Gender in Interaction

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Gender in Interaction: Perspectives on femininity and masculinity in ethnography and discourse
Edited by Bettina Baron and Helga Kotthoff

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Preface

Helga Kotthoff and Bettina Baron

1.   What does "Gender in interaction" mean?

"Gender in Interaction" — with this title we want to allude not only to the interaction between the sexes, but also to gender as an interactional achievement and to the social category of gender in interaction with other social parametres such as age, status, prestige, or institutional and ethnic frameworks as a third dimension. The new-born baby has no gender, but merely a sex. However, with the exclamation "It is a girl/boy!" that socio-cultural formation of gender begins. Thus, from the first day on, communication includes gender work.

The title of this book is programmatic in the sense that all papers collected in this volume share the perspective on gender as interacting with other social categories and with cultural, situative and institutional contexts. The assumption that masculinities and femininities are communicatively performed is a cornerstone in approaching gender. Presently there is wide agreement that they have to be conceived as pluralized: changing over time and varying culturally and contextually. One aim of the book is to trace the varying relevance of gender in interaction. In many contexts gender is not the only identity category a person acts out: people act as friends, neighbors, computer experts, scientists, etc., and they play certain roles in these social environments. Many of their everyday activities have a gendered dimension, though not all. How can this gendered dimension be described and what do the contexts look like in which gender is not made relevant? It is a basic assumption of the book not to depart from an ubiquitous importance of gender, but to ask if and in which way gender influences interaction in specific communicative situations.

This book is divided into three sections: perspectives on childhood and adolescence, on masculinity, and on femininity. All contributions discuss empirical research of communication and the question of whether (and how)

gender is made accountable in discourse, and how it is symbolized as a relevant category in the real world. The authors come from a wide variety of backgrounds: from sociology (Cahill, Behnke and Meuser, Connell, Bloustien, Bohnsack et al., Thorne), from anthropological linguistics (Kotthoff), from sociolinguistics (Baron, Cook-Gumperz, Gunnarson), from social psychology (Kyratzis), and from text linguistics (Giora). Only with cross-disciplinary approaches can we trace the multiple layers of the social semiotics of gender as forming (and being formed by) emotions, ideology, habitual ways to behave and act, body concepts, and concepts of "self". Linguistic behavior is not the only object of the researchers' attention. It is related to ethnographic description of the contexts and ideologies within which communication takes place. In addition, some authors (Bloustien, Connell) concentrate on the role of the body in defining one's identity and integrate information from video-based data (Kyratzis, Bloustien).

Another guiding motif for bringing the present articles together is to show various perspectives on how gender is shaped in the course of an ongoing socialization. Further, the fact that gender socialization continues in education, in the workplace, during spare time, and in the private and public sphere indicates that genderization is a process, which takes a context-specific character. The papers included cover a wide range of contexts, from children acting in gendered, peer-created situations in the classroom and on the play ground (Cook-Gumperz, Kyratzis) to teenagers (Cahill, Bloustien) and adults' behaviors and activities, from young working class men of Turkish origin living in Berlin (Bohnsack et al.) to young urban professionals in Swedish academic settings (Gunnarsson), from teenage girls in Australia (Bloustien) to older women in Caucasian villages (Kotthoff), from private to public communication, from mixed-sex to single-sex conversations framed by different cultural backgrounds (Australian, German, Georgian, Turkish, US-American). Three contributions (Thorne, Connell, Giora) center more around a theoretical discussion on gender and the implications of that discussion for empirical research. They do not conceive of gender as a socially mediated expression of something biologically given, and do not assume a straightforward relation between sex and gender. They view gender as a factor of the social order, a historically produced, discursive construct serving as a resource to constitute gendered identities. Biological anatomy is just an anchor point drawn into a symbolic practice of order formation which has many consequences for our lives.

To favor an interactional notion of gender means that we have to deal with the previously mentioned coupling of parameters, for example, gender and

age, gender and class, race, institutional demands, social milieu, etc. Gender is seen as communicated and put on stage by many semiotic means. How gender is performed and what such a concrete performance means becomes an empirical question. Gender is by no means always enacted the same way in all contexts. This insight has in the last few years sometimes led to the conclusion that gender is completely re-negotiable in every situation,[1] which is just as false as the assumption of stable oppositions between the sexes common in earlier research on women and men.[2] The articles in this book implicitly reject the postmodern arbitrariness hypothesis, as well as the old structuralist thesis of binary distinctions between the sexes and essentialist notions of masculinity and femininity.

Even though the authors included in this volume focus on the historicity (and therefore relativity) of gender, they also take the factual stability of gender distinctions in society — as seen in many everyday situations — into account. So, in spite of rejecting binary and decontextualized conceptions of gender, none of the authors conceive of gender as being arbitrary in the sense that its nature and its importance are negotiable in every situation, or could, just by performance, be discharged. Gender is based on typification as a social process,[3] not just personally performed, but recognizably performed in order to match intersubjective typification. It sets up background expectations, which are more or less stable factors of a culture. Individuals are not in full control of the degree to which gender is taken into account because others can perceive their behavior in traditional gender categories against their own intentions. Further, even though most people do have a certain amount of freedom to either conform to or oppose this cultural "normality", the expectations as well as the actual "doing gender" are interrelated with power processes in society.

Although it seems obvious to include both the construction of femininity and masculinity in gender research in communication, for many years only women's speech has been analyzed. According to Johnson/Meinhof 1997, this phenomenon has to be interpreted as a remainder of a traditional ideology: female talk as the exception from the (male) norm, which has to be closely examined in its peculiarity. Prior to feminism sociolinguists paid only little attention to women as speakers; men's talk had been the unquestioned norm (e.g. in Labov's claims about vernacular). The stages of exploring men's and women's ways of speaking went from overgeneralizing men's experiences to feminist efforts of focusing on women's perspectives (motivating a period of extensive research on women's talk)[4] to more profound theorizing of gender and gender relations (Gal 1989, 1995), which includes studying cultural

masculinities (Connell 1995). Thorne (in this volume) explores the history of gender studies in sociological and linguistic discourse analysis. She also explains why the focus was on women's speech behavior for a long time and also what the benefits of this focus were in relation to prior research foci in the field.

As mentioned earlier, we depart from the assumption of diverse "masculinities" and "femininities" which, phenomenologically, may differ considerably from person to person and situation to situation. However, there is also stability in performing and perceiving gender. Otherwise it would be difficult to identify a dressed person as either male or female. Very seldom do we have uncertainties like these in our everyday life. The articles presented here look in both directions: stability and change. We are interested in finding out what makes gender such a stable factor of interaction order and how changes are brought about. As the subtitle indicates, most of the authors connect ethnography and discourse analysis. This approach is derived from the idea that our communicative behavior arises out of activities we engage in and the social relations within which we undertake them (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1992). Cameron (1997:34) writes that the introduction of practice as a variable makes the language-gender relation a mediated one: "The potential advantage of this is that it leads away from global statements, and the stereotypical explanations that frequently accompany them. Towards a more 'local' kind of account that can accommodate intra- as well as intergroup differences."

We, the editors, think that current gender studies suffer from a decoupling of theory formation and empirical grounding. We witness a wide gap between generalizing approaches (e.g. in poststructuralism) interested in global reflections on gender and microscopic analyses and catalogues of very small speech phenomena (in the tradition of variation analysis or conversation analysis) which abstain from interpreting their (inconsistent) findings in larger social settings. Giora (in this volume) problematizes the inconsistency of findings in comparative gender research (men vs. women) and discusses it in relation to implicit theoretical assumptions.

This book combines data analysis, ethnographic description of various social worlds (in which gender has become more complex and consistencies are in some settings harder to find), and theory development. The papers cover a broad spectrum of methods: 'large-size' biographical studies (Connell), content analysis of discussions (Bohnsack et al., Behnke and Meuser), sociological text analysis (Cahill), quantitative sociolinguistic variation analysis (Gunnarsson) and qualitative performance analysis (Bloustien, Kyratzis, Cook-Gumperz, Baron, Kotthoff). Gender is seen in context which is created by the interactants.

Apart from the audience of gender researchers, we hope this book to be of interest for sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and the larger field of cultural and social studies. Most of the papers are rooted in interactional sociolinguistics and sociology. In the attempt to overcome the limitation to the verbal side of communication, the authors try to link interaction and emotion analysis and to elucidate what recent research has called "embodied language". Many analysts (e.g. Bloustien, Cook-Gumperz, Kyratzis, Kotthoff) also take para- and nonverbal aspects of communication into consideration. The research on embodied language is a very young field of analysis where methodology is only beginning to be developed. Further, by including video analysis as well as studies of game interaction and ritual communication, this book aims to broaden the scope of communication analysis. Some authors draw on Bourdieu's habitus theory to explain the relative stability of gender (Behnke and Meuser; Bohnsack/Loss/ Przyborski, Bloustien, Gunnarson). The concept of habitus, envisioning gender not as situationally constructed but as grounded in the participants' socialization history, allows one to go beyond — and look behind — people's local strategic and automatic forms of acting.

2.   The articles

In the following, we will briefly summarize the articles. Writing from the vantage point of a feminist scholar based in the U.S., **Barrie Thorne** (**Berkeley**), who has long worked within the interactionist tradition of sociology, steps back to assess almost three decades of research on gender and interaction. She observes that a strategy of deliberate one-sidedness has guided this research tradition, with the emphasis on everyday interaction, and the relegation of other dimensions of gender (structural, individual or personal, and, to a lesser extent, symbolic or discursive systems) to the background. This strategy has yielded considerable insight into the daily interactions that produce dichotomous gender categories and make them seem "natural," even as the organization, meanings, and salience of gender vary by context. Research, at the level of interaction, has also illuminated the "micropolitics" of gender and everyday life. After detailing the advantages of a concerted focus on interaction, Thorne argues that new perspectives and a more holistic understanding can be gained by drawing research on interaction into closer conjunction with analyses of discourse, social structure, and individual identity and emotions. She discusses some of the challenges that arise from this broadening strategy, as well as

specific theories and lines of research that link conceptions of interaction to other domains of inquiry. The multiple dimensions of gender make this category of analysis a useful route for examining connections between interaction and discourse, structure, and personal experience.

Jenny Cook-Gumperz (**Santa Barbara**) discusses the accomplishment of gender among girls from 3–5. Particularly, she investigates nursery school play ecologies to see if these environments have a gendered character. Although children have very different interactive experiences at home and many schools nowadays try to create gender equity in contemporary classrooms, children very actively create a gender-specific environment. The question Cook-Gumperz asks is why young girls — in an era of feminism — continue with such conventional play and use such stereotyped images.

In Cook-Gumperz's field work the playground turns out to be a remarkably constant gendered zone (e.g., doll playing and household pretend play have existed over several centuries). She discusses several micro scenes in which gender/power distinctions play a role, for example, a scene in which a group of boys manage to dominate a group of girls involved in domestic play. After the arrival of the group of boys, the three original players become a group of girls, rather than a gender unspecified group of "animal minders" (as they were before). As the two groups of girls and boys evolve into oppositional groups, they develop into a kind of socially organized entity which takes on a social life of its own for the duration of the activities and this grouping has an implicitly gendered character because from this point onward, any additional members of the group will need to be inducted into the group as gendered members.

Research has shown that through their reading, writing and fantasy life, girls continue to be exposed to views of femininity that are often at odds with the world the girls live in. A tension exists between girls and young women's attempts to control their own lives and the cultural stereotypes of their gender possibilities as presented to them in books and other media. Mothering and romantic relationships, the most stereotypical destinies of women and girls, still seem to be the twin poles of the play scenarios that young girls freely adopt even in the gendered neutrality of the contemporary nursery classrooms. However, there is also some evidence that girls are involved in a struggle against their own conformity to stereotypical behavior. Cultural resistance, for example against the image of girls as "little mothers" can be found in an sub-culture that happens in nursery school fantasy play.

Amy Kyratzis (**Santa Barbara**) examines peer emotion socialization through language in naturally occurring same-sex friendship groups in the

nursery classrooms across one school year. She focuses on three areas of emotion socialization: aggression, fear, and caring attitudes. The three to four year old children she observed were 70% Caucasian and 30% Asian, Latino, Middle-Eastern and African-American. Almost all the groups were same-sex. Her study focuses mainly on boys. The children were videotaped during free-play periods. Kyratzis presents several transcripts from play scenes. Certain play themes seemed to lend themselves to certain kinds of emotion display. The boys' often played nature themes, "scary stories", or "smash houses". Boys' play themes often involved risk-taking and confronting danger and trouble. There was a preoccupation with things powerful and scary. The more conquest/dominance-oriented the boys' play, the rougher the emotion display was, tending towards increased display of aggression or roughness towards characters in play. Kyratzis notes contextual variation, e.g., when a certain boy was around, the bravery and aggression seemed to be expressed more strongly than when he was absent. There were over-time changes in attitudes towards being scared, fear, and bravery that were concurrent with changes in attitudes toward girl-associated characteristics. The members of the friendship group referred to gender by statements such as "that's a girl". These patterns suggest that the over-time changes in emotion were part of socialization about gender. However, socialization about gender appears to be part of peer organization. Bigger groups, and the presence of particular children, affect when gender displays are in evidence. Children, within their peer groups, work out norms of what is appropriate and not appropriate in terms of the display of emotion. Kyratzis shows how children appropriate gender stereotypes from the adult culture, practice, reproduce, and reinvent them and actively produce them in their play. Strong contextual differences prevent taking an essentialistic view on emotions.

Spencer Cahill (**Tampa**) analyzes the written notes of girls from middle and junior high school. (164 notes were collected which had been received between 1985 and 1989 from 36 girls and 10 boys). These notes are passed in class. Cahill views these notes as an important medium for the construction, negotiation, and dissolution of relationships. He turns his attention to girls' affirmation of themselves as romantic actors within the context of same-sex relationships, the negotiation of romantic relationships between boys and girls, and, finally, the effects that girls' romantic relations with boys have on their relations with one another. North American boys seldom exchange written notes among themselves. The notes reflect some characteristic patterns and processes of early adolescent peer relations in North America in recent history. Note writing is

shown in the article as a form of resisting adult authority and of cementing exclusive social bonds because they provide a private channel of communication in settings where private conversation would be virtually impossible. The girls negotiate their complex interpersonal networks characterized by shifting internal coalitions by note writing (as a form of written gossip). Also, their romantic attractions to boys, and relationships with boys, find expression in these notes. Disclosure of romantic trouble is also quite common in the exchanged notes. Girls also show their faith in friends by soliciting their romantic advice. They seem to depend heavily on the wisdom of their corresponding friends and share their own wisdom with those friends. Some boys apparently recognize that notes provide a medium for romantically approaching girls without the threat of face-to-face rejection. Boys' notes to girls are accountably masculine in the sense of how masculinity has been described in the literature on preadolescent boys. Their personal disclosure is limited to sexual desire or aggression against third parties. Cahill determines that early adolescents create their romantic relationships in accountably masculine and feminine ways. However, their romantic relationships are not just between a boy and girl but between each of them and their same-sex peers as well. Girls and boys are very active in balancing their romantic/sexual and their friendship relations. Among girls even romantic competition and gossip about inappropriate romantic conduct adds new content to familiar forms of clique boundary work and internal coalition formation. Having a boyfriend is an important symbol of early adolescent girls' maturing femininity, but it is no substitute for having girlfriends and their social approval. Cahill describes how young people creatively appropriate, transform and use images and information about heterosexual romance from the adult world for their own purposes. The notes examined in Cahill's article also suggest that early adolescent girls put a high value on the maintenance of their emotionally rich relations with one another.

Gerry Bloustien (**Adelaide**) investigates the intersection of embodied subjectivity, gender, micro-cultures, and self-representation through fieldwork including participants' own videotaped recordings of their experiences. She explores the ways in which female adolescents reflect upon, discuss, enact, and constitute their sense of self. She shows "learning to be female" to be hard work, which means constant self-surveillance of the body to meet a ubiquitous female ideal. On the surface, such attempts to represent oneself through clothing, style, image, and bodily inscription can be seen just like play, but under closer scrutiny we also see "the human seriousness of play". The fifty-six participants were offered a Hi 8 domestic video camera to use when and where they liked for

over one year. The process of selection, filming and editing pointed to the ways the girls struggled to represent themselves in ways that cohered with their already established social and cultural framework.

Bloustien focuses on two young women, Diana and Bekk, highlighting differences and similarities between them. Diana is a quiet, shy, and self-contained girl in a class with mostly boys. The other girl in the class, Bekk, is extremely self-confident. Both girls indicate — in dress, stance, and language — the importance of the body as "physical and symbolic capital" in the sense of Bourdieu. Both were appropriating a particular representation of femininity. Fashion plays an important role. It boosts confidence and group-membership. Girls learn to be the object of a scrutinizing gaze. Bloustien discusses the girls' own vocabulary, i.e. what it means among them to be seen as a "slut" or a "tryhard". By discovering in-group criteria for evaluating people, she closely investigates the immense efforts, which are required to constitute and maintain "the self."

In his reflections on "Masculinities and Men's Health", **R.W. Connell (Sydney)** first gives an overview over the recent upsurge of topics connected to "masculinity". The range of issues dealt with in the media is constantly widening, covering health, education, leisure, family, peace politics and many more. Following insights originally developed by feminist research, Connell considers masculinity to be "very actively made, in practices both individual and collective". This anti-essentialist approach sees a multiplicity of masculinities as constantly creating new social realities and thus demands that "maleness" be understood in its historicity and interactivity. The new interest in understanding masculinity which can be found in modern societies could now develop into two directions: on the one hand, it could become a separatist movement competing with feminist programs; on the other, men could take the chance to cooperate "across gender boundaries", based on the insight that men's and women's issues have to be of vital mutual interest. The latter would be a promising perspective for men as they become increasingly aware of the cost of maintaining the traditional gender patterns (stress, diseases, restrainted emotional expressivity, violence, exclusion of important human experiences). At any rate, according to Connell, men's present situation must be described as being full of double-binds and ambiguities — a result which coincides with similar findings in the following article.

Cornelia Behnke (Erlangen) and **Michael Meuser (Bremen)** theorize masculinity with the help of Bourdieu's notion of habitus (which can successfully be transferred to gender relations, though originally referring to class

structure), based on discussion data from which they extrapolate different faces of the "male habitus". They argue, that detecting pluralized notions of "masculinities" / "feminitities" need not conflict with the assumption of one gender habitus in either case: modes of expression (femininities, masculinities) on the one side and a generating principle (habitus) on the other. Adopting Connell's notion of "hegemonic masculinity", they point out the power dimension of the male habitus and account for the diversity of the latter's shapes. Living in accordance with the male habitus provides the individual with a fundamental security, which the authors call "habitual security". Their empirical study shows what happens if this security is challenged. The authors present two different groups of men sharing leisure activities in their spare time: the first type consists of men with a secure masculine habitus, which take the gender affiliation for granted. Masculinity for them is a natural fact that just has to be accepted. Men and women represent two opposite spheres for them, whose existence is never sceptically questioned. These men define themselves basically by their work and see themselves quite traditionally as those who earn their family's living. The latter functions as an essential source for self-confidence. The second type, the "new male", represents crisis tendencies. Involved in circles of the women's movement, they are confronted with the task of critically examining themselves as men. In the course of permanent self-reflection, it becomes more and more unclear to them what it means to be a man. This uncertainty leads to strong ambivalences and various counter-reactions. Behnke and Meuser propose that the insecurities these men experience cannot be explained in terms of role conflict or role stress because it goes deeper into the personality structure; their habitual security is increasingly missing. Some men go on struggling with their self-perception, some manage to find personal identity beyond traditional masculinity.

Ralf Bohnsack, Peter Loos and **Aglaja Przyborski** (**Berlin**) analyze various group discussions of Turkish young men and women living in Berlin, Germany, focusing on the young men's (Turkish) concept of "male honor" in the migration context. They filter out big differences in masculine and feminine gender standards between the Turkish immigrants and the surrounding, mostly German, communities. The authors differentiate between several levels of meaning, focusing on a level of experiential knowledge embedded in "habitus" in the sense of Bourdieu. The concept of habitus allows not only to go beyond conscious or strategic acting but also to look behind automatic forms of acting. It makes it possible to see gender not only as situationally constructed, but as grounded in the participants' socialization history which is strongly influenced

here by Turkish cultural values. Bohnsack, Loos and Przyborski analyze the experiental spaces as they manifest themselves in same-sex group discussions. One problem turned out to be highly relevant to all groups of Turkish young men examined: that of male honor. "Being a man" for them has not only to do with virility but also with financial security, honesty, respect, and the ability to support one's own family. The search for habitual security is precarious for them. They repeatedly assert their desire to orient themselves to the habitus passed on to them through their Turkish socialization and struggle with different forms of masculinity practiced by the German or Italian men around them. The concept of honor is extended to the whole family. It includes controlling women' s outdoor activities and being respectful to parents. German men, of course, lack honor in their eyes, because they allow their wives to act in situations they have no personal control over, e.g., having dinner with male colleagues. In many ways, the young Turkish men and women float painfully between Turkish and German behavioral gender standards. Their parents often try to pre-arrange a marriage with someone from the Turkish home village, which is refused very often by the young Turks living in Germany. These inter-generational conflicts can be very dramatic. The young Turkish women interviewed also seek their way between the transmitted traditional social habitus on the one hand and a new personal one on the other hand.

Two papers in this volume deal with academic discourse. **Bettina Baron (Konstanz)** examines professional debates during conferences and Britt-Louise Gunnarsson looks at communication during university seminars. The data Baron analyzes suggest considerable differences between the conversational styles of male and female scholars in certain professional situations (e.g., conference debates after a paper delivery). For example, she finds differences in the formatting of criticisms and concessions, in the opening sequence of contributions, and in the strategies of presenting oneself as an expert on a certain topic. The analysis concentrates on formal situations in academia. For both sexes, there seems to be a correlation between the degree of formality, structure, and publicity of the event and the indirectness of criticism. The more formal the situation, the more indirect the criticism is expressed. Men typically use special formats of indirect criticism for specific kinds of "face-work", thus demonstrating a high competence in performing academic rituals. By starting their critical comments indirectly, they disguise the intensity of their critique, which is only revealed later. In contrast, women's critical comments usually lack this sharpness of critique. At the same time, they seldom use indirectness as a segue into more explicit critique coming later.

Despite being well-known experts, the women also tend to use certain strategies of self-deprecation, which are not found in the majority of utterances by males. The interplay between gender, status and prestige is very complex: Those women with a low hierarchical rank are even more handicapped in these ritualistic academic fights during conferences than men of the same professional status. Women of high status and public prestige, on the other hand, often do not receive the same verbal space as male scholars with similar prestige. The women tend to anticipate criticisms from the audience and transform them into self-criticisms, sometimes as early as the very beginning of their talk. This is often accompanied by admissions of the limited scope of their hypotheses and promises to keep their contribution short. When criticized or when their special role within conversation, e.g. being the chairwoman, is challenged, the female scientists observed were also likely to react with concessions.

Today we have much empirical evidence that both sexes handle a large stylistic repertoire, but there is still a lack of research about the institutionalized mechanisms which lead to a reduction of this repertoire as soon as a certain degree of publicity and officiality emerges. Under these conditions, women tend to choose styles, which may be advantageous in private settings. However, due to historically and institutionally developed frames, in the field of academia their speech styles are evaluated as signs of unprofessionality and low competence.

Britt-Louise Gunnarsson (Uppsala) discusses the discursive roles assigned to and played by female doctoral students and teachers. She examines postgraduate seminars within two university departments, the first one in the humanitites, the second in the social sciences. These departments vary as to the position established academic women have within the hierarchy. Though the investigated university is portrayed as trying to preserve itself as a male domain, in the social sciences we find more women in top positions than in the humanities. Gunnarson's analysis focuses on the production and perception of critical comments, e.g., on how within the seminar the roles of commentators are constructed. Women in both departments act as critics on other students' papers presented in the seminars. However, both the general acceptance of women in the department culture and the extrinsic status of the overly critical woman affect the stylistic strategies they use to present their criticisms. They also affect the reception by the seminar group. Fundamentally, the female teachers in the social sciences department seem to show a more straightforward speech behavior with respect to criticizing than their colleagues within the humanities. A closer look, however, reveals that in the social sciences, males and

females do not act on equal terms either. In particular, on the students' level, considerable asymmetries can be observed. She uses Bourdieu's habitus concept in order to explain the differences, which she found in the two gendered department cultures: the behavior differences on the one hand and the acceptance in the group on the other. In the end, Gunnarsson poses the question, whether we must assume gendered academic habitus (a male opposed to a female one), or if we should conceptualize the prevailing habitus as gender-neutral, a habitus of the "homo academicus" which the single individual, may (s)he be a man or a woman, can adopt more or less successfully.

Helga Kotthoff's (**Freiburg**) article deals with the relationship between gender, emotion, and culture in Georgian mourning rituals. Lamentations are seen as their core. In many parts of the world these polylogues are performed by women, as for example in Georgia. The article focuses on the poetic performance and social meaning of the genre as a gendered activity. Lamentation is a ritual of shared grieving, seen in Georgia as a female way to act out grief. The performance of grief is thereby delegated to women, and therefore grief as an emotion is gendered. It is, however, not a powerless activity. Expressive grieving at the same time allows the women to form cultural memory and social morals. The fact that the wailers have the last words about a deceased reinforces social bonding among village people and especially among the women themselves. It is an important form of their acknowledged religious practice outside the official Orthodox church, since it is believed to intensify relations to the deceased in the hereafter. In the role of lamenters women enjoy high respect. In these ritual polylogues the loss of a person is communalized, and by aestheticization it is quasi therapeutical. The article focuses on interrelated, bonding dimensions of Georgian death rituals and on the tension the genre contains for women's social position. The lamenting women carry out emotion work for the whole community, thereby maintaining a gendered emotional division of labor. Instead of regarding ritual wailing as a form of losing control of oneself, this high standard of verbal art shows that wailers must be in good control of their emotions. Aestheticized speech, demanding bodily control of the mourners during the performance of "being beside oneself," involves the audience in grieving and thus makes possible a shared cultural memory. The ceremonial genre of lamentations refers to moral standards, which are linked with emotional and religious expression. Kotthoff presents transcripts from a lamentation and analyzes the form and function of the genre within a theory of emotion work, thereby linking gender with body politics, power, and social structure.

In the last paper of the volume, **Rachel Giora** (**Tel Aviv**) offers a critical discussion of contemporary gender research from a text-orientated perspective. There is a growing body of evidence in the field, which suggests that the notions of 'difference' and 'similarity', prevailing in the public and scientific discourse of gender (and other minorities), should be revoked. Neither explains the conflicting data found in the literature. While the 'difference' assumption predicts different categorization (e.g., men vs. women, Jews vs. Arabs, etc.), the 'similarity' assumption predicts the opposite: men and women should belong to the same category. Giora's data, consisting of linguistic introductory patterns, impositives, and thematic and narrative structures of Israeli female and male authors and scriptwriters show that none of these assumptions hold. Contrary to the 'difference' assumption, Giora's findings provide evidence of similarities rather than differences between, for example, traditional female and male authors and male Arab and female Jewish characters. Contrary to the 'similarity' assumption, her findings suggest differences between female feminist authors and male authors. The search for either difference or similarity is erroneous, because it is local and superficial — it focuses on 'features'. Instead, she proposes to look into more global structures and themes. For example, similar strategies (e.g., setting out from a self point of view) result in different styles for different groups (e.g., men and women). In contrast, adopting different strategies (e.g., setting out from a self- vs. other- point of view) result in similar styles for different groups. Thus, looking into processes rather than products allows, in Giora's view, for the reconciliation of conflicting evidence.

As can be concluded from this brief introduction, all of the authors included in this volume indicate the necessity of examining "gender in interaction" under the perspective of its historical stability on the one hand, and its contextual variation on the other. Neither are men observed to be continually dominant, nor women to be permanently submissive. We watch variations, inconsistencies, and changes. Men and women certainly are no "cultural dopes" (Garfinkel 1967); they may question social norms and create subversive micro-worlds.

Although gender — together with race, class, and age — is one of the most important social parametres, it does not dominate (as feminist research of the seventies sometimes suggested) all other identity categories, which also may define a communicative situation. For centuries, gender has been constructed in accordance with the patriarchal system and the fact that up to now there has been little change in societal power structures on the whole proves that the patriarchal order has been astonishingly stable.

Studying gender and interaction means to wrestle with the tension between structure and action. We agree with Barrie Thorne's conception that "doing gender" needs to be linked to an understanding of the power of institutions, and of the unconscious — the coercive — force of gender conceptions, which cannot be grasped solely at the surface level of analysis.

Notes

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1. Theories like these have been formulated in some postmodern theorizing around the reception of Judith Butler's book "gender trouble" (1990). Although Butlers formulations on the performativity of gender acknowledged the necessity of attending to questions of power and intersubjective processes, some receptionists took phenomena such as symbolic plays with gender distinctions (drag and queer performances) as the revolution capable of overthrowing the whole gender system, e.g. Hark 1993. Other postmodernists reduce gender to a "rhetorical effect" (Menke 1992). Deconstructing gender then basically means to "re-read texts." The identification of persons with texts leaves totally open how the body and the socially constructed self are drawn into the formation process. They suggest quite simple symbolic changes, for example in dress codes, as threats to patriarchy as such. It remains totally unclear whether a "re-reading of texts" (and what this is supposed to mean) suffices as a threat to the gendered social order.

2. For a discussion of the sex and gender relation in discourse studies see Kotthoff/Wodak 1997 and Cameron 1997.

3. In the sense of Berger and Luckmann 1966.

4. See the overviews on the development of (socio)linguistic gender studies of Günthner/ Kotthoff 1991 and Crawford 1995.

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Introduction

Gender and interaction

Widening the conceptual scope[*]

Barrie Thorne

For over two decades many scholars who study gender and interaction have followed an analytic strategy of "deliberate one-sidedness."[1] To focus our distinctive subject matter we have foregrounded one aspect of human experience — the gendered dynamics of face-to-face interaction — and relegated other dimensions, such as gender as a process embedded in social structure and in personal and emotional experience, to the background. Erving Goffman (1983) explicitly used the strategy of deliberate one-sidedness when he defined the "interaction order" as a "substantive domain in its own right", "loosely coupled with," but distinguishable from, the more macro level of social structure.

   In this paper I briefly review the history of almost three decades of convergence between feminist ideas and the loosely linked traditions of interactional sociology and sociolinguistics. After discussing the significant insights that have resulted from concerted attention to gender and interaction, I bring other dimensions of gender, obscured by the strategy of deliberate one-sidedness, into view. Gender is a multifaceted concept that has been extensively theorized and studied not only at the level of interaction, but also as an aspect of personal experience and identity; symbolic or discursive systems; and social structure and institutions. The multiple dimensions of gender give the concept an elusive quality, but this multiplicity also provides opportunities for crossing levels of analysis and developing fresh perspectives on interaction and on the whole of social, cultural, and personal life.

A brief history of research on gender and interaction in the U. S.

There is a long tradition, dating back to the 19th century writings of the German social theorist, Georg Simmel, of finding sociological significance in

the seemingly small details of everyday life. In the history of U.S. sociology Simmel's ideas, as well as those of Robert E. Park, George Herbert Mead, and Everett C. Hughes, helped shape the "Chicago school" of fieldwork. Coming from a different theoretical tradition, the phenomenological sociologist, Alfred Schütz, attended to the structuring of experience and the contextual nature of intersubjectivity. His work was one of the precursors of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, another key strand of contemporary sociological research on interaction.

In the 1950s and 1960s Goffman picked up and reworked these and other traditions, theorizing the specificity of social contexts, the dynamics of face-to-face interaction, and the social framing of experience. Goffman's approach, which both converges with and differs from the traditions of symbolic interaction, ethnomethodology, and sociolinguistics, placed everyday experience and social interaction at the forefront of inquiry.

The study of social interaction was well established in the U.S. before the early 1970s, when second-wave feminist ideas began to move into the academy (I'm telling this brief history from an American vantage point).[2] But the interactionist tradition, like other strands of knowledge, had largely ignored women's experiences and issues of gender. In 1967 I read the American and British literature on social interaction and sociolinguistics with the urgency of a Ph.D. student preparing for a comprehensive exam. There were writings on social class and ethnicity, but little on gender as a social division that might make a difference in everyday talk and interaction. I found studies of interaction in all-male and in mixed-sex groups, but virtually nothing on interaction among women (at that point girls were all but invisible as subjects of study). A few writings focused on gender and interaction, but none of them moved beyond the assertion of dichotomous difference to theorize the complex dynamics of gender.

The women's liberation movement helped articulate the limitations of knowledge that consistently omits or distorts women's experiences. In the early 1970s feminists brought this critique into the realms of scholarship by questioning ideas that parade as inclusive, but in fact embed masculinist assumptions. Feminists revalued women's lives and experiences, bringing them from the margins to the center of knowledge, and they emphasized gender as a category of analysis. I became engaged with the ideas of the women's movement in the late 1960s and joined other feminists who asked "where are the women?" as we discussed the literature on processes of interaction and verbal and nonverbal communication. These dialogues resulted in a spate of writings published in the

mid-1970s (e.g., Key 1975; Lakoff 1975; Thorne and Henley 1975) that brought visibility to women as speakers and social actors, and that called attention to the gendered dynamics of language, speech, and everyday interaction.

Goffman's early writings ignored issues of gender, although, as Candace West (1996) has argued, he was attuned to micro processes, such as the asymmetric use of gestures, that mark relations of unequal status and power. Goffman's insight into "micropolitics" (a term coined by Henley [1977]) and his focus on everyday life resonated with notions of "the personal as political" that were basic to the contemporary U.S. women's movement. In early and influential studies of gender and everyday interaction, various researchers (e.g., Henley 1973, 1977; Zimmerman and West 1975; Fishman 1978) documented asymmetrical patterns of touch, interruption, listening, and other dimensions of interaction between men and women. Goffman, in turn, picked up on issues of gender raised by feminist work; and, while keeping a distance from the political issues, he analyzed "gender displays" in advertisements (Goffman 1976) and wrote a generative theoretical article on "the arrangement between the sexes" (Goffman 1977). By the 1980s the groundwork had been laid for more nuanced theorizing and empirical research on gender and interaction. Later, other intellectual currents, such as Judith Butler's (1990) poststructuralist, "performative" theory of gender, also enriched this area of study.

The advantages of deliberate one-sidedness

The analytic strategy of focusing on face-to-face interaction and relegating other levels of analysis to the background has resulted in significant contributions to knowledge. The micro level of analysis offers fertile soil for nourishing the core feminist insight that gender is socially and historically constructed rather than a given of nature. Deepening Simone de Beauvoir's (1942) argument that "one is not born but becomes a woman," a compelling body of theoretical work (e.g., Kessler and McKenna 1978; Goffman 1977) upturned the assumption that the signs we read of "masculinity" or "femininity" reflect underlying, natural essences. Thus, Goffman (1977: 302) wrote:

> It is not … the social consequences of innate sex differences that must be explained, but [how] these differences were (and are) put forward as a warrant for our social arrangements, and, most important … [how] the institutional workings of society ensured that this accounting would seem sound.

In short, daily patterns of interaction, such as gender-differentiated demeanor and practices of pairing that result in the man being taller in most heterosexual couples, evoke the belief that women and men have "essentially different natures." An array of social practices, many embedded in daily interaction, cut across the complex variation of biological sex and the wide range of individual behavior to construct the apparently "natural" world of two genders that is basic to Western cultures.

In 1987 West and Zimmerman drew these insights into a vivid concept, "doing gender," that jolts the assumption of gender as an innate condition and replaces it with a sense of ongoing process and activity. A range of empirical studies, for example, of the ways in which employees in fast food restaurants and insurance sales "do gender" as they go about their daily jobs (Leidner 1991), and of the "category maintenance work" of Australian preschool children (Davies 1989), have expanded insight into the daily interactions that sustain, and occasionally challenge, dichotomous gender categories.

In its guise as a category of individual placement and identity, gender is relatively fixed, dichotomous, and omnirelevant. But in another guise, as a dimension of social situations, gender varies in organization and meaning and assumes a more fluid quality. I explored this paradox in an ethnographic study of daily life in two U.S. elementary schools (Thorne 1993). On some occasions girls and boys collectively enacted dichotomies, separating into same-gender groups and performing stylized playground and classroom rituals (like "girls-chase-the-boys") that mark the genders as opposite and antagonistic. But in other situations boys and girls mixed in relaxed ways and gender was of minimal significance. On some occasions another line of difference, such as age or ethnicity, muted the relevance of gender. Gender may be omnirelevant, but its meanings and salience vary across situations. As theorizing and research of the last two decades have amply documented, the organization and meanings of gender are highly contextual and intertwined with other lines of difference and inequality, such as sexuality, social class, ethnicity, and age.

Three decades of research on gender and interaction have yielded significant insight into the daily practices that produce dichotomous gender categories and make them seem "natural," even as the organization, meanings, and salience of gender vary by context. This research has also illuminated connections between gender and power. More abstract formulations of inequality become especially vivid when they are situated in everyday experiences, for example, of unwanted touch or of having one's talk or space repeatedly interrupted. Practices of resistance and experiences of empowerment — talking

back, claiming verbal space, holding anti-rape marches to "take back the night" — also take shape in everyday life. The level of interaction engages the immediacy of social relationships, embodiment, and experience, and the fundamentals of positioning in space and time. In short, a concerted focus on everyday interaction and social situations has generated important contributions to the understanding of gender.

Intellectual divisions of labor in the study of gender

Although the study of interaction has richly illuminated some dimensions of gender, the vision is partial since gender is an organizing strand not only of interaction but also of symbolic systems, institutions, and identity and emotions. Scholars sometimes encounter the breadth of gender when they become interested in a strand of experience and follow it, like Ariadne's thread, in many directions. For example, women's primary responsibility for caring work is built into the organization of paid and unpaid labor and is basic to the distribution of political and economic power. These institutional arrangements are sustained by various ideologies and representations of gender, such as discourses of feminine nurturance and masculine detachment and autonomy. The gendered allocation of caring also infuses daily interactions and moves deeply and ambivalently into experiences of self and identity. A full account of gender and the dynamics of caring (and many other topics) would extend across several levels of analysis and varied domains of theory and research practice.

It is difficult to sustain such breadth. When one tries to envision the whole of gender as a focus of inquiry, the enormity of the task is likely to send one scurrying for a more manageable gaze. But it is useful to remember that the study of gender emerged from the women's movement and the wish to understand the whole of women's lives in order to challenge and end their subordination. Thirty years ago, when feminist ideas generated by the women's movement began to enter the academy, they moved across disciplinary partitions of knowledge. But as feminist perspectives took hold in scholarly communities of practice, divisions of intellectual labor that loosely map to traditional disciplines and subdisciplines of knowledge came, increasingly, to shape the contours of research on and the theorizing of gender (Laslett and Thorne 1997).

Research on gender tends to cluster around four levels of analysis, each organized around somewhat different traditions of theorizing: (1) Gender as discourse and ideology (e.g., theories of the discursive construction of binary

gender and studies of gendered fields of meaning such as "nice vs bad girls"); (2) Gender as a dimension of social structure and institutions (e.g. theories of gender and the state and research on the gendering of particular organizations); (3) Gender in relationship to individual identity, subjectivity, and psychodynamics (e.g. theories of gendered subjectivity and research on topics like maternal guilt); (4) Gender as a feature of social situations and everyday interaction (e.g., theories of face-to-face behavior and research on the patterning of conversations between women and men).[3]

Each of these nodes of research has generated an enormous literature, with various points of intersection that become more active when intellectual currents, such as poststructuralist feminist theory, move across the disciplines. While the multiple meanings or dimensions of gender are sometimes a source of confusion, the sheer reach of the category raises provocative questions about connections among various aspects of social, cultural, and personal life.

Widening the conceptual scope of research on interaction

Many roads converge in the study of social interaction and everyday life. This is where individual experience meets up with social situations and relationships, and where daily practices connect with social and symbolic structures. Have we done enough to explore these varied crossroads? What might be gained by reversing the strategy of deliberate one-sidedness, broadening our conceptual scope, and lighting up dimensions that we have, often quite purposively, tended to ignore?

These questions open on to vast territory, which I will quickly survey from three directions: first, by examining connections between the study of interaction and theories of discourse or symbolic systems; second, by discussing the need for closer knitting between interaction and social structure; and finally, by pointing to theories of personal gender that might remedy the problematic conceptions of the individual that are embedded in theories of interaction.

Linking interaction and discourse

The study of symbolic systems (variously understood as beliefs, ideologies, discourses) and the study of interaction have developed as somewhat separate lines of theorizing and research. The pay-off from bringing them together,

attending to processes of situated interaction while also encompassing the content of symbolic systems, is evident in Lisa Stulberg's (1996) ethnographic study of a sex education classroom in a U.S. junior high school. Stulberg found that the teacher and students continually negotiated between different discourses of gendered sexuality in classroom discussions: scientific language ("testicles," "orgasm"); vernacular, or what the students called "gross" sexual language ("balls"; "she came") and the (relatively missing) discourse of experienced desire ("that tingly feeling"). Stulberg situates these discourses within ongoing processes of interaction, such as patterns of question-asking, joking, and interruption. The teacher continually imposed scientific language; the students brought in "gross" discourse through the use of interruptions, eruptions, and humor; and on the few occasions when students talked about their own desire, the teacher interrupted and silenced them.

This effort to situate competing discourses within the context of ongoing interaction moves beyond the formalism that often makes conversation analysis seem sterile and abstracted from substance and feelings. In showing how actors negotiate, appropriate, rework, and resist competing discourses, Stulberg also counters a problem that haunts poststructuralist theories of discourse: the denial of human agency and action (as in phrases like "actors are positioned in and taken up by discourses"). Both levels of analysis benefit from such bridging.

Over ten years after Goffman (1977) used theories of social interaction to challenge the "naturalizing attitude" that obscures even as it is sustained by social constructions of gender, a feminist poststructuralist philosopher, Judith Butler (1990), laid out a similar argument, although rooted in a different theoretical tradition and with distinctive twists of analysis. Butler denaturalizes gender by arguing that the heterosexualized binary of man / woman is a "regulatory fiction," made to appear "real" through stylized repetitions of speech and other actions. (Her focus on hegemonic constructions of sexuality, in relation to gender, raises issues neglected by Goffman and by West and Zimmerman). Butler argues that

> (…)because there is neither an 'essence' that gender expresses or externalizes nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires, and because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all (Butler 1990:140).

West and Zimmerman (1987) distinguish symbolic systems ("normative conceptions" of dichotomous gender and related assumptions about the "nature" of masculinity and femininity) from situated interaction (the practices

by which actors hold one another accountable to these normative conceptions). In contrast, Butler's "performative" theory of gender makes discourse co-extensive with the social, and with the bodily. "Gender," Butler (1990:30) writes, "is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a rigid regulatory frame which congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a 'natural' kind of being." The fact that this appearance has to be sustained through repeated performances points to the inherent instability of these regulatory frames. This raises the possibility of transgression and disruption, although in more recent work, Butler (1993) emphasizes the constraining force of regimes of power and knowledge.

Butler's focus on the discursive construction of bodies, and bodily experiences, has informed a number of empirical studies in the interactionist tradition, such as Karin Martin's (1998) ethnographic research on gender and children's experiences of embodiment, and Bell and Valentine's (1995) analysis of the differing ways in which closeted lesbians and queer activists may disrupt heterosexualized, binary discourses of gender.

Butler's performative theory of gender, which emphasizes the constitutive nature of discourses, is rooted in conceptions of power and knowledge drawn from the work of Michel Foucault. West and Zimmerman use a more Weberian conception of power as coercion. Both lines of theorizing vacillate between an emphasis on agency (if gender is a social construction, current patterns are not inevitable) and on constraint (both stress the durability and persistence of oppressive arrangements). But, as various critics (e.g., Ebert 1996; Collins et al. 1995) have argued, theories that operate solely at the levels of interaction and discourse cannot adequately account for the constraining force of gender. To understand the coercive force of gender arrangements, one must also attend to the dynamics of institutions and social structure.

Knitting between interaction and social structure

The structural dimensions of gender, and of women's subordination within economic, political, and social institutions, have been extensively studied, with feminist and social theorists often reaching from the level of institutions to other sites of analysis, including interaction. This analytic crossroad has been explored with varied theoretical tools, but detailing connections in empirical and non-reductionist ways remains a significant challenge.

In the 1970s feminist sociolinguists posited an isomorphic relationship

between men's control of political and economic structures and what Nancy Henley (1977) called the "micropolitics" of communication. There is ample evidence that those with greater power are more likely to interrupt, initiate touch, stare at, and violate the space of those with lesser power. But as the phrase "more likely" suggests, these patterns are statistical rather than categorical. As Helga Kotthoff and Ruth Wodak (1996) have observed, the connection between situation and societal status is not as direct as was originally asserted. And the meaning of a particular gesture, like interruption, partly depends on the framing of each situation.

Henley's claim of isomorphism relies on a categorical approach, locating men and women within larger structures, like the economy, and then assuming a parallel positioning within daily processes of interaction. But gender does not come in such a simple package. It takes shape within a complex field of difference and inequality, intersecting with social class, ethnicity, age, sexuality, nationality, religion. The specific fields of socially marked difference, and their meanings and organization, vary by context and involve many dimensions, including the give and take of interaction itself (Schegloff 1987). Goffman's (1983) observation that structure and interaction are "loosely coupled" indeed is apt.

This loose coupling has led some to ignore the level of institutions and social structure and to highlight the distinctive features of situated interaction. But there are important theoretical and political reasons to try to connect these levels of analysis. On the one hand, the interaction order is the site where embodied and experiencing humans engage in social action, which highlights issues of agency — the very issues that tend to be neglected in abstract accounts of structure, such as analyses of social stratification or the state. On the other hand, interactionist accounts tend to neglect structure and thus the range of forces that help shape human action. An adequate account of society, and especially of social and historical change, arguably should encompass what Anthony Giddens (1984) calls the "duality of structure," or the process of "structuration." Larger structures are instantiated, reproduced, and challenged through the daily practices of social actors, who in turn are constrained and enabled by social structure.

I find Giddens' argument persuasive, but difficult to enact when one is engaged in empirical research that puts daily life front and center. Giddens uses Paul Willis's ethnography, *Learning to Labor*, to illustrate the process of structuration. Willis (1977) studied the daily interactions of a group of working-class "lads" who resisted the authority system of the school and later ended

up in unskilled jobs. The lads' enactment of a defiant type of masculinity resulted, ironically, in the reproduction of their position at the bottom of the class hierarchy. I have long admired Willis' study, in part because of his sensitivity to connections between social class and gender (although the standpoints of the lads' mothers and girlfriends, and the perspectives of more obedient boys, are notably absent). But Willis didn't *grow* his ethnography; it lacks the thick quality of research that takes full and open-ended account of daily life and interaction. His ethnography is driven by theoretical imperatives from the level of structure, especially the goal of understanding how hierarchical relations of social class get reproduced, in spite of moments of resistance.

The process of theorizing provides a prod and guide across levels of analysis (one should bear in mind that theoretical moves also split these levels apart). But there is also an empirical challenge: to use strands from both sides as one knits across the "macro/micro" divide, making sure that full insight into a particular domain is not slighted, as often happens to the level of interaction when linked to social structure.

Toward a fuller conception of the person in accounts of interaction

I will now turn in a last direction and ask about relationships between the study of interaction, and the level of analysis that focuses on the individual or personal dimensions of gender. Research on interaction has not sidestepped the individual level of analysis (after all, actors are central to interactionist accounts) so much as taken it for granted, making assumptions that are worth bringing into view. Susan Krieger (1991) has observed that various branches of the social sciences construe the self in different ways. For example, experimental psychologists understand the self in terms of measurable behaviors and cognitive processes; economists assume a self of rational choice and preference functions; political scientists understand the self in terms of the exercise of rights, power, and political participation.[4]

The study of interaction is a hybrid field that veers in a sociological direction, and the self or individual actor assumed by this perspective is, not surprisingly, shaped by the dynamics of social contexts and by relations with others. For example, Goffman theorizes the parts of the self that are activated and colonized by social interaction. He posits a cognitive self, continually responding to cues from others, and vulnerable to one major emotion — embarrassment or shame. The fear of "flooding out" motivates the individual to sustain

the interaction order. In the end, Goffman theorizes a relatively hollow self, which he even describes at one point as a "peg on which something of collaborative manufacture will be hung for a time" (Goffman 1959: 253).[5]

Although theorists of social interaction vary in their imagery of the individual, they tend to neglect the depth of inner experience. This impoverished understanding of persons stems from a conceptual division that lies at the foundation of the social sciences: the separation and even opposition between the individual and society. The anthropologist Jean Briggs (1991: 113) articulates the problem:

> I have noticed that when anthropologists talk about 'individual and society' they often assert the definite article before individual, thereby, in one simple three-letter stroke, obliterating all the rich detail of individual lives — the essence of individuality. This focus on what individuals have in common creates a homogeneous individual to set off against society.

More extensive questioning of the dichotomy between individual and society would enrich both sides of the divide. Psychologists have much to gain from sociologists' and anthropologists' understandings of context; and if students of interaction made room for a fuller sense of persons, including a wider range of emotions and a sense of individuality, it would take their work in creative and pathbreaking directions. These possibilities are illustrated by Briggs' (1998) ethnographic research with Inuit families and children. Informed by psychoanalytic theory, she attends to emotional dynamics and unique personalities as they take shape in particular contexts, especially playful dramas and interrogations between adults and children. Briggs describes these interactions with close attention to intentions, motives, understandings, and the complexities of emotional experience. Her work is an inspiring example of bringing a fuller, emotionally-attuned understanding of persons, and of culture, into the study of everyday life.

Once again, the multidimensional concept of gender opens up possibilities for bridging across levels of analysis. Nancy Chodorow (1995; 1999) has recently theorized what she calls "individual gender", arguing that in additon to shared or cultural meanings, such as socially consolidated notions of masculinity or femininity, each person has a distinctive sense of gender, shaped through their unique biography, psychodynamics, and interpersonal contexts. This individualized and highly personal dimension of gender operates not only in the inner world of perception and fantasy, but also in everyday life and interaction.

Conclusion

I have organized my argument as a sort of pendulum, swinging between two strategies of inquiry. At one end is the strategy of deliberate one-sidedness, which involves foregrounding a partial slice of reality, such as everyday interaction or intra-psychic experience, in order to explore it with some depth. At the other end is the strategy of looking behind what is foregrounded to bring other dimensions, and the challenge of bringing them together, into view. The narrowing and broadening strategies are, in some ways, complementary; both have enhanced the study of gender and the construction of knowledge.

For feminists the study of gender has been more than just another topic to be plumbed from many directions. Feminist scholarship emerged from and sustains ties with a political movement that seeks to understand the whole of women's lives and patterns of subordination, and that links knowledge with the goal of emancipatory social change. This goal bears on the issue of analytic strategies.

Some of the most innovative and inspiring feminist scholarship reaches across levels of analysis. For example, "institutional ethnography," a method of inquiry pioneered by Dorothy Smith (1987), uses women's lived experience and the "embodied ground" of daily life and consciousness as a take-off point for interrogating the "relations of ruling" congealed in texts, discourses, and institutional practices. Smith uses tools from phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and Marxism to probe these connections, without settling into any one level of analysis. This broad scope lends force and insight to her critical analysis and to empirical research anchored in Smith's method of inquiry (for examples, see Campbell and Manicom [1995]).[6]

Like the patterning of women's experiences, the multiple dimensions of gender — reaching across consciousness and emotions; discourse and meanings; the dynamics of social interaction and contexts; and institutions and social structure — challenge traditional divisions of knowledge. As Joan Alway (1995) has argued, the scope and complexity of gender makes it difficult to sharply distinguish levels of analysis, although scholarly practices reinforce such distinctions. By challenging dichotomies like "private vs public," "reason vs emotion," "individual vs society," and "mind vs. body," theories of gender subvert conventional divisions of knowledge. The very complexity, and even the instability, of gender as a category of analysis open avenues for broadened understanding.

Notes

* An earlier, much shorter version of this paper was published in German in Friederike Braun and Ursula Pasero (ed.), *Kommunikation von Geschlecht.* Pfaffenweiler, Germany: Centaurus 1997. My thanks to Anita Garey and Jean Lave for helpful suggestions.

1. See Weber (1949) for a discussion of the methodological use of "one-sided viewpoints."

2. The essays in Laslett and Thorne (1997) explore the history of U. S. feminist sociology and the more general, often rocky convergence between the women's movement and academic disciplines.

3. See Acker (1995), Alway (1995), and Hawkesworth (1997) for recent discussions of the multiple dimensions of gender that have been theorized and researched over the last three decades of feminist scholarship. Joan Scott (1986) and Sandra Harding (1986), the first feminist theorists to articulate different dimensions of gender, distinguished three levels of analysis: the structural, the discursive or symbolic, and the individual or personal. Their neglect of everyday interaction reflects the relatively low profile of this approach in feminist theory, although interactional approaches have been central to the core feminist argument that gender is socially constructed and not a given of nature.

4. Rebecca Blank (1993) raises an additional, scary possibility: that various social scientists actually believe that a given partial perspective is the full story about how the world works. Blank (1993: 133) reports that during a seminar or conversation with a colleague in economics, she sometimes recognizes, with surprise, that the colleague "really *believes* all this stuff about individuals constantly making fully informed and rational choices accounting for all expected lifetime costs and benefits". It never occurred to her, even in graduate school, that this model was meant to be more than a partial view of reality.

5. My analysis of Goffman's work has benefitted from the insights of Murray Davis (1966) and Candace West (1996).

6. R. W. Connell (1987) has also developed a comprehensive theory of gender that connects historically changing "gender regimes" of labor, the state, and other institutions; ideologies; everyday conduct (theorized by using Sartre's theory of practice); and personality, including hegemonic and subordinated "masculinities" and multiple "femininities." Although Connell's focus on "practice" rather than social interaction neglects issues of intersubjectivity, his theoretical framework is useful precisely because of its broad scope and multiple nodes of theorizing. Connell's attention to the historicity of gender, and to the contradictions and tensions in its structuring, is also inspiring.

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