend to set out from a feminine point of view. Males, on the other hand, do have a masculine point of view. They manifest 3.16 times as many self-biases as other-biases.

As for power and cooperation, while power is the prerogative of males, the measure of cooperation does not distinguish between female and male writers. On the whole, both manifest self-bias in this respect. In fact, this is the only measure where women unequivocally exhibit a feminine outlook. We should note that the findings of cooperation constitute more than a third of the women's self-biases. All in all, these findings, though in agreement with group-relation theories, are nevertheless surprising in two respects. First, they reveal that men can practice cooperation. Second, they present women as cooperating with women, contrary to

popular beliefs. When examined in context, namely, when taking into account the sex of the addressee, cooperation is found to be practiced by both women and men.

We next turn to an examination of the gendered theories in light of our findings. Even when examined out of context, the hypothesis with regard to cooperation has been clearly refuted. Cooperation was not found to be a feminine practice, but rather a behavior of both men and women: overall, the female characters in all seven scripts were slightly less cooperative (25% versus 29%). When female and male scriptwriters are compared, the prediction that female writers would have more cooperative characters than male writers was also refuted: no significant difference was found (27% versus 28.2%). This means that with respect to cooperation no significant generalization can be drawn according to the simplistic gendered view. However, an important generalization does emerge once we take into account the sex of the addressee. Then we see that each sex cooperates with its own group members more than with outgroup members.

The hypothesis regarding power, however, was not entirely refuted. When powerful behavior is examined out of context, men do seem to be more dominant than women. This seems to accord with prevalent (gendered) views, which regard males as more power-oriented. Thus, women were found powerless when their behavior was examined both in and out of context. However, it is possible to explain women's powerlessness as a result of their low social status rather than as an inherent feminine trait. Indeed, we found that when it was possible, in other words, when the addressee was either equal (a woman) or lower (a child) in status, women exercised power over her. We thus conclude that women might exercise power under appropriate circumstances.

Our findings concern unequal encounters. No wonder, then, that the powerful group was shown to manifest powerful behavior. Indeed, when unequal encounters between males were examined (Arabs as opposed to Jews in our example), similar results were found. Male Arabs, in the one Israeli script we checked, contribute only 11 impositive utterances (17.2%), out of which they managed to impose their will in only 22.2% of the cases. The male Jews, on the other hand, had their will complied with in 67.3% of the cases. Moreover, out of the 10 cooperative speech acts the Arabs issued, 8 supported Jews rather than ingroup members, i.e., Arabs. In other words, powerful behavior is not so much a masculine pattern as it is the pattern of the dominant group, which may explain why women supposedly fail to manifest powerful behavior in mixed-sex encounters. Given the findings about the Arabs' behavior, it seems that cooperating with outgroup members indicates an extremely oppressed social status.

In sum, our results show that both sexes behave according to the ingroup-outgroup distinction with respect to cooperation. Females are not more cooperative than males (and neither are characters of female scriptwriters more cooperative than those of male writers). Each sex is self-biased, cooperating more with its own group members. Males are also self-biased with respect to dominance, exerting more power over females than over males. The only exception to the model is that females do not exert more power over males than over females. However, we have suggested that this is due to their inability to exert power over a socially superior group, rather than to a feminine aversion to power. Thus, we propose that instead

of taking powerful and cooperative speech as inherent group characteristics (women, men, Jews, Arabs), we should take them as behaviors reflecting primarily intra- and inter-group relations, with the proviso that there are differences in the ability to practice self-biases by dominant and nondominant groups.

APPENDIX⁵

(1) Female bias (female scriptwriters)

a. Power

i.

TABLE 3. *Status*

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS < FS	25.14 21.43	1.17	Male
MS-MA > FS-FA	23.3 34.83	1.49	Male
MS-FA < FS-MA	18.55 12.35	1.5	Strong male
MS-MA < FS-MA	23.3 12.35	1.89	Strong male
MS-FA < FS-FA	18.55 34.83	1.88	Strong female
MS-MA > MS-FA	23.3 18.55	1.26	Female
FS-FA < FS-MA	34.83 12.35	2.82	Strong male

ii.

TABLE 4. *Power of speech act*⁶

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS < FS	2.96 2.1	1.41	Male
MS-MA > FS-FA	3.17 1.73	1.83	Strong female
MS-FA < FS-MA	2.82 2.48	1.14	Male
MS-MA < FS-MA	3.17 2.48	1.28	Male
MS-FA < FS-FA	2.82 1.73	1.63	Strong male
MS-MA > MS-FA	3.17 2.82	1.12	Female
FS-FA < FS-MA	1.73 2.48	1.43	Female

iii.

TABLE 5. *Amount of talk*

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS < FS	44.8 55.2	1.23	Female
MS-MA < FS-FA	42.9 50	1.16	Female
MS-FA > FS-MA	57 50	1.14	Female
MS-MA FS-MA	No prediction		
MS-FA FS-FA	No prediction		
MS-MA < MS-FA	42.9 57	1.33	Female
FS-FA > FS-MA	50 50	1	No

iv.

TABLE 6. *Compliance (of addressees to speakers)*

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS < FS	54.5 45.8	1.19	Male
MS-MA FS-FA	No prediction		
MS-FA < FS-MA	56.8 39.3	1.45	Male
MS-MA < FS-MA	51.3 39.3	1.31	Male
MS-FA < FS-FA	56.8 51.7	1.09	No
MS-MA > MS-FA	51.3 56.8	1.11	Male
FS-FA < FS-MA	51.7 39.3	1.32	Male

b. Cooperation

TABLE 7. *Cooperation*

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS FS	No prediction		
MS-MA < FS-FA	23.3 29.2	1.25	Female
MS-FA > FS-MA	36.1 25.5	1.42	Female
MS-MA FS-MA	No prediction		
MS-FA > FS-FA	36.1 29.2	1.24	Female
MS-MA < MS-FA	23.3 36.1	1.55	Strong female
FS-FA > FS-MA	29.2 25.5	1.15	Female

(2) Male bias (male scriptwriters)

a. Power

i.

TABLE 8. *Status*

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS > FS	49.7 0	Incalculable	Strong male
MS-MA < FS-FA	23.3 0	Incalculable	Strong female
MS-FA > FS-MA	39.7 0	Incalculable	Strong male
MS-MA > FS-MA	23.3 0	Incalculable	Strong male
MS-FA > FS-FA	39.7 0	Incalculable	Strong male
MS-MA < MS-FA	23.3 39.7	1.7	Strong male
FS-FA > FS-MA	0 0	Incalculable	No

ii.

TABLE 9. *Power of speech act*

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS > FS	3.36 3.27	1.03	No
MS-MA < FS-FA	3.46 0	Incalculable	Strong female
MS-FA > FS-MA	3.1 3.3	1.06	No
MS-MA > FS-MA	3.46 3.3	1.05	No
MS-FA > FS-FA	3.1 0	Incalculable	Strong male
MS-MA < MS-FA	3.46 3.1	1.12	Female
FS-FA > FS-MA	0 3.3	Incalculable	Strong female

iii. TABLE 10. *Amount of talk*

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS > FS	85.3 14.7	5.8	Strong male
MS-MA > FS-FA	74 0	Incalculable	Strong male
MS-FA < FS-MA	25.95 97.7	3.76	Strong male
MS-MA FS-MA	No prediction		
MS-FA FS-FA	No prediction		
MS-MA < MS-FA	74 25.95	2.85	Strong male
FS-FA > FS-MA	0 97.7	Incalculable	Strong male

iv. TABLE 11. *Compliance (of addressees to speakers)*

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS > FS	70.4 59.5	1.18	Male
MS-MA FS-FA	No prediction		
MS-FA > FS-MA	75.0 61.0	1.23	Male
MS-MA > FS-MA	57.9 61	1.05	No
MS-FA > FS-FA	75 0	Incalculable	Strong male
MS-MA < MS-FA	57.9 75	1.3	Male
FS-FA > FS-MA	0 61	Incalculable	Strong female

b. Cooperation

TABLE 12. *Cooperation*

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS FS	No prediction		
MS-MA > FS-FA	29.4 0	Incalculable	Strong male
MS-FA < FS-MA	21.3 30.2	1.42	Male
MS-MA FS-MA	No prediction		
MS-FA < FS-FA	21.3 0	Incalculable	Strong female
MS-MA > MS-FA	29.4 21.3	1.38	Male
FS-FA < FS-MA	0 30.2	Incalculable	Strong male

NOTES

1. We would like to thank Ilana Galante and Yossi Glickson for their advice and help in the statistic calculations. Thanks are also due to the Deborah Netzer Fund and the Abraham Horodisch Chair in Philosophy of Language for partially supporting this study.

2. The claims here and above should be taken as relative rather than absolute. Namely, when the gendered hypothesis expects women to be powerless, what is meant is that they are less powerful than men, etc. Similarly, when the group-relation theory predicts that women cooperate with women, for example, what is meant is that they cooperate with women more than with men.

3. The way we calculated each specific utterance for its power of speech is exemplified in (a) below (Impos = degree of imposition):

a. Rosy (to Eli): "Enough already, asshole."

Context:	Necessity	Status	Distance	Impos	Total
	0	0	-1	0	-1

Linguistic Aspects:	Intensifier/Mitigator	Explanation	Repetition	Illocutionary Force	Total
	+1	0	+1	3	+5
Gap:	6				

4. For the precise percentages and gaps between the sexes on which this table is based, see the appendix. Since the whole corpus of impositive speech acts was taken into account, a difference of 1.1 and above was considered significant and counted as a bias. A difference of 1.5 and above was considered a strong self-bias.

5. FS and MS in the Appendix stand for female speaker and male speaker respectively. Likewise, FA and MA stand for female addressee and male addressee. Under the heading Comparisons we list our predictions as to which behavior should be practiced more often. These predictions follow directly from group-relation theories.

6. The linguistic aspects weighed against the context yield mean results, calculated by Unbalanced Analysis of Variance and Covariance with Repeated Measures.

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The discourse of power and solidarity: Language features of African American females and a male program leader in a neighborhood-based youth dance program

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INTRODUCTION

This paper grows out of a larger study of language use by inner-city participants in neighborhood-based organizations. The larger study investigates how youngsters are allowed opportunities to learn the language of give-and-take in information-building and how they negotiate ideas and new skills in response to changing circumstances (Heath & McLaughlin 1987). The present research focuses on the language features of lower- and working-class African American females as they negotiate issues of power and solidarity within a neighborhood-based youth dance program. It presents initial findings of data collected over a one-year period using an ethnolinguistic approach to explore oral communicative practices among the female youth participants and with the male program leader as they negotiate issues of power and solidarity within the group.

Under the dominant philosophies of pedagogy practiced in most traditional classrooms, student-teacher relationships do not foster the development of expertise in a wide variety of spoken and written genres. As Heath and McLaughlin point out, argumentation, counterpropositions, and assertions of one's own knowledge gained through experiences (all important genres in the discourse of power and solidarity) are unwelcome intrusions in traditional classrooms where teachers are expected to be the question-askers and imparters-of-knowledge and students, especially females, are expected to be the responders and receivers-of-knowledge (1987:19). Studies indicate the brevity and limited scope of student responses within traditional classroom settings. Applebee (1981) reports that students spend only 3% of their time in secondary English classes writing discourse that extends to the length of a paragraph. Studies of classroom discourse illustrate the limited amount of oral participation students have (for a review of this literature, see Cazden 1986). In such environments, youth have limited opportunities to develop a discourse of power and solidarity—one that allows them to express an element of control over their own destiny and a sense of unity among themselves as members of an identifiable group.

When we turn to homes in today's society, the picture is similar. With the increasing number of households with single parents or families in which both parents work full-time, parent-child relationships do not provide an abundance of opportunities for youth to develop a discourse of power and solidarity. Approximately one-third of all elementary school children come home to an empty house and care for themselves at least part of the weekday while their parents work

or attend to matters outside the home. These unsupervised youth, commonly referred to as latchkey children, spend an average of two to three hours alone daily and report high levels of fear, boredom, loneliness, and stress (Long & Long 1982). Sadker, Sadker, and Long (1989) discuss the fact that although boys and girls are left alone in approximately equal numbers, their experiences differ. Parents, often more concerned about the safety of their daughters, place greater restrictions on their after-school activities. Girls as old as 12 are likely to be instructed by their parents to stay inside, while boys as young as 10 are generally allowed to play outside. Because of these restrictions, females experience greater isolation than their male counterparts (Long & Long 1982). Girls not only experience more restrictions, but also shoulder more household responsibility, including childcare and meal preparation (Gibbs, Huang, & Associates 1991:197). When there are several children in the family, the oldest girl is generally in charge. Because of these childcare responsibilities, girls are more often required to come straight home from school and are less able to participate in after-school activities, especially those that do not make allowances for younger siblings. These additional responsibilities can further isolate young females from their peers and force them to assume adult roles early with less time to spend on their schoolwork. Sadker et al. (1989) point out that "a large percentage of latchkey children of both sexes suffer psychologically because of the long hours they spend alone. Because of the differential treatment they receive from their parents, girls are even more likely to suffer from excessive responsibility, isolation, and stress" (1989:118). Given these realities, it is no wonder that many young inner-city females lack opportunities to develop expertise in a wide variety of spoken and written genres.

After-school neighborhood-based programs can provide some alternatives for working parents and youth, especially females. Participation in neighborhood-based organizations such as dance programs (which often allow participants to bring younger siblings along with them) provide structured environments in which important discourse and interaction can take place. Neighborhood-based dance programs stress collaboration and commitment, and make available shifting types of activities that allow youth to develop and practice a discourse of power and solidarity. In such programs, participants may see themselves as responsible contributors in a dynamic language environment that permits them to question the status quo, give answers in areas in which they feel a sense of accomplishment and achievement, respond without censure, absorb new knowledge through experience, and disseminate knowledge as peer models.

NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AS ENVIRONMENTS OF LEARNING

Neighborhood-based organizations exist in most urban areas but are generally overlooked by city officials, policymakers, and educators as resources for youth or as potential partners with schools and families in meeting youths' learning needs. The special contributions that neighborhood-based organizations can make to the socialization and development of young people are often regarded as supplemental resources. Primary to the research of Heath and McLaughlin (1987), however, is

the notion that the critical contribution of many neighborhood-based organizations lies in their ability to provide different, rather than simply more, experiences and types of involvement for youth than those available through schools and families. Because neighborhood-based organizations can provide a different type of structured experience that is challenging yet contextually predictable, their value and resource potential warrant further consideration. Encouraging collaboration and commitment from participants, neighborhood-based dance programs allow youth to view themselves as knowledge sources and to move from positions of group acceptance and security into positions of accepting the wisdom of others. Within the safe and supportive environments of neighborhood-based organizations, youngsters are allowed to experiment with the boundaries of social stratification and to take chances with new boundaries of power and unity. In such organizations, it is often permissible to question boundaries of authority since it is not uncommon for participants to find themselves in positions of expertise and leadership and since opportunities for negotiation and collaboration abound. Heath and McLaughlin (1987) have found that neighborhood-based organizations typically assume dynamic, interactive socialization roles in the lives of youth, providing occasions for a wide range of adaptive language uses and a sense of commitment to an institutional goal that today's families and schools cannot give on their own. The analysis that follows illustrates how one neighborhood-based organization provides an environment that allows participants to learn the power of high expectations, negotiation, collaboration, and unity of voice.

A DANCE PROGRAM AS CONTEXT FOR DEVELOPING A DISCOURSE OF POWER AND SOLIDARITY

Inner-city youth organizations provide numerous opportunities for talk, learning, and skills development. Dance programs in particular, requiring hard work, discipline, regimen, postponed gratification, and channeled bodily energy, have succeeded in attracting many at-risk youths away from street life, drugs, and other dangerous diversions of their community. A unique value of neighborhood-based dance organizations, however, can be found in their multifaceted nature. Hanna points out that dance is more than a physical behavior alone, in which the human body "releases organized energy through muscular responses to stimuli received by the brain" (1987:3). It is a cultural, social, psychological, economic, political, and communicative behavior as well (1987:3-4). All these aspects of dance reflect and influence patterns of social organization between individuals within and among groups in dance programs. Across cultures, individuals internalize and express the imperatives of their communities through dance symbols. For the Nazis, dance (aesthetic gymnastics) was part of the "cult of the body" (Hanna 1987:138) designed to foster discipline and comradeship and the restoration of body weariness through industrial labor. For the BeKwele of Africa, dance conveys messages of unity, self-help, and autonomy in the culture (Hanna 1987:140).

In the case of successful group leaders working with African American youths in inner-city dance programs, participant roles and language interaction reflect not

only society's standards, but also the standards of the student's subculture toward interpreting proper behavior and creating successful contexts for learning. This research considers language and social interactions among African American female participants and the European American male group leader in a performing-arts group established for the benefit of local urban youth. The Movin'-On-Up dance troupe was founded in the 1980s and has gained recognition as a remarkable program that helps minority youth excel. Movin'-On-Up is a chamber modern dance company for exceptionally talented students that offers intensive dance training with professional dancers, monthly performances, and workshops and lecture demonstrations with guest artists from professional touring companies. This organization provides African American female youth numerous opportunities for talk, learning, and skills development centering on dance. With regard to language use in this setting, the ethnolinguistic database provides evidence of dynamics that foster a discourse of power and unity not observed in the students' school or family settings. I draw examples from a neighborhood-based dance program located on a busy avenue in a commercial section of a West Coast city. The group leader, an accomplished performer in his own right, reached out beyond his own ethnic group and community in forming this troupe. Although not members of the students' cultural or ethnic group, the principal dancer and director and his staff recognize dance for its potential to bring urban youth to a strong sense of self, commitment, and pride.

Shanika, a ten-year-old participant, remarks of the program, "I really like it. I love to dance and I like the way the teachers teach. I learn a lot and I really enjoy the performances!" Shanika effectively summarizes why inner-city minority youths come to this after-school dance program on a voluntary basis week after week and, in many cases, year after year. The dance program was established for students who live in low-income, inner-city areas predominantly populated by African Americans, Latinos, Pacific Islanders, and recent immigrants. With unemployment rates above 20% and school dropout rates above 40%, the community is plagued with a myriad of family- and school-related problems that are not uncommon to contemporary urban areas. This particular dance education program was created to counteract the widespread social and educational problems that afflict students from such communities. The program was designed to reach at-risk youths and develop personal, social, physical, and academic skills through dance as an enjoyable art form that appeals to the young. The discipline required in dance, the program director believes, spills over into other parts of the students' lives.

The program's group leaders try to instill discipline, self-esteem, and commitment by focusing on artistic endeavors that help to bind the young people together as members of a distinctive, community-valued group. "I'm in one of the best companies in the U.S.A.!" remarks one eleven-year-old female participant. "... My mom and I have great discussions about my dance classes and I talk about it with my friends almost every day." Having high expectations, contextual predictability, and an atmosphere of support are key elements in instilling discipline, self-esteem, and commitment in at-risk youth. High performance expectations are exhibited by the staff through verbal interaction and by providing models of excellence: "I work with them tight," says one group leader, "and I get

to know them. On the one side, they like it. On the other side, they don't. You see, they have to be accountable." Regarding the level of discipline that is required of the students, the instructor remarks: "I know it's not easy to work with me, because I am disciplined and I know exactly what I want."

The program leader describes one key to his success with the students as follows:

It's confidence! They have the confidence in me that if they're going to turn right, and I say turn left, they're going to turn left. That is, the ones who stay with me. Some of them who just go through the movements, they're going to turn right because everybody else turns right. But I'm working to develop the personality, you know. And it's very hard ...

Familiar with each student's capabilities and convinced of their potential, the instructor monitors the students' progress and demands excellence at every level. The focus is to master just one dance at a time: "One good dance, instead of two or three that we don't know well ... And I want it clean!" Although the consequence of misbehavior is dismissal from the program, the instructor confidently demonstrates his expectation that students will meet the requirements: "(If you can't follow the rules) just go out and don't come back. I warn you. (I want) a better attitude. And you *will* do it, because you have a show tomorrow. And you *are* going to be in the show. Okay!" During times assigned for work, practice, and presentation, the instructor does not allow any straying from the task. He constantly directs the students' attention to the task at hand with comments like "Your attention, please. I want to see your face when I talk to you." Phrases of encouragement and support such as *There you go*, *That was good*, and *Keep on going*, come at a rate far more frequent than that found in the typical classroom environment. A close analysis of language features at the discourse and syntax levels illustrates how the discourse of power and solidarity develops as byproducts of the high expectations, consistency, and support that are played out in dance-program talk.

DISCOURSE-LEVEL FEATURES OF DANCE PROGRAM TALK

The format of activities for dance practice generally did not vary, beginning with a series of warmup activities and moving into specialized routines for practice and repetition in preparation for upcoming performances. At the broader discourse level, four features that characterize dance-program talk were noted as central to African American females' developing discourse of power and solidarity: the use of a coaching register by program leaders, the expression of high expectations as a major theme running throughout practices, ongoing checks for clarity and a united view among participants, and the use of negotiation and collaboration at all levels of participation.

Coaching register

Throughout dance practice activities, the leader used a *coaching register* in his

interaction with program participants. The work of Heath and Langman (forthcoming) provides an analysis of the coaching register that makes it possible to understand how it fosters opportunities for a discourse of power and solidarity to develop. According to these researchers, coaching is an instructional context for talk that calls for organizational structures and language uses that differ from classroom and family instructional talk. Coaching is the oral accompaniment to activities of practice and demonstration that prepare members of a group who intend to work together through a series of culminating events (e.g., baseball games or dance performances). Heath and Langman list four underlying organizational aspects that frame the language characteristics of coaching: (1) Participation, demonstration, and action provide the primary contexts in which language is used; (2) The program's action scripts the ensuing talk; (3) The primary goal of those involved is to function as a group to accomplish a jointly determined goal; and (4) Participants regulate the rules that govern their own activities. Critical to a discussion of the development of a discourse of power and solidarity within a dance group is the third characteristic—talk that fosters group-bonding for the purpose of the culminating activity. The Movin'-On-Up dance-group leader instilled a sense of group accomplishment through frequent use of inclusive forms like *let's* that portrayed a need for joint effort among the youths to accomplish goals that could not be accomplished as successfully by individuals. These forms also portrayed a sense of support, of the group working together with each individual. In the analysis of the data, *let's* occurred an average of about 3.5 times in every 100 turns of practice talk. It occurred in such contexts as:

Let's work on it.
Let's get it right.
Let's go back to the beginning and we'll go very slowly.
Let's make sure that we all know it.
Let's try to open a new page.
Let's try to be more positive.
Let's get results.

The form *we'll* also served a similar function in the discourse interactions among participants and the group leader.

Expressions of high expectations

The notion of high expectations for behavior and performance was a constant theme that ran throughout program language. The director expressed high goals for the group:

I'd like to make you be like a professional group. I wish to make you like this wonderful group from Harlem. Who's that singing group? The Harlem Boys Choir. Yes, I wish I could do this. ... I think you have all the talent. ...

The director also used the strategy of comparing members of the group to each other in order to challenge them to perform at their full potential levels:

Well, how come they can do it and you didn't do it so well? Let's put it in a nice way. ... Because they are interested in learning. ... So what are you supposed to do? ... Practice, practice, practice!

Teacher expectations that students would demonstrate responsibility and a sense of commitment to the program was an ever-present theme in the language interaction:

During the times that I am not teaching, it's good that you get together, so if you can't get the step here, you can get it from each other. Practice on your own time, during lunchtime or something. You do it for yourself. It's something important for all times in your life. You have to invest extra time. It takes time. And you have to learn to invest time in something that you want to achieve.

Because the high expectations that the group leader set for each student were guided by a knowledge of the students' capabilities coupled with a strong belief in their potential, students met those expectations time and time again. Building on their successes, the youths themselves were given roles of responsibility and placed in the front of the class to act as teachers or peer models for other students. The following example was very typical:

Leader: Stop everyone! Look at Monica. She's almost six feet tall and she can keep up with the music. You can too, guys! Just what are we supposed to do when the music is fast? That's right. Move fast!

Each student was encouraged to contribute her individual best:

Okay, let's do it one more time. Let's go. I want more. ... Just as long as you do as much as you can. Because after this ... we have today and Thursday. Okay. If Alina can do it, then you can do it.

The excellence required of these students inspired other lower-level dancers to want to advance to the Movin'-On-Up group. One student said:

You know, a lot of people ... they worked from the bottom on up. ... A lot of other girls, they have tried and they have worked so hard, to be in Movin'-On-Up. We wanna be in that group.

The director reminded them, however, that not only hard work, but follow-through, was required:

You remember. The show we did and you left the stage? And then the other students consulted with you and said they wanted to do it [the dance] and you said it was okay with you. Then you started to do the dance together. And that was wonderful. But you never finished. Right? You see, you have a short memory. But I remember.

Ongoing checks for clarity and unity

Throughout practices, checks for clarity and a united view among participants were common occurrences:

Now, let's go back to the dance and we'll go very slowly. Okay so far? (Are you) clear about what we're going to do?

Some of you Movin'-On-Up students, you're going to do more. You know what you're going to do next, right?

Okay. One, two, three, four. The arm goes straight down. Stop. So far, we're okay? Are we okay?

Everybody in here please. Do you remember where to come? The bus is going to pick you up. (Does) everybody understand?

Negotiation and collaboration

Uses of negotiation and collaboration occurred frequently. Such language allowed students the opportunity to stretch their previously defined limits. The following examples come from a rap session between several students and the program leader:

Student: I think we should all wear black shoes...and we should wear socks. We should also have a new dance for them [the beginning students] so they can learn it.

Leader: ... That's fine with me.

Student: I think that sometimes it's a problem to teach because you (the leader) have the company and everything. I think sometimes that the advanced dancers might could lead the warm-ups. And that would take a lot off of you.

Leader: ... That's fine with me.

Student: And we all want to get together and make up a (street) dance for everybody and not just let it be the ending. Let it be a part of the performance. I think that maybe we could mix street dance and jazz and modern and ballet. We would like to do combinations.

Leader: But one of the things your teachers said is that they don't like to see this street dance in the performances.

Student: Yeah. But our teacher need to hear from us. She needs to hear what we think. Also, I think that we should do some African dances in some of our performances. It's mostly minority people in this dance thing, and we ... and since all dance originated from African dance, or some form of African dance, I think that we should do that in our performances.

Leader: I agree with you. That's very good.

In addition to the discourse-level features mentioned above, the importance of repetition was stressed by the director. In response to repeated questions about the warm-up routines he replied, "Why don't we change the warm-ups? Because it is very important. If you do the same thing over and over, you develop discipline and concentration. Your body learns and you find your center." Open to the students'

questioning and their challenging remarks (which are seldom tolerated by parents or classroom teachers), the program leader listened to complaints and requests for higher standards that came from participants. Said one twelve-year-old girl:

The reason why I haven't been comin' to practice lately is because it got boring because nobody was ever doing nothin'. ... We kept doing the same things over and over again. I been comin' for three years and they kept doin' the same thing and never learn nothin' new.

The instructor remarked, "I like to hear what they have to say. I know a lot of things, but we're not perfect. And I want to hear what makes them do whatever they do." Because the director listened and responded to what the students had to say, he was able to make adjustments and monitor the success of the program. He was later overheard saying, "Maybe it's my fault. Maybe it is time to change."

Among themselves, the African American females voiced their feelings about the need for high group expectations:

Student 1: You know, like if we were professional dancers in a company, we wouldn't be able to not come to a performance or something like that. You have to be there. You can't just drop out and try to come back in, cuz they won't let you come back. And if people don't listen and pay attention and learn the steps, we should kick them out.

Student 2: I think sometimes that the advanced dancers or the better dancers should lead the warm-ups, the people who have been doin' it a long time and know it.

Student 3: Yeah, and I want to choreograph. I want to show my dance to everybody.

The highly skilled, advanced dancers were often consulted when beginning dancers were working out a routine. Their suggestions were seriously regarded. Dances choreographed by these students were sometimes incorporated into the semi-annual performances. Comments from students expressing appreciation for each other were often heard in dance-program talk. A twelve-year-old beginning dancer volunteered, "Well, I just wanna thank Anika for helping us and for teaching us the new steps."

SYNTAX-LEVEL FEATURES OF DANCE-PROGRAM TALK

During regular practices intermittent cuts of music and the sound of repetitive counts helped to keep the dancers on cue. There was not a great deal of connected talk taking place. Because students learned primarily through repetition and through watching others in the mirrors that lined the studio walls, the advanced dancers were always placed at the front of the class as demonstrators. The instructor generally stood near the music system in order to start and stop the music when needed. The leader also walked around the periphery of the dance floor or among the dancers in order to point out incorrect technique. The group leader's ongoing counts were laced with brief telegraphic reinforcements, directives, and statements that focused the participants' attention:

Good job. One more time. Yes, much better.

Look at the audience. Left arm down. Plié. Look out. Let me see your eyes. Better.

Look into my eyes when I'm talking to you.

Listen. Like you, gorgeous, I'm talking and I want you to listen.

Excuse me. ... If I'm talking, nobody else is talking. That's rule number one.

Such director talk was punctuated with occasional demonstrations of the correct execution of a step. The class generally looked to the more advanced dancers placed at the front of the room as models for visual cues. Connectedness and solidarity in the dance talk among African American females were marked by the use of the plural pronoun *we*. *We*, occurring about 18 times per 100 turns in overall dance conversations, was generally used in its inclusive form among the African American females.

We're gonna do it all over again till we get it right.

We always doin' the same dances in the performances.

If people don't listen ... we should kick them out.

The group leader, on the other hand, generally used *we* in its exclusive form:

We're going to get a grant.

We're not going to rehearse with you.

I think that's our biggest mistake that we made.

[Do] you think that we are much more demanding than your history teacher or any other classes?

In keeping with these patterns, the leader focused on naming a third-person agent of an action more often than the third-person recipient of the action in his speech, with *they* used more often than *them*. A high incidence of *you* served to portray a sense of the need for the students to accept their own responsibility for ensuring the success of their group. The focus on naming the agent of the action was noted in the higher incidence of *they*, occurring an average of 7.25 times per 100 turns of conversation, as compared to *them* (recipient of the action), which occurred only 1.5 times per 100 turns. The use of *you*, occurring more than 50 times in 100 turns of conversation, was in keeping with the general theme of high expectations held for participants. The sentiment that "this is your group, it's up to you girls to make it succeed, and you are the ones who will look bad if you mess up" was expressed in language like the following:

Leader: You have to learn that you can practice it ... on your own. ... It's not for me. [It's not] the dance that I want to see. You do it for yourself. It's something

that is important to you ... all the time in your life. You have to invest extra time. If you're going to college—and I hope that you do—you have to learn that you have a lot of homework. [If] you have to do a paper, it takes time. And you have to learn to invest time in something that you want to achieve.

This use of *you* was combined with frequent reminders to the students that they had the personal power or potential to accomplish anything they set their mind to. Empowering terms like *can* occurred almost 8 times per 100 turns, and *going to* occurred almost 7 times per 100 turns, while the hypothetical *think* and *suppose* occurred almost 6 times per 100 turns of conversation. *If* occurred 5 times per 100 turns of conversation, with 63% of those occurrences representing the simple *if/then* conditional construction. Such constructions stated only one condition and one result. They served the function of making program participants aware of the consequences of their decisions and behaviors. Complex *if/then* conditionals—stating conditions with multiple alternative consequences—occurred very seldom.

The inclusive *we* used among African American females, as well as the use of *you*, agent focus, language of empowerment (*you can*, *you are going to*, *you will*), and the focus on students' awareness of the consequences of their decisions and behaviors, all contributed strongly to the development of a discourse of power and solidarity.

CONCLUSION

Lisa Delpit (1988), an ethnographer of writing, teacher, and teacher of teachers, uses the debate over process-oriented versus skills-oriented writing instruction to stimulate a dialogue about the complex rules of power that influence the education of African American and poor students in this society and the importance of expectations in successful learning environments. Although many people have been very critical about the points raised by Delpit, the research reported in this paper supports her notion that a culture of power exists in our society and that if young people are to succeed in environments of learning, the rules of this culture of power should be made explicit for students to understand and practice. When African American females are in environments that transmit high standards of expectations, contextual predictability, and support for them to try the limits of their realities, opportunities abound for the rules of power to be made explicit and students can begin to break the cycle of deficiency so often experienced by African American youth. As students experiment with a wide variety of genres they are able to determine strategies that are effective and ineffective in communicating with different individuals in different contexts. During this process, they are learning to negotiate a discourse of power and solidarity.

This discussion of language use among lower- and working-class African American females and a European American group leader in a neighborhood-based youth dance program helps us to understand how students can be given opportunities to develop a discourse of power and solidarity that will help them negotiate within the existing culture of power. Heath and McLaughlin conclude that "critical and largely under-used resources for the socialization and development of

youths exist beyond the school and family in neighborhood-based organizations." This research concurs with that statement and documents how one neighborhood-based organization provides African American females with numerous opportunities for talk, learning, and skills development, and ensures them access to adult role models who support them in developing a discourse of power and solidarity. For the many young female participants whose families and schools afford them few supportive learning opportunities, this neighborhood-based organization provides an environment that is essential to the development of skills necessary for success in the larger mainstream society.

Although neighborhood-based organizations remain virtually invisible and unacknowledged as positive environments for learning in our society, this research illustrates how organizations like neighborhood youth dance programs provide structured, predictable, and challenging environments in which important power-related activities take place. Stressing important socialization skills like collaboration, negotiation, responsibility, and high expectations, the neighborhood-based youth dance program in this research provided opportunities for African American inner-city females to see themselves as responsible, capable, contributing members of a community-valued environment that allowed them opportunities to question the limits of their present realities in ways their families and schools often did not.

In taking an interdisciplinary approach to studying these issues of gender, class, ethnicity, and language, this paper takes the position that future feminist research should not be limited to the binary opposition of sex, but rather should expand other existing methodologies to include feminist parameters. This research suggests that in communicative situations surrounding the dance education program, African American females utilize language styles, such as negotiation, that reflect a unique value in neighbor-based organizations because they provide broad and supportive learning opportunities that are essential to effective socialization and development. Further, it demonstrates how an ethnolinguistic analysis of the discourse of dance can provide a better understanding of strategies used by African American females that involve an interplay of class, ethnicity, gender, and culture.

This research forges a closer connection between feminist theory and language-based research by taking an interdisciplinary, ethnolinguistic approach to the analysis of the discourse of power and solidarity. It also helps to increase understanding of African American females' language patterns and identifies linguistic resources within the cultural diversity of student populations that can empower students and can be built upon to enrich learning experiences.

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Organizational inequity in a steel plant: A language model

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A sociolinguistic analysis of the language environment of a major steel company was conducted to determine if the work environment at that company could be considered hostile toward women in the context of what is regarded as tolerable in the surrounding society. This analysis formed the basis of expert testimony on behalf of a 26-year-old plaintiff who filed a successful sexual discrimination suit against the steel company and two of its principal executives.

Based on this analysis, it was concluded that the organizational culture created by asymmetrical communication patterns involving gender-specific language and nonverbal communication messages constituted a substantially discriminatory hostile work environment for women employees in general, which went beyond the boundaries of reasonableness.

After framing the analysis in both the origins of a hostile work environment and a description of what such an environment might look like, the linguistic analysis was conducted to present facts that this steel company constituted a hostile environment for women even when the particular nature of the "rough" work setting was taken into account.

The analysis provided evidence that communication between male managers and female employees was distancing, discriminating, and debilitating, causing both tangible and intangible job detriment.

This paper presents an application of linguistic analysis to the courtroom. After a brief discussion of the origins of a hostile work environment, five communication areas are used to evaluate the organizational environment of the steel company to determine whether or not there was evidence of a hostile environment for women as charged in the discrimination suit. The third section uses this linguistic information to determine if the culture of the steel plant is acceptable by standards of reasonableness. The final section discusses the effects of a hostile environment, again interweaving the role of language in the discussion.

ORIGINS OF A HOSTILE WORK ENVIRONMENT

The origins of a hostile work environment lie in an organization's *culture*, a term used to describe the environment of an organization, including the pattern of beliefs and expectations shared by its members. Although culture is invisible, it is very powerful in governing worker behavior.

The organization's top management determines the culture within an organization by the limits of acceptable behavior that they allow to occur within their company. Senior management is ultimately responsible not only for the

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strategic and tactical direction of the company, but also for transmission of reasonable and legal cultural values which determine how employees behave in the organization (Daft 1989; Morgan 1986).

Within an organization, sexual harassment or discrimination is not an event that happens between just two people. The norms, rules, and constraints set by the top management of the organization profoundly affect behavior, as does the hierarchical nature of work. The rules and norms of managers are applied to their subordinates and extend from subordinates to people under them. Thus top management has the power to influence work habits and social behavior of all of their employees. When they tolerate or condone sexual harassment, the practice of acceptance reverberates throughout the organization (Gutek & Nakamura 1982). Whether an environment is hostile for all employees or differentially impacts in a hostile way any class of people who work there is determined by those managers who exemplify and direct the transmission of values within the organization. Associated with their role of culture formation and continuation are leadership responsibilities. When the abdication of those responsibilities results in the formation or continuation of a hostile culture (e.g., when the officers have knowledge of what has been occurring yet failed to take action), remedial interventions are necessary. The next section will show how that stage had been reached at the steel company.

EVIDENCE OF A HOSTILE WORK ENVIRONMENT

In evaluating any organizational environment in terms of "hostility," it is necessary to examine the quality of the human relationships within it. This was done by examining five communication areas to determine whether or not there was evidence of a hostile environment for women as charged in the discrimination suit.

The linguistic analysis, conducted prior to the trial, was done by coding various written documents for language patterns that might have contributed to a hostile culture for women in this organization. These documents were legal depositions of the plaintiff and two executives, and all correspondence concerning charges of harassment between management and the plaintiff. After initial reading of the general manager's deposition, the communication areas to be examined were determined. These included: (1) employee discipline; (2) defensive communication patterns; (3) organizational language and symbols as indicators of underlying values; (4) social-control aspects of nonverbal behavior; and (5) degrading talk, including use of derogatory terms for women, asymmetry of joke-telling, and swearing. Two independent coders examined more than 1,300 pages of transcript for language patterns that might have contributed to a discriminatory and hostile culture for women in this organization. Reliability from 82% to 100% was obtained on each of fourteen specific indicators for the five categories (see Table 1).

TABLE 1. *Language indicators for examination of a potentially hostile work environment*

Communication areas	Context	Indicator
Employee discipline	Discipline by management	*Employee fear and distrust
	Supervisory communication	*Negative feedback Focus on errors and defects
	Supervisory communication	*"We-them" adversarial distinctions *Parent-child abusive
Defensive communication patterns	Supervisory-employee exchanges	*Superiority/defensiveness *Evaluative, controlling, manipulative
Indicators of underlying values	Managerial values communicated	*Symbols *What is attended to or ignored *Reaction to critical incidents *Allocation of rewards, status, punishment
Nonverbal aspects of social control	Supervisory-employee exchanges	*Asymmetrical exchange Social control mechanisms Interpersonal dominance
Degrading talk	Supervisory-employee exchanges	*Non-equivalent use of derogatory sexist terms *Asymmetry of joke-telling *Asymmetry of swearing

Employee discipline and communication

The first of the five communication areas examined, employee discipline and communication, focused on language indicators of fear and distrust, negative feedback, "we-them" adversarial distinctions between employees and management, and supervisor-to-employee language in which employees were treated as children. All can lead to employees feeling that they are unfairly treated and may contribute to discriminatory practices and a hostile work environment.

Within the steel company charged, there were several such indications. For example, the plaintiff felt the need to use a hidden tape recorder during an interview with a manager concerning a harassment complaint she had made. This indicated a lack of trust.

The second indicator, negative feedback, was present in general comments and evaluations of the female staff at the steel company. These comments and evaluations emphasized errors and defects rather than providing constructive performance appraisals. Only negative evaluations were ever recorded in the plaintiff's file, and all occurred after her letter about harassment was sent to top management. The general manager motivated female employees with negative feedback, including derogatory, gender-specific language (*sleazy slut, sleazy lazy bitch, cunt*), which he described as part of his "unique language," purposely said to "upset the women, get their attention, endear them to him, and motivate them to get them moving on the job."

The way in which disciplinary actions were allocated at the plant gave a strong indication that there was a "we-them" atmosphere within this organization, which added to the perceptions of unfairness and injustice that are often felt by employees in hostile work environments. Differential priorities were attached to who got what punishment, depending on the status of the offender rather than the type of transgression. The punishment allocated to the manager who was charged with criminal assault of the plaintiff, who received hospital treatment, was three days' leave with full pay. This type of punishment was clearly token in nature. When compared with the week of unpaid leave that the plaintiff received because she was not properly compliant, it could almost be regarded as a reward rather than as a punishment. The general manager stated, "It is completely unacceptable for an employee not to be compliant. She was an insubordinate headstrong bitch."

This distinction sent important messages to other staff in the organization about injustices in their work environment. It also told them what was and was not tolerable or accepted behavior to management, and what would happen to them if their behavior was perceived as unacceptable. The message transmitted was that it was acceptable for a manager to throw an employee to the ground, causing injury, after she refused to retract a harassment complaint, but it was completely unacceptable for a female employee to challenge a male manager's order.

Clear examples of parent-child relationships between superiors and subordinates at this company added to the hostility. Women working there were frequently referred to as *girls* and were patted or kissed on the head, as children might be patted or fondled. This is paternalistic and destroys feelings of competence, weakening one's self-image. Women had no choice but to go along with it. The manner in which a manager dealt with the plaintiff's reason for picking up a stranded employee with car trouble bore a strong similarity to the way a dominating parent might deal with a disobedient child: "Don't you pick him up. I'm telling you not to pick him up. Don't you pick him up. Don't do it. Don't." The coercive nature of such interactions is characteristic of a hostile environment.

Defensive patterns

The second area examined was defensive communication patterns. Such patterns occur when people feel under threat. The communications that female employees received were evaluative, controlling, and manipulative, communicating superiority.

There were many instances of such communications triggering defensiveness at this company. For example, comments made to the women were frequently evaluative, derogatory, and sexually explicit. Women were not merely told that their work performance was not good; their moral worth was questioned by the use of such language as *lazy sleazy slut*, *sleazy bitch*. This was a very extreme form of evaluation. It occurred in the context of a punitive environment: the plaintiff's harassment complaint was viewed as "absolutely false ... an overreaction." She was threatened "with consequences unless she wrote a letter of retraction"; another woman, who did not accept being touched by a male superior, left the organization soon afterwards. Even though she chose to leave, her action showed others how extreme a response was necessary to avoid a hostile climate. Within this organizational culture, it was easier for an employee to go along with whatever management did.

Messages sent to female employees at this company were also manipulative. The general manager used "unique language" to greet or evaluate his workers. He stated that he "intended to upset, move, and motivate my women through language. The girls loved it." Calling someone a *sleazy slut* or *whore* to motivate her is aberrant in any organizational context. Doing so repeatedly makes it even less acceptable. This type of repetition took the shock value out of the words used, eventually resulting in the "girls" believing that they were inferior. "We were made to believe we were inferior. We expected to be called *cunts*. Everyone did it. We had no option but to tolerate it." These examples illustrate the threat in the work environment for the female, mostly clerical, workforce. Such an environment is hostile. As a result, it was not surprising that most of the women did not complain about their conditions; they were more concerned with keeping jobs, so they appeared satisfied and happy to avoid attack. They apparently accepted the language used by supervisors to upset, move, and motivate them. Their only option appeared to be to tolerate this "unique language," "taking it like a compliment," to smile, and even to laugh at being repeatedly touched, but not to complain. This is a central part of avoidance, submission, and learned helplessness. It also is indicative of fear. If everyone else accepts such behavior around them, it is likely to be a very brave person who does not.

Indicators of underlying values

The third area examined was the managers' role in perpetuating the underlying values of the organization through language and symbols. Explicit and implicit messages to employees filtered down through the organization by what the managers paid attention to and how they reacted to critical incidents and allocated rewards, status, and punishments.

At this plant, managers paid attention to the sexuality of the female workforce in a work environment characterized by sex-role spillover, where the work role of women was de-emphasized and their sex role exaggerated. An attractive appearance and personality were essential in the environment of this plant. Women were told they had "nice tits" or a "great ass." A sexually charged atmosphere gave women the message that they were sexual objects rather than competent and

respected workers, thereby trivializing their accomplishments. "Her job is something any pretty girl can do." It gave men the message that they were superior to women. Thus it was "acceptable" for the men to use harassing language, jokes, and sexual behavior. Pornographic sales videos were used to "charge up" the male sales force, including one with women performing oral sex with a horse. Prostitutes were retained on the sales payroll to service clients. Like dripping water, random drops do little damage; endless drops in one place can have profound effects.

Research has shown that there is a gender gap in attitudes toward sex in the workplace. Men have consistently said that they are flattered by sexual overtures from women, with only 15% saying they would find it insulting. In contrast, 84% of women consistently have said that they are insulted by sexual overtures by men (Gutek 1985). Women at this plant did not frequently complain of sexual advances, but many indicated that such advances were totally unwanted, that there was sexual pressure by men, including lunch-break trysts, and that many men were frequent touchers. At the steel company there was no policy about harassment; as a result, it was clear to all employees that harassment was not taken seriously. Yet management categorically denied that harassment existed.

Women do not "naturally" behave in sexual or seductive ways in the workplace, but they may respond this way when such behavior is encouraged or elicited, either specifically by individual men, or as a general norm in the workplace (Gutek 1985). Such a norm was evident in this company. So it was not surprising that women there accepted the sexual comments (and advances) of their male superiors.

But just as important as what the managers paid attention to in this company was what was ignored or tolerated. For example, in the general manager's testimony, he indicated that he did not pay attention to women employees being told that their "hooters" were too small, to their breasts being referred to as *tits* and their buttocks as *asses*. He did not pay attention to male employees' discussions of their sex lives at work. The company did not pay attention to the sexual-harassment letter of complaint long enough to document their findings in a report. "We categorically deny that any harassment exists." Yet the general manager indicated the complaints were treated as "serious." Even with a formal complaint, no attention was paid to discriminatory behavior in this workplace.

The general manager argued that "no one had ever been offended or had complained about his behavior or language in the past until the plaintiff sent a letter to upper management" in which she talked of unwelcome sexual advances that she found offensive. The sexual nature of the verbal and physical conduct that no one in the company had paid attention to created a hostile, offensive, and discriminatory work environment. It poisoned the atmosphere of employment for all women by treating them as sex objects. The plant managements' overall attitude was "if a woman wished to venture into the men's world of work, then she should expect overtures from men and be able to handle them."

The response to the plaintiff's complaint letter was indicative of the underlying values of this company. The way top managers responded to the crisis sent an important message to employees working there about what would happen if they raised a complaint. When the complaint letter was received, it was described as

"wholly" and "absolutely" false, rather than being given the benefit of any doubt or being seen as warranting a fair and impartial investigation before judgments were formed. The acceptability of sexual behavior was so commonplace that the vice-president to whom it was sent immediately saw it "as the retaliation of an angry woman" and "as the character assassination of a good family man."

A meager attempt at an investigation was conducted by the plaintiff's superiors, including the accused. No independent, disinterested staff were involved. In this situation, status and power issues became confused with the investigation of impropriety. The investigators had difficulty accepting the allegations. The complainant felt intimidated and unwilling to continue to disclose full information to her boss. If a complainant's charges are not substantiated by an impartial investigator, it will appear that she is a troublemaker; if the charges are substantiated, she will appear disloyal.

These examples indicate that women in the workforce at this plant were treated as low-value sexual commodities. The managers who initiated, condoned, and participated in such activities served as role models to those further down the hierarchy, giving the impression that "this is what successful people in this organization do."

Women remained at the lowest level of jobs in the organization, facing embarrassment, humiliation, and internalized anger because senior staff encouraged a sexually exploitive environment. In this environment, no manager questioned the display of photographs of nude women, or the rubbing, kissing, and touching of junior female staff. Because of this context, it was difficult for a female staff member to raise objections.

The company sent a clear message to its women employees that accusations of sexual harassment would not be taken seriously and would not lead to serious punishment, that harassing situations were acceptable, and that accusations might result in bodily harm to the complainant. Men did not view their sexual exchanges as incompatible with work behavior, because there was no punishment for that behavior.

Criteria for removal of staff also sent important implicit messages to employees. Critical comments and reports were added to the plaintiff's file after she sent her complaint letter. Whether or not those reports were to be used to assist her easy removal from the organization later on, their use told other women who might have wished to complain that it was potentially dangerous to do so: if a woman complains, she attracts attention to herself, which means that anything bad she does receives far greater notice; as a result, her job may be at risk. The plaintiff was told by her supervisor that "he would make it his business to be in the purchasing department every day to raise the flag on her job performance." When a complaint becomes tied to the content of an employee's personnel file, there is strong disincentive to make a complaint.

When the plaintiff was not sex-role compliant and submissive, she suffered direct employment-related consequences. She complained and within a short period was fired after her personnel file became newly documented with work-problem statements. These statements were issued only after the initial complaint letter about harassment.

All of these examples have shown that a hostile climate was being maintained through manager-employee relationships in the organization.

Social-control aspects of nonverbal behavior

The fourth area examined was nonverbal behavior as a means for social control on a large scale and interpersonal dominance on a smaller scale, including patterns of asymmetric exchange in relation to women. Nonverbal communication can be used to control women and maintain the power structure because of women's socialization to passivity and their frequent interaction with those in power. The nonverbal message overpowers the verbal one, carrying 4.3 times the weight (Argyle 1970) and more than 65% of its meaning (Birdwhistell 1970).

Goffman (1956) points to many characteristics associated with status and nonverbal communication. He writes, "Between superordinate and subordinate we may expect to find asymmetrical relations, the superordinate having the right to exercise certain familiarities which the subordinate is not allowed to reciprocate." Nonverbal cues function as gestures of dominance and submission, which maintain power relationships in work hierarchies. These gestures fall into patterns of asymmetric exchange around touching, eye contact, smiling, and space.

Just as the manager can put a hand on the worker, men more frequently put their hands on women. Although the power aspect of touching does not rule out its intimacy aspect, it is the asymmetrical pattern of touching which tells us most about the status issues in a relationship. Are female secretaries touched because they are subordinates, or because they are female? The answer is probably both. The use of dominant nonverbal behavior was prevalent in this company. There were frequent examples of touching, patting, hugging, kissing, cuddling, ogling, and leering at the female staff. "There was wholesale touching of us. We were community property." Men "touched, rubbed, kissed my head." They "ogled and leered at me." "I looked away." "They gazed at my body ... looked me up and down." "I smiled to cover my uncomfortableness." It was argued by management that such behavior was liked by the women. "She smiled because she liked it." Like the "unique language," it was "non-discriminatory and non-derogatory because it was applied to all the women workers." Managers who consistently patted and touched the women were treating them as sex objects.

There were repeated violations of personal space. Men "hovered over the women. ... They sat on their desks while they worked." This was accompanied by nonreciprocal touching. "In general for men in our culture touching is restricted to the opposite sex and its function is primarily sexual in nature" (Lewis 1972:237). The touching behavior used in this plant was a clear sign of dominance. The smiling, laughing, and apparent acceptance was a clear sign of submission. Such behavior was an acceptable part of the corporate culture here, where women were too fearful to challenge the male power hierarchy.

Degrading talk

The fifth area examined was degrading talk; the details of how managers and employees talked to each other were analyzed. Language is the core of human interaction. Since most managerial behavior occurs through linguistic activity, it was important to examine how managers talked to their employees in this plant. Their talk reflected their thoughts and attitudes. In particular, consideration was given to the use of sexist derogatory terms for women and asymmetry of joke-telling by men at the expense of women, and swearing, and extensive analysis of the nonequivalent use of language was carried out.

Words charged with emotion, taboo words, and distasteful words not only reflect the culture that uses them but teaches and perpetuates the attitudes that create them. The use of derogatory terms for women is one way an in-group (men) stereotypes an out-group (women). Such anti-woman language has the two basic ingredients of prejudice: denigration and gross overgeneralization (Allport 1954:34). The use of such language is an act of social domination that perpetuates discrimination.

Since language use reflects how we think (Baker 1981; Case 1985, 1988), it causes us to behave in certain ways. Thus, the use of sexist derogatory language, accompanied by denigrating touching behavior, had serious implications for the women at this plant.

The continual labeling of women in metonymical terms, including references to peculiarly female aspects of their anatomy (*cunt*, *ass*, *tits*), as animals (*bitch*), or in sexual terms (*sleazy slut*), reflects derision of women in the company and maintains gender hierarchy and control.

The asymmetry—one cue associated with dominance and the other with subordination—was also present when men made jokes. “Men made jokes at our expense. We laughed hard. What else could you do?” Status in this case was signaled by the so-called witticism, and subordination by laughing. In this company the language of domination involved swearing, joke-telling, and sexist derogatory terms.

The greater the segregation of the sexes, the more enhanced the value of swearing as an indicator of male solidarity and masculinity in general (Case 1988; Flexner 1960; Jespersen 1922). Swearing functions to exclude women, facilitating group ties with men. But since women at the steel company also swore, the language examination had to demonstrate the nonequivalence of swearing, showing a difference between sexually gendered language like *cunt* or *slut*, which applied to women only, and phrases like *fuck*, *screw*, *shit*, *piss*, and *asshole*, which all employees used. Although this language is vulgar in some contexts, it reflects informal language broadly used in society by both sexes. Sexist language, much like swearing, builds a certain solidarity as males share aggression against and domination of women. A common feature of the sexist terms used toward women at the company was reference to female sexuality in terms of the use men made of women. Success in this pursuit was positive for a male but had negative connotations for females.

Almost without exception, sexual terms for women have negative connotations and assume that a woman's sexuality is the most important thing about her. As Stanley phrases it, “If a man is a cockhound, one shrugs one's shoulders, if a woman is a slut, the moral fiber of women is in danger” (1977:72). The general manager defined women who worked for him in sexual terms referring to specific portions of their bodies: *cunt*, *ass*, *tits*. There is a scarcity of parallel words in the few sexual terms our culture has for men. Even when a male is termed a *prick*, it is a comment on his personality, akin to such terms as *jerk* or *creep*, not a comment on his sexuality.

Most of the 200 terms available to label women as sexual beings are negative, such as *hooker*, *tramp*, *slut*, *bitch*, and *whore*, and they tend to demean or trivialize women (Stanley 1977). There are only twenty similar terms for men and they usually have more positive associations: *Casanova*, *stud*, *Don Juan*, *dirty old man* (Stanley 1977). Generally, the positive connotations of the male terms seem to reflect the morality of machismo and the prevalence of a double standard. Most terms tend to be used with a “boys-will-be-boys” feeling and often are employed in good-natured joking.

In our culture, men are encouraged to take pride in their masculinity, which is often manifested in talk of physical involvement with women's bodies. At the steel company, this talk of men's sexual conquests took place publicly, in front of women employees. A successful sexual encounter is an important badge of manhood. For females, there is no linguistic counterpart of this type of machismo.

Effects of speech

Symbolic stratification of speech, which was important in maintaining sexual dominance and reinforcing authority over women, compounded the plaintiff's problems because of her gender-inappropriate assertiveness. She put her harassment experience in a letter requesting that she be allowed to do her job—“I come to work each day to do my job. No more; no less”—and that the “sexual harassment wrought upon me be put to a halt.”

The rules of what are appropriate ways to behave are not the same for the two sexes. Blatant assertiveness or aggression is prohibited for women, and when they express anger, they run the risk that it will elicit more anger in return. When women protest male gestures that they feel have gone too far, they are likely to be answered with an attack. Men attempt to assert status and establish dominance in interpersonal situations. The masculine language style is assertively aggressive. It presses listeners for compliance or leads to an argument (Case 1985, 1988).

The plaintiff's experiences were first denied, then declared “false” without an investigation. She was viewed as “overreacting,” then chastised and berated for writing the letter charging sexual harassment, threatened “with consequences unless she wrote a letter of retraction,” and ultimately upon refusal to retract her statement was grabbed, wrestled with, and thrown to the ground in front of witnesses, with enough force to require hospital treatment. Within weeks she was fired, mainly because she was not “a proper woman who knew her place.”

The plaintiff did not play the normative role nor did she have the normative demeanor of female employees at this plant. She acted on her own behalf in a work role, itself a dominant move. That dominance was met with counter-dominance, intensifying the gestures of dominance needed by the men in the organization to maintain their superiority. Why? The most likely reason was that the implications of a woman signaling power were unacceptable to these men (Henley 1973:18). This woman was trying to control. In the eyes of management, it was another act of defiance of an order by a superior.

The aspects of relationships within organizations that have been discussed combine to signal what is "right" or expected behavior for groups of employees within this culture. The work environment communicated to workers that sexual comments and overtures were acceptable and even expected of people within it. The signals sent to women were to be passive, tolerant, and accepting of discriminatory behavior.

In our expert-witness report and testimony, we made a case through an analysis of the linguistic environment of adversarial employee relations, defensive communications, inappropriate managerial behavior, sexually degrading language, and nonverbal dominance cues that there was a hostile work environment for female employees at this company, leading to sexual harassment and other kinds of sexual behaviors.

Standards of reasonableness

In the complete paper, the organizational culture of the steel company is compared with reasonable work cultures in the surrounding society to determine whether what some workers perceived as hostile was in fact so, and intolerable as well; or whether it was acceptable by standards of reasonableness.

Standards of reasonableness include a work environment characterized by the following:

- (1) Women are free from sexual indignities and intimidation.
- (2) Fair recruiting, hiring, training, and promotion of women occurs.
- (3) A strong policy on sexual harassment exists, with grievance procedures for resolving complaints.
- (4) Fair compensation practices exist.
- (5) Unequivocal messages from top management include: women are to be treated fairly; there is commitment to equality; and sanctions against offenders of sexual harassment include firing.

At the steel company in question, there were few indications that the work environment was reasonable by these criteria.

Given that the work environment was not reasonable, the next question was whether it was intolerably hostile. An intolerably hostile work environment is one in which managers show patterns of illegitimate behavior in acquiring and using power; use interpersonal, situational, and structural sources of power to distinguish and exploit particular groups of employees; show a lack of maturity and self-control in tempering their power-oriented behavior so that it is not applied carefully, fairly,

or consistently; and are insensitive to their own biases and effects of their behaviors on their subordinates. All of these conditions were met at this plant. The pattern of hostility, degradation of women, and abuse of power was not confined to a particular person or a situation. It was consistent, recurring, and had debilitating effects that transcended the individual worker who had filed a complaint.

The circumstances at the steel company provided ample evidence of behaviors indicative of an intolerably hostile work environment. The environment tolerated, if not encouraged, female employees as mistresses of married men; it tolerated pictures of naked women on the wall, pornographic films with footage of females performing oral sex with animals, public comment on the relative merits of women's anatomy, derogatory sexual comments on women's sexual proclivities, men rubbing, touching, and kissing women insensitively, and assault on a low-level employee who refused to retract a harassment complaint.

Through an analysis of the nonequivalent use of language it has been demonstrated that the environment reflected an exploitative, coercive power relationship of male employees over female employees; it made one's sex relevant to implicit and explicit terms of employment. Decisions were made based upon submission to or refusal of sexual advances. The environment for women was intimidating, hostile, and offensive, constituting economic coercion if they complied and threatening their economic livelihood if they did not.

Gutek (1985) estimates that only about 18% of victims report harassment incidents to someone in authority. The one who complains is not a fluke. She is not too sensitive. She is not crazy. She is not imagining the whole thing. She does not have severe emotional problems. To protest to the point of court action requires a quality of inner resolve that is both reckless and serene, a sense that "this I won't take" which is both desperate and principled. It also reflects an absolute lack of any other choice at a point at which others with equally few choices do nothing (MacKinnon 1979). A more rational view of a formal complaint like the one filed in this case is to see it as the "tip of the iceberg"—an indication of problems in the workplace, not an indication of a problem woman.

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The ultimate gatekeeper: Sexual harassment in a job training program

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WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND OCCUPATIONAL PREPARATION⁴

This paper is part of a larger ethnographic study of a program that trains women for jobs in the skilled trades. It examines the preparation they receive, ranging from manual skills to the physical theories underlying the work, to the kinds of rhetorical competencies the women must acquire in order to survive in the historically male trades.

One of the goals of the study is to describe the barriers that women encounter to gaining access to such jobs. Preliminary findings show that learning the skills and theories was not the greatest obstacle. The ultimate gatekeeper for one woman in this case was sexual harassment, and the reactions of her coparticipants in the program raise questions about their willingness to confront this barrier to women's progress in the workplace.

The importance of such research is evident upon searching the literature for information on the educational and career preparation of women. Educational research has shown that while boys are prepared for careers, girls' education emphasizes domesticity (Holland & Eisenhart 1990; Weis 1988). Prior to the 1960s, a white woman's career choices were limited by a social ideology that encouraged women to stay home and raise families while men worked to support them. Young women were guided into career decisions that assumed temporary or sporadic participation in the labor market. Sex-role stereotypes in the workplace were thus perpetuated, as women were clustered in relatively low-paying clerical or service jobs.

However, the situation for women is in transition. Federal antidiscrimination laws have opened up previously closed job choices (Baker 1978). Women are pursuing many diverse professions and will likely continue to do so, since by the end of this century they will comprise 47% of the U.S. labor force (Harlan & Steinberg 1989:4).

The preparation women receive for work thus demands critical examination. Women have a right to quality training for all occupations, and conditions which might impede this right need to be revealed and corrected. This study provides an in-depth look at a federally funded job training program for women, and how the lived experience under those particular conditions affected what the women learned.

Women and job training

Federal programs such as the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) provide

funding for industry, labor, and community leaders in a given labor market to conceive and implement training programs for local underskilled women and men. The funding supports the training and also provides vouchers for transportation and child care if necessary.

The JTPA system is not without criticism. Specifically, there are performance standards the training programs are expected to meet which cause them to "cream," or select the higher-educated people from the population that would benefit from free job training. In addition, in order to meet the performance standards in the allotted amount of time, the jobs people are trained for are necessarily entry-level and low-wage (Sanders 1988).

While these problems with JTPA affect both women and men, women make up 53% of the people served by JTPA (Sanders 1988:18). They are also more likely than men to get lower-paying jobs because they are usually trained for clerical, light technical or entry-level jobs in health care—precisely the same underpaid occupations that they have traditionally held.

In 33 states, however, blue-collar alternatives are available, such as plumbing, carpentry, or machining (Women's Bureau 1991). These offer women higher pay, the concrete rewards of skilled labor, and the fulfillment of having unconventional accomplishments.

Women entering the skilled trades are challenging gender roles. They will face skeptical contractors and clients as well as apprehensive or even hostile coworkers. These women need to acquire sufficient competence to diminish these doubts and to head off any potentially dangerous pranks. They must also learn ways to mitigate others' misgivings based on gender stereotypes. Finally, they must decide how they will address sexual harassment on the job, which is very widespread in the trades.

This paper will focus on the issue of sexual harassment in the job training program under study: not just the ways in which it was directly addressed within the program, and the strategies that were provided to help the women deal with it, but also how the other trainees responded when one woman accused a shop teacher in the program of sexual harassment.

I will juxtapose the discourse about solidarity among women in the skilled trades that the women hear in the program with the discourse they already use to talk about their world, one that can be called *street discourse*. It includes folk notions about gender and race relations, and ugly stereotypes. These perceptions cannot be totally categorized as sexist or racist but more as an intersection of the two. By examining this point of convergence, this study supports recent calls to go beyond categorization and confront a more complex reality (Amott & Matthaei 1991; McCarthy & Apple 1988:25).

The first section describes the program studied, Skilled Trades for Women, and what is said there officially about sexual harassment. The next section discusses the complaint filed and the reactions of the other women in the program. The third section explores the power, gender, and race relations converging in this case. I conclude with directions for future research in light of the findings discussed.

THE SKILLED TRADES FOR WOMEN PROGRAM

Skilled Trades for Women (STW) is housed at a regional occupational center in a California city. These centers are vocational schools that provide the shop space and equipment for job training in more trades than a high school or community college might be able to do.

STW has been in existence for about four years. Men may enroll, although the emphasis is on introducing women to the various trades. It is a comprehensive, semester-long program that meets five days a week from 9:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M., and includes such other courses as self-paced math and English, and weight training.

In the morning, the women take a course called Industrial Maintenance. This is the program's core course, where Christie, a journey-level tradeswoman, teaches the basics of some of the trades, such as machining and carpentry. The women also take other shop classes taught by the teaching staff at the occupational center, all of whom are men.

Like many job training programs, STW has a "World of Work" component. Normally this would socialize trainees into work norms such as attendance and punctuality. But in STW, the world of work the women are being prepared for has historically been a *man's* world, so Christie offers strategies for coping with inevitable conflicts. She encourages everyone to keep in touch after the program is over, to support each other out there, and to look for "sisters" on job sites. She tells them they will have to be twice as good on the job as the men in order to prove themselves.

Christie has an endless supply of stories about the harassment they will get on the job, not only because they are women, but also because they will be apprentices, who are stigmatized by holding the lowest position in the construction job site hierarchy.

Occasionally, working tradeswomen visit the class during the World of Work sessions. They talk about the adjustments they have made to their work environment. They are never praised about the quality of their work and all have had to deal with sexually explicit drawings of themselves and/or their coworkers. "If you act like a doormat, you're going to get walked on," said one woman, and encouraged them to draw the line. She herself had a meeting with the whole crew, where she told them that that kind of conduct was illegal, and it stopped. Other women, including Christie, have had to take their complaints to court.

But these are the downsides. All of the tradeswomen spoke of the pride they felt driving by a building that they helped build from the ground up. They talked about the *good* men on the job, and the good money they were bringing home. They also talked about the feeling they got when other women drove by and saluted them for being out there working hard alongside the men.

1992 participants of Skilled Trades for Women

In the spring of 1992, there were 18 students enrolled in STW, two of whom were men. They were brothers, both recent immigrants from Algiers. In this paper

I will concentrate on the 16 women, who ranged in age from 22 to 45. All were African American except one Latina. Of the 16, ten were receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).

Although federally funded job training programs like STW are geared towards women with low levels of income, education, and training, it is wrong to assume that such was the case for all of these women. Some of the older women had college educations and careers before their marriage; now their children had grown or perhaps the women were divorced or simply looking for a new career. Several of the younger women had some college education. Most of them had been trained for other occupations in the health-care or business fields. What they all shared was the feeling that the skilled trades offered them a better opportunity than other careers at this juncture in their lives.

My goal of writing about the lived experience of the program was explained to the participants and their approval secured. I participated in the carpentry, machining, and electrical-wiring projects in Industrial Maintenance and attended other shop classes, as well as their English class.

In the shop classes, the male shop teachers told the women that jobs should be relatively easy for them to find since contractors needed to hire women and minorities. Some teachers went further than others, describing their connections in industry and telling favorite stories of the jobs they had landed for people, especially women, in the past.

One shop teacher in particular, an African American man, was very convincing and infectious in his enthusiasm for his trade and his ability to help the women. But it would be impossible for them to learn enough to get a job in this trade in their nine-week unit with him, he said. Students who were serious about this trade should sign up for his evening class. It was not part of STW, but offered more learning time. Immediately two women, Angela and Barbara, got up and left to register for the class. Several others did so in the following weeks as well.

ANGELA'S DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT

As Angela tells the story, this is what happened. Since she had begun taking the evening shop class, the instructor had asked her questions about her age and whether she was married. She rarely solicited his help in the class, but he came and gave it anyway. Barbara had noticed, and had warned her that he was coming on to her, but she did not want to believe it.

One night he asked her to stay after class because he had something he wanted to ask her. Angela thought it might be about a job, so she did. As they approached his car in the campus parking lot, she claims he invited her to go out of town with him for the weekend. She said no, but was too aghast to say anything more. He asked her to think it over. At this, she says she turned and ran to her car. Later she was mad at herself for not having expressed her anger and disgust at him.

Angela told Barbara about the proposition, and Barbara advised her to forget about it. But Angela could not. After two torturous days, Angela finally confided in Christie, the Industrial Maintenance instructor, who told her she had the option of making a formal complaint.

When she did actually file the complaint with the campus affirmative-action officer, accusing the shop teacher of sexually harassing her, the other STW participants ostracized her. They were adamantly opposed to her action, even those who claimed to have had similar conversations with the shop teacher.

In fact, one woman instigated a campaign to support the instructor. She drafted a letter to the same affirmative-action officer, stating that the other women in STW did not believe Angela and stood fully behind the shop teacher.

All of the class members were asked to sign this document. Everyone signed, although the Latina and one of the two men said later that they had done so more out of the pressure of the moment than out of any feeling of support for the shop teacher. They had seen and heard nothing, and everyone else signed it.

Meanwhile Angela became a pariah in the class; most people ignored her. They began to openly dislike Christie, too, because they knew she had "encouraged" Angela to file the complaint. I also became suspect because I sat next to Angela in Christie's class and had not shunned her like most of the others. Significantly, neither Christie nor I are African American, the implications of which will be discussed below.

There was much tension in the air, since the complaint and its reverberations were the subject of much talk. Predictably, none of this talk was in the context of "official" classroom interaction—no one ever mentioned this specific case in open classroom discussion. However, whenever working tradeswomen visited the class, someone would inevitably ask them in a challenging tone about sexual harassment on the job and how they had dealt with it.

Christie and the staff of Skilled Trades for Women arranged for a mediator to come talk to the class, an African American woman who facilitated an open and at times raucous discussion. After this, most friendships were gradually restored or new ones developed. The program returned to the sense of community that had been developing before the incident occurred. Although it took time, by the end of the semester, the animosity had subsided.

Interpreting the incident and its aftermath

What was the other side of the story that made the entire class defend the shop teacher? I did not think that directly asking the women was the best means of arriving at an answer to this question. Given my longterm goals of remaining friends and in contact with them as they moved into apprenticeships and jobs, I did not want to risk my tenuous neutrality by expressing that I did not understand or share their point of view. Nor was I convinced that I would get at the real reasons for their actions simply by asking. Instead, the following discussion is based on related conversations with the STW participants and my observations.

It is impossible to talk about the gender relations operating here without reference to racial issues, and vice versa. This shows how intertwined such dynamics are in the lived experiences of people in contemporary urban society. To bring up these issues in the context of a research project means analyzing street discourse. This will inevitably disclose some "dirty laundry," and not just for the people involved in this situation, but for ourselves as a society.

First, Angela was perceived as being at least partially responsible for the shop teacher's proposition. For example, she was going early to the evening class. She did this so that she could leave early, too. But Barbara warned her against doing that, because it might give the instructor the impression that she was available. She should avoid this because "everyone knows how much black men like light-skinned women."

All the attention the instructor paid her seems to have been interpreted by others as meaning that she was also interested in him, or at least in "playing the game." One woman even told Angela once that she thought they "had a thing going." And then perhaps things did not turn out as Angela expected, they might have concluded, and she decided to expose him. Several women said to me that what Angela had done was wrong. Not one of them ever said to me that what the shop teacher had done was wrong; it seemed that such behavior was to be expected and so above scrutiny.

The argument here is that women are in control of potentially sexual situations, and Angela must have "wanted it" to some degree for her to have gone early to his class and for his attentions to have been noticed by all. If she was not interested, she should have been able to defuse the situation. Either way, she definitely should not have gone to the institutional authorities about it.

I believe that a major reason the women turned against Angela is related to her appealing to a white authority to accuse an African American man. Many of the women felt that she was jeopardizing his job over nothing. She was potentially destroying another black man's career: some African American communities are concerned that too many black men are being maligned. Now is not the time for African American women to be bashing their men—whites are doing a sufficient job on their own (Simmons 1992:43-44; Stallone 1992:35).

This rhetoric points out that there are more young black males in prison than in school or working, and that if Los Angeles motorist Rodney King had been white, he would not have been so violently beaten by the police. Sometimes, however, this discourse moves beyond social critique and reflects a sexist bias of its own, to the point of defending African American men like Clarence Thomas and Mike Tyson, who have been publicly attacked by "angry" (African American) women who probably "wanted it" and then saw a way to profit from their situation.

And indeed, the shop teacher and everyone who believed him is African American. Those who supported Angela, on the other hand, are white. Crucially, Angela comes from an interracial heritage. Like all people of mixed backgrounds, her classification is not straightforward; it is context-dependent.

DISCUSSION

The filing of a complaint of sexual harassment against a shop teacher in a training program for women is bound to have an impact on the preparation of all of the participants. Perhaps the only incontrovertible conclusion to be drawn is that it provided the women with good practice in confronting sexual harassment on the job. But was anything learned?

On sexual harassment

I believe everyone involved came away convinced that the term *sexual harassment* needs to be better defined. We have to be clear on what is sexual harassment and what is not. Legally, for someone to have a case these days, the behavior has to be repeated and documented, and witnesses are helpful. It seems, then, that Angela does not have a case. Her complaint stemmed from a one-time invitation. It is not against the law to ask someone out on a date.

But something is very wrong with that formulation. It stays on the surface of what sexual harassment is really all about. It ignores the entire issue of *power*, which is a far more basic cause of the behavior than wanting to go on a date. Maybe we need a better term for this behavior than sexual harassment, one that speaks more to the power issue.

We need to always be aware of the role that power relations between genders can play. In this case, the instructor presented himself as their ticket to a job if they stuck with him. This might explain why Angela did not set him straight right away. It also helps us understand why the rest of the women preferred to take his side: in the final analysis he was perceived to be more powerful for them than was talk about solidarity among women.

But we need to ask ourselves, what kind of access is being provided, if the price to pay for getting a good job is "going out on a date" with the instructor? This is the ultimate gatekeeping mechanism of a historically male occupation: put out or get out.

On the intersection of race and gender

The stereotypes which the Skilled Trades for Women participants invoked for this incident interfered with the solidarity that it is necessary for women in the trades to develop and maintain. Where do these ideologies come from that say that African American women have to defend sexist black men just because they are black? Or that it is a woman's own fault if she finds herself sexually accosted by a man—she must have done something to lead him on?

Much education is needed, and fortunately, there are African American communities of discourse, both popular and academic, loudly decrying the pitting of gender against race.

In a popular African American monthly magazine, Simmons is dismayed to find, in the wake of the Clarence Thomas and Mike Tyson media events, that many black women and men believe that "what serves black men's self-image and self-interest is good for the race, regardless of how it hurts, hinders, cripples or kills black women" (1992:44). She continues, "With this kind of nutso reasoning masquerading as pleas for 'understanding' and 'unity' the bad habit of holding a women responsible for a man's assaulting her is clearly going to be hard to break" (1992:44).

Within feminist thought, African American writers like bell hooks make the same argument: "As long as black people hold on to the idea that the trauma of racist domination is really the loss of black manhood, then we invest in the racist

narratives that perpetuate the idea that all black men are rapists, eager to use sexual terrorism to express their rage about racial domination" (1990:60). She asks, "Cannot black women remain seriously concerned about the brutal effect of racist domination on black men and also denounce black male sexism?" (1990:62).

The answer to this question, as this study has shown, is still being contested. The outcome will impact all aspects of life, including the quality of job training available for women to enter the occupation of their choice.

CONCLUSION

My continuing work in the Skilled Trades for Women program is focused on getting at these womens' ideologies, where they came from, and how they are encoded in their lives. I am paying extra attention to their autobiographies as they write and share them in the English class. I am considering whether and how their status in the social hierarchy—as black women, as unemployed single mothers—has contributed to their stance on women speaking out against this particular kind of abuse by men. And as I follow the women into trade apprenticeships and job sites, I hope to see how they deal with the next case of sexual harassment on the job.

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Gender, roles, and power in dyadic conversations

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INTRODUCTION

Studies on the differences between male and female language have shown three general themes: male dominance (Zimmerman & West 1975; West 1979; Kramer 1975), social differentiation of gender roles (Heiss 1962; Shaw & Sadler 1965), and differences in the division of labor (Smith-Lovin & Brody 1989). In this study, the patterns of interruption and silence in two-party conversations are analyzed to see how well each of these three theories explains the differences in linguistic behavior between men and women. Data for this study are taken from thirty-two group conversations which were recorded in an experimental setting. The sample was stratified according to the sex of the speakers in each group, the intimacy of the relationship between the speakers, and the roles assigned to each speaker.¹ Each group was given a negotiation task to perform and was told to speak for five to ten minutes. From the transcripts of the conversation segments, data were collected on the number of interruption attempts made by each participant (whether these attempts were successful or not), the number of silences within and before each speaker's turn, and the average length of these silences.

INTERRUPTION AS INDICATOR OF POWER

If interruption is indeed a direct reflection of one's power in society, we would expect men to interrupt much more often than women. However, the groups of men and women analyzed in this study both made a total of 83 interruption attempts in the 16 conversation segments. Looking at the two totals alone, there seems to be no difference between male and female tendencies to interrupt.

Zimmerman and West (1975) show that men interrupt women much more often than women interrupt men in cross-sex groups, while the same-sex groups show a more balanced frequency of interruptions by both parties. Smith-Lovin and Brody's study (1989) yields slightly different results. They find that although men interrupt women much more often than they do other men, women interrupt men as often as they do other women.

The data from the present study, shown in Table 1, seem to disagree with both of these earlier studies. The number of interruption attempts made by men when they are talking to other men is much higher than when they are talking to women, while women interrupt each other more than they do men. The most surprising result is that the lowest count among the four groups is in cases of men interrupting women. These results are difficult to explain if we assume that men, having more power in society than women, will demonstrate this power through interruptions when speaking with women. The fact that women interrupt each other more often

than they do men also seems to contradict the findings presented by Smith-Lovin and Brody (1989).

TABLE 1. *Summary of interruption attempts by sex*

Sex of interrupter	Sex of interrupted	Number of interruptions
M	M	52
M	F	31
F	M	37
F	F	46

Total number of interruptions by men = Total number of interruptions by women = 83

EFFECTS OF THE ASSIGNED ROLE

The negotiation tasks used in this study assign participants roles of different status. One task involves a negotiation of salary increase between the president and the vice-president of a small company. The other task involves a literary agent and a publisher negotiating on a book contract. The power differential between the two roles in each task may interact with the real-life power relations between the two participants to produce mixed results. In order to examine in greater detail the significance of power in shaping the pattern of interruptions, it is important to separate the power each speaker is endowed with by society from the power each speaker is assigned in the negotiation task. Table 2 groups interruption attempts by the role the interrupter plays, as well as by the sex of both interrupter and interrupted.

TABLE 2. *Interruptions by assigned role*

Sex of interrupter	Sex of interrupted	Role	Negative interruptions	All types of interruptions
M	M	D	18	25
M	M	S	24	27
M	F	D	9	10
F	M	S	8	11
F	M	D	21	26
M	F	S	21	22
F	F	D	15	26
F	F	S	14	20

In Table 2, we see that the lowest counts of interruptions are found in cross-sex groups with men playing the dominant role; in these groups the counts of interruptions are low for both parties. Interruption attempts are made more frequently by both parties in the other three groups and the numbers in these three groups are all quite similar. The results suggest that the number of interruption attempts made by a speaker can be seen not only as a reflection of the power she possesses, but also as a means to increase and maintain her power in situations where it is uncertain. When women are playing the dominant role, they are given

power over their male partner, which they usually do not have in other settings. As a result of this added power, they are more willing to make interruption attempts in these conversations. Their willingness to interrupt the men seems to pose a threat to their male partners, resulting in a high number of interruptions by the men in such conversations, despite the fact that they are playing the subordinate role. The low rate of interruptions by men when they are playing a dominant role against their female partners can also be explained by this alternative view of interruptions: in these cases, the men are doubly powerful. Based on the view that interruptions are a direct reflection of male dominance, however, one would expect men to interrupt women twice as often when they are playing the dominant role as when they are not. However, if interruptions are not merely indicators of the power the speaker already has, but also devices speakers employ to gain power when they are in positions of uncertain power, men would not need to use such a device in conversations in which they already have a great advantage over their partners.

Examples (A) and (B) are good examples of the effect assigned power has on inherent power. In cases in which the man is playing the dominant role, the woman is generally allowed much longer turns, while in cases where the woman is playing the dominant role, both parties assume aggressive poses as early as in the first few turns of the conversation.

(A) Female playing dominant role, casual relationship²

- F: So what kind of an advance are you expecting.
(2.0)
M: Expecting an advance that will::: (0.5) be proper for my client// (0.5) who *can
F: Who is a*
M: obviously sell this book=
F: =Which (0.5) which is her first book!

(B) Male playing dominant role, casual relationship

- M: Hi I'm Terry Holtz, the senior editor with Arundel House.
F: Hi, I'm Jays Mc (.) Jay McIntyre, Rachel's uh uh::: literary agent.
M: Hi. All right. ((clears throat)) Yes, you uh want to meet with me?
F: Yes, um (0.5) well (0.5) I (0.5) thought (.) uh since the last time we talked you know I'm (0.5) really interested in um (0.5) in getting her book out. I think that will be uh very beneficial for your publishing company, first of all. Um::: because I think she's (.) is going to be promoted (.) pretty well. Um as you know as far as turning around an urban high school. That is an *idea* that will sell pretty well *extremely* well. Especially for this this area we're talking about, in the Midwest.

As Table 2 has shown, in same-sex male groups, the men playing the subordinate role actually interrupt more often than the men playing the dominant role, especially when only negative interruptions are counted. (More details on the definition of negative interruptions will be found later in this paper.) This behavior shown by the men again gives support to the idea that interruptions can be seen as devices to increase one's power when it is threatened. In same-sex male groups,

there is no initial difference in power. However, the roles that the participants play help redefine the power relations. As a result, one of the men becomes subordinate in power due to the role to which he is assigned. In this position, the man feels threatened and is therefore eager to increase and maintain his power by attempting to interrupt his partner more often.

INTERRUPTIONS AND GROUP INTIMACY

Heiss (1962) and Shaw and Sadler (1965) show that in conversations involving heterosexual couples, the more casual the relationship, the more likely it is for both members of the couple to play the "traditional" male-female roles. In conversations between casual friends or unaffiliated couples, the man interrupts much more often than the woman. As the degree of intimacy increases, the degree of role differentiation between men and women in conversations decreases.

TABLE 3. *Interruptions by group intimacy*

Sex of interrupter	Sex of interrupted	Intimacy level	Negative interruptions	All types of interruptions
M	M	I	19	25
M	M	C	23	27
M	F	I	21	21
F	M	I	17	19
M	F	C	9	10
F	M	C	12	18
F	F	I	25	39
F	F	C	4	7

To examine the effect of the degree of intimacy on the different roles men and women play, the pattern of interruption according to group intimacy will be analyzed. Groups are defined as "casual" or "intimate" based on the self-reported information in the post-experiment questionnaire. Table 3 shows the count of interruptions by group intimacy. The results show that group intimacy has little effect on men's pattern of interruption in same-sex groups. In contrast, women interrupt their close female friends more than five times as often as they interrupt their casual female friends. Even when only negative interruptions are considered, the difference between the behavior of male and female speakers in same-sex groups is still significant.

The effect of intimacy on cross-sex conversations is mixed. Both men and women are more willing to interrupt in intimate cross-sex groups than in casual cross-sex groups, although the difference is much greater for men than for women. The surprising result is the lack of strong support for the view, found in earlier studies, that traditional gender roles are played out more in casual groups than in intimate groups. Instead, in intimate groups, the men interrupt more often than the women, but in casual groups, the women interrupt more often than the men and most of these interruptions are negative. Thus, it seems that group intimacy has a

mixed effect on cross-sex conversations and is not as useful a measure of gender differences as the differential power measure described in the previous section.

CONVERSATION DOMINANCE AND SUPPORT

One suggestion that Shaw and Sadler (1965) give for the mixed results they find in the relationship between gender roles and group intimacy is that interruptions may have different functions for men and women. Smith-Lovin and Brody (1989) show that the affective character of interruptions is an important factor to consider when analyzing the different patterns of interruption by men and women. Interruptions by women tend to be supportive while interruptions by men tend to be negative. It is therefore important to code the affective character of interruptions as well as the total number of interruptions.

Interruptions were coded as supportive if they expressed agreement with the current speaker ("that's good"), if they made an affectively positive request for elaboration ("yes, what do you think about that"), or if they completed the speaker's thought. The last type of supportive interruptions often involved repeating the last few words said and continuing on to the next transition point. An interruption was coded as negative if it expressed disagreement, raised an objection, or introduced a new topic. All other interruptions were neutral, which included interruptions which were so short that the content could not be determined, interruptions which merely repeated the speaker's words without showing agreement or disagreement, and other interruptions that appeared to be without evaluative content.

Tables 4 and 5 show the breakdown of interruptions by affective character. Smith-Lovin and Brody (1989) find that supportive interruptions occur more often in same-sex groups than in cross-sex groups. The present data show that this is indeed the case. A total of 18 supportive interruptions occurred in same-sex groups, compared to only eight in cross-sex groups. Furthermore, 12 of the supportive interruptions in same-sex groups were found among the women.

Kollack, Blumstein, and Schwartz (1985) have shown that men are unwilling to show conversational support when they are in subordinate position. The present data agree with their findings. In both same-sex and cross-sex groups, the number of negative interruptions attempted by men in subordinate roles is higher than that of their partners. For both men and women in this study, the conversational partner playing the dominant role shows more support for his or her partner than the one playing the subordinate role. The exception to this occurs among the men in cross-sex groups: none used supportive interruptions. The men's reluctance to show support for their female partners shows that the men in cross-sex conversations are more concerned about conversation dominance than they are in same-sex groups.

Smith-Lovin and Brody (1989) suggest that the interaction between status effects and conflict between the two sexes may help interpret some of the results they find in conversations involving women. Due to a difference in status between women and men in society, women defer to a male partner in conversation. At the same time, the conflict between the sexes in society prompts women to be in an adversarial position against men while they show support for other women.

Depending on which effect is stronger, seemingly contradictory results may be obtained.

TABLE 4. *Sex, roles, and affective character of interruptions*

Sex of interrupter	Sex of interrupted	Role	Supportive interruptions	Negative interruptions	Neutral interruptions	All types of interruptions
M	M	D	4	18	3	25
M	M	S	2	24	1	27
M	F	D	0	9	1	10
M	F	S	0	22	0	22
F	M	D	5	21	0	26
F	M	S	3	8	0	11
F	F	D	7	15	4	26
F	F	S	5	14	1	20

TABLE 5. *Sex, group intimacy, and affective character of interruptions*

Sex of interrupter	Sex of interrupted	Intimacy level	Supportive interruptions	Negative interruptions	Neutral interruptions	All types of interruptions
M	M	I	3	19	3	25
M	M	C	3	23	1	27
M	F	I	0	21	0	21
M	F	C	0	9	1	10
F	M	I	2	17	0	19
F	M	C	6	12	0	18
F	F	I	9	25	5	39
F	F	C	3	4	0	7

These two effects may be important in considering the pattern of supportive interruption displayed by women. While the status effect may be more evident in casual groups, where the participants do not know each other as well and may be more inclined to play the more traditional roles, support for members of the same sex may be more evident in intimate groups, where the feeling of camaraderie may be stronger. Thus, in casual cross-sex groups, women tend to defer to their partners and show more support for them. In all-female groups, women show more support when the relationship is intimate than when it is casual.

SUCCESS OF INTERRUPTIONS

Tables 6 and 7 show the number of successful interruptions and the rates of success. Successful interruptions are defined as instances in which the interrupter successfully gains the floor. Comparing these to Tables 4 and 5, which show the total number of each type of interruption, regardless of success, we see that the overall success rate of interruptions is not very high, only about 57%. The low rate of success of interruption attempts may be due to the nature of the negotiation task, in which each participant is eager to "win" in the negotiation and is less likely to yield a turn when interrupted by her or his conversational partner.

TABLE 6. *Success of interruptions by role*

Sex of interrupter	Sex of interrupted	Role	Supportive interruptions	Negative interruptions	Neutral interruptions
M	M	D	1 (25%)	10 (56%)	2 (67%)
M	M	S	1 (50%)	12 (50%)	0 (0%)
M	F	D	0 (0%)	6 (67%)	1 (100%)
M	F	S	0 (0%)	10 (45%)	0 (0%)
F	M	D	3 (60%)	16 (77%)	0 (0%)
F	M	S	3 (100%)	5 (63%)	0 (0%)
F	F	D	3 (43%)	9 (60%)	2 (50%)
F	F	S	4 (80%)	6 (43%)	1 (100%)

TABLE 7. *Success of interruptions by degree of intimacy*

Sex of interrupter	Sex of interrupted	Intimacy level	Supportive interruptions	Negative interruptions	Neutral interruptions
M	M	I	1 (33%)	11 (58%)	1 (33%)
M	M	C	1 (33%)	11 (48%)	1 (100%)
M	F	I	0	13 (62%)	0
M	F	C	0	3 (33%)	0
F	M	I	2 (100%)	13 (76%)	0
F	M	C	4 (67%)	8 (67%)	0
F	F	I	6 (67%)	13 (52%)	3 (60%)
F	F	C	1 (33%)	2 (50%)	0

Supportive interruptions are more likely to succeed in cross-sex groups than in same-sex groups. The result contradicts that of Smith-Lovin and Brody (1989), who find that supportive interruptions occur more often, and are more likely to succeed, in same-sex groups. Looking at negative interruptions alone, it appears that the role that one plays and the intimacy of the relationship is very important to the rate of success. In all instances, the person playing the dominant role has a higher success rate, and intimate groups are more likely to have successful interruptions than casual groups.

As with interruption attempts, the results from cross-sex groups are the most interesting. In both intimate and casual cross-sex groups, women enjoy a higher rate of success than men in interruptions. This is due to the immensely high rate of success that women playing dominant roles achieve. It has already been shown that the person who plays the dominant role always has the higher success rate for interruptions, regardless of whether the group is same-sex or cross-sex. However, men succeed only slightly more often in negative interruptions than their women partners when they are playing the dominant role. The women playing the dominant role in cross-sex conversations, on the other hand, succeed in negative interruption attempts more often than their male partners.

These data show that in analyzing the pattern of interruptions in conversations, one should look not only at the number of interruption attempts made by each speaker, but also at whether these attempts are successful. One could argue that

while interruption attempts are a means for a speaker to increase and ascertain her or his power in situations where power is uncertain, the success of interruptions is the true indicator of a speaker's power. The results have shown that the participant playing the dominant role does have more relative success with interruption attempts.

However, the high level of success of supportive interruptions by women in cross-sex conversations could also be due to the fact that the men are being polite in yielding the floor to the women. In so doing, they are recognizing and encouraging the women's role in the interaction as supportive rather than confrontational. The fact that women succeed more often in supportive interruptions when they are playing the subordinate role in a cross-sex conversation further supports this view. The women's relative lack of power in such situations may prompt the men to act chivalrously and concede the floor to the women. Thus, even the rate of success of interruptions cannot be used as a straightforward measure of power.

CORRELATION BETWEEN SILENCES AND INTERRUPTIONS

Zimmerman and West (1975) show that in cross-sex interaction, women exhibit more silence than their male counterparts, whereas in same-sex groups silence is distributed more equally among participants. They conclude that both the frequency of silences and the infrequency of interruptions by the female speakers in cross-sex groups indicate that men deny women the right to full use of their turns and withhold support for women's development of topics.

Looking at Table 8, which shows the total number of silences in each group,³ we find that the number of silences occurring in all-female groups is roughly the same. In all-male groups in which the conversational partners are casual friends, the count of silences is slightly lower. The lower count of silences in these groups corresponds to a higher count of negative interruptions than that in intimate groups of male friends. However, in cross-sex groups, higher counts of silences are found in the groups in which the women play the more dominant role, which are the same groups that have a high occurrence of silences.

Let us examine the patterns of silences in one such conversation to see what role silences play in interaction. In this conversation, most of the silences are followed by the previous speaker resuming talking rather than the other speaker initiating a change of turn. In nine of the silences, the speaker resumes her or his turn after the silence. Of the four silences that are followed by a change of speaker, two are attributable silences where the female speaker asks a question and the male speaker is silent for two seconds before answering. The other two silences can be interpreted either as lapses in the conversation or silences attributable to the male speaker. Example (C) is one of the cases of ambiguous silences.

(C) Female playing dominant role, intimate relationship

F: That's a very interesting number. That's a very high number. Um::: (3.0) I think (.) I think it's a little high.

(3.0)

M: I'm sorry. (1.0) All my//

F: I will be willing to settle for 20,000.

In the example given above, it is likely that the female speaker who is playing the dominant role was expecting the male speaker to speak before the silence between their turns occurred. However, there was a gap within her turn not too long before, where she resumed speaking after a pause of three seconds. Thus, it was unclear to the other speaker whether she would again resume speaking after a long pause. The fact that the male speaker apologized after the silence also seemed to indicate that he was not sure whether he should speak next or not.

TABLE 8. *Counts and average lengths of silences by type of group*

Type of group	Intimacy level	Number of silences	Average length of silences in seconds
All-male	I	52	2.4
All-male	C	42	2.4
All-female	I	52	2.4
All-female	C	55	2.3
Cross-sex			
Male dominant	I	53	2.2
Cross-sex			
Male dominant	C	39	2.5
Cross-sex			
Female dominant	I	67	2.5
Cross-sex			
Female dominant	C	70	2.2

The results from this conversation show that just as interruptions cannot be taken as direct reflections of power, silences are not necessarily indicators of a lack of power. In this conversation, the man had a higher number of attributable silences than the woman. However, he also interrupted almost as often as she did and showed almost as high a rate of success as she did. Throughout the conversation, the male speaker interrupted six times, with five of the attempts being successful, while the female speaker interrupted seven times, succeeding in every attempt.

Although silences can be used as independent information about social relations in conversations because they often indicate a lack of confidence or lack of power in speakers, the results are mixed. This is because the meaning of silences is sometimes hard to interpret. On the one hand, silences may be seen as an indication of the speaker's lack of confidence, thus resulting in a lack of things to say. On the other hand, silences may also be used as a means of intimidating the other participant. For instance, a speaker may use a long silence as an indication of disagreement or protest. If silences are used skillfully, the speaker can make her or his partner uncomfortable and can thus win the negotiation.

CONCLUSION

Although the tasks in this study encouraged negative rather than supportive interruptions, the resulting data still confirmed Smith-Lovin and Brody's finding

that women are more likely than men to make supportive interruption attempts. However, the study fails to show that the patterns of interruptions and silences are asymmetrical with respect to sex. Instead, we have found that men and women make interruption attempts equally frequently, show more or less the same success rates, and are silent almost as frequently. The data also fail to show that gender roles are necessarily tied to group intimacy.

This study demonstrates that while the differential in status and power between women and men in society does exist and is probably reflected in language use, the relationship is more complex than theories of dominance and difference suggest. The interaction of power and gender roles often combine to produce complex outcomes. Other factors such as race, ethnicity, and culture also interact with gender identity in shaping human behavior. The subjects used in this study are university students and are therefore a relatively homogeneous group of speakers. It would be interesting to see if the results obtained in this study are comparable to groups of women and men of different age groups, cultural backgrounds, etc. Furthermore, since this study is based on role-play, the power differential created by the roles may have been exaggerated by some of the subjects. Further research is necessary to determine whether the same kind of complex interactions between gender and achieved status exist in natural conversations.

NOTES

1. Of the 32 groups, eight were all-female, eight were all-male, eight were cross-sex with the man playing the more powerful role, and eight were cross-sex with the woman playing the more powerful role. All of the paired individuals were friends. Within each of the four groups, half were close friends and half were casual friends.
2. Transcription conventions are as follows:
 - : Length
 - // Beginning of overlap
 - * End of overlap
 - = Latching
 - () Pause, in tenths of seconds
 - (.) Brief pause
3. A silence is defined as a pause longer than one second. Following Levinson (1983), silences are further broken down into gaps, lapses, and attributable silences.

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Gendered talk and gendered lives: Little girls being women before becoming (big) girls

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"I was always glad that I was a girl. I cannot ever remember wanting to be a boy."
—Margaret Mead, *Blackberry Winter* (1972)

"When I grow up and you grow up we'll be the bosses."
—One four-year-old girl to another, while playing

GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDERED LIVES

This paper is based on a paradox that recurs repeatedly in feminist writings. It deals with one of the major puzzles in the establishment of gender identity: how is it that although young children experience the mother's role as all-powerful and important, little girls still grow up into young women who publicly carry through roles, activities, and talk that allow them to be placed in a secondary position? The paradox of this publicly expressed powerlessness was described by Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*:

If the little girl at first accepts her feminine vocation, it is not because she intends to abdicate; it is, on the contrary, in order to rule; she wants to be a matron because the matron's group seems privileged; but, when her company, her studies, her games, her reading, take her out of the maternal circle, she sees that it is not the women but the men who control the world. It is this revelation—much more than the discovery of the penis—that irresistibly alters her conception of herself (quoted in Chodorow 1989:41).

Nancy Chodorow in her work on the growth of gender identity and the reproduction of mothering suggests that girls' gender identity has both more continuity throughout childhood and in young adulthood than boys', yet is more difficult to achieve because there is no clear break or choice of identification which boys must make in switching from the beloved mother to the competing but companionable father. Girls continue to identify with and support their mothers while entering into an alliance to attract their fathers (Chodorow 1976). Girls' understanding of the mother role is based in large part on their perception of everyday life where the activities of mothering surround them, a fact which is underlined by the child-rearing and family practices in many different societies. More recently Chodorow has seen the self-perpetuating cycle of female deprecation described by de Beauvoir as arising in part from the essential ambivalence of girls' position in the family dynamic (Chodorow 1989). She sees the undue emphasis on the centrality of the mother role and mother blame to be an inherent part of Western gender ideology, the response to which has given a shape to the earlier era of

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feminism in the '60s and '70s. The overwhelming "Momism" of much American cultural thinking and reasoning serves to exclude adequate consideration of the active role of children themselves in helping to establish their own gender identity in interaction with a world "beyond Mom" (Chodorow & Contratto 1982). Yvonne Schutze, exploring the history of the normative ideal of mother love, demonstrates historically the extent of the ideological constraints that are put on women and so ultimately on girls, to take on the burdens of attempting to live up to the ideal of the "good mother" (Schutze 1987). These normative constraints often appear to isolate mothers and the mother-child relationship from the implications of daily sociability, at least in Western cultures.

The problem posed by work on gender identity takes on a new look if we go beyond the mother-centeredness of many theories to other social and cultural influences on children's development. While the mother's part in the growth of gender identity is still seen as primary, the social lives of children are also an important part of their developmental cycle, as Chodorow (1989) has recently discussed from the perspective of psychoanalytic theory. The need to make a transition from absorption of personality in the mother to becoming an independent being, that is, to finding the individuated self, requires a psychic space to be created where the self can develop. Some areas of psychoanalytic theory suggest that children's play makes available just this kind of psychic space (Winnicott 1971).

However, the condition so well described by de Beauvoir, even in brief quotation, gives further clues to other explanations of this problem. She indicates that it is not the deep psychic struggles over envy or fear of the other that shape young girls' lives, at least not consciously, but the need to continue to explore the ambiguity of women's gender roles. To go from experiencing the model of all-powerful womanhood that a mother offers her daughter, as indicated by the little girl quoted above, the expectation of being the boss when her turn comes, to a childhood and beyond of subordination, is to be seriously compromised.

This paper suggests that a focus on the talk and communication of girls (and boys) provides a basis for understanding the daily social construction of gender in children's lives. I hope to demonstrate how gendered lives start with the playful exploration of the woman's role as mother before the new sociability of girlhood begins. Since girlhood provides peer support for exploration and consolidation of a gender identity, the investigation of the communicative system that is built up at this time, as Maltz and Borker (1982) have suggested, provides an experiential model for future gender relations. The Maltz and Borker discussion, building on Marjorie Goodwin's (1991) detailed studies of children's talk with peers from the ages of seven until well into adolescence, suggests that miscommunication between women and men is built on different cultural assumptions that find expression in differing styles of interaction and talk. Crossing the gender divide is made difficult by these interactionally realized differing cultural and conversational norms.

Before looking at the central thesis of this paper, the study of very young girl's play, we must make a brief digression to recap some of the arguments that have been put forward about the nature and character of women's language that have led to the present interest in children's play talk.

LANGUAGE AND WOMEN'S SPEECH IN HOME AND SOCIETY

Discussions of women's language is now well into its second decade since it was developed in Robin Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place* (1975) and Dale Spender's *Man Made Language* (1980), both of which focus in different ways on how language usage and a gendered lexicon present women with a continually compromised position in the world of men. The issues of power, domination, and the difference between women and men's uses of language provided the focus for the first decade of research (Thorne & Henley 1975). The position was established that looking at men's and women's language is a search for what is universal in comparisons between language usage and the communication of gender. It was concluded that within the prevailing gender ideology of most societies, communication between women and men showed that the social discourses of gendered languages presented women as mute, domestically or socially reclusive members of their social group, placed in a secondary position (Ardener 1975). During this time, anthropologists often noticed that women in the course of their daily activities, whether within the domestic world usually referred to as the woman's domain or in other ceremonial duties in the wider social world, did not display powerlessness in actions or words. In many ways the language of women has been seen as the in-group substitute for outside social limitations, but women's position in the outside or public domain has seemed at odds with their private or familial position (Rosaldo 1974).

An exploration of why on the one hand we have lexically and interactionally demonstrated powerlessness in women's speech, yet on the other hand we have discovered the powerful discourse of women at work within their own constructed discourse occasions, suggests a wider problem than local differences. Michelle Rosaldo, revising her own analysis of the gendered lives made possible by the women-and-society paradigm described above, suggests that a Western bias has made the implications of different practices hard to recognize. She points to the inherent ambiguity in much of the discourse of gender, which would be seen if the variety of social tasks women were involved with were examined comparatively (Rosaldo 1980).

More recent work in language use and gendered communication looks at the specific character of the many communicative differences in discourse in wider ranges of situations and societies. Differences in genre and pragmatic forms are linked to both social-structural differences and different social occasions of use. As Susan Philips suggests in an introduction to *Language, gender, and sex in comparative perspective* (Philips, Steele, & Tanz 1987), a new approach to gendered language focuses on the variety of ways in which gender is constructed through different genres of talk.

GENDER AS CONVERSATIONAL STYLE

In both the Philips, Steele, and Tanz collection and in a recent issue of *Discourse Processes* edited by Deborah Tannen (1989c), researchers have explored the different ways in which specific discourse occasions are realized as talk and as

particular strategies of language use. These researchers link women's social-cultural styles to conversational strategies and interactional routines, making for a much more specific, genre-based exploration of general findings than in previous research. Penny Brown (in the Tannen volume), looking in sociolinguistic detail at women's politeness and arguments in Tenejapa, Mexico, comments that her specific findings "make sense of the widespread finding in language and gender research that women interact more co-operatively than men do, at least on the surface; that a patina of agreement is put over women's interactions in many contexts and in different societies" (Brown 1989:140). In the same issue, Tannen (1989a) suggests that we consider the genders as operating like two cultures that are made easily visible as two different conversational styles. The new research on women's language points to the usefulness of exploring gendered interactional and conversational styles in children's activities, considering these to be a possible grounding for future adult interactions, as Maltz and Borker proposed.

PLAY TALK AND GENDER

Shifting from a psychological perspective, we can now find other reasons for exploring children's play as the best approach to understanding how gendered lives come to be. Play has been recognized as the window into the cultural life of societies and as the social and personal source for the development of cultural metaphors (Bateson 1970; Bruner, Jolly, & Sylva 1976).

The play and social life of children provide communicative contexts for realizing the scenes of everyday life. Much of the work on play has concentrated on the fantasy that is presented in young children's games of pretend. Most of the work on children's play has yet to be influenced by feminist theory. Instead, research on play more often places gender as an issue within the more biological determinism of sex differences. Girls' play is seen as different and by contrast often inferior or less exciting than that of boys, that is, girls' activities are seen as residual. Traditionally, boys' play is characterized as exploratory, inventive, fast-paced, including a range of peers or other children, and often involving some risk to person or property, even if only in getting grubby. Girls are characterized as the opposite: careful, concentrating on small events, objects, or relationships, and staying quiet and mostly clean and tidy. These attitudes could be summed up by saying that boys *do* and girls *do not* (Lever 1976). More recent feminism-inspired work by Barrie Thorne on children's games with nine- and ten-year-olds has taken a social-constructivist approach to girls' gender roles, exploring the ways tomboy girls define their activities when they cross the gender divide (Thorne 1988). In studying very young children's early understandings of gender identity, however, fantasy or pretend play is an obvious resource.

The scenarios of fantasy play as talked and enacted scenes provide compact glimpses of gender understanding and gendered talk that other occasions of daily life with young children rarely provide. They give glimpses into fantasy that is motivated by deep unconscious responses as well as by the needs of the present activities (Kelly-Byrne 1989). But most of all these games and play present sets of verbally (and non-verbally) communicated scenarios which can be described as

narrative constructions of self. They provide a further glimpse into the perspectives on the development of a *gendered self*.

THE PLAY NARRATIVE: THE VOICING OF GENDER

Pretend or make-believe games are spontaneous speech activities where children blend talk and social and physical action into a developing series of events which have a meaning and an internal coherence as well as an often satisfactory social outcome. Such games can involve two or several children. The relation of talk to action, and the interpretation of intent inherent in the discourse, does not appear particularly to worry children in game talk. Contrary to what happens in adult-dominated talk, little attention is paid to potential miscues by children; they appear to respond to any previous cue or to take any response as adequate. In fact, the specific feature of these pretend games is their fluency: game solutions are verbally defined, negotiated, or solved within the continuity of the game. Game discourse also has a naturally progressive quality. Games are necessarily concurrent stretches of speech and social actions organized into a sequence which is meaningful and coherent for the participants, even if the cohesive qualities expected of adult conversation are not apparent on the surface of the interaction.

Pretend games have several forms, but a common feature of those for children from ages three to seven is that in the playing of games, there must be some plot development. That is, one event follows another and the transition from one event to the next must be verbally accomplished by being spoken out loud. I refer to such games as *narrative games*. For in these games not only do children adopt different voices to play different characters but, as my analysis will show, children also construct a narrative level of game planning that describes the details of the game's actions. Such a description may be dismissed as an analyst's construct, but the existence of discourse genres in play has been illustrated in several studies (e.g., Auwärter 1986). These studies give us independent evidence that shows that children themselves recognize distinctions similar to those recognized by analysts. Even young children can recognize and use intonation contours to mark genres of discourse and thus enact distinctive voices as part of a monologue of recollections spoken aloud.

A NARRATIVE GAME OF "MUMMIES AND BABIES"

The game to be examined is a complex and rapid game of "Mummies and Babies" between two three-and-a-half-year-old girls, Lucie and Sophie; the game and its variations are a regular part of their play repertoire. In the game, which lasts about twenty minutes, 26 separate events can be identified in the stream of action from the audiotape recording. The first question to ask, which on reflection is far from simple, is: How, given the verbal ability of such young children, can they keep such a concentrated oral-narrative performance going? What verbal, pragmatic, and paralinguistic strategies do they use to get the game started and continue it for such length?

Two issues of discourse planning need to be discussed here. First, there are the choices by which the speaker creates a pattern of expectations for the listener. These enable the listener both to process the information being received and to prepare for her turn as the speaker. Second, there is the speakers' more immediate problem of encoding their own talk, the need both to talk and to plan ahead in order to maintain the right to speak and to sustain the pace and flow of speech.

The first issue, speaker/hearer expectations, can be looked at as being created in three different ways: (1) Expectations set up by prosodic contours in certain linguistic environments. For example, a rising intonation indicates that more is to come in some contexts and signals a question in others. (2) Expectations set up by syntax. For example, expectations set up by utterance strings that break off before a clause is complete, by varied repetitions, by use of cohesive markers such as *but* and *because*, or by deixis. (3) Expectations set up by what is known about thematic structures or discourse frames. For example, knowledge that a story requires and will be given an ending.

The second issue, speakers' planning of their own speech, can be looked at in two further ways: in terms of the rhythm and pace of exchanges and in terms of the speaker's ability to maintain the flow of her talk. Neither of these is an easy task for young children.

Both of these planning problems are of particular importance in studying young children whose control over grammar and lexicon is still limited. What is more, the issue of fluency and effectiveness of production within social interaction is something that has been too often overlooked. One of the reasons that these self-organized games stand out from the more usual child-language corpus is the amount of speech that even very young players produce and the richness of its content and fluency. Clearly, game situations, in which children control their own social interaction, can provide sociolinguistic experiences which demand more from the interactants than do exchanges with accommodating adults. There are two particular issues to be explored in this game material: (1) the progression of the narrative and the development of themes throughout the game; and (2) the levels of the narrative, the ways in which the participants structure the discourse (and thus the game world) for themselves through their speaking performances, that is, through giving special significance to prosodic and rhythmic distinctions which become markers of the different game levels.

First, a great deal of content and action is generated in these games. The game's action is shown to be divided into 26 different event phases, all of which take place in the twenty minutes of the game. So there seems to be a very direct immediacy connecting talk to the realization of game action, with the result that these games may strike the adult listener as strangely fast-paced and somewhat confused narratives.

In the progression of events which takes place both within and across speaker turns, the responder to any suggestion can accept this suggestion by using or adding to the information provided by the first speaker. In this way, the progression of events appears to be smoothly negotiated by the two participants. Even in episodes 24 and 26, where the two participants have differences over the use of pins and their babies, the disagreement is resolved by one participant's

persuasive strategies. There is no evidence that the two have different expectations. Throughout the game, each of the girls seem to be quite prepared to accept and respond to the other's contributions to the plot and to recognize any change in discourse level when it occurs.

In adult discourse the absence of overt markers of cohesion across turns makes it difficult to see thematic connections; for the two little girls this does not present any problems. Fluency and coherence are achieved and maintained throughout by providing a series of different voices which serve to mark different levels of the game. Prosodically, a rhythmic and metrical formula seems to become established by the two girls, which then provides a frame into which further contributions can be placed. This formula seems to provide a metrical beat which appears to mark the pace of the action. While such stylistic devices also occur in adult talk (Tannen 1989b), they are used here in quite distinctive ways by very young children. Children also provide signaling cues to set up the context, so that each utterance can be placed within the narrative progression. As is generally true with very young children, these are exclusively prosodic cues. Most listeners will readily recognize these cues as marking different voices. In studies of pretend play, it is usually assumed that these voices indicate different characters or roles. However, as I worked at the transcription, I realized that the different voices did not merely mark in-character/out-of-character speech as I had first assumed, but rather constituted a series of organizational levels in the performance, that is, different discourse contexts. These voices are of four kinds: in-character speech from Mummies to Babies; in-character speech from Mummies to Mummies; off-record speech (real-life talk or organizational comment with Lucie and Sophie in their real-life characters as themselves); and narration, or description of things and events in the game. By utilizing these voices to mark the game's different organizational levels, the children are structuring their performance through discourse strategies and conventions of their own making. For example, the level of narrative talk is distinguishable not only by its prosodic form but also by a choice of lexical formula which suggests an ongoing narrative is being played out. In this paper I will focus on the narrative elements of the game.

GAME VOICES: CHARACTERIZATION OF DIFFERENT VOICES

Within the two types of in-character speech there is a difference between Mummy-to-Mummy and Mummy-to-Baby speech. Mummy-to-Baby talk normally has a relatively low pitch register as well as a characteristic sing-song rhythm. One type of this speech has tensing of vowels with a marked sing-song rhythm; when a much higher pitch is used the vowels become sharp. For example, in *Come on let's carry you* the final word is almost a squeak with a much higher-pitched voice than usual. The more usual Mummy-to-Baby talk is lower in tone and noticeably rhythmic, with some reprimands in a loud voice. For example, *All right baby I'll give you a drink of. Look baby don't spit it out* is said in a loud voice with a steady crescendo. Mummy-to-Mummy speech, on the other hand, uses a higher pitch than normal voice with a sharpening of vowels and a shortened, clipped enunciation, as in *Sandra do you have pins?*

Real-life speech, in which the children talk to each other as Lucie and Sophie, includes things unrelated to the game (*You like that one, don't you, Lucie*), as well as discussion of mechanical aspects of the game, i.e., of how X in the real world is related to Y in the game world (*I'm not having mine to be the golliwog*). Here the voice quality is perhaps nearest to the children's ordinary voices outside of play contexts, although when there is an alternation in tone it is in the direction of "being whiny." Since off-record talk is used for negotiations that cannot be settled in any other way there is often a tone of urgency about real-life talk, e.g., *NO that's my cup*, where *cup* is lengthened and there is a heavy stress on the *my*; or *NO I want it there*, which has lengthening of *there* and a slight whiny tone. Another possibility is conciliatory tone, the tone of voice closest to the orderly talk outside of play contexts, although sometimes the voice quality shifts in the direction of a whiny drawl: for example, *Cause you like this one don't you, don't you Lucie?* has a staccato rhythm and the *don't you* is repeated with a pleading tone, relatively low-pitched.

Finally, narrative speech, which organizes things in the game world without reference to things in the real world, includes naming the actions and reactions of Mummies (*I and you*) and Babies, planning the plot, etc. (*And they sit on our laps with us*). The voice quality here is often close to an ordinary tone. Narrative talk is mostly distinguished by special formulaic features: the use of *and* to introduce comments, often in conjunction with a *because* clause to add additional information or explanation, e.g. *I hold my baby ... cause she was crying for me*. The narrator's tone is more measured and in some ways more like a reading tone, with even intonation and spaced word enunciation. When I was transcribing the discourse of this game, I relied on formulaic features, particularly when these were found in conjunction with a measured voice, for distinguishing narrative speech. Everyday speech, by contrast, has a flexible use of prosody.

It is by means of these voices that children transform everyday reality into a game world and so create an everyday ritual event. However, the discourse-planning issue is further resolved by the use of the rhythmic formula, which provide a slot within game talk in which made-up words and exchanges can rapidly be presented to keep the pace and fluency of the game going.

NARRATIVE STRATEGIES

The development and distinguishing of the narrative level of the game is very important for game organization. It shows some specific aspects of the children's understanding of discourse, including the fact that they can make both a semantic and a prosodic separation of these different levels. Below are some examples of narrative utterances.

- (1) L: And we sit down and have a glass of orange juicy
 S: And they sit on our laps with us
 L: The babies don't like it
 S: No the babies don't like maccamba

The first two utterances are typical of the narrative level in that they are introduced by *and* as a narrative-coherence marker. In the last utterance a made-up word is used and the voice quality serves to distinguish this as a narrative utterance, rather than as speech of one Mummy to another. (2) is an example of the switch back and forth between the narrative level, again distinguished by *and*, and the speech of a Mummy to her Baby or to the other Mummy (not transcribed in detail):

- (2) L: And baby spilt her Falalanga. ... Look baby don't spit it out
(speech to Baby)

The planning speech occurs to move the game forward into another activity and is often announced and then acted out, as in the following:

- (3) S: And my my my baby goes to bed there don't she
L: And give her a drink of Salla langa
S: Not that babe ... I'll give her some ... Shh tea
(Mummy to Mummy)

Narrative level is used in the development of the game, as in example 4, where Lucie uses the Mummy voice to introduce the idea of a pin stuck in a baby and Sophie gives a further explanation and plan for the game action in the narrative style:

- (4) S: Um my my baby has got a pin stuck in her and
because we have to go to the doctor's don't we

The narrative style, although used for planning ahead, always uses present-tense verbs. Narrative utterances sometimes provide more than an additional piece of game information that is acceptable to both sides, or more than the development of a theme already in existence. In some cases, the planning level is used to make an indirect command or to insist on the speaker's plans against the other person's plans. In the following example, Lucie moves into planning/narrative-level speech to try to resolve a difficulty about who should have the pushchair that has been carried on in off-the-record talk.

- (5) L: You have that (off-record voice) And you have you can
can carry it like that quicker and I can't (narrative voice)

Planning speech can also be used to counter what someone has just done and to alter the course of the action without a direct off-the-record disagreement.

- (6) S: I've finished (drinking sound) (Mummy-to-Mummy voice)
L: No, no you shouldn't drink it You should
you should leave it in until we get to the park
S: And then there's another tap at the park.

In this case, the new piece of information, "going to the park," is introduced at the planning level. Previously, the children had been going for a walk and this

leads to an alteration of Sophie's game plan. The narrative level can also be used as an occasion to rehearse and plan out what is to be enacted more directly, as in these two final examples:

- (7a) S: You're called Mary and I'm called Sandra
L: Yes

- (7b) L: Now you say "Sandra have you got pins" and I say "Yes"

This statement appears to reverse the decision in statement 7a but no disagreement follows. The narrative voice is also used to get back into the game after a long period of off-the-record disagreement and negotiation as in the resolution of the pushchair difficulty:

- (8) L: Anyway Sophie you know, you you can go to the park quicker and I can't

Distinguishing a narrative level in these games has some very important implications for children's understanding of language-in-use, which I can only briefly summarize here. In previous papers (Cook-Gumperz 1981, Cook-Gumperz 1986), I have explored some of the consequences of children's rhetorical uses of language as a force to shape and control interpersonal relations. Here we see that the separation of the narrative level, as commentary upon the action itself, shows the children's recognition of the need to stay within the game world yet still to reflect or act reflexively upon the course of the action. The creation of the narrative level of the game discourse shows the ability to move the game events forward through use of this special metaprocedural level of discourse which frames sequences of talk (Goffman 1974).

Furthermore, the use of the narrative level of game talk suggests even more clearly that in the recognition of prosodically different voices the game event is separated off as a ritual transformation from everyday talk. However, there is a flow back and forth between game talk, daily talk in which Lucie and Sophie use their own voices, and a narrative channel by which the children construct the game world through talk. In this way, ritual performances of games are similar to those recognized by Briggs (1988) as the fuzzy fringes where performance styles shift back and forth between daily talk and special performance discourse. It is in looking at the child as a performer of speech in action and at how her social world is constructed through talk that we gain a notion not only of the communicative range possessed by children but perhaps even more importantly of the purposes for which these skills are used.

THE REPRODUCTION OF MOTHERING TALK

The central theme of this paper is to suggest that children are demonstrating in their game talk a communicative ability to explore their gender role as women with a complexity that would previously have been considered far in advance of their three-year-old grammatical and communicative abilities. We can see in the examples from the game that the talk of the two little girls, Lucie and Sophie,

focuses on mothering talk at several levels. The structure of the narrative events involve the Mummies in organizing the life of their Babies. The Babies are fed, given drinks, put to bed, taken to the park, and given fresh diapers and exercise. They are scolded, soothed, cajoled, cosseted, and disciplined. The Mummies' talk to the Babies is always aimed at doing or putting right something the Babies have done. The Mummies' talk to each other also involves organizing their own lives in relation to the Babies, but the Babies do not talk. The Babies are embodied characters moved around in space and time but they are not given a voice, not even a coo or a shout, in spite of the fact that the mothers report to each other on the Babies' naughty behavior, e.g., *My baby's spitting at your baby* (Mummy-to-Mummy voice). One interpretation of this finding would be that children see mothers as so powerful that children are simply less important and therefore voiceless. However, this is contradicted by the other finding, that at the level of Mummy-to-Baby talk the voice/prosodic character moves through a greater prosodic range than for any other narrative level, expressing a gamut of emotions from exasperation and annoyance to cajoling and sympathy. The Babies are clearly the central part of the game, the reason for the Mummy-to-Mummy and narrative talk to exist at all. The narrative is constructed around the Babies as the little girls play out their understanding of women's gender role to which children are central. They use their knowledge of the world in which it is having children that makes a woman a Mummy and in which being a Mummy, controlling the resources and destiny of others, makes women powerful. The narrative game of Mummies and Babies gives a particular, dramatized voice to gender identity.

CONCLUSION: WHY WOMEN BEFORE GIRLS

The game's narrative themes and play show some of the ways in which little girls come to terms with early gender understanding of powerful mothers. Little girls use their available mother knowledge to work out the consequences of gender identification; they must learn about being women before they can become girls. Girlhood will present other gender issues through the sociability of alliances with other girls and the ability to discover gender together. It is this peer exploration of gender that is described by Maltz and Borker (1982) as shaping a communicative culture of gender. In girlhood, gender identities are consolidated through a new sense of the possibilities and boundaries of gender roles. These roles are practiced together and developed through a process of group inclusion and exclusion. However, it seems from this inquiry that we can suggest that an initial generalized gender identity which can form a basis for later gender identity is gained by early role-playing and understanding of the role of mother/woman.

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Miss Nora, rescuer of the Rama language: A story of power and empowerment¹

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INTRODUCTION

We have been hearing more and more about the endangered animals and rainforests of the world from concerned biologists and environmentalists. The threat of extinction also exists for thousands of endangered languages, a fact about which linguists, as a profession, are becoming increasingly concerned.²

There are usually two phases to the enterprise of saving endangered languages. The first is *salvage linguistics*. It consists of producing whatever linguistic documentation can still be obtained from the last speakers of a threatened language, and would appear to fall clearly within the responsibility of the linguistic profession. The second phase belongs to the domain of *language planning*.³ It consists of designing strategies that will enable the younger generations to learn and use whatever is left of the language. Most linguists usually shy away from such enterprises, which bring little reward or recognition within academic circles. Some, however, do get involved.

It would appear that saving endangered languages is an almost insurmountable challenge, as such projects deal with extremely marginalized and alienated populations who have their own complex internal dynamics. Since the rate of success of these language revitalization projects is so low that even supporters of the concept sometimes doubt their feasibility, it seems worthwhile to document those projects that achieve some measure of success.

The basic purpose of this paper is to look at the success attained in a salvage linguistics and community language revitalization project that has been taking place in an isolated corner of Central America over the last eight years. It is written from the perspective of the academic linguist who found herself drawn into a project of much greater proportions than she envisioned at the start.

The paper addresses the issue of what made the project's success possible when previous attempts had met with failure and when, by all objective criteria, the odds of success were very low. Its focus is on a key actor of the project: Miss Nora, an illiterate, older indigenous woman without whom neither salvage linguistics nor language revitalization would have been possible. The thesis of the paper is that the power that propelled this woman into her leadership role as language rescuer was released by the matching dynamics of empowerment without which she could not have turned her lifelong dream into a tangible reality. But before discussing these two complementary themes of power and empowerment, some background on the project will be offered, to place it in context and to introduce its main actors.

MISS NORA, RESCUER OF THE RAMA LANGUAGE

Let me first make two general contextualizing points before embarking on the specifics of the project and before turning the spotlight on Miss Nora⁴ and her relation to the field linguist. One is to acknowledge that the local dynamic of empowerment that took place between the two women in the field must be understood in a broader sociopolitical context. The project was conceived and developed in the larger framework of empowerment provided by the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua, which by the mid-1980s had begun to foster autonomy and self determination for the indigenous people of the Atlantic Coast region. As an internationalist field linguist, I was consciously working within the spirit of new laws that proclaimed the rights of indigenous people to their ethnic languages and equal rights for all people regardless of ethnic affiliation or gender.⁵

The other contextualizing remark is that the dynamics of the project raise the difficult issue of the role of academics in field situations involving indigenous communities and their endangered languages. Described here is a type of collaborative research characterized by a commitment to empowerment on the part of the field linguist that is not the established norm in North American academia and certainly is not standard fare in the training or experience of linguistic fieldworkers. Involved here are issues of ethics and social responsibility that always arise in such field situations but are very rarely raised among academic linguists.⁶ There is much that women, both academic and indigenous community members, both linguists and native speakers, can contribute in these domains.⁷

BACKGROUND: THE RAMA LANGUAGE AND PEOPLE

The Rama people and the Rama language

The language being rescued is Rama, the language of the Rama people of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua. The Rama, who number around 1,000, are the smallest and most marginalized indigenous group of this multiethnic and multilingual region. The Rama people are surrounded by speakers of English Creole, Spanish, Miskitu, and Sumu. Today, they speak varieties of the dominant English-based Creole language of the region, known as Miskitu Coast Creole. The vast majority of the population lives on the small island of Rama Cay in the lagoon of Bluefields where the indigenous Rama language is practically lost. On the island, the handful of speakers left are women who are rememberers rather than fluent speakers, and older men who do not want to speak it to others. Miss Nora is an exception: a fluent speaker eager to do something with her knowledge of the language.

The Rama language has survived until today as the main language of communication among a tight-knit group of less than two dozen adult speakers who live either south of the lagoon or on the coast and upriver closer to the border of Costa Rica. However, the younger generation of this settlement is not learning Rama and the group at large is shifting to Miskitu Coast Creole.⁸

Previous attempts to document the language

Miss Nora was first involved in a serious attempt to work on the Rama language in the seventies. The linguist was Barbara Assadi, a then-graduate student in linguistics who had been charged with documenting what she could of the dying Rama language as part of a survey, sponsored by the National Science Foundation, of the endangered languages of Central America. Although the project did not immediately produce an analysis of the Rama language for the linguistic community, a strong bond was established between the two women, and Assadi became an invaluable resource on the language and culture of the Rama.

The second attempt in which Miss Nora participated took place a few years later, in the early eighties. In these first years of the Sandinista Revolution, a massive literacy campaign in Spanish had been set up. But when it reached the Atlantic Coast, it encountered resistance from all the ethnic groups of the region. They demanded a literacy campaign in the local languages as part of the recognition of their indigenous rights. The Rama were drawn into the heated debates and began to bemoan the fate of their all-but-gone Rama language. They turned for help to a German graduate student, Robin Schneider, an internationalist with anthropological training. It was decided that he should work on a dictionary, and he collected data for it from Miss Nora. But Schneider got embroiled in the regional politics and was expelled from the country after a year. The Rama people lost track of him and wondered what had happened to all their work and aspirations.

The present Rama Language Project

A few years later, Miss Nora became involved in her third attempt to save the Rama language. The present Rama Language Project was considered one of the pilot projects of the new Autonomy Project, which was being developed as a political peace-making process for the region torn by the Contra war. A new Autonomy Statute for the Atlantic Coast which specifically recognizes the cultural and linguistic rights of the local populations became part of the new Nicaraguan Constitution in 1987.

By the time I received an invitation from the Sandinista Ministry of Culture to work on the Rama language in 1984, three forces were converging toward a concerted effort to salvage the Rama language: the Rama community was demanding it, the Sandinista government was looking for a way to respond to their demands within the context of the Autonomy Project, and professional linguists like me were volunteering to work in Nicaragua.⁹

Salvage linguistics: Documenting the Rama language. I was led to Miss Nora by Barbara Assadi, who had maintained close contact with the Rama community in which she had lived for several years. After meeting Miss Nora and securing funding for the project, I started linguistic fieldwork in 1985. For the first work session, my research associate Bonny Tibbitts and I worked with Miss Nora in the capital of Managua. This first month of work was both excruciatingly painful and exhilarating for Miss Nora. The pain for her came from the usual stress of

being a linguistic informant, compounded by the fact that she had not spoken the language fluently for decades and felt that she was failing to do what she wanted most: to help record the Rama language before it died. The stress was also due to the war situation and her constant worry about her people. But there was also exhilaration as the language was slowly written and decoded.

The next work session, a year later, took place in Bluefields, on the coast. Barbara Assadi was with me in the field this time, and Miss Nora had arranged for her daughter-in-law, a native speaker from the mainland community, to join us. The search for native speakers continued over several fieldtrips, as both women brought to the office all the mainland native speakers that came to the market in Bluefields. By 1988, a census of the last speakers, a collection of Rama texts, and a draft of a Rama grammar had been completed. A dictionary is now under production. By 1990, a native male speaker returned from abroad and joined us, bringing the research team to three Rama speakers and three U.S. academics. The publication of this comprehensive documentation within a few years will complete the salvage linguistics part of the project.

Language revitalization: A community project. Early on, we began to work with the Rama community. We held public meetings to explain the project to the community at large; we sought out the last speakers on the island and interviewed them. We produced materials, such as calendars, small dictionaries, and phrase books, and had demonstrations of how to read and write Rama.¹⁰ We also started working with schoolteachers. Eventually, Miss Nora started teaching Rama in the school. Children from kindergarten to third grade now receive some form of instruction in Rama, mostly from her, some from teachers who have taught themselves the language. The Rama Language Project has been appropriated by the community, and if the main purpose of the project was to help the Rama people with issues of ethnic identity in this now officially multiethnic region, then the project must be considered a success.¹¹

THE POWER IN MISS NORA

It was not until several years into the project that I fully understood how much of Miss Nora's sense of self was tied to the Rama language. As time went by she took on the role of language rescuer with more and more confidence, and her image as a powerful woman became more evident.

Learning Rama

Determination, sense of control, and creativity were qualities identifiable in the young Miss Nora. As it turns out, this rescuer of the language is not herself a native speaker of Rama. She learned it after living the first eight years of her life with her mother on Rama Cay where she spoke only Creole. Her mother died, and she decided to go live with her father, a traditional Rama from the mainland who was monolingual in Rama. To ease the transition, she thought of asking an older cousin who could speak Rama to come along with her as her interpreter. She sent

the cousin back to Rama Cay once she felt comfortable talking with her Rama-speaking stepmother. When her father died, she came back with her children to live on Rama Cay. There she became the person to whom visitors were brought, because she enjoyed meeting them and was willing to tell them Rama words. Unlike the other few speakers of Rama from the island, she was never ashamed of speaking the language. And whenever the opportunity arose to work on it seriously, as with Assadi and Schneider, she had been eager to cooperate.

Working on the Rama Language Project

I remember our first meeting, when I thought I was there to interview Miss Nora and see whether I wanted to work with her, and quickly realized that she was checking on me, as she tested my ability to transcribe Rama words until she was satisfied.

As I look back on how the whole project developed, what comes to mind is a series of initiatives she took, from convincing her daughter-in-law to work with us, to rounding up all the speakers she could find for us to interview, to deciding at every step what we should do on Rama Cay. The Language Revitalization Project on the island owes much to her very good understanding of the Rama Cay community and the combination of her creative instinct and her unflagging determination.

It is clear that Miss Nora's involvement in the present Rama Language Revitalization Project represents the continuation of a complex and intimate lifelong relation to the language. She remembers learning it, she strongly identifies with it, and she understands the irretrievable loss it would have been if the language had died without something being done to at least record it as a testimony to the wealth of the Rama culture.

THE ROLE OF THE FIELD LINGUIST: EMPOWERMENT

The power that Miss Nora had in herself to take on the leadership role as Rama language rescuer is only part of the story. Although she had that power for most of her life, it is not until this particular project unfolded that she was able to realize it. The other side of the story was that she needed to be empowered to take on the dreamed-of role of language rescuer.

Specific instances of empowerment

The issue of empowerment emerged in the first work session in Managua. At this stage, the researchers had to deal with the anxiety that Miss Nora demonstrated over not remembering the language as well as she wanted. Empowerment consisted in reassuring her that she had much to teach about the language and managing as gracefully as possible the high level of frustration that we all felt in the course of these early work sessions.

The battle moved then to another front: her deep seated anguish about the value

of the Rama language. It is very common for speakers of an endangered language to absorb negative attitudes toward it. This happened as well with Rama, which the people of Rama Cay denigrated as "ugly" and which they argued was "no language," just noises like the howling of tigers. Although to a great extent Miss Nora could fend off this particular type of negative attitude—she personally found pleasure in the sounds of the language and she knew the sounds had meaning—she had nevertheless developed a profound worry that something was wrong with the language.

The worry was so deep and intimate that she did not share it until years into the project. It was based on two observations she had made. One was that the Moravian missionaries had not chosen to write it down, whereas they had developed a very successful literacy movement for the neighboring Miskitu language. The other was that the foreigners who had come to her claiming to be interested in the language, and to whom she thought she had taught some Rama, all appeared to have failed to produce any written materials or analysis of it. Both observations had led her to conclude that perhaps the Rama language was indeed unmanageable, untranscribable, and irretrievably doomed to extinction without leaving a trace. It had therefore been a great relief to her to see the analysis of the language unfold. Under the circumstances, the empowerment had consisted in providing her with the evidence that adequate linguistic analysis was possible. She obviously developed a profound satisfaction in understanding better the nature of the work in the course of each new fieldwork session. She became a very good linguistic informant and was instrumental later on in helping her daughter-in-law become one as well.

Empowerment became important when she began to turn her attention to dealing with the Rama Cay community and made a series of specific requests to me that required preparation and work on my part. She asked, for instance, for demonstrations of work sessions on the island and for formal presentations of some of the products of the project, like the elementary dictionary.

It was obvious that she could have taken on a leadership role in the community had it not been for the male-oriented culture and power structure of the island that would not allow it. However, within the Rama Language Project and within the structure of the meetings we began to call regularly—but that she did not have the power to convene by herself—she was provided with the opportunity to lead, and she took it. Every time she could, she seized the chance to make impassioned speeches about the nature and the importance of the work.

Creating opportunities for Miss Nora to speak was active empowerment. It was the result of using my position of relative power as a foreign linguist internationalist in relation to the leaders of the community, the government officials, and the media in order to open a space for Miss Nora to act. Miss Nora was given a voice not only in her community, but also in the outside world as a representative of her community, through meetings with the officials of the Ministry of Education and the Bilingual Education Program, interviews on the radio, meetings with Sandinista officials, and workshops at the research institute that sponsors the project.

Specific instances of lack of empowerment in relation to other foreigners/academics

The argument that the success of Miss Nora as a language rescuer was due in part to empowerment dynamics rests partly in analyzing the failure of previous attempts.

One reason has to do with the level of training in linguistic fieldwork. It would appear that the lack of experience of the graduate students Assadi and Schneider in the middle of an extremely difficult linguistic field situation meant that they were in no position to accomplish much themselves, or to empower Miss Nora with the necessary linguistic analysis. While Assadi's attempt was entirely predicated on U.S. academic interests and lacked any official or community support, Schneider's had both political and community support and the advantage of a great momentum on the island. However, he seems to have been drawn into the unrealistic dreams of the male political leaders of the island with very little understanding of the realities of both salvage linguistics and language revitalization projects. In addition, his male orientation to the task made him blind to the linguistic resource that Miss Nora was. It is clear that he did not operate within any framework that allowed for the empowerment of Miss Nora.¹²

Other instances of lack of empowerment: Attacks from the Rama Cay community

While a major obstacle to Miss Nora becoming a successful language rescuer had been a matter of the attitude and capabilities of the foreigners with whom she had worked, multiple negative dynamics were also at work in the community. It was not obvious what kind of empowerment a person like me could provide to counteract these self-defeating community internal forces, although I often agonized, standing on the sideline, over the cost she had to bear to realize her dream.

The attacks on the person of Miss Nora were persistent and at times vicious. Some of them came from a generalized attitude towards anyone taking on a leadership position, some of them were more specific to the fact that she was a woman and that women are not allowed to take on a leadership position. The main avenue of attack was gossip, but on several occasions the attacks came through public denunciations. It was said that she did not know Rama, had never spoken it well, and was making it up; that she was an old illiterate woman who could not possibly know what she was doing; that she was getting rich selling a communal wealth she had no business selling to outsiders; that she was a traitor working for the Sandinista enemy.

In the end what seemed to hurt most was the gossip that she was not from Rama Cay and had no business living there. She was ostracized, bypassed at times of distribution of food and other relief supplies on the island, and some of her grandchildren were turned away from school. That she persisted in the face of this kind of adversity gives a measure of her determination and sense of purpose. She came very close to giving up several times, at least in her efforts to work with the community. But fortunately she began receiving the recognition that she needed and deserved, and getting the support of people who mattered to her: the majority of

the last speakers, the majority of the schoolteachers, parents of schoolchildren she was teaching in the school. Eventually, as the project took hold in the community, even those leaders who had been the most outspoken against the project in general, and Miss Nora in particular, began to praise and acknowledge her. Today, after the electoral defeat of the Sandinista government that had provided support and recognition for the project, and in the political vacuum characteristic of the present government in the region, the Rama community has appropriated the Rama Language Project and looks upon it as a valued ongoing process. They are now willing to confer on Miss Nora the status of an elder respected for her accomplishments for the community.

CONCLUSION

This paper is meant to be a tribute to an indigenous woman who fits the profile of a linguistic agent, an older woman with a vision who has been a social actor consciously writing a piece of the history of her community.¹³ The point of the paper is to argue that what made her a recognized language rescuer was the combination of her own inner power and sense of purpose and the situation of empowerment in which she finally found herself.

Let me close with a final point of clarification about the identity of the "rescuer of the Rama language." Because this indigenous woman knows the importance of the work she has been doing in the last years and has a sense of history in the making, and history being recorded, it is her wish that her name be used, and that she be known to future generations as the person who helped save the Rama language. She does not want the anonymity assigned to informants of academic social scientists. Although I referred to her throughout the paper as Miss Nora, which is the name by which she is locally known, her full name is Nora Rigby.

NOTES

1. I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the following institutions for their financial support of linguistic work in the Rama Language Project: for work on the grammar, the National Science Foundation (BNS 8511156) and Wenner Grenn (No. 4906), and the University of Oregon Foundation; for work on the dictionary, the National Science Foundation (BNS 8819100 and 9021322); and for work on a profile of Miss Nora, the Center for the Study of Women in Society.
2. See for instance the papers from the Linguistic Society of America's 1991 symposium on endangered languages, published in *Language* 68(1) (Hale 1992); and Fishman (1991).
3. For a basic, concise, and well-informed introduction to language planning, see Cooper (1989).
4. *Miss* is the respectful form of address among Creole speakers of the region. It is used irrespective of marital status or age.
5. See Linguists for Nicaragua (1989) for an overview of the various linguistics projects of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua (Miskitu, Northern and Southern Sumu, Rama, English Creole) sponsored by the Center for Research and Documentation of the Atlantic Coast (CIDCA).
6. Craig (1992) discusses some of the issues of ethics and social responsibility of concern to linguistic fieldworkers and specialists in indigenous languages of the Americas, in view of the increasingly orchestrated denunciations of the 1992 Quincentenary by indigenous peoples of the continent.

7. I would like to acknowledge here the team of women who have worked with me on the Rama Language Project and who share with me a fundamental commitment to the type of collaborative research it exemplifies: Barbara Assadi, Bonny Tibbitts, and Elaine Walters.
8. For a discussion of the profile of Rama as an endangered language, see Craig (1988).
9. For a development of the analysis of these converging forces, see Craig (1992).
10. Much of the material for the community, including the teaching material for Miss Nora, has been produced annually by volunteer undergraduate students from the Linguistics 311 course "Languages of the World" taught at the University of Oregon, and by volunteers from Eugene's Council for Human Rights in Latin America.
11. Although it is hard to assess how many Rama people have been reached by the project, one can venture some guess estimates. It is hard to believe that there are any Rama families left today that are unaware of its existence. Even the families in exile in Costa Rica were kept informed by their island relatives. An intricate network of people reaching all the households is involved, from schoolchildren, teachers and community leaders to community members who regularly come to meetings and marginalized semispeakers just beginning to be drawn to the project. Any visitor to Rama Cay always leaves well informed about it. It would seem that the vast majority of the Rama population (which numbers less than 1,000) has been reached, one way or another.
12. This is a telling case of a disastrous linguistic analysis that did not need to be if only the linguist had paid more attention to the speaker, as well as a case of "irresponsible" linguistics, as argued in Craig (1990).
13. Let this paper be a small contribution to the acknowledgment of the indigenous women of the Americas in this year of the Quincentenary.

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Communities of practice: Where language, gender, and power all live¹

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INTRODUCTION: TOO MUCH ABSTRACTION SPOILS THE BROTH

Studies of language and gender in the past twenty years have looked at many different dimensions of language use and have offered a rich variety of hypotheses about the interaction between gender and language and especially about the connection of power to that interaction. On the one hand, language has been seen as supporting male dominance; on the other, it has been seen as a resource for women resisting oppression or pursuing their own projects and interests. We have all learned a lot by thinking about such proposals, most of which have been supported by interesting and often illuminating observations. But their explanatory force has been weakened by the absence of a coherent theoretical framework within which to refine and further explore them as part of an ongoing research community.

The problem is not an absence of generalizations. Our diagnosis is that gender and language studies suffer from the same problem as that confronting sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics more generally: too much abstraction. Abstracting gender and language from the social practices that produce their particular forms in given communities often obscures and sometimes distorts the ways they connect and how those connections are implicated in power relations, in social conflict, in the production and reproduction of values and plans. Too much abstraction is often symptomatic of too little theorizing: abstraction should not substitute for theorizing but be informed by and responsive to it. Theoretical insight into how language and gender interact requires a close look at social practices in which they are jointly produced. We see work in these volumes is headed in exactly this direction. What we want to do in this paper is to sketch the main outlines of a theoretical perspective on language, gender, and power that can help us continue to make progress toward a productive community of language-gender scholars who hold themselves accountable both to one another's work and to relevant developments in linguistics, social theory, and gender studies.

Why is abstraction so tempting and yet so dangerous? It is tempting because at some level and in some form it is irresistible, an inevitable part of theoretical inquiry. People and their activities, including their use of language, are never viewed in completely concrete or particularistic terms. With no access to abstract constructs like linguistic systems and social categories and relations like class and

race and gender, we could not hope to engage in any kind of illuminating investigation into how and why language and gender interact. The danger, however, is that the real force and import of their interaction is erased when we abstract each uncritically from the social practices in which they are jointly produced and in which they intermingle with other symbolic and social phenomena. In particular, if we view language and gender as self-contained and independent phenomena, we miss the social and cognitive significance of interactions between them. Abstraction that severs the concrete links between language and gender in the social practices of communities kills the power that resides in and derives from those links.

The notions of "women" and "men," for example, are typically just taken for granted in sociolinguistics. Suppose we were to take all the characterizations of gender that have been advanced to explain putatively gender-differentiated linguistic behavior. Women's language has been said to reflect their (our) conservatism, prestige consciousness, upward mobility, insecurity, deference, nurturance, emotional expressivity, connectedness, sensitivity to others, solidarity. And men's language is heard as evincing their toughness, lack of affect, competitiveness, independence, competence, hierarchy, control. Linguists are not, of course, inventing such accounts of gender identities and gender relations out of whole cloth. Not only commonplace stereotypes but also social-scientific studies offer support for the kinds of characterizations linguists offer in explanation of language use. But the social-science literature must be approached critically: the observations on which such claims about women and men are based have been made at different times and in different circumstances with different populations from those whose linguistic behavior they are being used to explain.

The problem is too much or at least too-crude abstraction. Gender is abstracted whole from other aspects of social identity, the linguistic system is abstracted from linguistic practice, language is abstracted from social action, interactions and events are abstracted from community and personal history, difference and dominance are each abstracted from wider social practice, and both linguistic and social behavior are abstracted from the communities in which they occur. When we recombine all these abstractions, we really do not know what we have. Certainly we don't seem to find real women and men as sums of the characteristics attributed to them.

What we propose is not to ignore such abstract characterizations of gender identities and relations but to take responsibility for connecting each such abstraction to a wide spectrum of social and linguistic practice in order to examine the specificities of its concrete realization in actual communities. This can happen only if we collectively develop a community of analytic practice that holds itself responsible for language and gender writ large.

This means that we are responsible to linguistic theory and research beyond the areas of our particular specializations. Furthermore, we cannot excuse our inattention to social theory and gender studies on the grounds that we are "just linguists," not if we hope to make responsible claims about language and gender interactions. And perhaps the most important implication is that we cannot abandon social and political responsibility for how our work is understood and used, especially given what we know about sexism and racism and elitism and

heterosexism in so many of the communities where our research might be disseminated.

Our major aim is to encourage a view of the interaction of gender and language that roots each in the everyday social practices of particular local communities and sees them as jointly constructed in those practices: our slogan, "Think practically and look locally." To think practically and look locally is to abandon several assumptions common in gender and language studies: that gender works independently of other aspects of social identity and relations, that it "means" the same across communities, and that the linguistic manifestations of that meaning are also the same across communities. Such assumptions can be maintained only when the language-gender partnership is prematurely dissolved by abstraction of one or both partners.

LANGUAGE, POWER, AND GENDER VIEWED LOCALLY

We find many examples in these volumes of what it means to view language, power, and gender in local terms. Becoming language users and becoming gendered members of local communities both involve participating with other members in a variety of practices that often constitute linguistic, gender, and other social identities and relations at one and the same time. Many such activities have been described in the papers in this collection: instigating or taking the plaintiff or defendant role in a he-said-she-said dispute (Goodwin, this volume), providing sexy talk on the 900 lines (Hall, this volume), participating in "Father Knows Best" dinnertime dramas (Ochs & Taylor, this volume), taking a police report from a bleeding woman (McElhinny, this volume), joining in a debate about rape and race and responsibility on the walls of a bathroom stall (Moonwomon, this volume), smiling at the boss's "Sleazy bitch" (Case, this volume), silencing a planned anecdote during a conference paper when you note its (male) protagonist in the audience (Lakoff, this volume), criticizing or defending a colleague's bestseller (Freud, this volume).

In the course of engaging with others in such activity, people collaboratively construct a sense of themselves and of others as certain kinds of persons, as members of various communities with various forms of membership, authority, and privilege in those communities. In all of these, language interacts with other symbolic systems—dress, body adornment, ways of moving, gaze, touch, handwriting style, locales for hanging out, and so on. And the selves constructed are not simply (or even primarily) gendered selves: they are unemployed, Asian American, lesbian, college-educated, post-menopausal selves in a variety of relations to other people. Language is never encountered without other symbol systems, and gender is always joined with real people's complex forms of participation in the communities to which they belong (or have belonged or expect to join).

Individuals may experience the language-gender interface differently in the different communities in which they participate at a given time or at different stages of their lives. Using *Mrs. Jones* may be important for avoiding the condescension of *Mary* when a professionally employed woman addresses the woman who cleans

her house; for that professional woman, receiving address as *Mrs. Smith* (particularly from her colleagues) may seem to emphasize her subordination to a husband and to deny her individual identity as Joan Doe, who (as she sees it) simply happens to be married to John Smith. On the other hand, acquiring a new name of *Mrs. John Smith* upon marriage may have functioned thirty years ago for the young Joan Doe as a mark of her achieving fully adult status as a married woman (a possibility denied her lesbian sister who rejects marriage). And the woman who with a tolerant smile receives *Mary* from the six-year-old daughter of her employer may insist in her local residential community on *Mrs. Jones* from her own daughter's friends.

Exploring any aspect of the language-gender interface requires that we address the complexities of its construction within and across different communities: what *Mrs. Jones* means, what social work is done by the use of that title, can be understood only by considering its place in the practices of local communities (and in the connections among those communities). Analysts not only jump too readily from local observations to global claims; they/we also too often ignore the multiple uses of particular linguistic resources in the practices of a given community. We can see the confusion that results by trying to put together some of the general claims about the social and psychological underpinnings of language use common in the variation literature with claims about gender such as those common in interaction studies.

A methodological cornerstone of variation studies is the notion that all speakers step up the use of vernacular variants when they are at their most emotional. It is also generally accepted that vernacular variants function to establish solidarity. If women are more emotional than men or more interested in promoting solidarity, as so many interactionists have claimed, the variationists might be expected to predict that vernacular variants typify women's rather than men's language. But the general claim in variation studies has been that men's language exemplifies the vernacular whereas women's aspires toward standard or prestige variants. The explanation offered is not men's emotionality or greater interest in social connections but women's supposed prestige-consciousness and upward mobility (often accompanied by claims of women's greater conservatism). Even in situations in which some vernacular variant is more frequent in women's than men's speech, analysts do not consider how their explanations relate to their own claims about the social meanings of vernaculars. There are many other tensions and potential contradictions when we try to put together all the different things said about language, gender, and power. The standard or prestige variants are associated with the speech of those who have economic and political power, the social elite; at the same time, standard speech is associated with women and "prissiness," and the vernacular is heard as tough and "macho." Once we take seriously the connections among gender characterizations and the various aspects of language that we study and try to develop a coherent picture, it quickly becomes apparent that the generalizations to be found cannot be integrated with one another as they now stand. This suggests serious difficulties in adopting as our primary goal the search for generalizations about "women" and "men" as groups with some

kind of global sociolinguistic unity that transcends social practices in local communities.

Statements like "Women emphasize connection in their talk whereas men seek status" may have some statistical support within a particular community. Statistics being what they are, there is, of course, no guarantee that the actual women and men whose behavior supports one such generalization will overlap very much with those supporting another—say, that women prefer standard and men vernacular variants in everyday talk with their peers—and this is true even if our statistics come from a single community. The more serious problem, however, is that such generalizations are seldom understood as simple reports of statistics.

Most American women are under five feet nine inches tall and most American men are over five feet six inches tall, but it would sound odd indeed to report these statistical facts by saying, "Women are under five feet nine inches tall" and "Men are over five feet six inches tall" without some explicit indicator of generalization like *most*. Although unmodified claims about "women" and "men" do allow for exceptions, such claims, which we have certainly made ourselves, often seem to imply that individuals who don't satisfy the generalization are indeed exceptional "as women" or "as men," deviants from some normative model (perhaps deviants to admire but nonetheless outsiders in some sense). This is especially true when women and men are being characterized as "different" from one another on some particular dimension. But if gender resides in difference, what is the status of the tremendous variability we see in actual behavior within sex categories? Too often dismissed as "noise" in a basically dichotomous gender system, differences among men and among women are, in our view, themselves important aspects of gender. Tomboys and goody-goodies, homemakers and career women, body-builders and fashion models, secretaries and executives, basketball coaches and French teachers, professors and students, grandmothers and mothers and daughters—these are all categories of girls and women whose mutual differences are part of their construction of themselves and each other as gendered beings. When femaleness and maleness are differentiated from one another in terms of such attributes as power, ambition, physical coordination, rebelliousness, caring, or docility, the role of these attributes in creating and texturing important differences among very female identities and very male identities becomes invisible.

The point here is not that statistical generalizations about the females and the males in a particular community are automatically suspect. But to stop with such generalizations or to see finding such "differences" as the major goal of investigations of gender and language is problematic. Correlations simply point us toward areas where further investigation might shed light on the linguistic and other practices that enter into gender dynamics in a community. An emphasis on difference as constitutive of gender draws attention away from a more serious investigation of the relations among language, gender, and other components of social identity; it ignores the ways difference (or beliefs therein) function in constructing dominance relations. Gender can be thought of as a sex-based way of experiencing other social attributes like class, ethnicity, or age (and also less obviously social qualities like ambition, athleticism, and musicality). To examine gender independently as if it were just "added on" to such other aspects of identity

is to miss its significance and force. Certainly, to interpret broad sex patterns in language use without considering other aspects of social identity and relations is to paint with one eye closed. Speakers are not assembled out of separate independent modules: part European American, part female, part middle-aged, part feminist, part intellectual. Abstracting gender away from other aspects of social identity also leads to premature generalization even about normative conceptions of femaleness and maleness. While most research that focuses on sex difference is not theoretically committed to a universalizing conception of women or of men, such research has tended to take gender identity as given at least in broad strokes at a relatively global level.

Too much abstraction and too-ready generalization are encouraged by a limited view of theorizing as aimed at accounts of gender difference that apply globally to women and men. In the interests of abstraction and global generalization, William Labov has argued that ethnographic studies of language and society must answer to the results of survey studies—that generalized correlations reflect a kind of objective picture that must serve as the measure of any locally grounded studies. Others cite the objectivity of controlled experimental studies. We argue instead that ethnographic studies must answer to each other, and that survey and experimental studies in turn must answer to them (see Eckert 1990). Surveys typically examine categories so abstracted from social practice that they cannot be assumed to have independent status as sociolinguistically meaningful units, and they rely heavily on interviews, a special kind of social activity. Experimental studies also abstract in ways that can make it hard to assess their relevance to the understanding of naturally occurring social practice, including cognition. To frame abstractions so that they help explain the interaction of language and social practice, we need a focus of study and analysis that allows us to examine them each on something like an equal footing. This requires a unit of social analysis that has explanatory power for the construction of both language and gender. It is mutual engagement of human agents in a wide range of activities that creates, sustains, challenges, and sometimes changes society and its institutions, including both gender and language, and the sites of such mutual engagement are communities. How the community is defined, therefore, is of prime importance in any study of language and gender, even those that do not use ethnographic methods (e.g., survey or experimental studies).

LANGUAGE, GENDER, AND COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Sociolinguists have located linguistic systems, norms, and social identities within a loosely defined construct, the *speech community*. Although in theory sociolinguists embrace John Gumperz's (1982) definition of a speech community as a group of speakers who share rules and norms for the use of language, in practice community studies have defined their populations on the basis of location and/or population. Differences and relations among the speakers who people sociolinguists' speech communities have been defined in terms of abstracted characteristics: sex, age, socioeconomic class, ethnicity. And differences in ways of speaking have been interpreted on the basis of speculative hypotheses about the

relation between these characteristics and social practice. Sociolinguistic analysis, then, attempts to reconstruct the practice from which these characteristics, and the linguistic behavior in question, have been abstracted. While participation in community practice sometimes figures more directly into classification of speakers, sociolinguists still seldom recognize explicitly the crucial role of practice in delineating speech communities and more generally in mediating the relation between language, society, and consciousness.

To explore in some detail just how social practice and individual "place" in the community connect to one another, sociolinguists need some conception of a community that articulates place with practice. For this reason, we adopt Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger's notion of the *community of practice*.² The community of practice takes us away from the community defined by a location or by a population. Instead, it focuses on a community defined by social engagement—after all, it is this engagement that language serves, not the place and not the people as a collection of individuals.

A community of practice is an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in some common endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations—in short, practices—emerge in the course of their joint activity around that endeavor. A community of practice is different as a social construct from the traditional notion of community, primarily because it is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages. Indeed, it is the practices of the community and members' differentiated participation in them that structures the community socially.

A community of practice might be people working together in a factory, regulars in a bar, a neighborhood play group, a nuclear family, police partners and their ethnographer, the Supreme Court. Communities of practice may be large or small, intensive or diffuse; they are born and they die, they may persist through many changes of membership, and they may be closely articulated with other communities. Individuals participate in multiple communities of practice, and individual identity is based in the multiplicity of this participation. Rather than seeing the individual as some disconnected entity floating around in social space, or as a location in a network, or as a member of a particular group or set of groups, or as a bundle of social characteristics, we need to focus on communities of practice. Such a focus allows us to see the individual as an actor articulating a range of forms of participation in multiple communities of practice.

Gender is produced (and often reproduced) in differential membership in communities of practice. People's access and exposure to, need for, and interest in different communities of practice are related to such things as their class, age, and ethnicity, as well as their sex. Working-class people are more likely on the whole than middle-class people to be members of unions, bowling teams, close-knit neighborhoods. Upper-middle-class people, on the other hand, are more likely than working-class people to be members of tennis clubs, orchestras, professional organizations. Men are more likely than women to be members of football teams, armies, and boards of directors. Women, on the other hand, are more likely to be members of secretarial pools, aerobics classes, and consciousness-raising groups.

And associated with differences in age, class, and ethnicity are differences in the extent to which the sexes belong to different communities of practice. Different people, for a variety of reasons, will articulate their multiple memberships differently. A female executive living in a male-dominated household will have difficulty articulating her membership in her domestic and professional communities of practice, unlike a traditional male executive "head of household." A lesbian lawyer "closeted" within the legal community may also belong to a women's community whose membership defines itself in opposition to the larger heterosexual world. And the woman who scrubs toilets in the household "managed" by the female executive for her husband and also in the home of the lesbian lawyer and her artist lover may be a respected lay leader in her local church, facing a different set of tensions than either of her employers does in negotiating multiple memberships.

Gender is also produced and reproduced in differential forms of participation in particular communities of practice. Women tend to be subordinate to men in the workplace, women in the military do not engage in combat, and in the academy, most theoretical disciplines are overwhelmingly male with women concentrated in descriptive and applied work that "supports" theorizing. Women and men may also have very different forms of participation available to them in single-sex communities of practice. For example, if all-women groups do in fact tend to be more egalitarian than all-men groups, as some current literature claims (e.g., Aries 1976), then women's and men's forms of participation will be quite different. Such relations within same-sex groups will, of course, be related in turn to the place of such groups in the larger society.

The relations among communities of practice when they come together in overarching communities of practice also produce gender arrangements. Only recently, for example, have female competitive sports begun to receive significant recognition, and male sports continue to bring far greater visibility, power, and authority both to the teams and to the individual participants in those teams. The (male) final four is the focus of attention in the NCAA basketball world every spring, with the women's final four receiving only perfunctory mention. Many a school has its Bulldogs and Lady Bulldogs, its Rangers and Rangerettes. This articulation with power and stature outside the team in turn translates into different possibilities for relations within. The relation between male varsity sports teams and female cheerleading squads illustrates a more general pattern of men's organizations and women's auxiliaries. Umbrella communities of this kind do not offer neutral membership status. And when several families get together for a meal prepared by the women who then team up to do the serving and clearing away while the men watch football, gender differentiation (including differentiation in language use) is being reproduced on an institutional level.

The community of practice is where the rubber meets the road—it is where observable action and interaction do the work of producing, reproducing, and resisting the organization of power in society and in societal discourses of gender, age, race, etc. Speakers develop linguistic patterns as they engage in activity in the various communities in which they participate. Sociolinguists have tended to see this process as one of acquisition of something relatively "fixed"—the linguistic

resources, the community, and the individual's relation to the two are all viewed as fixed. The symbolic value of a linguistic form is taken as given, and the speaker simply learns it and uses it, either mechanically or strategically. But in actual practice, social meaning, social identity, community membership, forms of participation, the full range of community practices, and the symbolic value of linguistic form are being constantly and mutually constructed.

And so although the identity of both the individual and the individual community of practice is experienced as persistent, in fact they both change constantly. We continue to adopt new ways of talking and discard some old ways, to adopt new ways of being women and men, gays and lesbians and heterosexuals, even changing our ways of being feminists or being lovers or being mothers or being sisters. In becoming police officers or psychiatrists or physicists or professors of linguistics, we may change our ways of being women and perhaps of being wives or lovers or mothers. In so doing, however, we are not negating our earlier gendered sociolinguistic identities; we are transforming them, changing and expanding forms of femininity, masculinity, and gender relations. And there are many more unnamed ways of thinking, being, relating, and doing that we adopt and adapt as we participate in different ways in the various communities of practice to which we belong.

What sociolinguists call the *linguistic repertoire* is a set of resources for the articulation of multiple memberships and forms of participation. And an individual's ways of speaking in a particular community of practice are not simply a function of membership or participation in that community. A way of speaking in a community does not simply constitute a turning on of a community-specific linguistic switch, or the symbolic laying of claim to membership in that community, but a complex articulation of the individual's forms of participation in that community with participation in other communities that are salient at the time. In turn, the linguistic practices of any given community of practice will be continually changing as a result of the many salencies that come into play through its multiple members.

The overwhelming tendency in language and gender research on power has been to emphasize either speakers and their social relations (e.g., women's disadvantage in ordinary conversations with men) or the meanings and norms encoded in the linguistic systems and practices historically available to them (e.g., such sexist patterns as conflating generic human with masculine in forms like *he* or *man*). But linguistic forms have no power except as given in people's mouths and ears; to talk about meaning without talking about the people who mean and the community practices through which they give meaning to their words is at best limited.

CONCLUSION: A SCHOLARLY COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Susan Gal (this volume) has called for the integration of the wide range of endeavors that come under the rubric of language and gender. This comes up over and over in these papers that range from Japanese morphological variation (Okamoto & Sato, this volume) to girls' verbal disputes (Goodwin, this volume; Sheldon, this

volume) to teenage girls' magazines (Talbot, this volume) to phone sex (Hall, this volume) and the Thomas-Hill hearings (Mendoza-Denton, this volume; O'Connor, this volume). Are these all loosely joined together simply by a shared interest in gender? Or is there an integral and indispensable connection that we must recognize and construct in order even to begin our work?

We have here the nucleus of a community of scholarly practice within which there is the real possibility of undertaking more ambitious collaborative inquiries. Mary Talbot's paper in this collection shows us how a teen magazine attempts to create an imaginary community around the consumption of lipstick. It provides many of the requirements of a community of practice—knowledge, membership, history, practices—inviting the readers to become engaged in lipstick technology and to form their own real communities of practice around the consumption of lipstick. Many people studying gender dynamics in everyday conversation may not immediately see the relation between their work and studies of the discourses of gender as revealed in teen magazines. But just as gender is not given and static, it is also not constructed afresh in each interaction or each community of practice. Those of us who are examining the minutiae of linguistic form need to build detailed understanding of the construction of gender in the communities of practice that we study. But part of the characterization of a community of practice is its relation to other communities of practice and to the wider discourses of society. Thus while we do our close examination, we need to work within a consciously constructed broader perspective that extends our own necessarily limited view of the communities we study.

Significant advances in the study of language and gender from now on are going to have to involve integration on a level that has not been reached so far. The integration can come only through the intensive collaboration of people in a variety of fields, developing shared ways of asking questions and of exploring and evaluating possible answers. Language and gender studies, in fact, require an interdisciplinary community of scholarly practice. Isolated individuals who try to straddle two fields can often offer insights, but real progress depends on getting people from a variety of fields to collaborate closely in building a common and broad-based understanding. We will cease to be a friendly but scattered bunch of linguists, anthropologists, literary critics, etc., when we become mutually engaged in the integration of our emerging insights into the nexus between language, gender, and social practice.

Sometimes our mutual engagement will lead us to controversy. And some authors in these volumes have been concerned about the development of controversy over the cultural-difference model. It is true that argument that is not grounded in shared practice can reduce to unpleasant and *ad feminam* argument. But rich intellectual controversy both requires and enhances mutual engagement. Without sustained intellectual exchange that includes informed and detailed debate, we will remain an aggregate of individuals with vaguely related interests in language and gender. With continued engagement like that begun in this collection, we may become a productive scholarly community.

NOTES

1. Many of the ideas expressed in this paper have appeared also in Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet (to appear).
2. See Etienne Wenger (1990 and forthcoming); and Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991).

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In arguing for the necessity of language reform, feminist theorists have generally assumed that language is not a neutral and transparent means of representing reality. Rather, language is assumed to codify an androcentric worldview. For example, the names that a language attaches to events and activities, especially those related to sex and sexuality, often encode a male perspective. Cameron (1985) discusses terms such as *penetration*, *fuck*, *screw*, and *lay*, all of which turn heterosexual sex into something men do to women. (Penetration from a female perspective could be given more appropriate names such as *enclosure*, *surrounding*, and *engulfing*.) In a similar way, the absence of names representing women's perceptions and experiences also reveals a male bias. Steinem sees terms such as *sexual harassment* and *sexism* as significant in this respect: "A few years ago, they were just called life" (1983:149). At the level of grammar, the so-called generics *he* and *man* render women invisible, thereby encoding a sexist worldview.

While sexist language clearly reflects sexist social structures and attitudes, the continuing existence of such structures and attitudes throws into question the possibility of successful language reform. Graddol and Swann comment:

Sexist language is not simply a linguistic problem. The existence of unmarked expressions "in the language" does not mean that these will be used and interpreted in a neutral way. This may lead one to question the value of the linguistic reforms advocated in writers' and publishers' guidelines. (1989:110)

Cameron makes a similar point:

Therefore, in the interests of accuracy we should strive to include the female half of the human race by replacing male terms with neutral ones. But the "reality" to which language relates is a sexist one, and in it there are no neutral terms. ... In the mouths of sexists, language can always be sexist. (1985:90)

As McConnell-Ginet points out in connection with women saying "no" to men's sexual advances, "meaning is a matter not only of individual will but of social relations embedded in political structures" (1989:47). A woman may say "no" with sincerity to a man's sexual advances but the "no" gets filtered through a series of beliefs and attitudes that transform the woman's "direct negative" into an "indirect affirmative": "She is playing hard to get, but of course she really means yes." Because linguistic meanings are to a large extent determined by the dominant culture's social values and attitudes—that is, they are socially constructed and constituted—terms initially introduced as nonsexist, nonracist, or even feminist

may (like a woman's response of "no" to a man's sexual advances) lose their intended meanings in the mouths of a sexist, racist speech community and culture.²

In this paper we examine the way in which nonsexist and feminist linguistic innovations travel and are circulated within the general speech community. In the first part of the paper, we look at the way that neutral generics and neutral titles get used and interpreted, demonstrating that these terms are often not used or interpreted in their intended way. In the second part of the paper, we extend our analysis to how what we call terms with feminist-influenced meanings—such as *sexism*, *feminism*, *sexual harassment*, and *date rape*—are used in the mainstream media. We demonstrate the extent to which these kinds of terms get redefined, and often depoliticized, as they become integrated into a sexist speech community.

NEUTRAL TITLES AND GENERICS

The title *Ms.* was originally popularized by feminists in the 1970s to replace *Miss* and *Mrs.* and to provide a parallel term to *Mr.*, in that both *Ms.* and *Mr.* designate gender without indicating marital status. Miller and Swift (1976) see the elimination of *Mrs.* and *Miss* in favor of *Ms.* as a way of allowing women to be seen as people in their own right, rather than in relation to someone else. Unfortunately, while *Ms.* was intended to parallel *Mr.*, considerable evidence suggests that it is not used or interpreted in this intended way. Frank and Treichler cite the following directive, sent to public-information officers in the state of Pennsylvania: "If you use *Ms.* for a female, please indicate in parentheses after the *Ms.* whether it's *Miss* or *Mrs.*" (1989:218). Graddol and Swann explain that *Ms.* is not a neutral title for women in Britain: "in some contexts it seems to have coalesced with *Miss* (official forms sometimes distinguish only *Mrs.* and *Ms.*)" (1989:97). Atkinson (1987), in a Canadian study of attitudes towards the use of *Ms.* and birthname retention among women, found that many of her respondents had a three-way distinction: they used *Mrs.* for married women, *Miss* for women who had never been married, and *Ms.* for divorced women. All three usages described here demonstrate the high premium placed on identifying women by their relationship (current or otherwise) to men, in spite of the intended neutrality associated with *Ms.*

In a similar way, true generics such as *chairperson* and *spokesperson*, introduced to replace masculine generics such as *chairman* and *spokesman*, seem to have lost their neutrality in that they are often only used for women. The following example containing announcements of academics' changing jobs, cited by Dubois and Crouch (1987) (from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*), demonstrates that a woman is a chairperson, but a man is a chairman.

Margaret P. Eby, *Chairperson* of Humanities at U. of Michigan at Dearborn, to Dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts and Professor of Music at U. of Northern Iowa.
David W. Hamilton, Associate Professor of Anatomy at Harvard, to *Chairman* of Anatomy at U. of Minnesota.
Eileen T. Handelman, *Chairperson* of Science at Simon's Rock Early College to Dean of Academic Affairs.

Elaine B. Harvey, Acting *Chairperson* of Graduate Pediatrics at Indiana U. to Dean of the School of Nursing at Fort Hays Kansas State U.
 Philip E. Hicks, Professor of Industrial Engineering at New Mexico State U., to *Chairman* of Industrial Engineering at North Carolina A & T State U.

From this example, we can see that the attempt to replace a masculine generic with a neutral one (one that does not refer to gender) has been somewhat unsuccessful in that so-called neutral terms like *chairperson*, *spokesperson*, etc. are functioning to designate only female referents. This same kind of distinction is made consistently in publications such as *The New York Times* and Toronto's two newspapers *The Globe and Mail* and *The Star* and was made recently by George Bush in his State of the Union address when he distinguished between the *chair* and the *chairman* of particular committees, to refer to a female and male respectively. Rather than ridding the language of a masculine generic, then, the introduction of neutral generic forms such as *chairperson* and *chair* has led to a gender-based distinction between forms such as *chairperson* or *chair* (used to designate females) versus *chairman* (used to designate males). Thus, we find that both the title *Ms.* and these true generics are used in ways that maintain distinctions the terms were intended to eliminate, distinctions that are clearly important to the speech community in question.

A recent study by Khosroshahi (1989) attempts to investigate the interpretation, rather than the use, of neutral generics such as *she or he*, *he or she*, and singular *they* versus masculine generics with respect to the mental imagery evoked. Her subjects included both females and males with both reformed and traditional language usage (i.e., four groups of subjects). Khosroshahi summarizes her results as follows:

All groups were androcentric except the women who had reformed their language; androcentric in the sense that when they read a paragraph that was ambiguous with respect to gender, they were more likely to interpret it as referring to a male than to a female character. Even if the paragraph used *he or she* or *they*, feminine referents did not become more salient than masculine ones. (1989:517)

Thus, these results demonstrate that for most of the subjects in this experiment the use of masculine versus neutral generics had no significant effect on the image evoked: male referents were always more salient than female ones. Khosroshahi explains her results in this way:

Given the repeatedly documented fact that women are significantly underrepresented in a variety of literatures, the finding that the masculine tends to be read as representative is not very surprising. ... In a literature dominated by male characters, initially sex-indefinite words must quickly develop masculine connotations. (1989:518)

This study, then, shows that neutral generic terms are not readily interpreted as generic. Again, we see that it is the prevailing attitudes and values of a culture that seem to determine how these innovative, nonsexist terms get interpreted, in spite of their intended neutrality. It is interesting to note here that the exceptional group in this study, the women who use reformed language, not only interpreted neutral

generics in terms of female referents but also interpreted the masculine generic mostly in terms of female referents. In other words, they displayed the opposite pattern to that of the other three groups: female (as opposed to male) referents were evoked regardless of the type of generic pronoun used. Again, we see that the interpretation of the pronoun is heavily influenced by the ideologies of an individual or speech community rather than by the particular pronoun used in a given context.

With regard to both use and interpretation, then, we see that the neutral title *Ms.* and neutral generics do not function in their intended (neutral) way. Rather, they seem to have been appropriated by the more general speech community and used in ways that maintain sexist stereotypes and distinctions.

TERMS WITH FEMINIST-INFLUENCED MEANINGS

In what follows, we identify some of the discursive strategies used in the mainstream media to redefine feminist linguistic innovations such as *feminism*, *sexism*, *sexual harassment*, *date rape*, etc. In the process of redefinition, phenomena such as *sexual harassment* and *date rape* are rendered nonexistent at best and at worst are trivialized and delegitimized. We therefore demonstrate the extent to which these feminist linguistic innovations get appropriated by a sexist speech community.³

Redefinition as omission or obscuring

The first kind of discursive strategy to be exemplified involves the elimination or obscuring of crucial aspects of a term's definition. The following examples illustrate how the phenomenon of sexual harassment virtually disappears when its distinguishing characteristics are omitted from its description. In an article on sexual harassment in the *National Review*, author Gretchen Morgenson reports on a *Time/CBS* sexual-harassment poll in which 38 percent of the respondents said that they had been "the object of sexual advances, propositions, or unwanted sexual discussions" from men who supervised them or could affect their position at work (1991:37). However, only 4 percent of this group actually reported the incidents at the time that they occurred. In attempting to explain the small percentage of formal complaints, Morgenson wonders:

Did the *Times* offer any explanation for why so few actually reported the incident? Could it be that these women did not report their "harassment" because they themselves did not regard a sexual advance as harassment? (1991:37)

Notice the implication here that without a report of sexual harassment the harassing behavior becomes a sexual advance. (Note the quotation marks around *harassment*.) Reporting, then, becomes crucial to Morgenson's definition of sexual harassment. Of course, this kind of definition ignores the political dimension intrinsic to sexual harassment, specifically, that in the majority of cases women are harassed by male supervisors who have the power to affect the women's position at work. The question of whether to lodge a formal complaint is a complicated one involving economic and career considerations, among others. To imply that sexual

harassment only occurs when it is reported and otherwise is merely a sexual advance is to deny the political aspect of the phenomenon and renders the majority of instances of sexual harassment nonexistent. This, of course, was one of the tactics used by the Republican senators in attempting to destroy Anita Hill's credibility: How could Anita Hill say she had been sexually harassed when she didn't file a formal complaint and even followed Thomas to a new job?

A similar obscuring of sexual harassment's political dimension is evident in the following example from *Time* by Janice Castro (1992). It comes from a review of the book *Step Forward: Sexual Harassment in the Workplace* by Susan Webb. The book is described as "an accessible sort of Cliffs Notes guide to the topic" and as "refreshingly free of ideology and reproach" (1992:37). The following examples of case studies from the book are given:

- (1) You and your boss are single and like each other a lot. You invite him to dinner, and one thing leads to another. Was someone sexually harassed? (No—though it wasn't very smart.)
- (2) Your boss invites you to a restaurant for dinner and—much to your surprise—spends the evening flirting with you. Just before inviting you to her house for a nightcap, she mentions that promotion you are hoping to get. (You are being sexually harassed. Whether or not you welcome her interest in you, she has implied a connection between the promotion and your response.)

Clearly, these types of examples are meant to help readers differentiate between behavior that is sexual harassment and behavior that is not. Of interest to us is the fact that the case that *does* constitute sexual harassment (#2) involves a female supervisor and presumably a male employee. (It's difficult to imagine *Time* reporting on lesbian relations.) Thus, what is presented as the *prototypical* case of sexual harassment is a situation in which a female boss harasses her male employee, a scenario that flies in the face of the overwhelming majority of cases of sexual harassment, in which male supervisors or colleagues harass their female employees. This is not to say that women never harass their male employees, only that this is not the typical case of sexual harassment.

Thus, in both the example from the *National Review* and the one from *Time* we see the elimination or obscuring of crucial political aspects of the phenomenon of sexual harassment. With these crucial omissions, sexual harassment in the first example gets redefined as a sexual advance if there is no reporting of the behavior, and in the second example the typical case of sexual harassment comes to be reconfigured as a female harassing a male.

A somewhat different case of the discursive strategy of omission and obscuring of crucial aspects of definitions is evident in the media's definitions of terms such as *oppression*, *oppressed groups*, *minorities*, etc. What gets obscured or eliminated in the following redefinitions from *New York* magazine (Taylor 1991) and the *National Review* (Taki 1991) is the fact that categories such as race, ethnicity, and gender are socially significant and salient categories, not arbitrary ones, and are commonly the basis for discrimination and oppression in our culture.

The multicultural and ethnic-studies programs now in place at most universities tend to divide humanity into five groups—whites, blacks, Native Americans, Hispanics, and

Asians. ... These are somewhat arbitrary categories. ... In fact, the politically correct have concluded that *anyone with any sort of trait, anxiety, flaw, impediment, or unusual sexual preference* qualifies for membership in an oppressed group. (Taylor 1991:36-7; italics in original)

Since nearly everybody belongs to one minority or another, being either tall or short, fat or thin, young or old, bald or hairy, rich or poor, black or white, Christian or Jew, it is ludicrous even to pretend that it is politically incorrect to call a fat slob a fat slob. (Taki 1991:60)

From these examples, we learn that categories such as race and ethnicity are arbitrary and are on a par with categories such as height and hairiness. As Taylor states, any "trait, flaw, [or] impediment" can serve as entry into an oppressed group, as if being white with flawed skin or being white and neurotic is commensurate with being black in this culture.

A perhaps more subtle version of this kind of depoliticization comes from the progressive Jewish magazine *Tikkun* (Berman 1992). In discussing the origins of the political-correctness debate in North America, Berman claims:

The new variation drew from American identity politics. Its fundamental unit was the identity-politics idea that in cultural affairs, the most important way to classify people is by race, ethnicity and gender—the kind of thinking that leads us to define one person as a white male, someone else as an Asian female, a third person as a Latina lesbian and so forth. (1992:56)

The implication here is that these categories are the creation of identity politics and are thus somewhat arbitrary. It is as if identity politics, not the culture, has made these categories salient and significant; as if identity politics has led us to identify individuals in terms of their gender, race, and ethnicity and presumably could have just as easily led us to view individuals in terms of their eye color.

In effacing and obscuring the real criteria for oppression in our culture, these three examples trivialize and ridicule the effects of racism and sexism, given the claim that any old trait or flaw can be the basis for oppression, as in the *New York* and *National Review* examples, or given the claim that categories such as race, ethnicity, and gender are merely the invention of identity politics, as in the *Tikkun* example.

Redefinition as expansion

The second kind of discursive strategy to be discussed is employed fairly consistently with terms such as *sexual harassment*, *rape*, and *sexual abuse*. It involves expanding the definition of such phenomena beyond reason by exploiting feminists' attempts to expand the definitions of these phenomena and then imputing this unreasonably expanded definition to feminists. The effect of this kind of expansion strategy is that of ridiculing and trivializing the phenomenon in question.

Taylor (1991), cited above, quotes the journalist Stephanie Gutmann of *Reason* magazine who states of date rape:

The real story about campus date rape is not that there's been any significant increase of rape on college campuses, at least of the acquaintance type, but that the word *rape* is being stretched to encompass any type of sexual interaction. (1991:39; emphasis ours)

Here Gutmann is presumably referring to feminists' attempts to expand the notion of sexual assault/rape so that it includes more than just sexual intercourse and so that mutual consent becomes a crucial criterion in distinguishing rape from non-rape. Gutmann overstates the case significantly, however, by saying that rape now encompasses "any kind of sexual interaction." Later on in this same article, Taylor "paraphrases" a feminist revision of the notion of rape (feminist Andrea Parrot is quoted as saying that "any sexual intercourse without mutual desire is a form of rape"): "by the definition of the radical feminists, all sexual encounters that involve any confusion or ambivalence constitute rape." Taylor then goes on to quote Stephanie Gutmann again: "Ordinary bungled sex—the kind you regret in the morning or even during—is being classified as rape. ... Bad or confused feelings after sex becomes someone else's fault" (1991:39).

This same strategy is evident in an article on feminism published in the *National Review* (Minogue 1991) but this time it is sexual abuse that is redefined. Again, the author plays on feminist attempts to broaden notions like sexual abuse, rape, and sexual harassment.

A raised consciousness in this area [feminism] plays with propositions of the form "X percent of women have experienced sexual interference before the age of Y," where X is a very large number, and Y as low as you care to make it, and "sexual interference" defined so broadly that it can include hearing an older sibling discuss his/her adolescent sexual experimentation. (1991:48; emphasis ours)

Clearly, women's concern with issues such as date rape and sexual abuse is rendered ludicrous and misguided when date rape refers to "any kind of sexual interaction" or "ordinary bungled sex" and when sexual abuse is defined as overhearing a sibling refer to sexual experimentation.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have attempted to demonstrate the extent to which linguistic meanings are determined by the social values and attitudes of the larger speech community. More specifically, we show that simply introducing nonsexist terms or terms with feminist-influenced meanings into a language will not necessarily result in nonsexist or feminist usage of such terms. Just as words such as "no," in the context of a woman refusing a man's sexual advances, can undergo a kind of semantic reversal in the mouths of a sexist culture, so nonsexist and feminist linguistic innovations may lose their intended meanings as they get integrated into the larger (sexist) speech community. This is not to say, however, that attempts at nonsexist and feminist language reform are futile. While those in power have the authority and influence to make their meanings stick, the feminist critique of language (to use Cameron's (1990) term) challenges the absolute hegemony of these meanings. As Seidel puts it: "Discourse is a site of struggle. It is a terrain, a

dynamic linguistic and, above all, semantic space in which social meanings are produced and challenged" (1985:44).

NOTES

1. We acknowledge Sage Publications for permission to reprint small portions of our article "Gender-based language reform and the social construction of meaning," *Discourse and Society* 3:151-66.
2. For a discussion of the implications of this view of meaning for gender-based language reform, see Ehrlich and King (1992).
3. This part of the paper comes from a larger research project we are conducting on redefinition and depoliticization of feminist linguistic innovations. Our data are drawn from print media reports of the Thomas/Hill hearings and of the "political correctness" debates.

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Gender differences in the construction of humorous talk

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For several years, we have been collaborating in research on conversational humor. We have been studying what makes people laugh, by using a database of naturally occurring conversations which were transcribed and entered into the computer by students. Laughter is a spontaneous index of affect which is rewarding enough to get people to make jokes and other humorous moves in order to evoke laughter. In earlier studies, what became evident to us was that such moves tended to vary with respect to gender, ethnicity, and group composition (Ervin-Tripp & Lampert 1991; Lampert & Ervin-Tripp 1989).

Initially, we began by sampling dialogue from 40 informal conversations among friends collected by Berkeley students in natural situations. These conversations involved women and men in same- and mixed-sex interactions. The speakers ranged in age from 18 to 35 and came from different ethnic backgrounds. Ethnicity was self-identified on taping permission forms, of the 114 individuals originally studied, 53% identified themselves as white, 28% as Asian or Asian American, 13% as Hispanic, 3% as Black, and 4% as other. Overall, the conversations covered a variety of laughter-eliciting talk that included few marked jokes. Attempts at humor generally involved personal anecdotes, putdowns of people not present, ribbing of present company, self-disparagement, and wisecracks.

Our first analyses confirmed earlier findings that women in single-gender groups self-direct humor significantly more than men in single-gender groups. However, in gender-mixed groups, we found that only the Hispanic and Asian speakers maintained these traditional gender differences. The white speakers changed their style of humor in mixed company. They increased their put-downs of absent targets significantly, and the men put themselves down and self-disclosed through humor more, whereas the women did so less often than in single-sex groups.

Mercilee Jenkins has made similar observations about gender differences and humorous talk (Jenkins 1985). In discussing this phenomenon, Jenkins cites Painter (1978) who calls attention to what speaker and listener must share for humor to succeed: context, meaning of primary form, perspective or intent, and social knowledge about the subject. To the extent that there are gender differences in these factors, humor directed at gender-homogeneous groups could differ. Jenkins found that women's humor often helps in reinterpreting negative

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experiences and is more context-bound, more often "jointly created out of the ongoing talk," and less often performance-oriented than male humor (1985:138). Jenkins particularly emphasizes the participatory character of humor in all-women groups, with supportive one-liners thrown into other people's stories.

In this paper, we have chosen to focus on the gender differences for our white-speaker samples because we had relatively few groups homogeneous in both sex and ethnicity except among white speakers. What we say, therefore, may not necessarily apply to Asian Americans, Latinos, and African Americans, since humor dynamics seem to depend on the gender and ethnic composition of the group as well as other critical social factors. With this one qualification, our goal in this paper will be to identify the conversational dynamics that seem to account for our earlier observed differences in self-directed humor, showing that references to the self take on different forms in the speech of men and women in mixed- and same-gender groups.

Texts 1 through 6 provide examples that illustrate the main categories of humor in which we found statistical differences, namely in targeting of self or of absent persons. All the groups had ribbing within the group.

EXAMPLES OF CONVERSATIONAL HUMOR¹

TEXT 1. SELF AS TARGET IN WOMEN'S GROUP: clothes
Conversation among four acquaintances, all white, in a senior center
Topic: clothing styles; making dress for high-school graduation

```
35 >Bev: and = .. -me with my little bit of *weight..=extra=
36 @Cat: = um hmm= ha =ehe =
37 Bev: extra than most of them .. i can get into clothes that uh
38 Cat: ==sure
39 Bev: that at least look *presentable on me but they kinda hide
40 : *disguise .. my figure because of the women's sizes.
-----
341 Bev: = and ..= if *you *did *not leave enough= yeah
343 : for your seams you know/ and then, uh, i had a [laugh] all but
344 > : one *sleeve for puffed sleeves? and one was *not gonna be
345 : as full as the other one, so::
346 @Deb: [chuckle]
347 Bev: my grandmother used to bring a lot of things from over ss-,
348 : you know, from uh, *europe, and, uh, *that
351 : that dress did up, but uh, what was *safe to do about the
352 > : *sleeves/ so i walked crooked up the ...= the stage/ =
353 @Ann: haha= ha =
354 >Ann: you mean one arm = was in a ( )/ = [laughing as she talks]
355 Bev: = yeah =
356 @All: [ general laughter ]
```

TEXT 2. SELF AS TARGET IN WOMEN'S GROUP: food

Three women preparing dinner—Rose (Filipina), Car and Bel (Chicanas)

Topic: Captain Crunch Bel brought Car for dessert

153 >Car: *oh my god, that stuff is *so sweet/ no *wonder it used
 154 : to give me canker sores/
 155 @Bel: [laugh]
 156 >Car: we'd eat *so much of it =()=
 157 Bel: =but= *yeah you wouldn't stop
 158 : though huh?
 159 >Car: i know..like *right now? [laugh]

 228 Car: see?...=()= (has removed all cereal from box for premium)
 229 > : okay now i have to put it all back in, *that's
 238 @ : the problem, *i'll just eat it all/ [laugh]
 239 Bel: {(p) really}
 240 Car: ahh, mmm..oh no, gonna be a *mess/ that's okay/
 241 > : we'll just eat it all/ [laugh] { }?

TEXT 3. MALE SELF AS TARGET IN MIXED GROUP: teaching

White mixed group: Two couples—Jim, husband of Cyn; Ken, husband of Lou

Topic: questionnaire about applying to graduate school

01 Jim: [reading from the test] o.k., does the idea of giving verbal
 02 : presentations of academic material in front of a ()
 03 : group bother you?
 04 Lou: ==*no it doesn't *bother me if i knew what i was *talking about
 05 : not at *all/
 06 Jim: ==because that's another one of those.. i mean..doing
 07 : doing uh *science is basically.. you *write about it or you *talk
 08 : about it/ giving talks () i *love it/ frankly ..i really..
 09 : = i'm a *-ham =/ i *love it/
 10 Lou: = did you ever = ==did you ever have stage fright?
 12 Jim: oh sure/ yes / the first time i ever *taught is when ([laughing])
 13 : i had these enormous notes,
 13 : and the first day i went in i was teaching
 14 : the intro psych course i was a graduate student and um i went
 15 : into this *class .. and there were 5..*freshmen sitting there
 16 : to take this lecture/ it was over in about (15 minutes [laughing])
 17 > : so i said) -well *that'll be it for *today: [laughs]/
 18 @Lou: [laughs]=i'm quite =
 19 >Jim: =i was *terrified/=[laughs]

Text 4. ABSENT MALE TARGET IN MALE GROUP: pranks

All-filipino beer party

Topic: nasty tricks played on drunken friends

01 Man: {[pp] it was) pretty funny.. what was ah, what funny things did
 02 : you guys do at fiji?
 03 Col: oh, um ...there was a lot of stuff, if um *god forbid you'd pass
 04 : out at the end of a party in the house, somewhere,
 15 Man: oh/

16 Col: so and actually i saw one, i was with- at this party with these
 17 : guys/ and it was just about ten people at this- at this guy's
 18 : apartment, and so everybody was passing out and i was *passed
 19 : out and i heard these two guys are all{[pp] hey, hey man let's
 20 > : get him man}
 21 @Man: [laughs]
 22 Col: and then like {[pp] let's get the razor}/ and i hear they get
 23 : the razor out, and the electric razor's going zzzzzzz/ and i
 24 : looked up and (said) you *touch me with that (and) i'm going
 25 : to *kill you/ and they're all o.k. all right, let's not get him,
 26 : so i passed out/ and then the next morning i got up and ah
 27 : this guy *needed a ride, he goes, yea give me a ride monahan/
 28 : gave him ride home, and ah later on in the day he gives me a
 29 : call/ you *asshole, why didn't you tell me what they did, you
 30 : were there too weren't you? i was like, *what are you talking
 31 : about? and the guy got one of his eyebrows shaved//
 32 Man: o::h go::d, *what do you do? with no eyebrows?
 33 Col: ya'know what he did was he *penned it in/ he took a pen and
 34 > : like *drew an eyebrow, and then put a band-aid over it/
 35 @All: [laughter]

White women, like men, engaged in a good deal of putting down of absent parties, both in women's groups and in mixed groups. These putdowns are illustrated in Texts 5 and 6.

TEXT 5. ABSENT FEMALE TARGET IN FEMALE GROUP: mimicry

Two sisters, both white college students, in a café

Topic: Application for a job

54 Lyn: =()= so you decided to call Sara?
 55 Mim: yeah/...it's weird cause she's kinda .. i don't know
 56 : don't you think that she's kinda *standoff- she's kinda
 57 : =her'n =
 58 Lyn: =she left this message=
 59 Mim: =her and *Jill
 60 : are both kinda weird i think
 61 Lyn: =she always goes she goes=
 62 Mim: =they're like=
 63 >Lyn: {[slow whiny] i'm calling for *Mi:*mi:}
 64 Mim: ..she's she =calls me *Mi:*mi: =
 65 Lyn: = {[acc] did you hear her message?}
 66 Mim: yeah/
 67 >Lyn: she goes {[slow whiny] i'm calling for *Mi:*mi: um if you
 68 : want you can work at the video store/ um tell her to call me,
 69 @ : bye *Mi:*mi:) (laughs).

TEXT 6. ABSENT MALE TARGET BY WOMEN IN MIXED GROUP

Rehearsal of student choral group, 5 white women, 1 white man (Sam)

Topic: appearance of boyfriend of common friend

01 Meg: oh by the *way,
 02 Jan: ==[laughs]
 03 Meg: ==*Terry and i have seen *him/ hahahaha/

05 Bet: *oh what's the verdict *guys?
 06 Meg: well,
 07 >Ter: ==definite potato=shrub=
 08 Meg: =definite=potato=shrub=
 09 @Wom: = [laughter, shrieks]=
 10 Sam: he's from *idaho?
 11 Jan: i'm
 12 Meg: [==laughs]
 13 Jan: i'm
 14 Meg: we told her *that-
 15 Jan: ==astounded/
 16 Meg: ==that he's=o.k. but we =have to meet him next time//
 17 Sam: =()=
 18 ? : =*oh= you didn't let us()=
 19 ? : =*oh=
 20 Jan: =well he's coming *tomorrow?=
 21 Ter: =he *stands there *talking=..but **no she doesn't introduce us/
 22 >Bet: ==she's *smart/
 23 @All: [laughter]
 24 Rae: =but =
 25 Sam: =[laughs]=
 26 Joa: ==he's *really **shy you *guys/
 27 Meg: ==he *smiled at us,
 28 Ter: ==*yeah? =he did smile= at us/
 29 Jan: =did he= did he/
 31 >Bet: ==does he have *good teeth/
 32 @Wom: [laughs]
 33 Meg: i didn't *look/..i was kind of looking at his *hair to be =honest/=
 34 Jan: (=yeah=
 35 > : he has kind of *nice *teeth..yeah he has really weird *hair huh
 36 @ : =[laughs]=

In a recent analysis of self-directed humor in an enlarged sample of 71 white males and 53 white females of student age, we added and coded five new variables that we believed would elucidate the gender differences that we had observed earlier and that are illustrated in the following examples. These variables included (1) who initiated the humor; (2) whether the humor served to build group solidarity; (3) whether the speaker shared or disclosed any personal information; (4) what general purpose the humor served for the speaker; and (5) whether the humor dealt with real, exaggerated, or fantastic situations. Our results on these dimensions confirm the direction that is apparent from inspection of the examples.

TEXT 7. MALE SELF AS TARGET IN MIXED GROUP: driving

White student couple eating in an Asian restaurant—Don is male, May is female

Topics: food they are eating; plan to drive to Virginia for their wedding

17 >Don: i'm a little rusty with the chopsticks/
 18 May: that looks like something that you could use a *fork for/
 19 >Don: i'm a little, ([laughing] again, i'm a little rusty with the
 20 : chopsticks/)

 28 May: i want to go to: <5> *berkeley books/
 29 Don: berkeley books/

30 May: because i'm *sure they have um good *atlases there/
 31 Don: oh are we still looking for an atlas/
 32 May: *i am/
 37 Don: ==look i don't even *want a stupid atlas/
 38 > : i don't know where virginia is and
 39 : ([baby talk] i *like it that way/)
 40 May: =you have to know how to *drive/=
 41 >Don: =i'm just, i'm just going to= follow the road signs/
 42 *May: ([laughter] they don't start in, in california saying virginia
 43 : this =way/=)
 44 Don: =with= an arrow?
 45 May: no/
 46 >Don: ==see i've never driven cross country/
 47 *May: [laughs]
 48 >Don: i just assumed they had like uh ... forty-nine separate
 49 : signs, with corresponding arrows/

TEXT 8. MALE SELF AS TARGET IN MIXED GROUP: reading

Graduate students—Peter and Art are white males; Diane, Leah, and Sara are white females

Topic: article in *Harper's*

25 >Art: *we've been actually discussing um empiriocriticism..we've
 26 : been going through some...ah..we were *earlier discussing
 27 : some of Locke's *moral,
 28 >Pet: ==fascinating that happens to be an interest of mine/
 29 *Dia: [laugh]
 30 Lea: oh *really? =()=
 31 Pet: =although=i *have to say to be honest i've been *so
 32 Dia: =[laugh]=
 33 Pet: busy =lately= that the only reading i've done in the last six to
 34 > : eight months or so is those little *placards on the Muni
 35 > : buses/ y'know the little *poetry,
 36 *All: [laughter]
 37 Art: oh you mean you read the poetry
 38 Dia: [laugh]
 39 Pet: it's how you get *educated by ridin' a lotta different
 40 : buses/
 41 Art: really
 42 Pet: yeah, uh huh
 43 Art: yeah *that's the ticket *that's the ticket *yeah
 44 : yeah, read 'em in the bus..*right/
 45 >Sar: (p) it's uh..i saw the movie/
 46 *Dia: [laughter]
 47 Pet: yeah, right, right
 48 Dia: [laughter]
 49 >Art: although *i've just become fascinated by Wittgenstein/ i
 50 : i just can't get him out of my head
 51 Lea: [singing]
 52 *Dia: [laughter]
 53 >Pet: *derivative/ derivative/ totally derivative
 54 *All: [laughter]
 55 >Pet: well, read the original, read the *original, my man/

56 *All: [laughter]
 57 Art: is it on a *computer though is what i want to know/
 58 >Dia: *computer/ video/ *Wittgvideo/
 59 Art: =yeah *Wittgvideo there you go/

Duetting (Falk 1980) has been found to be more common between female speakers. This is a way of sharing the floor by joint construction of utterances, simultaneity, or completion of each other's starts.

TEXT 9. FEMALE DUETTING IN WORD PLAY IN MIXED GROUP: coffee

White undergraduate group; Bill is male, others are female

Topics: Helen's job in coffee shop and Eve's job in record store

67 Hel: god we sell cappuccinos or well depending on the week
 68 : it's usually cappuccinos seventy-five cents/
 69 Eve: ==i can't wait until mcdonalds gets
 70 : *espressos and *cappuccinos/
 71 : they *will
 72 Hel: ==yeah
 73 Lau: that'll be really *good/
 74 >Eve: mc- mc- =mcpresso=
 75 Hel: =mc=
 76 Eve: =mc mc spresso=
 77 >Lau: =mc- mcpuccino=...i..
 78 Bill: =mcpuccino o my god=
 79 *Eve: [laughs] mcpuccino =mcpresso=
 80 >Lau: it sounds like =uh al=
 81 >Eve: =al pacino=
 82 *Lau: ==pacino [laughs]
 83 *Eve: yeah [laughs] yeah they'll
 84 > : have al *pacino do the
 85 Lau: yeah italian () [laughs]
 86 *Eve: do the *publicity for it/ **yeah [laughs]

We looked at how self-directed humor was organized in conversation and observed that the self-targeted remarks of the women were more likely than those of the men to build on someone else's humorous remark. We call this *stacked humor*. Women were also more likely to collaborate or duet in creating humor, as we see in the "mcpresso" joke in Text 9 or the add-on by Diane in line 58 of Text 8. Women maintained the humorous key across participants, resulting in a larger amount of humor elicitation overall by women. This was true in both single-gender and mixed conditions. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to initiate a humorous key. In the single-gender groups, over a third of the men's self-directed humor was novel rather than continuous, while women's humor was more collaborative and less novel. This point about collaborative one-liners has been made before by Jenkins (1985).

We then looked at the social functions served by self-directed humor. With respect to self-directed humor, Ziv (1984) has suggested the following four functions: (1) Redefining the social hierarchy by higher status individuals in order to create solidarity among group members of differing social status; (2)

Protecting the self by identifying a weakness before anyone else does; (3) Sharing similarities between self and others; (4) Coping with weaknesses by making light of them. We can more briefly refer to these as *equalizing*, *defending*, *sharing*, and *coping*. From our texts, we had a sense that the social dynamics were often different for men and women, with the men's humor serving the first two functions and the women's serving the last two. Women volunteered real stories about themselves to resolve and heal old embarrassments or to build togetherness by revealing shared experiences. Many people do not feel that there is any self-deprecation in these cases, only sharing. Jenkins calls this type of humor "self-healing" (Jenkins 1985:135). We found that over half the women speakers produced humorous self-revealing narratives for other women, whereas only 16% of the men did this with men.

In contrast, it struck us that the self-deprecations of the men more often were exaggerated or unreal and clearly false, a kind of Walter Mitty fantasy. The exaggeration gave a display or performance quality to men's humor, even though in our texts there is almost no identifiable joke-telling, that is, performance of pre-formed jokes. Women more often volunteered what seemed to be a true story about the speaker's experience, such as the puffed sleeve that was too small in Text 1. The true story in Text 3 was elicited, not volunteered, and it followed a comment that now the problem reported is vanquished, so it is a story of victory, not of weakness.

Men's remarks often took the form of flip wisecracks, as in Text 8. In gender-mixed groups, these wisecracks about oneself, often revealing the speaker's attitudes, were produced by more than two-thirds of the men but fewer than a third of the women. They also tended to follow a sequence in which the speaker had either said or done something to invite ridicule and seemed to reflect the speaker's attempt to defend themselves by making light of the situation. This is illustrated nicely in Text 7 first by Don's joking about his revealed clumsiness with chopsticks, and then by his attempt to downplay his stubbornness over buying an atlas by saying that he thought he could just follow signs and arrows to get to Virginia.

The tendency toward exaggeration seemed to get inflated in the mixed groups. In our samples, men increased their fantasy and exaggeration about themselves from about a third when with men to over half when with women.

In coding, we also observed that women seemed to use humor more often as a coping strategy, in both mixed and women-only groups. While both men's and women's self-deprecating humor gave a sharing impression about half the time, women's comments were judged to increase empathy and camaraderie more often than men's. If we look back at Text 7, for example, we see that Don's story about driving to Virginia is somewhat provocative and is certainly not intended as camaraderie because he distances himself from May's desire for an atlas. What is especially remarkable about this passage is that when readers think the speaker is a woman and not a man, they more often say that the speaker is commenting about her ability to find her way. In contrast, when readers are told that the speaker is a man, they are more likely to comment that he is joking about his reluctance to use an atlas. These commentaries reflect cultural stereotypes about a

particular theme. They also suggest that not only do women and men differ in the ways that they use self-directed humor, but that readers and listeners are likely to interpret equivalent humorous remarks of men and women as serving different functions: men's self-directed humor is more likely to be characterized as defensive while women's is more likely to be seen as an attempt at sharing and coping.

To sum up, we found that men and women in all the groups under study were indeed different from each other, but the white speakers shifted strategies between when they joined in gender-homogeneous and gender-mixed groups. They did more outgroup putdowns, and the women decreased self-directed humor when the groups were mixed. The men's self-directed humor turned out to be somewhat different in character from the women's, involving more exaggeration, more provocation, more display of attitudes, and less evocation of shared experience. Even when "accommodating," they brought with them attributes from male group style.

Visitors complain sometimes that Americans laugh too much, that they address serious problems with humor. A sense of humor is near the top of attributes Americans say they seek in a spouse—again, to the bewilderment of those of some other nationalities. What our data suggest is that young people either deal with the power tensions in mixed-gender situations with humor or use humor as a way of building solidarity and displacing anger to absent persons. One clue is the large number of outgroup putdowns. The increase in men's self-deprecations and a decrease in women's can be seen as a way of equalizing power. But in doing self-deprecation, men often do it differently, in a particularly masculine way, by provocation and exaggeration rather than by seeking out common experience.

NOTES

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Transcription conventions follow Gumperz (1982) with the following additions and modifications: (1) Key lines resulting in laughter are marked after the line number by >; laughter is marked by @; (2) Within each text, initial == marks latches, paired = marks overlaps, and * marks some stressed words.

Ethnicity was designated by participants in permission forms.

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Gender and linguistic change in the Belizean Creole community¹

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INTRODUCTION: GENDER AND SOCIOLINGUISTICS

Studies examining the relation of language and gender have mostly developed outside sociolinguistics, which means that relatively little attention has been paid to the linguistic variability linked to the diversity of cultural and social definitions of gender. Underlying most earlier studies of language and gender is the socially oriented feminist premise that language is one of the means through which men maintain their domination of women. However, the picture that emerges has often been based on studies of limited social segments—typically white Anglo middle classes—and from those specific observations, hasty generalizations have been extended to all members of both sexes. But a universal interpretation of male and female speech behavior does not do justice to the variety of cultural experiences and to the flexibility of language mechanisms. For example, conversational interruptions have been unilaterally interpreted as violations of a person's right to speak. Yet in most cultures interruptions constitute a dynamic element which signals participant interest and argumentation. In reality, interruptions may be either supportive or disruptive, and women interrupt men as much as men interrupt women, the proper interpretation being derived from the context of use.²

Thus, it is crucial to look at the cultural diversity of gender strategies and of concomitant linguistic devices. Since language is primarily a tool which mirrors its speakers' intentions, any linguistic feature may be used to signal group identity (see Labov's 1972 study of Martha's Vineyard): for example, aggressive resistance to interruptions is a relatively new discourse feature which has become a badge of identity for some American women actively involved in changing gender roles. It is likely that different sets of individuals will adopt different linguistic features to signal their chosen roles, cooperation, or alienation in a given community.

This study will investigate a traditionally stigmatized group of men and women, specifically, a rural community of West Indian Creoles; the focus will be on the role of gender in the diffusion of linguistic change, with particular attention to the effect of certain grammatical constraints on the progression of variability.

GENDER AND LINGUISTIC VARIABILITY IN A CREOLE CONTEXT

Code-switching is common to all Creole societies, and this can be explained by reference to the historical background of colonialism: the brutal exploitation

GENDER AND LINGUISTIC CHANGE IN A CREOLE COMMUNITY

of Africans transported to the Caribbean triggered the rapid formation of contact languages—pidgins and creoles (mixed varieties with African and European components). Even now, the uneven distribution of power in colonial times is reflected in the pervasive stigma associated with creole languages and their speakers, which entails linguistic insecurity in the users of those stigmatized languages.

The Caribbean Creole community I have investigated—a fishing village in the Central American nation of Belize—is of particular interest because of the extensive linguistic variability operating there.³ The vernacular language of most African Belizeans is an English-based creole, but the official and educational language is an external model, English, since Belize was the English colony of British Honduras before 1980. The result is a complex situation in which the choice of a code is determined by the context: the creole is used at home, whereas the official language is expected in formal—professional and educational—contexts. There is, however, no clear separation between the creole and the standard. The two poles in fact overlap and result in a language continuum. In this investigation of a West Indian community, two major sets of varieties are identified: *basilects* (the native creolized varieties that are officially stigmatized) and *mesolects* (learned varieties appropriate in semiformal or formal ingroup contexts).⁴

Gender roles are therefore to be studied against the background of the power relations associated with language varieties. In Belize, the English-based creole (Belizean Creole) symbolizes the power of ingroup identity whereas English, or some approximation of it, is associated with mainstream power and social privilege, upward mobility, and education. Individuals adopt the varieties which correspond to their chosen roles or ambitions, or they may develop the flexibility to switch from one variety to another to fit different roles.

GENDER AND THE DIFFUSION OF LINGUISTIC CHANGE

This study will explore more particularly women's role in the diffusion of linguistic change, and investigate the claim that women are innovators in linguistic change. The claim has been made that women initiate change but only in the direction of standard speech, and upgrade their speech patterns in formal situations more than men of the same age, social class, and education level, because they try through this strategy to compensate for their lack of power and the general subordination to which they are subjected. On the other hand, men are said to lead in the use of new vernacular forms because of the positive connotations of masculinity and male solidarity associated with nonstandard speech.⁵

This issue is particularly relevant in a Creole context because it has been widely assumed that a movement toward the standard variety and away from the vernacular (decreolization) is occurring in West Indian linguistic communities. If this is true, then the general claims on language change outlined above would predict that women as promoters of prestige varieties spearhead this process by

eliminating basilects from their repertoire. If so, they would be primarily acrolectal speakers, whereas men would be mostly basilectal speakers.

The hypothesis of sex-related complementary linguistic choices (female preference for the standard versus male preference for nonstandard varieties) appears at first to be confirmed. In a preliminary investigation of the overall distribution of copular variants across the continuum (Table 1), men in the Belizean community investigated used a greater incidence of the vernacular morpheme *de* than women (16.5% versus 9%), whereas women displayed more instances of the standard copula *be* (63.5%) than men (45.7%):

TABLE 1. *Gender and choice of standard vernacular copular variants*⁶

	N	Vernacular (<i>de</i>)	zero*	Standard (<i>be</i>)
Women	(961)	9.0%	27.3%	63.5%
Men	(2034)	16.5%	37.0%	45.7%

*See below for a discussion of the zero variant and its function.

However, the hypothesis of females' exclusive preference for prestige language does not hold when attention is paid to style-shifting in relation to gender, at least in the context of the Belizean Creole continuum. Indeed, the women of Placencia displayed greater shifting from one range of the continuum to the other and tended to use all varieties available, not just standard forms. They extensively used the vernacular in community activities and thus cooperated with men to preserve local identity and the traditional values rooted in the creole vernacular.⁷

The fact that women are instrumental in extensive style- and lect-shifting does not necessarily mean that they are not involved in the putative decreolization process. If decreolization is viewed as internal change away from an earlier grammar, systematic formal differences observed between basilects and mesolects can be viewed as indicators of incoming historical change. In the investigation of gender in linguistic change, it is therefore a prerequisite to identify carefully the features which characterize basilects and mesolects. When this is accomplished, the distribution of style-diagnostic features in women and men can then be investigated, but it is also essential to assess the extent of individual repertoires for both men and women. A single speech sample for each individual may create the false impression that this individual always performs at this stylistic level, and failure to assess the extent of style-shifting in relation to gender may result in fallacious conclusions, such as those displayed in Table 1.⁸

COPULAR VARIATION AND STYLE-SHIFTING

Because of the extreme variability of the creole continuum, it is necessary to focus on a specific morphosyntactic feature. The feature selected here is the copular variable and its three variants, and it was selected because it occurs in a

wide variety of environments. It is also a well-studied feature whose variability has been recognized in several creoles (Holm 1980) and decreolized varieties such as Black English (Labov 1972; Baugh 1980). The copula has three subvariants spanning the creole continuum, and their distribution pattern mirrors individual choices which are representative of the lect that is intended by a Creole speaker. These variants will be evaluated from a gender-sensitive perspective. The three copular variants are (1) *de*, which is strictly basilectal and functions as a continuative aspect marker as well as a locative verb; (2) a *zero* variant, which occurs in basilects and mesolects; and (3) inflected forms of the English verb *be* which start appearing in mesolects.

A quantitative measurement of the overall distribution of the three copular variants found that out of 2,995 copular tokens, *be* occurs 51.4% of the time (1,541 tokens), *zero* occurs 34.3% (1,030 tokens), and *de* occurs 14.1% (424 tokens). These figures seem to indicate that the community generally favors the English *be* variant, suggesting ongoing decreolization, and this trend is also represented in women's speech (Table 1).

However, both measurements (overall and gender-sensitive) obscure the fact that the relative proportions of the three morphemes differ systematically according to the variety selected. Specifically, *de* and *zero* co-occur in basilects (*de* never occurs in mesolects), whereas *zero* and *be* co-occur in mesolects (*be* occurs minimally in some basilects), as shown in Table 2. The relative proportions of the three morphemes vary along the continuum, so that the highest *de* incidence (over 10%) is characteristic of basilectal varieties, and at the other end, a high proportion of *be* signals acrolectal forms (Standard English of course includes 100% inflected *be* as copula/auxiliary).

The general distribution of those variants in each group of lects is as follows (taken from Escure 1991:599):

TABLE 2. *Distribution of copular variants in the Belizean continuum*⁹

	N	<i>de</i>	<i>zero</i>	<i>be</i>
Basilects	1131	12.7% (381)	22.6% (678)	2.4% (72)
Mesolects	1864	1.4% (43)	11.7% (352)	49.0% (1469)

Shifting "up"—that is, moving from basilects to mesolects—can be identified in terms of two processes: the deletion of the morpheme *de* or the substitution of *zero* for *de*; and the addition of the copular verb *be* or the substitution of *be* for *zero*.

It is possible to make a general assessment of the effect of gender on lectal choice if the data presented in Table 2 are separated in terms of speaker sex. Table 3 (taken from Escure 1991:600) shows how each sex makes general use of basilects versus other lects. No striking difference emerges in the average use per sex of the three copular variants, which means that women and men broadly agree on what constitutes a mesolect and a basilect:

TABLE 3. *Gender and lectal variation*

	Basilects		Mesolects	
	Women = 8	Men = 6	Women = 9	Men = 14
<i>be</i>	10.5% (21)	5.5% (51)	76.5% (590)	80.5% (879)
<i>zero</i>	54.2% (103)	61.1% (575)	20.7% (160)	17.5% (192)
<i>de</i>	34.7% (66)	33.4% (315)	2.7% (21)	2.0% (22)

The immediate interpretation of Table 3 which incorporates reference both to gender and to lectal variation appears to be that the men and women of Placencia do not speak differently, and that neither sex displays strong preference for either vernacular or standard variants.

However, there is another aspect of copular variation which is not represented in Table 3 and needs to be assessed in terms of its possible effect on the substitution patterns of those variants in lectal shifts. Each of the three variants identified above, *de/zero/be*, is linked to formal grammatical constraints. Formal properties have rarely been investigated in the context of gender because it has been assumed that gender is irrelevant to formal grammar (McConnell-Ginet 1990:75). However, this assumption has never been tested empirically, and this is precisely what I intend to accomplish here, namely, to determine whether formal conditions are perceived or represented differently by men and women. The next section outlines the grammatical environments which determine the occurrence of each variant in the two sets of lects, and the subsequent section relates these environments to gender.

SYNTACTIC CONDITIONING OF COPULAR VARIANTS IN BELIZE

The Belizean creole system (with English lexical base) is more diversified than standard English in its use of the reflexes of the verbal unit *be* (which in English functions as copula before adjectives, nominals, and adverbials, and as auxiliary in aspectual contexts).

The major copular functions represented in English are broken down in terms of their grammatical environments in order to illustrate the shifting mechanisms operating across the continuum, with specific reference to the variants *de* and *zero* corresponding respectively to basilects and mesolects. Note that lectal samples and even single sentences are not necessarily consistent in their usage of variants: copular variants can be mixed, as illustrated in the following basilectal and mesolectal excerpts. This variability is normal in the continuum and is accounted for by the discrepancies between grammatical environments and differential rates of linguistic diffusion represented in Table 4. The following short texts recorded in Belize illustrate the two major lects and the difficulty of identifying change in the creole continuum (copular variants are underlined):¹⁰

Basilect: "Anansi Story"

A traditional folk tale in which Anansi tricks his enemy the Tiger by hiding in a dead sheep's skin and pretending—as the (speaking) dead sheep—that he has been destroyed by Anansi's spitting on him. This dissuades Tiger from chasing Anansi.

[Note that *rotten* functions as verb or adjective; it is twice followed by *de* and twice by *zero*.]

"As i spit pan mi," i say, "ai (*zero*) rotten, ai start *de* rotten, you better not mek a eat me because," i say, "you (*zero*) rotten dead. Ai *de* right down di point: a *de* rotten, ai *de* rotten. Bra Tiger say, "What!" an' Bra Tiger run gone.

"As he (Anansi) spit on me (the sheep)," he said, "I was rotting, I started to rot; so you'd better not eat me because," he said, "you'll rot to death, too. I'll be direct: I am rotten (or I'm rotting)." Brother Tiger said, "What!" and ran away.

Mesolect: "Manta-rays"

Two fishermen discuss the danger involved in diving to catch lobster (called *crayfish* in the Caribbean): manta-rays can attack divers.

[Note that verbs are preceded by *be* or *zero*, adjectives by *be*, and locatives by *de* or *be*.]

Di manta-ray, dose tings are ugly. My bredda say i was divin' out—i *de* wid iz hookstick, right—i (*zero*) lookin' down aroun' di rock, try hook up a crayfish, right, an' when i look up, dis big ting was right, right you are fra mi.

Manta-rays are ugly creatures. My brother told me that one day he was diving out there—he was with his fishing hook, right—he was looking around the reef, trying to catch a lobster with his hook, right, and when he looked up, this big manta-ray was right there, as close as you are from me.

Pre-verbal contexts

In pre-verbal environments copular variants function as aspect markers for progressive/continuative and habitual/durative. Both are consistently marked in creole basilects by the pre-verbal morpheme *de* which, however, is replaced by *zero* or *be* in mesolects. Another conservative morpheme, *a*, also occurs occasionally in those aspectual contexts in basilects, as in *Breda Rabbit ina di bush a listen* 'Brother Rabbit is in the bush listening' but it is not included in the analysis for reasons stated elsewhere.¹¹

Basilects (see also "Anansi Story")

(1) (*zero*) di first time ai *de* hear bout dat [de- progressive with stative verb]
'it's the first time I hear (= am hearing) about that"

(2) all di time we only *de* eat vegetable an' fish an' chicken; dat (*zero*) time now fu eat piece a big meat [de- habitual]
'we only ever eat vegetables, fish and chicken; it's about time to eat some big piece of meat'

Mesolects (see also "Manta-rays")

- (3) *Dey (zero) using a little mechanizations for better results* [zero-progressive/habitual]
- (4) *When I'm around everybody is speaking English, you know. ... You usually use English when you're working there, we try to use English most of the time except when we (zero) speaking among ourselves in their office we use creole.*
[Habitual and progressive aspects are not differentiated in mesolects; *be* and *zero* are both used.]

Pre-locative contexts

Basilects use either a special locative verb *de* or a zero morpheme, and this alternation indicates the gradual loss of the creole locative verb. Mesolects use mostly the English copula:

Basilects

- (5) *When you get down de, da dock de, why, soldier de de*
'When we arrived there, at the dock, why, soldiers were there'
[other *de* items function as adverbials or place deictics]
- (6) *Bra Anansi i (zero) up in di housetop*
'Brother Anansi was up under the roof'
- (7) *When Partner i de da cave, boy, I fear I wan bite di dust*
'When my partner (he) was on the cave, boy, I feared for my life'

Mesolects

- (8) *He was living nearby, in the line of where dat Jungle place de*
'He was living nearby, in the area where that "Jungle" place is'
- (9) *I was here from a child, you know, I grow up here from a baby*
'I have been here since I was child, you know, I grew up here since I was a baby'

Pre-nominal contexts

The creole morpheme *de* never occurs before nominal predicates, although some other morphemes (*da* or *a*) may occur in those contexts (cf. note 11). In basilects, equation is marked by zero with nominal predicates and mostly by *be* in mesolects:

Basilects

- (10) *(fish) de wing part, an de head part, da (zero) lot a meat*
'(That fish) is very meaty in the side and head'

Mesolects

- (11) *Is one of de tings we don't bother about dat in Belize*

- (12) *I (zero) good as done seventy-eight because it (zero) only a mont or so*
'I am almost seventy-eight years old because it (my birthday) is only a month away'

Pre-adjectival contexts

As with noun phrases, adjectives (or stative verbs) cannot be accompanied by the morpheme *de* in basilects; the regular basilectal marking of attribution is a zero copula, and mesolects primarily introduce *be* in this context. Creole passive reflexes are also placed in this category because they function like adjectival elements or stative verbs, as shown in the "Anansi Story" excerpt shown above:

Basilects

- (13) *But den place (zero) easy fu get contact*
'But it's easy to make contact from that place'
- (14) *Ai (zero) afraid ai wan bite di dust*
'I'm afraid that I will bite the dust'
- (15) *Dat kyan be help*
'That can't be helped'
[English passive as stative verb: note the rare basilectal use of *be* following the modal *can*]

Mesolects

- (16) *Di word of god (zero) free, right, like di raindrops dat fall from di sky, right*
- (17) *That's hard to see, right ... it's hard to pinpoint*

Other contexts

There are some other environments requiring a copula in English but which do not correspond to a specific category in Belizean Creole. Some of those residual cases include the pre-sentential position, especially with cleft and pseudo-cleft sentences, and existential structures. They are mostly represented by zero in basilects and by *be* in acrolects:

Basilects

- (18) *Da (zero) no we you call bonin wata*
'This is not what you call burning water'
- (19) *We dey wan have to do da (zero) report it da custom*
'What they will have to do is report it to the customs'

Mesolects

- (20) *It's when you have to switch*

(21) *That's why I didn't have any problem because I had practice in it*

(22) *Der's a road being built, but it's not quite trafficable*

SEX AND GRAMMATICAL SUBCATEGORIZATION

Table 4 compares the five grammatical environments outlined above in terms of speaker sex with the intent to determine whether both sexes respond similarly to the syntactic constraints on copular choice in each group of lects, basilects and mesolects. It will then be possible to evaluate to what extent gender is involved in the diffusion of linguistic change, particularly in reference to grammatical subcategorization.

TABLE 4. *Gender and grammatical subcategorization of copular variants in a creole continuum*

		Basilects			Mesolects				
	N	<i>de</i>	zero	<i>be</i>	N	<i>de</i>	zero	<i>be</i>	
-VERB	M	[266]	.95	.03	.01	[175]	.06	.23	.71
	F	[50]	.86	.10	.04	[128]	.13	.30	.56
-LOC	M	[146]	.40	.58	.03	[159]	.07	.18	.75
	F	[50]	.42	.50	[.08]	[114]	.03	.13	[.84]
-NOM	M	[307]	0	.92	.08	[373]	0	.14	.86
	F	[42]	0	.81	[.19]	[234]	0	.12	[.88]
-ADJ	M	[158]	0	.92	.08	[322]	0	.20	.80
	F	[39]	0	.92	.08	[258]	0	.27	.73
-Other	M	[64]	.05	.86	.09	[64]	0	.11	.89
	F	[9]	—	—	— *	[37]	.03	.22	.76
Total	M	[941]	.33	.61	.05	[1093]	.02	.18	.80
	F	[190]	.35	.54	.11	[771]	.03	.21	.77
ALL		[1131]	.34	.60	.06	[1864]	.02	.19	.79

* Insufficient data

[] = areas of change most represented in women's speech

Some interesting differences emerge from a closer look at the five syntactic environments determining the use of copular variants, and their relation to style-shifting from basilects to mesolects. Those environments are arranged in ranking order, as presented in this section, in terms of their association in basilects with vernacular (non-English) variants. Whereas the special copula *de* occurs before verbs and locatives, a zero copula is normally expected before nouns and adjectives in basilects. This separation into two sets of environments can be related to substratal (West African) influences, since those languages (as well as many others, but not Indo-European languages) require separate pre-verbal tense/aspect morphemes and sometimes special locative verbs, whereas adjectives function as stative verbs and therefore do not require any pre-verbal elements.

Shifts in pre-verbal and pre-locative environments

Table 4 clearly shows that in basilects *de* occurrence is limited to aspectual (progressive and habitual) pre-verbal contexts (-VERB), and to locative predicates (-LOC). But there is also a discrepancy between those two environments: the pre-verbal environment is consistently associated with the creole morpheme in basilectal contexts (over 90% of the time), whereas locative predicates evidence only a 40% incidence of creole *de*. This is a possible sign of decreolization: if there is evidence of change, it is to be found in the tendency toward *de* deletion affecting only locative contexts, since that rule appears to operate even in the most stable native creole lects. In contrast, the basilectal aspectual morpheme is stable and strong in the pre-verbal category. Thus the linguistic change perceived in basilects clearly indicates grammatical conditioning, namely, *de* is more likely to disappear before locatives than before verbs. The crucial question relating to the effect of gender on linguistic diffusion is therefore whether one sex is more instrumental than the other in the implementation of this change before locatives. It turns out that the shifts from basilects to mesolects are representative of the trend and are differentially illustrated in men and women.

Whereas in basilects men use a somewhat higher frequency of *de* (95% versus 86% for women), which is, as discussed above, a typical vernacular morpheme in pre-verbal contexts, in mesolects they are also more advanced in their use of the standard *be* copula in those same pre-verbal contexts. This would seem to indicate that men are more likely to implement style-shifting in the pre-verbal environment (although mesolects are only *intermediate* varieties, not the full standard acrolectal realization, which, as mentioned before, rarely occurs within the rural community of Placencia in natural contexts). On the other hand, women appear to be more sensitive to the stability of pre-verbal *de* and remove it less drastically than men: they still produce 13% of *de* in mesolects and only 56% of English *be* (versus 71% for men), and they use more of the intermediate zero copula than men do.

The most striking area of differentiation involves the *locative* contexts which appear to be involved in an active process of change—a possible case of decreolization, since the creole verb *de* does not occur categorically in any basilectal sample. It follows that pre-locative *de* is in the process of being ushered out of the creole vernacular, unlike aspectual *de* which is vigorously present in the creole. No sex-based difference is noticeable at the basilectal level: both women and men display a similar scarcity of *de* in this context (as opposed to in the pre-verbal environment): they produce equivalent complementary proportions of the *de* and zero variants (around 40% and 55%, respectively). But in mesolects, the ongoing loss of the locative *de* verb is most clearly represented in women's speech: women, unlike men, implement *be*-insertion more frequently before locatives than before verbs.

This finding may be interpreted as indicating that the women of Placencia, Belize, spearhead linguistic change or at least are more sensitive to its overall directionality, that is, they conserve strong linguistic features, such as pre-verbal *de*, and accelerate innovations, such as the loss of locative *de*. This pattern of

speech behavior fits well with women's linguistic versatility, as evidenced in their use of extensive style-shifting: they actually promote bipolar repertoires which can incorporate the multiple values of the new society and, in particular, assign prestige to local ethnic values (as represented in the creole) beside the traditional educational and cultural values associated with English.

Shifts in pre-nominal and pre-adjectival environments

Both the pre-nominal (-NOM) and the pre-adjectival (-ADJ) environments are largely and systematically associated with a zero copula (in the 80% to 90% range), and this is implemented by both sexes. The zero copula element is clearly a stable basilectal feature, since it is not involved in any major internal linguistic change, and can therefore be assumed to be characteristic of the native varieties used in Placencia. When shifting to mesolects, the addition of the standard morpheme *be*—or, alternatively, the substitution of *be* for zero—is actively implemented. There is, however, a minor discrepancy between the two grammatical categories, which suggests that adjectives lag slightly behind nominals in terms of the *be*-insertion rule. Interestingly, women's usage reflects this discrepancy more than men's. Again, these formal differences, though minor, validate the claim that gender is connected to grammatical constraints.

In *pre-nominal* contexts, women's basilects evidence a small but significant incipient appearance of *be* (19% versus only 8% for men), whereas in mesolects men and women produce roughly equivalent frequencies of the English copula, both in the upper-80% range. This means that women anticipate the overall linguistic diffusion represented as the movement toward standard morphemes through the *be*-addition rule. And in this sense they are therefore innovators.

In *pre-adjectival* contexts, there is no gender-related discrepancy in basilects. Both men and women produce a high 92% incidence of zero copula. Zero is obviously the strongest element with adjectives or stative verbs. It is also widely used as well for creole reflexes of English passives, which appear to function like adjectives. The stability of copula absence is also represented in mesolects: the pre-adjectival context exhibits a lesser amount of *be*-insertion than does the pre-nominal context, and here again women best represent this tendency, since they use the standard copula less often than men and preserve a substantial frequency of the zero morpheme, in fact almost a third of all their copular realizations.

In conclusion, linguistic diffusion in pre-nominal and pre-adjectival environments appears to proceed in a manner similar to, though more subdued than, the patterns observed in the other two contexts, namely, pre-verbal and pre-locative. Change—here represented by the shift from zero to *be*—is more advanced before noun phrases, and women show more awareness or a more advanced implementation of this internal change.

CONCLUSION

With lects separated, it is clear that men and women broadly agree on the overall combination of the three copular variants in both groups of lects. It has

been demonstrated that, at least in this community, women do not clearly favor prestige variants, and men do not overwhelmingly favor vernacular (basilectal) forms. In fact, in mesolects women overall are slightly less likely than men to use the standard morpheme *be*, which is associated with external prestige. Thus the complex picture emerging from the detailed analysis of a specific linguistic variable does not suggest that sex roles are strongly reflected in the linguistic choices of a rural working-class community of Creoles in Belize, Central America.

I do not interpret these apparently inconclusive observations as negative; on the contrary, they indicate that all individuals in the Placencia community have a wide range of linguistic choices available to them, which reflects the conflicting identities common to many post-colonial societies. There are probably more linguistic choices in such societies than in the average white middle-class community, and members of communities using creole continua with extensive lectal shifting are likely to evidence a greater flexibility and originality in their linguistic choices.

However, a close examination of formal grammatical constraints proves productive in associating gender with linguistic diffusion. By scanning the patterns of copular choice in relation to grammatical subcategorization, it is possible to identify the directionality of change and to determine that linguistic diffusion is linked to category-related constraints. This type of linguistic change can also be interpretable as decreolization, since it occurs in the native (basilectal) varieties.

The most obvious case of internal change involves the pre-locative context (with substitution of zero, then *be* for *de*), and to a lesser extent some change is also evidenced before nominals (with the substitution of *be* for zero). In both cases, women are more sensitive to the tendencies of ongoing change. They are instrumental in preserving the conservative features which are also strong vernacular variants (the pre-verbal creole *de* morpheme and the pre-adjectival zero copula), and on the other hand, they accentuate innovative rules, such as the loss of the locative verb *de* and of the pre-nominal zero copula.

In conclusion, a careful analysis of the extensive variability of the linguistic copular feature in a Belizean Creole community demonstrates that the gender variable has an impact on language development, and more surprisingly that gender is represented at the formal level of grammatical constraints. It is not surprising to find that linguistic diffusion is constrained by syntactic features, and more particularly by grammatical subcategorization. But it is particularly interesting to find that women implement linguistic diffusion more actively than men do, and that they do so in terms of the formal factors underlying those changes.

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented under the title "Lectal Variation and Women's Power in a Creole Community" at the 1992 Berkeley Women and Language Conference.
2. Although a unilateral negative interpretation of interruptions may apply to Anglo middle-class groups in formal contexts, in which men were found to be responsible for most of the interruptions affecting women, it does not correspond to the speech patterns of other American social or ethnic groups (e.g., African Americans, Latinos, and Jewish Americans) or other cultures (e.g., Latin, Mediterranean, Caribbean or African societies). There is additional evidence (based on several studies conducted by University of Minnesota students) that even Anglo groups actively use interruptions and overlaps as a positive conversational device in relaxed contexts.
3. The speech data used in this study were collected between 1979 and 1985 in the village of Placencia (Stann Creek District), a small fishing community (population 400). Field methods are fully outlined in Escure (1982).
4. A third set of varieties is often identified in creole continua: *acrolects*, which are standard-like or approximate the official standard. They did not occur in daily spontaneous interaction in the rural community under investigation and were therefore not included in this analysis. *Acrolects* are appropriate in outgroup situations with government officials or strangers. It is also possible that some individuals do not control the upper range of the continuum (see Escure 1982 for more details).
5. Case studies documenting the relation of gender to language include *inter alia* Gauchat 1905; Labov 1972; Milroy 1980; Nichols 1983; and Trudgill 1972. See also McConnell-Ginet (1990); Graddol and Swann (1989); and Thorne, Kramarae, and Henley (1983) for overviews.
6. The database consists of thirty-seven speech samples recorded exclusively in spontaneous contexts with the help of a local assistant. The respondents cover a wide age spectrum, from 11 to 78, and include fourteen women and nineteen men. The discrepancy between women's and men's corpus size is discussed in Escure (1991).
7. Extensive repertoires were especially prevalent among middle-aged women who play a governing role within the special economy of the village. This pattern was interpreted as an indication of those women's mediating roles in their community (Escure 1991: 603-4).
8. It is not unusual to find linguistic descriptions based on brief, formally elicited samples, and "foreigner talk" is the usual result of interviews of this kind. Earlier claims that creoles are disappearing to yield "postcreole" continua are likely to be the result of inadequate immersion in the community. In the corpus used here, four speakers (three women and one man) are each represented twice in the corpus, once in basilects and once in mesolects.
9. The corpus of speech data includes fourteen basilects (1,131 copular tokens) and twenty-three mesolects (1,864 copular tokens). The basilectal group represents the most vernacular forms found in the sample, whereas the mesolectal group includes those varieties that represent a shift away from basilects yet indicate avoidance of acrolectal behavior.
9. The broad transcription of basilects used here is as close as possible to written English and reflects only the most obvious phonological differences, such as the lack of interdentalals.
10. A morpheme *da* (or its occasional conservative variant *a*) occurs in a potential copular position and has indeed been treated as copula in some studies of Caribbean creoles. This interpretation would raise to four or five the number of copular variants in this study. However, arguments have been presented in support of the claim that *da/a* in present-day Belizean Creole functions as a focusing device and has lost all copular value (Escure 1984). This constitutes the basis of my analysis of the copular variable into only three variants.

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**"Are you with me?":
Power, solidarity, and community
in the discourse of African American women**

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INTRODUCTION

The study of the language behavior of African Americans conducted over the past thirty years has produced a substantial body of research describing and analyzing the linguistic, sociolinguistic, and metalinguistic aspects of the community. Most of this work, however, has dealt with the language that deviates most from the standard—the exotic, male-dominated street language of males and adolescents—while ignoring the language behavior of "drylongso" (Gwaltney 1979) ordinary Black people. While some studies have dealt with child language and the language of women, compared to the others they are relatively rare (Heath 1983; Ward 1971; Goodwin 1990). The result is that we know comparatively little about language use in the larger Black community and about the language use of African American women in particular.

In the past few years, however, a few studies have sought to address this omission. This paper draws on a small and recent body of research by African American women scholars—including my own—who have undertaken the formal study of the linguistic and communicative styles of their African American sisters. According to Morgan (1991), studies of African American women's speech behavior are central to a complete understanding of how the community expresses its reality because it is women who have historically been responsible for the language development of children and consequently of the community. This paper examines specific linguistic and discourse features used by African American women to express and invoke solidarity, power, and community. It also examines some of the factors that seem to affect the choice of a particular style of speaking and analyzes the roles that a particular style plays in promoting and maintaining a shared identity by reinforcing culturally valued attitudes, beliefs, and mores.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PERFORMANCE

In Foster (1987, 1989), I argue that modern folklore and performance theories are useful for understanding many of the everyday interactions that take place within the African American community. Performance, a specific category within the field of ethnography of communication, is a special kind of communicative event in which there is a particular relationship between stylized material, performer, and audience. Just as a system of speaking varies from one speech community to another, so will the nature and extent of stylized communication—

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performance—vary. The rules governing performance vary from one community to another. Different speech communities will have their own rules regarding who can assume the role of performer, which speech acts and genres can be performed, which institutions are suitable contexts for performances, and the extent to which performances are expected, permitted, or even required in day-to-day interactions. The verbal and nonverbal means utilized by performers to signal they are performing and displayed by audiences to indicate they understand the performers' intentions will also vary across speech communities (Hymes 1972, 1974, 1975). Consequently, the complex relationships among context, audience, performer, and stylized material that produce performances can be established only emically, that is, by reference to the particular community in question.

Like much of the other research conducted in the African American community, studies that have considered performances have tended to focus exclusively on those of males, while largely ignoring women's performances. Conducted in the classroom of a community college, my own research has demonstrated how one African American woman incorporated familiar ways of speaking into her classroom and used performances to engage students in classroom discussion, reinforce group identity and values, and promote solidarity with her predominantly African American students.

In this classroom, five discrete events occurred regularly. The teacher opened each class with a greeting. Despite their brevity and formulaic nature, the greetings served an important social function. Students in this classroom were quick to point out that these greetings indicated the teacher's attempts to reduce the social distance between her and themselves. Brief announcements concerning on- and off-campus events, reminders or extensions of assignment due dates, or the date and scope of an upcoming test generally constituted the content of announcements. Following announcements, the teacher generally commented extensively on class assignments or tests. Only after greetings, announcements, and comments on student performance did the instructional event of the classroom begin. The teacher officially signaled the end of the instructional part of each class with a closing, which typically consisted of an expression of leave-taking accompanied by a call to action or an evaluation of the class.

The teacher was most likely to "break into performance" when attempting to clarify a concept students had encountered in a text or a lecture. Often, as if to decrease the distance between herself and her students, create greater intimacy, and increase the interaction between performer and audience and perhaps signal an incipient performance, the teacher would remove the podium behind which she usually lectured and place it on a chair beside her desk.

Typically a performance was preceded by a sequence in which the teacher read from her notes or where students were asked to read a passage directly from the text. Consider the following excerpt taken from a longer sequence (see Foster 1987, 1989 for a complete transcript), in which the teacher is trying to help the students understand the budgeting process, which they had encountered for the first time in their textbooks. In order to elicit participation, she begins by asking students about their own budgeting procedures.¹

Morris: ah Miss Summer/ um ah. not even based on the book what do you know about budgets
 Summer: what do I know about budgets?
 Morris: I'm looking for everybody's collective consciousness of what they know about budget making? you have one? you got a budget?
 Summer: yes
 Morris: how do you do it?
 Summer: l:my house
 Morris: your house:l
 Summer: my money
 Morris: no/ I don't know a house a money that budget?
 Summer: yeah/ yeah I have a budget
 Morris: [[acc:] you have a master plan to beat this economic system?]
 Summer: no/ not yet (laughs)
 Morris: well, that's what a budget is umh/
 Summer: I was referring to budgeting money to for payin' the bills runnin' my my house//
 Morris: unhuh// that's a budget//
 Summer: yes/ it works//
 Morris: you're sure?
 Summer: yes/ l:it works//
 Morris: it works:l
 Summer: for me//
 Morris: for you:l ok// somebody else who wanna share their ideas about budget// I want to make sure everybody understands what a budget is before we go on// yes, Miss Goins//
 Goins: I was just makin' mines up this morning// it has (class laughs) un/where who I have to pay up and you know/ how much money do am I gonna gonna get and how much money do I have to pay off everybody and everything and how much money will I have left and how much money will I put in the bank// that's basically what my budget ...

Compared to other speech events in the class, the talk during performances is embellished by a number of African American stylistic devices—manipulation of grammatical structure, repetition, use of symbolism and figurative language, and intonational contours—including vowel elongation, changes in meter, tempo and cadence. A few of the features excerpted from the transcripts are highlighted in an appendix. The talk during performances is also more symmetrical than other talk in this classroom. In one performance, for example, students and teacher have an equal number of turns; the students speak almost as much as the teacher, 211 words to her 296. This contrasts sharply with other speech events which are teacher-dominated and highly asymmetrical. Other interactions recorded in this same classroom reveal that the teacher dominates classroom interactions, in one case speaking 23 times as much as the students. Unlike other speech events, in which the teacher dominates the interactions, students are expected to participate in performance sequences; indeed, they frequently and spontaneously interject unsolicited comments into the ongoing talk. Sometimes the teacher specifically calls for audience response and the class responds in unison. At other times, however, the teacher uses a more subtle mechanism—cross-speaker anaphora—to

elicit additional student comments, as when, for instance, the teacher repeats student responses, echoing their exact words with rising intonation.

These performances require the active participation of the students to move them along. Several times during these sequences, the teacher chastises the class for failing to respond to an incipient performance, and sometimes after receiving no response she suggests lecturing as a less desirable alternate style of talk. As used in this classroom, performances are intended to evoke personal knowledge, which becomes the vehicle through which students get meaning from and make sense out of academic content. Moreover, there is some evidence, though slight, that for students, performances served a mnemonic function. Students were more likely to remember information conveyed through performances than they were to remember information not encoded in this way, as verified by analysis of portions of tests that had been administered.

Compared to the other speech events in this classroom which stress conformity to rules, allow almost no student input and are more regulatory and institutional, performances are creative, humorous, interactive events that allow for student contribution. In performances, there is a shift away from mainstream language to language and behavior that is more Black. The resulting talk is more participatory, with students contributing spontaneously. Despite its resemblance to play, the focus of these performances is instructional and the content intellectual. It is through performances that explanations and learning take place. By deliberately manipulating rhythm, grammatical structures, intonational patterns, and using images, symbolism, and gestures the teacher shifts in performances from a mainstream to a Black discourse style to accomplish certain communicative ends.

METAPHORS

One feature of performance is the use of metaphor; however, performances are not distinguished by this single aspect alone. Over the course of the semester the teacher employed several metaphors and created an extended metaphor which enabled her to talk to students and enabled them to communicate with each other. Early in the semester, the teacher began using the metaphor of *F-troops* to refer to students who because of insufficient effort were not making satisfactory progress in classroom work and were therefore in danger of receiving a failing grade. The *F-troop* metaphor was derived from a television series of the same name, which portrayed a fictional U.S. cavalry unit who because of lack of discipline, poor planning, and ineptitude were generally unable to carry out even the simplest tasks. Without exception, students in this class understood the use of the innuendo as the teacher intended it—a joke with a hidden meaning, not something to be offended by or to take personally. At midterm the teacher divided the class into four cooperative work groups. Named after three local Black community businesses and one state agency whose characteristics were familiar to students, these groupings formed a metaphorical system that could be invoked throughout the semester. On the day the groups were established the teacher told the class:

I don't want the Bank of Commerce to get swelled heads. Now don't get swelled heads because you if you want to remain, if you want to be in the Bank of Commerce and if you give someone in Cruz Construction Company a hard time you may end up in that group. Now I want some competition in here, I'm gonna give you a class project. You all are gonna be managers and um this state agency the Division of Employment Security if you don't want to be unemployed you gonna be fighting to get jobs in Cruz Construction and ah hunh Western Union in order to keep your position. I'm gonna have you do a class project in here. So, if you don't like the company or the state agency you work for you gonna have to do something about your grades. I'm not gonna be tellin you it anymore. So, I'm gonna let you sit with your most deserved group. ... Oh, yeah, I pick on DES (Division of Employment Security), I pick on the DES un and the Bank of Commerce a lot. I'm gonna call them for all my questions. (Foster 1987, 1989)

Later in the day she draws on the metaphor to exchange jokes with students:

Morris: Is this group with all the money? You'd better give me a house loan.

Students: Depends on how good your credit rating is.

Morris: I have an excellent credit rating (Foster 1987, 1989).

In the classroom, the metaphor functions on multiple levels. Because the class is a management class, a business metaphor such as this one is ideal, and thus creates one layer of meaning. The fact that all of the businesses are Black-owned and operate within the Black community adds a second layer of significance. Finally, the particular circumstances of the companies add another dimension to the metaphor. These circumstances include that the Bank of Commerce, reorganized from another bank that closed because of insolvency, has become successful; that Cruz Construction Company, one of the most successful minority-owned businesses in the community, was formed by a common laborer; and that although Western Union provides a crucial service for community residents, it charges stiff fees for its check-cashing service. The resulting metaphor is elaborate, intertwined with multiple levels of meaning that allow for the relationship and interplay among ideas.

Talking through the metaphor created a discontinuous speech event that classroom participants could invoke at will. Throughout the semester, the teacher called on the metaphor to nominate students, urge them to do their best on an assignment, quiz or compliment them. Though the teacher generally used the metaphor to communicate directly with students, they quickly embraced it themselves: only four days after it was introduced, students began using the metaphor to communicate with each other and thereafter often used it to talk among themselves. Examples of this strategy follow: A male student who normally would not approach a particular female student commented to her in the elevator, "You'd better study if you want to stay in the Bank. I'm planning to get a job in the Bank." In another instance, a student I was interviewing used the metaphor to explain why she had to study harder in school. "I didn't come to school to be unemployed," she informed me.

An analysis of the events in which the metaphor is used is instructive because it shows that in addition to being used to compliment or admonish students, it is also used to encourage competition between groups and individuals. Ordinarily the teacher did not promote competition and students rarely competed with each other.

Within the metaphorical frame, however, a key aspect of business was introduced within which competition was indeed appropriate. Because they were spoken and heard within the metaphorical frame, student challenges such as those quoted above were acceptable whereas under normal discourse, words such as these would not be spoken; indeed, such competitive comments would be deemed inappropriate.

This use of metaphor is consistent with Black's (1962) analysis, according to which metaphors can be used to suppress, select, or organize features of the principal subject by applying statements about it that normally apply only to a secondary subject, using a set of "associated implications." In the setting under study, the characteristics associated with the business world—competition to get ahead—are assigned to a typically noncompetitive classroom to encourage academic achievement. As used in this classroom the metaphor serves two principal purposes. First, students are permitted to compete and challenge each other through the frame of the metaphor while still maintaining their personae of noncompetitiveness. Second, the metaphor allows participants to take each other's comments figuratively instead of literally. The result is a kind of indirection characteristic in Black communities (Mitchell-Kernan 1971; Smitherman 1977; Morgan 1991).

To summarize, the speech events used in this African American woman's classroom are highly stylized, marked by linguistic features that signal a shift from standard English to a more Black style of discourse by manipulating grammatical structures, exploiting cadence and meter, drawing upon vowel lengthening, pitch, stress, intonation, and repetition, and employing figurative language, symbolism, and gestures. Embellished prosodically as well as gesturally, performances are highly stylized speech events. Unlike other speech events that do not encourage students to participate, the shift to performance elicits active student participation. The teacher, moreover, depends on student participation to construct the meaning to be derived from the text. In this class, performances are used to relate academic concepts to everyday events and incidents. Performances spark personalized accounts and vivid illustrations through which the subject matter is linked to real life. Evident in the interactions between preacher and congregation in African American churches, performances are important organizing principles in many other African American speech events as well. Some or all of the stylistic features identified in these classroom performances are also evident in the stories and play songs of Black children; in the sounding, rapping, toasts, and verbal art of Black adolescents of both sexes and of adult males, in Black music and Black preaching styles (Abrahams 1970; Abrahams & Bauman 1971; Chernoff 1979; Davis 1985; Heath 1983; Keil 1972; Kochman 1970; Mitchell-Kernan 1971; Smitherman 1977; Szewd 1969; Waterman 1952). Before concluding this analysis let me discuss the significance of classroom performances from the teacher's perspective.

This teacher's self-described style has developed out of her involvement with the Black church. Though unable to name particular features of a Black sermonic tradition, she emulates African American preachers and believes they are effective because "they are able to take complicated theological material and break it down to the ordinary person; teach, preach, entertain, and keep the people's attention" (cf. Mitchell 1970:100). Likewise, this teacher uses stylized speech events to link

textual knowledge—as public knowledge is—to personal experience. In addition, through her use of performance, she is signaling and affirming her voluntary affiliation with the African American community and its values (Blom & Gumperz 1972). Through these code and style changes, she shifts between multiple identities and roles while at the same time demonstrating her ability to negotiate the superordinate community and her proficiency in adhering to its norms. Through these code shifts, she demonstrates that participation in both communities is possible. Taking on multiple roles increases her chances of being understood and appreciated by the students and at the same time demonstrates her ability and willingness to take on the various identities required by each community.

CODE-SWITCHING IN INTERVIEWS

The second part of the discussion analyzes the code-switching behavior of six Black women who are participants in two larger ongoing studies of African American women. Two of the women whose interviews are presented are narrators in Nelson's (1990) study of 30 African American women, while the other four women are participants in a study of African American teachers being undertaken by Foster (1990, 1991a, 1991b). In both studies the researchers made clear to our narrators our shared background with them. Because I was dealing with strangers, I emphasized these shared characteristics to my narrators in initial letters and in subsequent phone conversations to set up interviews. However, I did not initiate the use of Black vernacular forms in my interviews. Nelson on the other hand did not hesitate to demonstrate her fluency in the vernacular and sometimes code-switched into the vernacular before her narrators had done so.

In both the Nelson and Foster studies, the narrators switched from Standard English to Black English at some point during the interview. Perhaps because I did not initiate code-switches, in my study they never occur in the beginning of the interview. In fact, the earliest any code-switch appears is 35 minutes into the interview. In contrast, in Nelson's study, code-switches occurred early in the interviews with either interlocutor initiating the switch from standard to vernacular forms.

Even though there are a number of syntactical variants that characterize Black English, all of the code-switches reported in my study were instances of multiple negation. There were no instances of the use of the invariant *be* and no non-occurrences of the copula, the third person singular, or the possessive. Although sporadic, the use of multiple negation is systematic and is frequently employed as a narrative device. The three examples that follow are illustrative.

- (1) JV I find myself addressing character and self image, much more than I did before. Constantly reiterating the fact that you can do it. I must say that fifty times a day or more. You know you can do it. Do it a little faster. Let me see if you can try your next sentence. Try that that book. I find myself doing that more and more than ever. I find myself trying to encourage them to do things on their own rather than say, "Have your mother help." I never say, "Have your mother help" cause the mother might not be there. "Miss Vander I don't have no mother." What can you say to that? "I don't have no ... my father ain't there."

- (2) MBM Oh yes more times than not. More times than not and then, you have to be even more entertaining, so they don't get discouraged. And you have to tell them that you know they don't know; it's not their fault. They say, "Miss Miller, I can't read." I say, "I know that. Now come on and try." But you can't say, "Now what's the matter with you boy?" or any of those things. All that has to go out of your mind. And when they tell you that you can't say, "There's no such a word as can't." Say, "I know you can't do it, but now we're gonna try some more." Because there is a can't. There're a whole lot of reasons you can't do something. But we keep telling children that lie. *Ain't no such word as can't.* Yes there is.
- (3) RF And do you know we have only one white teacher that will teach Black history. Only one, only one. She doesn't mind teaching the Black history, but the rest of them say, "*I don't know nothing about it!*" You see, "*I don't know enough about it to teach it. I leave that with Miss Ruthie.*" It isn't that. I think they do not want to acknowledge the achievements that have been done by Black men alone, you understand?

In the preceding examples, the narrators use a Black English variant specifically to report the speech of others. However, the narrators do not employ this strategy uniformly. Sometimes they report their students' speech using negative concord. At other times, they use the Standard English variant to report students' speech. Of course, it is impossible to know whether the quoted speech is being reported as spoken or whether it is being highlighted for emphasis. In example (3), for instance, it is unclear whether the white teacher whose speech the narrator is reporting used multiple negation, or whether the narrator is using the Black English variant as a strategic device. The fact that she immediately rephrases the statement suggests that she is calling attention to the comment by setting it off using the Black English variant.

Code-switching is sometimes used for allusion or emphasis. The narrators in my study used multiple negation more frequently to highlight a particular statement than they did when quoting someone. In fact, there were twice as many instances of the former as the latter. This type of switch, italicized in the transcript, is illustrated in the following three examples:

- (4) RF You see, there were Blacks all over there back in times before. Not owned by all whites. But now it's all white. Understand? All this over here that is developed—we call it—what do we call it—Palmetto? I think that's what they call that beach—Palmetto Beach. Dr. Burney's group from Sumter and Columbia. Blacks that own that beach. All right, the whites wanted it. All right, so then they put the taxes so high that their heirs couldn't pay it. So, after they wouldn't sell it to them. They put it on auction. So we had a group of men—doctors and lawyers and undertakers. They all got together. Blacks. And, they said they were gonna save it. So that Monday when I got the paper and the lady who was in New York, Miss Lilly, who was paying the taxes, *she didn't know nothing* about it because they didn't take the paper.
- (5) MG No, no, no, no, no. If you make the highest score on the test that's your seat. So, remember, Friday, you've still got to make the highest grade to keep your seat.
- MF That's what I'm saying. So, you can lose your seat.

- MG Yeah. Sometimes, *don't nobody sit at the table*.
 MF Why not? Somebody must have had the highest score?
 MG You *can't get no fifty* and sit at a table. You've got to make an A or a B.

- (6) RF Thurgood Marshall and Perry and all
 MF Oh, it was Thurgood Marshall
 RF Oh yeah, they were the ones that handled that case. Perry. And, they say there and when he would just tell them the number of the page and what the law was. And they knew. They knew what they were doing. Hear? They had to pay that girl for time that she was off.
 MF That they didn't hire her?
 RF And they wanted to reinstate her, but she said, "NO." She went to New York and got a job in New York. She wouldn't go back in the school. But, she got the money!
 MF She got the money.
 RF And they won the case. And from then on, *we didn't have no more trouble*. But that was, that was a sight to see.

There are a few points about the code-switching behavior in these interviews that are intriguing. The first is that irrespective of the reason for code-switching, at most it involves a single clause or sentence. Multiple negation is always embedded in longer stretches of Standard English, which highlights the contrast even more. Also, code-switching is used both as a device to set off reported speech and as a means to highlight a particular statement. Almost without exception, the frequency and use of code-switching varies according to the region in which the narrators spent their childhoods. The two narrators who grew up in the North, attended desegregated schools, and resided in the North at the time of the interviews code-switched less frequently and almost invariably used this device when quoting someone else's speech. On the other hand, the two women who grew up in segregated communities and attended segregated schools code-switched twice as often and their switches were almost always used for emphasis. The length of the interview did not affect the number of switches. Although this analysis concentrates solely on the manipulation of grammatical structures, there are undoubtedly other equally important features of code-switching such as vowel elongation, manipulation of meter, rhythm, cadence, and repetition that may signal and be understood as a shift to a discourse style that is more Black.

Nelson's study demonstrates that in addition to the use of multiple negation, the narrators employed aspects of a preaching style—responses in repetitive parallel clauses, which are structures commonly used for emphasis in the Black church tradition. For example, in response to Nelson's question, "What does it mean to be a Black married female?" one of her narrators provides an extended reply, part of which is excerpted here, in which she utilizes the parallel clause structure:

It is pain, suffering, determination, perseverance. ... It means a lot of heartache. It means achievement. It means a struggle, not for freedom, but for an identity, for that identity that is yours, that identity that says you don't have to have hair down your back, straight; you don't have to have blue eyes; you don't have to have a pencil-point nose; you don't have to have razor-thin lips; you don't have to be coy and cute in order to be attractive.

Throughout this interview Nelson and the narrator both interact spontaneously using both verbal and nonverbal means of communication. Both interlocutors' statements are punctuated by responses and comments in the form of cosigns and completers from the other. In cosigning, the listener expresses an affirmation, an agreement with the speaker. In the completer the response completes the caller's statement. Sometimes this is an answer to a rhetorical question and sometimes it is spontaneously talking along with the speaker.

In Nelson's study, there is a definite performance aspect to the interviews. Narrators manipulate words to enhance the utterances. They frequently repeat phrases for emphasis. Changes in pitch, meter, and cadence evident in these narratives resemble the performances described earlier in this paper.

CONCLUSION

It is not possible to give a complete account of the reasons for the conditions under which African American women code-switch from Standard English to a Black discourse style. This paper has attempted to present some examples of this behavior and demonstrate that it is a deliberate, systematic strategy used as a narrative and highlighting device and influenced by the social relationship between the participants. In some contexts, in my interviews, for instance, the social relationship is not established immediately. Rather, it is negotiated throughout the interview, and not until the narrators feel comfortable do they code-switch. It is unlikely that these narrators would code-switch with outsiders, who would probably misunderstand it. Since the last two studies examine speaker behavior only in interviews, which represent merely a slice of our informants' daily interactions, the conclusions that can be drawn must be provisional. It is worth asking in which other contexts besides interviews and classrooms narrators might code-switch.

The extent to which certain characteristics influence the social relationship and govern code-switching is also worth investigating. Both the Nelson and Foster studies presented here examine the language behavior between African American women. My interviews with male informants are qualitatively different. Because the men speak for longer stretches at a time there are fewer turns, and there are few instances of code-switching in the interviews. This suggests that gender plays some part in facilitating or inhibiting code-switching behavior and cannot be ignored.

Some researchers contend that teachers generally uphold norms of middle-class speech, that women adhere to the prestige code more than men and that middle-class African American speech is more likely than that of working-class African Americans to conform to Standard English norms (Labov 1966). The narrators in all three of these studies belong to at least two of these three groups. These facts notwithstanding, this paper makes it clear that African American women not only retain their ability to communicate in the Black vernacular, but through their use of Black discourse express the belief that Black English communicates a particular stance or point of view that cannot be expressed in Standard English. The vernacular enables them to communicate cognitive, affective content not available in

the standard form of the language, to create and maintain social relationships and express solidarity with listeners.

Although the particular features analyzed in this paper represent important characteristics of Black discourse, there are other features I have not discussed that may also signal and be understood as a shift to speech that is more Black (Foster 1989). Morgan's (1991) study of the discourse of three generations of African American women examines forms of indirection, which she argues is a counterlanguage through which African Americans assess speakers' intentionality.

Although narrow in scope, this analysis reveals that even in the relatively formal context of interviews, Black middle-class women do code-switch into Black vernacular forms. I believe that their code-switching behavior is an expression of solidarity, an invocation of shared identity through which they express their power and challenge the hegemony of public discourse.

NOTE

1. Transcription conventions are as follows:

/	pause
//	long pause
l: :l	repeated material
:	long vowel
::	longer vowel
[acc:]	accelerated speech
{ }	range of speech over which a description in brackets applies
...	ellipsis

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**We understand perfectly:
A critique of Tannen's view
of cross-sex communication**

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From increasingly restrictive abortion laws, unsafe breast-enhancing devices, legislative bodies composed almost entirely of white men, sexual harassment in the workplace, pay differentials for women and men, and an epidemic of violent crime, both sexual and nonsexual, against girls and women, we learn daily of the reality of patriarchal rule in our culture. It is within this context that I begin my comments about Deborah Tannen's (1990) book *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. Indeed, it is in this context that any discussion of interaction between women and men in the United States must be situated.

This book is an anachronism. Perhaps more accurately it is part of what Susan Faludi describes as the "force and furor" (1991:xxi) of a backlash against women and feminism. Its popularity and overwhelming acclaim are both astonishing and troubling. Its title has been accepted as a metaphor for what ails American female-male relations—a simple misunderstanding. As Senta Troemel-Ploetz comments, "that such a deeply reactionary book should appeal to so many readers informs us, disconcerting as it may be, that what is non-threatening to the status quo sells better than critical analysis" (1991:490).

Yet a critical analysis of the book is needed not only in scholarly journals but in public forums and the popular press as well. One particularly disturbing aspect of this undertaking is that an otherwise well-respected linguist has publicly and successfully promulgated a theoretical framework that is widely disputed within the academic community. It is not the expression of her own opinion that is objectionable. It is touting that point of view to the public without acknowledging its questionable status as a theory within the academic field which she represents. As early as 1975, Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley discussed the need for consideration of both difference and dominance in the study of language and gender.¹ Publicly ignoring this dichotomy does those of us who have studied language and gender for the past twenty years a tremendous disservice and significantly undermines, perhaps even sabotages, other legitimate research agendas.

When the difference or two-cultures model of cross-sex miscommunication first engaged in a quiet debate with the dominance model of miscommunication within the privacy of the academy, the objections to it were muted and polite (see Coates & Cameron 1988). With the publication and extraordinary success of Tannen's book, however, the stakes have become much higher. Now the general public, already ignorant about fundamental principles of language and rather tolerant of male dominance, embraces a theoretical model of communication that simultaneously

perpetuates negative stereotypes of women, excuses men their interactive failings, and distorts by omission the accumulated knowledge of our discipline. Therefore, the objections must be more forceful and more public.

We might start by asking why the book is so immensely attractive to so many individuals. There are first of all the stories of conversations between women and men, which are certainly familiar in tone to scores of people; they are even familiar to me. When we can identify with what we read, we read on. If we are unschooled in a topic of interest, as is the American public, yet searching for comfortable explanations, then we are more easily seduced by interpretations such as Tannen's, which sound plausible when presented without counterclaims. And as Penny Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet explain, "the appeal [of the two-cultures] theory is that it minimizes blame for cross-cultural tensions for both the dominating and oppressed group" (to appear:8). That is not to suggest that Tannen ever acknowledges the existence of men as a truly dominant group or of women as oppressed. She refers only to a set of asymmetries and carefully avoids a discussion of patriarchy. In fact, even some who otherwise praise her work as brilliant and scrupulously fair point out this flaw. Writing in a 1991 paper originally presented at a Stone Center colloquium, psychiatrist Stephen Bergman states that "if the goal of talking is the caretaking and growth of the relationship, it is not accurate to portray men and women as having separate but equal skill and power. They rarely do" (1991:9). He believes that women are taught the skill while men are taught the power.

Another point in the book's favor, as also assessed by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, is that Tannen gives equal time to female and male verbal behavior: "Where much work on language and gender ignores male behavior by treating it as a neutral norm from which women deviate, this work has the great merit of trying to account for men's behavior as well as for women's" (to appear:6). Yet equal time does not bring with it evenhandedness. Tannen is an apologist for men. She repeatedly excuses their insensitivities in her examples and justifies their outright rudeness as merely being part of their need for independence. While not explicitly setting men up as the norm, Tannen emphasizes the importance of women's adjusting to men's need for status and independence over men's need to understand women's desire for connection. In an August 1991 piece in the *London Review of Books*, Mary Beard writes, "if you follow [Tannen's] line of reasoning very far, you soon find that these genderlects turn into nothing more than convenient alibis for all the old male powergames. 'I can't help it, honest, it's my language'" (1991:18). In Tannen's book, for example, we read about Josh, who invites an old high-school friend who is visiting from another town to spend a weekend with him and his wife, Linda. The visit is to begin immediately upon Linda's return from a week's business trip but Josh doesn't first discuss the invitation with her. Linda, of course, is upset by his failure to do so. Tannen would have us believe that Linda's hurt feelings would disappear if only she understood that for Josh, "checking with his wife means seeking permission, which implies that he is not independent, not free to act on his own. He feels controlled by her desire for consultation" (1990:26). This sense of entitlement to act entirely on one's own and to make

unilateral decisions is part of the social empowerment that men enjoy. It has precious little to do with communicative style or language.

What of the book's premise itself, that girls and boys grow up in two separate cultures where they learn two different ways of relating to each other, which in turn results in two distinct communicative styles? That gender-differentiated socialization practices exist was one of the earliest lessons of feminist research. That these socialization practices are used to instill in our children the values and gender assignments of our society is equally well established. To find that some differences emerge in speaking styles is therefore not surprising. However, to speak of these gender arrangements without connecting them to the power arrangements which they enforce and enhance as well as reflect is intellectually naïve. And given the highly integrated lives of American women and men, to ascribe full-fledged cultural status to patterns that result from socialization is of doubtful validity.

We see then that Tannen moves from the premise that girls and boys grow up in two separate cultures, itself a disputed fact, to the assertion that communication problems between adult females and males are therefore equivalent to other cross-cultural miscommunication—another questionable claim—to the extraordinary conclusion that miscommunication between women and men results simply from our lack of familiarity with each other's sex-specific communicative styles. I agree with Eckert and McConnell-Ginet when they state that "the emphasis on separation and resulting ignorance misses people's active engagement in the reproduction of and resistance to gender arrangements in their communities" (to appear:6).

The earliest version of the two-cultures model for interpreting male-female miscommunication was presented by Daniel Maltz and Ruth Borker in 1982. They explain that their work developed from John Gumperz's (1982) research on interethnic communication and Marjorie Harness Goodwin's 1980 study of black children in Philadelphia (1982:196). It is precisely this model, originally presented as a short theoretical paper, that Tannen transforms into her popularized bestseller. In the process, some significant alterations take place. Most noticeable is the discrepancy between the conclusion of Maltz and Borker's article and the principal theme of Tannen's book. Maltz and Borker end their article by stating that the differences between women's and men's communicative style are strongest in childhood and diminish in adulthood due to adults' progressive adjustment to each other. Tannen's account is quite different: she asserts that no such adjustment takes place. If adaptation of this sort fails to occur, as exemplified by Tannen's reported conversations and the ones we all experience, we must wonder what beyond a misunderstanding prevents the adjustment.

The work of Marjorie Goodwin (1980) is central to the development of the two-cultures model of miscommunication. Here again, there are disturbing inconsistencies between the conclusions that Goodwin herself draws from her research and the conclusions that we read in Tannen. Tannen cites Goodwin's work at least a half a dozen times. She accurately cites the factual elements of Goodwin's findings, but time and time again she omits Goodwin's own conclusions. Whereas Tannen underscores the differences in the way girls and boys construct social realities through words, Goodwin stresses the importance of

the similarities between the girls and boys whom she studies. Tannen's emphasis on difference despite the author's insistence on similarity constitutes a genuine distortion.

In her 1980 article, Goodwin states, "It should ... be emphasized that the girls being studied not only have full competence with aggravated forms of actions but systematically use them in appropriate circumstances" (1980:170). Elsewhere she says, "In cross-sex situations girls are just as skillful at countering another party as boys" (1980:171). In Goodwin and Goodwin (1987), again the point is made about the similarities between girls' and boys' talk: "Though there are some differences in the ways in which girls and boys organize their arguing ... , the features they use in common are far more pervasive. Were one to focus just on points where girls and boys differ, the activity itself would be obscured" (1987:205). Finally, in Marjorie Goodwin's 1990 book *He-Said-She-Said*, a title included in Tannen's list of references, Goodwin affirms her previous position, this time still more emphatically:

Given the frequent interaction among boys' and girls' groups, it would appear that a major failing of recent reviews of gender and language (for example, Maltz and Borker 1983 [sic]) ... has been acceptance of a "separate worlds" model of social relations, which as Thorne (1986:168) argues "has eclipsed a full, contextual understanding of gender and social relations among children." ... It will be seen that as important as the differences between groups are the interactional structures they share in common. (1990:52-3)

The anecdotal nature of much of the material that Tannen provides emerges as still another area of weakness in her work. She uses her stories as a basis for sweeping generalizations, claiming, for example, that men but not women offer advice when others are seeking what Tannen calls understanding and that men but not women provide unrequested information in response to questions. Tannen follows Maltz and Borker and others in positing that women and men in general use questions differently, both in quantity—women asking more questions than men—and in the kinds of things that questions are thought to accomplish for the speaker. These assertions are based on very limited data from cross-sex communication (Fishman 1978, 1980) and cannot be generalized to same-sex interchanges. In my research with Alice Greenwood on questions between same-sex pairs of friends (Freed & Greenwood 1992) little difference was found in either the number or type of questions used by women and men. Again we find overgeneralized claims presented by Tannen as if they were well-established facts.

Also reproduced by Tannen is the stereotype that men are direct in their speaking style whereas women's language can be characterized as indirect. In order to argue against the notion that indirectness of style is a signal of powerlessness, Tannen cites research on both Greek and Japanese speakers (1990:226) that demonstrates that indirectness, widely valued as a communicative style in nonwestern societies, does not reflect low status. While there is no argument with this discussion, on what basis does she tie it in with her claims about women? How does she establish that women are indirect in the first place? And what sort of communicative style can one expect to find in a woman, who by sexual classification should be an indirect speaker but who happens to belong to an ethnic

group that places a high value on directness and confrontation? Tannen never addresses the resolution of conflicting ethnic and sex-related verbal styles. As an American Jewish woman married to an Irish American man, the constellation of conversational traits that I live with is completely at odds with those described by Tannen. Consider that research has shown that the Irish, known for their humor and verbal indirectness, generally avoid the expression of anger within the family (McGoldrick 1982). Research shows that Jews, on the other hand, tend to express themselves directly and engage easily in family arguments (see Tannen 1981; Schiffrin 1984). Unlike Tannen, Monica McGoldrick and Nydia Garcia Preto (1984), writing on ethnicity and family therapy, do discuss the interplay of sex and ethnicity. In an article on ethnic intermarriage they remark, "Given that women are generally raised to talk more easily about their feelings, an Irish wife with a Jewish husband will probably have an easier time than a Jewish wife with an Irish husband" (1984:349).

Tannen appears to be of two minds on this subject. In her 1982 article on ethnicity and style in male-female conversation, she concludes that "conversational style is both a consequence and indicator of ethnicity" (1982:230). Yet in the book under discussion here, despite frequent references to the effect of ethnicity on speaking she argues that conversational style is a result of being raised female or male. She asserts that understanding genderlects will make it possible to change how we speak and will "take the sting out" of the differences (1990:279). In 1982, she expressed the opposite opinion. Then she offered that "it is far from certain ... that awareness of the existence of differences in communicative strategies makes them less troublesome since their operation remains unconscious and habitual" (1982:229). If the difference in these statements constitutes an evolution in her thinking, then her readers should be so informed. Regardless, the interaction of ethnicity, gender, and a variety of other factors must be addressed.

Whatever their genesis, it is worth considering the phenomenon of cross-sex miscommunication in more detail. Henley and Kramarae (1991) proffer the suggestion that miscommunication may in fact be a smoke screen that allows people to emphasize issues of difference over issues of unequal power. They ask how male dominance could be maintained if communication from women were as valued as communication from men. They believe that "the construction of miscommunication between the sexes emerges as a powerful tool, maybe even a necessity, to maintain the structure of male supremacy" (1991:30).

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet point out that both real differences between women and men and the belief in differences "serve as interactional resources in the reproduction of gender arrangements, of oppression and of more positive liaisons" (to appear:7). Both pairs of authors provide compelling reasons for dismissing the notion that men lack knowledge of the differences between women's way of talking and their own. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet ponder the means by which men sometimes interpret a woman's saying "no" to mean "yes." When a man insists that her "no" means "yes," is he simply applying, they ask, the rules that he learned in his own same-sex peer group for accepting sexual advances by pretending to reject them? Or is he "exploiting his 'understanding' of the female style as different from his in its indirectness?" (1992:7). If women's and men's use of minimal

responses is indeed different, as suggested by Maltz and Borker and Tannen, then why, as Henley and Kramarae ask, do men respond so well to women's use of positive minimal responses as reinforcement; that is, why "do they keep talking" when another speaker keeps saying, "um hum" (1991:12)?

Overall, the view of continual bad communication between the sexes may be entirely too pessimistic. Certainly there are women and men, even the white middle-class heterosexual couples of Tannen's world, who talk well together. And what of lesbians and gays talking together? What about nonsexual friendships? Where are the sisters and brothers affectionately engaged in conversation? And what of our teenage children who spend countless happy hours conversing with one another? These are girls and boys talking to each other intimately and with delight and comfort.

Most remarkable of all is the fact that the language of courtship supplies us with few examples of female-male miscommunication. The men I speak of seem to know exactly how to engage in so-called "rapport talk" and sympathy-building exchanges with the women with whom they are establishing serious romantic or sexual relations. When it suits their purposes, men have no difficulty talking in a manner that women find comfortable and appealing. And why should this come as a surprise? Men as human beings require intimacy and connection just as women do, and they often find it most easily available to them when they act in nondominant ways with others.

Unfortunately, this is not merely an unconscious knowledge of sociolinguistic appropriateness. Not only do men understand and use what Tannen calls "women's communicative style," but they consciously and actively exploit this same expressive register, commonly known as *sweet-talking*, when in pursuit of sexual conquests. Well before the backlash of Tannen's ideas, Jack Sattel remarked that "male expressiveness is a good way of coming on." He argued that "in a society as thoroughly sexist as ours, men may use expressiveness to continue to control a situation and to maintain their position of dominance" (1983:123).

Deborah Tannen has given us a book filled with contradictions. From her other work we know her to be an astute observer of human conversation and a researcher who is sensitive to cues related to class, ethnicity, and friendship. Yet in this work, while repeatedly discussing the importance of considering social factors such as geography, ethnicity, class, race, and situation in the interpretation of conversation, she completely neglects their crucial interplay with gender; she treats sex and gender as unidimensional categories and as the most salient features in our lives—which they are not (see Henley & Kramarae 1991:28.).

Of all of the contradictions present in Tannen's work, the most telling revolves around the change in interpretation of the same example as written for two different audiences. In *You Just Don't Understand*, she argues that interruptions of women by men are simply part of a conversational game and are not the result of male dominance. She tells of a conversation between Zoë and Earl at a party. Zoë begins to tell Earl a joke but Earl interrupts, saying that he thinks he knows it, checks with her, and then tells a different and very offensive joke. Tannen acknowledges that Earl has interrupted Zoë but explains that Zoë yielded to Earl's attempt to tell the joke instead of preventing him from taking it over. She states

further that Zoë supports his bid and allows him to proceed since they are playing by different rules (1990:214). In a 1992 article "Rethinking Power and Solidarity in Gender and Dominance," written for her academic peers, Tannen uses the very same example but this time concludes that indeed this "interruption does seem dominating because it comes as Zoë is about to tell a joke, so the man is usurping the floor to tell it for her" (1992:140). Tannen's purpose in this more recent paper is to explain that the meaning of an interruption depends on the context, conversation styles, and communicative goals of the participants.

Ultimately what Tannen appears actually to believe, although she has not yet revealed this to the American public, is best expressed in the more recent work. In this she stresses that linguistic forms and strategies cannot be uniformly correlated with particular intentions or functions. (This does not mean that a particular social agenda, such as the theme of control that runs through men's interactions with women, cannot be regularly expressed through multiple linguistic strategies and devices.) But if what Tannen really wishes to teach us is that conversational strategies such as interruption, silence, and indirection can convey either solidarity or power, intimacy or independence, connection or status, depending on a large number of nonlinguistic factors, then it is this that she should be explaining to us and to our senators rather than proclaiming that "we just don't understand." If the same set of conversational devices is available to all of us, female and male alike, and if we all make use of these forms and styles at varying times for divergent social purposes, then obviously we understand perfectly.

NOTES

1. A number of "difference" models have been suggested to explain female and male variations in language. These, however, are not related to communication between the sexes and therefore are not discussed in this review. Among the models worth noting are: Lesley Milroy's studies (1980, 1987) which use social-network theory to explain how language is affected by the relation of individuals to the groups with whom they interact; Patricia Nichols' work (1983) which shows the effect of socioeconomic opportunities on women's and men's speech; and Janet Holmes' research (1984, 1986) which emphasizes the need to study how varying forms function within their discourse context, taking into consideration the relationship between participants. There are, of course, a large number of studies besides those cited that emphasize the role of dominance in analyzing women's and men's language. Finally, researchers are increasingly approaching language and gender studies by combining a number of different models; see, for example, Penny Eckert & Sally McConnell-Ginet (to appear); Amy Sheldon (1990, 1992); and Jennifer Coates & Deborah Cameron (1988).

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Language, gender, and power: An anthropological view¹

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For a number of years now, issues of language have been at the forefront of feminist scholarship. This has been as true in psychology, anthropology, and history as in literary theory and linguistics. Yet, oddly, the studies that result often seem to have little in common. Psychologist Carol Gilligan (1982) writes about women's "voices," historian Carol Smith-Rosenberg (1985) wants to hear "women's words," anthropologists Shirley Ardener (1975) and Kay Warren and Susan Bourque (1985) discuss women's "silence and cultural mutedness," literary critics from Elaine Showalter (1977) to Toril Moi (1985) explore "women's language and textual strategies." But it is not at all clear that they mean the same thing when they say "words," "language," "silence," and "voice" as do the linguists and anthropologists who study women's and men's everyday conversation, who count the occurrence of linguistic variables, analyze slang and euphemisms, or study the linguistic expression of solidarity in same-sex groups.

To be sure, we share a broad frame of reference, a capacious scholarly discourse that provides a fundamental coherence. First, in all feminist scholarship an initial and often remedial focus on women—their roles and stereotypes—has been replaced by a more sophisticated notion of gender as a system of relationships between women and men (Connell 1987; Gerson & Peiss 1985). As a corollary, gender relations within any social group are seen to be created by a sexual division of labor, a set of symbolic images, and contrasting possibilities of expression for women and men. A second source of coherence within feminist discourse has been the continuing argument about the relative importance, in our understanding of gender relations, of *difference*—between women and men, and among women—as opposed to *dominance* and *power*. The contrast between approaches focused on difference and those centered on dominance remains important in orienting debates, while feminist scholars increasingly argue that we need to move beyond such static oppositions (diLeonardo 1987; Scott 1988).

Despite these important commonalities, however, a dilemma remains. On opening a book with a title such as *Language and Gender* one is likely to find articles on pronouns, pragmatics, and lectal variation jostling unhappily with articles on textual gynesis, Arabic women's poetry, and the politics of gender self-representation. What exactly do such studies have in common? Certainly, a major strength of feminist scholarship is exactly the involvement of many disciplines and their divergent terminologies and interests. But I believe it is important to make some of these very different kinds of scholarship on language and gender speak more cogently to each other.

My aim here is twofold: First, I want to give an example of how two apparently divergent types of research on language and gender can complement

each other, and indeed must learn from each other. Second, I want to argue—in keeping with the theme of these volumes—that a conceptualization of power/domination that is different from our usual, traditional assumptions promises an even broader integration, one that is already underway in much exciting recent work and that allows feminist research to criticize and rethink received notions about power.

First then, the two types of research on language and gender that ought to embrace each other: I will call them, for convenience, variationist sociolinguistics and symbolic or cultural studies. Variationist studies of urban communities have provided some powerful insights about the internal and external forces operating in language change and the central role of gender differences in these processes. But variationists have too often counted linguistic variables, correlated these with sex of speaker, and then merely speculated about why urban Western women usually choose more standard, “prestigious” forms while urban men of all classes evaluate working-class features more positively than women do. Usually, sociolinguists have resorted to universal sexual propensities or global differences in power to explain their findings (e.g., Trudgill 1983; Labov 1972). Similarly, other sociolinguists have located and counted moments of silence or apparent interruptions in male-female talk and have tried to read off power relations directly from these linguistic asymmetries.

What is missing in such work is the understanding that the categories of “women’s speech,” “men’s speech,” and “prestigious” or “powerful speech” are not just indexically derived from the identities of speakers. Indeed, sometimes a speaker’s utterances create her or his identity. These categories, along with broader ones such as “feminine” and “masculine,” are culturally constructed within social groups; they change through history and are systematically related to other areas of cultural discourse such as the nature of persons, of power, and of a desirable moral order.

As we know, directness and bluntness are understood in some cultures to be styles appropriate to men, in others, to women. In some cultures verbal skills are seen as essential for political power, in others as anathema to it. The links between gender, status, and linguistic practices are not “natural” but culturally constructed (Borker 1980). Indeed, women’s forms are sometimes symbolically opposed to men’s forms, so that the values enacted by one are denied by the other. A classic case is that of the Malagasy: women’s speech is blunt and direct, men’s speech veiled and restrained (Keenan 1974). What “counts” as opposite is culturally defined, and these definitions affect the *form* of the differences between the sexes. In such cases we might even speak of “anti-languages” in Halliday’s (1976) sense. Speakers often attribute the differences to the different “natures” of women and men. Nevertheless, historical analysis shows that much ideological work is required to create cultural notions that link forms of talk to social groups in such a way that speakers come to think the relationship is natural.

Silence is a familiar example. The silence of women in public life in the West is generally deplored by feminists. It is taken to be a result and a symbol of passivity and powerlessness: those who are denied speech, it is said, cannot influence the course of their lives or of history. In a telling contrast, however, we

also have ethnographic reports of the paradoxical power of silence, especially in certain institutional settings. In religious confession, modern psychotherapy, bureaucratic interviews, oral exams, and police interrogations, the relations of coercion are reversed: where self-exposure is required, it is the silent listener who judges and who thereby exerts power over the one who speaks (Foucault 1979). Silence in American households is often a weapon of masculine power (Sattel 1983). But silence can also be a strategic defense against the powerful, as when Western Apache men use it to baffle, disconcert, and exclude white outsiders (Basso 1979). And this does not exhaust the meanings of silence. For the English Quakers of the seventeenth century, both women and men, the refusal to speak when others expected them to do so marked an ideological commitment (Bauman 1983). It was the opposite of passivity, indeed a form of political protest.

Silence, like *r*-dropping, *o*-raising, interrupting, or any other linguistic form, gains different meanings and has different effects within specific institutional and cultural contexts. And these meanings can, of course, be changed. A telling example is the dilemma of elite women during the French revolution, as described by Dorinda Outram (1987) and Joan Landes (1988). Elite writings during the French Revolution glorified male virtue and identified the influence of women with the Old Regime’s system of patronage, sexual favors, and corruption in which elite women had actively participated. Revolutionary theorists deliberately committed themselves to an anti-feminine logic: political revolution could only take place, they argued, if women and their corrupting influence were excluded from public speaking and from the exercise of power. In part as a result of this new conceptualization, the famous and powerful political participation of upper-class women during the Old Regime was replaced, in the era of the revolution, with vigorous attacks on female political activists. By the new logic, elite women’s public speech and activities brought their sexual virtue into question: for a woman, to be political was to be corrupt. The famous revolutionary claims of universal equality applied only to men. Thus, politically active women such as Jeanne Roland could organize influential forums at which men debated the issues of the day. But her memoirs and letters reveal that this demanded a painful compromise. To retain her dignity she herself had to remain utterly silent.

This example briefly illustrates the contingency of women’s silence in Europe, as well as the complex, mediated relationship of women to public speech. It highlights as well the strength of cultural definitions and the fact that they are not simply the product of nature or of some age-old and monolithic male dominance. In this case we can watch them emerge articulately in the writings of the revolutionary theorists and Enlightenment philosophers who were doing the ideological work of formulating, explaining, justifying, and naturalizing the constraints on women’s speech.

Returning now to variationist sociolinguistics, I suggest we take a hint from students of culture. For instance, the well-known affinity of U.S. and British urban men for working-class speech variants should be seen within a broader cultural and historical frame. The linguistic evidence is strikingly congruent with a general symbolic structure in which manliness is associated with “toughness” and with working-class culture, not only in language but in other cultural spheres

such as dress and entertainment. Femaleness, in contrast, is associated with respectability, gentility, and high culture. Surely it is not accidental that just these oppositions emerged in literature, popular culture, and scientific discourse on both sides of the Atlantic in the nineteenth century and continue to be one component of current gender images (e.g., Smith-Rosenberg 1985; Halttunen 1982). The enactment of this opposition in linguistic practices strengthens and reproduces it; the encoding in prescriptive grammars and etiquette books institutionalizes it (Kramarae 1980). But it is the broader symbolic opposition itself that makes the linguistic variants meaningful and allows them to be exploited for ironic play, parody, and ambiguity.

If variationists have neglected such cultural-symbolic aspects of talk—the cultural constructions of language, gender, and power that shape women's and men's ideas and ideals about their own linguistic practices—a parallel neglect is apparent on the other side. Some of the anthropologists and others who have found that the women they study are "mute" or "uncommunicative" have often not attended to the contexts of talk, the constraints on the interview situation, and the communicative conventions of the people they study. The situatedness of communication of all kinds is a commonplace for sociolinguists. But it is not so self-evident to, for instance, students of popular culture.

Janice Radway (1984) has shown that if we look only at the content of American pulp romance novels, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the women who read them are passive consumers masochistically drawn to images of female victimization and male brutality. But Radway does not only examine the content of the novels; inspired by sociolinguistics and the ethnography of speaking, she analyzes the event of reading itself, its immediate context and meaning for the women who do it. For many romance readers the act of reading, often done in stolen moments of privacy, counts as educational and socially useful; moreover, as something these women do for themselves. It is a way of fighting for a modicum of autonomy and against the usual self-abnegation of their lives. Thus, attention to the immediate performative or receptive context expands the understanding of popular culture, just as attention to the larger symbolic context allows for the interpretation of sociolinguistic variation. Clearly these kinds of studies should be much more closely integrated with each other.

Although such mutual exchange of analytic strategy is very advantageous, an explicit discussion of what we mean by power promises to be even more so. Traditional views of power emphasize access to resources and participation in decision-making (see Lukes 1974). Certainly, linguistic and interactional factors are often intimately related to such access. But these views of power mask the important relationship between two quite different phenomena, both currently studied under the polysemous rubric of "women's words."

Unlike linguists and sociolinguists who examine the phonological, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic details of everyday talk, anthropologists, historians, psychologists, and literary critics often use terms like *voice*, *speech*, and *words* as a powerful metaphor. This usage has become extraordinarily widespread and influential in social science. Such terms are routinely used not to designate everyday talk but much more broadly to denote the public expression of a

particular perspective on self and social life, the effort to represent one's own experience rather than accepting the representations of more powerful others. Similarly, *silence* and *mutedness* are used not for an inability or reluctance to create utterances in conversational exchange but for the failure to produce one's own separate, socially significant discourse. Here, *women's words* is a synecdoche for *gendered consciousness* or for a *positioned perspective*. Thus, while studies of gender differences in everyday talk focus on formal properties of speech or interaction, studies of women's voice have focused more on values and beliefs, asking whether women have cultural conceptions or symbolic systems concerning self, morality, or social reality different from those of men or of some dominant, official discourse.

It is not only that sociolinguistic studies on the one hand and studies of women's values and beliefs on the other are mutually illuminating, as I argued above. More importantly, the two are inextricably linked. They both investigate how gender is related to power—with power redefined as *symbolic domination*.

In the familiar, classic cases of symbolic domination, some linguistic strategies, variants, or genres are more highly valued and carry more authority than others (e.g., Bourdieu 1977; Lears 1985). What makes this effect domination rather than just a difference in form is that even those who do not control the authoritative forms consider them more credible or persuasive, more deserving of respect than the forms they do control. As a corollary, people denigrate the very forms they themselves know and identify with. Archetypal examples include standard languages vis-à-vis minority languages or racial/ethnic vernaculars, and ritual speech vis-à-vis everyday talk. But respected, authoritative linguistic practices are not simply forms; they also deliver or enact characteristic cultural definitions of social life. When these definitions are embodied in divisions of labor and in social institutions such as schools, they serve the interests of some groups better than others. It is through dominant linguistic practices (such as a standard language, for instance) that speakers within institutions such as schools impose on others their group's definition of events, people, actions. This ability to make others accept and enact one's representation of the world is another powerful aspect of symbolic domination. Domination and hegemony are matters of expressive form as well as cultural content. Thus the notion of symbolic domination connects the concerns of linguists and sociolinguists with the broader cultural questions posed by social scientists studying gendered consciousness.

But it is important to remember that domination and power rarely go uncontested. Resistance to a dominant cultural order occurs in two ways. The first is when devalued linguistic forms and practices (such as local vernaculars, slang, women's interactional styles or poetry, and minority languages) are practiced and celebrated despite widespread denigration and stigmatization. Second, it occurs because these devalued practices often propose or embody alternate models of the social world. The control of representations of reality occurs in social, verbal interaction located in institutions. Control of such representations and control of the means by which they are communicated and reproduced are equally sources of social power. The reaction to such domination

is various: it may be resistance, contestation, conflict, complicity, accommodation, indirection.

This general insight about domination and resistance is articulated in one way or another in the writings of a number of influential social theorists: Gramsci, Bourdieu, and Foucault, among others, although they have not always applied it to language. Missing from these theories, however, is a concept of gender as a structure of social relations that is reproduced and sometimes challenged in everyday practice. That is why the emerging work on resistance to gender domination—especially the important work on linguistic resistance—is a powerful critique of social theory.

This returns us to the feminist debate about difference and dominance: if we understand women's everyday talk as well as women's linguistic genres and cultural discourses to be forms of resistance, then this implies that difference and dominance are always intertwined. We hear, in any culture, not so much a clear and heretofore neglected "different voice," certainly not separate male and female cultures, but rather linguistic practices that are more ambiguous, often contradictory, differing among women of different classes and ethnic groups and ranging from accommodation to opposition, subversion, rejection, or autonomous reconstruction of reigning cultural definitions. But such practices always occur in the shadow of domination and in response to it. Finding the attempts at resistance will tell us about where and how power is exerted, and knowing how institutions of power work will tell us where to look for possible signs of resistance (Abu-Lughod 1990).

Two examples should clarify these general statements. The first is Carol Edelsky's (1981) intriguing study of different kinds of *floor* in mixed-sex faculty meetings at an American college. Two sets of implicit rules seemed to regulate the length and quality of contributions to the meeting. In episodes characterized by the first kind of floor speakers took longer and fewer turns, fewer speakers participated overall, they did not overlap much, there were many false starts and hesitations, and speakers used their turns for reporting facts and voicing opinions. The other kind of floor occurred at the same meetings but during different episodes. It was characterized by much overlap and simultaneous talk but little hesitation in speaking and by more general participation by many speakers who collaboratively constructed a group picture of "what is going on." In the second kind of floor many speakers performed the same communicative functions, such as suggesting an idea, arguing, agreeing, joking, and teasing. It was men who monopolized the first kind of floor by taking longer turns. In the second kind of floor everyone took shorter turns and women and men participated in similar ways in the communicative functions performed. Importantly, the first, more formal kind of floor, in which women participated less, occurred vastly more frequently, at least in this institutional setting, and it was the accepted norm. It is noteworthy that explicit and tacit struggles between speakers about how meetings are to be conducted are not idle: they are conflicts about the control of institutional power, about who will get to decide, who will get to speak, and how much. Even among status equals, as in this example, the interactional constraints

of institutional events such as meetings are not gender-neutral but weighted in favor of male interactional strategies.

I suggest that it is useful to reinterpret Edelsky's work within the view of power I have been outlining. As in all the classic cases of symbolic domination, the organization of the meeting masks the fact that speakers are excluded on the basis of gender, while it simultaneously accomplishes that exclusion. But we can also ask about the implicit world view or value system that is enacted by the different kinds of floors. And then we see the two not as simply different but as mutually dependent, calling on different values within American culture, values conventionally seen as opposed to each other. The kind of floor more congenial to male strategies of interaction depends on images of heroic individuality, competition, and the celebration of planning and hierarchy. The second kind of floor is implicitly a critique of the first since it enacts values of solidarity, simultaneity, and collaborative cooperation. When women argued for the second kind of floor, they were resisting the dominant floor both as form and implicitly as enactment of cultural values. Note that the way in which one set of values is linked to one gender while the other is associated with the other gender is not explored here. It is an ideological and interactional process that deserves much more attention by social scientists (see Ochs 1992).

My second example draws on the oral lyric poetry performed among intimates by the Bedouin of Egypt's Western Desert. In describing these delicate, brief, and artfully improvised performances, Lila Abu-Lughod (1986) stresses that the dominant ideology, what she (metaphorically) calls the "public language" of the Bedouin, is one of honor, autonomy, self-mastery, personal strength, and sexual modesty. The poems directly violate this code of honor and implicitly criticize it by expressing the feelings of dependency, emotional vulnerability, and romantic longing condemned by the official view. The poetry constitutes what Abu-Lughod calls "a dissident or subversive discourse ... most closely associated with youths and women, the disadvantaged dependents who least embody the ideals of Bedouin society and have least to gain from the current social structures. Poetry is the discourse of opposition to the system and of defiance of those who represent it" (1986:251).

But the poetry is anything but a spontaneous outpouring of feeling. Indeed, its formal properties and performance context enhance its ability to subtly carry messages counter to official ideals. It is formulaic, thereby disguising the identities of poet, addressee, and subject. It is fleeting and ambiguous, performed by women and youths among trusted intimates who can decipher it precisely because they already know the reciter well. Yet this poetry of subversion and defiance is not only tolerated, it is culturally elaborated and admired because of the paradoxical intertwining of official and dissident discourse. The oral poetry reveals a fundamental tension of Bedouin social and political life which, while valuing and demanding autonomy and equality between families and lineages, demands inequality between the genders and generations within families. This verbal genre of women and youths reveals the contradictions of the ruling ideology.

In sum, I have been arguing that power is more than the chance to participate in decision-making, which feminist theorists have sometimes called informal or micropolitics. The notions of domination and resistance alert us to the idea that the strongest form of power may well be the ability to define social reality, to impose visions of the world. Such visions are inscribed in language and, most importantly, enacted in interaction. Although women's everyday talk and women's voice or consciousness have been studied separately, I have argued that both can be understood as strategic responses, often of resistance, to dominant hegemonic cultural forms. Thus, attention to linguistic detail, context of performance, and the nature of the dominant forms is essential to both endeavors. The precise form of questions and turn-taking is crucial in understanding the construction of different floors in American meetings (that is, in everyday talk); the exact formal conventions of Bedouin intimate poetry (that is, of an expressive genre) is indispensable to understanding how it is suited to the expression of vulnerability and dependence. Although the linguistic materials are quite different, both collaborative floors and intimate poetry locate an opposition or contradiction in dominant conceptions and try to subvert the dominant through rival practices. One undermines the hierarchical form and ideology of meetings that favor men's expertise in competitive talk; the other is seen as the opposite of ordinary talk and undermines the cultural rule of honor, threatening to reveal the illegitimacy of elder men's authority.

This returns us to the cultural constructions about women, men, and language with which I began. These cultural constructions are not only ideas that differentiate the genders with respect to talk but are also discourses that are themselves sources of power; they are enacted and sometimes contested in talk. I believe that the research I have discussed marks a very productive path for future studies of language and gender, one informed by sociolinguistics at least as much as by cultural and social theory.

NOTE

1. A somewhat different and much longer version of the argument outlined here appeared in Micaela diLeonardo (1991).

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A sociolinguistic description of linguistic self-expression, innovation, and power among Chicanas in Texas and New Mexico

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is the beginning of what we as Chicana sociolinguists would like to perceive as being innovative and groundbreaking language and women research because it is distinct from other works due to its focus on issues of bilingualism versus monolingualism, bilingualism and bidialectalism, and class, race, and cultural differences. While there may appear to be similarities due to the premise that if one is studying women as the prime sample population many previously established precepts and principles should therefore apply, we advocate a less "gendercentric," homogeneous approach to the study of women and language. For us, it is necessary to look beyond the concept of gender and recognize other factors that interplay within women and language research from the perspectives both of women of color and of Chicanas.

After perusing the literature on language and women research, we noted that the methodological approaches and theoretical paradigms of Hymes (1972, 1974) and Labov (1972, 1978) have been applied to studies of women and language use among monolingual American and British English-speaking populations. This body of work includes Coates and Cameron (1989); Cheshire (1982); Lakoff (1975); and Thorne and Henley (1975) among others.

Given the unique sociocultural and linguistic situation confronting Chicanas in the Southwest, a priori assumptions should not be made that these same approaches will automatically apply to a bilingual/bicultural community without taking into account a plethora of factors that impact the function and choice of one language (Spanish versus English) or of one variety within one language (standard Spanish versus the Southwestern Spanish variety *caló*) or both (codeswitching).

These two empirical studies of Chicanas from communities in Texas and northern New Mexico are part of this evolutionary process that will, it is hoped, lead toward a more refined description of Chicana language use. Both studies operated within a qualitative paradigm and employed social networks and extended social ties to seek out women for the research. A salient characteristic of both studies was that they were facilitated by the shared sex and ethnicity of the scholar and the informant, which can be advantageous to the data-collection

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process. Finally, both studies examined issues of gender, ethnicity, cultural roles, and class as important factors impacting or altering the linguistic behavior of these women from a bidialectal (Spanish vs. *caló*) or a bilingual (Spanish vs. English) perspective.

THE TEXAS STUDY: CHICANAS AND *CALÓ*

Background information

This paper describes the recognition and use of a variety of Southwest Spanish by Chicanas residing in Austin, Texas. This variety, herein referred to as *caló*, is known for its lexical creativity and has been variously classified as an "argot," a "slang" language, or a "patois" by several scholars (Barker [1950] 1975; Griffith 1947; Katz 1974). It has been documented since the 1950s as being primarily a male-dominated, intragroup form of communication (Barker [1950] 1975; Berk-Seligson 1980; Coltharp 1965).

Functionally, *caló* use has been perceived to be clandestine by nature, serving a subculture comprised of young males, known as *pachucos*, involved in drugs and gangs. Reyes (1988) rejects the notion that *caló* is solely affiliated with clandestine activities and delinquent behavior and instead perceives it as a linguistic variety widely disseminated within the Chicano speech community.

After a review of the empirical research on *caló* that spanned from the 1940s to the 1970s, it was clear that *caló* use was perceived to be a predominantly male phenomenon and that those females who did use it were located on the bottom rung of society—barmaids, prostitutes, or gang members' girlfriends—even within the eyes of the Chicano community to which they belonged.¹ This biased and restricted interpretation of *caló* use served as an impetus to conduct research that surpasses the stereotypic images and instead examines the possibility of Chicanas from all walks of life knowing and using *caló* as a legitimate linguistic variety based on social functions and interlocutors.

Sample description and methodology

Thirty-five Chicanas ranging in age from 17 to 37 and from various socioeconomic strata, educational levels, and geographic regions within Texas were selected via extensive social networks.

This qualitative study took into account the "natives'" own views as they discussed their perceptions and use of *caló*. Collecting data vis-à-vis a structured, taped interview among Chicanas by a fellow Chicana facilitated the process.

Findings

This investigation sought to find out about *caló* use and the social contexts in which it was used as well as ideas regarding changes in *caló* use due to changing sex roles and social status.

Although several women observed that the stereotypic notions of gang members, barmaids and prostitutes as frequent users of *caló* still prevailed, there was no such thing as an accurate description of a typical Chicana user of this variety. A woman user of *caló* is a woman who is not threatened by the sociocultural repercussions that may come with speaking the language and feels comfortable using it. She is also a woman who is liberated and is breaking away from her traditional role and uses *caló* if she wants to and deems it appropriate.

This need for linguistic self-expression and innovation can be linked to Chicanas' adaptation of *caló*. It is antithetical to what Anzaldúa (1987:58) calls "linguistic terrorism," whereby Chicanas have been terrorized by members of the majority culture into believing their Spanish is an illegitimate, bastard language, which can ultimately produce feelings of linguistic insecurity and low self-esteem. She states, "In childhood we are told that our language is wrong. Repeated attacks on our native tongue diminish our sense of self. The attacks continue throughout our lives" (1987:58).

Domains most often perceived as conducive to *caló* use were the home, the workplace, neighborhood restaurants, bars, parties, and dance halls. These domains serve as a catalyst for socializing and verbalizing to take place, especially the uninhibited use of *caló*.

Select interlocutors include close friends, both male and female; some family members including parents, brothers, sisters, husbands, and cousins; bosses; professors; clients; coworkers; and fellow students.

Coupled with the disclosure of those individuals with whom these women opted to speak in *caló*, other criteria that impacted their language use included mutual understanding and acceptance, ethnicity, and appropriateness. Appropriateness included high levels of intimacy or familiarity and an informal conversational context within the speech event of joking.

Caló use with males revealed interesting differences based on gender and cultural roles. Given the strong patriarchal influence within the Chicano family structure, some women would not speak *caló* in the presence of their fathers as a sign of deference to an authority figure. However, other Chicanas indicated that their fathers, brothers, and husbands would be pleased to hear them use *caló*.

Several women recounted incidents in which they actually separated from their lovers or divorced their husbands partly due to their use of *caló*. A Chicana from Austin stated that her husband used *caló* but forbade her from speaking in such a manner. This double-standard mentality caused marital problems because he would not accept her and the language she grew up using. Other situations were not quite as extreme; however, women felt strongly that being their own person included being linguistically liberated and no longer "linguistically silent," as Anzaldúa (1990) describes. This exertion of power by women to establish linguistic independence and escape linguistic oppression from the Chicano male, resulting in a loss of an interpersonal relationship, was seen in these extreme cases.

Two women discussed their experiences in prison, their drug use, their gang involvement, and how language was critical to survival and hegemony over other women. In this domain, Chicana *pintas* ('female prisoners') coalesced and

organized with other women of color (Blacks); however, Black and Chicana females also clashed, creating tension between the two groups.

According to these two women, *caló* served as a unifying force among Chicanas from urban areas and was used to express experiences pertaining to gang activities, drug-related activities, street-life occurrences, and prison life. The language also served as a means of establishing ingroup/outgroup boundaries by distinguishing its speakers from non-Spanish-speaking populations.*

These two instances of women's involvement in barrio culture as *pachucas*, gang members, and prisoners corroborated earlier research findings about the users of *caló* being affiliated with urban street activity.

Conclusion

Because this language variety and its speakers, especially females, are often stigmatized by members of the larger Chicano speech community, the informants' acceptance and use of *caló* indicated their willingness to be linguistically innovative despite prevailing cultural norms and gender distinct roles that still prevail for *la mujer Chicana*. Innovativeness meant: (1) rejecting or surpassing the expected social, cultural, and linguistic norms designated to Chicanas; (2) risking interpersonal relationships based on power and control by males for personal and linguistic freedom; and (3) becoming educated and acculturated into the dominant society but maintaining ethnic identity through the use of Spanish and *caló*.

THE NEW MEXICO STUDY

Introduction

Two sociolinguistic studies (Ortiz 1975; Chávez 1984) completed in other northern New Mexico communities indicate that sociocultural changes which crucially involve more extensive linguistic contact with the larger society and with the English language are contributing to a shift to English. The results of these studies point out gender differentiation in language use and suggest that English is being used more by women than the vernacular (Spanish), whereas Spanish is predominantly used by males. Chávez concludes that women are the primary contributors to language shift within the home and beyond. These findings clearly run counter to the notion that women have traditionally been the transmitters of culture and language to children. However, these results do support earlier findings by Labov (1972) and Trudgill (1972) that linguistic insecurities linked to the low social position of women result in a female preference for prestigious language varieties.*

Setting

Córdova is a rural, homogeneous community of 700 inhabitants. The uniqueness of this speech community is its tight-knit social structure, which has

survived since the mid-eighteenth century and continues to function as a norm-enforcement mechanism for maintenance of the vernacular, Spanish. The stability of the dense and multiplex social structure has also created a strong sense of ingroup cohesiveness and linguistic security.

Respondents

General observations were conducted within the community for six weeks prior to choosing nine women who would participate as respondents in this study. The women were chosen on the basis of their interest in participating and their availability. The most important factor was the presence in the community of three generations of the family: daughter, mother, and grandmother. The families are identified as Family A, Family B, and Family C, and within each family the individual women are identified by generational number only. The ages of the first- and second-generation women do not parallel each other; however, the ages of the third generation do.²

TABLE 1. *Ages of members of respondent families, by generation*

	Family A	Family B	Family C
1	79	96	75
2	52	65	46
3	25	23	26

Education. The women belonging to the first generation had not attended school beyond the third grade. All the women of the second and third generations had received high-school diplomas. Respondent 3B was in the process of finishing her master's degree in speech pathology.

Family size. An important contrast between the first and second generation of women in this study was the decrease in family size. Respondent 1A had eight children; her daughter, respondent 2A, had one daughter. Respondent 1B had ten children and her daughter, respondent 2B, had five children. Respondent 1C had six children and her daughter, respondent 2C, had three.

Employment. The women belonging to the first generation primarily worked in the home and community in the production, preparation, and distribution of food as well as in communal labor such as plastering, adobe-making, sewing, and mattress-making. The women of the second and third generation are or have been employed in their homes and outside the community, primarily in service and blue-collar jobs.

Discussion of linguistic interactions

The ethnographic observations of intergroup and intragroup interactions among Cordovan women were conducted in everyday situations and at four social events during the summer of 1988: a bridal shower, a wedding, a fiftieth wedding

anniversary, and a family reunion. The observed linguistic interactions were then categorized by setting (public/private domain) and interlocutor (intragroup/intergroup). The concept of *domain* as a means of predicting language choice in bilingual/bicultural settings follows closely that elaborated by Fishman (1966).

Patricia Nichols argues that "women use language in ways that reflect the options available to them within their particular speech communities. In some circumstances they exhibit linguistically innovative behavior, in others conservative" (1983:54). The findings in this study suggest that the women in Córdoba appear to be not only innovators vis-à-vis English but also conservators of their native tongue, Spanish. The size of the village, its historical background, and the social networks established during the agriculture/subsistence era are density factors that have contributed to the transmission of cultural and linguistic patterns from one generation to another. Consequently, the linguistic behavior of Cordovan women is conservative when interacting in ingroup situations in the private domain.

Respondents' interactions in intragroup situations in public domains were most heavily influenced by identity and ethnicity. The observations made of the ingroup behavior indicate that the senses of solidarity and identity function as much outside the community as they do within it. Spanish is used among community members in both settings. The best example of this linguistic behavior was observed during the wedding activities which were held in the city. Although the women were not in their community environment per se, they continued to function linguistically as if they were. The presence and number (approximately fifty) of family and community members contributed to the creation of a private domain within a public domain. Because the events occurred away from Córdoba, it was assumed by the researcher that the setting (a reception hall) in a more heterogeneous community would influence language use, and that English would be chosen over Spanish. However, the need to identify as a speech community (comprised of ingroup versus outgroup members) as well as an ethnic group influenced speakers to choose Spanish.

The intergroup linguistic interaction in a private domain reveals that although the respondents were in their usual environment, they did not adhere to the norms of their speech community, i.e., using only Spanish. When in Córdoba, the respondent's linguistic choice—English, Spanish, or codeswitching—in intergroup interaction was principally motivated by the notion of accommodation. Convergence in code selection may be attributed to various factors. For example, it is possible that a speech community, consciously or unconsciously, perceives its variety as less prestigious. Thus, when interacting with outgroup members, this attitude may influence the choice of the more prestigious code, English. However, many of the non-community women with whom the respondents interacted used codeswitching, a variety which is also perceived, at least within the dominant society, as less prestigious. This would lead us to believe that convergence toward English did not result because of a need for approval or for the potential rewards of adopting English, but because of the speaker's verbal repertoire as well as her capacity to innovate.

In intergroup interaction in the public domain, the first generation of women, because they are monolingual Spanish speakers, used primarily Spanish. The women of the second generation tended to converge to the speech style of the interlocutor. The strong sense of cohesiveness and linguistic security has permitted the second-generation Cordovan women to venture out of their community and interact with women from other communities by altering their communal language, converging to English or codeswitching, without feeling a threat to their sense of identity. The third generation, when interacting outside of the community, primarily used English except when interacting with elderly Spanish-speaking women.

Summary

In sum, how then does the use of English become a tool of empowerment for Chicanas from a small, rural, isolated village? Nan Van Den Bergh argues that "language is a mirror of power imbalances, as such, it is capable of becoming a weapon or instrument for social change" (1987:132). For Chicanas of this speech community, the acquisition of English as a second language has: (1) provided them educational and employment opportunities; (2) empowered them to have more control over their destinies, e.g., family size; and (3) has allowed them to function as *cultural brokers*. The notion of cultural brokers is used here as defined by Bea Medicine (1987), as individuals who act as mediators between two cultures, particularly in regard to the socialization of their children. The Chicanas' use of Spanish in intragroup situations was motivated by two factors: (1) a need to demonstrate solidarity and ingroup identity; and (2) a need to act as transmitters of language and culture to their children. On the other hand, the use of English in intergroup situations (with English speakers) suggests that Chicanas of this speech community function as effective agents for social change as they self-consciously incorporate strategies designed to mediate cultural differences. This activity is quite different from behavior that results from linguistic insecurities linked to low social position, which in turn affects preference for the prestigious language. Instead, Cordovan women function as cultural brokers between their native speech community and the English-speaking community, and language is the medium for exchange. Because Chicanas have a broad linguistic repertoire which includes at least three codes—Spanish, English, and codeswitching—they are able to make conscious choices about code in different settings to meet different communicative needs. The presence of options allows them to make choices that are simply not available to women of monolingual speech communities.

CONCLUSION: THE TEXAS AND NEW MEXICO STUDIES

As novices and innovators in language and women research within a broader Chicano sociolinguistic base, we find the idea of theorizing about language use among Chicanas in Texas and New Mexico both exciting and challenging. We acknowledge the cultural and linguistic nuances that distinguish *nuestras*

hermanas ('our sisters') from other women of color (inclusive of other Latinas) and from European American women. This distinction needs to be recognized as the most salient characteristic; however, we must also recognize heterogeneity and diversity within this group. We cannot view the Chicana as a monolithic entity but must take into account those social variables that are relevant to most studies of linguistic variation. The theory should acknowledge not only social diversity within the group, such as level of education, social class, sexual preference, and rural or urban residence, but also linguistic diversity in the forms of monolingualism, bilingualism, and bidialectalism.

The research on women's language use by European American women who work within the language and gender framework cannot be applied to women of color (Anzaldúa 1987; Medicine 1987; Penfield 1987; Zentella 1987). For example, Anzaldúa (1987) speaks of "linguistic terrorism" in reference to our deprivation of our mother tongue as Chicanas participating within a dominant culture. Thus, studies such as these two and future research can bring back the Chicana voice which has been silenced and repressed for so long.

Chicanas from Texas speak Spanish and *caló* as a means of linguistic innovation, self-expression, and power. Cordovan women have the linguistic choice to function effectively in two worlds: their private domains where Spanish is relished and expected and the public domain where English is adopted as a means of economic empowerment and educational and social mobility.

NOTES

1. See Galindo (1992) for a thorough review of the literature on *caló*.
2. In the original study (Gonzales Velásquez 1992), the respondents in Family C did not include this 75-year-old respondent, although she had been interviewed and observed. Instead, Respondent 2C participated as Respondent 1C; Respondent 3C became 2C and her 3-year old daughter became Respondent 3C.

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Language choice and women learners of English as a Second Language¹

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The walls of the classroom begin to shake as the tow motor speeds by on the old wooden floor. The truck is transporting raw materials needed by some of the assembly-line workers down to the production floor. The assemblers themselves, however, are not on the lines. It is lunchtime and they are sitting in the English classroom waiting for the noise to pass and for the teacher to begin speaking again. The line workers are all women and most of them are first-generation immigrants from Portugal. The noise dies down, and the teacher continues his lesson on polite ways of asking a coworker for tools while working on the line. The women smile in amusement, look at each other, begin to laugh quietly, and start talking to each other in Portuguese. The teacher is puzzled and waits for someone to tell him what is funny about talking politely on the lines. Fernanda² looks at the teacher, smiles and tells him that on the lines, no one has to be polite. They are all "sisters" and sisters don't have to be polite when asking each other to pass over tools. What Fernanda does not tell the teacher, and what he does not know, is that on the lines, not only do workers not have to be polite with one another, they also do not speak English to each other. The majority of the women working on the lines in this Canadian workplace, like the majority of the women in the English class, are Portuguese. The language used to communicate and do production work on the lines is Portuguese. The communicative tasks that make up the curriculum the teacher is using in his workplace English language class, tasks such as asking a coworker for tools, are not undertaken in English. They are undertaken in Portuguese.

Current English as a Second Language (ESL) curriculum for immigrant workers in Britain, Canada, and the United States is often centered around the need to learn English to carry out work tasks and assume greater responsibility at work. The use of English is associated with both economic survival and economic mobility. However, as the incident reported above reveals, not all immigrant workers working in English-speaking countries need to learn and speak English to perform everyday work tasks. Furthermore, the ability to speak English is not necessarily linked to getting ahead in the workplace. In fact, for many working-class immigrant women in Canada, the use of English at work may be associated with economic and social costs rather than benefits (Goldstein 1991).

Statistics show that many immigrants living in Canada do not speak either of the country's official languages (English and French) at all and even fewer use them at home. For example, statistics on the Portuguese community in Canada show that 15% of all those who identify themselves as having a single Portuguese origin (that is, as having two parents of Portuguese origin) do not speak English or French at

all, while 64% only use Portuguese at home (Statistics Canada 1989). These figures are actually low estimates since they are based on self-reporting data. Importantly, when looking at the differences between men and women in this group, statistics show that while 12% of all single-origin Portuguese men do not speak either French or English, 18.2%—almost 1 in 5—single-origin Portuguese women do not speak one of the official languages (Statistics Canada 1989). While some of these women may simply not have access to formal English- or French-language training or informal opportunities for language learning, others do but choose not to take advantage of these opportunities or choose not to use the English or French they may have learned. In order to understand these choices, we need to re-examine assumptions that have been made about the use of official languages and access to opportunities associated with economic and social advancement.

BILINGUAL LIFE AND LANGUAGE CHOICE ON THE PRODUCTION FLOOR

Portuguese immigrant workers who do not have access to English-speaking networks and/or ESL classes upon their arrival in Toronto, Canada, are able to find and keep jobs by relying on Portuguese network ties and by using the Portuguese language. In the production department at Stone Specialties, the manufacturing factory in which the study described in this paper was undertaken, 24 out of 27 Portuguese workers surveyed (88%) found a job at the company from a "friend," that is, a friend of a relative or a relative of a friend. Others found work at the company by responding to an advertisement placed in a Portuguese church paper or by following up information given to them by someone working in a Portuguese church. The majority of the Portuguese employees working in the production department work on assembly lines. Almost all of these assembly-line workers are women, and most of them have been with the company for 16 to 22 years.

The company's use of Portuguese networks and churches to recruit employees for work on the production floor can be related to the labor shortages it periodically experiences. At the time most of the Portuguese production workers at Stone were hired (in the late 1960s and early 1970s), the company was in competition with fast-food restaurants and local hotels for "cheap labor." Portuguese immigrants who do not speak English will work for low wages on an assembly line because it is not possible to get a better-paying job off the lines without English language skills and additional job training or education. Stone Specialties can hire Portuguese workers who do not speak English because they have bilingual English-Portuguese supervisors on the staff who can convey information in Portuguese to those workers who cannot speak English.

The company's practice of hiring Portuguese family and friends to work on the production floor and the Portuguese community's practice of finding work through community networks have led to the creation of a Portuguese "family"/community in the production department. While some members of this Portuguese "family" are actual kin related by blood ties, others are not but think of each other as family. People call each other *sister*, *brother*, *daughter*, and *marida*, which is an invented feminine derivation of the Portuguese word for husband, *marido*. A problem

involving a worker who is unhappy about the supervisor she is working is for is referred to as a "family problem." Thus, for most Portuguese workers on the production floor, work relationships and conditions at Stone Specialties are lived and represented as family and community relationships and conditions.

The use of Portuguese functions as a symbol of solidarity and group membership in the "family"/community on the production floor. Portuguese is associated with the rights, obligations, and expectations members of that community have of each other at work.³ Members of the "family" who work on assembly lines are expected to help each other "keep the line up." If one person on a line is ahead because her particular task is easier and takes less time to complete, she is expected to help someone else whose work is piling up. Similarly, if a person needs to leave the line, someone else is expected to pitch in and help do her work while she is gone.

Making friends and ensuring access to assistance in case of work backlogs or the need to leave is related to knowing how to talk to people on the line. Furthermore, talk that provides access to friendship on the lines and thus to assistance is talk in Portuguese. Women on the lines—including women whose first language is not Portuguese, but Spanish or Italian—use Portuguese on the lines to gain access to friendship and assistance when they need it.⁴

- Tara: If I am on the line with you and I want to be your friend, what should I do to be your friend on line?
- Angela: So all you have to do is talk with us. And if we see you can't do the job properly, then we will help you.
- Odile: We will help show you what you have to do. And you need to talk to the others, so we can know about yourself.
- Tara: What kind of things are important to know about me? What should I tell you about myself?
- Odile: We would like to know where you worked before. If you like to work with us. We will help you to get your hands on the work so you won't feel nervous on the line.
- Tara: What kind of things do people talk about on the lines?
- Angela: Mostly family problems or they talk about their sons and daughters. Family matters.
- Augusta: Sometimes they talk about cook[ing], movies.
- John: If you're married. If you're single. If you're dating. They all want to know that kind of stuff. Or why aren't you married?
- Lidia: You talk about your recipes or ask about a person who everyone is talking about. People talk about who's sick, events in people's lives.
- Raquel: Some talk every day about the cook[ing]. Some girls they talk about their husbands. Every day about the kids. Shopping. Everything. Everything.
- Tara: This is mostly in Portuguese.
- Raquel: Yeah.

The value of friendship and assistance at work is not to be underestimated. When asked what advice she would give me if I were new to the company and wanted to make friends on the lines, one of the line workers, Raquel, replies, "If you have a good job already, don't come here. Because this is a change and you have to make other friends." Friendships at work are valuable—valuable enough

for a worker not to leave a job and risk not finding them elsewhere. Without friends on the line, without access to assistance, assembly workers run the risk of losing their jobs for not being able to meet efficiency standards.

As a language that is associated with the performance of a work role on the production lines, Portuguese is not only associated with finding a job through networks in the Portuguese community, it is associated with keeping a job and getting a paycheck as well. For Portuguese women immigrants who have had no prior access to English-speaking networks and/or ESL classes, the use of Portuguese is the only accessible linguistic means to economic survival and gain in Canada. There are social and economic benefits associated with the use of Portuguese on the lines that are not associated with the learning and use of English. Moreover, there are risks to using English at work.

Line workers who don't understand English report that they feel "like it's an insult" when a fellow Portuguese speaker speaks to them in English rather than Portuguese. They also report that they will tell the speaker to "talk in Portuguese." Accommodating this preference for Portuguese on the line is important to members of the Portuguese "family" who are able to speak English. Using English with workers on the lines is risky; if people don't understand exactly what a speaker is saying, they may assume she is talking about them and feel insulted. The following quotation describes how one worker felt when a Portuguese speaker addressed her in English before she had acquired enough of the language to understand what was being said to her. It illustrates how angry people can become if they think others are talking about them in English:

Before I'm mad because I don't speak English. I don't understand the people who talk English. It make me crazy because maybe they talk about me... Now, I don't care. Before I don't understand... Now, I don't speak very, very good, but I understand.

The use of English on the production lines, then, is associated with social and economic risks for many of the Portuguese line workers. Line workers who depend on their "sisters" for assistance in "keeping the line up" and meeting efficiency standards cannot risk making others "mad" and losing their friendship by using English on the lines.

"TALKING BAD"

The content of Portuguese talk that is used to gain access to friendship and assistance is also interesting. As Lidia reports above, on the lines people talk about each other and the events going on in each others' lives. Such talk or gossip provides individuals with information that is needed for "talking bad" about other individuals. Talking bad is an important sociolinguistic act on the lines, since it provides people with a way of asserting social control and managing conditions of subordination associated with the everyday activities of doing production-line work.

One of the values and goals held by workers on the line is that of distributing work tasks as fairly as possible so that no worker regularly takes on heavier and

more tiring work tasks than others. After 16 to 22 years on the lines, the workers know which jobs are more difficult than others and how job tasks can be distributed more fairly. To illustrate, in an exchange with Rosa, Cecília talks about how many pieces need to be produced before the run they are working on will be finished and how work for the woman at the end of the line would be more comfortable and more fairly distributed if the supervisor had another worker share her job task:⁵

Havia de ser vinte mil, agora cinquenta mil. Cinquenta mil para a gente descansar daqui para fora. Se ela deitar duas mulheres no fim da linha é é mais comodo.

Should be twenty thousand, now fifty thousand. Fifty thousand until we can rest. If she puts two women at the end of the line it is more comfortable.

Trying to make work tasks as comfortable as possible is one way workers deal with the physical demands of working on an assembly line. Ensuring that all line workers get their fair share of difficult tasks is another. If one worker looks down the line and discovers that someone else does not have as difficult a task as she does, that worker may engage in talking bad about the less-burdened worker. In Exchange A, Cecília is at the front of the line. The assembly job consists of filling plastic containers with a number of small plastic animals. One of the tasks on the line consists of putting a cover on each container that comes down the line. It is considered an easy task and Lúcia is the worker assigned to it.

Exchange A

Cecília (to line): A Lúcia é que está fechando?
Is it Lúcia who is closing [the containers]?

Raquel: Yes! São muito bons de fechar.
Yes! They are very good [easy] to close.

Cecília: São bons, por isso é que ela foi para lá!
They are good [easy], that's why she went there.

Lúcia: Também podes vir para aqui se quiseres.
You can also come here if you want.

Cecília: Ai, Lúcia! Ninguém está falando mal. Olha que tu também!
Ai, Lúcia! Nobody is talking bad. See that you too [You are always waiting for people to talk bad about you/See that you don't either].

In the exchange above, Lúcia, who has overheard Cecília and Raquel talking about her, replies, "You can also come here if you want." This is interpreted by Cecília as a defensive response to the others' talking bad. Having publicly pointed out to those within hearing distance that Lúcia has the easiest job on the line—making it difficult for her to have the easiest job the next time around—Cecília distances herself from her remarks by denying that she was talking bad and insisting ("Olha que tu também")—that Lúcia is always waiting for people to talk bad about her or that Lúcia shouldn't talk bad about others ("[See that you don't either]") by

accusing them of talking bad about her when they were not. (The meaning of "Olha que tu também"/"See that you too" in this exchange was interpreted differently by two different translators. One thought it meant 'You are always waiting for people to talk bad about you' while the other thought it meant 'See that you don't (talk bad) either'.)

Talking bad is a powerful means of effecting social control among members of the "family." Prior to Exchange B, Olga, who has just seen Lúsa, the supervisor of the line, pass by, notices that her eyes are red. Aloud, she wonders why. Fatimá suggests it might be because someone has talked bad to Lúsa and that her eyes are red because she has been crying. When Olga disagrees, Fatimá restates her opinion that being talked bad about can make someone cry:

Exchange B

Fatimá: Eu digo-te uma coisa se me disserem uma simples palavra que não me caia bem eu sou capaz de estar o dia inteiro a chorar, sinto-me tanto, tanto, tanto de uma me palavra que me deem.
I'm telling you something if someone tells me a simple word that doesn't feel good I'm able to cry all day I feel so much, much, much one bad word that is said to me.

Olga: Tu sentes-te muito, mas se tu tiveres uma pessoa íntima doente, muito doente, tu não choras com mais dor que se já qualquer coisa que te digam aqui.
You feel it a lot, but if you have a close person who is ill, very ill, don't you cry with more pain than about something that they say to you here?

Language behavior that is powerful enough to make an individual "cry all day" and that has the power to inflict pain comparable to the pain of having a close friend or family member fall very ill is language behavior that also has the power to assert social control on the lines—control that is used to manage local, everyday work activities that must be completed in order to bring home a paycheck.

It is interesting to note here that all instances of talking bad in the data can be attributed to women. It is possible, then, that talking bad is a gendered linguistic practice that is performed solely by women. Unfortunately, interactional data of men's linguistic practices on the production floor, which are needed to support such a hypothesis, were not collected. This is because all interactional data between Portuguese workers were tape-recorded on the production lines and no men were assigned to the lines during the period of tape recording. The male production workers were busy transporting raw materials and finished goods to and from the lines. If data on male interactional practices had been collected and if those data had demonstrated that the act of talking bad was indeed a gendered linguistic practice, then the strategy of talking bad could have been linked to the management of activities and relations associated with women's subordinate position as production-line workers. Such evidence would have provided support for Gal's (1989) argument that women's "special verbal skills" can be seen as strategic responses to positions of powerlessness.

In her zygotic study on language use in the bilingual community of Barcelona, Woolard (1985, 1989) has argued that subordinate languages (such as Portuguese

in Canada) can be used as a symbolic means of resisting unequal relations of power. On the production floor at Stone Specialties, however, the use of Portuguese does not seem to function in this way. Instead, the use of Portuguese and the particular practice of talking bad seem to be used as a means of coping with conditions of subordination associated with the everyday activities of doing production-line work at Stone Specialties. Grillo (1980) points out that where massive labor migration has brought linguistically diverse populations together, the official languages of the receiving or host society have greater authority than the languages of the immigrants. Speakers of languages other than those of the receiving or host society usually occupy subordinate social, cultural, economic, and political statuses. Languages of solidarity are often used by speakers of subordinate, powerless groups as part of a survival strategy. On the lines at Stone Specialties, asserting social control by talking bad in Portuguese is a linguistic practice that can be seen as part of such a strategy.

LANGUAGE CHOICE, ETHNICITY, CLASS, AND GENDER

People's language choices on the production floor are further illuminated when they are examined in terms of the cultural values and practices they symbolize and the economic arrangements and possibilities that govern people's lives. Most of the women on the lines who choose to use Portuguese at work are from rural villages in the Azores, an archipelago of nine islands that lie 1,223 kilometers east of Lisbon in the Atlantic. During the period of heaviest migration to Canada, rural life in Portugal was still characterized as a traditional peasant society with a light local and family-oriented economy (Higgs 1982). Dependence on the family as the basic unit of economic and emotional security in Portugal has been understood as a legacy of the country's feudal heritage and historic impoverishment. Familial bonds are formed not only within the immediate family but also outside it through godparentage arrangements. The appointment of godparents relates the families of the godchild and godparents and "they become like family" (Anderson 1974).

Born into a traditional peasant society based on an economic and emotional dependence on family network ties, raised to expect particular favors from and assume particular obligations to relatives, those who first emigrated from Portugal to Canada in the 1950s were responsible for bringing over many others from their native communities. Ever since the early 1960s, Portuguese immigration into Canada has mostly been a product of extensive family and community links. The strong family and community ties of rural and small-town Portugal that cause people to join friends and neighbors are renewed within the Portuguese communities in Canada. As in Portugal, such ties—and the commitments they entail—are basic resources for economic survival and prosperity.

The discussion undertaken so far has attempted to demonstrate how and why Portuguese may be used by some immigrant workers as part of a survival strategy in a new English-speaking setting. However, it is important to remember that there are certain economic gains associated with English, the dominant language of the factory. Better-paying jobs off the lines demand a good command of English. Why, then, do immigrant women production-line workers who have come to

Canada to improve their economic circumstances choose to speak Portuguese over English when English would provide them with access to better-paying jobs? How do we make sense of the ways people choose to communicate on the production floor?

Most Portuguese workers who secure higher-paying jobs off the lines upon entering the factory or who have been able to move into such jobs later are individuals with access to English-speaking contacts and, in some cases, English literacy skills prior to joining the company. Importantly, the differences between those who bring prior English language skills with them to the factory and those who do not are not arbitrary. Generally, all men and those women who immigrated to Canada under the age of 16 bring prior English-speaking network ties with them to the workplace and have access to jobs off the lines. Women who immigrated to Canada over the age of 16 do not.

Five out of the 6 Portuguese men (83.3%) working on the production floor came to the factory with prior English-speaking ties, and 4 out of 6 men (66.6%) have higher-paying jobs off the lines as maintenance men, production-line supervisors, and quality-control inspectors. Conversely, only 3 out of 30 women (10%) had some command of English when they began to work at the factory and only 4 out of 30 (13.3%) have better-paying jobs as supervisors and quality-control inspectors. The three women who brought some English-language skills to the factory had all immigrated to Canada under the age of 16 and spent some time in an English-Canadian high school. Although they all left school at 16 to go to work and help their families financially, they did have an opportunity to develop English literacy skills.

The reasons why Portuguese men have more access to English-speaking ties and better-paying jobs have to do with the way linguistic resources are distributed in Portugal and within the Portuguese community in Toronto. In Portugal, Julio, the maintenance man, reports that he learned English by talking to American soldiers stationed at the army base on the island of Terceira. He also had the opportunity to speak English when he was a soldier stationed in Mozambique, which at the time was still a Portuguese colony. Tony and Peter, both production-line supervisors, report that they attended all-day English-language classes held at a local community college five days a week for six months. While both Tony and Peter feel that their formal English-language training gave them "a start," they also believe that most of the English they have learned has been by "just talking with people" at work. Tony and Peter have had the opportunity to "just talk with people" at work because of the nature of the jobs they have held at the factory. Welding (Peter was a welder for the company before he became a supervisor) and supervisory jobs off the lines provide access to English-speaking ties that jobs on the lines do not:

- Peter: Most of the other welders were not Portuguese. One or two of them were. And when I was welding, we worked in an area by ourselves, so that also forced me to communicate without having to ask for translation. It was a separate area away from the production area. You know what I mean.
- Tara: In the production area, it's much easier to find someone to translate for you.
- Peter: Yes. That's what I think. But sometimes when you're, not really by yourself,

but, you know, working away, I think you really are forced to learn how to communicate in English.

Portuguese women working on the production floor at the factory did not have the opportunity to learn English by talking to American soldiers in Portugal and they did not travel to places like Mozambique where they could practice English skills. In Toronto, the majority of Portuguese immigrant women who were over the age of 16 and were not forced by Canadian law to attend school also lacked access to the kind of formal language training which gave Tony and Peter the start they needed to secure jobs as welder and supervisor. One obstacle to formal ESL training is explained by Augusta, who reports that her father did not permit her to attend language classes because of the presence of men—"so many boys"—in the classroom. Other obstacles are revealed in the conversations below:

- Tara: Some people go to school when they come from another country. Did you have a chance to go to school when you first came?
- Olga: Yes. When I came [to Canada], my husband come with me to the employment insurance [Canada Employment Centre] and for make a card for a social insurance number. And the girl [asked me if] I am so young why I don't go to the school? I had 19 years old when I came. I say no I came for work. I make a life. I think I make big mistake, but I never go.
- Tara: Did you ever think that you would like to go to night school? Or it was too hard working and coming home?
- Olga: I think it's hard, because after four years here I have my son. And for working the day and then the night go to the school ... I have to pay to the babysitter, and the night maybe again. It's very hard for my son, and very hard for me.
- Tara: Did you think about going to school when you first came here?
- Luisa: I was scared to walk on the streets at night. Because I came in August and in September the school starts. And I was scared because I hear so many strange things.
- Tara: So you never wanted to go to night school.
- Luisa: I want to go, but I was scared.
- Tara: And day school?
- Luisa: I had to help my friends because we had to start a new life.
- Tara: When there's two Portuguese-speakers speaking English and you are there, what do you think?
- Angela: I would like to know English to talk to them. I have a Spanish lady telling me that I could go for six months and learn English and get paid by the government. But I didn't want to at the time... I was not feeling optimistic, so I didn't want to go to school.
- Tara: You didn't at that time think about going to school?
- Fernanda: No, at that time I don't think to go school, because I don't have a father. Me and my mother had to work alone. My [younger] brothers went to school.

As mentioned earlier, in order to move into a higher-paying job off the line, production-line workers need a good command of English. Specifically, they require a Canadian grade-12 (high-school) education or at least English-language

skills equivalent to those of a Canadian grade-12 graduate. This kind of training is beyond the means of most—if not all—of these working-class women, who have only four years of schooling in Portugal, do not have access to evening ESL classes, and perceive the two weekly hours of ESL they do have access to at work primarily as a social activity. As Virginia explains, the women on the lines do not have “enough school” to compete for a job off the lines and “see nothing better” than the line work that they currently do, work that is associated with the use of Portuguese. Thus, the language choices the line workers make on the basis of the linguistic resources to which they have access can be linked to the gendered structure and dynamics of the Portuguese family and the class positions the workers hold within the Canadian political economy.

In conclusion, this paper has documented women's language behavior at work, attempted to interpret what this behavior might mean in light of the background knowledge women bring to their talk, and briefly examined how women's language practices may be related to their experiences at work and opportunities in life. It has been argued that the use of English in the multicultural/multilingual workplace may be associated with costs as well as benefits and that immigrant workers may resist using the language when these costs are perceived to be too high. Educators who wish to facilitate opportunities for immigrant workers through the provision of English-language training must understand the nature of these costs and understand in what ways language training may or may not assist their students. We must be sensitive to the social, political, economic, and historical circumstances that have shaped our students' lives.

While English-language training is not always necessary for economic survival in English-speaking countries and while it does not always provide access to economic mobility, there are still good reasons for women working and living in languages other than English to participate in English-language classes. In a society where English is the dominant language, not speaking English may limit the control people have over everyday living conditions and relationships. English-language training that enables women to intervene at school on behalf of their children, participate in a union, and deal with medical and legal professionals and corporate and government bureaucracies is training that can provide people with expanded possibilities for functioning as members of English-speaking societies without forcing them to assume great risks.

NOTES

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2. The names of the participants and the name of the manufacturing company in this study have been changed to maintain their anonymity.
3. The study of language choice in this paper is rooted within the field of interactionist sociolinguistics. An interactionist approach to the study of language choice makes use of

anthropological research perspectives and traditions to investigate what makes individuals in a multilingual society choose to use one language or language variety rather than another in a particular instance. For other interactionist studies on the social significance of language choice and codeswitching (the use of more than one language in the course of a single communicative episode), refer to Blom and Gumperz 1972; Gal 1979; Gumperz 1982a, 1982b; Heller 1988a, 1988b, 1988c; Woolard 1989.

4. The following is a collage of data obtained from separate interviews with Portuguese line workers.

5. A translation of a Portuguese-speaker's utterance(s) appears immediately below the utterance(s) and is *italicized*. Any additional information needed to make the meaning of the speaker's words clear to the reader appears in brackets ([]) within or immediately following the translated or English utterance.

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Orchestrating participation in events: Powerful talk among African American girls

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Many studies of women's language have focused on features that can be specified in single utterances, decontextualized from the endogenous scenes of the lived social world. Early studies of women's language (Lakoff 1973) characterized it as distinct from the language used by men, being more deferential, imprecise, noncommittal, indirect, passive, ineffective, tentative, or uncertain (observable through the use of hedges, breathy voice quality, tag questions, or intonation patterns resembling questions (Lakoff 1990:204)), and ultimately "powerless." Such a perspective describes women's speech with respect to what it is not and implicitly views it as deficient with respect to another standard, male speech (see Coates 1988:66, 69; Henley & Kramaræ 1991:21).

In this paper I look at interaction in "situated activity systems" (Goffman 1961:96) and examine the organization of a larger speech activity—*stories*—within a particular domain, a form of gossip dispute activity that African American girls call *he-said-she-said*. Rather than being a discrete linguistic variable, a story constitutes a type of master matrix in Bakhtin's (1973) sense, one that can encompass a range of different kinds of talk, different genres and participation frameworks. Instead of looking at how language *reflects* an existing social structure, I want to analyze how language can be used to *build* relevant social organization, to orchestrate events and scenes in order to bring about a particular political event that is of great importance in the lives of African American girls: the *he-said-she-said*.¹ The *he-said-she-said* did not occur among the boys; in fact, girls actively sanctioned boys' intrusions into this activity.

Gossip is generally considered a form of "gendered resistance" (Gal 1990:183, 197) to women's powerlessness, a speech form which arises in the "private sphere" (Coates 1988:71; Harding 1975), which is women's domain. By way of contrast, among African American girls gossip culminates in a public confrontation between two girls in a scene of high drama that the rest of the street not only watches but eagerly anticipates. It provides an exemplar of female verbal virtuosity in orchestrating political activity.

In analyzing narrative many researchers have accepted Labov's proposal that stories principally provide descriptions of past events. As Labov and Waletzky state, "one method of recapitulating past experience is by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequences of events which supposedly occurred" (1968:287). Here instead I want to extend the notion of a story as not merely a description of prior events, but as a way of doing things in the present and bringing about events in the future. I investigate the structure of a family of stories that are linked to each other in the *he-said-she-said* activity—stories that are retellings of

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past events, pretellings of future events, hypothetical tellings about possible events, and parallel stories.

On the one hand stories are used to bring about the *he-said-she-said* event, to shape and engineer the activity, while on the other hand the internal structure of the story is itself shaped by its position within the activity, in a reflexive relationship. By looking at the larger speech genre we can see not only how language reflects society, but also the ways in which girls are active agents in building relevant events in their society. Stories provide a rich genre for study, in that within them participants can enact an entire theater of characters and events. As Goffman (1974:496-559) argues in his discussion of frame analysis, in telling a story a speaker not only portrays events but also *animates characters* who produce talk of their own and provides indications of her own alignment towards the events being recounted. One further reason for concentrating on stories is that both indirect and direct speech, which are sometimes viewed as dualities, are encompassed within this single event.

Girls selectively filter and reorganize their stories according to both the immediate local context (the audience) and the larger social projects that they are engaged in, realigning the social order so that two girls will square off in a confrontation. Through the telling of stories about gossip girls draw the entire neighborhood into the anticipation of a future drama.

FIELDWORK

This research is based on one and a half years of ethnographic fieldwork I conducted in an African American working class neighborhood of Philadelphia.² I tape recorded the children on Maple Street as they played together on the street after school, on weekends and during the summer. In all, over 200 hours of conversation were transcribed. The children spent most of their time in interaction within same sex groups. However, contrary to most "separate cultures" notions of children's play groups, the girls and boys of Maple Street were in regular daily contact with one another. Both girls' and boys' groups elected to spend most of their time playing outside on their front steps or in the street. Together girls and boys played games, ritually insulted one another, joked, told stories, built dramatic play episodes, and argued—all with relatively little "miscommunication" among them.

To conduct activities with their same-sex group members or cross-sex peers, the children selected actions from a known-in-common repertoire of speech actions: directives, disagreement strategies, and story-construction techniques. Girls and boys drew from a common bank of dispute strategies, and as early as four years old, girls could outmaneuver their sparring partners in cross-sex interaction. By the age of seven, girls in same-sex groups began to participate in *he-said-she-said*, a form of argumentation with same-sex age-mates that differs quite dramatically from the types of talk found among boys.

STRUCTURING OF THE HE-SAID-SHE-SAID EVENT

Within the girls' repertoire of events the he-said-she-said constitutes a major political event through which girls display their willingness to engage in *character contests*, defined by Goffman (1967:257) as "moments of action [during which] the individual has the risk and opportunity of displaying to himself and sometimes to others this style of conduct." He-said-she-said disputes permit girls to take action against those they construct as their offenders (parties who talk about them behind their backs). The girls' social organization consists largely in shifting coalitions in triads, and gossip can be used to rearrange the social organization of the moment. In addition, gossip functions to constrain those who are ambitious, girls who in various ways "think they cute" or are perceived as trying to show that they are "better than" others. In the most serious of he-said-she-said confrontations, a girl may be ostracized for a period of up to a month and a half, and during this time she is subject to the taunts of others who will attempt such pranks as ringing her doorbell and running away, ridiculing her siblings and mother, or composing songs about her physical traits. In less serious cases the defendant endures the deluge of accusations that are hurled against her and practices avoidance behavior for a few days.

Accusations within the event are made with utterances that have a particular syntactic shape—one that economically warrants the current accusation by providing a history of how the accuser learned that her addressee had talked about her behind her back and also provides the grounds for the charge. For example:

Barbara to Bea:	They say y'all say I wrote everything over there.
Annette to Benita:	An Arthur said that <i>you</i> said that I was showin' off just because I had that bl:ouse on.
Bea to Annette:	Kerry said <i>you</i> said that (0.6) I wasn't gonna go around <i>Poplar</i> no more.

Diagrammed, these utterances take the following shape.

Bea to Annette:	Kerry said you said that (0.6) I wasn't gonna go around <i>Poplar</i> no more
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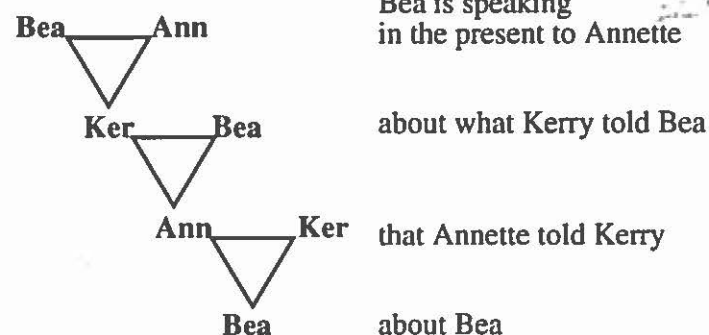


FIGURE 1: Diagram of Bea's accusation

Annette to Benita:	And Arthur said that <i>you</i> said that I was showin' off just because I had that bl:ouse on.
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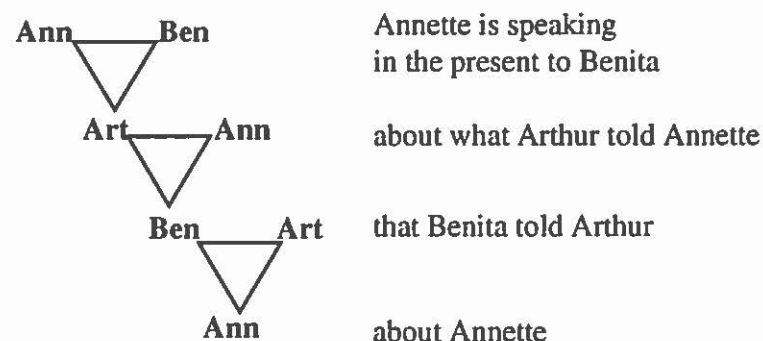


FIGURE 2: Diagram of Annette's accusation

Regardless of the particular utterance, the pattern contains three basic stages. At each stage two parties in the immediate presence of each other are situated as speaker and hearer.

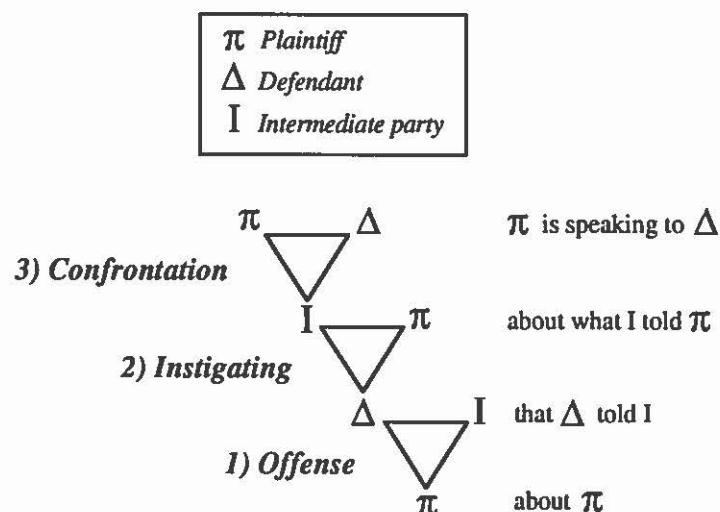


FIGURE 3: Pattern of accusation in he-said-she-said event

Though drama seems to reside in the confrontation between accuser and defendant, crucial events that bring about the confrontation occur in the second stage, in which the accuser is told that someone has been talking about her. Indeed, the girls use the term *instigator* to refer to the party who engineers the confrontation by reporting such events.

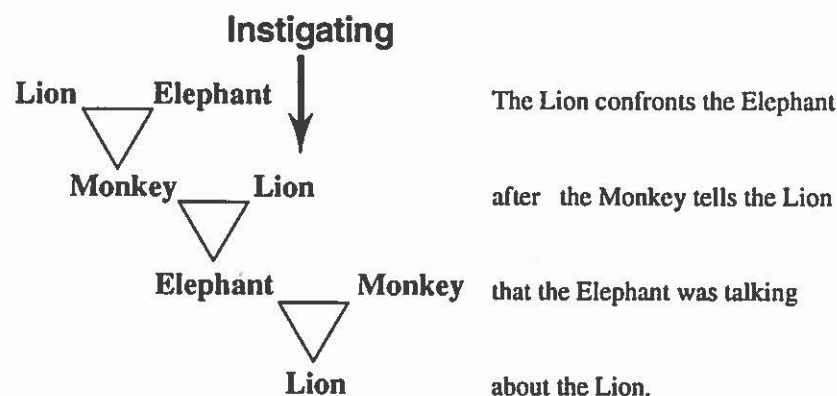


FIGURE 4: Diagram of accusation in "The Signifying Monkey"

The storytelling event in this activity (the middle stage)—called "instigating" by the girls participating in it—resembles the African American speech event of "signifying," which Gates (1988:81) has called "the trope of tropes" in Black culture. In the narrative poem "The Signifying Monkey," the monkey (a devious

trickster) reports to the lion some insults that their mutual friend the elephant has been saying about the lion. This leads the indignant and outraged lion to confront the elephant and to demand an apology in the next stage.

RETELLINGS: INDIRECTION IN BUILDING THE HE-SAID-SHE-SAID ACTIVITY

In discussing the frame analysis of talk Goffman (1974:516-44) builds on Volosinov's (1973) analysis of reported speech and notes that quoted talk in stories poses problems in "framing" for both analyst and listener: at one and the same time, quotations are the words of a present speaker replaying past experience as well as those of a character in the story who is animated by the teller. Within stories the speaking individual occupies different levels of an intricately laminated participation structure. From Goffman's perspective, to understand who is talking it is necessary to distinguish several different entities: (1) the *principal* or originator of a statement, the party held responsible for having taken up the position to which the meaning of the utterance attests; (2) the *emitter* of the statement in the current interaction; (3) the character who is being enacted, the *figure*; and (4) the *animator* who enacts both the talk and the speaker being quoted and simultaneously comments on them.

To see the complexity that these different structures make possible in even a short strip of talk, consider the following in which my response to an innocuous comment is strategically manipulated:

Bea: That boy have ugly sneaks on don't he.
 Candy: Mm yeah,
 Bea: HEY BOY.=THAT GIRL SAY YOU HAVE UGLY SNEAKS!

My agreement with the teller's talk is subsequently reinterpreted as words authored by me about the absent party. Here I am cast as the principal responsible for a statement whose content was authored by Bea.

The goal of the instigator's storytelling is to elicit a statement from the offended party which leads to her confronting the offending party. In the following more elaborated stories in which Bea talks about Kerry to Julia and Barbara, we will see that the storytellings are carefully managed with this in mind. Initially the teller relates offenses that the absent party, Kerry, committed against Julia. However, when Julia leaves, her next set of stories involves offenses Kerry committed against Barbara. Although the absent party who commits the offenses, Kerry, remains constant, the *story figure* who is recipient of her actions changes so that the target of the offense is always the present hearer. Through such changes the speaker maintains the relevance of her story for its immediate recipient.

In reporting prior talk it is common for the teller to carefully craft her reporting of past dialogue, to selectively omit part of it and reorganize the structure of prior conversation in light of her current projects (cf. Volosinov 1971). Such selective reporting of events is apparent in the ways in which Bea, as instigator, carefully structures her stories about an absent party's (Kerry's) actions and animates characters within them. In the first set of stories that Bea tells, she describes

offenses Kerry has committed against Julia: Kerry said that Julia was acting "stupid" and inappropriately when girls were telling jokes:

Bea: She said She said that um, (0.6) that (0.8) if that girl wasn't there=you know that girl that always makes those funny jokes, *h sh'aid if that girl wasn't there you wouldn't be actin, (0.4) all stupid like that.

In contrast to events in which Kerry, the absent party, is depicted as having slighted the listener, teller presents herself as having stood up for the listener. For example, in the following, Bea describes how absent party (Kerry) excluded present listener's (Julia's) name from a "hall pass," a permission slip to go to the bathroom, while speaker and her friend (Martha) included Julia's name.

Bea: She ain't even put your name down there. I just put it down there. Me and Martha put it down.=And I said, and she said "Gimme that paper." I don't wanna have her name down here." I s- I s- I s- I said "She woulda allowed you name."

Here quite different forms of affect and alignment toward Julia's perspective are conveyed in Bea's animation of Kerry and herself. Kerry was eager to remove Julia's name from the hall bathroom pass, while Bea in contrast stood up for Julia.

In her stories, teller also relates how she herself confronted the absent party when she was involved in similar interactions with that person. These stories present models for how the recipients of the story should react to the reports about nonpresent party's offenses towards them. For example, in the following Bea describes herself as someone who quite openly talked back to Kerry in response to a reported offense.

Bea: Oh yeah, oh yeah.=She was, she- w's she was in Rochele house you know, and she said that um that- I heard her say um, (0.4) um um uh uh "Julia said y'all been talkin behind my back." I said I'm a- I'm a say "Honey, I'm gla:d. that you know I'm talkin behind your back. Because I- because I meant for you to know anyway." An she said, I- said "I don't have to talk behind your back.= I can talk in front of your face too.

By presenting herself as having defended the offended party in the past and portraying how she boldly confronted the offending party, speaker carefully works to co-implicate her present recipient in a next course of action. In keeping with Mitchell-Kernan's (1972:166) analysis of indirection,³ the goal orientation of speaker in presenting her stories is obscured; through a story about past events a speaker suggests future courses of action for the present recipient.

PREPLAYINGS: FUTURE STORIES IN RESPONSE TO INSTIGATING STORIES

One of the things that instigators do is tell stories about how they treated the absent party in the past as a way of suggesting how their current addressee should treat that party in the future. Through such stories, teller attempts to engender in a

story recipient a feeling of righteous indignation and elicit from a listener a promise to confront the offending absent party in the future. In response to stories about past events, offended party (Barbara) produces a series of *future stories* in which she projects what she will do when she confronts her offender (Kerry):

Barbara: I better not see Kerry today. I'm a say "Kerry I heard you was talkin bout me."

Note that the talk cited in the projected confrontation differs in significant ways from what is actually said in such events. In actual confrontations accusations are framed as statements that a specific third party informed the offended party that the offending party had been talking about her behind her back: *Kerry said you said I wasn't gonna go around Poplar no more*. However, when replaying a future story to an instigator, the offended party omits any mention of the involvement of a third party in her projected accusation (*Kerry I heard you was talkin bout me*). How the offended party heard about the offense against her is ignored. This omission does not appear to be accidental. The actions being ignored are precisely those that her current co-participant is now engaged in: instigating. Preplayed stories thus show the offended party's sensitivity to the participation of the instigator in setting up the confrontation.

RETOLD STORIES BY INSTIGATOR TO PERIPHERAL PARTIES

The work of the instigator involves not only recruiting a protagonist to initiate a future confrontation but also recruiting a future audience to that event. Between the instigating and the confrontation stages, the instigator selectively reports prior talk when meeting friends not involved in the event and recruits people who will act as future audience to it. The instigator talks about the offended party's past statements that are important to the future confrontation but does not tell of her own work in soliciting such statements. In the next example, in her retold stories to Martha, Bea omits entirely the stories she told to Barbara (some 120 lines) and downplays her own role in the past storytelling; summarizing her own participation with a single statement — *I had told Barbara what um, what Kerry said about her?* — she then launches into her story about the offended party's promise to confront the offender.

Bea: Hey you- you n- you know- you know I- I- I had told Barbara what um, What Kerry said about her? And I- and she said "I better not see um, um Kerry, 'cause" she said she said "Well I'm comin around Maple and I just better not see her b'cause I'm- b'cause I'm gonna tell her behind her in front of her face and not behind her- I mean in front of her face."

Martha: She call her baldheaded and all that?

In the initial storytelling session, the crucial events at issue were the actions of the offending party (Kerry). They were important in that they constructed a portrait of the absent party as an offender and generated responses (preplayed versions of how the offended party will reply to the offender). When a story is retold to someone who may be a future witness to the confrontation, a detailed chronology of past events is not key to the activity of involving a listener in some future stage

of the gossip event. The crucial aspect of the past story is rather the responses of the offended party to the report: whether or not she will seek a confrontation. Indeed, offended parties are under strong obligation to seek redress; failure to confront someone after such a promise can lead to accusations that someone "swags," "moles," or backs down from her commitments.

FUTURE HYPOTHETICAL STORIES

Through telling a story about past events involving an offended and an offending party, Bea elicits Martha's co-participation in the construction of the character of cited absent party, Kerry. By proposing something which Barbara could have said about Kerry — *She call her baldheaded and all that?* — Martha implicates herself in the co-construction of figures in the narrative. Recipient and teller build scenes with casts of cited characters and protagonists. In response to some of Bea's stories about past events the girls construct scenes which provide yet another type of story generated from the framework of the he-said-she-said event: hypothetical stories occurring when offended meets offending party. The confrontation event is a spectacle that the whole street looks forward to. Anticipating possible confrontations and displaying intense involvement in future action, the following types of future hypothetical stories develop:

- Martha: Can't wait to see this A::Ction Mmhf. Mmhf.
 Bea: But if Barbara say she
 Martha: I laugh- I laugh I laugh if Kerry say- Bea s- I laugh if Barbara say, "I wrote it so what you gonna do about it."
 Bea: She say, she- had- and- and she and she probably gonna back out.
 Martha: I know.
 Bea: Boouh boouh // boouh
 Martha: And then she gonna say "You didn't have to write that about me Barbara." She might call her Barbara fat somp'm. Barbara say "Least I don't have no long: bumpy legs and bumpy neck, Spot legs, Least I don't gonna fluff my hair up to make me look like I hadda bush."
 Bea: You know she's- she least she fatter than her.
 Martha: Yeah an "Least I got bones. At least I got shape." That's what she could say. Barbara is cuter than her though.
 Bea: Yeap. And Barbara got shape too.

In response to Bea's story Martha enacts a future possible confrontation using quoted speech and utterances which contrast with those which are actually enacted in a confrontation. In dramatizing what Kerry and Barbara would say to each other, Martha and Bea together co-construct the story, citing personal insults, actions which among girls rarely occur in someone's presence. Considering the importance of recipient's co-participation, it would appear that the view of Goffman (and Bakhtin) that a single speaker creates theater in everyday talk through the animation of characters needs revision to include the intricate ways in which speakers implicate others and work together with story recipients to elaborate scenes. Telling about a past meeting with an offended party not only serves to

recruit potential spectators to the event; it also allows girls to shape a common view and build a shared political perspective on how events should occur.

HARVESTING STORIES TO UTILIZE IN LATER COUNTER-ACCUSATIONS

In the building of a common consensus about the offending party, one other type of story is important in the he-said-she-said event. In preparation for the future meeting with the offending party, the plaintiff herself is an active storyteller. As she meets others who also have grievances with the offending party and tells about the offenses committed against her, recipients in *parallel stories* may relate their own grievances towards the offending party.

A number of arguments with different protagonists may cluster around a he-said-she-said event. For example, a dispute developed between Naynay and Ruby regarding what Naynay said about her in her absence. At about the same time as the dispute between Ruby and Naynay, a conflict about the rules of jump rope developed between Sister and Naynay; rather than physically fighting, these girls instead decided to debate who by rights was obligated to deliver the first blow in a "fair one" (a "fair fight").

In this example Ruby meets Sister and tells her of Naynay's offenses toward her and the upcoming confrontation. As Sacks (1970, lecture 5) has argued, stories appear to occur "in clumps." A participant will examine a story for its characters and then use its characters to get another story. On hearing Ruby's grievances with Naynay, Sister relates the ongoing disagreement she herself is having with Naynay — specifically the debate about who has the obligation to initiate a fight.

- Ruby: She better not lie: boy. She better not go in the house! Ah: she said she ain't say it. Did she?
 → Sister: She told Cherie that I called her out for a fair one.

Sister's parallel story is tied to Ruby's story about the offending party Naynay. The prior linguistic structure provides a framework for a next move in kind. By constructing a parallel story in response to Ruby's story, Ruby and Sister together build a consensus about the event in question, a collaborative seeing and interpretation of the offending party's behavior.

Of special interest here is the particular wording Sister uses to relay her story. Although the offense that Sister accuses Naynay of does not involve something said in someone's absence, and thus is quite different from that which Ruby has against Naynay, Sister frames or packages her complaint using the same format as that used for a he-said-she-said accusation (*X told Y that I said Z*): *She told Cherie that I called her out for a fair one*. Sister states that Naynay reported to another girl, Cherie, something about Sister in her absence: "that she, Sister, was the one who was responsible for initiating a fight, the person who 'called her [Naynay] out for the fair one.'"

Thus, in response to stories of offenses involving nonpresent parties, story recipients may relate their own grievances toward the offending party. In the confrontation stage the offended party strives to paint a portrait of the offender as

someone who has wronged her. Parallel stories become powerful resources for elaborating features of the defendant's character since they provide supporting evidence for the plaintiff's accusations. In essence, through her own recounting of past events the offended party *harvests* incidents of offenses which can become grist for the accusation mill.

When Ruby subsequently meets up with Naynay she uses the incident Sister related in support of her accusation against Naynay. When Naynay denies the charges Ruby makes against her, Ruby can tie the complaint Sister has against her to prior accusations of her own. This occurs in the following examples of next actions to Naynay's denials in the midst of a confrontation:

- Naynay: I ain't gonna say it.
 → Ruby: You the one that supposed to b'fightin Sister. (1.0) And if Kerry wasn't never mad at you, you wouldn't a told you was- I ain't about you. Just like it took you forever, just to give me a lousy thirty-five cent.
 Naynay: One thing. That's a lie.
 → Ruby: Just like when we was playin rope. You kept on gettin all sma:rt and everything. And just like that other time that girl comes up here and smacked you, and then I told and smacked you. I- I- I just told that girl that you was gonna say somp'm to me.

Repetitively when the defendant denies charges brought against her, the plaintiff may counter by bringing up offenses committed by the defendant from the repertoire of stories she has acquired by talking with others. Conjunctions such as *and* and *just like* connect sequences of topics related to a common theme, providing for the cohesiveness of the text as a whole. In each of the reports (both the harvested story and a prior accusation) the defendant appears as a figure. Parallel stories ratify the accuser's perspective and display a consensus regarding the character of the defendant. In essence, they constitute an implicit coalition of *two against one* against the defendant — a form of argument that may be stated explicitly by the accuser in response to a defendant's denial, as in the following:

- Ruby: Well I'm a get it straight with the people. What Kerry, (1.4) It's between Kerry, and you, (1.0)
 → See two (0.5) two against one. Who wins? The one is two.=Right? (0.5) And that's Joycie and Kerry. (0.5) They both say that you said it. And you say that you didn't say it. Who you got the proof that say that you didn't say it.

Such forms of argument by someone acting as the accuser are quite common in court cases. For example, in attempting to discredit Anita Hill's testimony during the Clarence Thomas hearings Arlen Specter reported that she had spoken positively about Thomas with Carleton Stewart and that this was supported by another witness.

- Specter: So that uh Mr Stewart and Mr. Grayson are simply wrong when they say, and this is a quotation from Mr. Stewart, that you said specifically how great his nomination was and how much he deserved it. They're just wrong.

The he-said-she-said confrontation, like Senate hearings (or legal testimony), makes available a structure for topically tying one description to another. As a

unique forum for bringing complaints of various sorts against another girl, it permits the accuser to build a portrait of the defendant as someone who could have done what she is being accused of. Here power lies not in the force of a speech act (such as a directive), but rather in the way stories can be used to shape a shared vision and engineer a consensus of "two against one."

CONCLUSION

While most research on women's speech has focused on linguistic features demonstrating situations of powerlessness, in this paper I have focused on a type of speech activity — stories — and the resources they provide for orchestrating a gossip dispute event. Among the girls I studied, power is clearly evident in the instigator's actions: through her use of stories the instigator recounts events which engage the neighborhood as audience and creates feelings of righteous indignation in the offended party, which lead to her confronting the offending party.

Stories tied to the he-said-she-said event take a variety of forms: they include (1) the initial *instigating stories* between instigator and offended party; (2) *future stories* by offended party in response to instigating stories; (3) *retold stories* about the instigating session between instigator and offended party told to future spectators; (4) *hypothetical stories* between instigator and peripheral parties about future confrontations; (5) *parallel stories* between the accuser and others who have grievances against the offending party; (6) *harvested parallel stories* used by the accuser in presenting her case. In presenting her stories an instigator carefully shapes them to elicit from her listeners responses that will promote involvement in a future confrontation. She embellishes past dialogue that will evoke recipient response and downplays talk of her own that could be viewed in an objectionable way. Plaintiff, for her part, carefully omits the role of instigating party in evoking a future stage in her future stories. By relating past events to others in the neighborhood who stand in a similar position with respect to the offending party, the plaintiff may generate parallel stories. These along with hypothetical stories of the instigator and her friends are important in building a consensus about the offending party's character. Subsequently parallel stories can be used by the accuser as evidence for the offending party's blame. Thus, an entire family of stories is linked within this dispute process.

Labov has argued that narrative constitutes "a method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequences of clauses which (it is inferred) actually occurred" (Labov 1972:359-60). Within the he-said-she-said, the organization of descriptions is unrelated to the properties of past events being described. Rather, organization is to be found in the structure of the present interaction, which projects a future stage. The anticipation of a future stage is possible because of the embeddedness of storytelling within a larger cultural event, the he-said-she-said. Stories permit the teller to elicit pledges to future courses of action and to engineer a consensus regarding teller's perspective.

Recently, black feminist researchers concerned with language have argued that all too often studies by middle-class white scholars give only lip service to a "litany of diversity" (Houston 1990:30), treating middle-class white communication styles

as the norm. Houston, for example, argues that gender is frequently perceived as separate from race and class; as a consequence it is treated "as if it is experienced in the same way by all women, that is, according to white middle-class women's experience" (1990:31). Often women are viewed as disadvantaged relative to men and are said to speak less forcefully, making use of such linguistic features as hedges, intensifiers, and tag questions. According to hooks,

within feminist circles, silence is often seen as the sexist "right speech of womanhood"—the sin of woman's submission to patriarchal authority ... but in black communities (and diverse ethnic communities) women have not been silent. (1989:6)

hooks has further argued that African Americans value and seek out confrontational talk⁴ while for WASP women confrontation is viewed negatively, as something to be avoided (hooks 1990, cited in Houston 1990:31).

Certainly this has been the view in the literature on girls' socialization. It has been argued that girls avoid direct competition and are little interested in negotiational involvements (Gilligan 1982; Lever 1976; Sutton-Smith 1979). Here, however, we see that within the he-said-she-said event girls react with righteous indignation when they learn that their character has been maligned. They display an intense interest in initiating and elaborating disputes about their rights. In the he-said-she-said event, the instigator displays her ability to bring about confrontations and enlist others' involvement in the future spectacle; girls actively reorganize their alliances and clearly differentiate between offending and offended parties. Nothing of the complexity of he-said-she-said embedded accusation statements nor of the scale of the girls' he-said-she-said political event was observed among the boys.

If we are to understand the full range of female communicative competencies, we need to examine what females do across a variety of contexts, in same-sex as well as cross-sex interaction in diverse ethnic communities. To investigate power in female speech, one place to begin might be how females use language to orchestrate the important political events in their lives.

NOTES

1. The term *he-said-she-said* is used by African American adults (Rose 1987) and adolescents (Shuman 1986) to refer to a form of gossip that can lead to dispute. As New York City student Kenaisha Warran put it in a *New York Times* interview about adolescent culture, "Rumors — 'he said she said' — [also] lead to beef" (Saturday, March 17, 1992).

2. For a more extensive discussion of the fieldwork on which this study is based see Goodwin (1990).

3. On indirection in African American women's stories see Morgan (1991).

4. See also Liebow (1967:102-60), Folb (1980:146-48), and Stanback (1985:184) for descriptions of power and self-assertiveness in African American women's speech.

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Women talking to women: The function of questions in conversation

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INTRODUCTION

In the language and gender literature, claims have been made about women's speech style based primarily on data taken from cross-sex conversations. Both the difference and dominance frameworks, two models frequently used in such discussions, have focused on the contrast between women's and men's speech. Relatively little work has been done on the characteristics of same-sex conversational behavior; it is our contention that the results of work on cross-sex communication cannot be generalized to the speech of either women or men in same-sex conversations (Coates & Cameron 1988). The research reported here is part of a larger project designed to investigate women's use of language when speaking with other women.

We believe that the premise and design of much previous research should be reevaluated. First, we question the assumption that the appropriate criterion for characterizing conversational style or for measuring the success of conversation is the balance between speakers in amount of talk, the number of interruptions, or the frequency of questions asked (Hirschman 1974; Fishman 1978; West & Zimmerman 1983). Second, we caution against drawing conclusions about speaking styles based on the examination of linguistic variables removed from their conversational contexts (Lakoff 1975; Maltz & Borker 1982; Tannen 1990). Third, we reject the claim of correspondences between single linguistic structures or pragmatic expressions and invariant meanings associated with a particular group of speakers (see also Hymes 1974; Goffman 1983; Holmes 1984, 1986).

In order to determine if the characteristics attributed to cross-sex conversational exchanges are applicable to same-sex conversations, we examined the use of questions between pairs of female friends. Of course, questions are only one of a series of linguistic forms and devices which must be analyzed before characterizations can be made about a so-called gendered speech style. We chose to study questions because of previous research which finds that in cross-sex conversation women ask many more questions than men (Fishman 1978). The greater use of questions by women has been generally accepted as a characteristic of female speech style and has been interpreted in various ways. Lakoff (1975) claims

that it is a reflection of women's insecurity. Fishman (1978, 1980) asserts that women ask more questions than men because of their desire to maintain verbal interaction in the face of uncooperative partners. Maltz and Borker (1982) and Tannen (1990) have suggested that the imbalance in the amount of questions asked by women and men reflects different communicative strategies learned by girls and boys as part of sex-specific childhood socialization.

We take issue with these interpretations because until there is empirical verification, conclusions about question use drawn from intimate heterosexual cross-sex conversations (Fishman 1978) or from anecdotal reports cannot be generalized to same-sex conversations. In addition, considering questions as a single syntactic and pragmatic form masks important information about the complexity of question use in conversation. Finally, we believe that treating conversation as if it were a unitary phenomenon consisting of only one type of talk leads to incorrect generalizations.

The data for this study are based on 8 conversations taken from a larger database of 30 conversations recorded in an experimental setting. Each of the conversations lasted approximately 35 minutes. The informants were white middle- and working-class women from two age groups. The four pairs of women in the younger group, who were from 18 to 24 years old, were students from a state college in New Jersey; the four pairs of women in the older group, ranging in age from 39 to 52, were either students at the college or members of the local community. The students, who were from women's studies and linguistics classes, had been asked to participate in a study of friendship. The women who were not students were known to the investigators and were given the same description of the study. Each volunteer was asked to bring a good friend of the same sex to a specified location; they were informed in advance that they would be audio- and video-recorded during the study.

In order to manipulate the conversation, we divided it into three parts, with each part having distinct requirements. When the participants arrived, they were told that we were not completely ready to begin and they were encouraged to relax and enjoy the juice and doughnuts that we had provided. Microphones and a tape recorder were in full view on the table at which they were asked to sit. The equipment was running and they were so informed before we left them alone. We call this first portion of the conversation the *spontaneous* talk segment (Part 1) because although the women were aware of the recording equipment, the conversation was controlled by the participants, not the investigators, and participants were under the impression that the study had not yet formally begun. Each pair spoke about matters unrelated to the subject of the study.

After 10 minutes we returned and asked them to discuss friendship and how it differs for women and men. While giving our instructions we attempted to be as casual as possible, hoping to mitigate participants' self-consciousness. We call this the *considered* talk portion (Part 2) because the participants were told to focus on a particular assigned topic.

After 15 more minutes we interrupted them, thanked them, and asked them to fill out an anonymous ethnographic questionnaire and sign a release. Since the documents had to be filled out individually no conversation was required.

Surprisingly, however, there was usually a good deal of talk. The women seemed relieved that the formal part of the study was over; they made jokes about the questions, read them aloud to each other, and engaged in general commentary about the task at hand. This section (Part 3), which lasted from 6 to 13 minutes, provided us with an opportunity to observe *collaborative* talk.

We identified 902 questions in these eight conversations. Table 1 shows the number of questions asked in each of the conversations.

TABLE 1. *Total number of questions, by pair*

18-22 years old	39-52 years old
(3-5 months of friendship)	
(#1) A: 81 B: 133 = 214	(#5) A: 24 B: 59 = 83
(1-3 years of friendship)	
(#2) A: 84 B: 41 = 125	(#6) A: 36 B: 29 = 65
(3-4 years of friendship)	
(#3) A: 58 B: 64 = 122	(#7) A: 44 B: 41 = 85
(17-18 years of friendship)	
(#4) A: 27 B: 59 = 86	(#8) A: 68 B: 54 = 122

Questions occur in every conversation and are asked by every speaker. The smallest number of questions asked by any individual is 24 (#5A) and the largest is 133 (#1B). By pairs, the number of questions asked varies from 65 to 214. The younger group of women asked more questions than the older group but these figures may be slightly skewed due to the unusually high number of questions asked by one member of pair #1. This individual asked one-third more questions than the next-highest questioner.

Our data show that in half of these same-sex interactions—where sex is not a variable—one member of the conversational pair asks more questions than the other. Four of the pairs are relatively balanced in the number of questions asked (#3, #6, #7, #8); 4 of the pairs show an imbalance in the number of questions asked (#1, #2, #4, #5). Since sex differences cannot be held responsible for this imbalance, we doubt that sex differences alone are responsible for the imbalance in the number of questions used in cross-sex conversations, as claimed by Fishman (1978, 1980).

The pairs of women in the older age group ask slightly fewer questions and are generally more balanced in their use of questions than the younger pairs. However, it is unlikely that age alone accounts for the discrepancies in either the number of questions asked or the balance in the amount of questions because the numbers for this older group of women are almost identical to the number of questions used by a group of young men who participated in this same project (reported on in Freed and Greenwood 1992).

The two groups of female friends were matched for length of friendship in

order to investigate whether friendship affected questioning. In the older age group, the largest number of questions was asked by the pair who knew each other the longest (#8), 17 years; in the younger age group, the largest number of questions was asked by the pair who knew each other the least amount of time (#1), 3 months. Therefore, based on these data, a simple correspondence cannot be made between the number of questions asked in a conversation and the length of time speakers have been friends.

We also examined the distribution of questions in the different parts of the conversation. Our data establish that speakers vary the amount of questions they ask according to the demands of the particular conversational situation. The same patterns are followed by all 8 pairs, with both age groups adjusting their question use in similar ways. These findings show that unless conversational participants are observed across several talk situations, assertions about various aspects of their speaking styles are suspect.

Each type of talk situation in our study—spontaneous, considered, and collaborative—elicited a different kind of conversational interaction from the participants. A random distribution of the questions based on the difference in the length of time of the three segments would predict that 29%, 44%, and 27% of the questions would occur in Parts 1, 2, and 3 respectively. Instead we find that 41% of the total number of questions are asked in the first, spontaneous talk segment, 35% occur in the second, considered talk portion, and 24% are in the final, collaborative talk segment. The rate of questioning when adjusted for the difference in the time of the segments reveals that almost half, or 46%, of the questioning occurs in Part 1. Although the considered talk section is approximately double the time of the collaborative section, the rate of questioning is almost the same for both: 26% in Part 2 and 28% in Part 3 (see Table 2).

TABLE 2. *Distribution of number of questions by type of talk*

PART 1	PART 2	PART 3
10 minutes	15 minutes	6-13 minutes
Spontaneous	Considered	Collaborative
370 questions (41% of total)	319 questions (35% of total)	213 questions (24% of total)
Rate of questioning adjusted for time:		
46%	26%	28%

Our data further indicate that not only does the number of questions vary according to the talk situation, but the type of questions asked differs as well. Questions were first identified according to standard syntactic and intonational criteria: sentence-initial interrogative words, inverted subject-verb order, tag formation, and phrase-final rising intonation. Next, we sought to determine how questions were being used. It became clear that there were many different kinds of questions and that they were functioning in a number of different ways; each question had to be carefully analyzed within the context of the particular talk

situation in which it occurred. We made use of a taxonomy of question types that we developed for an earlier study (Freed & Greenwood 1992), which is based on the informational content of the question utterances themselves rather than on our intuitions about the speakers' intentions.

In establishing our taxonomy, we purposefully considered question utterances alone rather than as part of adjacency pairs because we feel, with Levinson, that "strict adjacency" as suggested by the model developed by Schegloff and Sacks (1973) is "actually too strong a requirement" (1983:304) for question-answer sequences (see also Sinclair and van Gessel 1990).

For example, some questions elicit inappropriate responses or no answers at all; Levinson argues that such occurrences "undermine[s] the structural significance of an adjacency pair" (1983:307). Questions get asked and have informational content regardless of the response. In one of the conversations used for this study, a speaker interrupts her partner's narrative, saying, *I have to go to the bathroom. Where can I go to the bathroom?* She receives no response and repeats the question, which again is not answered. Possibly the other woman was so involved in her story that she did not want to acknowledge the interruption. Her lack of response, although interesting, does not in any way modify the informational content of the question. The speaker clearly wants to know where a bathroom is. This question specifically asks for a particular kind of factual information. Since our goal here is to identify and compare in context the kinds of questions that speakers ask, we feel that the description must be initially based on the informational content of the interrogative utterance.

In this corpus, as in our earlier work, we found that speakers asked questions for different types of information or reactions. For example, there were questions that asked about facts in the external world, such as *What's today's date?* There were questions that asked for information about the life of the hearer, such as *Do you have enough credits to be a junior yet?* There were questions that were rhetorical and asked for no information at all, but functioned to orient the hearer to the speaker's attitude; for example, *By the time I figure it out for him, you know, who cares?* We determined as before that the questions fell along an *information-style continuum*. Moving along the continuum, the information sought changes from new public-domain information, to shared or given information (Clark & Haviland 1977), to phatic information (Malinowski 1923), to rhetorical information, and finally to no information at all (see Prince 1981).

We established 16 different question functions which we used in our analysis. These can be grouped into four general question classes:

1. We identified questions which seek information *external* to the circumstances of the conversation. These include public-information questions, social-information questions, social invitations, and deictic-information questions. An example of this category is *What time are you going to the movie?*
2. We also found questions which seek information about the *talk* or conversation itself. These consist of clarification questions, repetition questions, and confirmation questions. This category is similar to what Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks (1977) call "other-initiated repairs." An example of this type of question is the following: A: *I'll be a free soul.* B: *What do you mean "free"?*

3. We found questions which pertain to information related to the verbal and social relationship between the speaker and hearer. Contained in this group are conversational-focus questions, shared-information questions, phatic-information questions, and questions which ask for elaboration. An example of this *relational* category is the frequently asked question *Do you know what I mean?*

4. There are also questions which are a reflection of the speaker's expressive style and ask for no information from the hearer; on the contrary, the information is known to the speaker, who offers the information in the form of a question for purely stylistic reasons. This category includes didactic questions, rhetorical questions, questions used for humor, self-directed questions, and questions used in reported speech. An example of a question used stylistically is *In other words, you don't take a person aside and say, um, "Could you hold off on your questions?"*

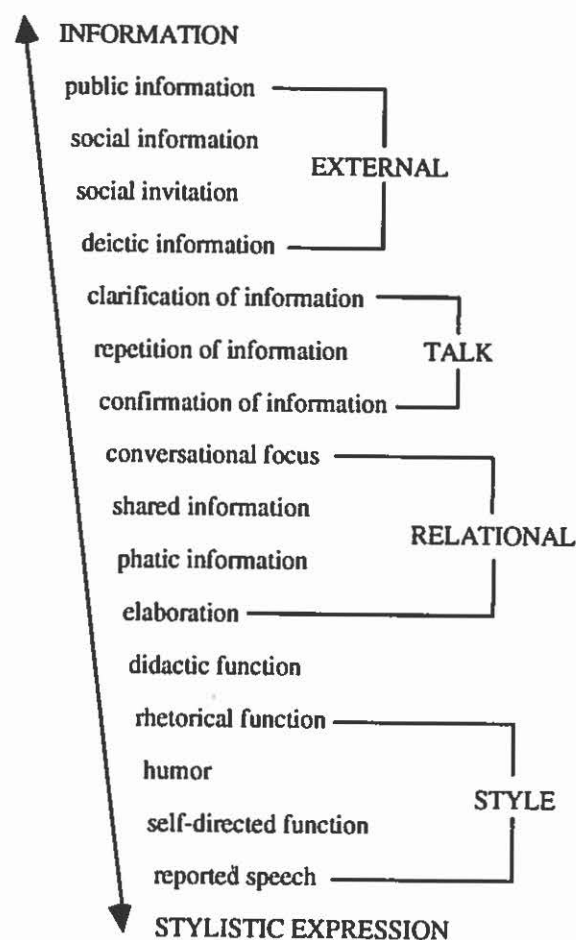


FIGURE 1: Taxonomy of question functions.

Broad categories of this sort have been suggested by other researchers (Kearsley 1976; Goody 1978; Sinclair & van Gessel 1990) but not organized as a continuum, as presented here. By situating questions along an information/style continuum, the similarities between adjacent types can be recognized and the wide range of reactions that questioners seek can be accounted for as well. The continuum of questions, from straightforward requests for information to questions that reveal the individual style of the speaker, captures the range of question use in conversation. The four larger categories combine questions that ask for similar kinds of information.

The procedure that we followed for establishing the functional categories above was different from the process by which individual question tokens were analyzed. In order to arrive at the specific classification of the individual questions which occurred at a particular moment in a conversation, we considered the context that preceded and followed each question. Our identification was generally confirmed by the hearer's verbal or nonverbal response (Goodwin 1981). Since by and large hearers correctly interpret what is being requested of them and respond appropriately, answers were especially useful in determining problematic interpretations and provided independent confirmation of the taxonomic classification.

We classified the 902 questions in these conversations according to one of the 16 categories. Although a question could be interpreted as serving a number of different purposes within a conversation, we identified a primary informational function for each question from the context in which it occurred. When we examine the distribution of these question types as they occur in the three different talk situations of these 8 same-sex conversations, we see that each section of the conversation has a distinct distribution of question types (see Table 3).

TABLE 3. Distribution of functional categories by type of talk

Question type	PART 1	PART 2	PART 3
	Spontaneous	Considered	Collaborative
EXTERNAL	34%	14%	49%
TALK	25%	11%	16%
RELATIONAL	18%	47%	13%
STYLE	23%	28%	22%

In the spontaneous talk portion, most of the questions asked are external-information questions (34%); relational questions are asked least often (18%). Part 2, the considered talk portion, has an entirely different distribution of question types. In this section, the speakers ask very few external questions (14%), but instead use a preponderance of relational questions (47%). Since the only change in the situation is the new requirements of the conversation, the use of different types of questions must be a reflection of the particular demands of the talk situation. The third section of the conversation, where collaborative talk occurs,

shows a still different distribution of questions. In this section, close to half, or 49%, of the questions used are external. The distinct distribution of these categories confirms that the particular talk situation determines what kinds of questions are deemed useful or appropriate by the speakers.

The distribution of questions within each talk situation is parallel to the pattern we found in our previous study which compared pairs of young female and young male friends. Both women and men followed the same pattern (cf. Tables 5 and 6). In Parts 1 and 3 of those conversations, the men as well as the women used more external questions than in Part 2 and very few relational questions. In the second, considered, portion, the men also asked more relational questions than they asked in either the first or the third sections. Clearly, in these studies sex is not the variable which accounts for different question use. Furthermore, having examined the use of different types of questions in four pairs each of young female, older female, and young male friends, and finding that the same general distribution occurs for all three groups within and across each talk situation, we conclude that it is the particular demands of the talk situation that conversationalists are responding to in similar ways.

Although the patterns in the distribution of individual question types between the younger and older women are quite comparable, there are a few subtle differences. Tables 4 and 5 show the distribution of questions in each talk situation for these two groups.

TABLE 4. *Distribution of functional categories by type of talk:
Older female pairs*

Question type	PART 1	PART 2	PART 3
	Spontaneous	Considered	Collaborative
EXTERNAL	32%	22%	53%
TALK	25%	18%	14%
RELATIONAL	18%	37%	12%
STYLE	25%	23%	21%

TABLE 5. *Distribution of functional categories by type of talk:
Younger female pairs*

Question type	PART 1	PART 2	PART 3
	Spontaneous	Considered	Collaborative
EXTERNAL	36%	9%	48%
TALK	25%	6%	17%
RELATIONAL	18%	54%	13%
STYLE	21%	31%	22%

TABLE 6. *Distribution of functional categories by type of talk:
Younger male pairs*

Question type	PART 1	PART 2	PART 3
	Spontaneous	Considered	Collaborative
EXTERNAL	31%	13%	50%
TALK	27%	10%	13%
RELATIONAL	8%	33%	9%
STYLE	34%	44%	28%

We see that in Part 2, the considered talk portion, the older women ask more external and talk questions than the younger women, and the younger women use a higher percentage of relational questions. In general, the distribution of question types changes less dramatically from section to section for the older group of women than for the younger. Since the overall patterns of the two groups are similar, further research is needed to ascertain whether these subtle differences are significant.

When we examine the distribution of relational questions for the two groups of women, we find that for both groups, phatic questions are the kind of relational question most often used. (*Phatic questions* ask if the hearer is following the information exchange in the conversation.) An examination of the actual question tokens reveals that each of the 8 younger women ask the specific question *You know what I mean?* They use this expression a total of 72 times as compared to the older women who use this phrase only 9 times in all their conversations. Such a dramatic difference may indicate that the expression *you know what I mean?* is age-related, is a part of this student-body register, or is simply idiosyncratic to this age group in this particular speech community. Although the older women ask as many phatic questions and use them with the same distribution as their younger counterparts, the older women form these questions in different ways. Here again, further research is necessary before any conclusions can be drawn about the relevance of age to this aspect of question usage in conversation.

Although it has been asserted that women engage in so-called rapport talk and accordingly should use more relational questions than any other type (called "conversational maintenance" questions by Maltz & Borker 1982), in our study, we found that women do not ask an overall higher proportion of relational questions than other kinds. Even younger women, who ask the greatest amount of relational questions, use them only 29% of the time. We have shown that women, like men, use a preponderance of relational questions in certain conversational circumstances but not in others. Therefore, notions about "rapport" talk as described by Tannen (1990) are overgeneralized and misleading.

By examining question use in 8 same-sex conversations, each consisting of three different talk situations, we are able to determine that this group of female speakers agrees on the requirements of different conversational contexts and that all the conversationalists vary the amount and type of questions they ask in similar ways. Since the patterns of question use are the same for this group of older and

younger women as they were for the group of young men previously studied, we see that neither sex nor age alone can account for the distinct variations which occur.

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Women's language for sale on the fantasy lines

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INTRODUCTION

When the deregulation of the telephone industry co-occurred with a number of technological advances in telecommunications in the early 1980s, American society witnessed the birth of a new medium for linguistic exchange—the 900 number. The growing success of this discursive medium in the marketplace calls for a new interpretation of the place of women's language in contemporary society and, in particular, demands an examination of the use of women's language as a sexual commodity. On the fantasy lines, which generate annual revenues of approximately \$55 million in California alone, women's language is bought, sold, and custom-tailored to secure caller satisfaction. This high-tech mode of linguistic exchange complicates traditional notions of power in language, as the women working within the industry consciously produce a language stereotypically associated with women's powerlessness in order to gain economic power and social flexibility. In a preliminary study of five international women-owned fantasy-line companies based in San Francisco, I argue for a definition of linguistic power that devotes serious attention to the role of sexuality in conversational exchange and that examines power in cross-sex conversation as a multidimensional phenomenon that cannot be reduced to simplistic notions of "powerful" and "powerless."

The adult message industry, referred to more colloquially as *dial-a-porn*, has enjoyed considerable financial success over the past decade, taking in an estimated \$3 billion since its inception in 1983.¹ As fear over the AIDS epidemic and the accompanying interest in safe sex spreads throughout the culture at large, the demand for women's vocal merchandise promises to expand rapidly throughout the 1990s. *Prerecorded* services, which normally charge the patron through the monthly telephone bill, offer the caller a choice of predetermined sexually explicit messages, accessible through the appropriate button on the touch-tone telephone. Callers are greeted by a recorded woman's voice which, after informing them that they must be at least eighteen years of age in order to continue the call, outlines the currently available fantasies. One service which advertises monthly in *Hustler*, for example, offers a choice of "oral fantasies," "oriental girl fantasies," "housewives fantasies," "lesbian fantasies," "Swedish mistress fantasies," and even "women-in-jail fantasies." In contrast, *live-conversation* services, now available mainly through credit card, allow the caller to engage in a live verbal encounter with a speaker who is paid by the minute to fulfill a phone fantasy. The customer calls the fantasy line and speaks directly to a switchboard operator who then processes his fantasy request. After screening his credit card number, the operator calls one of her home-based employees, explains the requested fantasy to her, and gives her the

choice of accepting or rejecting the work. In a sense, then, this latter type of encounter mocks conventional prostitution except that it is being conducted entirely within the vocal sphere. In street terms, the john calls the conversation brothel, files his request with the phone pimp, and gets connected to the vocal prostitute of his choice.

The growing demand for this controversial service in American society has prompted the legislature to examine the legality of pornography as a vocal phenomenon.² In April of 1988, an upset Congress amended section 223(b) of the Communications Act of 1934 to impose a complete ban on both indecent and obscene interstate commercial telephone messages. In the legal battle that ensued between Sable Communications of California, Inc., and the Federal Communications Commission, the FCC attempted to justify the ban on indecent messages by arguing that mass telephone message systems are analogous to public radio broadcasts. They relied on the 1978 case *FCC vs. Pacifica Foundation*, where in response to a father's complaint against a radio's afternoon broadcast of George Carlin's "Filthy Words" monologue, the Supreme Court ruled that the FCC could in fact regulate indecency over the airwaves on a nuisance basis. The plaintiff, on the other hand, compared dial-a-porn to the private medium of cable television, which a number of courts have declared may broadcast obscene and indecent materials. The District Court judging the case found that the provision dealing with dial-a-porn was severable, deciding that while the first amendment did not protect *obscene* messages, it did protect *indecent* ones. Because there is no official legal definition of which words or phrases are "obscene" and which words or phrases are "indecent," 900 lines that believe their messages to be indecent and not obscene may continue to transmit messages.³

Debates in the legislature over the legality of this controversial form of communication have coincided with recent feminist discussions on what has been called (since the 1982 Barnard College Conference on the "politics of sexuality") the *pleasure/danger controversy*. Feminists like Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon, who stress the sexual danger brought on by male pornography, oppose feminists like Gayle Rubin, who emphasize the need for freedom of speech in the pursuit of women's sexual desire, embracing as powerful what has been traditionally thought of as "feminine" sexuality.⁴ Most interesting with respect to the present discussion is that Catherine MacKinnon, in her argument that "pornography, in the feminist view, is a form of forced sex" (1987:148), blurs the division between representation and act, defining depictions of sex as synonymous with actual sex. Her arguments have unfortunately been appropriated by the more conservative legislators led by Jesse Helms who back the American obscenity law, judging images as obscene either because they cause real-life effects (or in legal terms, appeal "to the prurient interest in sex of the average person" ⁵) or because they depict sexual acts which are illegal under other sections of the criminal code. In order to make their case against photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, for instance, legislators cited Minnesota's MacKinnon/Dworkin anti-pornography bill (Title 7) in their own bill to set restrictions on the kinds of representations fundable by the state. It is perhaps the strength of this discursive alliance between liberal and conservative America—albeit superficial—that led the Senate to pass the bill in

September 1989, forbidding the National Endowment for the Arts from funding artistic projects that depict "obscenity." Additional legal equations of representation and act could have interesting implications for the adult message industry, where the representation, although vocal, is undoubtedly one of prostitution. As the mediums by which people gain access to obscene and indecent material change (the most recent form is computer pornography, which provides formats for exchanging sexual messages and conducting on-line "modem sex"), courts and legislatures will have to determine which types of representation (e.g., visual, verbal, vocal) more closely approximate, or affect, reality.

Dworkin and MacKinnon are especially concerned with the issue of pornography because for them, sexuality is the basis for the constitution of power relations in our society; in MacKinnon's own words, "The social relation between the sexes is organized so that men may dominate and women must submit. This relation is sexual—in fact, is sex" (1987:3). But in their arguments against pornography, they construct a definition of sexuality in terms of oppression, a definition which, in the words of Judith Butler, "links masculinity with agency and aggression, and femininity with passivity and injury" (1991:113). Feminists such as Echols (1983) and Rubin (1984), and more recently Valverde (1989) and Freccero (1990), have pointed out that in defining female sexuality as uniformly powerless and constructed by men, Dworkin and MacKinnon leave no room for women to construct their own sexual desires, much less to reclaim patriarchal ones. They argue that a theory of sexuality must allow for individual variability in women's desire, fantasy, and consent, and moreover, that sexual oppression (although certainly important) should not be emphasized to the exclusion of economic and social oppression.

The eleven women fantasy-makers and fantasy-line managers interviewed for this study, all residing in San Francisco and ranging in age from 23 to 38, were aware of the recent feminist controversy over pornography and were highly reflective on their position within this debate. Particularly interesting is the fact that these women had reinterpreted this debate within the vocal sphere, perceiving their position in the linguistic exchange as a powerful one. Their positive attitude may have much to do with the fact that in San Francisco, most of the adult message services are women-owned and operated, with a large percentage of employees identifying themselves as feminists and lesbians. For these women, many of whom are freelance artists, graduate students, and writers, their work on the telephone brings economic independence and social freedom. To them, the real prostitutes in our society are those women who dress in expensive business suits in the financial district, work fifty hours a week, and make 65 cents to every man's dollar. They understand the adult message industry to be primarily a creative medium, viewing themselves as fantasy-tellers who have embraced a form of discourse that has been largely ignored by the women of this sexually repressed society. Moreover, they feel a certain power in having access into men's minds and find that this access empowers them in their everyday cross-sex interactions.

FANTASY AND THE TELEPHONE

In order for fantasy to be effective, it must somehow parallel reality, and if its intended audience is the culture at large, it must necessarily prey on certain cultural perceptions of what the ideal reality is. In order to sell to a male market, women's prerecorded messages and live-conversational exchange must cater to traditionally held male perceptions of the ideal female. The training manual for operators of 970-LIVE, for instance, a male-owned fantasy-line service in New York City, instructs its women to "create different characters" and to "start with one that resembles the ideal woman"—as if this is a universal, unproblematic concept. In order to train women to fulfill this ideal, the manual gives additional details on how "to start a conversation," "ways to keep callers interested," and how to maintain "professionalism":

Create different characters:

Start with one that resembles the ideal woman. Move on to bimbo, nymphomaniac, mistress, slave, transvestite, lesbian, foreigner, or virgin. If caller wants to speak to someone else, don't waste time being insulted. *Be* someone else. You should be creative enough to fulfill *anyone's* fantasy.

To start a conversation:

"What's on your mind?"

"What would you like to talk about?"

"What do you do for fun?"

"What are you doing right now?"

Remember: Never initiate sex. Let the caller start phone intimacy.

Ways to keep callers interested:

Tell them crazy fantasies: *Jell-O*, honey, travel, ice cream, lesbian love, orgies. If conversation stays clean, tell them an interesting story: movies, TV, books, etc. Make it sound like it really happened. *Insist* that it happened.

Professionalism:

Do not talk to *anyone* besides a caller when taking a call. Always be bubbly, sexy, interesting, and interested in each individual caller. Remember, *you* are not your character on the phone.

[reprinted in *Harper's Magazine*, Dec. 1990, 26-7]

What makes the ideal woman from a verbal point of view, then, is quite reminiscent of Fishman's (1983) definition of "maintenance work"—encouraging men to develop their topics by asking questions ("What's on your mind?" "What would you like to talk about?" "What do you do for fun?"), showing assent (*Always be bubbly, sexy, interesting, and interested in each individual caller*), and listening (*Do not talk to anyone besides a caller when taking a call*). Since the conversation would be meaningless unless it in some way approximates the male caller's understanding of reality, what becomes critically important to its success is for it to "sound like it really happened"—for the woman to "*insist* that it happened." This realization, coupled with the fact that many clients may be calling the lines in response to the increasing threat of AIDS, has even led some companies to practice

"safe phone sex." The number 1-900-HOT-LIPS, for instance, which advertises as "just one of ... many steamy safe-sex fantasy numbers," has all of its fantasy-line operators "carry" (in the verbal sense, that is) condoms and spermicides alongside their cosmetics and perfumes.

THE PRERECORDED MESSAGE

The language promoted in the trainer's manual is precisely the kind of language sold by the prerecorded services—language that, through extensive detail and supportive hearer-directed comments, presents a certain reality. In the two-minute pre-recorded message reproduced below in (1), for instance, which is played daily on a national fantasy line that advertises as "girls, girls, girls," the speaker is unquestionably the perfect female: she loves to shop, she wears feminine clothes, she likes to look at herself in the mirror, and she lies in bed half the day fulfilling male fantasies.⁷

(1) oo::f/.. i'm so [breathy voice] ex*cited// i just got a *hot new job//... well/.. i've been bored lately//.. i live in a small town and my husband travels a lot/.. i have lots of time on my hands// [gasp] <1> of course/ i've always managed to stay busy//.. lots of girlfriends/ you know/ .. [whisper] i love to shop/.. i [laugh] practically live at the mall it seems/ but still [gasp] <2> anyway//.. this friend told me about this job i can do at home// all i need is a *phone//.. and a *lusty i*magination// [laugh] yeah, you've got it.. i'm doing hot sexy phone calls these days// i really get into it too//.. i love that sexy hot fellows from all over the country call me and [whisper, lower voice] enjoy my voice and my fantasies// i like to dress the part too// i went to my favorite lingerie store//.. victoria's secret?.. and bought satin bikinis/ lacy thong underwear/ a tight black corset/ and fishnet stockings/ <1> and a *dangerous pair of *red [whisper] *spiked *heels// umhum// then/ when i'm in a dominant mode?.. i have this leather g-string and bra and thigh-high boots// .. oh *baby// [giggle] when i dress up and look in the mirror/ [breathy voice] i get *so *crazy [gasp] i just can't wait for that first call/ then//.. i assemble all my favorite little.. *toys all around me// lie back on my big bed with satin sheets [gasp] <1> and live out my fantasies with some mysterious stranger [gasp] <2> o::h hearing those voices/ those excited whispers and moans, o::h/ it gets me so [gasp] .. well//.. you know// <2> then/ i just go *wild//.. i have so many great i*deas//.. they come fast and furious/ oo::h/ i can't get enough//.. each call makes me hotter, i just keep going/ over and over, [gasp] *o::h.. yeah baby do it again o::f/ [gasp] well/ i *love my workday//.. but//.. by the time I put in a few hours on the phone? i'm so re*laxed//.. and when my husband gets home//.. oo::h he gets the treatment// he loves it// but .. shhh// [whisper] don't tell//.. it's our secret//

In the absence of a visual link, this ideal is created solely through language (as the speaker herself says, "All I need is a phone and a lusty imagination"). She begins by constructing a visual image of herself with words popularly thought of as feminine: *girlfriends*, *lusty*, *lacy*, *lingerie*, *satin*, and *secret*. Her voice is dynamic, moving from high-pitched, gasping expressions of pleasure to low-pitched, breathy-voiced innuendoes. Although this is unidirectional discourse, she makes it quite clear that she would be an admirable conversational partner in any male-female

dyad—she “just can’t wait for that first call” so that she can respond supportively to all those “voices” and “excited whispers.” Additionally, she sets up her monologue so as to establish an exclusive intimacy with her absentee partner, referring to their conversational relationship as a passionate “secret” that should be kept from her husband.

Particularly interesting is what happens at the end of this fantasy, where the speaker’s verbal “ideas” come to represent the sex act itself: *I have so many great ideas. They come fast and furious ... Ooh, I can’t get enough.* An equation of the spoken word with the sex act is a common element in such messages, perhaps not so surprising considering the nature of the discourse. Often in the beginning of the fantasy scenario, the speaker will be reading a book at a library, selling encyclopedias as a door-to-door salesperson, or taking a literature course at the local college. By the end of the scenario, swayed by the voice and intellect of the suitor in question (who is often addressed in the second person so as to bring the caller directly into the fantasy), she has discarded her books, her encyclopedias, and her academic pretensions for the bedroom. In the fantasy reproduced in excerpt (2), for instance, the speaker is obsessed with her English professor’s voice which repeatedly “penetrates” her during lecture:

- (2) hi// my name is vicky/ and i *guess i’m in *deep trouble in one of my classes at college// it’s my english professor// he’s got me *crazy/ and i think i’m losing my *mind/ he’s really not handsome or anything/ it’s the way he talks/ his voice gets deep inside me where it counts/ turns me to jelly/ i sit at the front of the class/ and i just can’t seem to keep *still/ i remember the first day/ i wore jeans and a sweater/ and my long blond hair up in a bun/ i felt pretty studious/ but the moment i started *listening to him, i knew i was gonna *change *all *that// and the next session, i showed up in the *shortest mini-skirt i could find/ i’m real tan [breathy voice] and in *real good shape/ and i *knew i looked pretty good in that mini-skirt// i wore a silk blouse that should have had his eyes riveted on me/ instead he hardly *noticed/ o:h i was getting so *crazy// well after a few weeks/ the weather changed and it got *real hot/ so i started wearing shorts and this *great little halter top/ i know i looked okay/ because guys in the class were stumbling over themselves to sit next to me/ but my professor—there he was/ just a few feet away, and hardly a *glance// and still i go back to my dorm room and lay in my bed/ and dream about that voice/ *all of me reponds to it/ [sigh] it’s as if he’s penetrated me/ *reached the *depths of my *soul and *won’t go// i dream about the moment when we’ll be alone, maybe it’ll be after class/ maybe it’ll be a chance meeting at a coffee shop or something/ but when that moment comes/ i know i’m going to tell him what he does to me/ and i don’t think he’ll be surprised/ because i *think he already knows//

The speaker begins the fantasy by establishing that she is attracted to this particular professor not because he is “handsome or anything,” but because of the “way he talks” (*His voice gets deep inside me where it counts ... turns me to jelly*). After several unrequited attempts to impress the professor by relaxing her studious stance (letting down her hair bun) and wearing apparel more appropriate to her gender (“the shortest miniskirt [she] could find,” a silk blouse, shorts, and “a great little halter top”), the speaker goes back to her dorm room so that she can at least “dream

about that voice.” She concludes the fantasy by exclaiming (rather emphatically) that she becomes powerless before the sound of it: *All of me responds to it, it’s as if he’s penetrated me, reached the depths of my soul and won’t go.*

But as this scenario nicely illustrates, the reality presented on the message line involves a power hierarchy in which men are dominant (penetrating, powerful, intellectual) and women submissive (penetrated, powerless, emotional). In order to have a successful conversation, then, the fantasy-line operator must additionally affirm this imbalance, especially as it is essential to the frame of male pornographic discourse. Rosalind Coward (1986), with reference to visual pornography, argues that although images of women are never inherently pornographic, they necessarily become so when placed within a “regime of representations” (i.e., a set of codes with conventionally accepted meanings) which identify them as such for the viewer. Images are enclosed by captions and texts presenting them explicitly for male enjoyment and affirming the female-as-object/male-as-subject power differential. In vocal pornography, because there is no visual link, this imbalance must be created through voice and word. The fantasy-line operator has been assisted, of course, by the many pornographic advertisements that have already situated her within this frame, but she must still actively assume a submissive position in the conversation. In the telephone advertisement reproduced below, for example, which was offered by one service as a “free phone job sample,” the speaker sells the number by highlighting this very inequality:

- (3) [low, breathy voice] baby I want you to listen closely/ dial 1-900-884-6804 *now for *hard love/ for *tough love/ for girls who *need *men to *take con*trol://.. dial 1-900-884-6804/ for women who aren’t afraid to say what they *really want/ for girls who need *powerful men to open their deep desires/ dial 1-900-884-6804/ and go all the way... deep into the secret places for a fantasy experience that just goes *on and *on and *on/ dial 1-900-884-6804/ and get a girl who wants to give you the ultimate pleasure/ 1-900-884-6804/ [quickly] just half a dollar a minute/ forty the first//... *now I can tell *you everything/ now i can give you everything you want/ *all you desire/ i can do it now/ i *want to/ i *have to/ [giggle] dial 1-900-454-6804/ just half a dollar a minute/ forty the first//

In a low, breathy voice, she explains that the women who work at this particular company will provide the emotional support (*hard love, tough love*) if their caller provides the “control.” They are women who need “powerful men to open their deep desires”—who not only *want* to submit and give their callers “the ultimate pleasure,” but who *have to* do so. McElhinny (this volume) refers to Kanter (1977) and Hochschild (1983) in order to discuss the gendered *division of emotional labor* that characterizes corporate workplaces. Certain types of work structures, particularly those which involve women in typically feminine jobs, require women employees to perform emotional labor for their bosses. As Lutz (1986, 1990) and other anthropologists have recently pointed out, such divisions follow from the way emotion has been constructed along gender lines within Western society, so that men are expected to be rational and women emotional—a construction which has interesting effects on women’s language and on societal perceptions of what women’s language should be. What is interesting with respect

to the present discussion is the way in which fantasy-line operators consciously employ both emotional language and sexual language (which are not always entirely distinguishable) in order to intensify the perceived power imbalance. As one fantasy-line operator explained, "My job is kind of a three-conversation trinity—one part prostitute, one part priest, and one part therapist."

INTERVIEWS WITH SAN FRANCISCO FANTASY-LINE OPERATORS

The women I interviewed for this study⁸ felt that both the anti-pornography feminism of Dworkin and MacKinnon and the pro-freedom feminism of Rubin prioritize an issue which most of the women in this country—because they suffer from serious economic and social oppression—do not have the privilege of debating. Carla Freccero (1990), in questioning why the issue of sexuality has become so important to North American feminism, remarks that sex workers, since they focus on the sex industry from the point of view of its labor force, "provide an important corrective to the middle-class intellectual feminists' debates about pornography and sexuality. ... The issue is thus no longer the commodity itself (pornography) nor the 'private' sexual practices of individuals, but rather, their convergence in the marketplace" (1990:316). Similarly, the most important issue to the women I interviewed is not whether pornography or sexuality is oppressive, but rather, how they as a group can mobilize for a better work environment so that the job they have chosen will be as non-oppressive as possible. They spoke of the need for a sex-workers' union, for health-care benefits, and for approval from people working outside the industry. Each of them chose this line of work initially for the economic freedom and social flexibility it offered, and like the fantasy-line operators quoted in excerpts (4) and (5) below (the first of whom identifies herself as a "militant feminist," the latter as a "feminist most definitely"), regard the issue of sexual oppression as comparatively unimportant with respect to the other types of economic and social oppression they have suffered.

- (4) Yes, in one word, the reason I got involved in this work is Reaganomics. It doesn't filter down to people like me. I'm an artist. I refuse to deal with corporate America. I'm an honest person. I have integrity. I work hard. There's no place in corporate America for me. ... About a year and a half ago when the economy really started to go sour, I started thinking, well I'm going to have to get a part-time job. I looked around at part-time jobs and it was like, you want me to dress in three-hundred-dollar outfits when you're paying me six bucks an hour? Excuse me, but I don't think so. And I saw an ad in the *Bay Guardian* for a fantasy maker, and I thought about it for months, because I had an attitude that it was really weird and I was concerned that I would end up really hating men, and finally it got down to, well, you can go downtown and spend a lot of money on clothes, or you can check this out.
- (5) For me, I can work at home, I can make my own hours. If I want to take off and go on vacation on last minute's notice and be gone for a month, I can do that and know that my job is there. And I like that flexibility and I like the idea of not really having a boss to answer to. In some ways, it's powerful and in some ways it's definitely not. [We're] people who are sort of marginalized, [there's a lot] that we don't have access to. Like health care, it's like forget it,

you get sick and you don't have insurance. We don't have any kind of union. I think it would be great if we could have some kind of sex workers' union. So it's a mixed bag, but I guess for me, in light of what the options would be for me to make a living at this point in time, it seems like the best thing I can do for myself. Definitely one of the best compared to the options I see out there—I'm pretty damn lucky with what I'm doing. Because I've tried to have a few sort of semi-straight normal jobs and I didn't cut it very well, I don't deal very well with authority, especially if I feel like the person is not treating me with the respect that I deserve, and that I'm not getting paid what I deserve for the quality of work that I'm putting out. Like I have to dress a certain way that I'm uncomfortable in.

Both women have balanced the patriarchal oppression found in corporate America against the patriarchal oppression in a capitalist enterprise like pornography and opted for the latter (although they made it quite clear that the women-owned services treat them much more kindly than the men-owned services, especially with respect to advertising technique⁹). While the first of these women entered the industry for economic security in a reaction to "Reaganomics," the second entered it primarily for social flexibility. Interesting in her interview is that when she speaks of the phone-sex industry as a "mixed bag," she is not referring in any way to the sexual subordination that such a job might require of her, but rather to the subordination required by a society that has marginalized her line of work—she has no benefits, no sex workers' union, no societal support.

As the income of these women is entirely dependent upon verbal ability, all are very conscious of the type of language they produce and often explain specific linguistic qualities that made their language marketable. The features that make the prerecorded messages persuasive are the same features that these operators choose to emphasize in their verbal exchanges. Especially interesting is the fact that the type of language they consider "sexy," and therefore for them economically and socially powerful, is precisely what has been defined by linguists working in the area of language and gender as powerless. They explained that they make frequent use of feminine lexical items, incorporate intensifiers into their conversation whenever possible, regularly interrupt their narrative with questions and supportive comments, and adopt a dynamic intonation pattern. One operator, for instance, who pointed out that "to be a really good fantasy maker, you've got to have big tits in your voice," explained that she creates sexy language through lexical choice, employing "words which are very feminine."

- (6) I can describe myself now so that it lasts for about five minutes, by using lots of adjectives, spending a lot of time describing the shape of my tits. And that's both—it's not just wasting time, because they need to build up a mental picture in their minds about what you look like, and also it allows me to use words that are very feminine. I always wear peach, or apricot, or black lace—or charcoal-colored lace, not just black. I'll talk about how my hair feels, how curly it is. Yeah, I probably use more feminine words. Sometimes they'll ask me, "What do you call it [female genitalia]?" And I'll say, well my favorite is the "snuggery." And then they crack up, because it's such a feminine, funny word.

In particular, she initiates conversation on the fantasy lines by creating a feminine image of herself through non-basic color terms such as *peach*, *apricot*, and even *charcoal* instead of *black*, together with soft words like *curly* and *snuggery*—the latter being her favorite word for female genitalia because all her callers “crack up, because it is such a feminine, funny word.” Another operator, who jokingly referred to herself as a “phone whore,” defines what makes her language marketable as a vocal phenomenon, explaining that she “talks in a loping tone of voice” with a “feminine, lilting quality” so that her callers will think she is “really enjoying it.” This fantasy maker attributes her phone success to “the way that you say things, more than what you’re actually saying,” and characterizes her vocal posture as “inviting”:

- (7) I feel like definitely the timbre of my voice has a lot to do with it. I don't know, the ability to sound like—I hate to say it—feminine and kind of that lilting quality, and to sound like you're really enjoying it, like you're turned on and you're having a good time. I think that has a lot to do with it because they're always telling me, “Oh yes, you have such a great voice! God, I love listening to your voice!” I think that's a big part of it, it's just the sound of the person's voice. Some people will tell you that they really like detail and lots of description, and so I can provide that too. But I think so much of it is the way that you say things, more than what you're actually saying. That's kind of funny, you know—sort of an inviting tone of voice.

A third operator emphasized the maintenance work she uses to engage her male callers in a more collaborative exchange, mentioning that she tries to draw out shy callers with supportive questions and comments (*I stop a lot to say things like, “Oh, do you like that?” You know, that kind of thing. I try to get them to talk as much as I can, because some of these people would sit here and not say one word. And if I get one of those, from time to time I say, “Hello? Are you still there?”*). A fourth operator, who is also a manager of one of the women-owned lines based in San Francisco, explains that she makes her language sexy by creating characters that conform to certain cultural stereotypes of womanhood. She explains that she has four different characters: (1) herself, whom she calls Samantha, (2) an eighteen-year-old girl with a high-pitched voice who fulfills the “beach bunny” stereotype, (3) a woman with an Asian accent whom she calls Keesha, and (4) an older woman with an Eastern European accent whom she calls Thela. To make the fantasy effective, then, these fantasy makers consciously cater to their clients by producing a language that adheres to a popular male perception of what women's speech should be: flowery, inviting, supportive, and stereotypical.

What is interesting in this particular medium of discourse, however, is that the fantasy maker consciously employs speech traditionally identified as powerless for reasons of power, and more importantly, that she identifies her position in the conversational exchange as powerful. The operators interviewed felt that they are completely in control of each conversation: they initiate and dominate the conversational exchange; they are creators of the fantasy storyline and scenario; they can decide what kind of fantasies they will entertain; and they can terminate the conversation with a simple flick of the index finger. They described their work first

and foremost as artistic, one worker calling herself a “telephone fantasy artist,” another (whose self-definition is reproduced below) defining what she did for a living as “auditory improvisational theater on the theme of eros”:

- (8) I'm a good storyteller. A lot of what I do is wasted on most of these people. They're not bright enough to know some of the words I use. And then about every fifteenth call is one that makes it worthwhile. Because it's someone who will go, “God, you're really good at this! You really use language well! This is fun! I was expecting this to be really weird, but you're cool!” I have a large vocabulary. I read a lot and I'll use other words. I don't own a television. I think that's a big part of my greater command of language than the average human being. And since I've gotten into this, I've also decided that if I'm going to be a storyteller, I'm going to study more about storytelling. I've listened to Garrison Keillor for years, and in the last year or so, I've taped him several times and listened for the devices that he's using to be a more effective storyteller.

This particular operator has written erotica for a number of years and identifies herself primarily as a “good storyteller.” She explains in this response that she actively incorporates storytelling techniques into her own fantasy creations, imitating Garrison Keillor of *Prairie Home Companion*, as well as a number of other well-known storytellers. She and the other fantasy makers would often jokingly refer to themselves as “phone prostitutes” and their switchboard operators as “phone pimps,” but they did not perceive the conversational exchange as representative of any particular asymmetrical sexual reality. Like the woman in this excerpt, who mentions her “large vocabulary” and her “greater command of language than the average human being,” the operators interviewed felt that they were so superior linguistically to the average man who called the service that male power was just not an issue. The only exchange they did perceive as asymmetrical, and which they consequently did not like to participate in, were those domination calls where the male caller overtly restricted their freedom of expression and demanded that they be conversationally submissive. Many of the women refused to take these calls altogether (although one fantasy-line operator did say that she recently changed her mind on this subject—since she only has to respond with “Yes, sir” and “No, sir,” she can get a lot of dishes done).

Still, the same fantasy operators would readily admit that they had to subdue their own creativity in order to please a comparatively uncreative audience. The fantasy maker above who considers herself a storyteller, for instance, explained that her linguistic creativity makes her less popular than some of the other fantasy operators, as she often refuses to adopt the expected “stupid, pregnant, and dumb” voice:

- (9) If I'm in a surly mood and I get a call from a guy who sounds like he just let go of his jackhammer and graduated with a one-point-two average, you know, I have a hard time with those guys. I mean, they need love too, but Jesus! Dumb people bug me ... it's hard to realize that you're a lot smarter than whoever it is you're dealing with, and number one, if you're really bright then you won't let them know it, and number two, if they do figure it out, then you're in trouble, because they don't like it, especially if it's a man, I mean,

that's just the way it is. Girls are supposed to be stupid and pregnant. Or just dumb. So that the testosterone type can get out there and conquer the world for you, or whatever it is that they do. ... I'm approaching this from the angle that I want to be a better storyteller, I want to increase my linguistic abilities. But that isn't what the average customer wants.

She goes on to say that "if you're really bright then you won't let them know it," and moreover, if "they figure it out, then you're in trouble." Although she is "approaching this from the angle that [she] want[s] to be a better storyteller" and to "increase [her] linguistic abilities," she realizes that this "isn't what the average customer wants." Another woman similarly explained that she had to "be constantly walking that line" between embracing a sexuality for herself and catering to customer expectations of her sexuality. Interesting in her interview, reproduced in excerpt (11), is that she describes women's language as a submissive sexual position that her callers assume she is taking, even when she overtly refuses to do so:

- (10) I wonder if it really is women's language or is it mostly that we're repeating what it is that the men want to hear and want to believe that women like and think. I think it's more what's in their heads. You know, scenarios where I'm being mildly submissive, even though they don't call it that, and they're like calling me a slut and a horny little bitch ... It's a total turn-off, I never think of myself that way. And that definitely goes through their heads. ... So having to sometimes sort of like repeat their ideas back to them because it's what they want to hear can be a drag. So sometimes it's more my idea than my language and sometimes it's there and it's what they're reading out of these stupid magazines, you know, that they really want to believe women are like. ... It's interesting to be constantly walking that line where you're trying to make sure they're happy and please them and get them off and at the same time, you know, for me, I want to do my best not to perpetuate all the bullshit that goes on in their minds. It is a difficult task sometimes. It's a challenge to come up with ways that you can still turn them on without perpetuating all the bullshit about women that they believe.

She realizes that the male fantasy of female sexuality is so firmly rooted within our culture that even though she tries not to perpetuate it, there is little she can do to dispel it: "It's a challenge to come up with ways that you can still turn them on," she says, "without perpetuating all the bullshit about women that they believe." Like the other women I interviewed, she speculated that for the male callers this interactive fantasy was in some sense very real, evidenced by their dismay if they ever suspected that the voice on the telephone was not the beautiful blonde it presented itself to be.¹⁰ It would seem that although these women are aware of and wish to break away from the negative stereotypes about women's language and sexuality, they are restrained by their clients' expectations of the interaction, and they must therefore try to strike a balance between employing a creative discourse and an affected one.

CONCLUSION

What exists on the adult message lines, then, is a kind of style-switching which is based primarily on gender rather than on class, ethnicity, or other variables. When on the telephone, the fantasy-line operators interviewed, whether Latina, African American, or white, switch into a definable conversational style which they all associate with women's speech. Bourdieu would argue that these women, as "agents continuously subjected to the sanctions of the linguistic market," have learned this style through a series of positive and negative reinforcements:

Situations in which linguistic productions are explicitly sanctioned and evaluated, such as examinations or interviews, draw our attention to the existence of mechanisms determining the price of discourse which operate in every linguistic interaction (e.g., the doctor-patient or lawyer-client relation) and more generally in all social relations. It follows that agents continuously subjected to the sanctions of the linguistic market, functioning as a system of positive or negative reinforcements, acquire durable dispositions which are the basis of their perception and appreciation of the state of the linguistic market and consequently of their strategies for expression. (1977:654)

According to Bourdieu, speakers develop their strategies for expression through their experiences within the linguistic market, a notion which he refers to elsewhere as *habitus*. In their interactional histories (e.g., at school, in the family), the women fantasy-line operators have received positive reinforcement for this particular style of discourse and are now, through additional reinforcement within the workplace, selling it back to the culture at large for a high price. Like examinations and interviews, fantasy-line conversations are situations in which linguistic production is explicitly sanctioned and evaluated—if the operator fails to produce the appropriate discursive style (i.e., a style that is feminine, inviting, and supportive), she will lose her clients, and therefore her economic stability. But for this style to be so overtly reinforced within this particular medium of discourse, the same reinforcement must exist within the larger public, so that women at a very early age begin to, in the words of Bourdieu, "acquire durable dispositions" toward this particular strategy of expression.

The question then follows: How can current definitions of linguistic power account for the fact that on the fantasy lines, speech which has been traditionally thought of as "powerless" suddenly becomes a very powerful sexual commodity? Many of the authors represented in this volume have followed Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (this volume) in arguing that discussions of gender should be located within particular communities of practice. By studying the local meanings attached to interactions, researchers will develop a more flexible understanding of gender—an understanding which allows for variability of meaning within and among communities. These San Francisco-based fantasy-line operators offer an interesting challenge to those theories which have essentialized women's language as powerless and men's language as powerful. Within the context of the adult message industry, women have learned that manipulating the female conversational stereotype can in fact be powerful, and sometimes even enjoyable—it potentially brings them millions of dollars, it allows them to support themselves without

having to participate in a patriarchal business structure, it permits them to exercise sexual power without fear of bodily harm or judicial retribution. Clearly, there is another dimension to power besides the dichotomy of oppressor/oppressed. To say that all women are powerless in sexual interaction or to say that all women are powerless when they assume a role traditionally thought of as subordinate in a conversation denies real women's experience of their situation. The women interviewed in this paper view the success of their exchange in terms of how creative they can be in fulfilling a fantasy. Although they recognize that they often have to perpetuate the girly-magazine stereotype of women to maintain a clientele, they consider the men who require this stereotype so unimaginative that to attribute any power to them in the conversational exchange is ludicrous. This somewhat ironic state of affairs indicates that any theory of linguistic power in cross-sex conversation must allow for variability with respect to female desire, fantasy, and consent.

NOTES

1. This estimate is somewhat conservative. I have based it on a 1988 estimate (134 Congressional Record E271, daily ed., Feb. 17, 1988) that the dial-a-porn industry grossed \$2.4 billion since between 1983 and 1988. For particular estimates on earnings of the industry in California, see Maretz (1989).
2. Recent reviews of the legal decisions surrounding this form of communication (both for and against) include Huffman & Trauth (1991), Mann (1986), McKee (1988), Murphy (1989), Petersen (1990), Potter (1989), Reed (1990), Rubens (1990), Torregrossa (1989), Tovey (1988), and Witt & Scher (1989).
3. That an obscenity judgment is necessarily subjective is nicely illustrated by Justice Stewart's well-known observation about obscenity: "I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced within that shorthand description; and perhaps I could never succeed in doing so. But I know it when I see it" (*Jacobellis vs. Ohio* 1964, 378 U.S. 184, 197).
4. In response to MacKinnon- and Dworkin-led anti-pornography ordinances in Indianapolis, the latter group of feminists (often referred to as *liberal feminists*) organized into a group called the *Feminist Anti-Censorship Taskforce* (FACT), which has had among its members the well-known feminist activists Kate Millett, Linda Gordon, and Adrienne Rich. The former group (often referred to as *radical feminists*) has attracted support from Mary Daly, Robin Morgan, Janice Raymond, and Kathleen Barry. Because of page-length limitations in the present volume, I have considerably simplified the history and import of this theoretical division. See Bacchi (1990) for an interesting and thorough discussion of these two camps of feminism.
5. In accordance with the definition of obscenity established in *Roth vs. United States* and refined in *Miller vs. California*, the Minneapolis code defines *obscene* as the following: "(i) That the average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest in sex of the average person; (ii) That the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive manner, sexual conduct specifically defined by the clause (b) [Clause (b) includes representations of sexual intercourse, "actual or simulated," "sadosomachistic abuse," "masturbation," and "physical contact or simulated physical contact with the clothed or unclothed public areas or buttocks of a human male or female.]; (iii) That the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value."
6. As quoted in Potter (1989:453). The original information can be found in *Carlin Communications, Inc. vs. FCC*, 749 F.2d 113, 114 (2d Cir. 1984).
7. Transcription system adapted from that used by John Gumperz:
/ falling intonation, signaling more to come

- , rising intonation, signaling more to come
- // falling intonation, signaling conclusion
- .. pauses of less than 0.5 second
- ... pauses of more than 0.5 second
- < > pauses of one second or more, measured
- * syllabic emphasis
- [] extralinguistic commentary

8. I tried to find an equal representation of the employees working for San Francisco women-owned services (Berwick, Lola, Time Share Consultants, Rio's, and one other that is unnamed) based on the breakdowns of race and sexual preference that two of the managers gave me. With respect to sexual preference, 3 of the women I interviewed were lesbians, 3 bisexual, and 5 heterosexual; with respect to ethnicity, 3 are African American, 1 Latina, and 7 white. The women who granted me interviews were generally high-school- or college-educated, supportive of the industry, and politically aware. Many of these women had sought employment with the women-owned services in reaction to the poor treatment they had received from various men-owned services in the city, among them the financially successful Yellowphone. It is possible, of course, that the women who did refuse me interviews felt more negatively about the industry.
9. The advertising done by the men-owned services tends to be much more pornographic and sexually degrading to women than the advertising done by the women-owned services. As one manager explained of her own company: "Since there's a woman owning it and another woman managing it, even though we advertise in *Hustler*, we have probably the most tasteful ads in it. The model has on a bikini-type thing, long blond hair, and she's not showing anything. But the rest of them are like, open wide! So there's a little class in it. And our number is 1-800-456-KISS. So it's presented a little softer, a little nicer."
10. In support of this statement, I had an interesting interaction with my next-door neighbor, where in response to my paper topic, he told me about "all the sexy women" he had seen in the 900-number advertisement section of *Penthouse* magazine. Later, when I told him that all the women I interviewed had been hired by voice alone and had never met their employers, he responded in disbelief, "What? You mean it's all a scam?"

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**"It's rather like embracing a textbook":
The linguistic representation of the female psychoanalyst
in American film¹**

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INTRODUCTION

Ever since Lakoff (1975) introduced gendered speech as a viable area of linguistic study, social analysts have attempted to identify, define, and explain sex-based differences in language. A number of linguists have followed Maltz and Borker (1982) in arguing that sex differentiation in language is a function of differing sex roles and social systems; others have followed Lakoff in arguing that sex-based distinctions in speech are reflective of power relations within a social hierarchy.² For the most part, however, linguists have not addressed the question of how these sex-differentiated expectations enter the cultural consciousness, or rather, how these expectations are adopted and affirmed by popular culture. In order to illustrate one way in which gendered discourse has been constructed within our society, we examine popular characterizations of psychoanalytic discourse in American film. Since such films portray characters engaging in conversation that reflects or addresses the linguistic interaction itself, they advance certain expectations of men's and women's speech, in particular, the implicit Freudian expectation that women's speech should be emotional and men's speech logical.

Psychoanalysis is particularly well suited to the study of conversational power dynamics since the success of the encounter depends entirely on the success of the linguistic exchange, an exchange that Breuer's patient "Anna O" first identified as *the talking cure*³ in the late nineteenth century. The analyst's primary task is to teach the analysand how to verbalize emotion, or in Freudian terms, to allow the "strangled affect to find a way out through speech" (Freud 1895:255). The interaction is necessarily imbalanced, as the analysand defers to the analyst for conversational direction and interpretation. Such nonreciprocity allows for various types of social and linguistic abuse, which scholars from a variety of disciplines have discussed in some detail. It is precisely this conversational imbalance which has been adopted by the film industry as the ideal frame for romance. Since 1930 over 250 films have included mental health professionals in the plot line, and of these, a significant number have featured an analyst who becomes romantically involved with the patient.⁴ When a woman is one of the conversants, acting as

either analyst or analysand, she is set up as deviant linguistically, socially, and emotionally. Her inappropriate use of language reflects her social ineptitude, which in turn reflects an unhealthy emotional disposition. Her cure, then, must also be enacted in terms of language use. In many of these films, the woman's male conversational partner, whether he is a doctor or a patient, corrects her deviant behavior by showing her how to express her untold desires—for either romance or motherhood—and, in effect, cures her through talk.

Constructed dialogue, such as that in a screenplay, should be of special interest to the conversation analyst since its success within the dramatic narrative depends on how well it conforms to cultural understandings of appropriate discursive practice. Films work dramatically primarily because they represent idealized forms of communication. Characters whose social behavior is inappropriate in some way are disciplined through the workings of the plot, their behavior corrected or avenged so that the viewer can leave the film with some sense of satisfaction. The same is true for characters who have inappropriate linguistic behavior, as in the films examined in the present discussion. When a woman engages in a discourse that is unsuitable for her gender—that is, if it is too passionate or too intellectual—either she is typed as a villain or she undergoes a transformation which allows us, the audience, to sympathize with her situation.

While women are typically cured of their unnatural linguistic power in movies, men become dramatically interesting *because* of their linguistic power—because they employ a discourse that is authoritative, direct, honest, and logical. This “natural” linguistic power is well illustrated in the 1991 film *Silence of the Lambs*, in which the antihero, Dr. Hannibal Lector (played by Anthony Hopkins) is portrayed as a man so skilled in mind manipulation that visitors to his maximum security cell must be warned of his power to “get inside your head” and do serious damage. This power is emphasized in a scene in which an inmate who has embarrassed the young FBI cadet (played by Jodie Foster) is found dead in his cell. It is clear to the audience that since Dr. Lector has taken a liking to his female visitor, he has somehow, through the sheer force of his words, caused the inmate to take his own life. The title of the film itself refers to the fact that even though he is a psychotic killer, Dr. Lector has enough mental control to cure the young cadet of her recurring nightmares about crying lambs being led to slaughter. As an audience, we accept these incidents as believable because Dr. Lector, before he developed a fondness for eating his patients, was once known for his skill as a brilliant analyst. One would be hard-pressed, however, to imagine a female character possessed of the same skill in a film which wished to maintain a sense of credibility, or which would go on to win, as in the case of *Silence of the Lambs*, an Academy Award. Whereas male analysts in film regularly deliver expert opinions about women and womankind, female analysts are not allowed to speak with the same authority on men's matters. Such female analysts do exist, but they tend to appear in the B-rate science fiction film or in the psycho-killer murder mystery, where the analyst's unnatural behavior can be interpreted as a function of her own potential for sex-related violence.

THE WOMAN AS ANALYSAND

For the purposes of this paper, we reviewed 21 films spanning five decades which feature an analyst in the narrative: 10 involving a male analyst with a female patient and 11 involving a female analyst with a male patient.⁵ Whether the woman acts as analyst or analysand in the psychotherapeutic relationship, she is portrayed as the inferior participant in the conversational exchange. She typically suffers from one of two things, both of which involve emotional discord: either she has repressed her emotion and replaced it entirely with intellect, or she has misdirected her emotion and transformed it into aggressive sexual desire. She is in this respect *half a woman*, possessing either intellect exclusive of emotion or sexual desire exclusive of intellect, and her use of language reflects this psychical split. In those films which involve a woman as analysand, the job of the male analyst is to make his patient realize that her emotional constitution is in some way unnatural, and to cure her of the abnormality by getting her to express herself properly. For this reason, such films regularly incorporate popular expectations of how women and men should express themselves linguistically.

The American film industry's portrayal of the doctor-patient relationship is reminiscent of Freud's own writings on psychoanalytic discourse, where he argues that the job of the psychoanalyst is to teach the patient how to express her or his primal desires intelligently. Freud (1900:588-609) makes a distinction between *primary process* thoughts and *secondary process* thoughts, the former corresponding roughly to desire and emotion and the latter to intellect. Although Freud never overtly associates a gender with either process, he often implies that men and women relate to these processes differently. Hyper-emotional diseases like hysteria, which Freud associates with women,⁶ are labeled as primary process diseases, while hyper-orderly diseases like obsessive-compulsive disorder, which Freud associates with men,⁷ are labeled as secondary process diseases. Each of these diseases has a corresponding language, as Freud describes in his introductory discussion of the case of Little Hans:

The language of an obsessional neurosis—the means by which it expresses its secret thoughts—is, as it were, only a dialect of the language of hysteria; but it is a dialect in which we ought to be able to find our way about more easily, since it is more nearly related to the forms of expression adopted by our conscious thought than is the language of hysteria. Above all, it does not involve the leap from a mental process to a somatic innervation—hysterical conversion—which can never be fully comprehensible to us. (Freud 1909:156)

Since Freud distinguishes between the language of obsessional neurosis and the language of hysteria, relating the first to “conscious” or secondary process thought and the second to “unconscious” or primary process thought, it is no wonder that his writings often reveal gendered expectations of how men and women should express themselves. Lakoff and Coyne (forthcoming), in their exposition of the Dora case, point out that Freud is not only ambivalent about attributes of intelligence in women, but that he “resents any woman's matching him in logical acuity and verbal adroitness,” so much so that he seems to believe that intelligence

predisposes women to hysteria. This is especially clear in his case study on the hysterical Dora, where he describes her as "participating actively with her intellect, though absolutely tranquil emotionally" (cited in Lakoff & Coyne forthcoming). It seems that this same notion was embraced by the American film industry in the 1930s and '40s, which presented the woman intellectual as half a woman, as someone out of touch with proper emotionality and therefore unnatural. In the plotlines of over 20 films, among them *Now Voyager* (1942), *Spellbound* (1945), and *The Dark Mirror* (1946), Hollywood brought Freudian theory to the general public, establishing the intellectual woman as emotionally deviant.

Feminist film and literary critics have discussed the split portrayal of women in American film as a division in the social conception of womanhood.⁸ Fischer (1989) views the portrayal of female twins as involving opposition along lines of masculinity and femininity, showing that good sisters are regularly portrayed as possessing feminine attributes and bad sisters masculine ones. Johnston, in her discussion of myths of women in the cinema, similarly illustrates with reference to semiotic theory that "the real opposition" posed by the woman as sign is one of "male/nonmale" (1977:411). In a gender-polarized society, she argues, the attributes which come to symbolize women are those which are nonmale; women who possess male attributes like intellect and passion are therefore seen as unnatural and threatening. This is precisely the case in the psychoanalytic film, which regularly portrays the intellectual or passionate woman as sick. She can become well only if the psychoanalyst is able to redefine the overly intellectual or overly passionate woman in terms of an affect more appropriate to her gender. It is interesting to examine how the dichotomy of intellect and affect is portrayed through language use. If the distinction between the two is largely one of masculinity and nonmasculinity, the ways in which these oppositions are represented linguistically will reveal much about gendered understandings of appropriate linguistic behavior.

Such is the case in the 1946 film *Dark Mirror*, an evil-twin vehicle about sisters Ruth and Terry, both played by Olivia de Havilland. The characters are easily distinguished from one another by the manner in which they speak: Ruth, the favored twin, speaks softly, indirectly, and emotionally. She is almost always the passive participant in the discourse, accepting the words of her conversational partner without question. Terry, on the other hand, has a much lower voice, her utterances are quicker and more assertive, her intonation sharper. In the film, one of the twins is accused of murder, but since no one is able to tell the two apart, the police department is unable to affirm which twin did the dirty deed, and the case is dropped. But the chief detective, unsatisfied with this outcome, employs a psychoanalyst, Dr. Scott Elliot (played by Lew Ayres), to discern which of the sisters is guilty. After administering a series of inkblot and word-association tests, he confides to the chief detective that Terry is "very clever, very intelligent, but insane." He has arrived at this decision solely on the basis of the language that she has used in response to his tests, which is highly unfeminine: aggressive, almost violent, and competitive.

In a telling scene, Terry attempts to fool the doctor into believing she is Ruth by altering her conversational style. What is particularly interesting is the way in

which Terry gives herself away in this final interaction. Even though Terry says things that only Ruth would say and knows things that only Ruth should know, she *talks* like Terry. She asks probing questions, flirts aggressively, and controls the conversational topic. In the following excerpt, for example, which is taken from the end of their conversation, Terry directly challenges Dr. Elliot's analysis in a way not at all representative of what Lakoff (1975) and subsequent scholars have defined as women's speech:

- Dr. Elliot: But there's a natural strong rivalry between sisters. And ever since that incident—whatever it was—it's grown more and more bitter in her until now it's—it's abnormal, and she needs care and attention right away.
- Terry: Terry and I have never been rivals. Never. Not in the slightest.
- Dr. Elliot: All women are rivals, fundamentally. But it never bothers them because they automatically discount the successes of others and alibi their own failures on the grounds of circumstances. Luck, they say. But between sisters it's a little more serious. The circumstances are generally about the same, so they have fewer excuses with which to comfort themselves. That's why sisters can hate each other with such terrifying intensity. But as for twins, especially identical twins, well you must have some idea yourself what vagaries of jealousy are possible.
- Terry: Go on.
- Dr. Elliot: People, men particularly, find it easy enough to like you, you're natural and normal. By the grace of God, you've managed to escape that poison of rivalry and jealousy. But not she. If there's truth in what you say then actually on the surface there's really so little to choose between you.
- Terry: That is of course a lie.
- Dr. Elliot: I'm sorry my dear, but it isn't. It's the same story over and over again. It's the whole history of the case, by her word as well as yours. The lawyer in Chicago. And that family, the one who adopted you, but not her. It's the same story over and over and over again.
- Terry: I've never listened to such utter nonsense in all my life.
- Dr. Elliot: And I called you tonight because I want you to talk to her about this. I want you, as the one nearest and dearest to her, to persuade her to go to a doctor and put herself under his care and I want you to get her to do this at once.
- Terry: And if I refuse to insult her with such incredible rot?
- Dr. Elliot: But you mustn't. I can't tell you how important it is that she get this care immediately.
- Terry: And if she refuses?
- Dr. Elliot: If you refuse, Terry, [dramatic music, meaningful pause], I'm afraid I'll have to tell who killed Frank Peralter . . . and why.

Although Terry has made her intonation more dynamic throughout the conversation to sound more like Ruth, her pragmatics are all wrong. Instead of affirming her partner's suggestion that "all women are rivals fundamentally" and employing the proper minimal responses, she uses streams of negatives in order to contradict him (*Terry and I have never been rivals. Never. Not in the slightest*). She favors direct commands like "go on" over indirect requests and assertive asides like "of course" over qualifiers and hedges. And she clearly has no intention of maintaining an interactive floor when she rejects her partner's comments as "utter nonsense" and "incredible rot." The conversational tension can be resolved only when Terry's deception is exposed and Ruth's psyche is subsequently freed of her evil

counterpart. Injustice is corrected at the end of the film when the evil sister is committed to an institution, and the good sister is committed to Dr. Elliot.

Other films like *Now Voyager* and *Three Faces of Eve* involve women patients who suffer from either too much intellect or too much libido. Neither woman speaks in a manner appropriate to her prescribed position, and each must therefore come to assume a more acceptable speech style. In *Now Voyager* (1946) Bette Davis plays an intelligent but repressed spinster, Charlotte Vale, who has denied her emotions in order to protect herself from her domineering mother. Charlotte's linguistic transformation begins in her first scene with the psychoanalyst, Dr. Jackwith (played by Claude Rains). Although in the beginning Charlotte challenges the doctor in a manner reminiscent of Terry Collins' final interaction with Dr. Elliot, she ultimately pleads for his guidance after an extended flashback to a traumatic event from her youth:

Before the flashback:

Dr. Jackwith: Oh, you don't happen to have a cigarette hidden away someplace? I seem to have left my tobacco in my coat downstairs.

Charlotte: Do you think I hide cigarettes in my room, Doctor?

Dr. Jackwith: No.

Charlotte: Where do I hide them, Doctor—on the shelves behind the books? Cigarettes and medicated sherry and books my mother won't allow me to read? A whole secret life hidden up here behind a locked door?

Dr. Jackwith: Please, it was only the box that reminded me—

Charlotte: How very perceiving you are, Doctor! How very right you are! And see I was just about to hide this album. You know you really should read it. It's a shame for you to come all the way up here and miss your amusement. Read it, Doctor. The intimate journal of Miss Charlotte Vale.

Dr. Jackwith: Will anything convince you that I don't wish to pry—

Charlotte: Oh, but you must pry. I insist that you do. There's really nothing to frighten you off. A few snapshots and a memento or two. It's a record of my last trip abroad with my mother. We were sailing up the coast of Africa. See, there's a picture of our ship, a steamer. You wouldn't have known me then. I was twenty then.

After the flashback:

Charlotte: What man would ever look at me and say, "I want you." I'm fat. My mother doesn't approve of dieting. Look at my shoes. My mother approves of sensible shoes. Look at the books in my shelves. My mother approves of good, solid books. I am my mother's well-loved daughter. I am her companion. I am my mother's servant, my mother says. My mother! My mother! My mother! [emotional breakdown]

Dr. Jackwith: [picking up her glasses]: You'll never get another pair of eyes, as your mother says, if you spoil them with tears.

Charlotte: Dr. Jackwith, can you help me?

Dr. Jackwith: Help you?

Charlotte: When you were talking downstairs, when you were talking about the fork in the road. There are other forks, further along the road, so many.

Dr. Jackwith: You don't need my help. Here are your glasses, put away your book, and come downstairs. I'll go ahead.

In the scene before the flashback, Charlotte asks aggressive and defensive questions (*Do you think I hide cigarettes in my room, Doctor? Where do I hide them, Doctor?*), she is sarcastically critical of his intelligence (*How very perceiving you are, Doctor! How very right you are!*), and she issues a stream of commands (*Read it, You must pry, I insist that you do*). She directs the conversation by asserting her own topics, interrupting, and not allowing the doctor to respond. When she invites him to do his own job by urging him to comment on her "secret life" and her "intimate journal," she reverses the power dynamic and positions herself in control of the conversation. Her control is hysterical, however, and her aggressiveness infuses the audience with pity instead of respect. It is only after she has had a flashback to her youth and suffered a sudden emotional breakdown that the audience is able to find relief. In final desperation, Charlotte defers to the doctor's authority and asks for his help. Instead of introducing her own topics as in the scene before the flashback, she reintroduces and develops one of his earlier metaphors about "the fork in the road." It is now only a matter of time before Charlotte can throw away her glasses (which the doctor recommends), and become a normal, emotionally balanced woman.

Also revealing is the title of the movie itself, which is taken from Walt Whitman's poem *Now Voyager*. In many of these films, poetry and art play an important role in the patient's recovery. Such is the case here when Dr. Jackwith gives Charlotte an excerpt of Whitman's poem after she has completed her stay at the sanitarium: "Untold want by life and love near granted, / Now voyager, go forth to seek and find." With the help of her psychoanalyst, Charlotte has learned how to express her "untold want," and she literally sets out on an ocean cruise to "seek and find" it—with a man. Dr. Jackwith is here approximating the bedside manner of Freud himself, who often used poetry with his hysterical patients in order to get them to discover their unconscious desires. For Freud, artistic and poetic language belongs to the primary process, while informative and logical language belongs to the secondary process. In this scene, then, Charlotte's newly found interest in poetry is established to counteract the repressive effects of her mother's "good, solid books." She has finally adopted the emotional language of the primary process, the language appropriate to her gender.

The character Eve Black in *The Three Faces of Eve*, in contrast, is overly conscious of desire. She too must learn to speak the language of emotion, but the language of a controlled emotion. She represents an abnormality in a woman's psyche which rejects motherhood and family, preferring instead to carouse until all hours with strange men. Her counter-personality Eve White, on the other hand, is more the type of the repressed Charlotte Vale. She is weak and unable to control the appearance of Eve Black. Her own personality is scarcely noticeable, and it is Eve White's frustrated husband who brings her to the doctor to be fixed. The solution to the conflict is the melding of these two inadequate personality types into the person of Jane, a well-balanced woman, capable of catering to the needs of both her child and her husband.⁹

THE WOMAN AS ANALYST

In general, the female analyst in the American film is not easily distinguished from the female patient. In the films we reviewed involving cross-sex interaction between male patient and female doctor, the woman is portrayed as either a Charlotte Vale or an Eve Black/Terry Collins amalgam—that is, as either a repressed intellectual or an oversexed villain. In the films from the 1940s through the 1980s which set up the female analyst as a protagonist, she is portrayed as an unnatural woman, a divided self suffering from an inappropriate expression of emotion. She can be cured only when she replaces her analytic capabilities with erotic ones. In each of these films, the woman psychoanalyst is broken down linguistically through the workings of the plot. At the outset, the analyst is set apart with respect to her use of language. She talks in a manner appropriate to her profession but inappropriate to her role as a woman: She speaks quickly and precisely, she presents a voice of authority, she often has a foreign accent, and she directs the conversation—all to the dismay of her male patient. By the end of the film, the analyst has assumed a discourse which is much more emotional and intimate, a discourse which, through the workings of the plot, becomes less and less assertive. Although she has retained her accent (this too is sometimes inconsistent), the female psychoanalyst no longer evokes a pragmatic frame that is direct and informative.

Spellbound, which stars Ingrid Bergman and Gregory Peck, offers a classic example of Hollywood's divided woman. From the very first scene, Dr. Constance Peterson is portrayed as cold and unfeeling, attractive (without her glasses) but bookish, and much too analytical. Our first introduction to Dr. Peterson is a scene between her and one of her patients, a young nymphomaniac named Miss Carmichael. Immediately, the viewer gets a clear impression that these women represent two poles of emotionality: Dr. Peterson is emotionless and cold, while Miss Carmichael is single and sex-starved. From this point on, we as an audience need Dr. Peterson to become a more balanced character so that we can sympathize with her. To underscore Dr. Peterson's problematic lack of emotionality, the script provides Dr. Floreau, a male doctor who wants to date the nonresponsive Dr. Peterson:

- Dr. Floreau: Murchison must be really out of his mind to assign Carmichael to you.
 Dr. Peterson: Well, you may report your findings to the new head when he arrives.
 Dr. Floreau: You can't treat a love veteran like Carmichael without *some* inside information.
 Dr. Peterson: I have done a great deal of research on emotional problems and love difficulties.
 Dr. Floreau: Research, my eye. I've watched your work for six months. It's brilliant, but lifeless. There's no intuition in it. You approach all your problems with an icepack on your head.
 Dr. Peterson: Are you making love to me?
 Dr. Floreau: Well, in a moment. I'm just clearing the ground for this. I'm trying to convince you that your lack of human and emotional experience is bad for you as a doctor [meaningful pause], and fatal for you as a woman.

- Dr. Peterson: I've heard that argument from a number of amorous psychiatrists who all wanted to make a better doctor of me.
 Dr. Floreau: Ahhh, but I've got a much better argument. I'm terribly fond of you.
 Dr. Peterson: Why?
 Dr. Floreau: [leaning over to kiss her, putting his arm around her; she turns her head] It's rather like embracing a textbook.
 Dr. Peterson: Why do you do it then?
 Dr. Floreau: Because you're not a textbook. You're a sweet, pulsing, adorable woman underneath. I sense it every time I come near to you.
 Dr. Peterson: You sense only your own desires. I assure you mine in no way resemble them.
 Dr. Floreau: Stop it. I'm mad about you. [kisses her; she doesn't respond] I'm afraid I'm boring you.
 Dr. Peterson: No, your attitudes are very interesting.
 Dr. Floreau: I feel exactly like Miss Carmichael. I'd like to throw a book at you. [picks up book] But I won't. May I borrow this?
 Dr. Peterson: Certainly.
 Dr. Floreau: Oh, and uh, forgive me for my criticism. I think you'd better stick to books.

Dr. Floreau criticizes Dr. Peterson for failing to live up to his expectations of femininity. First he questions the judgment of their superior, Dr. Murchison, for placing her on the Carmichael case. Then he insults her professionally by questioning her ability to treat Miss Carmichael, suggesting that she is ill-equipped to handle the case because of her inability to understand love: *Your lack of human and emotional experience is bad for you as a doctor, and fatal for you as a woman.* Finally, he tells Dr. Peterson exactly what is wrong with her method and how she can become a better doctor, presumably by sleeping with him. Dr. Peterson sits inattentively at her desk with a bemused expression while Floreau raves on. Her responses are very matter of fact, always questioning his motivations, as if the whole conversation were an experiment and he the subject. When Floreau stops insulting her and moves on to flirting, she puts him off in no uncertain terms. Since she does not sugarcoat this rejection in any way or frame it within a pragmatics more reflective of an appropriate power imbalance, Dr. Floreau proceeds to insult her once more by comparing her to a "textbook," establishing her as a woman incapable of love.

But Dr. Peterson does fall in love—with John Ballentine (played by Gregory Peck), an amnesiac who believes himself to be the new director of the sanitarium—and begins to talk more like the women we expect to see in full-length feature films. The first time they kiss, we see in Dr. Peterson's mind an image of seven doors opening one after another,¹⁰ which François Truffaut summarizes as a "very beautiful scene" in "one of [Hitchcock's] most sensible pictures" (1984:165). The now-cured Dr. Peterson ceases all textbook talk, chatters incessantly, and even lies to the police when they come to question Ballentine for the murder of the real clinic director. When Dr. Peterson approaches her mentor Dr. Brilloff for assistance, she babbles emotionally like a "schoolgirl in love," urging him to believe that John is innocent:

- Dr. Peterson: [without glasses] He didn't know he had that! [a razor with which he was sleepwalking] Alex, you mustn't think that. He didn't try to do anything to you. He couldn't!
- Dr. Brilloff: My dear child, he's not responsible.
- Dr. Peterson: Well that's not correct!
- Dr. Brilloff: I'm just a little more experienced with this type than you.
- Dr. Peterson: I grant that you know infinitely more than I do but in this case—
- Dr. Brilloff: Do not complete the sentence with the usual female contradictions. You grant me I know more than you but on the other hand you know more than me! Women's talk! Bah!

Later in same scene:

- Dr. Peterson: You don't know this man. You know only science. You know his mind but you don't know his heart.
- Dr. Brilloff: We are speaking of a schizophrenic and not a valentine.
- Dr. Peterson: We're speaking of a man.
- Dr. Brilloff: Oh. Love. Look at you, Dr. Peterson, a promising psychoanalyst is now all of a sudden a schoolgirl, in love with an actor and nothing else.
- Dr. Peterson: Alex, let me tell you about him.
- Dr. Brilloff: What is there for you to say? We both know that the mind of a woman in love is operating on the lowest level of the intellect.
- Dr. Peterson: You're right. I'm not an analyst, not even a doctor here. I'm not talking to you as one. But believe me, not what I say but what I feel. The mind isn't everything. The heart can see deeper sometimes.
- Dr. Brilloff: You are twenty times crazier than him. [sarcastically] She couldn't love him if he was no good! This is baby talk! Nothing else . . . Oh my dear dear child, even to a woman in love such a situation should seem a little unreasonable.

We learn a great deal about the female mind in this scene, as Dr. Brilloff reminds his pupil that they "both know that the mind of a woman in love is operating at the lowest level of the intellect." Dr. Peterson, now the "dear, dear child," defers to the psychoanalytic authority of her mentor, first granting that he "knows infinitely more" than she does and finally accepting his analysis without question (*You're right. I'm not an analyst, not even a doctor here*). Although she has very definite ideas about the mindset of her lover, she bases them completely on emotional intuition instead of intellect (*You know his mind but you don't know his heart!*, *The mind isn't everything. The heart can see deeper sometimes!*). Her speech is now more appropriate to her gender, progressing within this one scene from "women's talk with the usual female contradictions" to the talk of "a schoolgirl in love" to "baby's talk." This is a far cry from the emotionless psychoanalyst who in an earlier scene shuns poets for "filling people's heads with delusions about love." She is now speaking the language of primary process thought, a language that is emotional, illogical, and nonsensical. She therefore concludes by urging Dr. Brilloff to believe not what she "says," but what she "feels."

The film *Wild in the Country* with Elvis Presley and Hope Lange features yet another linguistically uptight psychoanalyst who must be taught how to speak like a woman. Dr. Irene Sperry is the outsider in a small town, and as the only woman in the film without a small-town dialect, she is clearly an outsider linguistically. She has been assigned by the parole board to observe how an emotional young upstart,

Glen Taylor, is adjusting to parole. Unlike other woman analysts, Dr. Sperry is comfortable with her authority and is respected for it—an anomaly which can be explained in terms of the class difference between her and the other characters. Because she is the only middle-class person in the entire town, she is positioned above her patient on the social hierarchy, and her speech can more closely approximate the speech of the male psychoanalyst. At the end of the film, however, the gender hierarchy overrides the class difference when the two become involved romantically. The direction of power is reversed when Dr. Sperry and Glen exchange positions with respect to intellect and emotion—she falls in love with him and he goes off to college.

The metalinguistic comments which take place in the first psychoanalytic encounter between Dr. Sperry and Glen underscore the differences in their speech styles. While he talks like a "slow-witted country boy," she talks like someone who wants to "get down to business":

- Dr. Sperry: You can leave. There's no bars on these windows. You smoke?
- Glen: No. This routine of yours would stagger a billygoat. [She laughs.] What's funny?
- Dr. Sperry: What you said was funny.
- Glen: Well it wasn't meant to be funny. You wanna find out what makes me tick, doncha?
- Dr. Sperry: No, you're a complicated human being, not a cheap tin clock, and you can stay or leave as you choose. Well?
- Glen: That's twice you invited me to leave.
- Dr. Sperry: That's right, and if you keep on pretending that you're a slow-witted country boy, I'll put you out.
- Glen: Pretty tough, huh?
- Dr. Sperry: Well, I can be. Now why don't we get down to business. I might be able to help you if you let me.
- Glen: Well, I'm not exactly drownin'. What kind of help?
- Dr. Sperry: How do I know? All I know about you is what I have in this report and that isn't very much.
- Glen: Well, what does it say? Ah mean, can ah see it?
- Dr. Sperry: No! What it says . . . would stagger a billygoat! I see you can smile, too.
- Glen: I'd like to apologize, Ma'am, for bein' so . . . hostile, I think that's the word, idn't it?

Dr. Sperry begins the conversation by laughing at his use of the small-town colloquialism *it would stagger a billygoat*, a response he does not appreciate. When he questions her reaction, she explains to him matter-of-factly that his remark was "funny." When she later returns to this colloquialism at the end of the conversation in an effort to make him smile, he apologizes for being so "hostile," asking her to approve his choice of vocabulary: *I think that's the word, idn't it?* But as they continue to meet with one another, Glen gradually begins to assume the position of psychoanalyst. He asks her to tell him about her life, about the death of her husband (hence the repression of affect), about her fear of romantic involvement. When he finally tells her one dark rainy night that he is in love with her, he silences her altogether, refusing to listen to her "shrink talk" anymore.¹¹

There is clearly a pattern of male-patient cross-sex interaction in which the analyst ends up being analyzed by the analysand. This pattern is particularly clear in the comedy *They Might Be Giants* with psychiatrist Dr. Mildred Watson (played by Joanne Woodward), and a patient who believes himself to be Sherlock Holmes (played by George C. Scott). Although Watson's speech is at first aggressive and confrontational, she eventually falls in love with her schizophrenic patient and adopts his fantasy as her own. In the final scene, the two stand awaiting Holmes' enemy Moriarty, with Mildred Watson trying desperately to see what her patient sees. The film ends with her joyfully declaring that she too believes in Moriarty, and she and Holmes become partners in fantasy.

This is quite a contrast with the beginning of the film, in which Dr. Watson wrestles with Mr. Holmes for a position of linguistic superiority. The plot is ideal for such banter, since it sets against one another two professionals whose success depends on linguistic know-how.¹² The psychoanalyst must be able to interpret linguistic clues correctly in order to cure the patient; the detective must be able to interpret linguistic clues correctly in order to solve the crime. When the two professionals get together, their conversation is a rapid battle of linguistic one-upsmanship, as in their first exchange:

- Holmes: Stop laughing at me.
 Dr. Watson: I'm not laughing.
 Holmes: I assure you. That paper is real. Moriarty is real. I am not mad! You want to test me out? Let's test me out on you.
 Dr. Watson: Very well.
 Holmes: You tell me when I'm wrong.
 Dr. Watson: I'll shake when wrong and nod when right like Mr. Small.
 Holmes: Are you ready?
 Dr. Watson: Go right ahead.
 Holmes: You're left-handed. You tint your hair and have a vitamin deficiency. You were a tomboy and an only child. Your adolescence was a nightmare and you didn't lose your acne until your middle twenties. You can neither cook nor sew and your apartment needs a thorough cleaning. You suffer from insomnia and sometimes drink yourself to sleep. You think you're homely and you're glad you're growing old. You bite your nails. You're frightened and you're lost without your work. I've got more. You want it?
 Dr. Watson: By all means.
 Holmes: You don't have many friends. You have never been engaged. No one you've loved has ever loved you back. You're stubborn and inflexible. You've got a temper that you can't control. That suit is ten years old and you annoy the living Jesus out of me.
 Dr. Watson: Now it's my turn. I'm gonna stay right here.
 Holmes: Go or stay. What you do doesn't interest me.
 Dr. Watson: The hell it doesn't.
 Holmes: And I forgot, you swear.
 Dr. Watson: Listen, my name is Watson, Mildred Watson. I am a doctor. I'm not beautiful or rich or ambitious because about the only thing I care about in life is to cure. Now I have offered you what skills I have and in return you have fought and you have jeered and you have tried to compete. I don't care. All I feel is dedication.
 Holmes: Watson—

Dr. Watson: Shut up! I'm not finished. I am a dedicated doctor, sir, and I will cure you if it kills me!

The character Dr. Watson is an argumentative, repressed, hyper-dedicated psychoanalyst. Holmes assumes the position of superior evaluator, pointing out that she is out of touch with both her sexuality and her femininity: she can "neither cook nor sew," her apartment "needs a thorough cleaning," and she has "never been engaged." Nor does she pay attention to her physical appearance: she is "homely," has a "vitamin deficiency," "bites her nails," and wears a suit that is "ten years old." Although she asserts her conversational turn near the end of the interaction, ultimately interrupting Holmes and telling him to "shut up," it is clear that she is not the conversational victor. He has put her entirely on the defensive, and instead of analyzing him, she defends herself: *I am a doctor. I'm not beautiful or rich or ambitious because about the only thing I care about in life is to cure.* It is only a matter of time before she defers completely to his linguistic authority and enters into the frame of his own schizophrenic discourse. In a sense, the film seems to be telling us that for women, a deranged discourse is preferable to an intelligent one.

But the repressed intellectual is not the only female stereotype that Hollywood has capitalized on. The oversexed female psychoanalyst is a common character in low-budget science-fiction or male-fantasy vehicles. Consider Dr. Charlotte, the murderous sex therapist in the 1984 remake of *I, the Jury*, or Dr. McMichaelson, the repressed analyst in the 1987 science-fiction film *From Beyond*, who later sheds her hair bun and glasses for leather and whips. The most recent manifestation of this type of Hollywood female analyst can be found in the character Dr. Garner in 1992's controversial thriller *Basic Instinct*, whom we come to suspect as the film's icepick-wielding dominatrix. The film is interesting in that the psychoanalyst Dr. Garner, who is hired by the police department to analyze the psyche of their chief detective Nick (played by Michael Douglas), is set up in opposition to the bisexual psychology graduate Catherine Tramell (played by Sharon Stone). The fact that Catherine is also a writer of best-seller psycho thriller novels makes her even more suspect, as the viewer comes to believe that her desire to write novels about the men in her life must reflect some deeper desire to control and manipulate them. Both are portrayed as oversexed and potentially dangerous women, who because of their "degrees in people's heads" are clearly capable of psychotic anti-male behavior. There is something extremely phallic, of course, about a woman trying to enter into a man's mind, and her dominant position in the conversational exchange is explained through her proclivity for sexual perversion; namely, she likes to assume the dominant role in the sexual exchange as well, tie her partner to the bedpost, have sex, then stab him repeatedly with an icepick (a nice tool of penis envy for a frigid lesbian/bisexual woman). Such films work primarily as male fantasy, then, since women can comfortably assume positions of linguistic power only within this realm. When Nick's co-worker warns him in *Basic Instinct* that Catherine is "screwing" with his head, the audience is relieved to interpret this sexually as well as psychically. It is perhaps not so surprising that an entire genre of American pornographic films exists in which the female

psychoanalyst acts as sexual dominatrix, curing her patients with sexual skills instead of linguistic ones.

One notable exception to the general rule that female analysts are by definition either emotionally deficient or sexually deranged is the 1991 movie *Prince of Tides*, starring Barbara Streisand and Nick Nolte. In this film, the woman psychoanalyst Dr. Lowenstein is portrayed as capable, intelligent, and at the very least multi-dimensional. However, although she is able to cure her male patient by the end of the film, she does so in part by entering into a sexual relationship with him. It would seem that the woman analyst can be portrayed as capable of treating men in the 1990s, but that treatment must still be realized through romantic involvement.

CONCLUSION

In her article on engendered emotion in American discourse, Lutz (1990) explores the "rhetoric of control" that accompanies women's talk about emotion, suggesting that such rhetoric stems from a widely shared Western belief in the danger of women and their emotionality. After examining several studies on the female role in physical and social reproduction, she argues that social scientists have been operating on a cultural model that links emotionality with women. Since Western society views emotion as something that is chaotic, dangerous, and irrational, its association with women "vindicates authority and legitimates the need for control" (1990:87). Such is the case with respect to the portrayal of the female psychoanalyst in American film. If the woman analyst does not express herself with the emotion appropriate to her gender, she must learn how to do so through the workings of the plot. Only when she learns to speak chaotically and irrationally can the film end happily—with a linguistically powerless woman in the control of a linguistically powerful man.

It is telling that in all but two of the 23 films since 1935 which have featured a female analyst treating a male patient, the analyst ends up, in effect, being analyzed by her own analysand. She is portrayed in much the same way that the female patient is depicted, as a woman who has chosen an intellectual field because she is afraid to acknowledge her desires, who can be considered only half a woman because she has intellect without emotion. Her linguistic aggression causes anxiety in the male patient and tension in the plot. In fact, the anomaly of her position as analyst becomes the focal point of the narrative. The only way this tension can be relieved is if the male patient is able to bring his analyst down linguistically, to move her from the language of the intellect to the language of emotion. She must assume a discourse that is nonmale (indirect, nonaggressive, responsive to her partner's choice of topic), justifying what she says in terms of emotion instead of intellect. A number of feminist film critics have followed Silverman (1984) in illustrating that the male voice is regularly presented as the disembodied voice of authority, while the female voice is presented as intimately connected with the body and sexual desire. As the possessor of the voice of authority, the male psychoanalyst can serve as incidental to the workings of the plot; his presence does not need to be explained or commented on in the narrative. When a women character holds a position of authority, however, her linguistic power must be

explained in terms of her failure to participate in her prescribed, socially powerless role. It is our contention that such images of women serve to affirm and reinforce a popular stereotype that women should communicate at an emotional, nonintellectual level—and at that level only.

NOTES

1. This paper was initially written for Robin Lakoff's graduate seminar on psychotherapeutic discourse at the University of California at Berkeley, spring 1990. Many thanks to Robin for her support and insightful comments. We would also like to thank the faculty and administration of the Department of Teaching English as a Foreign Language, American University in Cairo, for sponsoring Beth Daniels' attendance at the Berkeley Women and Language Conference.
2. For further discussion of these approaches, see Cameron (1985). She identifies the two theoretical leanings discussed here as the "subculture and gender role" approach and the "dominance hierarchy" approach, respectively. She additionally identifies the psychoanalytic "sexuality and body" approach adopted by the French feminists Cixous and Irigaray, who hold that language is related to gender identity through its connection with the body and sexual desire.
3. Lakoff (1990) discusses this term with reference to linguistic abuse, arguing that the nonreciprocal nature of psychotherapeutic communication can lead to talk which, in the wrong hands, can be a cause of neuroses instead of a cure.
4. For a thorough summary of cross-sex psychotherapeutic encounters in film, see Gabbard & Gabbard (1988:1045), who have categorized such encounters in terms of romantic/sexual involvement and successful treatment. Also see Samuels (1985), Schneider (1977, 1987), and the article "A lot of not so happy endings" in the April 13, 1992 edition of *Newsweek*.
5. The films we reviewed involving a male analyst with a female patient include *Now Voyager* (1942), *The Dark Mirror* (1946), *Cat People* (1948), *Three Faces of Eve* (1957), *Suddenly Last Summer* (1960), *Butterfield 8* (1960), *Klute* (1971), *Seven Percent Solution* (1976), *Stepfather* (1986), and *Silence of the Lambs* (1991). The films we reviewed involving a female analyst with a male patient include *Spellbound* (1945), *Wild in the Country* (1961), *They Might Be Giants* (1971), *The Man Who Loved Women* (1983), *I, the Jury* (1984), *From Beyond* (1987), *Prince of Tides* (1991), and *Basic Instinct* (1992).
6. Freud (1895:13) argues that the basis and *sine qua non* of hysteria is the existence of hypnoid states, which women are more prone to than men: "We have nothing new to say on the question of the origin of these dispositional hypnoid states. They often, it would seem, grow out of the day-dreams which are so common even in healthy people and to which needlework and similar occupations render women especially prone."
7. Many of these associations have to do with Freud's understanding of male and female participation in the sexual act, i.e., that men assume an active role and women a passive one. He argues that hysteria stems from excessive sexual passivity and obsessional neurosis from excessive sexual activity, associating the former with women and the latter with men: "Sexual experiences of early childhood have the same significance in the aetiology of obsessional neurosis as they have in that of hysteria. Here, however, it is no longer a question of sexual *passivity*, but of acts of aggression carried out with pleasure and of pleasurable participation in sexual acts—that is to say, of sexual *activity*. This difference in the aetiological circumstances is bound up with the fact that obsessional neurosis shows a visible preference for the male sex" (1896:169; original emphasis).
8. Irigaray (1980) and Kristeva (1981), arguing from the perspective of French feminist theory, have suggested that such splits arise from a male fear of women's dual sexuality.
9. A comparable film is *Butterfield 8*, in which the psychoanalyst Dr. Treadman treats Gloria Wanderess (played by Elizabeth Taylor), who has embraced erotic desire at the expense of emotional fulfillment. After years of running around with college men (her only association with books and intellectual institutions is sexual in nature), she falls in love with the "very Yale" Weston Ansbury Liggett. She subsequently decides that she is cured and no longer needs her

psychoanalyst: *I don't need you anymore. I have no problems anymore. I'm in love. I am in love. I am really in love!*

10. In many of the early American psychoanalytic films, Freud's theoretical ideas are developed overtly in the workings of the plot, the 1949 *Spellbound* being no exception. This particular scene recalls one of Freud's own metaphors for hysterical recovery: "The situation may be compared with the unlocking of a locked door, after which opening it by turning the handle offers no further difficulty" (1895:283).

11. Often in these films, the emotionally deviant female patient or female psychoanalyst must be silenced altogether, as in the 1948 *Cat People* with Simone Simone and Tom Conway. Here, the portrayal of multiple personality disorder is taken to an extreme when the leading character, a Serbian woman named Irena Reed, routinely turns into a man-eating panther (a potent symbol of dangerous aggressive female sexuality) at the onset of any emotion. After her psychoanalyst's many failed attempts to get her to express her emotion properly—and much of this is in reaction to her refusal to kiss her husband—Irena loses her ability to speak, telephoning her friend twice out of jealousy and both times being unable to utter a single word. At the end of the film Irena is transformed into the panther one final time and is silenced permanently when hit by a car—an ending reminiscent of Gloria's finale in *Butterfield 8* when, because she allows her desire once again to get the best of her, she drives her car over a cliff and dies. (In some films the speechless woman can in fact be cured, as when in the 1948 *Snake Pit* the female inmate who has been silent throughout the film is told by her psychiatrist, "Oh, you've talked—you're going to get well now, I know you will." See Silverman 1984 for an interesting discussion of such films.)

12. The same opposition is the focus of the film *The Seven Percent Solution* (1976), in which Sigmund Freud treats Sherlock Holmes for his cocaine habit.

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Bringing aging into the language/gender equation

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Why am I, a woman in her sixties, who has explored the stereotyping of sexism, racism, of the physically disabled, just now looking at ageism? Even to pose the question goes a long way towards answering it. Because, in our society, to be old is so awful, one best not think of it.

Shevy Healey (1986:59)

INTRODUCTION

Over the past year I have been repeatedly struck by the fact that language, gender, and aging are not being addressed simultaneously within the same scholarly studies. Researchers in the area of language and aging tend not to focus on gender differences; researchers studying gender diversity and aging tend not to include language in their examinations; and researchers in the area of language and gender have not typically embraced a full lifespan perspective in their investigations. Since age is socially constructed, just as gender is (cf. Eckert 1984), language use and communicative needs can be expected to change as people age, take on different social roles, and experience shifts in gender identity and/or gender roles over their lifetimes. It is my intention in this paper to argue that individuals interested in how language and gender are interrelated could benefit from the examination of language used by old people. Insights by researchers in the field of aging are presented and discussed to help those analysts interested in incorporating data from old women and/or men to avoid methodological pitfalls specific to studies of these populations.

JUST WHAT IS OLD AGE?

Before we go on to discuss how old age may relate to issues of language and gender, it is important to topicalize the notion of old age. Researchers who work with old people come to the immediate realization that age is much more complex than a simple biological category. Knowing a speaker's chronological age tells only a small part of the story. Let us listen first to the voices of some old women as they talk about the complexity of the notion of age.

Copper writes of the societal constructs that make getting old hard. She says as she approaches the age of 67 that:

I am becoming invisible. I am seen as asexual, although that is not how I feel. I am condescended to and socially segregated, as if I had a condition that was catching. ... We are inundated by responses we cannot explain. To ourselves, we aren't all that different

BRINGING AGING INTO THE LANGUAGE/GENDER EQUATION

than we were in our midlife years. It is not physiological aging or psychological aging that is troubling me. I am experiencing social aging—ageism. A generalized image is being projected upon me that does not correspond to my self-image. I must continually internalize this feedback, or adjust to it, in order to retain my sanity at all. It is disorienting, and very hard to not lose confidence and blame myself. (1986:52)

Healey comments: "It is difficult to hold on to one's own sense of self, to one's own dignity when all around you there is no affirmation of you. At best there may be a patronizing acknowledgement; at worst, you simply do not exist" (1986:61). Randall writes: "The dislocation created out of the contradictions between how I feel and look—and *what I know*—and how society perceives me—physically, socially, economically, emotionally—is a very real element in every day" (1986:127).

In her research within the Labovian sociolinguistic paradigm of language variation and change, Eckert (1984) began to realize some of the complexity of the notion of age when she found that simple chronological age did not correlate well with the facts of linguistic change; differences in aspirations, roles, and orientation to society needed to be taken into account in order to make sense of the situation.

Counts and Counts (1985), in their work on aging in the Pacific, find the need to differentiate between chronological age, functional age, historical age, and social age. Functional age refers to changes in facility (e.g., senses), change in appearance, change in activity (both level of interest in community events and level of independence), and change in bodily action (physiological and cognitive). Historical age refers to an individual's age as related to a specific event significant to the history of the society in which the individual lives. Social age refers to the rites of passage in a given society.

Boden and Bielby (1986) argue that the perception of one's age is also important to a more complete understanding of age beyond chronological age. The notion of "disjunctive aging" advanced by Coupland, Coupland, and Giles (1989) seems to extend this idea. "Disjunctive aging" refers to the phenomenon of individuals feeling older or younger than their actual chronological age.

THE SITUATION AT PRESENT

The situation regarding the triad of constructs—aging, gender, and language—appears at present to be the following:

Language and aging

Researchers in the area of language and aging typically work within a psycholinguistic paradigm which relies on relatively large groups of subjects performing a number of tasks in an experimental setting. This means that data are available for comparisons along gender lines, but to my knowledge these comparisons are most often of a parenthetical type rather than a major focus of the studies. Additionally, the treatment of age in studies of this type tends to be as a biological category rather than as a social category as discussed above.

Work over the past five years or so in the field of social psychology that is best represented in the work of Giles, Coupland, Coupland, and colleagues has consistently argued for a more complex treatment of age in research on language, communication, and aging. For example, Coupland, Coupland, and Giles maintain that

mapping the linguistic and discursive processes that will mirror and truly constitute the redefinitions of social aging must be a sociolinguistic priority. In an academic climate where sociolinguistics is acknowledged to have made diverse but crucial contributions to the social scientific study of class, gender, ethnic and child studies, researchers of whatever subdiscipline urgently need to reconsider their neglect of our old folk and of their aging selves. (1991:191)

This work, though well-suited for such complex investigations, has not yet begun a systematic exploration of gender issues as they relate to old people's language use.

In addition to the language produced in the experimental settings associated with the psycholinguistic approach and the language produced in the relatively natural conversations associated with Giles, Coupland, Coupland, and colleagues, language which seems to lend itself well to an investigation of gender differences and aging is that produced in the telling of an individual's life story, or autobiography. Projects of this type are being carried out in Philadelphia (cf. Saunders 1992), Berlin (cf. Freund, Staudinger, & Smith 1991), and in Minnesota (cf. Thorsheim & Roberts 1990). Preliminary findings that men's stories often seem to be focused on mastery and women's filled with considerations of relationships fit in well with Gilligan's (1982) identification of two basic ways in which people describe themselves: one with regard to individual achievements and distinctive activities, and the other with regard to relationships and connections to other people.

Gender and aging

Investigations of gender diversity and aging fall into two categories with regard to language: (1) studies which use language to find out about differences between men and women on substantive issues, such as widowhood and perceived power; and (2) studies in which language plays no part or only a minimal role, such as in investigations of differences in cancer rates in men and women. Researchers of the first type do not at present examine talk in and of itself but use it rather to get at opinions and ideologies. Since it is quite likely that the majority of these researchers lack the necessary training and experience in linguistic analysis, it would seem that interesting opportunities for collaborative work between these researchers and linguists exist and could be mutually beneficial.

As an example of the first category above, papers in Counts and Counts (1985) explore the complex relationships between social withdrawal, transition in gender roles, and change in the social spheres (domestic and public) in which people hold authority as they relate to aging. Further, they suggest that one's gender may significantly affect the nature and quality of the aging experience. These

relationships between gender roles and power are discussed by Healey: "As an old woman I am approaching what in some respects is the greatest power of my life. I am truly freed from the role of wife, mother, daughter, career woman. I can in truth seek to take charge of my life" (1986:62). Harris describes a similar phenomenon: "From the moment of my birth, tradition and society forced me to become a patient, loving, kind, feminine possessed thing. I accepted that role and the fact that the male role was dominant. For years (it seems like thousands) I almost destroyed myself as a person trying to live up to that role" (1986:82). Upon becoming a widow after forty-two years of marriage, Harris comments: "My life changed completely. ... I liked myself more than I ever had. ... It was as if I were born again into another body and for the first time in my life I felt good about being me ... all of the feelings held back for 62 years were pouring out and it was wonderful and exciting" (1986:82).

Unfortunately, the freedom and power which come with old age for some women, as described by Healey and Harris above, are not experienced by all women as they reach old age. It is at this juncture that ageism is linked by many with sexism. Copper describes the difference between aging and ageism as follows:

Aging is a natural and universal personal experience that begins the day we are born. It is a process of challenge—not necessarily growth and development when we are young as opposed to loss and deterioration when we are old—but learning through change. Ageism is the negative social response to different stages in the process of aging and it is a political issue. The ageism that old women experience is firmly embedded in sexism—an extension of the male power to define, control values, erase, disempower, and divide. (1986:47)

Healey points out that ageism is the logical extension of sexism's insistence that "women are only valuable when they are attractive and useful to men" (1986:59). It is here that we can begin to understand how old age can be such a positive experience for some women and such a negative experience for others. For women who have spent their lives believing that their value is in looking young and beautiful, old age is almost certain to be a negative experience.

Language and gender

Since the relationship between language and gender is the framework within which all of the papers in these conference proceedings fall, I do not need to discuss the state of research here, except to state that generally people beyond middle age are not included in studies of language and gender. This situation is reflected in the papers in this volume; despite the diversity of topics discussed here, to my knowledge only one paper (Craig, this volume) has an old woman as its subject.

Given this situation, I would like to suggest that sociolinguists and discourse analysts think about the possible relevance of extending their own studies on language and gender to include language used by men and women throughout the entire lifespan.

MOVING TOWARDS A FULLER LIFESPAN PERSPECTIVE: SOME METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS

This problem is not solved, however, simply by adding several old people to the linguist's sample. Insights by researchers working in the field of aging may help us avoid methodological pitfalls as we add a lifespan perspective to our own work on language and gender. These insights fall into the two general areas of research design and interpretation of results.

Research design: Selection of informants

Once a researcher has made the decision to include individuals over the age of, say, 65 in her study, it is important that she recognize and take into account the extreme heterogeneity of this age group with regard to life experience, physical and mental health, and living situation. Nelson and Dannefer (1992) observe that this increasing diversity over the lifespan does not appear to be domain-specific, i.e., the same general finding emerges across physical, personality, social, and cognitive domains. Researchers in the field of aging routinely differentiate between the young-old and the old-old (the boundary age in most studies is 75 or 85) in order to systematically sort out some of this diversity.

This extreme heterogeneity makes it difficult to talk about normative behavior in terms of language use. Wiemann, Gravell, and Wiemann (1990) discuss the need to provide standards appropriate to different stages of aging, which are vital to understanding whether a person is aging successfully, rather than comparing them to the communicative, social, and psychological standards from typical middle age, as is usually the case.

Underlying this heterogeneity can be both individual and interactional influences. Individual influences include possible memory and/or cognitive decline and attitudes towards self and others. Individual communicative needs may also change with increasing age. Fredrickson and Carstensen (1991), Ulatowska, Cannito, Hayashi, and Fleming (1985), and Wiemann, Gravell, and Wiemann (1990) all found that, for old individuals, anticipated positive affect and friendly social relations are significantly more important than information-seeking or other task-oriented functions, both in the selection of a conversational partner and in the maintenance of contacts with others.

Interactional influences underlying diversity in behavior among the elderly are varied. These influences have to do with what kinds of people old women and men have to talk with, as well as where and how often this talk takes place. Although on the surface it may seem similar, this is a separate issue from the question of who is talking with whom, when, and where within the actual data-collection portion of the study being carried out. Issues here include social networks and attitudes of those in the networks both toward the particular individual in question and toward old people in general. Is the individual's lifetime partner (if any) still alive? Does the social network include only persons of the individual's generation or also of younger (and possibly older) generations? Is the individual talking a great deal to persons who hold ageist attitudes? Another important factor to consider is the

variety of places in which communication takes place. A number of studies of nursing homes suggest the important influence which this kind of institution exerts on the quantity and quality of opportunities for communication (cf Lubinski 1976, Nussbaum 1990).

Selection of longitudinal, cross-sectional, or cross-sequential design

In determining whether to use a longitudinal, cross-sectional, or cross-sequential approach in the investigation of gender and language, it is important that the researcher recognize several advantages and disadvantages with regard to cohort effects in research that spans several generations. Cross-sectional studies have the well-recognized advantage of being able to examine language behavior of several different age groups simultaneously. It is critical, however, that the researcher ask whether the differences she finds have to do with differential socialization of the various groups regarding the importance of talk, gender roles and identities, and etiquette, or with differing amounts of formal school education, or whether they reflect actual changes in individuals over the lifespan. Here longitudinal work has obvious advantages over cross-sectional work, but one must be aware of a possible skewing of the data over time as healthy individuals stay with the study and others either opt out over time or die.

A cross-sequential approach which combines elements of both longitudinal and cross-sectional studies seems to offer the most flexibility for these types of studies. It allows the researcher to make some hypotheses about differential language behavior based on the investigation of several different age groups at a given time and then to test these hypotheses out based on any changes observed in the groups over time.

Data elicitation

With regard to the tasks used to elicit language, it is important to point out factors which may confound the researcher's results. First, if the data elicitation involves memory or attention to task to a great extent, older individuals may perform worse than younger individuals. Second, if the task is one which is relatively abstract, older individuals might perform worse than younger individuals since they are "out of practice" performing the kinds of tasks which are more typical of the school situation than of everyday life.

Besides the actual task chosen, it is crucial to recognize the potential influence of the tester/interviewer/conversational partner on the language used by individuals of different generations. Work by Coupland, Coupland, Giles, and Henwood (1988) points to the subconscious overaccommodation by younger-generation interlocutors to the (falsely) perceived needs of their older-generational conversational partners. This overaccommodation can effect lower performance levels on the part of the older individual.

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Researcher as "outsider"

If the researcher belongs to a generation younger than the oldest informants in the study, she must consider the possible effects of this intergenerational encounter on her interpretation of the research findings. A younger researcher is necessarily an "outsider" to the population under examination; the danger exists that she will interpret the older person's behavior as if *she* were behaving that way. One linguistic form or communicative strategy may have a very different social meaning for an older individual than it has for a younger one (cf. Gumperz 1982 for analogous cross-cultural findings).

Giles, Williams, and Coupland (1990) argue that, since the elderly are products of different historical periods with their own cohorts, values, and predispositions, elderly researchers and scholars are needed in order to gain an insider's perspective into these populations. Eckert expresses the danger of intergenerational research in the following way: "The elderly, being the farthest from the experience of the young and middle-aged researchers, comprise the age group that is most subject to stereotyping in linguistics as well as other research" (1984:229).

Rich states: "Old women are not the ones defining aging, old women are not listened to about aging and ageism ..." (quoted in Swallow 1986:199). Copper agrees that we are missing out on the perspectives of women in their 70s, 80s, and 90s and that we need to try to listen to these "voices not present" in current discussions of gender and aging (1986:56).

Justification of interpretations

Two basic points need to be made here. First, if research findings in a cross-sectional study indicate that two different age groups perform in different ways, the researcher needs to be careful not to assume that the behavior of the older of these groups has deteriorated. Coupland, Coupland, and Giles (1991) topicalize this problem in interpretation within a useful critical discussion of the assumption of decrement in old age. It is, of course, very possible that the behavior under investigation has changed in a negative way as the individuals have aged. The point to be made here is that this interpretation must be grounded in the data and supported by supplemental analyses and not simply assumed *a priori* to be the case.

Second, research findings may indicate that two different age groups perform in similar (or even the same) ways. Here the researcher needs to be able to differentiate those behaviors which are similar (or the same) for both groups *for the same reasons* from those behaviors which are similar (or the same) for different reasons. To illustrate this situation, I will point to some observations about the use of constructed dialogue (cf. discussion in Tannen 1989 of what is commonly called "reported speech") by men and women in their 30s and 70s in their telling of the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood."²

The findings reported here are those of one "snapshot" within a much larger cross-sequential study, that is, they are findings based on the tellings of "Little Red

Riding Hood" by individuals in only two different age groups at one point in time (not longitudinally). It is interesting to note that the tellers are able to project different social identities onto the tellings of this culturally recognized children's story, that is, they can use this narrative opportunity to negotiate their age and gender, as well as to display their intellect and attitudes.

Table 1 shows the numbers of men and women in both age groups who use constructed dialogue (e.g., "Why, Grandmother, what big ears you have!") of any length and type in their telling of the story.

TABLE 1. *Number of males and females who used constructed dialogue in their retelling of "Little Red Riding Hood"*

	30-year-olds	70-year-olds
Female	16 of 19	12 of 20
Male	7 of 19	12 of 21

If we compare the 30-year-old men with the 30-year-old women, we see that 16 of 19 women use constructed dialogue, whereas only 7 of 19 men do.² Instead of using constructed dialogue, these men summarize what happened in the story and rarely use even indirect speech. These initial observations fit in with other discussions of gender and the use of constructed dialogue. Tannen argues that girls and women tend to use constructed dialogue more than boys and men do because "girls and women are concerned with conveying the emotional impact of what happened between people" (1990:262); the use of constructed dialogue is one means to dramatize events. In her examination of 245 prenarratives produced by children between one and two years of age, Jervay Pendergrass (1991) found that even at this early stage of language use, girls used significantly more constructed dialogue than boys did. This finding provides evidence of early socialization of boys and girls in different ways with regard to the use of dialogue in talk.

When we add the 70-year-old men and women to our investigation, however, the emerging picture changes. Here we note that 12 of the 20 70-year-old women use constructed dialogue. Of the 21 70-year-old men, 12 use constructed dialogue. If the study had merely compared 30-year-old men with 30-year-old women, significant gender differences would have been reported. But when we add a fuller lifespan perspective to our study, the gender differences disappear. Why? Based on the methodological considerations sketched above, several possibilities seem worthy of further investigation: (1) men may be less concerned about being macho at 70 than at 30 (gender identity account); (2) providing this kind of dramatic detail may fit the image of a 70-year-old grandfather better than the image of a 30-year-old male in our society (life experience/social network account); (3) the 70-year-old men may have been socialized differently with regard to the use of constructed dialogue, i.e., they may have used more of this device when *they* were 30-year-olds forty years ago (cohort effect); and (4) the 70-year-old women seem to use less dialogue than the 30-year-old women because of problems in remembering the story rather than any gender identity issue (cognitive account). This possibility, of course, makes the 70-year-old male *increase* in use of dialogue even more striking.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to suggest that the addition of language data from old men and women may enrich our investigations and understanding of a variety of issues related to language and gender. I hope that this brief discussion of why and how to bring aging into the language/gender equation will encourage readers who have not yet done so to consider incorporating members of older age groups into their investigations of gender issues. Let's work to help old men and women overcome the invisibility they so often articulate by bringing them from the margins into the mainstream of our work.

NOTES

1. These stories were collected as part of the Language in the Aging Brain Project carried out by Loraine K. Obler and Martin Albert, principal investigators, at the Boston Veterans Administration Hospital. I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Obler, Dr. Albert, and their colleagues for allowing me to report my findings based on portions of their data. My observations and interpretations do not necessarily reflect those of these other researchers.
2. Although space constraints do not allow an extended discussion, it is important to note that the gender differences appear to be about the decision to use constructed dialogue or not, and not about how much of it to use. Of those men and women who do use constructed dialogue, it is used approximately to the same extent in all four groups: between 23 and 26 words per telling are devoted to the construction of dialogue.

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Participation in electronic discourse in a "feminist" field¹

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INTRODUCTION

Studies of gender differences in amount of talk have shown that men consistently talk more than women in public settings. Talk in such settings—which include conferences, seminars, formal meetings, and television discussions—draws attention to the speaker in ways that are potentially status-enhancing (Holmes 1992). Moreover, sheer amount of talk may garner speakers credit they do not deserve, as when subjects in a study conducted by Rieken attributed insightful solutions to those who had talked the most during the discussion, even when the solutions had in fact been proposed by other participants (reported in Wallwork 1978). In short, amount of talk is related to status, power, and influence in the public domain.

In recent decades a new form of public discourse has emerged and is taking the academic world by storm. The possibility of communicating via computer network has led to the organization of multiparticipant electronic discussion lists (or conferences or bulletin boards, as they are variously known) in which individuals contribute to discussions on issues of interest within a profession, practice, or academic field. Subscription is free to those with access to Internet, Bitnet, or other wide-area networks, and some lists are exceedingly active, generating hundreds of messages per week.

It is often claimed that the electronic medium exercises a democratizing influence on communication. Citing studies conducted in educational settings, Kahn and Brookshire conclude that individuals communicating via computer "tend to participate more equally in discussions, and discussion is likely to be more democratic in the absence of nonverbal status cues" (1991:245). Users also wax enthusiastic. As one male member of a discussion list recently wrote to another:

One of the greatest strengths of e[lectronic]-mail is its ability to break down socio-economic, racial, and other traditional barriers to the sharing and production of knowledge. You, for example, have no way of knowing if I am a janitor or a university president or an illegal alien—we can simply communicate on the basis of our ideas, not on any preconceived notions of what should be expected (or not expected) from one another.

PARTICIPATION IN ELECTRONIC DISCOURSE IN A "FEMINIST" FIELD

The electronic medium is claimed to break down gender barriers as well. Graddol and Swann observe that the introduction of computer conferencing leads to "a change in the traditional pattern of contributions from female and male participants" (1989:175). A number of the medium's characteristics mitigate the likelihood of gender asymmetries: sex non-specific electronic return addresses,² the absence of physical (including intonational) cues signaling relative dominance or submission, and the fact that interruption and overlap are effectively precluded³—a subscriber may choose to delete messages, but each message appears on his or her screen in its entirety, in the order in which it was received.³

Despite this optimistic early prognosis, the research which has directly investigated the relationship between gender and participation in electronic discourse calls into question the claim that computers exercise an equalizing effect. In a recent study of the participation patterns of professional linguists on the Linguist electronic discussion list, Herring (to appear) found that female linguists contributed significantly less overall than male linguists—20% and 80% respectively—with women most noticeably silent in discussions of an abstract or theoretical nature. Moreover, when surveyed, both men and women reported feeling irritated by the bombastic and adversarial postings of a small minority of male contributors who effectively dominated the discussions. Herring concluded that women refrain from participating on Linguist due in part to their aversion to the adversarial tone of such discussions.

In the present study, we report on an investigation of participation on a smaller list serving an academic field—composition and rhetoric—in which feminism currently enjoys considerable influence.⁴ This list, Megabyte University (hereafter MBU), is considered by its members to be especially "friendly" and "supportive" relative to other lists. We hypothesized that in a non-adversarial environment, women would be more likely to participate equally in discussions, as predicted by the claims cited above. However, this hypothesis was not supported: while the overall tone of the list was indeed less adversarial, women still contributed only 30% of the messages as compared to 70% contributed by men. Even more revealing patterns emerge when participation is considered on a day-by-day and topic-by-topic basis. In discussion of a feminist topic, the contributions of women at one point exceeded those of the men for two consecutive days. The subsequent disruptions that took place, including male accusations of being "silenced" in the discussion and the threats of several men to unsubscribe from the list, provide support for the view that women and men do not have equal rights to speak in public; by contributing more even temporarily, and on a feminist (and female-introduced) topic, women in the group violated the unspoken convention that control of public discourse belongs rightfully to men.

THE INVESTIGATION

Our investigation focuses on a particularly lively discussion that took place on MBU between November 7 and December 16, 1991. It began as a request by one of the subscribers for reading suggestions for a course he planned to offer on "men's literature." The "men's literature" question soon revealed itself to be

controversial, with participants becoming polarized along gender lines regarding the legitimacy of offering such a course.⁵ Some women feared that the course might be used to perpetuate male hegemony, e.g., by co-opting resources that might otherwise be used for women's literature courses. The men in turn argued that feminists on the list were trying to deny them the right to talk about how gender shapes their identity. In addition to being concerned with gender issues, the "men's literature" discussion contains meta-commentary on gender and "silencing" in the discussion itself.

Participation in the "men's literature" discussion

The first and most obvious indication of gender-based inequality comes from the figures for participation in the "men's literature" discussion as a whole. These figures are summarized in Table 1:

TABLE 1. *Participation in the "men's literature" discussion*

	Female	Male
Number of contributors	18 (30.5%)	41 (69.5%)
Number of contributions	87 (36%)	155 (64%)
Average words per contribution	162	211.5
Total words contributed	14,114 (30%)	32,774 (70%)

As Table 1 shows, men contributed significantly more than women to the discussion overall. 69.5% of the participants were men, who in turn were responsible for contributing 70% of the total words and 64% of the total messages.⁶ Moreover, the average message length for men was 211.5 words, as compared with 162 words for women. Rather than demonstrating a new, democratic form of discourse, these figures support "the traditional pattern of contributions from male and female participants" alluded to by Graddol and Swann (1989:175), whereby men dominate (i.e., in face-to-face conversation) by taking longer and more frequent turns.

Figure 1 below gives a day-by-day breakdown of the number of messages contributed by members of each sex to the "men's literature" discussion.⁷ It shows that males (M) contributed more than females (F) nearly every day on which the discussion took place. What is also striking, however, is that the number of contributions by both sexes rose dramatically in the period between November 21 and November 27. Of special interest is the three-day period between November 21 and 24, which contains the only continuous span (November 22 through 23) when the contributions of women exceeded those of men. Participation in the discussion then rose to a peak between November 24 and 27, dropping off and stabilizing after Thanksgiving, which was celebrated on November 28 that year.

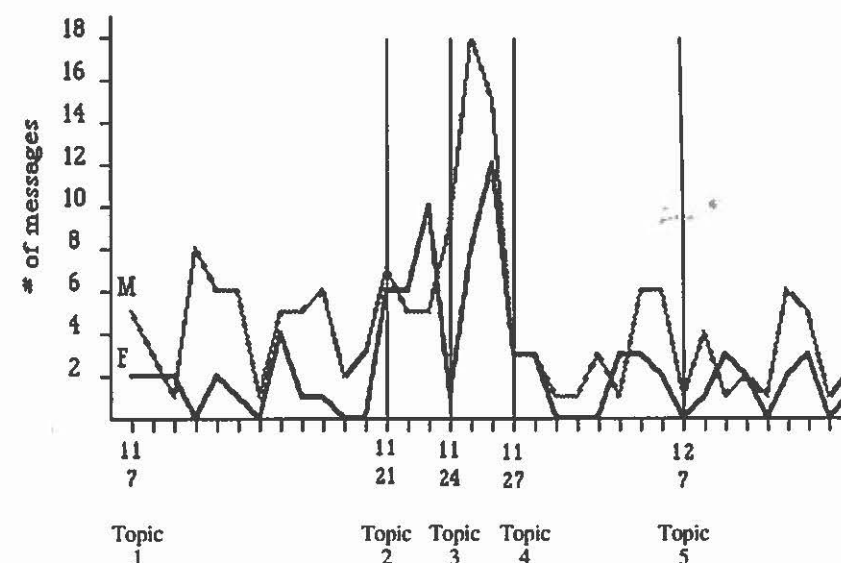


FIGURE 1: Number of messages by day

Explanations for this variability begin to suggest themselves when we take into account what MBU members were talking about at any given time. The vertical lines in Figure 1 indicate transitional points at which new topics of discussion were taken up by the group. Five such topics arose in the course of the discussion as a whole:

- Topic 1: Men's literature course (M)
- Topic 2: Silencing of women in the discussion (F)
- Topic 3: Threats of three members to unsubscribe, and reactions to this (M)
- Topic 4: Male hegemony in English departments (F)
- Topic 5: Statistics posted by one of the members (similar to those in Table 1) showing male and female participation in the discussion to date (M)

Topics 1, 3, and 5 were introduced by males; Topics 2 and 4 were introduced by females. Participation by topic is shown in Figure 2.

Men contributed the greatest number of messages on Topics 1 and 3, both introduced by men, and the least on Topic 2, which was introduced by women. Women, on the other hand, contributed the most on Topic 2. Indeed, this is the only period in the discussion when the usual pattern of men posting more messages than women is reversed. We suggest that this reversal—the fact that women were talking more, and on a female-introduced topic—made men uncomfortable to the point of threatening to unsubscribe, and that it was ultimately responsible for male perceptions of "silencing" and female dominance in the discussion.

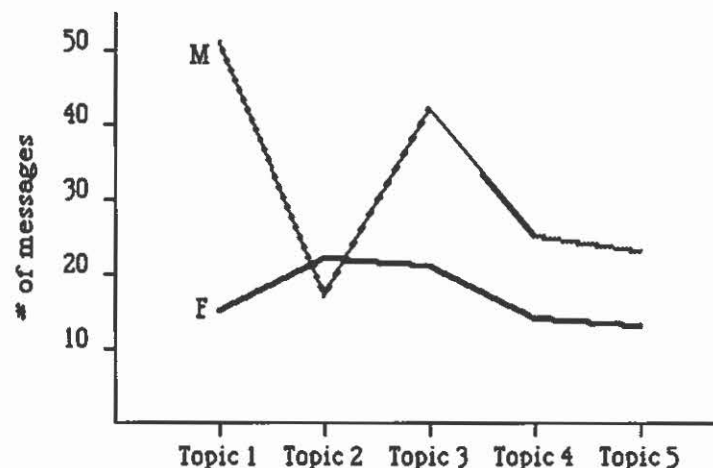


FIGURE 2: Number of messages by topic

Why, when men dominated the five-week discussion overall, would a few days when women happened to contribute more be perceived as a threat? To begin with, the number of women's contributions took a leap on November 21 relative to what had come before, as can be seen in Figure 1. Second, the women continued to contribute actively the next day and the next, exceeding the contributions of the men for two days straight, a situation without precedent in the discussion thus far. Spender (1979) found that male academics perceive women as dominating when they contribute as little as 30% of the talk. What would men then feel when women contributed more than half?⁸

Note that during this period men posted no fewer messages in absolute terms than they had previously. Yet on November 23 a male contributor (the one who posted the original request for texts on "men's literature") wrote and, addressing two of the more vocal women in the group by name, complained, "You may not feel very powerful outside this net or this discourse community, but here on the inside you've come very close to shutting all of us men up and down." The perception that men had been shut up (or down) is clearly contradicted by the fact of their participation—this man's message alone is 1,098 words, the longest in the entire discussion, and four other lengthy messages were contributed by men on the same day as well—yet it is consistent with Spender's observation that women need not truly dominate in order to be perceived as doing so.

The evening of that same day and the morning of the next, three men (none of whom had participated in the discussion thus far) posted public messages in which they announced their intention to unsubscribe from the list.⁹ The reasons given were that the discussion, having begun as a well-intentioned request for help in selecting texts for a course, had degenerated into "insults," "vituperation," and "vilification." They hastened to assure other members that they had no problem with discussing gender issues; rather, what upset them was the "tone" of the debate.

In looking back over the messages posted during the immediately preceding days, however, we find little evidence of a vituperative tone. With one exception, the contributions of the women appear to be aimed at furthering communication; they raise questions about the interaction at hand (specifically, the lack of male response to female concern about the proposed course), explain their own views, and encourage others to respond in kind.¹⁰ The only message indisputably negative in tone was posted by the man who proposed the "men's literature" course in the first place. In it, he accuses women on the list of "posting without thinking [their contributions] through carefully first," of leveling "charges" rather than questions at the men, and in general, of "bashing," "guilt-tripping," and "bullying" men who didn't follow a strict feminist line. A man who overtly sided with the women also comes under attack: he is accused of betraying his brothers out of feminist-induced guilt.

If the only vituperation comes from the man whose cause they allegedly support, why then did the three men threaten to leave the list? The reasons are not hard to find, nor did they escape the notice of participants on MBU at the time: it was a "boy"cott, a "power play" intended to silence those who persisted in speaking uncomfortable truths. It is no coincidence that threats of withdrawal occurred on and immediately following a day when the majority of messages were posted by women.

Ironically, the boycott had the reverse of its intended effect—it shamed the other men on the list into cooperating, at least temporarily, with the women's attempts to change the topic of discussion to one of feminist concern: the issue of male hegemony within the field of English. The period labeled as "Topic 3" in Figures 1 and 2 above was thus a turning point in the gender dynamics of the discussion, a turning point, as we demonstrate below, that is reflected on various levels of the discourse.

Responses

Revealing evidence comes from a consideration of how—and how often—participants of each sex were responded to in the discussion. Male participants received more responses than female participants overall: 89.2% of male postings in the "men's literature" discussion received explicit responses, as compared with only 70.6% of female postings. This disparity led one female participant to observe:

I am fascinated that my thoughtful . . . response on the "men's lit" thread was met with silence . . . while an anonymous man . . . with a silly little 3-liner gets fascinated and committed responses. . . . When threads initiated by women die from lack of response that's silencing; when women do not respond on threads initiated by men for reasons to do with fear (and the fear may be fear of verbal or other reprisal, ridicule, whatever)—. . . that's silencing.

Lack of response to postings questioning the proposed "men's literature" course prompted another frustrated woman to write, "Are you (in general) listening to

what's being communicated?," and a third to conclude a message by "shouting" in capital letters: "IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE?"

Figure 3 charts the percentage of response (100% = 1 response per message) received by females and males according to topic.¹¹

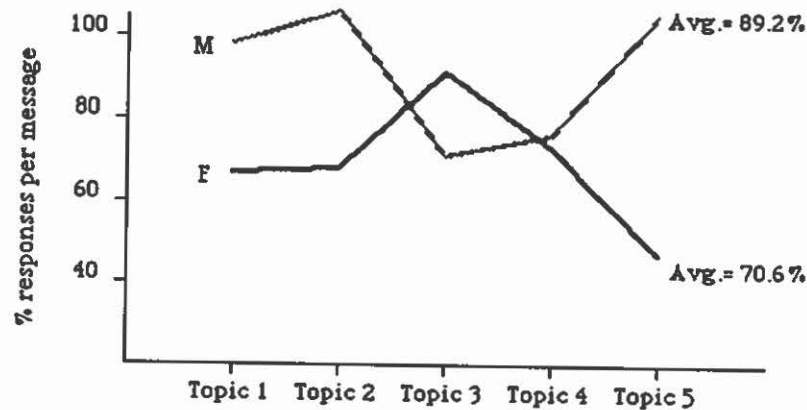


FIGURE 3: Responses received in relation to messages posted

As Figure 3 shows, men were responded to more than women at all times during the discussion, except during Topic 3, the period of male threats to leave the list. The reversal of the usual pattern of response during Topic 3 appears to be a reaction to the reversal in participation during Topic 2 (see Figure 2 above), and reinforces the notion that amount of talk is power: by contributing more, women earned a higher rate of response to their messages.

Also of interest is the matter of who responds to whom. The most frequent direction of response is men to men (33.4%), followed by women to men (21.3%), men to women (15.8%), and finally women to women (11.2%). (The remaining responses (18.3%) were addressed to the group as a whole.) Both men and women thus respond more to men, an indication of the more powerful status of men in the group overall. The number of responses directed to participants of each sex is shown for men in Figure 4 and for women in Figure 5 below.

Men on MBU are consistent in responding most to men on topics introduced by men, as shown in Figure 4. Their rate of response to postings by women is consistently low throughout. Note that in acknowledging the topic of hegemony (Topic 4), which was introduced by women, men avoid responding directly to women (since to do so would be to concede power) by addressing their postings to the group (G) as a whole.

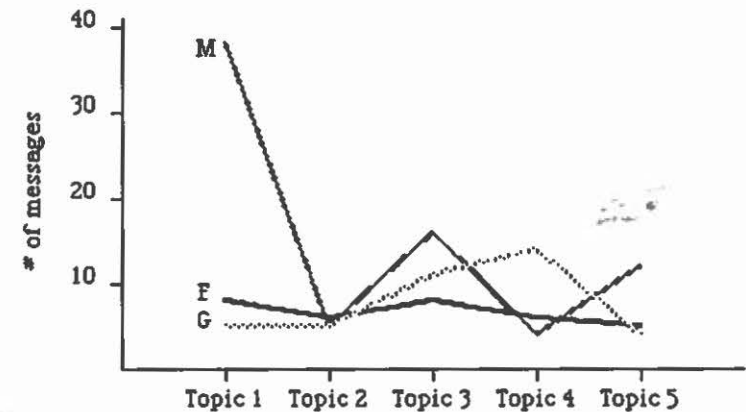


FIGURE 4: Responses to males, females, and group by topic (men only)

Women show a different pattern. As Figure 5 indicates, women respond most to men throughout, except during Topic 3, when the pattern of response is reversed:

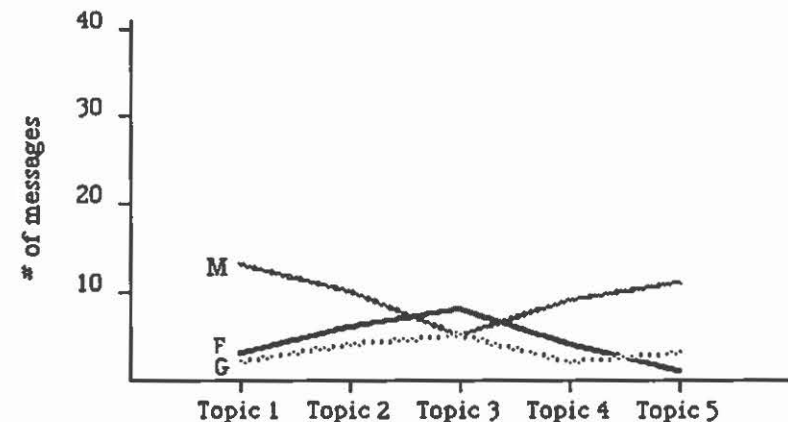


FIGURE 5: Responses to males, females, and group by topic (women only)

Are women responding most to other women about the threats of three men to leave the list (Topic 3)? In fact, they are not; rather, women at this point are virtually ignoring Topic 3 and pursuing the topic of hegemony (Topic 4) among themselves instead. This is further evidence that the tide of the discourse has turned; the women, having struggled throughout the earlier part of the discussion to make themselves heard and having succeeded in gaining the floor on the topic of silencing (Topic 2), are finally empowered to talk about what they want, and they do so among themselves. The increases both in women's responses to women during the time period identified as Topic 3 and in men's responses to the group during Topic

4 can be seen as reactions to women having gained control of the conversational floor.

Hedges

Yet another revealing piece of evidence comes from the use of hedges. Hedges—qualifiers such as *sort of*, *a little*, and *somewhat*, the modals *may* and *might*, and expressions such as *perhaps*, *conceivably*, and *it seems*—have been observed to occur more frequently in the speech of women, especially in situations where women are relatively powerless (Lakoff 1975; O'Barr & Atkins 1980). In the "men's literature" discussion, women use more hedges than men overall.¹² However, while women's use of hedges *decreases* steadily, men's use of hedges *increases* as the discussion builds in intensity, dropping off after the worst of the conflict has passed. This is charted in Figure 6:

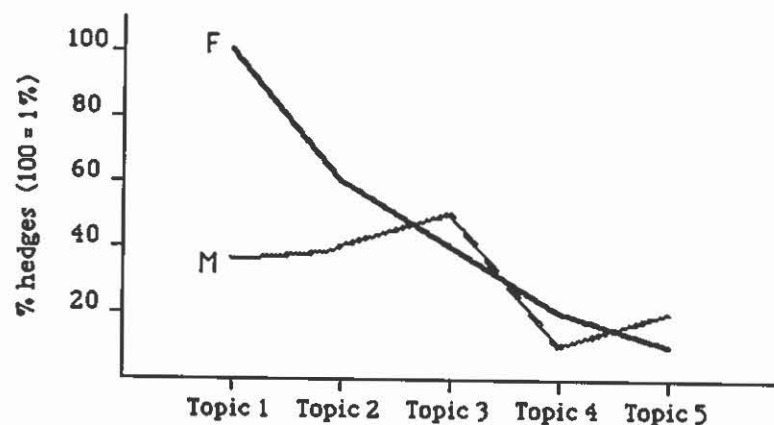


FIGURE 6: Percentage of words which are hedges

Men hedge most during the period identified as Topic 3, resulting in another reversal of the usual pattern. Thus men exhibit features of powerless language at a time when women are relatively more empowered in the discourse.

Survey results

Finally, the hypothesis that power relations underwent a reversal in the discussion is supported by the results of a survey we created and disseminated on MBU two months after the "men's literature" discussion had taken place. The survey included the following two questions:

- (1) In the course of the debate, two basic positions were expressed: a "pro" position, which essentially supported the offering of courses on men's literature, and a "con" position opposed to or concerned by the offering of courses of this type. If you had to choose, which side would you say was ultimately more successful in persuading the group as a whole to its point of view?

PARTICIPATION IN ELECTRONIC DISCOURSE IN A "FEMINIST" FIELD

- (2) How satisfied were you personally with the outcome of the debate?

Twenty-eight people responded to the survey (M=18; F=10) either privately or by posting their responses publicly.¹³ Their responses to question (1) are summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Survey results for question (1): Who won the "men's literature" debate?

	Pro	Con	Neither	Other
Female	10.0%	30.0%	40.0%	20.0%
Male	11.1%	50.0%	33.3%	5.6%
Both	10.7%	42.9%	35.7%	10.7%

While the greatest percentage (40%) of women responded that neither side had been more persuasive, the majority of men (50%) indicated that the "con" (i.e., female) position had prevailed. These responses are especially revealing in that the original question could be interpreted as biased towards a "pro" response: the person who suggested the "men's literature" course did, in fact, go on to teach it, and survey respondents were aware of this fact. Why did more men than women say that the "women's side" had won the debate? Clearly, they perceived the women to have been more powerful than the women perceived themselves to have been, or than the external circumstances indicated.

Not coincidentally, male survey respondents also indicated a lower level of satisfaction than females with the outcome of the debate (question 2). On a scale where 2 = very satisfied, 0 = indifferent, and -2 = very dissatisfied, the men's responses averaged -0.06 (indifferent to somewhat dissatisfied), while the women's averaged 0.6 (somewhat satisfied). Additional comments made by survey respondents on the overall tone of the debate provide further evidence of differing levels of satisfaction. Female respondents tended to comment that they found the discussion "interesting," "provocative," "gratifying," and "impressive," although several also expressed weariness at having to fight the "same old battles." The comments of the male respondents, in contrast, range from reporting themselves to have been "initially shocked" to describing the debate as a "no-win" discussion and characterizing it as "whining," "yelling and screaming," and (from the man who posted the original "men's literature" request) "a bad-tempered festival of condemnation and defense."

Finally, the survey asked respondents the question: "Do you consider yourself to be a feminist, and if so, how strongly?" 100% of respondents of both sexes indicated that they were either strong feminists or supporters of feminist principles.

CONCLUSION

We have presented data to show that despite considerable external evidence to the contrary (amount of participation, rate of response, real-world outcome of the debate), men perceived women as dominating the "men's literature" discussion. This perceptual reversal of dominance can be traced to a two-day period during

which women contributed more messages than men. Immediately following this period, men threatened to leave the list, began hedging more, and ultimately abandoned a male-introduced topic to talk about a female-introduced topic instead (although without responding directly to the women involved). Moreover, when surveyed later, men were more inclined to state that the women's side of the argument had "won" and to express dissatisfaction with the discussion overall.

The feminist overtones of the women's contributions, along with the fact that they were critical of a topic introduced and supported by men, no doubt contributed to the discomfort experienced by the men in the group. Yet the implied accusations that the women were "vituperative" and "unreasonable" are not supported by our analysis, nor indeed is such a characterization consistent with the women's supposedly greater rhetorical effectiveness in persuading others to their point of view, as male survey respondents claimed. In fact, we suggest that women on the list were neither vituperative nor especially persuasive—what won them the floor was their persistence in participating, and male reactions to that persistence.

What are the implications of these findings for electronic discourse more generally? It is significant that after their brief period of more-or-less equal participation, women on MBU retreated to a lower level of participation, such that their contributions to the discussion overall did not exceed 30%. Moreover, in discussions on MBU in the four months since, women's contributions have averaged slightly less than 20%, even on topics of broad general interest.¹⁴ The 20% figure is also consistent with earlier findings (Herring to appear) for women's participation on the Linguist list. If it is true that women, including successful, well-educated, academic women, are accorded less than equal speaking rights in mixed-sex public discourse, then it appears that the amount they are expected to speak, all other factors being equal, is between 20 and 30%.

The 20-30% figure is supported by evidence from a variety of public discourse types, both spoken and written. In an academic seminar, Spender (1979) found that 30% was the upper limit before men felt that women were contributing more than their share. In publishing, at least until very recently, only about 20% of works appearing in print were written by women; male publishers consider that to publish more women would be "risky" (Spender 1989). Finally, in a recent survey of American television commercials, students in a sociolinguistics course taught by the first author of this paper found that women were spokespersons in only 28% of the commercials aired. This last observation is particularly interesting, in that it reinforces the view that society at large recognizes as "normal" a less than equal amount of talk by women. In a society where such an expectation is conventionalized and even exploited for commercial ends, it is small wonder that the electronic medium does not—cannot—in and of itself make for equal communication between the sexes.

Nevertheless, increased feminist awareness may help. The fact that MBU women spoke up, persisted in speaking up even when ignored, and appealed successfully to other women in the group for support can be attributed to widespread feminist consciousness within the field of composition and rhetoric. Further, the political reality of feminism in the field constrained (according to self-report) the males in the group to hedge their objections and ultimately to concede the

floor—at least temporarily—to the women. Of course, these results did not come about without effort (as one woman later put it, "A small war was necessary on MBU for a bit of consciousness raising"), and the women's communicative efforts were met with resistance as soon as they appeared to be taking up more than their "share" of the discussion.

Women may never gain the right to equal participation, however, unless we assume that the right is ours already and act accordingly. Given the growing importance of computer-mediated communication in the current information age, electronic discussion groups might well be a good place to start.

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the Workshop on Theoretical Perspectives on Electronic Discourse, College Composition and Communication Conference, Cincinnati, Ohio, March 18, 1992. Our thanks go to John Burt for his helpful comments on that version.
2. Gender non-specific return addresses (such as those containing sender's last name only, or a more or less random sequence of letters and numbers) were apparently used in the communication observed by Graddol and Swann, which took place at the Open University in Great Britain. In the American-based lists reported on in this paper, however, the sex of participants is generally known because their first name is part of their return address or because they sign their messages or because their address is otherwise known within the community.
3. Messages are typically posted to an intermediary machine, or listserver, before being distributed to subscribers. Some lists have a moderator who exercises a degree of editorial control over the content (and less commonly, the order) of messages; generally, however, messages are distributed on a strict "first come, first served" basis.
4. In support of this point, at the recent College Composition and Communication Conference (CCCC) in Cincinnati, the number of sessions on "gender and feminist theory" ranked third out of 27 topics. The only two topics that had more sessions were devoted to practical teaching issues.
5. One man supported the feminist position throughout, and several others supported parts of it during the later portions of the discussion; overall, however, most men favored the idea of a men's literature course, and all participating women expressed concerns about such a course.
6. The subscription figures for MBU are 42% female and 58% male (out of a total of 178 subscribers), based on a count of names from which gender can reliably be determined.
7. The intervals between dates in Topics 1, 4, and 5 are fewer than the number of calendar days since we have included in Figure 1 only those days on which messages related to men's literature were contributed.
8. At the height of the reversal, on November 23, women contributed 66.6% of the day's messages. However, since the women's messages were shorter, men still contributed more words.
9. One man did in fact unsubscribe; the other two were persuaded to remain on the list.
10. The one exception is a contribution in which the writer presents her feminist views dogmatically, rather than cooperatively; this message accuses one of the male participants of "intellectualizing."
11. Responses were counted as only those messages which explicitly acknowledge an earlier posting. Excluded were messages pertaining to the topic under discussion but addressed to the group as a whole, as well as first postings on a new topic.
12. Hedges constitute 0.48% of women's words and 0.36% of the words contributed by men.
13. Of these, 18 (M=13; F=5) had participated in the original discussion.
14. For example, in a recent discussion of the usefulness of composition theory in teaching writing, contributions by women account for only 16.9% of the 142-message total.

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Sex differences in address terminology in the 1990s¹

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INTRODUCTION

Brown and Ford (1961) have pointed out that choice of address term is determined primarily by the parameters of intimacy and status. Kramer (1975) added another primary factor to this model, that of sex. Not only are some terms clearly sex-related, such as *sir*, *brother*, and *miss*, but also the use of certain types of address terms—endearment terms, insult terms, nicknames, etc.—varies in frequency depending on sex of speaker and addressee.

Freshman students in a course the author taught in fall 1991 were strongly of the opinion that differences between men's and women's speech patterns are disappearing. Nevertheless, a study of address terminology collected by these same students shows there are still dramatic differences in address patterns, according to sex of both addressor and addressee. At the same time, certain address patterns which used to be considered primarily male are found to be robust among young women at the present time.

Freshmen women in the course expressed the opinion that men and women now "speak the same," using all the same forms in address and other walks of life. If this claim made by the students is correct, it is certainly most likely to be correct in that very population—a group of young adults, born after the beginning of the women's liberation movement and with a generation of feminist thinking behind them, middle class, in college, and independent enough to be living away from home.

These same freshmen men and women were asked to do two assignments on address: one to report the terms they use when speaking to their relatives; and the other to record all address terms used to them during a period of several days.

In this paper, the combined results of the students' assignments will be tested against their claim that men and women speak the same. The paper will also consider how men and women are spoken *to*. There are many different semantic parameters by which an address term may vary; I will concentrate primarily on one of these, the semantics of *intimacy*.

KINSHIP ADDRESS PRACTICES

Parental address

Let us begin with a look at what students who speak English at home call their parents. It is well known that the terms *Mom* and *Dad* are now by far the most widely used address terms for parents in American English, with *Dad* replacing the

previously popular *Pop*, which has now gone almost entirely out of usage. In young childhood, the diminutivized forms *Mommy* and *Daddy* are the terms most often used. These generalizations hold true for both men and women, but in the self-reporting project, consistent quantitative differences show up between the sexes.

In an unpublished study that I did some years ago, students were asked to place a set of address terms for the mother and father on a scale of intimacy, as well as along other semantic parameters. *Mommy* was judged the most intimate, *Mama* next, *Mom* more neutral, and *Mother* the least intimate. The equivalents for the father, *Daddy*, *Papa*, *Dad*, and *Father*, fell along the scale in the same way.

Tables 1 and 2 show the breakdown on how freshman men and women report addressing their parents. (People speaking to their parents in a language other than English were left out of this sample.)

TABLE 1. *Terms of address for mother, as reported by UC Berkeley students*

	Women	Men	Total
# Records	97	90	187
# People	58	56	114
<i>Mom</i>	48 (83%)	50 (89%)	98 (86%)
<i>Mommy</i>	19 (33%)	9 (16%)	28 (25%)
<i>Mama</i>	5 (9%)	2 (4%)	7 (6%)
<i>Mother</i>	8 (14%)	2 (4%)	10 (9%)
Other			40 (35%)

TABLE 2. *Terms of address for father, as reported by UC Berkeley students*

	Women	Men	Total
# Records	93	75	168
# People	56	52	108
<i>Dad</i> *	44 (79%)	47 (90%)	91 (84%)
<i>Daddy</i> **	25 (45%)	6 (12%)	31 (29%)
<i>Papa</i>	3 (5%)	3 (6%)	6 (6%)
<i>Father</i>	3 (5%)	1 (2%)	4 (4%)
Other			34 (31%)

* plus one other term based on *Dad*: *old Dad*

** plus three other terms based on *Daddy*: *Daddy-o*, *Daddy darling dearest*, and *old Daddy*

These results are shown in graph form in Figures 1 and 2. The term *Mom* is used by 82% of the women and 89% of the men. 33% of the women report calling their mothers *Mommy*, whereas only 16% of the men report this. Thus it would seem that women tend more toward the intimate end of the address scale, except for one result that occurs in this and all other samples I have taken of students: a larger minority of women report using the most formal term *Mother* (14% as opposed to 4% of the men).

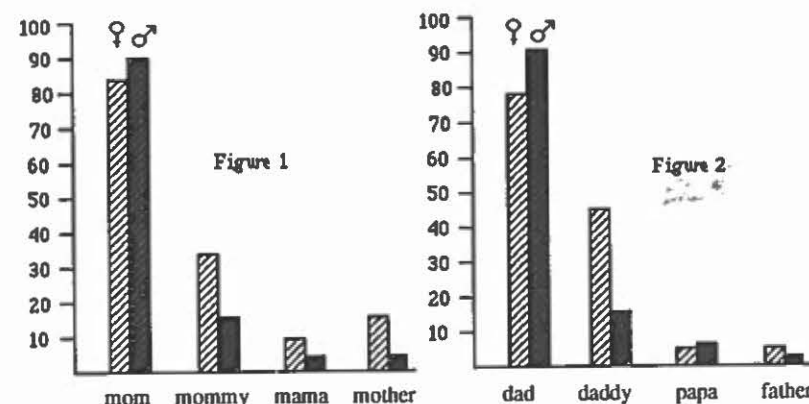


FIGURE 1: Terms of address for mother FIGURE 2: Terms of address for father

There is a greater discrepancy between men and women in their reported address terms for their fathers (Figure 2). 90% of the men, as opposed to 78% of the women, report using the neutral term *Dad*, whereas fully 45% of the women but only 12% of the men report using the intimate term *Daddy*. The other two terms are very rarely used by either sex.

Note that the cross-sex parent receives more of the diminutive form (*Mommy/Daddy*) than the same-sex parent. This is true whether the speaker is male or female, but it is considerably more pronounced for the female speakers, who clearly use the most formal term (*Mother*) more than men do, and at the same time use *Daddy* almost four times as much as men do.

Address terms for aunts and uncles

The relationship between parent and child is unique in degree of involvement, and the tendency for some women to address their mothers more formally than their fathers, and more formally than men do, is unique to that particular relational dyad. For all other relationships, whether kin or non-kin, the following generalizations hold: (1) women tend to use more intimate address terms than men, and (2) women are addressed (by both sexes) more intimately than men are.

We can illustrate this for other kin relationships by observing address patterns for aunts and uncles. The use of the diminutive form—in particular, use of diminutive suffix *-y*—is shown in Table 3. This chart includes the diminutive on a name as well as the diminutive form of the kin term (which is only possible for *Aunt*). First note that for both aunt and uncle, women use diminutives a great deal more than men do. On the other hand, since it is impossible to say **Uncley* one could suggest that the greater number of diminutives for aunts simply comes about because of this linguistic restriction. Therefore, I also looked at the diminutives occurring on the first name, leaving out the diminutives occurring on the kin term. As can be seen, men report almost *no* diminutives on the first name, whereas

women use first-name diminutives for their aunts and uncles to a large degree. Out of 77 terms women reported for aunts, 42% have diminutives on the first name, the kin term, or both. This figure drops to 21% if only the diminutive on the first name is considered. For their uncles (71 terms), women use 20% diminutives on the first name. Men use the diminutive suffix far less often: their 25% usage of diminutives to aunts (out of 48 terms reported) drops to 2% if only the diminutive on the first name is considered; and uncles receive only 4% of address terms with the diminutive, out of 54 terms reported.

TABLE 3. *Use of diminutive address terms for aunt and uncle, as reported by UC Berkeley students*

	From women			From men			Total		
	Total terms	All dimin.	Dimin. on FN*	Total terms	All dimin.	Dimin. on FN*	Total terms	All dimin.	Dimin. on FN*
Aunt	77	32 (42%)	16 (21%)	48	12 (25%)	1 (2%)	129	44	17
Uncle	71	13 (20%)	13 (20%)	54	2 (4%)	2 (4%)	126	16	16

* FN = First name



FIGURE 3: Reported use of diminutive address terms for aunt and uncle
(*FN = first name)

Address terms for siblings

Going on to sibling relationships, I will introduce some other kinds of address terms: *first name*, *short form* (nondiminutivized) of first name, *mutated form* of the first name (such as Zuzu for Susan), *nickname* (which I am defining for these purposes as a term not based on the name, such as *butch* or *choo-choo*); *endearments* (*honey*, *babe*, etc.) and *insults* (*slob*, *jerk*, *ugly*, etc.). I should mention that I use the term *insult* here to refer to terms that might be defined as

insulting in dictionaries; but functionally, they may not be insults at all, but signs of intimacy.

Like the parental terms, each type of address term for siblings has a place on the distance-intimacy scale. I am not ready to place all these term types on such a scale with respect to each other, but we can at least say that first name, while already an intimate form, is nevertheless the least intimate. Short forms are also less intimate than the other forms of address. Figures 4 and 5 show that men tend to address their siblings with the less intimate terms more than women do. Women clearly give more diminutives, endearments, and insults to their siblings than men do. Tables 4 and 5 show the numbers, and Figures 4 and 5 put these in graph form.

The greater usage of insults from and to women might at first seem surprising, but as will become clear, they are in fact a signal of intimacy. They certainly fit the same pattern numerically as the endearment terms and diminutive forms. Similarly, the mutated forms of first names (usually joking forms, such as *Aims-babe* from Amy) also pattern with the endearments and diminutives. The one exception is that men give diminutive forms to their sisters almost as much as women do, but don't give many diminutives to brothers. On the other hand, women give just as many diminutives to their brothers as to their sisters.

To summarize the findings on kinship, there is a tendency for women to be addressed by their kin more intimately than men are, and also for women to use more intimate address terms than men do.

TABLE 4. *Terms of address for sisters, as reported by UC Berkeley students*

	From women (85)	From men (66)	Total (151)
First name	27 (32%)	29 (44%)	56 (37%)
Short form	10 (12%)	13 (20%)	23 (15%)
Mutated form	13 (15%)	5 (6%)	18 (12%)
Nickname	6 (7%)	7 (11%)	13 (9%)
Insult	11 (13%)	2 (3%)	13 (9%)
Diminutive	13 (15%)	9 (14%)	22 (15%)
Endearment	6 (7%)	0	6 (4%)

TABLE 5. *Terms of address for brothers, as reported by UC Berkeley students*

	From women (92)	From men (93)	Total (185)
First name	27 (29%)	33 (35%)	60 (32%)
Short form	20 (22%)	27 (29%)	47 (25%)
Mutated form	6 (6%)	10 (11%)	16 (9%)
Nickname	11 (12%)	10 (11%)	21 (11%)
Insult	10 (11%)	7 (3%)	17 (9%)
Diminutive	14 (15%)	8 (14%)	22 (12%)
Endearments	2 (2%)	0	2 (1%)

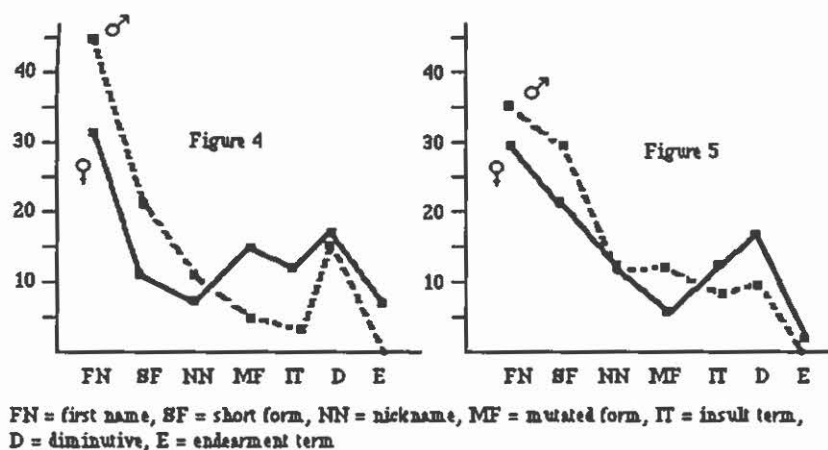


FIGURE 4: Reported address terms for sisters

FIGURE 5: Reported address terms for brothers

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ADDRESS TERMS RECEIVED

In another assignment, students were asked to write down all address terms they received during several days in a one-week period. These terms were then categorized in various ways. Five of the categories are shown in Figures 6 through 10. Between peers, men and women, while still showing quantitative differences from each other, also show the most similarity. Figure 7 shows that men tend to use more of the last-name form of address than women (again, this is a term which is less intimate than others); and the diminutive suffix is used most when a woman participates in the speech act, and especially when both participants are women. Endearment terms are the most sex-linked among peers, with cross-sex interactions increasing endearment-term usage, and men using endearment terms to women most of all, while in the man-to-man interaction, endearment terms are completely forbidden.

Cross-sex insulting, shown in Figure 10, is somewhat reduced for women talking to men and utilizes considerably weaker terms. The most widely reported insult by men talking to women is *stupid* (despite the large numbers of stronger slang reference terms men have for women, as discussed by Sutton, this volume), and for women talking to men the insult term of greatest usage is *dork*.

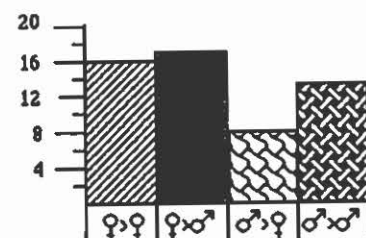


FIGURE 6: first name (plain)



FIGURE 7: last name (plain, mutated, etc.)



FIGURE 8: diminutive suffixes

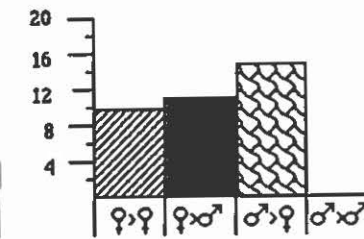


FIGURE 9: endearment terms

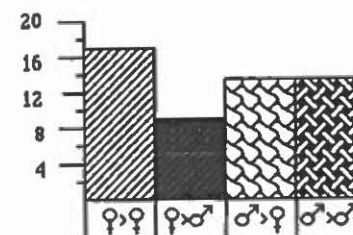


FIGURE 10: insult terms

♀♀	dyads = 220
♀♂	dyads = 114
♂♀	dyads = 143
♂♂	dyads = 302

Cross-sex usage of male-gender terms

What appears to be happening among peers is that many address practices that were characteristic of man-to-man interactions in the past are now also being used by women and to women. The use of friendly insults shows the change most dramatically, but it can also be seen in other categories. There are many terms that are inherently gendered in nature: *girl*, *man*, etc. The male-gendered terms are reported as addressed to women as well, as shown in Table 6.

Only the male terms can be used for the other sex. Female terms stay entirely linked to women. *Compadre* is especially interesting in that this term is a loan from Spanish and is now used for both sexes, while the female counterpart *comadre* is not used in English.

This then is one reason that freshman women believe that men and women "speak the same." There is definitely a trend toward the usage by both sexes of gendered address terms that used to be limited to male-to-male interactions.

TABLE 6. *Use of male-gendered terms to men and women*

	To men	To women	Total
<i>dude</i>	54	13	41
<i>man</i>	16	3	19
<i>bro, brah</i>	5	3	8
<i>bud</i>	6	1	7
<i>compadre</i>	1	2	3

Address practices by opportuning strangers

In a final interactional situation, the greatest difference between the sexes comes from a group of addressors labelled as *opportuning strangers*—that is, strangers approaching the addressee for some purpose: to ask for money, to initiate conversation, etc. From this set of people, out of a total of 253 terms, there were 29 endearment terms used from men to women (*babe, baby, cutie, darling, doll, honey, sweetheart, sweetie*), and 22 references to sexuality or physical beauty (*beautiful, bonita, gorgeous, hot stuff, pretty one, lovely, lovely eyes, pretty lady, sexy, and yummies*). There were no such terms coming from women, or from man to man. Insult terms from strangers were not common, and when they did occur they were interpreted by the students as true insults. It is significant that the only two reported instances of *bitch* from a man to a woman were between strangers.

CONCLUSION

College freshmen, then, show both interesting differences and interesting similarities between the sexes in the address terms they use and receive. Women, more than men, tend to use terms that express intimacy, and nowadays that even includes the use of friendly insult terms among people of the same generation, including both kin and non-kin. Young women today are also using address terms that used to be limited to male usage. Men also are using these address terms (insult terms and male-gendered categories) to women. What is not changing is male-to-male interaction; in particular, terms that have been used primarily toward women are not being adopted by men at all. Endearment terms, for example, are still completely missing in male-to-male interaction as they have always been, as are gendered categories expanded from female address. Another older pattern that is still visible in address is that address practices that could be interpreted as aggressive or invasive are still much more obvious in male-to-female interaction than in female-to-male interaction. The reduced use of friendly insults by women talking to men is one instance of this. And on the other side of the coin, strangers, especially, still display the use of verbal aggression to women.

While women are adopting male address term usage, they are not rejecting the female interactional patterns that display intimacy, and are only co-opting male forms and practices in ways that are consistent with this interactional style.

NOTE

1. This paper results from the analysis of the work of freshman students in a lecture class last semester, and of a set of graduate students working with me in a seminar. The graduate students were Collin Baker, Jim Long, Maki Nakashima, Hassim Salih, Teo Kok Seong, Laurel Sutton, Tim Radzykewycz, Sarah Taub, and Sondra Reinman. I want to thank Sarah Taub, especially, for her editing of the database I used for this paper.

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**"Talking it out" or talking it in:
An ethnography of power and language
in psychotherapeutic practice**

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Domination can exist only with the consent of the dominated, at least to some extent. But for those who have not learned to consent, who haven't learned, for instance, what can and cannot be said, where, how, when, and to whom, methods in the history of social control have involved coercive structures external to the "problem" individual that are traditionally associated with penal or "corrective" institutions. In the contemporary Western democratic context, the efficacy of "treatment" and "healing" involves medical authority and clinical expertise in a more sophisticated approach to social control: one in which the regulation of population is affected not so much by external structures but by the individual internalization of structures of control or hegemonic control.¹ Given the notion of the cultural as the product of cooperation and collective human praxis, how is it that a particular "reality" becomes fixed in the heads of those who do not stand to benefit from it (Willis 1977)? In sociolinguistic studies the empirical examination of coercion and consent in face-to-face interaction contributes a compelling approach to the development of social theory in addressing problems of consciousness, culture, and power (Woolard 1985). Such an approach to social interaction in group therapy in a residential institution offers insight into the role of institutional efforts to control contexts of "informal" interaction in the construction of hegemonic authority. Following recent theoretical directions in sociolinguistics (Gal 1989) in establishing the connection between the larger cultural context and socially situated, face-to-face interaction in the institution, the first part of this paper briefly outlines aspects of the interrelationship between ideological orientation and political-economic influences within which therapeutic practice and theory are located. From this perspective the covert role of power in guiding interactive behavior in the institution is brought more clearly into focus. After some illustrations of how coercive and overt mechanisms of power are indeed an integral aspect of the therapeutic process in the institution, the paper focuses on the way in which coercive power works to structure the interactive conditions conducive to the establishment of symbolic authority and hegemonic control through language and communication. To the extent that communicative context can be constructed and maintained by overt, direct, and coercive forms of control, contextual constraint on communicative choice is an indirect and therefore less readily perceived form of control that directs communicative outcome and thus the unfolding of politically significant events. Because power embedded in the structures of language often escapes the conscious awareness of participants, the potential to challenge it is misdirected (Bloch 1975). It is through the exercise of power in language that cultural reproduction and

AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF POWER AND LANGUAGE IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

resistance take place in therapeutic interaction where overt and implicit forms of power are at work in competing constructions of "legitimate" and "illegitimate" authority.²

Approaches to the human psyche and emotions have little to do with the physical domains of science, yet clinical ideology and discourse are authoritative by mere association with the institutions of science and medicine.³ As a product of this authority, clinical discourse and common linguistic ideology veil the role of power in "healing through talk" as an apparatus of social control and distribution of social power. While elaborate and sophisticated definitions of psychotherapeutic theory and practice may be found by consulting the codified authority on clinical practice, an ethnomethodological approach (Garfinkel 1967) to common and informal professional knowledge of therapy provides a useful vantage point in the examination of the role of authority in cultural knowledge and practice. State-regulated, long-term residential programs designed to treat "disturbed" or "problem" adolescents, for instance, have high financial incentives to meet state-designated criteria for what is considered the "therapeutic treatment model" by providing "therapeutic structure" and regular group and individual therapy sessions, yet an explicit definition of *therapy* or *therapeutic* is absent from program and social-services literature. To question therapy and therapeutic practice, what therapy is, what it does, is received by clinical professionals and lay people alike as a question of the obvious, and yet the logic and rational basis of the talking cure remain obscure. Consider the common metaphors associated with therapeutic ideology and practice, such as, *to let it out* or *talk it out*. In talking it out, words become invested with nearly magical properties. Problems are metamorphosed into words which are then somehow expunged, purged, or exorcized from the self through a process of articulation. It is "good," according to the logic, to "talk it out" between friends, but "true" therapy involves a professional, who from a more "objective" position can "bring it out of you" or help "bring you back to reality."

Indeed, as Thomas Scheff has suggested, interaction in psychotherapy can be viewed as the interactive negotiation of reality (Scheff 1968). In "bringing one back to reality," a basic "objective" premise in therapy is that "reality" consists of fixed immutable conditions or "facts" to which individuals must adapt. Following theoretical developments in the sociology of knowledge, reality may be viewed not as fixed and immutable fact, as it is often presented in the discourse of authority, but as socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann 1967). In this view, competing interests and the role of power in the therapeutic negotiation of reality become salient issues: Who has the power to construct and define reality, and to whose benefit? Here power and domination involved in the social construction of reality pose as an act of benevolence, reflected in the views held by many that the objective of therapy is to "help" individuals to "fit in." The identification and treatment of problems located in the individual and the subsequent failure to consider the larger social context of conditions to which the individual must "fit" suggest that differences between concepts of healing and social control in Western institutions are perhaps not easily distinguished. Given that the individual must adapt to fit the needs of inflexible social institutions and not vice versa, the suggestion of symmetry between individual and society implied by the popular conception of the

therapist as a mediator of this relationship is misleading. Common notions of communication further obscure the power of the therapist by attributing the role of passivity to the therapist since the patient in therapy often assumes the active, talking role. In fact the therapist, at least in theory, quite actively structures context and exercises control over the space of talk, communicative outcome, and the conclusions patients reach "on their own." The exercise of social power becomes more explicit when the absolutes of value-free objectivity upon which the legitimacy of cultural authority is based are themselves recognized to be the values of a particular cultural orientation. From this perspective the construction of objectivity as the self-professed and exclusive capability of professional and clinical expertise can be viewed as advocacy in the promotion of dominant interests (Furner 1975). The cultural authority of clinical discourse and practice produces and reproduces reality through language which constructs, upholds, and at the same time veils the structures of domination and authority of the clinical institution specifically and, more generally, the larger political-economic system of which clinical discourse is part. It is the reality constructed by the culture of the dominant group in Western society that distinguishes the sanctioned practices of teaching and socialization from cult indoctrination, of therapeutic treatment from ritual brainwashing. From this perspective it is the dominant construction of reality, both ideological and political, that the authoritative practice of psychotherapy "legitimately" seeks to instill.

In the institution which served as a basis of this study, therapy explicitly functions as a means of behavioral management. Given the institutional goals of "producing independently-functioning and productive adult members of the community" (as stated on a program brochure), therapy and the therapeutic structure are intended to prepare adolescent women with the skills of independent living and productive participation in the work force of the "real world." On a more implicit level, therapeutic treatment is prescribed for those who do not subscribe to "reality" or the dominant system of values in which work, material acquisition, and productivity are an integral part of mainstream Western individual identity. For many, the alternative means of survival offered by the welfare system is sufficient reason not to cooperate with the exploitative and alienating conditions of work.⁴ In the treatment of adolescents removed from marginalized, predominantly Hispanic neighborhood communities of east San Jose, California, therapy involves an effort to address the resistance of young women to participating productively in the work force and to "correct reproductive problems" and subsequent patterns of dependency on the state welfare system. In addressing resistance, therefore, therapeutic treatment must do more than prepare young women with vocational skills for the work force; it must first condition them to internalize and accept the values of production and consumption. It is a strong tenet in clinical practice that internal change and ideological reorientation cannot be motivated by coercive measures alone, for while bodies can be controlled and regulated by external structures of control, minds cannot. In other words, to capture the words that reverberate throughout the therapeutic milieu, "you have to want to change." In "bringing one to reality," therapeutic practice attempts to bring residents to "buy into the system," so to speak, and to subscribe to the values of the producer- and consumer-oriented culture in place of competing values of reproductivity and

familial responsibility associated with female self-image and identity in traditional Hispanic culture.

Yet just as the decisions made by professional authority to remove young women from previous living arrangements are not objective but subjective determinations made on the basis of culturally informed values⁵ (such as in "factual" distinctions between *healthy* and *unhealthy*, *fantasy* and *reality*, *fit* and *unfit*), so too are decisions regarding the "appropriate" role of these women in society. Indeed, sharp disparities commonly exist between the values of the staff and those of the population targeted for treatment, which account for a principal underlying tension in group therapy. In questioning the reasons for resistance, or what "reality" has to offer women in treatment, the exercise of power and domination is explicit: The "real world" for which residents are prepared in the program is one in which they must come to terms with a system of inequality and the acceptance of one's position within it. Hard work and "luck" create the "privilege" of "opportunity," i.e., menial work in which the peak hours of a life are sacrificed for the agenda and profit of an often unknown and faceless other. At the expense of neglecting the development of other human potentials, the primary emphasis on the instrumentalization of women as products for the service, retail, and manufacturing sectors of the work force is justified due to the "limited time to get them on their feet," as a program director once commented. Given Goffman's observations in his study of asylums (Goffman 1961), however, the limitations of treatment are more convincingly attributed to the general conception commonly held by clinical and social workers that the individuals categorized as residents have the potential to offer society little more than the functions for which they are trained. Residents are discouraged from developing other "inappropriate" interests, as these often contribute to "unrealistic" or "fantasful" goals, a determination based in part on "objective" professional assessments of scores on achievement, aptitude, and IQ tests. Common metaphors employed by staff further reflect a mechanistic view of the residents: In appeals for corporate funding and in the therapeutic milieu alike they are referred to as *investments*, *insurance*, and as *products* that are "damaged," in need of "tune ups" or "attitude adjustments" in order to "get into gear." Furthermore, the framing of social conditions and of one's position within them as "natural" constitutes a theme repeated throughout all contexts of therapeutic interaction. Although the program "structure" is an "artificial" construction that proposes to emulate the social conditions of "the real world out there," a point generally overlooked is that the social world is not natural, in the conventional sense of the term, but cultural and thus the product of human agency. The discourse of the natural is not specific to the therapeutic setting but is reproduced in it nonetheless, implying that social structures have a certain inevitability and fixed nature, a belief upon which the status quo depends for its sustenance. Such an orientation teaches one to accept rather than question and to conform rather than resist conditions which there is no choice but to accept in living for the needs of an amorphous and impersonal system. As Goffman suggests, the reflection of self and social identity in the social environment, in this case particularly in view of the effects of long-term exposure and isolation from other social networks, is profoundly influential in the making of self-image and the acceptance of one's place

within a designated social hierarchy (Goffman 1967). The reasons for resistance to the alienating conditions of "reality," on the other hand, are evident.

The question remains as to how individuals become motivated to choose the sparse rewards of one system over another. The number of institutionalized persons indicates that, despite the efficacy of control through symbolic power, symbolic power alone is not entirely successful, in which case coercive power in the presentation of "no choice" is a next-best method of persuasion. It is the lack of subscription to cultural authority that distinguishes voluntary from involuntary "clients," for whom therapeutic treatment is a mandatory prescription.⁶ "Problem individuals" are targeted for treatment by social technicians and institutions precisely because, unlike the voluntary clients, they do not subscribe to the dominant system of values, including those of professional therapeutic expertise. Hence the common belief that therapeutic clientele largely represents the white middle class due to greater financial resources is questionable. While therapeutic clientele mainly comprises the white middle class it is not surprising that the institutionalized largely represent cultural and economic "minorities." It is the "problem with authority," as it is commonly diagnosed by therapeutic authority, for which individuals with problems, or rather "problem individuals," are treated.

Once in "the system," attendance and success in therapy are contingent upon personal freedoms and choices often taken for granted by citizens who are in compliance with mainstream values. These often include the "privilege" of parenting one's children, for instance, or of reunifying with family members. Backed by legal jurisdiction, the regulation of the rights and privileges of minors is more extreme. Noncompliance or refusal to cooperate with authority or to "make progress" in therapy may result in penal consequences, ordinarily involving placement in juvenile hall or in treatment institutions with "tighter structure" in which personal freedom is more regulated and restricted. Social workers relocate individuals geographically and prevent them from interacting in groups that subvert mainstream values. Residents are often denied visitations with family or the members of the community of east-side San Jose, for instance, because this interferes with "therapeutic progress." Isolation as well as the regulation of group membership is a significant factor in the effort to reconstruct individual identity and self-image in the therapy group, where positive and negative sanctions for behavior often come to mean more to the individual (Goffman 1967).

Despite the stated format of "free association" in which "we come together as equals to share informally," interaction in group therapy is highly structured by enforced rules of communicative cooperation.⁷ Physical presence in therapy, for instance, is required and coercively enforced. In the ritual opening of each therapy group, rules to ensure some degree of communicative cooperation are explicitly stated. These include no interrupting, no "talking out of turn," no "put downs," no swearing or "inappropriate language," no "side talk," and "no mothering" (rephrasing of another's words). A topic for discussion is proposed and the discussion must stay on topic. The circular arrangement of chairs must be maintained, and one is to remain seated. The circle does more than facilitate interaction; it makes silent resistance uncomfortable and difficult to sustain when there is little left to do but stare at other group members. Repeated violation of

these rules results in "termination," i.e., the termination of the residential contract. In an effort to downplay the coercive role of authority, the structural constraints on behavior are ideologically removed from the human agency that creates and enforces them, in which the rules and penal consequences for their violation are naturalized as the fixed conditions of reality.

The highly structured format for interaction in group therapy is in keeping with the stated objective of providing residents with communication skills needed in the workplace. It is implicitly known here by the "properly socialized" that one cannot hope to obtain a job in an interview, for instance, by suddenly interrupting to demand why the interviewer is "so nosy," as often occurs in a parallel situation with the therapists. Group therapy is designed to be an intensive apprenticeship situation in which social and communicative competences can be acquired in a context constructed to sustain prolonged face-to-face interaction and to disregard breakdowns in communication. "We are giving them a language," is one therapist's description of a principal therapeutic objective. The "appropriate" language to be acquired, in other words, is one which involves rules of participation and communicative cooperation according to the contextual constructions of authority. Notions of context and of socially situated understandings involved in communicative cooperation (see Gumperz 1982, 1992) offer important insights into the dynamic of interaction in group therapy. Communicative outcome and the negotiated construction of reality in therapy, as in any face-to-face interaction, are directly influenced by differential access to control of the space of talk accorded to participants, which is dependent upon position within a contextually defined hierarchy. Characterized by asymmetrical relationships of power and unequal access to control of the space of talk, the stated rules of interaction in therapy, for instance, apply only to residents. Therapists retain the privileges of questioning and interrupting, while clients respond in limited ways deemed appropriate according to context. Extended to the broader social context, the learned behavior of consent and powerlessness in socially situated understandings of context upon which cooperation depends serves to locate and perpetuate individual status within larger political-economic structures. Cooperation in the authoritative context of therapy therefore simultaneously prepares, assigns, and conditions residents to consent to a designated position within the social hierarchy of therapy specifically and the broader political-economic context more generally. What therapeutic treatment seeks to instill in those who haven't been "properly socialized" is a particular political organization of talk, or in broader terms, Goffman's rules of deference and demeanor (Goffman 1967), or the conflict avoidance of *harmony ideology* (Nader 1990), involving the submission upon which the established structures of power and domination depend in the democratic context.

The political organization of talk and the power to define context, and thus the constraints of communicative choice, form a critical aspect of the communicative and often political outcome of events. In the ideological sense of language in the Whorfian tradition, categorical propositions in language are integral to the social construction of reality. When "coming together to talk about our feelings" in group therapy, for instance, therapists state quite often that feelings belong to the

individual and that "no one can tell you whether what you are feeling is right or wrong." Yet feelings do not exist independently; they are the reactive counterpart of culturally informed interpretations of experience. While feelings are not to be evaluated and held up to culturally informed criteria of "right" and "wrong," the narratives of experience, organized by the cultural framework of interpretation which gives rise to feelings, can be evaluated and reinterpreted in the light of dominant cultural standards. Narratives of experience are reconstructed, rephrased, and thus reformulated as a sensible co-production of "reality." Moreover, the proposed topic of a therapy session often focuses on a directed, collaborative effort to produce "correct" definitions and meanings of words, such as the definitions of *motherhood*, *love*, or *desire*. As words to describe feelings and experience are defined, reassigned, and articulated according to the rules and standards of "appropriate" language, feelings and interpretations associated with perceptions of experience are structured according to the "appropriate" reality, and individual and cultural symbols of interpretation are merged through the symbols of a common language. The dichotomy between feelings (the authoritative domain of the individual) and the words to describe feelings (the authoritative domain of the therapist) is an implicit but instrumental construction in the effort to restructure the subjective experience in the individual relationship to external circumstances. From a perspective in which language and power are explored not as two distinct abstractions but as the counterparts of a dialectic relationship, the conceptual lines between similar dichotomies in categorical propositions of feelings/experience and culture/individual appear to be not so much rationally based as they are instrumental. The structures of domination, cultural authority, or reality in therapeutic treatment, therefore, as in other forms of discourse, are embedded and upheld in the structures of the institutionally defined "appropriate" language, both ideologically, as categorical propositions are codified in the lexicon, and politically in the sequential organization of talk.

In the teaching of a "correct" language in group discussion, it is common in the course of client narratives for therapeutic authority to substitute one word for another, one phrase for another, one interpretation for another. A repeated case involves the imposition of the "correct" use of *I* in place of the second-person plural pronoun *you*, which is "incorrect" in the way it is commonly used by residents. For example:

- Norma: You know how that is when you just want to have a baby, just something that is *yours* and belongs to you ...
 Therapist: No, Norma, *we* don't know what it is like. Please tell us, but don't say "you"; it is your experience, not ours, so you need to say "I" instead of "you." That is how *I* feel when *I* see a baby.
 Norma: OK. I.
 Therapist: So how does it feel to say "I"?

Of course it feels very different to say *I* instead of *you*. Client response to the correction is often an apathetic *I don't know* with a shoulder shrug, eyes cast to the floor. Following the "correction," few are the occasions in which individuals pick up the narrative line with its initial fervor. This is because there is a significant

distinction in symbolic meaning and intention between the use of *I* and *you* in this context. While the use of *you* constructs a symbolic alliance with other members of the group on the basis of an assumption of shared experience, the use of *I* breaks it down. The symbolic isolation of individual experience makes it easier to identify a problem located in the individual, in this case the desire to have children, which can then become the focus of therapeutic effort. In establishing different relationships to the group, the two words construct alternate social realities; one supports while the other subverts the agenda of authority.

If the use of *you* is simply "incorrect," there is no suggested alternative in the proposed correct standards of discourse in therapy for the originally intended meaning. Perhaps the apathetic response, rather than one of direct resistance, is characteristic because of the elusive and implicit nature of the assumption of shared experience entailed in the use of *you*. To challenge the correction directly is difficult because of the implicit differences in meaning between two words. The necessary differentiation between properties of meaning and intention in defense of word choice is particularly difficult when general ideology conceives of language as a referential system of word-object correspondence. Denial of the social and symbolic dimensions of language renders the tools needed to challenge implicit constructions of meaning located intangibly beyond the limits of conscious awareness, or at least of expression. Secondly, the use of *you* is an unsubstantiated assumption or claim of common experience. If the symbolic social dimensions of language were a part of conscious awareness, the logistical, let alone the political, complications involved in substantiating a claim of common experience, of rendering explicit the implicit, are formidable. Yet language is based upon assumptions of common meaning and experience. None of us in our subjective worlds of perception experience any one thing alike, and yet on the other hand, the system of communication is built more or less on an assumption that we do. To call the assumptions implicit in language into question is an act of power and dominance in which authority deconstructs, delegitimizes, defines the boundaries, and allocates rights, privileges, and access to linguistic power. The therapist, for instance, retains the right to use *we*, involving an assumption of the same sort, a claim not just of experience in common between individuals, but often one that additionally involves an implicit assumption of common agreement. If the same rules were to apply, for whom does the therapist speak? This case clearly presents not a question of grammatical correctness but of meanings and assumptions being made, in which consent to authority allows authorities to impose one culturally recognized and legitimated system of meanings, interpretations, and social reality over another.

Given the view that social reality is the product of social interaction and negotiation, however, certain theoretical problems are presented when therapy is referred to as a process of instillation, inculturation, and socialization, involving the transmission of traditional cultural content. Appropriate to their grammatical category, the transitive verbs (*instill*, *inculcate*, *socialize*) by implication reflect a world view which maintains that the acquisition of cultural forms is not interactive but is based upon a one-way relationship in which the "object" is passive recipient of the action of the subject. Furthermore, socialization theories are inherently

monophonic and exemplified by professional accountability in the treatment of the "culturally deficient," for just as language that does not adhere to the standard is "incorrect" and therefore "nonlanguage," alternatives to the dominant version of reality are simply nonreality. In contrast to this view, theory which holds actors as active agents in the construction of power and reality challenges traditional notions of socialization and relatively recent theories of cultural reproduction. Empirical studies suggest that linguistic and paralinguistic behavior in adherence to alternate and oppositional vernacular attests to overt and conscious systems of resistance (e.g., Woolard 1985). Despite the constant correction in the example illustrated previously, for instance, among other expressions and grammatical "mistakes," there is a tendency to persist in the "incorrect" use of *you* in adherence to an "incorrect" vernacular. While this can be seen as an "innocent mistake," it is unconvincing to attribute it to incompetence due to the restriction of access to standard or "appropriate" linguistic behavior, particularly in view of the fact that the acquisition of the standard is an objective of the therapy group. Indeed, while some residents are occasionally new enough to the group to be lacking standard linguistic competence, most of them are intimately familiar with the "system" and its language. Furthermore, residents demonstrate an acute awareness of the symbolic differentiation between linguistic codes when those who adhere to the standard become the focus of peer ridicule. Repeated "mistakes" can more compellingly be explained in terms not of incompetence but of strategy: a symbolic disassociation from the values and symbols of authority in favor of individual alignment with the symbols and meanings of "illegitimate" language, through which an alternate symbolic identity and affiliation are not merely expressed but sustained.

The interactive approach to power presents a second difficulty concerning the conceptual distinction between representations of resistance and authority, a conceptualization that inherently derives from and reproduces the value system of authority. It is sufficient for the purposes of the present paper to make a relatively simplistic distinction in which authority is differentiated from resistance by "legitimate" access to resources of coercive power in the process of its construction and legitimation. This schema is problematic, however, for it depends on a definition of authority that excludes the symbolic dimension of authority: sustained by coercive power alone, authority ceases to be authority in the conventional sense of the term. Here Woolard's conceptual set of *status and solidarity* is useful in differentiating the symbolic authority of *status* from the coercive domination of *power* (Woolard 1985). Such a distinction between coercive power and symbolic authority is succinctly captured in the words of a resident who remarked once, "I may do as you say, but I don't have to respect you." Restricted from access to resources of coercive power, strategies of resistance do not generally challenge coercive power since this offers little to be gained; rather it is the symbolic power of authority that is challenged and often made illegitimate through indirect means. Strategies of resistance, as well as those of authority in seeking to diminish the cause for resistance, as mentioned earlier, generally avoid overt strategies of power and control. This presents a principal constraint and underlying tension characterized by the delicate and careful manipulation of surface meanings and appearances in group therapy. Resistance, like authority, relies upon similar

indirect strategies: linguistic and paralinguistic mechanisms embedded within the structures of language and communication are difficult to identify in explicit terms and are therefore difficult for therapeutic authority to subject to disciplinary measures or "call on."⁸ Here resistance relies upon linguistic resources to make explicit the coercive mechanisms underlying the group dynamic that authority strives to downplay. When coercive mechanisms of control are made explicit, existing hegemonic power and the symbolic legitimacy of authority are seriously undermined. In so doing, resistance legitimates its own symbolic authority. This raises a central question concerning the criteria of authority in the examination of competing constructions of "legitimate" and "illegitimate" authority.

The rules of conversation, for example, become the focus of conversation when on occasion the hierarchical organization of power in talk is overtly challenged by residents demanding to know, for instance, "Why you (the therapist) get to interrupt and I don't?" The question is perceived as a challenge to authority, yet as it is not in violation of the explicit rules of cooperation, it cannot be called on. To allow residents to apply the rules of cooperation symmetrically to all participants, however, involves the surrender of authority and undermines the objectives of therapy. Choices in the form of an answer to the question posed are limited. The common evasive strategy of an answer in the form of another question only temporarily evades the defeat of exposing coercive power: "Because I am a therapist, and if you don't do as I say ...". More commonly, however, authority is challenged and subverted in ways that are difficult to call on or confront due to the implicit nature of resistance and opposition. A common form of resistance involves mimicking the language or code used by the therapist in a way that accentuates the "otherness," symbolically associated with the relative formality, "nosiness," or "so-white" aspects of the therapist's conduct. If carefully executed, such behavior is not called on since it is somewhat difficult for therapists to discern the difference between a sincere cooperative effort and one of resistance. While the therapist often gleanes the general impression of resistance and subversion, because it is difficult to identify explicitly what constitutes the nature of the violations, resorting to coercive power appears to be an irrational defeat in this verbal game of cunning. Because the therapist does not have access to the shared background knowledge and linguistic conventions that the residents draw upon to engage in a cooperative effort in these instances, she or he will often appear blundering, unaware, or naive, a situation that further undermines symbolic authority.

The implicit battle in which power alliances compete to construct symbolic authority is evidenced in constructions of context, and hence control over topic and the rules of participation. Studies of the ways in which context shapes interaction and is continuously reshaped by interaction offer important insight. Resident participants engage in cooperative efforts to redefine context and to engage in what will be referred to as adolescent *girl talk*, a format of conversation which commonly occurs during "free time" in the smoking area on the back patio and which is characterized by alternate rules of participation that defy the structure and relative formality of the therapeutic context. In the format of girl talk, relationships between participants and the rules of participation are implicitly redefined. Interruptions, questions, and even the language of the therapist seem rude, irrelevant, or out of

place. Here again cooperative effort is based upon shared background knowledge and common linguistic and paralinguistic conventions (Goodwin & Goodwin 1992), or contextualization cues that signal how the context is defined (Gumperz 1982, 1992). A certain kind of demeanor, for instance, is required in the therapy group and is a factor that signals the context of the therapeutic format. The context of "girl talk" on the other hand, is less formal and draws upon different rules of cooperation signalled linguistically through communicative choices, such as in choosing between *you* and *I* in the previous example, or through the "de-voiced" cues of an "a-lingual" system of resistance (Alvarez-Caccamo 1990). Until called on, for instance, while a resident can't close her eyes in the therapy group, she can look down. While she can't avoid sitting in the chair, whose rigid and straightback design already impose restrictions on possible corporeal positions, she can recline or slouch as far as physically possible, or tilt back to rock on two legs, using the chair for something other than what it was originally intended. The format of girl talk typically involves the co-production of narratives and results in the formation of an alliance that monopolizes the space of talk. Residents may go on and on about the experience of dressing that morning, for instance, and the process involved in having to choose between the shoes with the purple laces or the shiny black flats. Therapists thus become engaged in an implicit struggle to get the group "back on topic" and into the format conducive to therapy. Because authority has a vested interest in refraining from resorting to the mechanisms of coercive control, the therapist is usually caught trying to play along in a losing battle. Often the only alternative for the therapist to regain control involves resorting to coercive measures in an attempt to re-establish the therapeutic format. Resorting to coercive actions, as mentioned previously, further undermines the symbolic authority of the therapist because the actions seem unreasonable and uncalled for, particularly since reasons for imposing consequences are difficult to make explicit; after all, under the guise of cooperative effort a stream of talk is being produced in place of recalcitrant silence. In other words, embedded within the talk is the implicit message: "Sure, we will sit here and talk as you say, but we will talk the way in which we choose to talk." The objectives of therapy may never be realized since therapists remain engaged in an ongoing but implicit battle for the construction and legitimation of symbolic authority.

In conclusion, the program under observation is considered a model program due to the success rate in achieving its goals: nearly half the residents become productive and independently functioning adults. Some women, however, "keep forgetting" to take birth-control pills or to use contraceptives and thus resist sacrificing self-image and values associated with fertility and reproductivity for values of productivity in the work force. Some clients exhibit lack of concentration and "learning deficits" and "have difficulty in applying themselves" to acquire necessary skills of menial labor, which is no reflection on ability when the same individuals confront the challenges of establishing more promising footholds to status and prestige within the hierarchy of power in illicit kinds of business. Still others simply refuse to dress "appropriately" or to stop saying things that are "inappropriate" or "grammatically incorrect." The sense of self affiliated with

alternate cultural values seems to remain alive in individuals who cooperate in the collective adherence to the symbols of an alternate cultural reality.

On the other hand, it is the successful residents, those who have internalized the values of authority, who have also internalized its problems. A host of symptoms become the manifestation of problems in a society that has created an insatiable hunger for the limited autonomy that society affords individuals. The humor of the "shop 'til you drop" slogan also points to the bitter side of a hot-so-humorous social tension. For the compulsive consumption of the products that money can buy, or the taxing of the body which has become a symbolic war zone in the dialectic between individual and society represented in eating disorders, unwanted pregnancy, and drug addiction, these individuals turn faithfully to an authority that cannot help with pains and symptoms whose etiology remains "unknown," perhaps psychosomatic, and therefore untreatable. Instead, individuals continue to be therapized by a society which "helps" the disenfranchised to come to terms with and accept contradictions of ideals and practices: of individual autonomy and subjection, democracy and individual powerlessness, free choice and no choice, the American dream and the American reality. With a certain irony, the producers and consumers keep the wheels of capitalism turning and perpetuate a system which seems to feed on itself and on the unacknowledged "soul" of human beings. From this perspective it can perhaps be understood how it feels "just to want something that is yours and belongs to you."

In bringing power into focus, "healing" in the context of the residential institution can be viewed as a method of social control: a process through which power and social status are differentially distributed in a system based upon inequality and exploitation. In examining a method of "healing" whose practice is centrally concerned with language, the principal objective of this paper has been to illustrate that power and language, unlike the concepts of healing and social control, are too easily distinguished given the conceptual tools of the dominant cultural orientation. The case of therapeutic treatment, involving the efforts of the formal cultural institution covertly to direct and control "informal" face-to-face interaction, suggests that the site of cultural reproduction and resistance lies somewhere between the poles of the formal institution and informal face-to-face encounters. Here, external measures of control can, to some extent, establish conditions conducive to indirect, hegemonic forms of control through political and ideological constructions implicitly codified in the institutionalized standards of language and communication. Once the structures of control are internalized, external measures of control and domination traditionally associated with authoritarian states are rendered unnecessary. In "talking it out" therapeutic discourse is a medium of "talking it in," so to speak, in which the structures of cultural authority are transmitted and internalized. While the mechanisms of overt power in the politics of cultural reproduction may be more salient in the institutional context, outside the institution, in the "democratic" context, they are not necessary.

NOTES

1. An interpretation of Gramsci's concept of hegemony is used here which formulates an explanation of hegemonic control as indirect, political forms of control through the ideological realm, embedded in language, behavior, ritual, and symbol.
2. The empirical data for this study are based on participant-observation as a "youth counselor" over a five-year period, in addition to extensive interviews with residents, agency employees, and state officials, and follow-up study on individuals emancipated from the residential institution. To protect individual privacy the original names of the individuals referred to have been changed in this paper.
3. The common Western notions of the talking cure perhaps originated with the scientific authority of Freud, when in 1911 he announced his discovery: "We found to our greatest surprise at first that each individual hysterical symptom immediately and permanently disappeared when we had succeeded in bringing to light the memory of the event by which it was provoked ... and when the patient had described the event in the greatest possible detail and had put the affect into words" (Breuer & Freud [1911] 1957:8).
4. Why does the system of social welfare remain in place since it apparently obstructs state objectives? For a compelling argument which demonstrates the way in which the welfare system serves dominant interests see Piven and Cloward (1971).
5. In the cases of Cecilia, Maria, and Teresa, for instance, court intervention was recommended on the basis of overcrowded, unsanitary living conditions, school truancy, and household responsibilities of raising younger siblings, which interfered with "normal, healthy adolescent development."
6. The term *clients*, inherently implying the voluntary seeker and consumer of services, ceases to be an accurate term under these conditions, in which case the state is actually the client here. For lack of a better term, which incidentally suggests again how the role of power is camouflaged by the words of the therapeutic lexicon, the involuntary "clients" are here referred to as *residents*.
7. The therapy group typically comprises eleven to twelve participants. These include six residents, four counselors, a therapist, and a program director.
8. *To call on* is a colloquial phrase of the therapeutic milieu meaning to identify and make explicit "manipulations" or otherwise implicit aspects of behavior that are resistant. To call on behavior renders it an explicit violation which is therefore subject to consequences.

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Interruptions, gender, and power: A critical review of the literature¹

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Reviews of gender differences in speech consistently report as a well-established finding that men interrupt women more than the reverse in mixed-sex interaction (e.g., Coates 1989; Swann 1989). Normally cited in support of this finding is Zimmerman and West's (1975) pioneering work on gender differences in interruption behavior, and a few other well-known studies, such as West and Zimmerman (1983) and Eakins and Eakins (1976).

This gender difference is typically claimed to result from men's being more likely than women to attempt to dominate and control conversations. Most researchers have assumed that the normal function of interruptions is to prevent the other person from being able to finish what s/he wants to say, and to allow the interruptor to seize the floor. Men have more power and status than women; men are therefore more likely, it has been supposed, to assume that they have a right to seize the floor from women, whereas women will not make the same assumption with respect to men. In addition, the hypothesis proposed in, e.g., Maltz and Borker (1982) that women and men are socialized to have different goals in interactions and to use different verbal strategies to attain those goals would also predict that men would interrupt more (if we assume that interruptions are primarily dominance-related), since men learn that an important goal for them is to assert status and to appear to be a leader, and since taking and holding the floor is a way of achieving this goal; if women, on the other hand, learn to focus instead on establishing and maintaining harmonious relationships with others, this would militate against their violating conversational "rules" by interrupting others.

However, our survey of 32 studies that have examined interruption use in mixed-sex conversation reveals that in fact no firm grounds exist for the belief that men interrupt women more than the reverse. Seventeen, or more than half, of these studies found no significant difference between the genders in number of interruptions, and five found that women produced more. Only 10—fewer than a third—found that men produced more interruptions. The findings of these studies are summarized in Tables 1 and 2.²

INTERRUPTIONS, GENDER, AND POWER: A CRITICAL REVIEW

TABLE 1. *Dyadic studies that have examined the relationship between gender and number of interruptions initiated in mixed-sex interaction*

Studies that found no significant difference between the genders in number of interruptions	Studies that found males to interrupt females significantly more than the reverse	Studies that found females to interrupt males significantly more than the reverse
Bilous & Krauss 1988	Bohn & Stutman 1983	Sayers 1987
Dindia 1987	Esposito 1979	Shaw & Sadler 1965
Duncan & Fiske 1977	Octigan & Niederman 1979	
Frances 1979	Peterson 1986	
Jose, Crosby, & Wong-McCarthy 1988	West 1979; West 1982; West & Zimmerman 1983 (all three describe the same study)	
Kollock, Blumstein, & Schwartz 1985	Zimmerman & West 1975	
Leet-Pellegrini 1980		
Leffler, Gillespie, & Conaty 1982		
Marche 1988		
Martin & Craig 1983		
Roger & Nesshoever 1987		
Simkins-Bullock & Wildman 1991		
Welkowitz, Bond, & Feldstein 1984		

TABLE 2. *Group³ studies that have examined the relationship between gender and number of interruptions initiated in mixed-sex interaction*

Studies that found no significant difference between the genders in total number of interruptions	Studies that found males to interrupt significantly more than females overall	Studies that found females to interrupt significantly more than males overall
Beattie 1981*	Brooks 1982	Connor-Linton 1987* ^F
Smith-Lovin & Brody 1989*	Craig & Pitts 1990* ^M	Kennedy & Camden 1983*
Willis & Williams 1976	Eakins & Eakins 1976	Murray & Covelli 1988* ^F
Woods 1989	McMillan, Clifton, McGrath, & Gale 1977* ^M	

Also of interest is the question of whether males differ from females in interruption behavior when same-sex interaction is compared. If the major determinant of interruption behavior is simply having more status or power than others with whom one is interacting, there is no reason to expect differences between all-male and all-female interaction with respect to number of interruptions. If, on the other hand, learned differences in goals and verbal strategies are an important determinant, and if asserting a leadership role by taking the floor is an

important strategy for men but not for women, then one would expect there to be more interruptions in all-male than in all-female interaction. The results of studies that have compared number of interruptions in same-sex interaction are presented in Table 3. (All these studies are of dyads, except for Smith-Lovin and Brody 1989 and Dabbs and Ruback 1984, which examined three-person and five-person groups respectively.) The great majority, 17 out of 22, found no gender differences. This initially appears to suggest that status is the more important determinant; however, we will suggest below that the situation cannot be assumed to be as simple as this. Two further studies found more interruptions in all-male interaction; and 3 studies, contrary to both types of prediction just made, found more interruptions in all-female interaction.

TABLE 3. *Studies that have compared all-female and all-male interaction with respect to number of interruptions*

Studies that found no significant difference in number of interruptions	Studies that found significantly more interruptions in all-male interaction	Studies that found significantly more interruptions in all-female interaction
Dabbs & Ruback 1984	Bohn & Stutman 1983	Bilous & Krauss 1988
Dindia 1987	de Boer 1987	Crosby 1976
Duncan & Fiske 1977		Street & Murphy 1987
Esposito 1979		
Frances 1979		
LaFrance & Carmen 1980;		
LaFrance 1981 (these describe the same study)		
Marche 1988		
Martin & Craig 1983		
McLachlan 1991		
Octigan & Niederman 1979		
Peterson 1986		
Roger & Schumacher 1983		
Rogers & Jones 1975		
Simkins-Bullock & Wildman 1991		
Smith-Lovin & Brody 1989		
Trimboli & Walker 1984		
Welkowitz, Bond & Feldstein 1984		

Several questions arise here. First, why is it that the majority of studies have not found men to initiate more interruptions than women? Second, how can the inconsistencies in the results of different studies be accounted for? Third, why have some studies found women to interrupt more? And fourth, are there aspects of interruption behavior that can be examined that would be more revealing of dominance-related gender differences than simply counting the relative number of

interruptions initiated by each gender? In this paper, we will focus on the first and the fourth of these questions.

To begin, then, why have most studies of mixed-sex interaction not found men to interrupt women more than the reverse? One important factor here is undoubtedly the following. Most researchers have assumed that to start to talk while someone else is speaking constitutes a violation of the other person's speaking rights, and thus represents an attempt to dominate and control the conversation. However, it has been increasingly recognized in recent years that a good deal of the simultaneous talk occurring in interactions may be neither intended nor perceived as disruptive, and moreover, that it may indeed function to signal and promote solidarity between speakers. Researchers who have commented on this include Edelsky (1981), Coates (1989), Murray (1987), and Tannen (1984, 1989, 1990). For example, Edelsky and Coates both note that in the groups they studied, when members talked simultaneously they were frequently developing an idea or a theme together in a manner that was collaborative and supportive. Coates also notes that while comments and questions were often uttered simultaneously with another person's talk, these were normally signs of active listenership, rather than attempts to take over the floor. Coates reports that only a minority of the simultaneous speech in her data represented attempts to take over the floor; Tannen (1989) reports that when students in her course counted instances of simultaneous talk in half-hour casual conversations they had taped, roughly 75% of these were judged to be cooperative rather than obstructive.

In addition, researchers have pointed out a number of other circumstances in which interruptions, while not being particularly associated with solidarity or support, nevertheless do not represent attempts to take the floor away from another person. An obvious example is a simple mistiming error: the interruptor thinks that the interruptee is about to finish when this is not the case. As a further example, if one is failing to understand what another person is trying to communicate because one did not hear or did not understand a word s/he used, one might legitimately break in to ask for clarification.

If many instances of simultaneous talk, perhaps the great majority of them, are not in fact dominance-related, this could well result in a finding of no significant gender difference, since there is no reason to expect that men would produce more simultaneous talk of the solidarity- and rapport-building type or of other non-dominance-related types, and also since, given the nature of research findings to date on women's speech, it is possible that women initiate more simultaneous talk of the rapport-building type than men do.

This, however, then leads us to the following question. Does there exist any straightforward way of distinguishing dominance-related simultaneous talk from other types of simultaneous talk? And if so, does research then show that men's simultaneous talk is more likely to consist of dominance-related attempts to seize the floor than women's?

There are several different approaches that can be taken in investigating this question. One approach is to try to find some objective, easily measurable criterion that will distinguish those instances of simultaneous talk that are disruptive from those that are not, and then observe whether or not men produce more of the

disruptive type. In fact, a number of researchers have attempted to use some such criterion; however, the criteria proposed have frequently been quite inadequate. An example is the proposal originally made by Schegloff (1973) to distinguish simple mistiming errors from all other types of interruption (this measure is employed in 12 of the studies in Tables 1, 2, and 3);⁴ in this approach, instances of simultaneous talk that begin near a point defined as a possible completion point in the interruptee's talk are classified as mistiming errors (called in this approach *overlaps*), and all other instances of simultaneous talk are assumed to be dominance-related. One problem with this approach is that what constitutes a possible completion point is not adequately defined (it is defined simply as the end of any *unit-type*, which could be any word, phrase, clause, or sentence); thus in practice, researchers employ primarily subjective criteria to determine whether the interruption is near a completion point, and results therefore may be affected by biases on the part of the researcher. Another problem is that, as we have seen, it is quite incorrect to assume that all instances of simultaneous talk other than mistiming errors must necessarily be dominance-related. Such problems with this approach have been noted by a number of writers, for example Bennett (1981) and Murray (1987).

No criterion that has been employed by researchers to distinguish dominance-related interruptions from other types of simultaneous talk approaches real reliability. However, two such criteria are worthy of mention here. We will examine each of these in turn.

It is not unreasonable to suppose that the semantic content of interruptions is relevant to whether or not they represent manifestations of dominance. For example, interruptions indicating disagreement with the interruptee's views might plausibly be more likely to be dominance-related than interruptions indicating agreement or support. However, it is also clear that no simple one-to-one relationship can be assumed here. For example, data provided by Coates (1989) contain examples of simultaneous talk in which one speaker is gently disagreeing with another, but in which the simultaneous talk is nevertheless clearly collaborative and rapport-building in function.

In addition, it has not infrequently been assumed by researchers that so-called successful interruptions always constitute dominance-related attempts to seize the floor, while so-called unsuccessful interruptions do not. In a "successful" interruption, the interruptee stops talking without finishing what he or she had to say and yields the floor to the interruptor; in an "unsuccessful" interruption, it is the interruptor who stops talking, while the interruptee carries on and does not yield the floor. There is obviously a certain amount of plausibility in this notion, and there does exist some evidence from studies relating interruption use to relative power or predisposition toward dominance (these will be discussed further below) that "successful" interruptions are more strongly associated with dominance than "unsuccessful" ones. However, at the same time, other such studies have not found evidence for a link of this kind (e.g., Ferguson 1977; Rogers & Jones 1975); in addition, examples of simultaneous talk given in works such as Coates (1989) and Tannen (1989) provide a number of instances of "successful" interruptions that are clearly both intended and perceived as rapport-building rather than dominance-

related in nature. Thus, it is clear that here too there is no simple one-to-one relationship between "successful" interruptions and dominance-related attempts to seize the floor.

A certain number of studies have made use of these two criteria in an attempt to determine whether men initiate a greater number of interruptions that are specifically dominance-related than do women. Five studies have compared women and men with respect to the first criterion mentioned, the semantic content of their interruptions.⁵ However, relatively few gender-related differences were discovered, and these did not form a clear pattern across studies. Further, 11 studies have compared women and men with respect to the second criterion mentioned, the number of "successful" versus "unsuccessful" interruptions initiated. Nine of these studies have dealt with mixed-sex interaction.⁶ Of these, two (Woods 1989; Craig & Pitts 1990) did find that men initiated a significantly greater number of "successful" interruptions than women; however, the remaining seven studies found no gender difference. In addition, seven studies compared the initiation of "successful" and "unsuccessful" interruptions in same-sex interaction.⁷ None of these studies found men to initiate a greater number of "successful" interruptions than women. One (Kollock, Blumstein, & Schwartz 1985) found a greater number of "successful" interruptions in female than in male dyads, contrary to what might have been predicted; the other six studies found no gender difference.

Thus, the evidence from studies employing these two types of criteria as ways of measuring whether or not an interruption is dominance-related does not provide support for the hypothesis that men initiate more dominance-related interruptions than women do, either in mixed-sex or same-sex interaction. However, it is important to remember that neither of these two criteria are in fact genuinely reliable measures of whether or not an interruption represents an attempt to seize the floor. Consequently, we cannot conclude from these results that men do not initiate a greater number of dominance-related interruptions than women; the question remains open.

There also exist other, quite different, approaches to resolving the question of whether men are more likely than women to initiate dominance-associated interruptions. One such is the following. Seven studies have examined the relationship between people's use of interruptions and their having a predisposition toward dominance in their personalities⁸; and one further study has examined the relationship between people's use of interruptions and their having greater power than their partner in a couple relationship, as measured by a questionnaire dealing with relative influence over day-to-day decision-making (Kollock, Blumstein, & Schwartz 1985). Most of these studies found some positive correlation between interruption use and having a predisposition toward dominance or having greater power (although context also appears to be important). A few of these studies found evidence of gender differences in the extent to which the use of interruptions was linked with having a predisposition toward dominance. In particular, two studies that compared male and female same-sex interaction in this respect (Aries, Gold, & Wiegel 1983; Rogers & Jones 1975) both found that in all-male interaction individuals with high-dominance personalities initiated significantly more interruptions than those with low-dominance personalities, but that this was not true

of all-female interaction. These findings—if confirmed by other studies—would suggest that women, even when they have a predisposition toward dominance in their personalities themselves, are less likely and less willing than men to produce dominance-related interruptions, at least when talking to a member of the same sex. However, the findings of other studies have not been consistent with such a conclusion. Three studies—Kollock, Blumstein, and Schwartz (1985); Roger and Nesshoever (1987); Roger and Schumacher (1983)—found a positive link between interruptions and dominance predisposition or power for both sexes, and found no gender difference in the strength of this link. The findings of another study, Marche (1988), form no clear overall pattern with regard to gender differences in this respect. Further complicating the picture, moreover, are two findings that are the opposite of what might have been anticipated: Aries et al. (1983) found with respect to “successful” interruptions that not only was there a positive link between these and having a predisposition toward dominance for both all-male and all-female groups, but the link was actually stronger for all-female groups. And in Courtright, Millar, & Rogers-Millar (1979), a study of married couples, the wife’s “dominceringness” score, as measured by the extent to which she made utterances that tended to assert relational control, was found to be associated more strongly with interruptions than was the husband’s. It is possible that factors such as whether the interaction was cooperative or conflictual, and the topic of conversation, may help to explain some of the variation in these results, but there is not enough evidence to speak with any assurance as to this.

These studies, then, provide no evidence that males produce more dominance-related interruptions than females in mixed-sex interaction. With respect to same-sex interaction, some evidence supports this hypothesis, but other evidence fails to support it or even contradicts it.

Let us now turn to still another, quite different way of approaching the issue of whether men’s interruptions are more likely than women’s to be dominance-related. This approach, discussed in such works as Smith-Lovin and Brody (1989), focuses on the extent to which individuals discriminate on the basis of gender in their interruption attempts; it is in particular concerned with the fact that women’s lower status relative to men may cause them to have more dominance-related interruptions directed against them than men have. Suppose, then, that it were to be found that members of both sexes interrupt women significantly more than they interrupt men; such a finding could be explained on the grounds that men assume they have a greater right to take the floor from women than they do from men, and that women feel it is less legitimate to try to take the floor from men than from other women.

Twenty-one studies have examined whether women have more interruptions directed toward them than men do; these studies are listed in Table 4. (These include both studies of mixed-sex groups and studies comparing same-sex and cross-sex dyads.)

TABLE 4. *Studies that have examined whether each gender interrupts females or males more*

(1) Studies in which both females and males inter- rupted fe- males and males to an equal extent	(2) Studies in which both sexes inter- rupted fe- males more than they did males	(3) Studies in which males interrupted females more than they did other males, but females interrupted both sexes to an equal ex- tent	(4) Studies in which fe- males inter- rupted other females more than they did males, but males inter- rupted both sexes to an equal extent	(5) Studies in which males interrupted females more than they did other males, and females interrupted males more than they did other females	(6) Studies in which fe- males were interrupted more, but it is not report- ed whether they were in- terrupted more by males, fe- males, or both males and fe- males ¹⁰
Beattie 1981 Craig & Pitts 1990 (regarding “successful” interruption of students by tutors or the reverse; cf. (2)) ¹¹ Duncan & Fiske 1977 Frances 1979 Greif 1980 Leffler, Gillespie, & Conaty 1982 Martin & Craig 1983 Murray & Covelli 1988	Brooks 1982 (re students’ interruption of profes- sors; profes- sors’ inter- ruptions of students not tabulated. Cf. (5)) Craig & Pitts 1990 (regarding “successful” interruption of students by other students; cf. (1)) McMillan et al. 1977 Peterson 1986	Octigan & Niederman 1979 Smith-Lovin & Brody 1989 Willis & Williams 1976 Zimmerman & West 1975	Bilous & Krauss 1988 Marche 1988	Brooks 1982 (re students’ interruption of other stu- dents; cf. (2)) Dindia 1987	Eakins & Eakins 1976 Kennedy & Camden 1983

Of these studies, 13—those in sections (2) through (6) in Table 4—did indeed find that women were interrupted more than men by either one or both sexes, while only two studies found men to be interrupted more by either sex (these are listed under section (5)). Clearly, the hypothesis that dominance-related interruptions are more likely, in general, to be directed against women than against men because of the status difference between them would provide one explanation for this marked discrepancy in numbers. Further, male interruptors “discriminated against” women to a somewhat greater extent than female interruptors did: Men interrupted women

more than they did other men in nine of the 19 studies listed in (1) through (5), whereas women interrupted other women more than they did men in only six of these studies. One possible explanation for this result is that the status and power difference between the sexes is a more significant determinant of the interruption behavior of men than of women, and this in turn would provide support for the hypothesis that women's interruptions, as compared to men's, are less often intended as attempts to take over the floor.

However, other interpretations of these results are also possible. While we will not go into these in detail here, we might note that factors unrelated to dominance may well have been at work. For example, our survey unearthed a certain amount of evidence that women's interruptions are more likely than men's to be of the supportive, rapport-building type;⁹ and in addition, there is some evidence that both men and women tend to manifest some speech accommodation in the direction of the other sex's style in mixed-sex interaction (e.g., Bilous & Krauss 1988). Therefore, it is possible that both men and women use more of the supportive type of simultaneous talk when interacting with women than when interacting with men; this constitutes one possible alternative explanation for those findings in which women were interrupted more than men.

To conclude, then, this survey shows that the common belief that most research on interruptions has found men to interrupt women more than the reverse is quite unfounded; most studies have found no gender difference in this respect. This may be in part because—again, contrary to the usual belief—most interruptions do not constitute dominance-related attempts to seize the floor. However, we have also seen that no clear evidence of any kind exists that men more than women use interruptions as a means of dominating and controlling conversations; or that women are more likely to have dominance-related interruptions directed against them. Nevertheless, it cannot be definitively concluded that no gender differences exist with respect to the use of dominance-related interruptions, since no truly reliable gauge exists of whether an interruption constitutes a dominance attempt.

The central problem here, of course, is that there are no simple criteria that one can use to determine reliably whether or not an interruption constitutes an attempt to seize the floor. Probably the only method that would even approach adequacy would be the type of detailed analysis that has been undertaken by researchers such as Jennifer Coates, Carole Edelsky, Marjorie Goodwin, and Deborah Tannen, in which one takes into detailed account the larger conversational context in which the simultaneous talk occurs. There are, however, inevitable problems here; in particular, such an approach involves trying to ascertain what speakers' intentions were, and these ultimately can be only guessed at. One tactic that might be useful here would be to have the participants in the conversation review the transcripts with the researcher (as has been done by Tannen; e.g., Tannen 1984).

In closing, we should also point out that the research on gender and interruption use is problematic to evaluate in a number of ways. For example, studies have differed in the way in which interruptions have been measured; this renders their results not truly comparable, and more seriously, some measures of interruption may have given rise to misleading results. For example, calculating the frequency of interruptions as a rate relative to the amount of talk produced by the other

participant(s) is arguably a more reliable measure than simply counting the raw number of interruptions produced by each participant, but most studies have simply counted the raw number of interruptions. Moreover, some studies have employed unrepresentatively small subject samples, have employed faulty statistical methods, or have failed to do a statistical analysis. Because of such methodological problems, real gender differences in interruption use may have been obscured, or gender differences may have been reported that were not in fact present. Lastly, the ways in which the results of studies may have been affected by such subject and situational variables as age, degree of intimacy, size of group, and type of interactional context remain unclear.

Plainly, there is considerable scope for future research in the area of gender, power, and interruption use.

NOTES

1. A fuller version of this paper, under the title "Women, Men and Interruptions: A Critical Review," is to appear in Deborah Tannen (ed.), *Gender and Conversational Interaction* (Oxford University Press).
2. Unpublished papers of which we have been unable to obtain a copy have been omitted from Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4.
3. Studies marked with an asterisk also compared the frequency with which males interrupted females and females interrupted males within a group. Those with no further indication found no difference; studies marked with M found males to interrupt females significantly more than the reverse, while those marked with F found females to interrupt males significantly more than the reverse. Thus, for example, in Kennedy and Camden (1983), while females initiated significantly more interruptions overall than males did, there was no significant difference between the extent to which females interrupted males and the reverse. (This suggests that the higher overall female interruption rate was primarily a result of females interrupting other females more than males interrupted other males.)
4. Dindia (1987); Eakins & Eakins (1976); Esposito (1979); Kennedy & Camden (1983); Kollock, Blumstein, & Schwartz (1985); Murray & Covelli (1988); Octigan & Niederman (1979); Sayers (1987); Smith-Lovin & Brody (1989); West (1979), (1982); West & Zimmerman (1983); Woods (1989); Zimmerman & West (1975).
5. Dindia (1987); Kennedy & Camden (1983); Sayers (1987); Smith-Lovin & Brody (1989); Willis & Williams (1976).
6. Beattie (1981); Craig & Pitts (1990); Kollock, Blumstein, & Schwartz (1985); Marche (1988); Natale, Entin, & Jaffe (1979); Roger & Nesshoever (1987); Smith-Lovin & Brody (1989); Welkowitz, Bond, & Feldstein (1984); Woods (1989).
7. Kollock, Blumstein, & Schwartz (1985); Marche (1988); Natale, Entin, & Jaffe (1979); Roger & Schumacher (1983); Rogers & Jones (1975); Smith-Lovin & Brody (1989); Welkowitz, Bond, & Feldstein (1984).
8. Aries, Gold, & Wiegel (1983); Courtright, Millar, & Rogers-Millar (1979); Ferguson (1977) (this study employed only female subjects); Marche (1988); Roger & Nesshoever (1987); Roger & Schumacher (1983); Rogers & Jones (1975). Subjects' predisposition toward dominance was measured, in most cases, by an established dominance test involving subject self-rating. While the choice of test differed from study to study, testing was in general designed to measure the extent to which subjects tended to influence or control the behavior of others in their interpersonal interactions.
9. The three studies from Table 3 that found more interruptions in female than in male dyads—plus a fourth study, Marche (1988), that found that when in dyads females were more likely to

interrupt other females than they were males, and a fifth study, Dabbs & Ruback (1984), that found a non-significant tendency for all-female groups to produce more interruptions than all-male groups—all report in addition various other findings for all-female conversation that suggest a pattern very reminiscent of the “high-involvement” style discussed by Tannen (1983, 1984, 1989, 1990) and there claimed to be characteristic of certain cultural groups. This style, which Tannen argues emphasizes enthusiasm and rapport, is characterized by (among other things) a fast rate of speech, fast pacing with respect to turn-taking, frequent and expressive backchannel responses, and much simultaneous talk. All five of the interruption studies just mentioned report findings of this type for female interaction but not for male interaction; for example, Bilous and Krauss (1988) report that female pairs not only produced more interruptions than male pairs, but also produced more backchannel responses, fewer pauses, shorter utterances, and more laughter; the researchers note that this pattern suggests a high level of involvement in the female conversation. These facts indicate that the interruptions observed in female interaction in the above studies were probably primarily expressions of interest and rapport rather than dominance-related attempts to take over the floor. It is of considerable interest that no study has found this type of pattern to be more strongly associated with male than with female interaction, or even to be as strongly associated. Thus, this style may be particularly characteristic of all-female talk.

10. In addition, Woods (1989) found that subordinate females in three-person work groups were more often “successfully” interrupted than subordinate males. No statement is made, however, as to whether females were more often interrupted than males overall, or as to the results with respect to “unsuccessful” interruptions.

11. Craig and Pitts (1990) did not examine instances of “unsuccessful” interruptions.

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