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## GENDER-TWISTING AND BROS TALKING: DISCURSIVE PERFORMANCE OF GENDER, POWER, AND RECOGNITION IN THE SEX ED. CLASS

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**GENDER-TWISTING AND BROS TALKING:  
DISCURSIVE PERFORMANCE OF GENDER, POWER, AND RECOGNITION  
IN THE SEX ED. CLASS**

**BY**

**ODILE MATTIAUDA**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**IN**

**EDUCATION**

**UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND**

**AND**

**RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE**

**2013**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DISSERTATION

OF

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UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND  
AND  
RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE  
2013

## ABSTRACT

In American Schools, students are rarely offered educational experiences about gender and sexuality. Programs that do address sexuality are rarely based on moral beliefs and democratic values of tolerance and inclusivity. Sexuality education is predominantly taught by health teachers, rather than human sexuality educators, and their focus is on facts, statistics, and controversial issues such as the prevention of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. This limited perspective on sexuality neglects the important role of gender identity and sexual orientation (Donovan, 1989; Haffner & De Mauro, 1991; Nelson Trudell, 1993)

Using teacher-researcher-participant-observer qualitative methodology, I examined the discourse of thirteen and fourteen-year-old youth in relation to the construction of meaning of gender in a comprehensive sexuality education program using a progressive curriculum named *Our Whole Lives, Grades 7-9* utilized in congregations throughout the United States. The setting was the eighth grade class of a progressive church Sunday school in a middle-size city in the U.S. Northeast.

Primary data collection consisted in two hundred and twenty double-spaced, typed pages of field notes and roughly two hundred and sixty eight minutes of audio recordings. Data analysis included discourse analysis, and interpretation of three conversations between participants carefully selected from the corpus and contextualized with field notes. I found that students' discourse reproduced and resisted stereotypical gender representations, reified boys as sex-obsessed and sexual predators, constructed all participants as confused, contradictory, and seeking connection, at times. This process

produced dynamics of power and dominance that tended to promote the patriarchal status quo, although moments of collaboration and complicity emerged. These results complicate the conversation about adolescence viewed as a “specie” and about adolescents’ discourses constructing meanings of gender that help them be recognized as a certain kind of person in this context. Examining the discourse of adolescents in relation to gender identity is an opportunity to explore their cultural values. Implications for teachers include greater awareness of students’ gender representations and gender performance, and articulating the curriculum with students’ meanings.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Traditional school curricula and classrooms do not typically discuss gender. However, feminist theorists have demonstrated that sexism permeates all aspects of school, including its organization, status hierarchy, and curriculum (Lincoln, 1992, p. 92). I was acculturated in a sexist, but non-Anglo-American context and have become all the more fascinated by issues of gender and sexuality in the twenty six years I have been living in the United States.

I started teaching sexuality education, as a volunteer teacher, fourteen years ago in the Sunday school's co-educational eighth grade classroom of my liberal church. First, I had to become certified to teach a specific curriculum named *Our Whole Lives for Grades 7 to 9* (Later on, I became certified to teach the *Our Whole Lives Curriculum for Young Adults and Adults* as well). I had been living in this country for some time and had developed a sense of some cultural differences and similarities between France and the United States in terms of how sexuality, especially young people's sexuality, is perceived and how it is taught.

Teaching about sexuality urged me to reminisce about my own sexuality education, and to become cognizant about human sexuality and gender. Teaching about sexuality in this religious context provided me with the foundational language I had been searching for to clarify and articulate deep-held beliefs about the body, sexuality, pleasure, emancipation and freedom. It provided me with a place to hone and teach those values. Importantly, learning to teach about sexuality education, and teaching this sexuality education program in the eighth grade "Coming of Age" class confirmed impressions I had had about how sexuality was viewed in this country, especially young people's sexuality but not only. Before starting



to teach this program, I had been surprised at comments from parents, and teachers of my stepsons when they were teenagers and the popular culture and institutional discourses that associated sexuality with drug and alcohol consumption. I had discovered a way of thinking about sexuality different from the one I grew up with: Sexuality as an unwanted or dangerous behavior as opposed to a vital and pleasurable one that deserves full attention and disclosure. And I did not like it. Even though this program's approach is different, I was also perplexed by some of the anxious attitudes of parents of students in this program although the majority was very supportive. However, as I became more and more familiar with teaching this course and utilizing its curriculum, its stories, and its activities, I started noticing gender patterns in the ways students responded to them by which I grew increasingly intrigued.

For instance, I noticed such patterns over the years during the session named "Personal concerns about puberty." While the first part of this class is spent in non-gender-mixed groups, female students would constantly focus on painful menstruations, premenstrual syndromes, and painful first sexual intercourse for girls even after the two groups had reconvened as a class. I noted how negatively even boys referred to female reproductive functions such as pregnancy, while, on the other hand, girls would make comments about how cool it must be to pee standing up and/or play football. Boys would dismissively discuss issues of penis size and would never allude to issues such as wet dreams or unwanted erections. In addition, girls would reminisce about how they had received tampons and pads during health class in an earlier grade in middle-school, while boys had gotten shaving cream without further commenting this fact. The girls' and boys' discourse mostly highlighted negative things about being a girl. It associated being a girl primarily

with reproductive functions and organs whereas the girls' and boys' discourse silenced negativity in any of the boys' issues whether bodily or not, and emphasized the benefits of being a boy.

Similarly, students complete an activity named "Sexual language" in the early part of the school year. In this activity, students are divided in teams. Teachers announce terms referring to sexual body parts or genitals, or sexual behaviors such as penis, breast, or masturbation, and students are asked to compete in stating as many synonyms for this term whether from the scientific, common language or slang that they know while teachers list all the words on newsprint. During this activity, I could not help noticing, over the years, how mostly boys competed in shouting sexual terms. I especially noticed, and heard students notice how most terms referring to masturbation refer to the male organ. In fact, I have, year after year, heard girls explain how "There is really not such a thing for girls because they do not have the same [gesture pointing to penis shape and location but the word penis is not pronounced]," or that "It's not just not *as* common for girls to masturbate." At the most, girls would comment about (sperm) stains, or even dildos, but would deny female masturbation. This variation in male and female students' discourses intrigued me.

This "Missing discourse of desire" (Fine, 1988), this silencing of the clitoris actually resonated with my own sexuality education as open as it was, and with what I observed in the surrounding culture whether in France or in the United States. I questioned how young people came to understand and express what it means to be a man/boy or a woman/girl. How they constructed meanings of gender and articulated these meanings. Why was the girls' discourse so rich about female suffering and so silent about the possibilities of pleasure? Why did many boys speak out freely and loudly words referring to sexual body parts or

behaviors while most girls did not? I became curious about how these meanings constructed their discourse and how this discourse situated them, and helped them be recognized by self and others (Gee, 1999).

Over the years, I became more and more interested in what happens in this Sunday school sexuality education class for eighth grade girls and boys in this progressively oriented community and wondered what could be learned from examining closely what students are saying.

I decided to investigate the discourse of my students, and because I used qualitative teacher-research in doing so, it is important that I situate myself within the context in ways that affect my approach to observation and analysis. This perspective on research is in contrast to the supposed or purported objectivity of a distant observer; rather, it is the “strong objectivity” of feminist theorist Sandra Harding (1986) or other feminist proponents of acknowledging a situated, partial perspective, such as Donna Haraway (1988).

My perception of gender and sexuality is highly influenced by my background and my culture. I grew up as a white-European, middle-class, and heterosexual female in France in the 1960s. My parents’ marriage was traditional but rather common for the time period. My father and mother’s life achievements are very different. Even though both of my parents grew up poor and children of Italian immigrants from the Piedmont, my father was encouraged as a male to pursue an education while also working. He was in charge of earning the income to support his family. My mother received a different message: the main purpose of her life was to get married, bear children, and dedicate her life to caring for her home, her children, and her husband, while receiving no income. The stories of my family resonate with what Bourdieu & Passeron (1977) calls “cultural capital”- knowledge of the

rules and codes of power, that even without material wealth, allow the owner of such knowledge tools to successfully negotiate systems of hierarchy. My mother's cultural capital and education were too limited for her to question her status. Together, my parents were able to acquire economic capital and access to the French middle-class. Yet, their cultural capital remained limited because of their lack of education and social capital.

As Sophie Calle (2012) notes, "I was always curious as a child, which maybe gave people surrounding me a pretext not to respond!" As a result, I developed a passion both for learning and language. Thanks to my parents' economic achievement, I was able to access a more privileged status as the child of a white middle-class family. My cultural capital was constructed in school and at home. Yet, when time came to choose a career path, the "privilege" of whiteness was overruled by my gender (McIntosh, 2005): I was encouraged to pursue a career, such as teaching, or giving private instruction in languages or music, which would combine well with my life as a wife and a mother. I chose business school instead. My brother, whose modeling had been very different, was encouraged to pursue a career in engineering, considered a successful profession. There was never a discussion about whether this career might interfere with his future life as a husband or a father. As a woman, I have struggled with Roman-Catholic female representations and my own mother's role model, which stood in contradiction with my personal expectations of family and romantic relationships as well as professional hopes and ambitions. In a patriarchal society, such phenomenon is often invisible, even to the oppressed, and rarely discussed overtly. Male privilege is understood as normalcy (McIntosh, 2005; hooks, 2004). What mattered most were my brother's interests, his hope and ambitions, and, most importantly, the assurance

that, as a male, and therefore, the head of the household, he would receive the highest compensation possible.

Through my life as a child and a young woman, I was encouraged to learn and explore my culture and other cultures. I found the fact that my grand-parents, around me, spoke a language different from mine intriguing although I did not realize my maternal grand-mother spoke French with an Italian accent until visiting her house with a close middle-school friend, Laurence, who brought it up. I enjoyed driving over the Alps with my parents and brother, as a child and adolescent, every summer, to spend time visiting our Piemontese family. As a teenager, I cultivated relationships with girls whom I felt had a different background from mine which I found most attractive. For instance, I believe that the fact that my friend Laurence (The one who asked whether my grand-mother was French) was Jewish lay at the root of my friendship with her because I loved hearing about different ways of thinking and believing. I enjoyed the stories her mother told about the history of their family especially throughout the French occupation during W.W. II. I loved learning about the Hebrew culture and calendar from Laurence, and imagining her and me working side by side in a Kibbutz vineyard.

A few years later, I became very close to a German girl my age who was learning French, through an arranged family exchange. Bettina lived in Brussels and her father worked for the European Union there. We would spend weeks together every summer, at one another's homes and travel through France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. We would each speak one another's language, or try to, and correct each other. We would share about books we read, T.V. shows and films we watched, commiserate about the wars between our countries, and promise each other that we would never let it happen again. As a preventative

measure, we devised a plan that she would marry a French man and I, a German and we would teach our children both languages and be friends forever. At this time, I also became very close to a girl, Michelle whose parents were family friends. She had known me since birth and was a couple of years older than me. Michelle wore her hair short, and had an athletic body compared to my long dark hair and my skinny features which my brother always mocked. She ran track and cross-country, skied, swam and water-skied. She had always been labeled a tomboy and had preferred playing with my brother until our adolescence. At that time, we started confiding into each other about our lives, schools, music preferences, dreams, and, of course, romantic interests. She talked at length about her attraction to girls, and the difficulty to show it, or communicate about it especially with her parents. I listened and supported her inspired by the discourse of tolerance I had been immersed in by my mother since childhood. Indeed, while my mother was not very educated and held conservative values about gender, she was adamant about at least two major social issues: ever since I was born, she had never shied away from interweaving her support for reproductive choice and same gender<sup>1</sup> equality into the sexuality education mini-sessions she held for my brother and me. She had even discussed the possibility with us that Michelle might be attracted by same gender based upon her gender expression - because, at the time and still today, people often confuse gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation-, and that it would not matter because we loved Michelle and we would always love her. In these conversations with Michelle, I would complain about my mother treating my brother and me differently, and about my brother's taunting machismo. Moments of

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<sup>1</sup> When it comes to sexual attraction, relationships, and commitment, I prefer to refer to gender (identity) than to the ambiguous term sex. For more details, please refer to the discussion about the construction of gender and the construction of sexuality in chapter II: Review of literature, pages 21 and 22.

sincere sharing between Michelle and me were often interrupted by incredible joyful ones where we would tell jokes and stories and laugh until breathless.

Still today, I cherish the memories of these intimate conversations and dreams with these friends who are all still in my life. Even if these dreams did not quite all materialize: I did visit an Israeli vineyard but just for a tasting, and never ended up working in a Kibbutz. I did marry a German national, and although I divorced him, I did instill a passion for languages, peace, and cultural exploration in my multicultural and multilingual children. And I never stopped laughing with Michelle, who grew up to be a successful psychologist and gay parent.

While my mother provided education about sexuality to the best of her ability, education about gender was not part of my formal education and was mostly informed by my parents' own modeling and conservative upbringing, as well as the socio-cultural environment of 1960s France. However, I benefited from the modeling of/and the exciting conversations with one of my father's sisters, Madeleine, who was my godmother since birth, and a fervent feminist, although I did not even know this term at the time.

A rigorous primary and secondary education in the French integrated (not openly diverse) and secular public school system helped me develop strong critical thinking skills, and the love of philosophical debate, languages and discourse. Yet, while Beauvoir's "Second Sex" (1949) was being published in English and distributed in the Anglo-Saxon world, it still was not part of the curriculum of the philosophy course I took in senior year in high-school (eight hours a week for one school year) in 1977 as part of the rigorous "philosophy and languages Baccalaureate" section I was enrolled in (Baccalaureate is the name of the diploma that sanctions completion of secondary education in France). In fact,

our three volumes of philosophical texts did not include one female author. Yet, books were always available to me at home, and given to me as presents, especially from my godmother, and I read all the time. I read everything. I read up and coming French feminists of the time, such as Groult (1972, 1975, 1988, 1997, 2007), Cardinal (1987, 1990, 1998), and Badinter (1980, 1986, 1992) not knowing they were feminists, not knowing even what feminism was. And these writings resonated with my understanding of life as observed thus far and inspired understandings for my life yet to come.

After I completed my graduate education in English, German, and international business in all public universities, I fell in love (hooks, 2009) and married a German widower with two young boys. A couple of years after I gave birth to my daughter, we decided to move to the United States and followed a partner's suggestion to start a commercial venture here, as we were both equally attracted by the dream of the "overseas." As a young and new parent and step-parent, I was unaware, at the time, of the long-term implications of such a decision. I thought this American adventure would seal our new and recomposed family. Later, I gave birth to a boy. As I strived to be a good parent of a boy and a girl, and struggled to be accepted as a step-parent of two teenage boys, I was becoming frustrated and increasingly aware that there might be more to love than fate (hooks, 2009), and that my life path had been following a gendered script. In addition, even though I was a voluntary immigrant and mastered English, I also had to learn to live as an expatriate. This meant speaking my native language, French, with my family only, while my partner spoke his, German, and while everyone spoke and learned a foreign language, English, outside, and this for all other activities not performed with family, be it work, play, school, sports, music, dance, cinema, and theater. I was learning to think of race and ethnicity in a way much



different from my homeland, where institutions do not acknowledge diversity as such so that non-dominant groups, such as non-whites and non-Catholics are only considered through the lens of an *integration* model. In this model, one is expected to become part of the dominant culture and to shed signs (religious symbols and practices, dress, and language) that may *disrupt* the public sphere. Finally, I was struggling as the New York artist/sculptor Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010) puts it: With “feelings about domesticity, living in a foreign country, and my pride in motherhood” (Bourgeois, 2013). Over time, I became involved in the co-foundation and management of a French-American school. I became cognizant, as a parent, a school administrator, and a teacher, of the diversity of the American school system with children of my own attending public, private and charter schools. At the same time, I was slowly growing apart from my children’s father, and separated myself both from our, or what I thought was “our” while he thought it was “his,” business, and from him soon after. My experience living with four males, and raising three, resonated with growing up side by side with my brother, and contrasted with my own experiences as a girl and woman and that of raising a girl which reinforced my interest in the system of gender and informs my fascination with it to this day.

Soon after moving to the United States, I had discovered the Unitarian Universalist Church whose Sunday school is the setting for this study, while attending a wedding there while my daughter was six-years-old. Because of my dominant Roman-Catholic background although not practicing, I was perplexed at first by the absence of dogma, and ecstatic about the philosophical and intellectual questionings of faith I observed there, which was very different from my experience of sitting and kneeling in pews, as a child, and mechanically reciting prayers whose words I had not always understood. After having been crowned as the

model child of my Catechism group, enamored early on of the mysteries and miracles of the Bible stories we were read, I had become disenchanted with the lack of powerful female role models around the age of thirteen; I am unsure what exactly happened: Perhaps, I just could not accept the concept of a virginal birth. 1960s France was a sexist place to grow up in, and my mother, who lacked a formal education beyond the fifth grade, was not a feminist visionary much to the contrary. However, although I struggled throughout my life with her conservative and essentialistic beliefs about gender, she taught me to love and take care of my body, and to think of myself as a sexual being ever since I can remember. Because she had struggled with being kept in the dark as a child and a young woman herself, she wanted full disclosure for her children. Thus, for me, sexuality education happened at home, and I was offered the tools I needed whenever I needed them. Although French society was and remains patriarchal and anchored in Judeo-Christian vestiges, it was never as puritanical or frugal about terrestrial nourishments (Gide, 1897) as American society and I never learned that I should be ashamed or felt shame about my body or my sexuality.

My father transmitted to me his love of language, grammar, music and singing, and the last two had been my most familiar and favorite parts of attending mass. This is another element that drew me to this Unitarian Universalist Church. I started attending regularly every Sunday with my two children who, in turn, joined their own age-group classrooms, and I became involved in the church school in my son's classroom when he turned four years-old. Later, I taught the World religions sixth grade class for several years, until I was asked, in 1999, to enroll in a sexuality education certification program in order to teach the eighth grade "Coming of Age" class. This is the program I have been teaching ever since and that lies at the core of this study which investigates the discourse of these students.

I turned to discourse analysis in order to gain an understanding of adolescents negotiating and shaping their identity through discourse. Discourse analysis allows one to closely examine the performative talk of adolescent boys. Cameron (1998) talks about the “generalizations about men’s talk that are often encouraged in discussions of gender differences in conversational styles: that it is competitive, hierarchically organized..., and foregrounds speech genres such as joking, trading insults, and sports statistics” (p. 47).

Listening to the voices of boys and girls in this context contributes to understanding the process by which students gain awareness about their gender and their sexuality. It may allow educators to apply these findings to their teaching methodology and to the choice of materials they present. Educators may gain awareness about their personal modeling of gender (Mac an Ghail, 1994) and the importance of their response to students’ gender representations (Carlson, 1997). Additionally, adolescents enrolled in a comprehensive gender and sexual education program based on moral beliefs and values of tolerance and inclusivity may gain awareness about gender role, gender identity, and sexuality. This study may guide institutions such as schools, community, and, hopefully, society at large.

The sexuality education program I teach is referred to as “comprehensive” because it does not simply promote postponement of sexual intercourse but also provides information on all issues of sexuality such as facts and statistics on the prevention of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV-AIDS, *as well as* information about gender role, gender identity and sexual orientation. Analyzing how the youth in this sexuality education program negotiate their participation in conversation and how their participation varies within and between genders was a transformative experience both professionally and personally. Students’ discourses tended to often reproduce gender stereotypes. Yet, students

connected with one another, supported each other and collaborated in a multiplicity of ways using talk and strategies that did not necessarily appear to be collaborative, and some did, in several ways, resist the patriarchal order. While the findings for this study are contextual and could not be easily generalized, they clarified my interrogations, and allow for some optimism as far as this youth's articulation and negotiation of gender and sexuality. At a personal and professional level, in completing this work, I learned to navigate through the meanders of the setting, parents, students, supervisor, and other faculty as a teacher-researcher. Most importantly, I learned to listen to many voices including my own. It empowered me and provided me with a newly-found and stronger voice (Gilligan, 1993; Belenky, McVicker Clichy, Ruler Goldberger, & Mattuck Tarule, 1986).

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of Literature**

#### **Introduction**

Participants' discourse in the sexuality education eighth grade "Coming of Age" classroom of this Unitarian Universalist church school constructed meanings of gender and sexuality and these meanings got enacted in their conversations. As I listened and interrogated the voices of students (and teachers), questions arose about the concepts which inform my inquiry:

- How were gender and sexuality defined, constructed, and irreversibly related, and how was gender a performance?
- How were the students learning about gender and sexuality?
- What are the history and the current policies of sexuality education in the United States?
- How did the relationship between sexuality and religion support teaching about sexuality in this religious setting?
- How are discourse and discourse analysis defined? How is discourse a way to perform gender?

In this chapter, I use these questions to outline the examination of theoretical concepts that inform the conceptual framework of this inquiry.

## **The construction of gender**

Gender is commonly understood as being identified as female or male based upon one's biological and reproductive system. In an activity offered at the beginning of the semester for a gender and women studies course I teach, I ask students to write their definition of gender on an index card which I collect. Between 80 and 90% of the collected cards refer to gender as directly related to biological sex, or the fact of having *either* male reproductive organs *or* female reproductive organs. Students' understanding of gender in the eighth grade classroom are also rooted in the dominant understanding of gender which defines one as either both male and masculine, and romantically (sexually) attracted to the feminine, or female and feminine and attracted to the masculine.

Although the boundaries for these two categories have been and are constantly being challenged by human experience across history, geography and the sciences, this is the most pervasive societal definition of gender today which informs eighth grade students in the sexuality education classroom as much as college students in a gender and sexuality course, who all struggle as we attempt to redefine the concept of gender as a social construction that organizes sexual difference. Lorber (1994) explains that "Gender construction starts with the assignment to a sex category based upon what the genitalia look like at birth" (p. 142). This means that, from the day we are born and assigned a gender based upon biological sex, we learn to perform the specific gender aligned with this biological sex.

However, scientific research, and, among other things, the increasing visibility of intersexed individuals (born with anatomical and reproductive attributes of more than one gender) in the past twenty years, has shown that the diversity of bodily and reproductive

possibilities is much more extensive than assumed, and that “Two sexes are not enough” (Fausto-Sterling, 1985, 2000). Fausto-Sterling (2000) establishes a continuum between 100% biologically male and a 100% biologically female with many possibilities in between. She defines gender as a cultural construct along which males are people who look and act “male,” and females are people who look and act “female.” Gender identity then defines the gender with which a person identifies as, the Encyclopedia Britannica (2007) explains: “An individual’s self-conception as being male or female as distinguished from actual biological sex. For most persons, gender identity and biological characteristics are the same. There are, however, circumstances in which an individual experiences little or no connection between biological sex and gender.” This means that a person’s body may have a biological sex (whether ambiguous or not) which differs from their sense of their own gender. Many argue that gender identification relies on mind rather than bodily considerations (Butler, 1999; Foucault, 1976). Fausto-Sterling (2000) says that labeling someone a man or a woman is a social decision and whether we use scientific knowledge to make this decision, it is our beliefs about gender – not science – that define our sex.

Still, even if defined as a social construct in the postmodern and feminist perspective, gender identification viewed as a rigid binary between male and female remains fundamental to the organization of society and it is shaped within institutional (school, the media) and social (family, peers) context (Beauvoir, 1949; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Connell, 1996. Martino, 2000). Learning or knowing a newborn’s gender (“Is it a boy or a girl?”) is one of the most emphasized (by family, friends and the parents themselves) features of becoming a parent: Whether the parent(s) opt to know the “sex”

(as it is predominantly referred to as) of the fetus or not, to divulge the information (and to whom) or not; whether the parent(s) will throw a “gender reveal party” or not are all relevant questions in Twenty First Century America which concur with the notion that gender is an essential component of social life. So many decisions are based upon the child’s gender during their formative years and later whether about mundane aspects such as room decoration or clothing, or more significant choices such as physical appearance and expression, school, peers, and career, influenced by parents/family’s, teachers’ and societal attitudes and expectations. Gender norms and expectations are enforced formally and informally in a social process or a production that defines us a man or woman. We learn to and are constantly “doing gender” (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Thorne (1993), for instance, draws on her daily observations in the classroom and on the playground to show how children construct and experience gender in school. She argues that the organization and meaning of gender are influenced by age, ethnicity, race, sexuality, and social class, and that they shift with social context. Many see gender identity, not through the lens of individual socialization or difference, but rather as a social process of acculturation and reproduction, involving groups of children (Apple, 1988; Giroux, 1981; Martin, 1998; Pascoe, 2007; Thorne, 1993).

Identifying as male or female is probably the primary component of one’s identity (Frye, 1983; Lorber, 1994; Wildman & Davis, 2005) which impacts every aspect of one’s life. While, as Shaw and Lee argue (2009): “There is nothing essential, intrinsic, or static about femininity or masculinity; rather they are social categories that might mean different things, in different societies and in different historical periods” (p.124), gender is the fundamental component of our social system that assigns roles and responsibilities based



upon whether one is male or female, and these roles and responsibilities are ranked and valued differently whether they are associated with the masculine or with the feminine. Lorber (1994) refers to this system as a “gender-stratified society [in which] what men do is usually valued more highly than what women do because men do it, even when their activities are very similar or the same” (p. 143). Thus, gender as a rigid binary system, although a social construction, is the essential component of a system of privileges and oppressions referred to as a patriarchy or patriarchal order (hooks, 2004; McIntosh, 2005). In a patriarchy, men, as a gender category, are the norm and dominate while anyone not recognized as male is defined as the “Other.”

In the study of gender, the concept of hegemony occupies a central place. Connell (1997) defines hegemony (a term coined by Gramsci, 1971) as “a social ascendancy achieved in a play of social forces that extends beyond contests of brute power into the organization of private life and cultural processes ... Hegemonic masculinity is very public... The public face of hegemonic masculinity is not necessarily what powerful men are, but what sustains their power and what large numbers of men are motivated to support. Hegemonic masculinity is always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women” (p. 23). In other words, hegemony defines the manner in which some ways of understanding the world become culturally dominant, taken for granted, invisible, thus almost *natural*. Hegemonic masculinity emerges in the relationship men have with other men and with women, and may be emphasized or minimized within institutional settings. Hegemonic masculinity as a play between different forms of masculinity is as much part of a patriarchal social order as its counter-part: emphasized or hyper-femininity (Connell, 1997). Thus masculinity and femininity are viewed within a range and, for this reason, these two

words are, at times, used in the plural form in the literature: masculinities, and femininities (Mac an Ghail, 1994). In “The Will to Change,” hooks (2004) explains how the education of boys and girls is rooted in the patriarchal system. Of her parents she says: “As their daughter, I was taught that it was my role to serve, be weak, be free from the burden of thinking, to take care of and nurture others. My brother was taught that it was his role to be served; to provide; to be strong; to think; strategize, and plan; and to refuse to care take and nurture others” (p. 18). As a girl, I was oppressed in the same way, as are many still today.

Importantly, the concept of multiple genders or a gender continuum has led to reconsideration of the conventional binary male/female, boy/girl, and the abandonment of biological and sex-differences theories of masculinity formation (Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Weaver-Hightower, 2003). As Mac An Ghail explains (1994): “The Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies makes the following distinction: “By ‘gender,’ we mean the socially constructed forms of masculinity and femininity.” Until recently, policy and research on gender and education focused on girls, yet a growing shift occurred in the mid-1990s in the examination of boys’ education, sometimes referred to as “the boys’ turn” (Weaver-Hightower, 2003).

Some popular literature warns of increasing psychological harm to boys in modern society (Pollack, 1998; Hoff-Sommers, 2000). This literature is based on the essentialist belief in “natural” biological differences between boys and girls and supported by indicators such as differential national standardized test scores in literacy, drop out and disciplinary rates, disproportionate numbers in special education, and falling college enrollment. These data have alerted parents, teachers, administrators, and policy-makers. However, Weaver-Hightower (2003) argues: “We need to avoid assuming not

only that all boys are *disadvantaged* because some are, but also that all boys are *advantaged* because some are” (p. 480). The constructivist and post-structuralist approaches argue that ideals of masculinity and femininity are historically and contextually dependent, making an infinite number of masculinities and femininities possible. Ethnographic studies (Mac an Ghail, 1994; Martino, 2000; Chambers, Tinknell & Van Loon, 2004) show a typology of masculinities for both teachers and students, each with distinct characteristics in relation to women. Gender identity greatly intersects with issues of class and race (Weaver-Hightower, 2003) and is influenced by the version(s) of masculinity and femininity depicted in popular culture via the media from movies, TV shows (e.g. MTV), electronic games, advertisings, Hip Hop and Rap music lyrics, magazines, memorabilia, to sports. The predominant masculine image (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998, Drummond, 2003; Martino, 2000) is heterosexual, dominant, and hegemonic. In schools, hegemonic masculinity implies a number of normative practices: “othering,” differentiation, sexism, heterosexism, homophobia, sexual harassment and violence (Martino, 2000, Kimmel 2003, Robinson, 2005). Practice-based research attempts to respond to some of these issues, but also disproves some of the stereotypes of boys who are primed to imitate the violence they see (Newkirk, 2002; Renold, 2004). Some researchers even argue for an educated use of electronic games as a literacy tool (Gee, 2003).

I understand the construction of masculinity (Connell, 1996; Edley, 2001) or femininity according to the concept of “habitus” as outlined by Bourdieu & Passeron (1977). “Habitus is a set of dispositions created in an individual over time and shaped by structural elements in society, such as the family or school. The ideologies and practices

of our everyday life are absorbed and internalized so that they become habitual, shaping our future choices, and perceived as natural” (Marsh, 2006). Butler (1999) refers to gender as a “laborious process of becoming naturalized” (p. 95). Edley (2001) notes that through gender rituals and disciplines, masculinity and femininity are “inscribed” upon the bodies (p. 195).

I understand patriarchy as an internalized ideology which defines and shapes the *discourse* of multiple masculinities and femininities. As Foucault (1972) indicates, the ideology of the subject works to construct the object of which it speaks. It has become a socially and discursively constructed reality. In my sexuality education classroom, young people’s voices embedded in patriarchal ideology inform me.

### **The construction of sexuality**

Generally speaking, “sexuality” refers to the condition of being characterized and distinguished by sex, the interest in sexual activity, or the sexual character or potency (American Heritage Dictionary, 2000). From the same source, the adjective “sexual” is defined as relating to sex, sexuality, the sexes, or the sex organs, and their functions, implying erotic desire or activity, or involving reproduction characterized by the union of male and female gametes: sexual reproduction. Finally, this source defines “sex “ as the property by which organisms are classified as male or female on the basis of their reproductive organs or functions, the condition of being male or female, the sexual urge as it manifests itself in behavior, sexual intercourse, the genitals. Because of the range of definitions available for the term “sex,” I prefer to avoid it in this study. In general, I prefer to use the word “sexuality,” and the expression “biological sex” when referring to anatomy and reproductive systems. Similarly, when discussing sexual behavior and

attraction, or marriage, I use the expression same gender rather than same sex in this study because I find it less ambiguous and intrusive.

In addition, although the definitions for the term sex I mentioned earlier are current definitions in today's dictionaries and reflect current understandings of sex and sexuality in the dominant ideology, they have long been challenged by research on discourse, gender and sexuality showing that the definition of sex and sexuality is tightly coupled with socio-cultural-historical and even geographical contexts and that these contexts complicate the concept of sexuality whether it relates to biology or identity. Such research visualizes sexuality on a continuum of biological sex, gender identity, gender expression and sexual attraction, rather than within a rigid binary - male/female and masculine/feminine - which makes gender and sexuality inseparable (Beauvoir, 1949; Butler, 1999; Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Foucault, 1976).

In "Sexing the body," Fausto-Sterling (1998) demonstrates the importance in the socio-cultural history of humanity of surgically addressing any ambiguity of the genitals or reproductive organs in newborn babies in order to align their body within the male/female gender binary. This is done, according to Chase (1998), in spite of the fact that "these surgeries typically reduce individuals' chances of sexual pleasure dramatically and may increase depression and a sense of stigma" (p. 67). Fausto-Sterling (2000) estimates that 1.7% of babies are born with ambiguous genitals and that this phenomenon is on the rise. Her research brings much evidence to the concept of a gender and sexuality continuum and of the inseparability of gender and sexuality. Butler (1999) explains that: "For Foucault, the body is not "sexed" in any significant sense prior to its determination within a discourse through which it becomes invested with an "idea" of

natural or essential sex....Sexuality is an historically specific organization of power, discourse, bodies, and affectivity” (p. 125). This means that specific gender characteristics are attached to the term male/masculine and female/feminine that extend much beyond sexual organs, sexual attitudes and sexual behaviors, and apply to all social processes, and that the predominance of a gender and sexuality binary is inherent to social organization and distribution of power in society. In other words, sexuality and gender are socially constructed to align with each other along a rigid binary (Lorber, 1994; Shaw and Lee, 2009; Schwartz and Rutter, 1998) in a way that attributes more power to certain groups than others.

## **The Construction of Sexuality Education**

### **History of sexuality education.**

Concerns about sexuality education as a public matter emerged in the USA in the 1900s. At the time, sexuality education was considered in the context of social hygiene, purity and eugenics. The “policy-makers” or groups who uncovered and brought these issues to the forefront mostly belonged to the white, educated, middle-class and were motivated by puritanical, moralizing values (Irvine, 2002, Nelson Trudell, 1993). This means that dominant understandings of sexual activity made it acceptable exclusively in the framework of heterosexual marriage and reproduction. It was considered immoral by the Upper and Middle-class in any other context; thus sexual activity tended to be taboo and viewed as a factor of prostitution, crime, and drunkenness, especially when it came to lower social ranks and the working class. Thus, the necessity of educating the population about sexual matters stemmed from both public health concerns and moral values. The

goal of policy-makers was to ensure that the population would know enough to maintain a healthy body and entertain a safe sexual activity.

The target population was young people, as well as the least economically advantaged and least educated groups of all ages. Later on, during the 1960s and 1970s, the focus of sexuality education became teenage pregnancy and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections. Educating youth about sexuality became an attempt to curb youth sexual activity so as to reduce the risk of teenage pregnancy. Hines (1999) and Lesko (1996) argue that the concept of “teenager” is historically and socially constructed. According to Hine’s “Teenage Mystique,” the labor of young people was once very important except for the dominant class who could afford to train and educate its children, and an assumption was made at the time of World War II, that “All young people, regardless of their class, location, or ethnicity, have essentially the same experience” (p. 5). This means that the category of “teenagers” was more or less “created” in the post-industrial era, as fewer young people were needed to be employed in factories, and were encouraged to remain in school and pursue an education. Sexuality education has been and is mostly addressing this specific age-group.

#### **Current sexuality education policy.**

Today, adolescents remain the main target of sexuality education and schools’ sexuality education curricula remain mostly founded on the principle that adolescent sexuality is dangerous and unwanted. The focus of sexuality education has traditionally remained the prevention of sexually transmitted infections and teenage pregnancy, as evidenced by increased government mandates to provide some form of sexuality and HIV/Aids education in the past two decades (Nelson Trudell, 1993). Several sexuality

education programs are offered in American public schools and other private/religious settings. These programs are mostly referred to as either abstinence-based or comprehensive sexuality education (SIECUS & Advocates for Youth, 2001; Nelson Trudell, 1993; Mathematica Policy Research, 2007).

Thomas (2000) distinguishes two types of abstinence-based programs:

1. Abstinence-only sexuality education
2. Abstinence-plus sexuality education

Abstinence-only sexuality education programs present abstinence of all sexual activity as the only method for the prevention of pregnancy and sexually-transmitted infections among adolescents, whereas abstinence-plus sexuality education programs emphasize other prevention methods against pregnancy and infections as well as abstinence. The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) and Advocates for Youth (2000) refer to abstinence-only programs as “abstinence-only until marriage” programs. They explain that these programs usually limit their discussion to sexually-transmitted infections, unplanned pregnancies, contraceptive failure rates, and the necessity for teenagers to refrain from any sexual activity prior to marriage. They add that these programs typically do not provide any information about sexual health relating to puberty and reproduction, and pregnancy and disease prevention. In addition, according to the SIECUS and Advocates for Youth report (2000), they are often referred to as “fear-based” programs as they attempt to control young people’s sexual behavior using shame, fear, and guilt, and they emphasize chastity or purity pledges rather than education per se.



Comprehensive sexuality education programs emphasize abstinence while teaching about infections and pregnancy prevention. They provide information about sexual health, reproduction, body image, intimacy, gender role, and the opportunity to develop communication and decision-making skills. Abstinence-based programs received the bulk of federal funding from 1996 to 2009 under Section 510 of Title V of the Social Security Act. While proponents of abstinence-only sexuality education programs argue that abstinence is the only way to encourage young people to delay sexual activity until marriage, many organizations (SIECUS & Advocates for Youth, 2000) concur that there are no published studies in the professional literature showing that abstinence-only sexuality education results in young people delaying the initiation of sexual intercourse and much evidence that a majority of adolescents engage in sexual activity in their late teens : While 13% of teenagers have had sexual intercourse by age 15, seven in ten teen men and teen women have had intercourse by their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. Regardless of the sexuality education program they were enrolled in or whether they pledged “chastity,” or not, and, although first time sexual intercourse (understood as vaginal/penile) may be slightly delayed for youth enrolled in abstinence-only programs, they do so at much greater risk of sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy because of lack of information (Guttmacher Institute, 2012).

Thus, these organizations argue that sexuality education programs must be comprehensive in order to provide adolescents with as much and as accurate information as possible, even when simultaneously encouraging postponement of sexual intercourse. A documentary, “The Education of Shelby Knox,” (Lipshuz & Rosenblatt, 2005), tells the story of a teen-ager, Shelby Knox, from a Southern Baptist family in a small Texas

town, who has taken a “True Love Waits” pledge. This text gives a realistic rendition of how abstinence pledges are lovely in the abstract but don’t acknowledge reality, and of how abstinence-only education fails to actually “educate” and prepare young people in addition to excluding non-heterosexual youth. Shelby Knox became a comprehensive sexuality education activist and has spoken at congressional hearings on sexuality education since then.

In 2010, Congress eliminated two federal programs that had funded abstinence-only education: the Adolescent Family Life (AFL) Prevention program and the Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE) program; \$13 million and \$99 million a year, respectively for a total of \$112 million a year. With the enactment of health care reform legislation, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (P.L. 111-148) in 2010, the federal government created two new evidence-based programs which currently receive a total of \$180 million in funding for more comprehensive approaches to sexuality education: the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative (TPPI) administered by the newly established Office of Adolescent Health within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP). The Teen Prevention Initiative provides grants to public and private entities for medically accurate and age-appropriate teen pregnancy prevention and positive youth development programs. The Personal Responsibility Education Program provides young people with medically accurate and age-appropriate sexuality education in order to help them reduce the risk of unintended pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and other STIs. Although Section 510 of Title V of the Social Security Act which enabled the allocation of the bulk of federal funding to abstinence-only programs from 1996 to 2009 was reinstated in 2010, states

now may choose to apply for comprehensive sexuality education funds, abstinence-only funds, or both.

In addition, two bills, the *Real Education about Healthy Youth Act (REAHYA)* as well as the *Repealing Ineffective and Incomplete Abstinence-Only Program Funding Act* were introduced in 2013 which would strike Title V, Section 510 of the Social Security Act from statute, thereby ending the Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage programs once and for all. The *Real Education about Healthy Youth Act* would generalize comprehensive sexuality education and address the need for young people to make informed, responsible, and healthy decisions in order to become sexually healthy adults and “enjoy” healthy sexual relationships (although the word pleasure is never pronounced in most sexuality education legislation or public school sexuality education curricula).

Yet, although a 2002 study conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 58% of secondary school principals describe their sex education curriculum as comprehensive, most public and private schools’ curricula promote “just say ‘no’ approaches.” In many states, teachers of sexuality education must be certified to teach health and this certification usually only requires candidates to complete one or two three-credits courses related to sexuality education, namely Human Sexuality and/or Family Life and Sexuality Education (Rhode Island College, 2004). Many teachers seek certification both in health and physical education; although not all health teachers teach physical education. Research shows that sexuality education is defined (and taught) by “how human sexuality is perceived and conceptualized,” by the instructor (Welbourne-Moglia & Moglia, 1989; Nelson Trudell, 1993). Thus, while the official curriculum outcomes and strategy may be well-intentioned in many states, teachers of sexuality

education generally focus on the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, and teenage pregnancy, promoting abstinence as the safest means of prevention for both, and avoiding more value-driven and controversial items such as sexual diversity, contraception or termination of pregnancy. As a result, a 2012 report by the Guttmacher Institute showed that, in 2006–2008, although most teens aged 15–19 had received formal instruction about STIs (93%), HIV (89%) or abstinence (84%):

1. About one-third of teens had not received any formal instruction about contraception; fewer males received this instruction than females (62% vs. 70%),
2. Many sexually experienced teens (46% of males and 33% of females) had not received formal instruction about contraception before they first had sexual intercourse,
3. About one in four adolescents aged 15-19 (23% of females and 28% of males) received abstinence education without receiving any instruction about birth control in 2006–2008, compared with 8–9% in 1995.
4. Among teens aged 18–19, 41% reported that they knew little or nothing about condoms and 75% said they knew little or nothing about the contraceptive pill.

These statistics are troubling and confirm that most sexuality education programs as of 2012 were focusing on teaching about STIs and postponement of sexual intercourse and not much else.

### **Sexuality education policy and curricula problematized.**

Adolescents are constructed as if they are a distinct species. In “Denaturalizing adolescents,” Lesko (1996) explains that, in our culture, biological and physiological changes at puberty are used to characterize this age group as its own specific and often “naturally uncontrollable” group within the human spectrum. Yet, she claims (1996) that the term adolescent, which did not enter the public discourse until the late 1800s, arose from the need to maintain social order and especially to control young people’s sexuality. Thus, this concept is informed by socio-historical context as much as by human development. While sexuality and sexual activity have been attached to heterosexual marriage and reproduction, and imbued with silence and taboo since the Victorian era (Foucault, 1976; Fausto-Sterling, 2000), adolescent sexual activity has been associated with danger and shame. Troutman (2011) argues that “‘Sexual activity’ ... acts as the discursive borderland between teens and adults” (p. 249). By this, she means that adults are positioned as superior to young people and claim authority to regulate what sexual behavior is acceptable or not for teenagers. In “The cult of virginity,” Valenti (2009) reminisces about her first sexual exploration: “I was a ‘sexually active teen,’ a term often used in tandem with phrases like ‘at risk,’ or along-side with warning about drug and alcohol use, regardless of how uncontroversial the sex itself, may have been” (p. 181). Her statement emphasizes how young people’s sexual behaviors have been scrutinized, and education about sexuality has been confined within a “moral” discourse of risk (sexually transmitted infections, formerly referred to as diseases, and teenage pregnancy), “promiscuity,” and prohibition and associated with substance abuse as another ill-

structured problem, rather than addressed as a normal and essential part of human development.

In this context, “Just Say No” approaches have been problematic and led to lack or absence of information, or misinformation about condoms, contraception and termination of pregnancy. Similarly, sexuality education curricula do not teach formally about gender, and do not usually address considerations of sexual desire and pleasure, and lovemaking in general and do not challenge or even reinforce sexual gender stereotypes which construct girls as either pure and virginal or “promiscuous” but without desire, and boys as either sexual predators or as the only gender with desire. Under these circumstances, a growing number of adolescents turn to popular culture, internet sites and sexually explicit material (online and not) for education about sexual health and romantic or sexual behavior (Ashcraft, 2001; Valenti, 2007, 2009; Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009; Owens, Behun, Manning, & Reid, 2012). Indeed, children and adolescents learn about sexuality from gender and sexual representations in the media. Yet, few programs examine gender roles and gender characteristics and their representations in the media such as, for instance, films, advertisings, and music lyrics, or teach how to decipher messages from the media, develop critical thinking skills, and become media-literate. Thus, the learning impact from popular culture is not addressed, yet shapes understandings about gender and sexuality within a “hidden” curriculum (Anyon, 1980), a curriculum “Beyond the classroom” (Christensen, 2003).

In this respect, the framework of political analysts such as Freire (1970), Giroux (1981), or Foucault (1972) is particularly inspiring (Lincoln, 1992). Their work suggests that any curriculum is ideologically based, and that, in our society, instructional curricula

may be used to either reproduce the status quo, or to create awareness among participants, and educate them into becoming full member-citizens of a true democracy. Media literacy is an important tool of critical thinking in our visual and technological environment, and when the media's gender and sexuality hidden curriculum remains unaddressed, as is the case in many sexuality education programs, this works to reproduce the gender and sexuality status quo.

In addition, institutional discourses of abstinence (or abstinence-only) and morality often ignore such value-driven issues as gender identities and sexual orientations, thus excluding entire groups of young people yearning to explore and/or struggling with their sexual/gender identity.

***“Just Say ‘No’” or “Just Say ‘Know.’”***

Such language as “Just say ‘No’,” is an example of symbolic or hortatory tools (Ingram & Schneider, 1993; Hill, 2006, Mc Donnell & Elmore, 1987), and still seems typical of the discourse and tools used to promote and teach about sexuality education today. Sexuality education relies heavily on the personal concepts and values of policy designers as well as policy implementers regarding human sexuality and our own experiences (Welbourne-Moglia & Moglia, 1989). In such context, Ingram and Schneider explain that symbolic and hortatory tools such as the slogan “Just Say ‘No’,” hail targeted populations on the basis of their beliefs and values. They may include slogans, images, labels, codes, etc. This means that people tend to accept a policy if the slogan, image or label fits into their own value system. Similarly, Hill (2006) explains that the meaning and use of words is shaped heavily by context, especially the particular “discourse community” to which its users belong” (p.65). The slogan “Just Say ‘No,’” whenever used in the context of sexuality education, allows the policy to establish that

sexuality is unwanted or maybe immoral without explicitly saying so. Yet, in a study using data from four cycles of the National Survey of Family Growth (1982–2002) and event history analysis techniques, including Kaplan-Meier life-table procedures and Cox proportional-hazards regression models, Finer (2007) examined the incidence of premarital sex by gender and historical cohort. He found that: “Almost all Americans have sex before marrying” and that, while the purpose of sexuality education is mostly to encourage young Americans to postpone sexual activity until marriage, “the median age at first marriage increased from 22.1 to 25.8 for women and from 24.4 to 27.4 for men over the past 25 years, and the proportion of the population 18 and older that had never married increased from 16% to 25% between 1970 and 2004, suggesting that many individuals have a long interval after puberty and before marrying during which they may become sexually active” (pp. 73-74). These findings confirm the notion that adolescents have been and will be engaging in sexual activity and need to “know,” i.e. they need extensive and accurate information – comprehensive - rather than fear-based, shaming, and/or prohibitive sexuality education (SIECUS & Advocates for Youth, 2000).

***Gendered desire and enthusiastic consent.***

Dominant definitions of sexuality fail to define gender and sexuality as a social construction and even less so as a continuum. Schwartz and Rutter (1998) explain that “a person’s sexuality consists of both behavior and desire” (p. 186). Yet, as discussed earlier, sexuality and gender are inseparable (Dorlin, 2008). Femininity(ies) and masculinity(ies) are learned socially and reproduced through public, popular culture and institutional discourses. Traditional discourses of femininity and masculinity are rarely problematized as such in the dominant ideology which is mirrored in most sexuality



education curricula. Therefore, the latter often also reinforce hegemonic gender characteristics and present boys as sexually aggressive and testosterone-driven and girls as “gatekeepers” and responsible for “Just Say(ing) ‘No’!” (Whatley, 1991; Weis & Carbonell-Medina, 2000). In the same way as women and girls are often represented as “compulsorily heterosexual” (Rich, 1986), and either slut or virgin, in the dominant media (Valenti, 2007), but never simply as sexual agents, the “discourse of female sexual desire” has been found “missing” from most sexuality education curricula (Fine, 1988; Fine & McClellan, 2006; Tolman, 1994). The fact that female desire and pleasure have traditionally been ignored, not researched, and/or misrepresented, accounts for the absence of accurate language and representation, and acknowledgment in the culture at large. In “The myth of the vaginal orgasm,” Koedt (1968) explains that female desire and female orgasm were misconstrued by Freudian theory in that, according to Freud, clitoral orgasm represented an immature stage of female development as opposed to vaginal orgasm which was said to be the only site of female sexual maturity. Koedt argued further that the site of female pleasure is always the clitoris and that the myth of the vaginal orgasm is rooted in patriarchal systems that confuse women about their bodies and subordinate female sexuality to male pleasure. Interestingly, still today, many high-school textbooks used for sexuality education do not include the clitoris and labia in diagrams of female anatomy. This omission is justified by claiming that only reproduction should be covered and, that, strictly speaking, the clitoris and labia are not organs of reproduction (Weinberg, 2013) even though most agree that the clitoris is, indeed, the major source of female sexual pleasure and power (Rich, 1986; Ensler, 1998; Gerhard, 2000) and even though recent research about female sexuality has evidenced

that female sexual desire might actually surpass male desire both in intensity, frequency, and versatility (Bergner, 2013).

The fact that female sexual desire has been silenced or made invisible both in American culture at large and in sexuality education curricula in particular, combined with the charge for women and girls to “resist” sexually-driven boys and men, challenges the efficacy and meaning of the word “no.” Research questions whether this combination may impact the incidence of male sexual violence, assault against -, and rape of women and girls. As an example, in their study of three adolescent girls experiencing unwanted advances for sexual intercourse by boys, Tolman and Higgins (1996) found that two of the girls said “no” unconvincingly because they had successfully learned from this culture that “good girls” do not feel desire and, as a result, were not able to recognize physiological signals of arousal in their own body which would have made their refusal all the more powerful, whereas the one girl (originally from Poland) who had grown up in a different culture explained that she instantly would recognize her own arousal without shame and therefore was clearly able to reject her suitor when not feeling aroused. In spite of the size of the sample in this specific example, the authors suggest that the dichotomy good girl/bad girl in American culture prevents girls from learning to acknowledge their own sexual desire and claiming their own sexual pleasure, so much so that the good girl/bad girl dichotomy impacts girls’ ability to “enthusiastically consent to” or successfully reject sexual advances and often carries this uncertainty into adulthood. In “‘Yes’ means ‘yes,’” Friedman and Valenti (2008) explain the concept of sex-positivity which requires teaching young people about the benefits of healthy, pleasurable, and consensual sexual relationships across gender, and teaching women and

girls to be independent sexual agents, and learn to consent enthusiastically when they please, whereby the articulation of desire is welcome and the search for pleasure expected and validated, as well as to “just say ‘no’” when they please, in order to both affirm authentic female sexual desire and quest for pleasure, and successfully address sexual harassment and assault.

***Pornography is Sexuality Education.***

As noted earlier, an increasing number of young people rely on sexually explicit material (often online) for sexuality education. In “Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts,” Langton (1993) entertains MacKinnon’s (1988) notion that pornography subordinates women and perpetuates the subordination of women, as well as silences women. She says: “Pornography is said to rank women as sex objects, defined on the basis of [their] looks... [their] availability for sexual pleasure. Pornography represents degrading and abusive sexual behavior in such a way as to endorse the degradation. MacKinnon has a striking list of illocutionary verbs: ‘Pornography sexualizes rape, battery, sexual harassment . . . and child sexual abuse; it . . . celebrates, promotes, authorizes and legitimates them’” (p. 307). In addition, Langton demonstrates the authoritative (and pervasive) effect of pornography to educate about sexuality. In this way, students’ discourse (mostly male) in my classroom corroborates Langton’s observation. Sam, an outspoken male participant whose discourse is at the heart of one of the chapters of this study, confides sometimes during class about things he has learned online. For instance, he once shared that he had “*learned about labia stretching on this website*” (Field notes, February 2008) or he asked at another time: “*What about strap-ons?*” as our class was

discussing whether abstinence has the same meaning for same gender<sup>2</sup> sexual relationships (Field notes, March 2008). Finally, he admitted during the same discussion about abstinence that: “*You watch so much porn, you get sick of it*” (Transcript 9, March 9, p. 8). Thus, his discourse implied that he resorted to sexual explicit material for information. In addition, a question had appeared in the question box a few weeks prior to Sam’s earlier comments. Students are asked to write a comment or a question on an index card at the end of each class, or simply the following sentence: “I do not have a question for the question box today.” The question highlighted the use of pornography: “*Is it bad for your future sex life to watch porn sex?*” (Field notes, February 2008). In any case, both Sam’s comments and this anonymous question point to the idea that internet pornography may well serve as a common resource for adolescents searching for information about sexuality. Langton (1993) notes:

What is important here is not whether the speech of pornographers is universally held in high esteem: it is not -- hence the common assumption among liberals that in defending pornographers they are defending the underdog. What is important is whether it is authoritative in the domain that counts -- the domain of speech about sex-and whether it is authoritative for the hearers that count: people, men, boys, who in addition to wanting "entertainment," want to discover the right way to do things, want to know which moves in the sexual game are legitimate. What is important is whether it is authoritative for those hearers who -- one way or another -- do seem to learn that violence is sexy and coercion legitimate: the fifty percent of boys who "think it is okay for a man to rape a woman if he is sexually aroused by her," the fifteen

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<sup>2</sup> Here, I am referring to sexual relationships in which two individuals both identify as having the same gender.

percent of male college undergraduates who say they have raped a woman on a date, the eighty-six percent who say that they enjoy the conquest part of sex, the thirty percent who rank faces of women displaying pain and fear to be more sexually attractive than faces showing pleasure. In this domain, and for these hearers, it may be that pornography has all the authority of a monopoly. (p. 312)

Thus, Langton concurs with many about what she names the “disable-ing of the utterance ‘No.’” She adds:

For many cases of rape, and probably all that reach the courts . . . , the woman whose hearer recognized that she refused, and persisted in spite of it, or perhaps because of it; the woman whose hearer recognized the prohibition and disobeyed. If pornography legitimates rape of this kind, it does so by sexualizing the use of force in response to refusal that is recognized as refusal. Such pornography eroticizes refusal itself, presenting the overpowering of a woman's will as exciting. Someone learning the rules of the sexual game from that kind of pornography would recognize a woman's refusal and disobey it. (p. 323).

By this, she means that pornographic representations of women often present men's rape of and violence against women as acceptable, even common behavior, and the uttering of the word “no” by girls and women as erotic rather than non-consensual.

Langton's (1993) as well as McKinnon and Dworkin's (1988) views of pornography as largely detrimental and harmful for women, and mis-informative have long been challenged. Rubin (1993), for instance, questions McKinnon and Dworkin's expandable definition of all pornography as a “documentary of abuse” (p. 31) against women and whether this amalgamation may be counter-productive to the feminist cause

and to women's sexual emancipation. Rubin (1993) considers the fact that the term pornography has never been properly and definitively defined most interesting. She argues that not all sexually explicit material is violent and degrading, and questions whether pornography depicts any more violence against women than the mass-media. She argues that appreciation of most pornographic materials relates to a wide diversity of sexual practices and that the restriction of sexual representations is based on a normative hierarchy that constricts sexual acts and identities outside heterosexuality, marriage, monogamy, and reproduction. Many, since then, have defended the notion that pornography and erotica might be transformed into a vehicle for women's erotic expression (Taormino, Parrenas-Shimizu, Penley & Miller-Young, 2013). In fact, Langton (1993) herself had alluded to the possibility of an alternative pornographic speech "where women tell the world what women are really like, or with the speech of competition to counter pornography's monopoly, where women themselves become authors of erotica that is arousing and explicit but does not subordinate" (p. 314) and such erotica has been increasingly developing on the internet although still in small number (e.g.: Websites for Bright Desire, Erica Lust, MakeLovenotPornTV).

In addition, many emphasize the need to differentiate between pornography and internet pornography. Grebowicz (2013), for instance, defines internet porn as the intersection of pornography and technology. She notes that McKinnon and Dworkin's (1988) analysis of the social meanings and political effects of pornography have been championed by feminist thinkers and that the combination of pornography and technology has not only universalized the use of pornography, but also drastically complicated its definition as central to the formation of imaginary sexuality; she

interrogates the relationships between speech, freedom, sexuality, and power as they are produced and maintained by this commodification of information about sexuality.

This being said, most pornographic materials (whether online or not) also known as “mainstream pornography” limit sexual representations to heterosexual male fantasies. In his qualitative study of today’s pornographic industry, the sociologist Mathieu Trachman (2013) interviewed seventy professionals in the world of French pornography (directors, producers, actors, technicians, and critics), and analyzed gender and sexuality relations and representations in the field. He found that pornographic images are mostly constructed on a masculine/male heterosexual phantasmagorical model. First, he said, because, although many experienced actresses attempt creating their own films, producers and directors are mostly male, and have been very successful at keeping the creative (and lucrative) side of the profession closed to women. Secondly, because, although many sexually explicit materials include lesbian sex (for the male gaze), in addition to many sexual practices (such as bondage/discipline/domination/submission/sado-masochism, double/multiple penetration, and even sexual assault and rape where the recipients are mostly female), representations of men having sex with men, or gay male sex, are absent from mainstream pornography. Also, lesbian and feminine pornography occupy a minimal part of the “industry.” Thus, Trachman notes, the sexual representations are not “natural” but constructed.

In addition, many, including Valenti (2007), argue that mainstream internet pornography and the normalization of pornography have “spawned a generation of boys who (think) that porn sex equals normal sex (...) (and) girls who think that porn sex is the only way to please guys” (pp. 551-552). Valenti refers to this cultural phenomenon as

“pornified sex,” a term coined by Pamela Paul (2005). Such pornification impacts not only sexual relationships and attitudes but has also pervaded Twenty First Century American beauty culture such as beauty pageants, suggestive fashion lingerie style trends, pole-dancing workshops, and a variety of body disciplines such as integral waxing or cosmetic surgery included but not limited to breast implants, vaginoplasty, labiaplasty, and also penis enlargement (Jean, 2009): All these are phenomena on the rise at an alarming rate for ever younger girls according to Peggy Orenstein (2012). Research on internet pornography is a vibrant field, and it seems that the globalized impact of mainstream graphic images of objectified women and girls by men and for the male gaze may go far beyond fashion trends, pole-dancing, and plastic surgery to attitudes undermining support for affirmative action programs for women (Wright & Funk, 2013).

Importantly, a lot of this research is showing that pornography has become young people’s preferred source of sexuality education; thus, pornography (and more often than not “mainstream” pornography) is sexuality education! Yet, in spite of the many signs showing the increasing use of internet pornography by children and youth, formal discussion about pornography, or pornography literacy education are drastically missing from most sexuality education programs and policies. Thus, it is left to the discretion of parents, who often prefer to rely on parental controls on the family computer rather than introducing the topic (Joannides, 2009). Indeed, in my work as a sexuality educator, I have been approached many times by parents who suspected that their child was watching internet pornography but were unsure how to “address” the issue and often did not.



### *Sexualities and identities left behind.*

In regards to sexual orientation and gender identity, even though, many states in the United States have adopted or are in the process of adopting a non-discrimination policy regarding sexual orientation, they do not generally provide a specific implementation policy in schools. Most schools are not officially required to include education on sexuality or sexualities in their health curriculum and to overtly police sexual orientation discrimination or harassment, allow/encourage non-heterosexual faculty to make their sexual orientation visible (to say the least), or allude to sexual orientation or sexual diversity in general instruction or discussion about current events. Carlson (1997) explains how devastating this institutionalized silence in the curriculum has been for teachers as well as students in public schools.

In addition, institutional sexuality education discourse often refers to “having sex” or “sexual intercourse” as vaginal/penile intercourse, thus normalizing heterosexual behavior and silencing non-heterosexual activities, as well as minimizing as “foreplay” behaviors different from vaginal-penile intercourse, thus reinforcing dominant popular culture and media representations of sexual behavior as heterosexual and phallogentric. Similarly, while the concept of sexual orientation is mostly silenced by public schools’ sexuality educators, it might occasionally surface only when associated with HIV and AIDS, thus stigmatizing further the groups in question (Nelson Trudell, 1993). Some researchers establish a relationship between the observed increase in school violence (such as the Columbine massacre) and the observed homophobia, hetero-normativity, and bullying in schools (Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; Martino, 2000) and in media representations of sexualized violence (Katz & Jhally, 1999).

Many education policy makers (legislators, states, and cities) note the need to address these issues explicitly, as well as education about gender and gender identities. Cities and states are grappling with how to register sex changes on birth certificates. Today, the law allows Australian citizens to alter their registered gender on their identification documents according to their gender identity. In Germany, parents of babies born with ambiguous genitalia will be able to declare their child's gender "neutral" on the birth certificate as of November 1, 2013. Around the western world and in the United States, school districts and youth organizations are urged to make decisions about how to include transgender students. For instance, the Unified School District of Arcadia, CA was accused of discriminating against a child who was anatomically female but identified as a boy at an early age, and was accepted by his peers by Grade 5, but forbidden to mix with boys and/or isolated throughout several grades ("Next Civil Rights Frontier," 2013). In fact, the State of California is the first state in the Union to have recently signed legislation guaranteeing transgender students access to interscholastic sports, gym classes, locker rooms and bathrooms based on their gender identity, irrespective of their biological sex ("California: Rights Guaranteed," 2013).

Many liberal colleges are offering gender neutral facilities for non-heterosexual and transgender student populations, and many states have been ratifying same-gender marriage. Yet, education about gender and gender identities, and how they relate to human sexualities does not formally belong to sexuality education per say in K-12 public schools curricula whereas gender and sexuality unofficial curricula are profuse in media of all kinds (Ashcraft, 2001; Christensen, 2003; Katz & Jhally, 1999; Kilbourne, 2010). Although the curriculum that I use (Our Whole Lives, Wilson 1999) addresses sexual

diversity in instructing inclusively and equally about heterosexual, bisexual, and same gender<sup>3</sup> relationships, many sexuality education programs do not define and elaborate about terms relating to non-heterosexual or transgender identities thus entertaining confusion and mis-information, and/or further emphasizing terminological learning from popular culture, and/or peers outside the classroom.

Indeed, new terms referring to identities and sexualities outside of the dominant gender and sexuality binary (either biologically male with masculine gender expression attracted to the feminine or biologically female with feminine gender expression attracted to the masculine) abound in today's socio-cultural language where the common acronym LGBT has organically expanded to LGBTQQIAAP for Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, ally, asexual, pansexual, and possibly more. Although queer theory argues that such labels are stigmatizing, and do not comprise the versatility of human eroticism and attraction, or capture the depth and complexity of human relationships, their expansion points to the co-existence of gender and sexuality and the necessity of formally teaching about both comprehensively (Sumara & Davis, 1999-2002), and the growing aptitude of younger generations to view gender identity-ies and sexuality-ies as fluid and plural (Vaccaro, 2009).

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<sup>3</sup> Here I am referring to an individual who entertains a relationship with someone who identifies with the same gender.

As developments and research in the field of sexualities and gender identities complicate the social construction of gender and sexuality, many critique the inertia of most sexuality education curricula in this arena (Ashcraft, 2001; Blount, 2005; Casemore, Sandlos, & Gilbert, 2011; Kronkhausen & Kronkhausen, 1963; McQueen, 2006; Weis, 2000; Whatley, 1991).

### **The Relationship between Sexuality and Religion**

Etymologically, the term religion comes from the Latin word “religio” meaning reverence for god/the gods, obligation or the bond between humans and god/the gods. It has been said to derive from the Latin “legare” (to read) or “re-legare” which means to read again or go over again, or from the Latin word “ligare” or “re-ligare” which means to bind, to connect or to reconnect (the later derivation is particularly relevant to understanding Unitarian Universalism). It is commonly defined as a belief or set of beliefs in a god or gods, and the worship of god or gods.

Durkheim (1915) defined religion as a “unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things” (p. 10). There are about 4200 recorded religions in the world today (Shouler, 2010). Each religion is an organized collection of beliefs and world views, a cultural system that relate to humanity, the supernatural, and spirituality. Religions practice organizes human life in society or in a group, and includes rituals and prescribed behaviors that affect every aspect of human life including but not limited to sexuality and reproduction, and therefore such practices rely on a specific organization of gender. Many modern religions such as Judaism, Islam and Christianity which are most widespread throughout the world and monotheistic have been decried as tools of the patriarchal system. Discussing the condition and construction of femininity, Beauvoir

(1949) says: “In modern civilization, which – even for woman -- has a share in promoting freedom, religion seems much less an instrument of constraint than an instrument of deception. Woman is asked in the name of God to accept her inferiority ... Religion sanctions woman’s self-love; it gives her the guide, father, lover, divine guardian she longs for nostalgically ... But, above all, it confirms the social order ...; it is why the Church (Roman-Catholic) is notably hostile to all measures likely to help woman’s emancipation. There must be religion for women; and there must be women, ‘true women,’ to perpetuate religion” (pp. 621-624). By this, Beauvoir means that religion, as an institution, subordinates women to men and God.

Many years prior to Beauvoir, Cady-Stanton (1895) explained this subordination of women through religion in the “Introduction to the Woman’s Bible,” saying that: “The Bible teaches that woman brought sin and death into the world, ... that she was arraigned before the judgment seat of Heaven, tried, condemned, and sentenced. Marriage for her was to be a condition of bondage, maternity a period of suffering and anguish, she was to play the role of a dependent on man’s bounty for all her material wants, and for all the information she might desire on the vital questions of the hour, she was commanded to ask her husband at home” (p. 683). In this excerpt, Cady-Stanton refers to the story of The Old Testament in which Eve led Adam into temptation by biting first into the apple, a symbolic metaphor for committing the original sin (love of the flesh), which itself led into the fall of humanity. According to Christian teachings, Eve bears the responsibility for the end of “humanity,” redeemed only by God who sent Jesus, his son, to earth to save humanity. Thus, both physical love - sexual intercourse viewed as fornication unless within marriage and aiming at “procreation” or reproduction - and women are

blamed and, as Cady-Stanton explains, this blame defines women's plight as men's subordinates through marriage, maternity, and death.

Similarly, Plaskow (2005) describes how "the central Jewish categories of Torah, Israel, and God are all constructed from male perspectives," and that, "In Torah, Jewish teaching, women are not absent, but they are cast in stories told by men ... Women are named through a filter of male experience: That is the essence of their silence. But women's experiences are not recorded or taken seriously because women are not perceived as normative Jew." (p. 698).

Of course, many reform movements emerged within Christianity, Judaism, and Islam in the past century which provided a more powerful presence for women and femininity. For instance, Nomani, a Moslem scholar, established an Islamic Bill of Rights for Women in Mosque (2005, p. 692); many Christian Protestant and Reformed Jewish denominations ordain women as ministers or rabbis, and many women enjoy empowering religious experiences and careers as religious leaders in the United States today. Still, prescribing sexual behaviors is an important part played by modern religions in today's world and American society, and the way in which different groups and organizations appropriate these prescriptions, although quite a hermeneutical process, fuels conservative discourses entertaining controversies about gender and sexuality topics such as gender roles, same gender<sup>4</sup> relationships and marriage, contraception and abortion, etc... Marty Klein (2013), a certified sex therapist and sociologist puts it rather bluntly: "For millennia, religion has colonized sexuality. Religion dictates who is eligible for sex, under what conditions, which activities, and which parts of the body in which combinations ... whether forbidding oral sex, forbidding intercourse during

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<sup>4</sup> Please see chapter II, pages 21 and 22 for more details about why this term is preferred to "same sex."

menstruation, forbidding sex between unmarried people, the dynamic is always the same. Believers are stripped of their bodies and their sexuality. Sexuality is religion's worst nightmare because it offers the possibility of personal autonomy." Here, although Klein utters the term "religion" without defining it, he quite captures the relationship between religion and sexuality as informed by traditional and dominant religious discourses.

A resurgence of religious fundamentalism has been observed during the past century, and these conservative movements always involve the control of women (McCarthy Brown, 1994). In fact, as Shaw and Lee (2009) note, "Many of the social and cultural battles raging in American society are cast in religious terms – abortion, marriage and gay marriage, sex(uality) education, racial violence, domestic violence, to name a few" (p. 669). Religion impacts every aspect of American culture, especially gender and sexuality, and religious beliefs and terminology: "defense" of marriage, "virginity," "chastity," "sin," "fornication", "abomination" that are presented in opposition to controversial topics such as reproductive rights, and/or gay marriage are often strictly associated with conservative religious discourses such as those of conservative Catholics or evangelical Christians (Haffner, 2006).

In this context, progressive religious organizations such as the Unitarian Universalist Association came to develop sexuality education curricula during the past forty years (Gibb Millspaugh, 2011). Haffner (2006), a sexologist ordained Unitarian Universalist minister, former chief executive officer of SIECUS, and founder of the Religious Institute writes: "The fact is that debates about the role of sexuality in life go back to the early church. While many of the early Christians fathers warned about too much passion even in marriage, other religious leaders such as Jovinian and Athanasius

argued that since sexuality was part of God's creation, it must be good ... The vast majority of faith traditions affirm that sexuality is God's life-giving and life-fulfilling gift, and almost all Protestant and Jewish denominations affirm access to voluntary contraception." Similarly, "Sacred choices and Abortion," (Attie & Goldwater, 2005) a documentary produced by the Religious Consultation, presents alternative discourses by Islamic, Christian, and Judaic scholars and representatives about termination of pregnancy affirming the moral value of reproductive choice. The point here is that the Unitarian Universalist Church is one of several religious institutions advocating for new views on gender and sexuality.

Although The Unitarian Universalist Church has been an active member of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, and has performed religious wedding ceremonies for partners of all genders for decades, progressive religious movements, such as this one, struggle to reclaim "morality" from dominant discourses about gender and sexuality that rely on fear and shame and keep penetrating into popular culture and institutional media presenting sexuality outside of marriage as "sinful," "promiscuous," or as "fornication," sexual activity between same gender <sup>5</sup>as an "abomination," abortion (and even contraception and the morning after contraceptive pill) as "murder," and the fetus as an "unborn child," and advocate for fetal rights on the basis of unverified studies that establish fetal pain as scientific truth (Roth, 2003).

In the eighth grade sexuality education classroom, students' discourses about their understandings of gender and sexuality are contextualized within such dominant

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<sup>5</sup> Please refer to chapter II (review of literature), pages 21 and 22 for a discussion about the use of the term gender rather than sex in this context.



discourses as well as the progressive discourses of the institution this classroom is a part of.

### **Discourse, discourses, and discourse analysis**

Discourse can be broadly defined as the expression, oral or written, of thought on a subject. For instance, directions on a box of medicinal tablets is as much discourse (Gee, 1999) as a speech by a government official on television, or a conversation between two people at the breakfast table, or a status post on someone's Facebook page. Discourse has also been defined as a way of thinking about / or presenting a subject including self, or even of establishing what knowledge is (Foucault, 1972). Foucault (1976) uses the term discourse in its plural sense, and refers to discourses as "regimes of truth." He explains that discourses are systems of thoughts, ideas, and values that shape the subject or the world of which they speak. He argues that, for instance, to declare that someone's behavior is *not* normal in society is also to define which behavior *is* normal.

Thus the discourse of normalcy is defined by ab-normalcy, and these definitions have changed throughout history. For instance, societal acceptance of same gender sexual attraction has changed throughout history from being part of a mentoring system for men-only in the Antiquity to a diagnosis of psychological deviance, and later to an "alternative lifestyle," and then to an attraction viewed as natural and acceptable in many Western nations, although still stigmatized, and punishable by law elsewhere. For Bakhtin (1981), discourse is defined in the plural sense, as an array of socio-ideological languages that individuals take up, from the various contexts in which they interact, to represent points of view on the world. Discourse is also defined as socially situated practices constructed

in moment to moment interaction (Fairclough, 1992, Gee, 1999). Gee (in Hicks, 1996) explains that “Discourses are identity tool kits replete with socially shared ways of acting, talking, and believing” (p. 53). In the postmodern perspective, the term discourse is often used in the plural sense, and connotes considerations of identity, epistemology, ideology and power.

In addition, Gee (1999) explains that “who we are and what we are doing always involves a great deal more than just language” (p. 17). He distinguishes between two categories of discourse:

- Big D-discourse is “Socially accepted associations among ways of using language, of thinking, valuing, interacting, in the ‘right’ places, at the ‘right’ times, with the ‘right’ objects (associations that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or ‘social network’). Big D-discourse always involves other tools or props such as clothes, symbols, objects, buildings, books, which help a person be *recognized* as a member of a specific social group may it be a university or a street gang (1999, pp. 17-18),
- Little d-discourse is “‘Stretches’ of language, like conversations or stories (1999, p. 17).

Similarly, Edley (2001) notes that “Discourse encompasses a whole range of different symbolic activities including styles of dress, patterns of consumption, ways of moving as well as talking” (p. 191).

In this study, I am interested in the oral or verbal form of discourse. Speaking or using words to express one’s mind is always social action, and always includes the notion of interaction(s); even in a monologue, when one is addressing oneself, it is conceivable

to envision an audience of another, or others. When two or more people speak with each other, they are social actors, and their use of language is situated in a specific context. Goffman (1959) defines an interaction as “The reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another’s actions when in one another’s immediate physical presence” (1959, p. 15). In other words, talking involves a lot more than semantics and grammar, and is always situated in a specific social context.

Similarly, in their study of classroom talk, Cazden, John & Hymes (1972) distinguish between the “referential” function of language or the way in which language is grammatically organized to name objects or state relationships, and the “social” function of language, or the way language is used by teachers, children, and communities with “Features of intonation, tone of voice, rhythm, style ... to convey respect or disrespect, concern or indifference, intimacy or distance, seriousness or play” (p. xiii). Hymes (in Cazden et al, 1972) argues that “The meaningfulness of language is interwoven of two kinds of meaning, referential, and social” (p. xxv). In the study of language, the distinction between “linguistic competence” (Cazden et al, 1972), or the knowledge of grammar separated from any other knowledge, and “communicative competence” (Cazden et al, 1972) or the knowledge of all sorts except grammatical knowledge which give someone the ability to speak “appropriately” in a given context, occupies a central place. Hymes explains that “linguistic competence” which he also names “means of speech,” and “communicative competence” which he also refers to as “contexts of situation” are both inherent components of social role. He refers to these “two interrelated aspects of speech” as the “verbal repertoire” (Cazden et al, 1972, pp. xxiii-xxiv). For Bakhtin (in Hicks, 1996), language is also centered more on dialogic

utterances than on grammatical sentences (p.51). Thus, as Hicks (1996) notes, “Language is a social construct and meaning is *relationally* constituted between hearer[s] and speaker[s]” (p. 52).

According to Bakhtin (1994, in Morris, p. 251), “An utterance is any unit of language from a single word to an entire text” (p. 251). The word utterance is used to refer to a group of words produced by a speaker or “any instance of language produced by a speaker” (Kutz, 2007).

For Bakhtin, an utterance is the main unit of meaning and is formed through a speaker’s relation to Otherness: Other people, others’ words and expressions, and the cultural world in a specific time and place, or context. He says (1981): “There are no neutral words and forms – words and forms than can belong to no one – All words and forms are populated by intentions ... The word in language is half someone else’s ... It exists in other people’s mouths, in other people’s contexts, serving other people’s intentions” (pp. 293-294). This means that when we speak we are always using words and expressions that have been used by others, and that we appropriate these words and expressions to make meaning in the specific time, place and context in which we are situated.

In addition to utterances, several features of speech inform the analysis of participants’ discourses in my classroom such as:

- What kind of speech event is happening: Is it a dialogue, a phone conversation, a conference?
- What type of speech act is happening: Is it a question, a request, a compliment, an insult?

- What is the intonation, tone of voice, rhythm, style of the participant(s)' speech in a particular conversation?
- Who takes turns, initiates conversation topics, and interrupts, and how often? Who is silent and/or participates less?

As Goffman (1977) explains “The management of talk will itself make available a swarm of events usable as signs. Who is brought or brings him/herself into the immediate orbit of another, who initiates talk, who is selected as the addressed recipient, who self-selects in talk turn-taking, who establishes and changes topics, whose statements are given attention and weight and so forth” (p. 324). The location and explication of these signs is essential to analyzing the discourse of students in my classroom.

This study is an ethnography of speaking (Cameron, 2001) that focuses on the “verbal repertoire” of these youths and on the ways in which they “populate their words with intentions” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293-294). The range or verbal repertoire of students and teachers in my classroom represents linguistic aspects of the different social languages they use, and which enable each of them “to be recognized as a certain kind of person” (Gee, 2001, p. 134) by self and others.

Goffman (1959) believes that when interacting, and/or speaking, everyone is always playing a part, or performing. In my classroom, participants, as they exchange and interact, play many parts using several discourses. Their speech performance can be referred to as carnivalesque (Bakhtin, in Morris, 1994) because there are no performers *and* spectators: Everyone is performing; and everyone is performing gender: masculinities and femininities.

Feminist theory has explored the relationships that exist between power, ideology, language, and discourse referred to as “doing gender,” or “performing gender” (Butler, 1999; Cameron, 2001). Butler (1999) argues that “Gender is a set of free floating attributes ... and proves to be performative ... There is not gender identity beyond the expressions of gender ... Identity is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results (p. 34). Cameron (1998) explains that “Speech is a ‘repeated’ stylization of the ‘body’” (p. 49). In other words, repeated speech acts help us, as social actors, develop discourse styles constituting us as “proper men or women” (p. 49). Thus, Cameron (1998) argues that: “Whereas sociolinguistics traditionally assume that people talk the way they do because of who they (already) are, the postmodernist approach suggests that people are who they are because of (among other things) the way they talk” and that “This approach acknowledges the instability and variability of gender identities, and therefore of the behavior in which those identities are performed” (p. 49).

In other words, attending to the D-discourse and d-discourse (Gee, 1999) of participants informs us about the ways in which their performance of gender constructs meanings of gender, and how fluid or rigid these meanings are. In her study of a group of male students in their twenties, Cameron (1998) suggests that it is possible for males and females to “Performatively subvert or resist the prevailing codes of gender” even though what the four male students in her study “Perform is the same old gendered script” (p. 62). Similarly, Cook-Gumperz and Szymanski (2001) demonstrate that “Gender is not an immutable given ...; rather, it is an interactional accomplishment that develops from the specifics of everyday interactions” (p. 108). Students in my classroom both reproduce and resist gendered scripts. With their speech, they construct meanings of gender which

construct them within a multiplicity of femininities and masculinities. As Edley (2001) notes: “Identities are produced and culture is transformed by those performances” (p. 190-191).

Research about youth talking in the sexuality education classroom and youth talking about sexual matters converges with the theory of heterosexual normativity called heteronormativity (Chambers, Tincknell & Van Loon, 2004; Robinson, 2005; Weis & Carbonell-Medina, 2000). Boys “perform” gender within the culturally dominant boundaries of “hegemonic masculinity” (Connell, 1997), by being “physically and verbally bold and intimidating” (Chambers, Tincknell, and Van Loon, 2004, p. 401). In addition, as I noted earlier, the discourse of many sexuality education curricula reproduces this dominant representation. They perpetuate the “Understanding that boys are not responsible for their sexual activity because they are hormonally programmed to want sex...” (Fine & Whatley, in Weis & Carbonell-Medina, 2000). In general, Cameron (1998) notes that “Men are under pressure to constitute themselves as masculine linguistically by avoiding forms of talk whose primary association is with women/femininity” (p.59-60).

As I listened to and interrogated the voices of participants, I was attentive to how their words and utterances, their features of speech, and the management of their talk constructed meanings of gender and how these meanings were enacted in our classroom. Discourse analysis is an interpretive lens with which to examine how participants used language and silence to connect and collaborate, to exclude and include, to dismiss, or even bully and accept, and to be recognized as a certain kind of person by self and others. It is an explanatory process to better understand how issues of identity and power were

negotiated discursively in this setting, and how this negotiation relates to broader social problems in education (Luke 1996, Rogers, 2004; Gee, 1999, 2001) such as the societal learning, implementation and functioning of the system of gender identification.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I redefined sexuality and gender identity as inseparably linked and viewed more on a continuum than a binary whereby a multiplicity of combinations of gender identities and expressions, biological sexes, and sexual orientations are possible as observed by ongoing research on gender and sexuality (Butler, 1999; Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Foucault, 1976). However, I recognized that dominant socio-cultural understandings of gender and sexuality are still informed by a rigid binary which aligns male biological sex (chromosomes, reproductive organs, and genitals) with masculine gender identity and expression, and attraction to the feminine and female biological sex (chromosomes, reproductive organs and genitals) with feminine gender identity and expression, and attraction to the masculine.

I noted how sexuality education emerged historically from white, upper-class, moral concerns about the dangers and risks of adolescents and less privileged groups' sexual activity and how sexual education policy tends to reproduce dominant understandings of gender and sexuality as a rigid binary. Thus, whether these policies support abstinence-only, abstinence-plus which are more or less fear or shame-based, or comprehensive (accurate information about STIs and prevention of unintended pregnancy) sexuality education, they mostly target adolescents as a distinct group for which sexuality is unwanted and dangerous rather than part of normal human development, and they encourage postponement of sexual intercourse.



Although newer legislation acknowledges research-based support of comprehensive sexuality education, and allows states to choose whether to apply for funds for abstinence-only or comprehensive sexuality education programs, or a combination of both, recent statistics show that young people in the United States remain uninformed about sexuality and contraception (Guttmacher Institute, 2012). Thus, I problematized current sexuality education policies. First, I noted that “Just say ‘no’” approaches fall short of sufficiently educating youth and that curricula still attach sexual intercourse to marriage although statistics demonstrate that Americans have married at an ever-later age over the past twenty-five years, and that most Americans engage in sexual intercourse before getting married anyway.

Secondly, research shows that most sexuality education curricula tend to reproduce gender stereotypes that construct boys as the gender with raging hormones and girls as the gender whose discourse of desire is missing, and as the gender charged with resisting all sexual advances, which potentially impacts gendered violence.

Thirdly, I observed that internet pornography is becoming young people’s unofficial and universal sexuality educator as the combination of pornography and technology has made pornography a prevalent resource for some of them, though they often stumble upon it by accident. The majority of these sexually explicit materials have been found to portray women as subordinates and recipients or victims, to represent predominantly male and heterosexual fantasies, and to present an indiscriminate abundance of sexual practices, including rape and sexual assault, as well as practices requiring expertise such as anal sex, multiple penetrations, as a common standard. Unfortunately, although many adults (parents, educators) try to restrict access to these

visual materials, most do not address or deconstruct them for the youth, even though they have impacted many other aspects of social life such as fashion trends, beauty standards and disciplines, and cosmetic surgery (including of male and female genitals) referred to as the “pornification” of life.

Lastly, I argued that sexuality education programs leave many sexualities and identities behind and are slow to address social changes as Western nations and the United States tackle same gender marriage<sup>6</sup> and intersexed and transgender identities, in spite of the fact that these identities and sexualities are readily represented in confusing and sometimes inaccurate media discourses.

I described the relationship between sexuality and religion and how institutions such as the Unitarian Universalist church, referred to as progressive, are involved with social justice work, which, as one of its missions, strives to reclaim morality from conservative denominations such as evangelical Christians or conservative Catholics around issues of reproductive freedom and sexual/gender equality in a climate of resurging fundamentalism.

In this study, discourse is defined as socially situated practices (Fairclough, 1992; Gee, 1999) that enable a speaker to be recognized as a certain kind of person, in a specific time, place, and context (Gee, 1999, 2001). Language-in-use is understood as a social construct where meaning is constituted between hearer and speaker from a combination of grammatical features, and socially-situated context. Discourse includes

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<sup>6</sup> As explained in chapter II (Review of literature), pages 21 and 22, the term sex refers to several distinct definitions. While it can be included in the expression biological sex to refer to anatomical or reproductive parts, in the discourse of my students, having “sex” mostly refers to vaginal-penile intercourse. In order to avoid such ambiguity, I prefer the term same gender marriage as opposed to same sex marriage. In addition, where marriage and commitment are concerned, the term sex as referring to biological sex feels intrusive to me, and seems to reinforce dominant discourses that limit the concept of marriage to heterosexual marriage and reproduction.

more than just language -- words and utterances – what Gee (1999) refers to as little d-discourse; it includes socially accepted associations such as ways of using language, valuing, interacting, as well as clothes, props, symbols, objects that enable a person to be recognized as a member of a specific social group – what Gee (1999) refers to as Big D-discourse. An utterance is understood as single unit of meaning that is formed through a relation to other speakers. My understanding of the term utterance is informed by Bakhtin’s idea (1981) that “words and expressions belong to no one” (p. 293): We borrow words and appropriate and populate them with our own intentions. I view the discourses of participants in my classroom as a performance (Goffman, 1959), and this performance is gendered (Cameron, 2001).

As I listened to participants’ voices and interpreted their language, I examined carefully how the meaning of utterances, as well as all other features of speech such as intonation, or rhythm, and the management of their talk such as turn-taking, topic initiation, or interruption, constructed understandings of gender and how these meanings were enacted. In analyzing the discourse of students in the eighth grade “Coming of Age” sexuality education classroom, I gained insights about how young people negotiate dynamics of power as they relate to the broader ideological system of gender and how their talk helps them be recognized within this system (Cameron, 1998; Edley, 2001; Edley & Wetherell, 1997; Frazer & Cameron, 1989; Gee, 1999, 2001). In the next chapter, I explicate in detail the methodological aspects of the study.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology:**

#### **Teacher-Researcher in the Sexuality Education Classroom**

##### **Introduction**

This study is a qualitative research study conducted within the framework of ethnographic practitioner-research in education (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995; Erickson, 1986; Hubbard & Power, 2003; Zeni, 2001). As a teacher and a researcher in the tradition of participant-observer, I investigated the language use and the culture of the Eighth grade youth in the context of the sexuality education classroom of a Unitarian Universalist church school. This work fits within the spectrum of an “ethnography of speaking” (Cameron, 2001, pp.53-67) where I examined the spoken ways and rules of this situated community during specific activities. Using discourse analysis (Cameron, 2001; Gee, 1999), I investigated how the discourse of six male and six female students and four teachers (two males and two females including me) constructed meanings of gender in the eighth grade sexuality education classroom and how these meaning were enacted. In this study, the language of participants constructs socially-situated identities; discourse analysis was the lens for examining how students in this setting let their understanding and enactment of gender and sexuality be “recognized” (Gee, 1999) by others and self via their Discourses.

In this chapter, I articulate my methodological choices and I describe the setting and the participants, and the process of data collection and analysis.

### **Qualitative, ethnographic, practitioner research using discourse analysis**

Qualitative research does not refer so much to non-quantitative as it refers to a variety of approaches such as ethnographic study, case study, participant observation, and practitioner research whose specificity is that the data collecting and analytical process are interpretive (Erickson, 1986). Erickson (1986) explains that interpretive fieldwork research is most appropriate for classroom research as it involves spending long hours observing in the setting, writing continuous narratives, and collecting other documentary evidence such as drawings, audio and videotapes. In this study, I am one of the actors and I utilized qualitative methods because it allowed flexibility in designing data collection and analysis. Erickson says: “Interpretive fieldwork research involves being unusually thorough and reflective in noticing and describing everyday events in the field setting, and in attempting to identify the significance of actions in the events from the various points of view of the actors themselves” (1986, p. 121). As Erickson explains, qualitative research relies on both inductive and deductive processes (1986, p. 121). I began this study by posing a research question about a specific activity context. From this question, I had a few goals in recording and interrogating participants’ voices about the meaning and the enacting of gender in this setting and I questioned, among other, how these voices might both reproduce and resist stereotypical gender representations. This part of the approach is referred to as deductive.

However, I was unsure about what the extent of this reproduction and resistance might be, and about what “else” the youth’s voices would actually produce. I followed with and examined the data closely and drew from it in order to develop understandings,

and design the analysis. This part of my approach was inductive. In this way, my approach was both deductive and inductive and required flexibility which, as Erickson notes (1986, p. 121), is characteristic of qualitative research.

Flexibility is an essential skill in teaching as well as in researching. For me, being a teacher-researcher presented both advantages and benefits, and came with surprises which I detail further in the following chapter. Zeni defines teacher research as “Qualitative research conducted by insiders in educational settings to improve their own practice” (2001, p. xiv). As a teacher-researcher, I, too, intended to understand and better my practice as well as others’ in the field of gender and sexuality education. I built upon the flexibility teaching requires, and utilized my knowledge of the setting, the participants, and the materials to inform my question, and the organization of data collection, and to perform the analysis.

However, such “flexibility,” among other things, has also been at the center of criticism of both qualitative and practitioner research methods and sometimes confused with a lack of objectivity or limitation thereof (Erickson, 1986; Hubbard & Power, 2003). As Zohar (2004) puts it: “As one of the course leaders, I (am) a participant in the group I investigate. This fact may (contribute) to my ability to construct meaning from the data I (collect), but it may also limit my ability to see alternative meanings” (p. 297). In other words, there is a concern that my participation and my position as a teacher in the group I am observing may have had an adverse impact on the evaluation and analysis of the data. Qualitative inquiry has traditionally been criticized in comparison to research conducted by non-participants such as quantitative research. Hymes, a sociolinguist and anthropologist who established disciplinary foundations for the comparative,

ethnographic study of language use acknowledges (1982) that “The ethnographer himself or herself is a factor in the inquiry ...” (p. 29). However, he adds (1982) that: “Scientific objectivity resides, not in the individual scientist but in the community of scientists. That community has provided methods which ... discipline the investigator and overcome partiality; the rest is the responsibility of the community” (p. 29).

In addition, while objectivity and truthfulness matter in any and all research, Erickson (1986) explains that criticism against interpretive fieldwork research (and thus teacher research) may be complicated by political considerations. He views teachers’ inquiry and participation in the body of research in educational reform as a teacher-empowering “bottom-up” effort which might upset the effect of centralized “top-down” decision-making derived from more positivist research that strives for prediction and control via educational administrators and policy-makers. In some way, he argues that teachers’ voices disturb the status-quo.

Indeed, Gee (1999) also notes that teachers are often assumed to “have only a ‘local’ voice (and are) rarely invited to speak in more global and national ways about racial, literacy, and schooling issues” (p. 122). Thus, Erickson (1986) concludes that: “Interpretive research on teaching [including teacher-research] is not only an alternative method, but an alternative view of how society works, and of how schools, classrooms, teachers, and students work in society” (p. 158). Offering an alternative view into and especially an alternative hearing of how adolescents in my classroom construct and negotiate understandings of gender and how these understandings construct their recognition by self and others in this specific context is a main objective for this investigation.

Certainly, as a teacher-researcher, I struggled “with issues of loyalty, confidentiality, and trust” (Zeni, 2001p. xii); yet, I enjoyed the satisfaction of grounding my question directly in the classroom I taught in and I was familiar with. As Hubbard and Power (2003) state: “Who’s better to do this? We teacher-researchers bring to our work an important element that outside researchers lack- a sense of place, a sense of history in the schools in which we work. Because of our presence over time at our research sites, we teachers bring a depth of awareness to our data that outside researchers cannot begin to match. We know our schools, our students, our colleagues, and our learning agendas. Our research is grounded in this rich resource base” (p. xiv). Similarly, my knowledge of the church school, students, colleagues and curriculum brought depth and awareness to this work that no outside researcher could equal.

Brice-Heath (1982) explains that “Ethnography provides an empirical data base, obtained through immersion of the researcher in the ways of living of the group. This immersion allows perception of the interdependence of parts and also permits frequent returns to the data. The descriptive power, the ability to incorporate in data the form, function, and context of the behavior of a specific social group, and retention of the data for considered and repetitive analysis are the major strengths of ethnography” (p. 44). Indeed, being fully immersed in a classroom that I was familiar with and using a comprehensive sexuality education curriculum called Our Whole Lives which I was familiar teaching, granted me ample knowledge of the setting and its participants, and facilitated access for data collection, and return to the data.

In addition, I refer to this ethnography as “ethnography of speaking” (Cameron, 2001) because it does not just study the language of participants to find out about other



things, but it makes their language “the object of ethnographic interest in its own right” (p. 55). In the study of language, the distinction between “linguistic competence” (Cazden et al, 1972), or the knowledge of grammar separated from any other knowledge, and “communicative competence” (Cazden et al, 1972) or the knowledge of all sorts except grammatical knowledge which give someone the ability to speak “appropriately” in a given context, occupies a central place. Hymes explains that “linguistic competence” which he also names “means of speech,” and “communicative competence” which he also refers to as “contexts of situation” are both inherent components of social role. He refers to these “two interrelated aspects of speech” as the “verbal repertoire” (Cazden et al, 1972, pp. xxiii-xxiv).

This study focuses on the “verbal repertoire” of these youths in this context. Using discourse analysis, I made meaning of participants’ “verbal repertoires,” that is to say both their ability to use language grammatically and their ability to speak “appropriately” in this specific social context. Gee (2001) explains that the “key to Discourses is ‘recognition.’” Thus, my premise is the notion that, when speaking, the youth are using “the resources of English to project (themselves) as a certain kind of person.” Given that one projects “a different identity at a formal dinner party than (...) at the family dinner table” (Gee, 2001, p. 13) in order to be recognized as a certain kind of person engaged in a certain kind of activity, my interest lies in how, in this particular setting, participants’ socially situated discourses situated them socially within this group.

## **Setting**

The setting for this study was the eighth grade Sunday school class of a Unitarian-Universalist church Sunday school located in a northeastern city of the United States with a population of 180,000. This church is part of an association of congregations throughout the United States. These congregations unite along the affirmation and promotion of *seven principles* rather than dogma. I provide more details about Unitarian-Universalism and the relationship between religion and sexuality in the following chapter.

The parents of students enrolled in the eighth grade class were members of this church. The essential component of this program, which is also known as the coming of age class, is the “relationship and spiritual exploration” component. This component is and was taught by means of a comprehensive sexual education curriculum (Nelson Trudell, 1993) and its spiritual addendum from September 2007 to the end of April 2008. I provide more information about the curriculum in the following chapter.

## **Participants**

### **Students.**

Sixteen students (nine females and seven males) were registered for this class at the beginning of the school year even though nine females and only six males attended throughout. Twelve students participated in the research, six male and six females. Two of these twelve students (one male and one female) did not consent to video-taping so that video-taping was not used. Three female students out of the fifteen enrolled students who attended did not participate: One female student never returned any of the consent

forms so that I counted her as not participating, along with two students who did return forms but chose not to participate.

In general, no difference was made at any time in the classroom between participating and non-participating students in terms of time and energy spent teaching, answering questions, and addressing needs. In the writing of field notes, I included references to all students in attendance whether they had chosen to participate; but I did not include data from non-participants in the analysis. During the first part of the school year (November 2007 to February 2008), I audio-recorded small activities which included only students who were participating. From February to April 2008, after discussing the issue with my co-teachers, and academic advisor, I decided to maximize data collection by recording all students including non-participating during class discussions and small activities with the condition that non-participating students' voices would not be used in the analysis.

The students enrolled in this program were mostly middle-class and white, and came from families with sufficient economic and cultural capital for comfort in the community. The physical setting was, for the most part, a classroom located in the church school (also named Parish House). This group of students was gender-mixed in contrast with many public school sessions devoted to sexuality education. In a study Weis & Carbonell-Medina (2000) conducted, young women attend a daily "focus group". Weis & Carbonell-Medina (2000) comment that "same gender-groupings have the greatest potential for interesting curricular work at the same time that they are often the site for the most disappointing activities (for students and researchers)" (p. 646). The mixed-gender grouping in this research study enabled the inclusion of all young people,

including ones potentially developing diverse sexual orientations. This means that, most of the time, young people were not separated by gender while learning about and discussing gender and sexuality education topics. In this way, the instructional approach was faithful to the philosophical framework of the curriculum in use and also provided an unusual context for the study.

### **Teachers.**

Classes in the church Sunday school were taught by a team composed of a total of four teacher-facilitators, two males and two females, including myself. Two teacher-facilitators (one male and one female) lead the class each Sunday and alternate every other Sunday or so. This means that only two teachers out of each teaching team are required to teach on any particular Sunday. This model allows for some flexibility in scheduling for teachers, and some variety in the teaching styles and personalities offered to students. The gender distribution of the team is required/recommended by the curriculum. In general, the two teacher-facilitators display collaboration and collaborative communicative strategies, and emphasize collaboration among students as most of the activities are done in groups.

The eighth grade class met every Sunday (except during winter holidays) for one hour and forty-five minutes for a total of twenty eight class meetings, and two teacher-facilitators led the class each week. In addition, this class gathered one Saturday night at the end of January for the Pasta Supper Fundraising and traveled in early March to another nearby city for an overnight (Friday afternoon to Saturday afternoon) visit of the Unitarian Universalist Headquarters. I conducted research during twenty four class-meetings out of twenty eight, as well as during the Saturday night Fundraiser, and during

the overnight trip. During nine class-meetings out of twenty eight, I was solely observing, writing notes, and recording while two teachers were leading; on all other Sundays, I was observing, recording *and* leading the class with one co-teacher.

## **Procedures**

### **Preliminary process and Mini-Committee.**

In the spring of 2006, I introduced my research idea to my supervisor, Director of religious education (D.R.E), and she suggested that I wait until the following school year. She stated that the following class would be more “interesting,” and things would be “easier.” At around the same time, following my D.R.E’s suggestion, I discussed this research project with the chair of the Religious Education Committee (R.E. committee); this committee includes around twenty five members from the church congregation who are hand-picked by the D.R.E. He seemed skeptical about the whole idea and mentioned that he would check on potential liability issues since there was no history of such research in the church school. This response raised my anxiety level even though liability issues never surfaced after this.

In February of 2007, I was invited to present my research project in front of the R.E. committee at large and felt that I was well received. In March 2007, I was auditioned by a mini-committee composed of the chair, and two other members of the R.E. committee. This audition had been orchestrated by the D.R.E. and the chair of the R.E. Committee. One of the mini-committee members had been a co-teacher in this class in years past, and the other was a personal friend of mine. I am unsure how this committee was selected and whether it was hand-picked by my D.R.E, or whether these R.E. committee members had volunteered. After questions were posed and asked, two

members of the mini-committee expressed much anxiety about my ability to both teach and do research in the classroom while still supporting students appropriately, and about my ability to not let my research work interfere with my practice. Anxiety was also expressed about how non-participating students would be addressed, about how well parents would receive this research project, and skepticism was expressed about how many of them would actually consent. One of the committee members questioned the “objectivity” of my prospective narratives. The references to the potential lack of “objectivity” resonated with criticisms expressed traditionally about qualitative and/or practitioner research (Erickson, 1986; Haraway, 1988; Hymes, 1978-1982; Hubbard & Power, 2003; Zeni, 2001). The remaining mini-committee member, my friend, explained that several parents had just questioned the relevance of fire drills in the building, and he qualified the level of concern of many parents about “anything” affecting their child as high and even exaggerated. He did, however, make it clear that the latter was the reason why he was expressing skepticism and that he had no concern about my ability to both conduct this research and teach appropriately.

During this mini-committee hearing, I learned coincidentally that the chair of the R.E. committee who also chaired this mini-committee happened to be the father of one of the male students in this upcoming class. I was shocked by this evident conflict of interest which also made me question the timing of the research project as it had been initially suggested by my D.R.E. I wondered whether the reason why she had suggested for me to do this work a year later actually had to do with the fact that the son of the chair of the R.E. committee would be in the class and thus would commit his father/ chair to more scrutiny and involvement in the happenings of his son’s class; or that, maybe, both my

D.R.E. and the chair had agreed on these terms. Although I understood their concern on behalf of individuals responsible for the organization and the well-being of all participants, as well as responsible for responding to parents in this community, I had been a member and a dedicated volunteer teacher in this institution for over fifteen years, I was disappointed to be granted such minimal level of trust. Of course, I was intent on continuing and I submitted to the stipulations set forth by these individuals. I never mentioned the conflict of interest problem and the project proceeded further under their scrutiny.

In April-May 2007, I received the IRB approval from my academic institution. As a planned informational pre-meeting with parents of upcoming students had been cancelled in June 2007 due to external reasons, I drafted and submitted an informational introduction letter addressed to the parents of incoming students, for my D.R.E and members of the mini-committee to read. They requested several revisions which I completed. In August 2007, as I requested parents' address listing from my D.R.E to mail the said letter, my request was ignored, and she asked instead that I re-submit the letter to parents to her and the mini-committee to read. My D.R.E and the mini-committee chair requested more revisions which I declined as they seem to revert the introductory letter to its initial version. In the meantime, the letter was approved as is by the two remaining members of the mini-committee, but I was not given the parents' address list. However, exactly around this time, I found out coincidentally that one mini-committee member who had not been on my teaching team for years, and had been serving on the R.E. committee instead was returning to the teaching team this fall. He was the mini-committee member who had expressed most concern about the intricacies

of practitioner research and the risk of lacking objectivity! At this point, I began to question what seemed to be the orchestration of a “surveillance” plan. Although I knew that I would not necessarily be teaching and/or observing this class when this teacher was present because the teaching team is composed of four teachers who alternate in pair (one male and one female teacher) at each class-meeting, I realized that the return of this particular committee member to the classroom was most likely not fortuitous but destined to keep an eye on my “work.” I felt scrutinized and somewhat betrayed after so many years of doing my best work with little support and/or supervision from the administration.

Regardless, on September 16, 2007, the church school year started and I began observing and writing field notes right from the first class meeting. I cooked these first field notes that afternoon and I continued observing and writing notes which I cooked every Sunday afternoon until May 2008 (and to some extent until August 2008). On this same day, my second request to my D.R.E for the parents’ address listing which I needed to send the introductory letter, and keep track of students’ and parents’ names was literally declined this time. I was told that not all students had enrolled yet. I was surprised since I had always received this list promptly at the beginning of each school year in years past at my first request. Although this refusal seemed to align with my previous observations: I was being treated with mistrust and this research project was maybe not this welcome. Luckily, my D.R.E offered for the two teachers leading the Ropes Course at the second class meeting to hand-deliver the letters to parents and I gladly accepted in lack of better option. Several months later, I did receive the parents’ address listing after a third request (persistence is a researcher’s sine qua non quality)



which was instrumental in keeping track of students (participating and not), and parents' names and addresses. Letters introducing me and this research project to parents were successfully hand-delivered on September 23, 2007 by two co-teachers.

This introductory process turned out to produce the goal I had intended: Parents received a letter of introduction about the research project. Yet, the feeling of mistrust and of being "surveilled" was bittersweet and made me anxious about the year to come. It seemed that I had been optimistic in wanting to access this setting for data collection but that the people whom I had collaborated with, as a partner, and as a volunteer for years neither trusted me nor were interested in my work; in fact, they seemed weary of me and this work.

#### **Consent forms.**

On September 30, I presented my research project to parents, teachers, and to my D.R.E at the end of the parents' orientation session and I handed out consent forms for parents and for their child. I received nine consent forms back between September 30 and October 21 with eight students participating and one not-participating. In the following week, three more parents/students consented increasing the number of participants to eleven, or almost 75% of the class. On October 28, I met briefly with the chair of the R.E. committee (and mini-committee) who expressed surprise about this percentage. Coincidentally (or not?) on the following Sunday November 4, 2007, I received back his and his son's consent forms which brought the percentage to almost 80%. It seemed as if the chair had refrained to make a decision and return his consent form to me until he found out that most parents/students were consenting. By November 11, 2007, I established the number of participants to twelve, with six males and six

females (one male and one female refused to be videotaped). Two students (both females) did not consent to participate, and one student (female) never returned the consent form, and, after two attempts at re-delivering the consent form to her parent which were ignored, I decided to treat her as a non-participant.

On December 2, I handed signed copies of consent forms back to all parents during the additional slideshow presentation (Lovemaking and masturbation slides).

In general, the process of obtaining consent from students and parents although it required organization and perseverance was rather smooth, and in spite of the ambivalent stance of the R.E. committee chair, who, as a parent in the classroom, had been reluctant to take a stand about his son's participation until most parents had, and whose obvious conflict of interest was never addressed.

### **Data Collection**

I conducted the study during twelve months between September 2007 and August 2008. At the beginning, I struggled with my role as a teacher-participant. I also encountered technical difficulties with audio-recordings and grouping of participants during recording. However, I started writing field notes at the first class meeting in September 2007 and continued working on them and writing follow up emails to parents until August 2008 long after the school year had ended. Although I collected a set of drawings from one activity, most of the data collected consisted in field notes and recordings. I wrote a total of almost two hundred and twenty double-spaced, typed pages of field notes. I first recorded participants' voices in November 2008, although the first successful recording is dated December 2, 2008. I continued recording many times until May 2008. I recorded seventeen conversations for a total of four hours and forty eight

minutes (almost two hundred and sixty nine minutes) out of which sixteen conversations were transcribed.

Although the corpus included seventeen conversations, many consisted in whole class discussions in which a few non-participating students' voices played a major role yet could not be used, and from which removing their voices would have made the conversation not comprehensible enough for analysis. In addition, the background noise in whole class discussions turned out to be an issue in comprehension and transcription that would have made the analysis too tentative. Therefore, I selected three conversations for discourse analysis on which the findings for this research are based (one from December 2008 and two from February 2008).

The speech events selected revolve around the topic of relationships and made for rich and interesting exchanges. I found that discussions around friends, boys, girls, going out and dating, and the ways in which the intended curriculum activities evolved discursively best captured how the youth performed "relating," and understood and enacted this relational understanding of gender and sexuality. These conversations were contextualized with students' words recorded in field notes on the days these activities were completed and during other class-meetings and events, as well as with data collected in "cooked field notes" (Emerson et al, 1995) written throughout the entire study.

### **Learning to Be a Teacher-Participant.**

Early on, the process of acting as a participant-observer was tedious. As a teacher-researcher, I struggled with my role during class during the first part of the school year, especially during these classes when I was observing and recording and not co-

teaching. I noted in my field notes that I was conflicted about “interfering” (Field notes, January, pp. 23 & 29) because I was not officially scheduled to teach.

Yet, I did not confide to anyone about this concern, and even had a hard time articulating it to myself until I finally discussed it with one of my male co-teachers, one Sunday in late January, probably because writing it in my field notes had raised a flag. His response was that there was no reason for me to feel self-conscious about when or not to participate in our class for the simple reason that, for co-teachers and students alike, I was indeed one of the teachers on the team; he added that, students especially viewed me as a teacher regardless of whether my name was on today’s schedule or not, and whether I was conducting research or not, and that they, most of the time, were probably unaware of, and not that interested in said “schedule,” i.e., whether I was teaching and observing or just observing.

Was this so simple that I could not see it myself? Or did I just need someone else to make this point? I guess my mind had been encumbered by ethical considerations from fending criticisms from the mini-committee, and reading too many articles about the “dangers” of non-objective practitioner and qualitative research and I will be forever thankful for Jerry to have set me “straight,” and helped me envision my position as a teacher-participant more smoothly in the second part of the school year.

### **Writing Field Notes.**

I conducted research during twenty four class-meetings out of twenty eight, as well as during the Saturday night Fundraiser, and during the overnight trip. During nine class-meetings out of twenty eight, I was only observing, writing notes, and recording while two other teachers were leading; during the remaining fifteen class-meetings that I

attended, I was observing, recording *and* leading the class with one of the co-teachers. Even when not presenting, I prepared in advance for every class I attended and coordinated with other teachers. In addition, I planned what material I needed (participants' list, notebook, pencil, recorder) and what specific activity (ies) might best lend itself/themselves to recording or note-taking. During the classes I was only observing, I was able to take long and detailed notes including names of participants, description of activity, entire sets of participants' utterances, and interactions, details about participants' dress and physical appearances, external interruptions in the classroom such as visits from parents, Director or other church members, and other events in the classroom.

During the classes I led as well as observed, I planned similarly; however, under such circumstances, it was much more difficult to take detailed notes (Field notes, November 4, p. 3). Assuming several responsibilities together with a co-teacher, such as taking attendance, leading activities, organizing snack time, and "managing" various classroom dynamics allowed much less time for note-taking. In general, I mostly wrote notes when students were engaged in small group activities and/or class discussions as I was able to sit aside or in the circle. I did capture a lot of discourse and activity in classroom field notes using abbreviations that I developed and refined throughout the study.

After class (and after the Fundraiser and overnight trip), I tried to make sense of and studied my notes as I sat for about two hours rewriting them into so-called "cooked notes" (Emerson et al, 1995). I wrote continuous narratives and I consulted the curriculum to include details that had been missing from the first reporting such as the

exact name or description of an activity, or names of participants involved. At times, I realized I was missing information or had recorded incomplete information and I returned to participants at one of the following classes to get clarifications.

I wrote in total two hundred and twenty double-spaced, typed pages of field notes. These cooked notes were classified by month and I started a new section for each month with new page numbering. Over time, I added personal concerns throughout using italics and commentaries about ethical concerns, methodological observations, and simple reflections about the participants, and the developments. These commentaries occupied an increasing part of the cooked notes so that, in February, I started writing a separate methodological section. Over time, I also wrote complete and detailed participants' profiles which included physical, and personality characteristics illustrated with utterances from field notes and recorded conversations which turned out to be very helpful during the analysis.

In retrospect, using ways of marking text such as italics and a different ink color did not make reading and locating information easier and I am glad I had a separate section for the methodological and ethical reflections and concerns. Similarly, in order to save time, I used initials for all participants in my first and cooked field notes and I wish I had not. This made reading harder. Lastly, I used a large binder to file the field notes classified by month, and the methodology section which became problematic overtime as, after multiple reading and page turning, the perforated holes sheets started breaking apart and required constant maintenance.

### **Recording conversations during activities and classroom discussions and grouping issues.**

The process of recording students in the classroom required quite a bit of adjusting and practice. I started recording participants in November as soon as I had received enough consent forms from parents and students to decide that this study was viable at the end of October. During the first part of the school year from December 2007 to February 2008, I recorded participating (consenting) students only. Before each class, I selected what activity to record. After students started arriving to class, and activities unfolded, I was able to select which group of students to place the recorder next to. In general, I would not remain with the group/students being recorded other than placing the microphone and the recorder and giving them simple instructions, such as how to turn off the recorder when they had completed the work, or when they needed to interrupt the activity.

Unfortunately, as soon as I started recording in early November, I was met with several technical difficulties with audio-recording. First, at one time, I had forgotten to check the battery in the recorder and it was empty when I was ready to use it (Field notes, November 4, p. 1); for the following class, I had bought an omni-directional microphone to optimize sound quality. Unfortunately, I forgot to turn on the omni-directional microphone and the speech was inaudible (Field notes, November 11, p. 10). Because the following in-class session did not take place until early December, a whole month had been lost! Later on, in January, the recorder malfunctioned during the “alien” activity and “decision-making steps” activity (Field notes, January 1, p. 3) and I bought a second recorder to maximize recording opportunities (record two groups at once).

However, during another class in March, one of the recorders was stopped by one of the group of students during the “Finding a good parent” activity and I was unable to establish whether this had been inadvertent or not (Field notes, March 2, p. 4). This was the only time this happened. During another class also in March, the recorder which I had meant to record the group of girls malfunctioned which was unfortunate as I wanted to record both groups of girls and boys during the “condom obstacle course” activity (in which students in pairs use a feather, a tape-measurer, and a penis model to experience respectively the skin sensitivity even with condom extended over one arm, the expanded size of condom extended over one arm, and the actual putting on and removal of a condom), thus leaving me with a recording of the boys only for this activity (Field notes, March 16, p. 23).

In addition to technical problems, I was also confronted with grouping issues. By this, I mean that, as explained, during the first two months of recording (December through February), I only recorded participating students. This made the organizing of the recording difficult because I was completely dependent on students’ attendance: Absenteeism made it impossible for me to know who was going to be present on any given Sunday. In addition, random and affinity grouping for activities (which are the preferred format) during class made it difficult, at times impossible, to record any group. After I discussed the issue with my advisor, and my co-teachers (Field notes, January, pp. 31-39) who sympathized, we agreed that, starting in February 2008, I would record classroom discussions and small groups regardless of whether students were participating or not as long as I would not use the voices of non-participating students. This changed this aspect of data collection for the better and I was able to produce longer and more



recordings from February to May 2008. In total, four hours and forty eight minutes (two hundred and sixty eight minutes and seven seconds) were recorded on seventeen audio recordings. However, it turned out, that because two out of three non-participants were strong speakers in many of the conversations or class discussions recorded and because their voices were recorded, I was not able to use these speech events for analysis ultimately.

In general, recording was not problematic as far as students' cooperation is concerned, except for the incident cited before during which the digital recorder was stopped (inadvertently or not). In general, students proceeded with their conversations and the activity at hand even though it is difficult to say whether they might have spoken differently had they not known they were being recorded. Even though they were aware, after a few seconds they became engaged into their own world and seemed to ignore the digital recorder. The conversation analyzed in chapter six is a good example of this. The recorder is mentioned two or three times early on, in the first few seconds (until line 14 of the transcript) because students are wondering if it's working, then one student refers to it again but indirectly after about four and a half minutes (in line 137), and lastly at the very end after nine minutes or so (in line 203) one of the students and I refer to the recorder because the activity is coming to an end (line 222 is the last line). However, interestingly, in this conversation, at least one student was aware of who within the group was holding the recorder, and it seemed that for this student, some power was derived from having access to the recorder. Thus, I found that this might have affected the discursive dynamics in some way.

One difficulty I sometimes encountered was finding time to note down details about participants' speech and about the way in which the activity was being completed. If I was unable to remember afterwards, this forced me to return to informants in the classroom for help about these questions.

### **Transcribing recordings.**

Sixteen of the seventeen audio recordings were transcribed. I transcribed myself only one of the recordings early on and I relied on outside help for the remaining fifteen recordings to be transcribed because transcription turned out to be a challenging task. Although Wacquant notes that: "The intrinsic difficulties of transcription are not unlike those of translation" (Wacquant, 2004, p. 265), I found deciphering the youth's American-English language into one I could understand harder than to translate academic French or academic German into Standard English or vice versa! Thus, after struggling with the youth's vernacular for some time, I preferred to retain the "linguistic specificities of the milieu studied" (Wacquant, 2004) by hiring native American-English speakers (three graduate students) who transcribed the bulk of the recordings in the winter of 2009 and the spring of 2010.

The one recording which was not transcribed took place at the end of the school year in May 2008, after the sexuality education curriculum component of the course had been completed, and dealt with spiritual explorations. It was twenty two minutes long, and I made the decision not to transcribe it because it did not relate to sexuality per say. The fifteen transcripts I received back from the transcriber had to be refined: I added and modified names of participants, added comments and details while returning to the audio-recordings, and made corrections based on multiple reviews of each audio-recording.

## Data Analysis

### Preparation for discourse analysis.

As explained, this study focuses on the “verbal repertoire” of these youths, that is to say, on their language use as situated within this specific set of social factors including participants, activities, and community. In studying this language, special attention was given to the interpretation of utterances, juxtaposing semantic choices to intonation, gestures (whenever possible), tone of voice, and to the communicative process itself such as turn-taking, interruptions, and topic initiation. Hymes explains (1982) that: “The scale and conditions of inquiry in ethnography... impose essential differences in tactics. Perhaps the key to these differences is *meaning*” and he adds: “... Even though one may live nearby, speak the same language, and be of the same ethnic background, a difference in experience may lead to misunderstanding the meaning, the terms, and the world of another community,” (p. 25). Even though, the adolescents who participated in this study originated from different school districts, they formed a rather homogeneous group along mostly middle-class, and white values and beliefs.

Yet, their discourse style was that of a youth sub-culture with its own vernacular. I had captured a large amount of the youth’s discourses both in four hours and forty eight minutes of recordings, sixteen transcripts, and two hundred and twenty pages of double-spaced, typed field notes. During the initial process, I listened to participants’ voices and contextualized their voices with field notes. I struggled to make sense of the youth’s slang and argot (Labov, 1992). I sorted utterances by noting down entire speaker’s turns I found significant from all recorded conversations and selected language I found relevant

from field notes. I transferred these onto index cards which I classified and organized in order to develop themes. In the back of each index card, I noted the name(s) of participants, the date, and activity, and/or the field note or the specific transcript reference. This was a meticulous and time-consuming process.

### **Selection of data for discourse analysis.**

Initially, I had planned to select one recording each of a group of boys and of a group of girls. Even though I was fortunate enough to record more than four hours of small group conversations and class discussions in total, I failed to obtain a girls-only recording. In spite of this challenge, as I returned to field notes, audio recordings and transcripts, and indexed all verbal materials, I noticed interesting developments which led me to select specifically three recordings for fine-grained analysis. All three recordings took place during activities pertaining to the relationship unit between December 2007 and February 2008. This particular unit led to conversations which provided a rich sampling of discursive dynamics that seem sustained across the entire year.

In addition, I found that these three conversations had the most potential to give insights into identity negotiation and other issues of interest in this investigation. One audio recording includes one male and one female participant preparing for a role play; the second one, which supports the first one, and belongs to the same analysis chapter, includes the same two participants with another male and another female student. This first recording provides a unique (and, at times, complicated) discursive performance as each student spontaneously agreed to perform as the “other” gender although this was in no way required by the curriculum prompt; I refer to this phenomenon as a “discursive twist.” The third recording includes five male students and one teacher and offers an

interesting rendering of male-to-male discursive strategies. In addition, one particular male is present in all three recordings and his particular performance emerged as a bridging force for the discourse analysis in data chapters five and six.

Once these recordings had been selected, I counted turns, interruptions, and topic initiations in order to discover communicative patterns. I combined utterance themes contextualized with field notes language, and communicative patterns in order to develop codes. I coded the selected transcripts. I returned to the data (both recordings and field notes) repeatedly and intensively in order to refine meanings from the youths' discourses, and to adjust coding. The findings for this study emerged directly from the language of the youth (linguistic and communicative competence) examined in three conversations recorded around two activities contextualized with language from other conversations and from field notes.

## **Conclusion**

As a teacher-researcher, I conducted an ethnography of speaking in the eighth grade sexuality education classroom of a Unitarian Universalist church school in a Northeastern U.S. city of 180,000. Data were collected while attending twenty four class-meetings out of which I observed participants nine times, and I both observed and taught fifteen times. Data were also collected during a Saturday night Fundraiser and an overnight trip to the Unitarian Universalist headquarters. Observing my own classroom provided easy access to the setting and data collection and using qualitative methodology allowed me to design my own research model and write long narratives about events and interactions developing in the classroom. Kelly notes (2003) that such models provide opportunities to develop arguments that center on "... rich *descriptions* that illuminate

arguments about processes” (p. 3). Indeed, these descriptions provided valuable insight into the “verbal repertoire” of the adolescents in my classroom.

I addressed the procedures followed during the preliminary process such as the interviews with several committees, and the distribution and collection of consent forms, as well as some the methodological challenges encountered during data collection.

The collected data consisted in two hundred and twenty double-spaced, typed pages of field notes and roughly four hours and forty eight (two hundred and sixty eight minutes) of audio recordings. After indexing all verbal materials from these data, I carefully selected three conversations and analyzed the discourse of participants. Participants’ utterances, intonation, gestures and communicative style, contextualized with detailed profiles and speech from field notes and from fifteen other conversations, were coded and examined in order to construe meanings from students’ and teachers’ discursive performances, and to understand how via these performances each participant negotiated a position to be “recognized” (Gee, 1999) by self and others within this group. What exactly “happened” as I conducted research in the context of the sexuality education classroom is the subject of the next chapter.

## Chapter 4

### Context of the Study:

#### “Condoms? Get them from your church!”

##### Introduction

I refer to context as “The immediate and ongoing social interaction of the assembled participants, as well as the socio-historical dimension of the socially assembled situation, and the cultural practices” (Panofsky, 1994, p. 228). This means that the conversations which take place between students and between students and teachers in this classroom during specific activities are embedded in a much broader “system” of social languages, discourses, and cultural meanings and practices. This “system” or context impacts every word participants utter, and how they present themselves, interact, as well as what they believe and value. Gee explains that we, as social actors, use different “social languages” depending on what we are doing and who we are doing it with (1999). He says: “Social languages are what we learn and what we speak... Discourses always involve more than language. They always involve coordinating language with ways of acting, interacting, valuing, believing, feeling, and with bodies, clothes, non-linguistic symbols, objects, tools technologies, times, and places” (p. 25).

As they speak and interact in the sexuality education classroom, my students’ identities and the meanings of the words they utter are situated in this particular time and place. In other words, as Gee notes “Meaning is not general and abstract ... It is situated in specific social and cultural practices, and is continually transformed in those practices

(1999, p. 63). This youth's social performance both constructs and is constructed by the Discourses of middle-class youth in this particular setting, the church school of a liberal, Northeastern congregation, and at this particular time, the second half of the first decade of the Twenty First Century.

Thus, special attention must be given to the “context of situation” in the examination of these Discourses. Gee explains further that: “The context of an utterance (oral or written) is everything in the material, mental, personal, interactional, social, institutional, cultural, and historical situation in which the utterance was made that could conceivably influence” (1999, p. 54) the meaning of the utterances. As I listen to and analyze participants' Discourses in the sexuality education classroom, in this place and at this time, their performance is influenced by historical, and socio-cultural discourses about and around sexuality and sexuality education, by socio-cultural discourses around sexuality and religion, by the institutional setting (Unitarian Universalist Church) and the curriculum in use in this study, *Our Whole Lives, Grades 7-9* (Wilson, 1999), and by the composition of the class (participants) and the physical space itself. In this chapter, I examine in details each of these contextual elements. The last section of this chapter is dedicated to the process of selecting data for discourse analysis.

### **The Construction of Sexuality<sup>7</sup>**

### **The Construction of Sexuality Education<sup>8</sup>**

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<sup>7</sup> For a discussion about this component of the context of the study, please refer to the section of the same name in chapter II: Review of literature, pages 21 to 23.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion about this component of the context of the study, please refer to the section of the same name in chapter II: Review of literature, pages 23 to 44.



## **Institutional Setting and the “Our Whole Lives:” Sexuality Education Curriculum**

### **Institutional Setting: A Unitarian Universalist Church as the setting for a sexuality education program.**

The institutional setting for this study is the eighth grade class of a progressive church Sunday school located in a northeastern city of the United States with a population of 180,000. This church is part of an association of Unitarian Universalist congregations.

Unitarian Universalism is a liberal religious tradition that was formed from the consolidation of two different religions: Unitarianism and Universalism. Both began in Europe hundreds of years ago. In America, the Universalist Church of America was founded in 1793, and the American Unitarian Association in 1825. After consolidating in 1961, these faiths became the new religion of Unitarian Universalism through the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Both religions have long histories and have contributed important theological concepts that remain central to Unitarian Universalism.

The Unitarian movement began in Poland-Lithuania and Transylvania in the mid-sixteenth century. Originally, all Unitarians were Christians who didn't believe in the Holy Trinity of God (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), but in the *unity*, or single aspect, of God. Later, Unitarian beliefs stressed the importance of rational thinking, a direct relationship with God, and the humanity of Jesus. The first documented appearance of Christian Universalists was in 17<sup>th</sup> century England and 18<sup>th</sup> Century Europe and Colonial America. Universalism emerged as a Christian denomination with a central belief in *universal* salvation; that is, that all people will eventually be reconciled with God. Universalists emphasize the *universal* principles of most religions and accept other

religions in an inclusive manner. Since the merger of the two denominations in 1961, Unitarian Universalism nurtures its Unitarian and Universalist heritages as a non-Christian denomination (although inspired by Christianity and many more religions- Please see below) to provide a strong voice for social justice and liberal religion where the concept of God, as a sacred idea, is not defined or personified, but rather left for each to search and articulate.

Unitarian Universalism is a religion that celebrates diversity of belief. It draws inspiration from Atheism and Agnosticism, Buddhism, Christianity, Humanism, Judaism, Paganism, and other religious or philosophical traditions and is guided by seven principles:

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth in the congregations;
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within the congregations and in society at large;
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Unitarian Universalist congregations are run independently in coordination with the Unitarian Universalist Association and congregational leadership operates along a democratic process. The association is not a central authoritative organ but serves as a resource to all congregations. In general, the Unitarian Universalist Association and its

congregations emphasize putting faith into action through social justice work in communities and in the wider world, whether in collaboration with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (a non-sectarian organization that advances human rights and social justice in the United States and in the world) or not. Social justice work entertained in concert by the UUA and Unitarian Universalist congregations may include:

- Economic justice,
- Environmental justice,
- Immigration,
- International engagement and peace building,
- LGBTQ welcome and equality,
- Racial justice and multicultural ministries,
- Religious and civil liberties,
- Reproductive justice.

Two items in this list (“LGBTQ welcome and equality” and “Reproductive justice”) resonate with the purpose of the Our Whole Lives (OWL) Grades 7-9 sexuality education curriculum (Wilson, 1999) used in the eighth grade class and which covers the “Relationships” component and occupies most of the classroom time dedicated to this course from September until the middle of April. Other components of this course include:

- Spiritual explorations: After the OWL sexuality education program is completed (Relationships component), the class explore the concept of religion, and world religions using games and activities, attends a Unitarian Universalist leaders panel (several members of the congregation are invited to

the classroom), and a questions and answers panel with the Minister of the congregation who is invited to our classroom. This exploration is meant to inspire the credo writing (see below),

- Community service: Students participate to a Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (U.U.S.C) humanitarian action during the holidays entitled “Food at your table.” It consists in the whole class assembling small cardboard money-boxes provided by the U.U.S.C, and distributing them in the Meeting House during services from the end of November to early January. Anyone who attends a service is encouraged to take a box and place it on their dinner table for family and guests to donate coins during the Holiday season. In the first three weeks, several students volunteer each Sunday to present this action to the congregation during the weekly service. Congregants bring back their box at their convenience which is collected until January. The proceeds are transferred to the U.U.S.C to fund several food programs.

In addition to the “Food at your table” project, students participate to the sandwich brigade (making sandwich for local shelters) with their mentors once or twice (usually fall and spring) during the school year, and are encouraged to help at the monthly food pantry which takes place in the Parish House, by carrying boxes, organizing, serving clients, and cleaning up,

- Unitarian Universalist heritage and identity: this component is explored during the overnight trip to a nearby city which is funded by a Pasta Supper that takes place the last Saturday in January each year and which is organized and staffed entirely by parents and students,

- Credo writing and credo presentation during the Coming of Age celebration at the end of the school year: One Sunday a month students attend a meeting with their mentor (hand-picked by the church school administration based on affinity) where they make crafts, write poetry, listen to speakers, and discuss spiritual, social justice, and environmental issues in order to inspire thinking about their credo, the statement of beliefs and values that they present to the congregation and their friends and family in May.

The Eighth Grade Coming of Age class is an intense and busy one!

### **The Our Whole Lives Curriculum.**

The “Our Whole Lives” sexuality education curriculum (Wilson, 1999) is the tool used in the classroom for most of the school year (September through April) and covers the Relationships component of the course. It was developed from 1994 to 2000 by the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries. It is currently in use in many Unitarian Universalist and United Church of Christ congregations in the United States.

In Unitarian Universalist church schools, it is meant to be taught with an addendum titled “Sexuality and our faith: A Companion to our whole lives” (Svobada II, Agate, Bassham, & Morriss, 1999). The Faith Companion aims at situating issues of sexuality within the philosophical and spiritual framework of Unitarian Universalist principles (they are listed in the previous section). I was specifically trained to instruct this curriculum for Grades 7 to 9 (the one in use in this classroom) and for young adults and adults, and became certified respectively in 1999 and 2010.

While this curriculum's goal is to provide information about sexuality and sexual health and development, it is informed by moral and spiritual values of caring and compassion, and rooted in humanist, feminist and social justice considerations. The process of the OWL curriculum relies on constructivist educational philosophy where learning cannot occur unless the teacher is aware of the needs and readiness of students and where students' motivation and active participation are encouraged and necessary (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 1992; Duckworth, 2006).

It is described by its authors as “comprehensive and “inclusive,” and presents information about sexuality in a manner that is atypical, such as teaching about sexual pleasure, and innovative, such as teaching about gender identities and sexual media literacy.

***OWL is comprehensive.***

One way in which the OWL curriculum is comprehensive is the audience it reaches: Sexuality education for grades K-1, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12, and finally young adults/adults. Each specific curriculum sequence by grades includes developmentally appropriate sexual information and utilizes developmentally appropriate terminology. For instance, while the young adults/adults curriculum includes definition, information, and recommendations about hooking up, BDSM (bondage, discipline, domination, submission, sadism, masochism), and polyamory, the Grades 7-9 curriculum does not.

The Grades K-1 and/or 4-6 include accurate information and proper terminology about anatomy, thus considering that, while small words used in public and popular discourse matter, children are able to understand and know the appropriate (scientific) terms for all body parts include their genitals, and bodily functions. To clarify, the only

OWL curriculum referred to in this study is the Grades 7-9 curriculum which is taught in the eighth grade class here. In addition, this is the only OWL curriculum in use in this institutional setting which means that sexuality education is only taught in the eighth grade level here via the Grades 7-9 OWL curriculum.

The OWL program is also comprehensive in that its intent is more than just factual or preventative. Cuban defines the intended curriculum of a course of study as the written body of content designed by a state, a district, or an administration, as it is expected to be taught (1992, p. 222). The intended purpose of the Grades 7-9 OWL curriculum is to “Create environments that support and nurture sexual health” (Introduction, p. IX). Its intent is holistically educational and addresses issues that are not typically addressed. The goals of OWL are to help participants to “Gain the knowledge, values, and skills to lead sexually healthy, responsible lives” (pp. IX-X) and:

- Affirm and respect themselves as sexual persons,
- Increase comfort and skills for discussing and negotiating sexuality issues with peers, romantic partners, and people of other generations,
- Explore, develop, and articulate values, attitudes, and feelings about their own sexuality and the sexuality of others,
- Identify and live according to their values,
- Increase motivation and skills for developing a just sexual morality that rejects double-standards, stereotypes, biases, exploitation, dishonesty, and harassment,

- Acquire knowledge and skills for developing and maintaining romantic and sexual relationships that are consensual, mutually pleasurable, non-exploitative, safe and based on respect, mutual expectations, and caring,
- Increase knowledge and skills for avoiding unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections,
- Express and enjoy sexuality in healthy and responsible ways at each stage of their development,
- Assess the impact of messages from family, culture, religion, media, and society on sexual thoughts, feelings, values, and behaviors” (pp. IX-X).

The curriculum is based on five main components that represent the sexual being:

1. Sensuality,
2. Intimacy,
3. Sexual identity,
4. Sexual health and reproduction (including intercourse),
5. And sexualization.

In practice, it is broken down into eleven standard units of work, ranging from group building and examining values, sexuality and body awareness, gender and diversity, sexual orientation and gender identity, relationships, lovemaking, preparing for parenthood, responsible sexual behavior, sexually transmitted infections, to abuse of sexuality. Each unit is composed of one to four sessions. As far as the process is concerned, each session includes:

- Reentry or review (of the past class session) time,



- Answering questions (by teachers and students) from the “question box:”  
Questions are placed anonymously in a box placed to that effect at the end of each class session. Students are asked to write a question or comment on the following sentence: “I do not have a question for the question box today” on an anonymous index card. Sometimes, teachers themselves secretly put a question in the box that they deem important in order to raise interest, or start a discussion about a specific topic,
- One (or more) short reading from relevant literature introducing this class’s topic; Students usually volunteer to read, and if none does, teachers proceed to read,
- One or more activities i.e. value-voting, anatomy and physiology cards, condom obstacle course, which are described in more details later in this chapter followed by a discussion, and a short time for students to put an index card with a question or comment in the question box.

Each session takes place weekly (Sunday mornings) and lasts one hour and forty five minutes. The program also includes a “ropes course” for students only, a formal parent orientation (both take place at the onset of the school year), a slide show using black and white drawings illustrating the anatomy (part of the sexuality and body awareness unit), lovemaking, and masturbation (the latter two are part of the lovemaking unit) sessions.

For this slideshow, teachers take turn reading the script. (Since then, the slide show was converted into a DVD with voice over). Usually, parents view the slideshow during orientation at the beginning of the school year. During this particular year, only

the anatomy slides were shown at parents' orientation in the last Sunday of September. Another slideshow session was organized late in January for the lovemaking and masturbation slides. Unfortunately, I did not record any information in my field notes as to why this happened although the reason might have been related to the unavailability of the Director of Religious Education (DRE) or other technical problem.

Students' attendance to the slideshow requires a signed permission slip from parents (usually completed during parents' orientation). In addition, students attend three panel presentations throughout the year during class by members of this community in connection to the corresponding unit of work (sexual orientation, expecting parents, and new parents panels), as well as a presentation on HIV/AIDS by an outside speaker, and a celebration/closure ceremony to which students' parents are invited.

***OWL is inclusive.***

The OWL curriculum (Wilson, 1999) is inclusive as it addresses every sexual experience and prevents diverse types of sexual orientation and relationships as equally visible and acceptable. One of the foremost values represented in this curriculum is self-worth: "Every person is entitled to dignity and self-worth and to his or her attitudes and beliefs about sexuality" (Introduction to the program, p. 13). Another basic OWL program value reads: "Being romantically and sexually attracted to both genders (bisexual), same gender (Homosexual), or other gender (Heterosexual) are all natural in the range of human sexual experience" (Introduction to the program, p. 13). Although it is still operating within the biological sex/gender identity binary, this concept of inclusivity is an atypical approach for most sexuality education programs, especially programs taught in religious settings.

In fact, this approach may be viewed as ideologically subversive by less progressive or more conservative religious denominations. Such groups may apply the notion of “hidden curriculum,” to this aspect of OWL. Cuban (1992) defines the hidden curriculum as a curriculum’s side that is not made explicit by the teacher, but rather is implied by the behavior of the teacher, or the choices made by the teacher or the institution itself within a specific system (p. 222). In the case of OWL, certain groups, based upon personal or religious beliefs object to the idea that sexual attraction to same or either gender could be represented as tolerable and dignified sexual orientations. Such groups may argue that the representations made by the OWL curriculum (and lovemaking portion of the video) are a way of “subverting” young people into becoming themselves “sexual deviants.”

The philosophy and values of OWL, however, support the inclusion of any and all sexual orientations, not as a “hidden curriculum” but as an explicit value. Cuban (1992) explains that there may be a discrepancy or a gap between the intended and the taught curriculum. The taught curriculum is the one that is actually delivered in the classroom (p. 222). Yet, the program that I teach remains rather faithful to its intent. This may be attributed to two factors: The role of teachers and the homogeneity of the student body. I return to these factors in a subsequent section.

***OWL is atypical and innovative.***

As explained earlier, one of the goals of the Grades 7-9 OWL curriculum is for participants to: “Express and enjoy sexuality in healthy and responsible ways at each stage of their development.” Sexuality and lovemaking are rarely presented as pleasurable or encouraged by messages received from schools, teachers, and parents.

Yet, children and adolescents are exposed to multiple media representations of sexual behaviors and content. This contradiction tends to be confusing information. The message of OWL is simple. Thanks to multiple activities and discussions, students learn about both the challenges (e.g. sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancy) and the benefits (e.g., pleasure, fulfillment), of being sexually active. The lovemaking part of the slideshow which includes visuals of and information about lovemaking offers a realistic and alternative perspective to various images from the media. The fact that masturbation is dealt with as a natural expression of sexual feelings toward self and addressed specifically with readings, discussion and slides is especially innovative as this topic is either silenced/taboo or presented as shameful in American culture whether at home, at school, at church, or in popular culture media.

Participants are encouraged to pay attention to their own developmental needs, to assert themselves, and to negotiate about issues of sexuality. They experience conversations with teachers and with each other about sexual pleasure.

Another significant goal of this curriculum is to “Assess the impact of messages from family, culture, religion, media, and society on sexual thoughts, feelings, values, and behaviors” (p. X). As stated earlier, children and adolescents are exposed to sexual content and gender representations in the media. This program allocates some time to examine gender roles and gender characteristics and their representations in the media such as, for instance, films, advertisings, and music lyrics, and to learn to decipher messages from the media, develop critical thinking skills, and become media-literate.

Teaching to deconstruct media messages about gender and sexuality is one innovative contribution from the OWL curriculum to create such awareness. In this way,

the OWL curriculum aims at “Teaching good sex” (The New York Times, 2011). The specificity of this program is rather unique and provides a valuable opportunity for research because of the scarcity of such programs. To understand why such programs are scarce, it is important to conceptualize sexuality education within a religious organization and to briefly examine the relationship between sexuality and religion in general.

### *How progressive is the OWL Curriculum?*

The process of observing and listening to participants, writing cooked field notes about participants’ interactions, events, sessions and activities from the curriculum, and of selecting activities for recording urged me to examine in details the curriculum I had been using for years. One of the most important discoveries I made in examining the curriculum, as a teacher-researcher, as opposed to simply using it as a guide to be followed and completed, was that, in many ways, it was not “all” that I thought it had been.

The OWL curriculum which I have described as comprehensive, inclusive, and atypical includes many innovative concepts and ideas which are admirable as far as teaching sexuality education, especially in a religious setting, compared to most curricula in use in American public schools, and/or other traditional and private religious settings. The fact that it makes all gender identities and sexualities visible (L.G.B.T.Q) and presents them as equally important and significant, that it presents sexuality as an essential, vital, and healthy component of human behavior rather than just a risky endeavor, that it addresses communication, lovemaking and masturbation, mutual sexual pleasure, and non-exploitation, as well as stereotypical media messages about sexuality as opposed to offering a limited review of basic reproductive anatomy, and STIs or

pregnancy prevention in the way most sexuality education programs do makes it undoubtedly unique.

However, time and again, as I wrote about activities, topics, or class discussions and described them in order to provide contexts for participants' discourse, as I listened to the way in which participants performed discursively in completing them, and struggled to make meaning of how they themselves made meaning of the activity itself, how their utterances in completing these activities, positioned them in the group, and how they, at times, co-opted the activity altogether, I questioned some of its structures and language.

For instance, one role-play activity which is at the heart of the following chapter consists in a teenage boy wanting to convince a girl to let him visit her while her parents are out of town. While this scenario was designed by sexuality education scholars and experts, it makes sense to adults because this is a scenario that adults view as risky or dangerous. However, I question how seriously teenage students in my class might view this scenario? In other words, how strongly is this choice of scenario connected to what students in my classroom would actually consider risky or dangerous? Besides, in this script, the boy is stereotypically prompted as the one who takes the initiative, and even though it is not specified, who most likely has ulterior sexual motives. Although not all role-play prompts for this activity and other activities presented boys in this way, several did, and this specific prompt supported the notion that boys are predators and girls have to "defend" themselves against boys, as if girls had no sexual desire or were not "naturally" interested in sexual activity, and only boys did and this is the only activity they are interested in.

In addition, although the curriculum insists on redefining abstinence as a practice that includes sexual activities that are both pleasurable and safe, the leading vector of the OWL program values and assumptions is the postponement of sexual intercourse defined as vaginal/penile, oral, or anal, in other words, the abstinence of exchange of bodily fluids except mouth to mouth. And even then, one of the STIs activities in the curriculum still emphasizes the risk of developing herpes in kissing another person even though it cites a very low risk percentage. While the term postponement sounds milder than abstinence, it is reminiscent of a foundational and problematic principle of sexuality education in America: The urge to present adolescence as “distinct” specie, and adolescent sexuality as dangerous and unwanted. A hardly progressive concept!

Most importantly, I struggled with a recurring double-standard that, from the early curriculum units, presented gender identity as fluid, and sexual identity as diverse, that explained in details the notion of intersexuality, and how it complicates the relationship between gender and sexuality from a rigid binary closer to the concept of gender continuum; And, yet, again and again, throughout the entire manual assumed gender as a binary: for instance, in referring to the grouping of boys and girls, or both in small activities, in insisting, at times, that students specify their gender with an F or an M at the top of the card when completing an index card anonymously, for instance when giving a definition of abortion, in insisting that the teaching team had to be composed of four teachers out of which two should be males and two should be females, and that a pair composed of one male and one female should be teaching on any given Sunday, in the wording of activities or readings that always referred to gender as a possibility of two only: male or female.

I came to realize that there is an unavoidable tension between the post-modern understandings of gender and sexuality which inform my conceptual framework and my teaching praxis, and the “double” representation made in the curriculum which, in part, yearns to take a progressive stand in defining gender as a continuum, but, yet, which textual discourse is constantly aligned with the default and normative position assigned to gender and sexuality by the dominant ideology.

As students who attend this class are coming of age and growing up emotionally and sexually, this is the dominant socio-cultural context, media, family, school, in which they and we, teachers, parents live and where this default position is taken for granted and invisible. As a teacher-researcher, I found myself constantly trying to push against the ideological boundary that supports the gender binary and ultimately the discourse of the very curriculum I was here to teach.

### **Sexuality and religion<sup>9</sup>: What’s the connection?**

Students’ discourse in my classroom sometimes illustrates their awareness about the relationship between sexuality and religion, and the amalgamation of moral values with specific conservative religious beliefs within popular and institutional discourses. For instance, when discussing life time commitments and marriage as part of the relationships unit during the second part of the school year, a male participant noted: “*Marriage is religious legal sex*” (Field notes, January 2008, p. 20). During the same class, an anonymous question from the question box read: “*Why is marriage the only way to have sex inside a religion?*” (Field notes, January 2008, p. 22). This question, especially the use of the term “*inside*,” is somewhat awkward. Here, the student is

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<sup>9</sup> For a full discussion about the relationship between sexuality and religion in general and in the context of the Unitarian Universalist Church in particular, please refer to chapter II: Review of literature pages 44 to 49.



wondering about the moral belief that a person should not have sexual intercourse outside of marriage which permeates abstinence-only public and institutional discourses often supported or voiced by conservative religious groups.

In these discourses, the sexual behavior itself is never defined specifically but often implicitly refers to heterosexual vaginal-penile intercourse as the only form of intercourse. This type of sexual behavior is the only acceptable one, as opposed to oral or anal intercourse which is prohibitive, and it is only acceptable in the context of marriage between a man and a woman because reproduction is its only justification. Such conservative belief does not acknowledge or validate the concept of sexual pleasure. This student's remark, points directly to prevalent abstinence-only-until-marriage discourses that young people are immersed in, whether their family adhere to conservative religious views or not.

### **Parents, Participants, and Physical Space**

#### **Parents.**

Unitarian Universalism is a liberal religion in that it embraces and draws from all confessions, does not rely on dogma, and welcomes explicitly individuals of all walks of life, religious backgrounds, sexual orientations and gender identities. In addition, each congregation operates independently relying on a democratic process for the election of officers and committee chairs, supported and not directed by the Association. Unitarian Universalist congregations usually engage in a variety of social justice campaigns such as marriage equality, fair immigration policy, and reproductive choice and this congregation is no different.

However, Unitarian Universalism as such is not familiar to many Americans. I have sometimes been confronted to criticisms or remarks in the general public regarding this faith which were quite ignorant. Most people find the fact that one is encouraged to ask questions but not be imposed answers or Commandments and dogma rather esoteric. It is even less familiar to Europeans, and especially to my French family and friends. Some of my family members, for instance, have expressed concerns, at times, that I might be involved in a sect! The majority of people who are attracted by, and attend services in this Church, or become members are white, upper- and middle-class, sexually diverse professionals and their families who reside in this state or near-by states. Many grew up with a different religious background (Jewish, Roman-Catholic, Episcopalian, agnostic, or atheist) which they wish to reconcile with while seeking answers to their own spiritual quest and connect with like-minded others. This characterization is representative of the families to which students enrolled in my eighth grade classroom belonged.

The parents of my students were for the most part members of this church, and with few exceptions, enjoyed sufficient economic and cultural capital for comfort in the community. In general, parents in this congregational community seek specifically a “progressive” sexuality education program such as Our Whole Lives for their child(ren). Indeed, the specificity of this program is rather unique and this site provides a valuable opportunity for research because of the scarcity of such programs.

Parents were required to participate actively in several organizational responsibilities for this class throughout the school year. The class culminated with the Coming of Age service and celebration at the end of the year. During this annual

celebration, each student present a “Credo” or set of values delivered from the pulpit to the entire congregation, which they have developed throughout the second part of the school year with an assigned mentor –who usually is a member of the church community - different from the teachers –who also come from the church community.

At the beginning of the school year, parents were required to attend an orientation session to receive a detailed course syllabus with schedule, to view the curricular material and slide show, although the slideshow was presented in two different sessions this particular year, one in September (Anatomy slides), and one in January (Lovemaking and masturbation slides), and sign a permission slip, as well as to contribute about their own sexuality education experience, and ask any question.

Over the years, I have observed that parents, in these sessions, often complain about having received none or the wrong information about sexuality as a child or as a teen-ager and explain that they chose this program because they want their child’s experience to be different from their own. Often, parents acknowledge that, although the OWL curriculum positions them as the “primary sexuality educator of their child,” they feel unprepared for or uncomfortable talking to their child about sexuality. Even though they support this sexuality education program and enroll their child, parents sometimes show anxiety and even reticence during and after viewing the lovemaking slideshow at orientation, and question their child’s “readiness” for it. Some years, some parents have kept their child home on the days when the lovemaking and/or masturbation parts of the video are shown to the class (dates are always specified in detailed syllabus for this purpose). Parents’ contributions and the conflicted responses of some during the orientation sessions and during the school year were no different.

As I stated, most families here were middle-class or upper middle-class, “where middle-class is taken as designating a cultural orientation rather than simply economic status” (Panofsky, 1994, p. 229). By this, I mean that middle-class parenting is considered as its own cultural model in connection to social class. Gee (1999) explains that although middle-class parents believe in and want to encourage their child’s independence and maximize their child’s learning, they are sometimes inconsistent when the child’s behavior is seen as negative or the situation as difficult or requires “new sorts of response from the parents” (pp. 64-65).

### **Students in the G8 Sexuality Education Classroom.**

#### ***Students and Their Parents.***

Students came from mostly white, middle-class, economically comfortable families who resided in this state and nearby states, and attended a variety of schools during the week: private, public, parochial, or were home-schooled which was the case with two male student-participants. Interestingly, the discomfort or anxiety I have observed in parents resonated with the discomfort expressed by students during class about their parent’s ability to discuss sexual matters, or even about their parents’ sexuality or sexual knowledge. For instance, even though one female student during a discussion about parents acknowledged that her “mother *answers any question (she) may have*” (Field notes, March 2008, p. 24), another one when asked during the same class whether she spoke with her parents about sexuality uttered: “*I try not to!*” (Field notes, March, p. 24). Similarly, during a discussion about making responsible sexual decisions towards the end of the school year, students’ words expressed discomfort and incredulity about either addressing any sexual topic with their parents, or about even imagining their

parents as accurate sexual subjects. For instance, when finding out that parents would be attending the OWL closure session, students exclaimed:

- *Are you serious?* (Gina)
- *Well, I'm leaving!* (Sam)
- *Our parents are coming?* (Tony)
- *Why?* (a female student)
- *That's creepy!* (another female student)

During the same discussion, students expressed incredulity and even disgust when imagining their parents as sexual subjects:

- *I cannot think about my parents* (a female student)
- *I thought it was a pretty good idea that a healthy sexuality is a healthy part of your life and stuff but, like, when you're older, I guess, like, I'm kind of grossed out about, but, I guess it's normal and whatever, but like, like your parents?* (another female student)
- *Like your parents?* (Gina)

(Transcript 16, April 2008)

Thus, parents' discourse presented them as anxious and uncomfortable and their children (my students) s' discourse presented them as incredulous about their parents' sexual knowledge, and as uncomfortable about addressing sexual matters with them or in their presence. These views align with the notion that, even though we grow up, live and work in a sexualized culture, formal discussion about sexuality is awkward, even, (or maybe more so?) when the setting provides reassurance and seriousness.

In this respect, the parents' orientation, which took place two weeks after the beginning of church school, as mentioned above, and parents' reactions to the "lovemaking" slideshow in particular, played an important role. In general, getting to know parents, and understanding whose parents make which comment and/or asks what question gives the teaching team interesting insights in how to read and/or approach a student's response to material or their behavior during class. Gina's story was particularly interesting in this regard.

***Gina's Story.***

Gina was one of the most talkative and developmentally advanced girls in this class. She had long blond hair and liked to wear very feminine, sometimes eccentric outfits to class such as non-matching, long, striped, and bright high stocking. She had her hair colored different bright colors a couple of times throughout the year (green, red). She told many stories from her own life, her school friends, and other friends displaying lots of sexual knowledge and experiences throughout the entire school year regardless of the topic at hand.

For instance, during a conversation about disability and sexuality in the fall of 2007, students had read Olivia's story. Olivia goes to high school, lives with her parents and loves her boy-friend. They both want to become lovers for the first time but things are complicated because Olivia cannot walk and uses a wheel chair to go places. Thus, the story continues on telling us how Olivia and her boy-friend with the support of Olivia's mother organized their first day and night out in a hotel. Students responded to the story with skepticism, especially regarding Olivia's willingness to discuss sexual matters and plans with her mother.

A discussion followed during which Tony, a male student, said that he “*could never make out in his room since his parents’ room is right across the hall,*” Gina interjected: “*You wait till they’re out!*” (Field notes, November, p. 17). This phrase encouraging Tony to engage in sexual behavior while his parents are out showed that Gina performed as someone with experience or at least, someone who had thought about the issue, and knew what to do in such a case, and even might be sexually active herself, or at least supported the notion that sexual activity was the thing to do or simply “cool.” She positioned herself as knowledgeable about avoiding parent’s scrutiny in order to have sex.

Often, Gina’s voice used great conviction as if speaking from “experience” and her discourse positioned her as someone who was progressive and knowledgeable about social issues including but not limited to sexuality. For instance, she once said about another female student’s complaint, Reina, that students used the word Jewish or N. in her school that: “*They could never do this in my school*” ... *Someone could get “killed who uses these words”* (Field notes, September-October, p. 12).

Yet, her language also came to support, at times, a more stereotypical representation of femininity. As, for instance, when she noted, during a same-gender all girls discussion about personal concerns about puberty early in the school year how the “*First time is a pretty painful experience for girls from what I’ve heard, and of course, guys probably enjoy themselves*” (Field notes, November, p. 20). Painful sexual intercourse was a recurring theme in girls’ conversation, in line with the missing discourse of female desire and pleasure (Fine, 1988) and Gina and other girls often brought it up as well as painful menstruations during discussions about gender and

differences, thus supporting the idea that things related to female sexuality were painful and unwanted.

A discussion about love during the class about sexual decisions which was the last session for the OWL program in late April provided another of many examples of Gina's language supporting a conservative notion of femininity. After a discussion about sexual readiness and just before completing questionnaires entitled "How to decide about sexual experience?" students were asked to share their definition of the term "love." While students tried to come up with reasonable and rational combinations citing trust, sexual attraction, etc. Gina's contribution sounded as romantic and idealized as that of a female tele-novella character: *"Love is like when you're just really comfortable with them and like you can just be doing just absolutely nothing and you're OK and you can work things out and even talk about yourself and they don't mind that you're really weird and you have birthday parties and they think you're cute anyway and you can just "Aaaaarrgghh! And when you guys have the same favorite movie and it's really cute and you're like tee-hee!"* (Transcript 16 April 13, 2008, p. 6).

Here, Gina was describing a wonderfully innocent idea of perfect love although a stereotypical script often represented in media text whereby a girl's life's purpose is to "fall" (hooks, in Shaw and Lee, 2009, p. 193) for the one (man or boy) with whom she will miraculously get along in full mutual acceptance and live forever and ever (Christensen 2003; Rich, 1986). As she often did when telling such stories, she was able to speak fast and inflect the intonation of her voice from deep to quiet to acute and loud and using onomatopoeic sounds throughout, thus making it dramatic.



Yet, a moment earlier during the same class, after students had been reading and listening to young people's opinions from the curriculum about what might good reasons be for two young people to have sex, Gina noted: "*You're gonna spend an awful long time to have sex if you're gonna wait till you're completely in love*" (Transcript 16, April 13, p. 2). With these words, she was separating feeling love from being sexually active which differs from ways in which femininity is traditionally represented whereby women and girls are said to be more interested in feelings than in being sexual agents feeling desire and seeking pleasure.

Similarly, when discussing gender roles, during another class much earlier during the school year, Gina told a story to demonstrate her ability to be assertive and defending one of her friends by resisting a boy who was teasing her at school: "*This guy, he was telling my friend about all these sexual things he wants to do to her and I told him to shut up, and he said he would beat me up, and then later on, I threw eggs at him and he beat me after school*" (Field notes, December, p. 6). In the first part of this excerpt, Gina's language is presenting her as powerful as she told a boy to "*shut up,*" and "*threw eggs at him,*" although, in the end of her story, the boy beat her up, thus reinforcing a discourse of dominant masculinity.

Another example of Gina's resisting stereotypical representations of girls and teens took place when students were asked to cite and discuss characters from any media text whose representation of gender they either liked or did not like and to explain why. A few girls discussed the Hollywood hit-movie "Mean girls" (Waters, 2004). This film describes the adventures of a math-smart and beautiful teenager, Cady, who recently returned from spending her childhood in an African country where she had been home-

schooled by her parents, both scholars, to continue her high-school education in the USA. In the film, although excellent at math, she learns to dumb herself down in order to attract the boy she likes, and becomes a member of the highest-rated (in terms of beauty and fashion) and exclusive group of girls “The Plastics” who rule over the school and over each other by using gossiping, rumor-spreading, cheating and lying strategies.

Gina reacted to the film’s stereotypes about teenage girls in this way: “*I hang out with high-schoolers and it’s not like that. There is not that caginess and manipulation. I don’t think everybody’s mom gets a boob job* (Referring to one of the Plastics’ mother in “Mean Girls”), *and not all girls are like ‘mean girls’*” (Field notes, November, p. 34). Here, Gina was strongly resisting stereotypical visualizations of girls such as the ones advertised in Mean Girls. Yet, at another time several weeks later, she told of a story at her school when she or one of her friends “*lighted one of their friends on fire*” (Field notes, December, p. 3) which resonated with the dramatic opening scene of “Mean Girls” in which students gathered in front of the high school before the start of school are shown in their colorful peer groups wearing eccentric attire and hair styles, and performing all kinds of wild and even prohibited activities, one student, for instance, starting a fire under a tree for fun, as Cady, the main character arrives for her first morning in an American school.

There is a tension between Gina’s rebuttal of stereotypes about girls and teenagers and her saying that teenagers are not the way they are depicted in mainstream media, and the stories Gina told about the risky and risqué actions she and her friends took.

There seems to be many levels nested within Gina’s speech which fluctuates from moments of “coolness” to moments of dominant and then resistant followed by dominant

representations of femininity. Such contradictions permeated Gina's and students' discourse in general throughout the year. Frazer and Cameron (1989) note that "People's accounts to each other and to themselves, are a continuous procedure of glossing, by which the social world becomes a place, and a series of happenings, which make sense, and have meaning. This meaning itself is, of course, constantly negotiated and constructed; as is the significance and reference of utterances" (p. 29).

In Gina's social world, girls can act strong, and perform as sexual agents, yet, at the same time, girls view love as a miraculous and romantic happening, where the sexual performance is conditional of one's coolness although not necessarily pleasurable: Acting as if one knows about "having sex" is almost prescribed whether one wants to have sex or not...

In this respect, Gina's discursive references to her relationship with her parents are intriguing. Gina often complained throughout the school year that "*her parents want to control everything in her life*" (Field notes, November p. 22), and that her "*Mom was wicked paranoid*" (Transcript 11, March 30).

Here, I would like to return to the issue of parents' response to the lovemaking and masturbation slideshow which, that year, took place in January and not during the parents' orientation session at the beginning of the school year as usual during which only the anatomy slides had been shown. Gina's mother had left several voice mail messages on my phone after seeing the slide show, in order to schedule a private slide show for her husband who had not been able to attend and view the lovemaking and masturbation slides. Gina's mother's voice sounded nervous.

When I spoke with her, she sounded worried about Gina's behavior in general. She explained that Gina really needed this class, or needed help and, at the same time, she intimated that there was some kind of conflict between Gina's dad and herself about what to do "about Gina." She was concerned about letting Gina attend and view the lovemaking slides with our class without Gina's dad having seen them as well and approved of it. Yet, our administrative policy stipulates that one parent must see the slides and sign a permission slip for their child to be able to attend the slide show but does not require both parents to do so.

It did not seem clear to me what exactly was going on between Gina, her mother and her father. I had the impression that maybe none of the parents wanted to take responsibility for Gina's knowledge or learning about sexuality, and that her mother, who seemed to believe in the importance of this program, was conflicted about the lovemaking slides themselves and the impact they may have on her daughter.

In the end, another session with Gina's father was never scheduled and Gina was absent on the day we showed the lovemaking slides. When I bumped into Gina's mother later that month and inquired about not having heard back from her, she alluded to a ski trip which had made it impossible for Gina to attend the class during which the slides were shown "anyway" (All field notes, pp.84-85). Why would she insist on her husband's viewing the slides? Why would viewing the slides be a topic on which both parents could not communicate? Why would Gina's mother in the end, after spending time on the phone and speaking to my D.R.E. and myself to arrange an individual slide session (which takes about two hours) for her husband, never get back to me, and seem to

remember afterwards that they would be going away anyhow, so that Gina never viewed the slides?

As I explained, most parents who live in a committed relationship attend together or separately and usually one signature is enough because agreement is implied. In the case of Gina's parents, was there a communication problem or tension or even a disagreement about the program, or about the slides between them? Between Gina and her parents? Why would Gina's mother be organizing an individual slideshow for her partner? Could he not take care of it or did he not want to be responsible? Was he disagreeing or did neither parent want to take responsibility for allowing Gina to watch the slides because they viewed them as high-stakes? I will never know. Gina's example, however, illustrates the unease that parents, or some parents, even middle-class, or upper-middle-class, educated, and liberal white American parents may experience about sexuality, their own and their child's.

The case of another student who opted to not participate to the study also shows the discomfort that talk about sexuality conveys for parents and/about their children. After several weeks of class at the beginning of the school year, while I had not received the consent form back from this female student, her mother approached me in class and handed me back the consent form where the not-participating option had been checked. She explained that her family was conservative and that they would have preferred that sexuality education was not taught to their daughter this year. She added that, unfortunately, she would be attending as there was no other option for her age-group in the church school, and that they did want their daughter to follow the rest of the "Coming of Age" program. She added that her daughter was very uncomfortable with the topic

and this is why they, together, had decided not to participate to the study. What was most striking in this exchange was the extreme discomfort that I sensed from this parent as she was discussing the issue with me and this helped me to better understand the behavior of this student until then, who had been silent and quasi-invisible, and remained so throughout the school year. In a way, although I consider this case as exceptional, these parents were maybe more aware of their own discomfort and able to articulate it. Yet, this was the first time this happened in my seven years' experience of teaching this class.

Gina's story and this last example demonstrate the ambivalence I mentioned earlier about parents' wish for an accurate and comprehensive sexuality education program for their child, and at the same time, their fear to address issues of sexuality with their child, or for their child to be exposed to sexual materials even in a church school setting, or their reluctance to accept their child as a "sexual" being, let alone as a being who might engage in sexual activities.

#### ***Students and Being Unitarian.***

On the other hand, student-participants, although they sometimes complained about having to attend this class, expressed comfort about the religious setting they were growing up in. For instance, when asked how they describe their "religion" to peers outside of the program, two students responded. One, a boy, said: *I go to public school and they really don't care (about your religion) maybe if you go to private school?*" and the other one, a girl: *"I go to public school; it's not really like that"* (Transcript 19, May 2008). This student first said that she goes to *"public school,"* emphasizing the notion that public schools are different from religious private schools (such as Roman-Catholic or parochial schools), and from this church school. Then, she used this notion to explain

that she has not been asked about her religion in school, or that religion is not discussed in her school.

This is puzzling because religious references are omni-present in the English language, in many subject matters, and in most school district's calendar, and students who attend public schools are very likely to discuss activities that take place outside of school and that maybe related to a family's or student's religious affiliation with each other, especially when it comes to school friends and peers, be it an invitation to a friend's Bar or Bat's Mitzvah, or Christmas Eve Dinner party, although religion might not be discussed overtly, religion is present in public and private schools. These two comments by students demonstrate how the dominant ideology that students and all of us are immersed in makes some aspects of our cultural environment invisible.

Sometimes, students' words showed both knowledge and a certain level of irreverence when expressing opinion about religion and other modern religions (Field notes, February 17, p. 14). For instance, towards the end of the second semester, before a discussion about unplanned pregnancy, a teacher was reading and commenting questions and comments from the anonymous question box. One comment read: "*Orgasmo* is God" (Transcript 11, March 2008). Here, a student is establishing a direct connection between religion and sexuality by renaming God a name they created based on the word orgasm. This connection is not disrespectful of religion, or of the idea of God. In fact, it pre-supposes and accepts the idea of God. While it is meant to sound humorous, this comment is interesting because it welcomes the notion of a sacred "being" or "idea" in a broad sense and associates sexual pleasure or orgasm with sacredness.

Another time, as our class was exploring religious beliefs during one of the last meetings of the school year, a student had commented that Jesus might have been both Mary-Magdalene and John's lover (both disciples of Jesus in the Christian faith) probably based on the Da Vinci Code book by Dan Brown (2003) out of which a film was made in 2006 (Howard, 2006), thus a year before this study. These two characters are cited in the New Testament as two disciples of Jesus. Thus, this comment implied that, in this student's view, Jesus was bisexual. Lola, an outspoken female student whose discourse is analyzed in detail in the following chapter exclaimed: "*Jesus was a pretty cool dude*" (Recording April 27, 2008).

Here, Lola's words were not only validating the existence of Jesus but also complimenting Jesus thus demonstrating knowledge and interest in and respect for a religious character and religious beliefs (Christianity) which are not dogmatically presented as part of Unitarian-Universalism beliefs. Notably, students who attend the Church school from Kindergarten through High-School do receive education about all or most world religions and this include Christianity.

In general, Unitarian-Universalist beliefs embrace the idea of Jesus as a man concerned with social justice and equity. Thus, although the first anonymous comment may be more informed by popular media culture than religious education, Lola's comment, who had attended since childhood, demonstrated religious tolerance and a somewhat mature understanding of Jesus as a person, and even as a "*cool*" person. But what makes this person "*cool*?" Is being bisexual "*cool*" for Lola? Most likely, Lola was moved by Unitarian Universalist principles that she had been taught over the years (in addition maybe to other messages from home, or specific media she was exposed to?)



that support any and all gender identities and relationships between people of any and all genders. Her sentence showed her understanding of these principles to some extent.

Yet, at the same time, the student's reference to Jesus which started this exchange was interesting because it reinforced the visibility of a Christian character which and possibly because this character had been referred to in the popular culture sphere this student was immersed in. Thus, while Jesus's visibility in media text gains him visibility among Christians and non-Christians, the story of other Bible characters such as Mary-Magdalene are not necessarily made visible, and even less praised. According to the Bible, Mary-Magdalene, a woman accused of living a life of "sin and fornication" and convicted to lapidating is saved by Jesus.

However, it is notable that this element of the story did not enter the conversation, and did not inspire one about for instance, female sexual liberation and agency. In this way, dominant religious discourses are powerful in silencing more critical approaches even in a context viewed as progressive.

At times, students' discourse referred directly to being Unitarian, and/or to the OWL program. Once, while discussing peer pressure and relationships in the early part of the school year, Roger, an outspoken male student whose discourse is analyzed in the two chapters following this one, was role-playing Moorage, a girl who talks inappropriately to her younger male cousin. He paraded in the classroom placing two plastic Easter eggs (these eggs lied on the shelves in the classroom this entire school year and were sometimes passed around as a talking stick at the end of class to encourage students to share a thought or comment about class) over each of his breasts and holding

one over his crotch saying: “*Giving them the Unitarian way!*” (Field notes, January 2008).

Here, Roger seemed to be referring to the fact that, as he is representing a girl and posturing as one by emphasizing his breast and his crotch with Easter eggs, he is demonstrating that, by adding a female breast and crotch to his boy’s body, he is “free” to parade as cross-dresser, or even transgender without feeling shame but instead pride; thus representing the inclusive principles of Unitarian Universalism. By this, I mean that he may be expressing how Unitarian-Universalists support a variety of gender expression regardless of gender identity and biological sex. This is another example of a student who chose to perform in a role-play as another gender similar to the situation analyzed in chapter 5 where the female student perform as a the male character and the male student as the female character, a phenomenon I refer to as discursive gender-twisting in the next chapter.

On the other hand, many may argue that representing a woman by sexualizing the body in emphasizing sexual attributes is hardly a radical approach, so that I wonder whether Roger’s performance was actually promoting Unitarian Universalism or just mocking the female body. Or both.

Another time, during a class discussion about sexually transmitted infections, later during the school year, Sam exclaimed: “*Condoms, get them from your church*” (Field notes, March 2008, p. 18). With these words, Sam was emphasizing the relationship between this church and the sexuality education program he was enrolled in, with an ironic tone of voice that expresses both mockery and pride at the same time, for being part of an alternative and innovative program about sexuality.

To me, these examples are important because they evidence this youth's approach to the idea that their religion is interesting, and that they "can" discuss all sorts of issues and even playfully. But also they show that students, to some respect, understand, or have a sense that religious beliefs are intricately related to sexual beliefs and practices, partly because of the existence of this unique sexuality education program and their participation in it.

***Students in a school that is not a "school."***

Although this classroom is located in a church school, it is important to note that this school is not "a" school (Bogad, 1998). Except for the specific time schedule on Sundays between 10:45 and noon, and the use of a specific curriculum, practices evident in American schools such as the ringing of bells, movement from classroom to classroom, and the monitoring of halls by teachers and other staff are absent from this setting. Respect and collaboration are expected behaviors within the norms of non-confrontation and politeness of a mostly white, Anglo-Saxon, and middle-class culture of power (Delpit, 2005).

In addition, because of the sensitivity of some of the topics addressed, the issue of confidentiality is stressed with this class at the beginning and throughout the school year: Students are asked to not discuss issues or personal stories that peers share by using their names outside of the classroom, and teachers are only required to report life-threatening issues to the hierarchy (Director of Religious Education, Minister, and ultimately parents). For this reason of confidentiality, this class has a "no guest" policy (Field notes, January 13, p. 15).

However, although the dynamics of discipline, power and submission which characterize schools as an institution (Foucault, 1972) are different here, Bogad (1998) explains that even when freer from institutional routine, young people' whether at "play" or at "work" are never "free from the dynamics of power and resistance..." (p. 380). While this classroom does not qualify as a play space, it is not exactly viewed as a school space by participants. Although there is an "agenda" or a lesson plan for each class and they are asked to attend and contribute to serious discussions, they, for the most part, rarely follow rules such as raising hands, or asking permission to move around. Nor do they refrain from entertaining side conversations, interrupting, or using slang, and even, for some, profanity at times.

In fact, discourses developed in this space are unique and almost qualify as Borderland discourses (Gee, 1996, Blackburn, 2005). Gee uses the term "Borderland Discourses" to describe community-based Discourses that allow interaction "outside the confines of public sphere and middle-class, and in this case I [he] would add homophobic, ageist, racist 'elite Discourses'... Borders are unnatural boundaries ... that are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe" (p. 162). In this setting, although the youth's language is mostly that of a white, middle and upper middle class youth whose parents, for the most part, are professionals, thus different from Gee's definition, it is Borderland in the sense that the youth conversations are kept safe from their parents, the church administration, the congregation, their regular school, and to some extent from the public sphere. Thanks to the confidentiality clause but not only, student speak freely within the constraints of the said dynamics of power and resistance (Bogad, 1998). While

this combination of freedom and constraints might create tension for the group leaders, students, for the most part, enjoy being here.

Therefore, most of the students in the classroom, partly also because of their age-group, find the subject-matter engaging and attend enthusiastically and consistently; this includes the year during which this research took place (only two students missed consistently throughout the entire year). Importantly, these students, while in the same age group, may be at different levels of physical, as well as social-emotional development. Notably, the curriculum and the classroom covenant provide any participant with a “pass” option. This means that students who do not wish to share on any topic in a class discussion are not required to and can simply pass their turn by saying “pass.”

Interestingly, this group of students is gender-mixed in contrast with many public school programs devoted to sexuality education. In a study Weis & Carbonell-Medina (2000) conducted, young women attended a daily “focus group” on sexuality education. Weis & Carbonell-Medina (2000) comment that “same gender-groupings have the greatest potential for interesting curricular work at the same time that they are often the site for the most disappointing activities (for students and researchers)” (p. 646). The mixed-gender grouping in this curriculum enables the inclusion of all young people, including ones potentially developing diverse sexual orientations/gender identities. This means that, even though the curriculum’s discourse tends to support a binary male/female understanding of gender, and separation by biological sex is required for a few class-sessions throughout the school year, student-participants are, for the most part, not separated by gender while learning about and discussing gender and sexuality education

topics. In this way, the instructional approach is faithful to the philosophical framework of the curriculum in use.

Classes in the church Sunday school were taught by a team composed of a total of four teacher-facilitators who had been members of the congregational community for a long time and with whom I had taught before. Two teacher-facilitators led the class each Sunday and alternated every other Sunday or so. This means that only two teachers from the teaching team were required to teach on any particular Sunday. This model allows for some flexibility in scheduling for teachers, and some variety in the teaching styles and personalities offered to students. The eighth grade class met every Sunday for one hour and forty-five minutes and two teacher-facilitators led the class each week.

#### **Classroom, Resources and Activities.**

The physical setting of the sexuality education program was a classroom located on the first floor of the Parish house. Its door opens onto the large Parish House lobby with cathedral ceiling where church members congregate for coffee hour on Sundays after services in the Meeting House.

The classroom had three windows overlooking a small path in the back of the Parish House and contained two large tables usually pushed to the sides of the room, a small desk, and rows of chairs standing against one wall. The walls were decorated with a poster listing the seven Unitarian Universalists principles, two posters displaying respectively the OWL Bill of Rights, and the OWL Values (These posters were read out loud and explained during the first class meeting), a framed collage made by a previous class, a covenant listing class rules (“Use ‘I’ statements, “Take turn,” “Pass”) which had been discussed by the entire class during the first class-meeting, a cork board showing

photos of all student- and teacher-participants, and displaying artwork made by students during class gatherings that took place in connection to Coming of Age Credo preparation with mentors.

One large set of shelves contained material for the class such as:

- Index cards,
- Notebooks and pencils,
- Several books,
- A curriculum manual,
- A spiritual “companion,” which is another textbook referring to the faith principles of the organization in relation to issues of lovemaking, sexuality, sexual orientation, and inclusivity,
- A chalice (candle in a cup) with matches,
- A square piece of fabric, (on which the chalice is placed on the floor at the center of classroom)
- A question box,
- A set of slides: They are black and white drawings. There are anatomy slides that include drawings of male and female reproductive systems and genitals, one drawing each of a group of boys and girls of the same age showing a wide range of physical development, and one drawing each of boys/men and girls/women of a variety of ages showing a wide range of physical development and appearance. There are lovemaking slides that show an equal number of same gender/different gender partnering and there are masturbation

slides that show an equal number of boys/men and girls/women with a variety of physical appearance and development.

- A video entitled “Talking About Sex,” by Planned Parenthood, (1997), (which presents the importance of sexual education in a humoristic cartoon),
- A STI-HIV prevention kit (male and female condoms, penis models, brochures, lotions),
- Other contraceptive resources on loan regularly from Planned Parenthood.

Before the beginning of each class, leaders, usually helped by students who arrived early, arranged chairs in a circle and placed the chalice and matches on the square piece of fabric on the floor at the center of the circle, and the question box with index cards and pencils on the desk. Snacks had usually been provided by the church office (Juice or water and crackers) and placed on one of the large tables with a folder containing an attendance list to be checked by leaders, and a weekly newsletter from the church to be shared with participants during check in.

Class started at 10:15 although many student-participants arrived between 10:15 and 10:30. Thus the first activity was check-in so that students could easily join in as they were arriving even though they missed what students who arrived earlier had shared.

Next, the chalice (a candle in a cup at the center of the room on a piece of fabric) was lit by a volunteer. Students sometimes competed to light the chalice. Next, the day’s topic was introduced by leaders before reading(s). The chalice usually stayed lit until the first activity that requires students to move around the room.

Class activities included: A check-in at the beginning of class, answers to questions from the question box from the previous class, one or more readings about the



day's main topic, a debriefing of the reading(s) with the class as a whole, a variety of activities done in small groups or with the whole class depending on the topic at hand, and a closing or wrap up time. Activities that were performed as a whole class were for instance:

- Value-voting: Students listened to a teacher read an opinion-statement and stood on an “agree/disagree” line – Two signs reading “Agree” and “Disagree” were posted at each end of the classroom to define an imaginary line- depending on their opinion, and got to explain why they stood where they did; students were encouraged to listen to each other’s statements and moved along the line if they changed their mind throughout. Statements related to the topic at hand. For instance, during the session about gender identity and gender roles, a statement might read: “Girls should not call boys to ask them out” or “Girls who wear mini-skirts are asking for it [sexual assault].” Students liked this activity because it is very interactive and they got to congregate with each other...Or not.
- Myths and Facts game: One teacher read a statement and students decided whether the statement was a myth or a fact. For instance, during the sexual orientation and gender identity session, a statement might read: “Gay and lesbian people can be easily identified by the way they look and act,” or “Parents have a major influence on whether their child is straight or gay.” Students usually shouted out their answer.
- Anatomy and Physiology cards: This activity took place in the early part of the school year before the anatomy slides were shown. Cards had been

prepared by teachers. Each card had the name of a part of the male or female body written on it. Many parts were sexual or reproductive body parts. Some were not (eyes, ears, mouth). One teacher taped a card on each student's back. Each student had to find out what their part was by asking questions to peers such as: Am I male or female? Below or above the waist? Etc...

- Final wrap up: Students shared what they liked or did not like about class. Sometimes a plastic Easter egg was passed around as a talking stick in order to allow students to share a word or a thought about class that day.
- Anonymous question box: Before leaving class, each student wrote on an index card a question or a comment about the class or took the time to write the following sentence: "I do not have a question or a comment for the question box today." They placed the card in the question box. Teachers retrieved the cards at the end of class and reviewed them to select questions/comments that would be addressed at the beginning of the following class-meeting. My experience was that few cards contained an actual question or comment at any given class and many students just wrote the sentence. However, comments and questions did come up, even if sometimes disguised with humor. These questions and comments were posed to the entire class at the following class. Students and teachers were encouraged to respond, or find answers for the following class-meeting if no answer was found. Sometimes, teachers secretly added a specific question they deemed important about a particular topic because it had not spontaneously come up from students so that they had to consider and address it.

Activities that required students to work in small groups were, for example:

- Role-play preparation: students were given a prompt with a plot and characters, and devised a dialogue between these characters around the plot. One such activity is at the center of the conversation analyzed in the next chapter and revolves around relationships and peer pressure.
- Discussion about a case study: For instance, during the session about parenting in the second semester of the school year, students were given a list of people or couples who wanted to become a parent. This list mentioned the persons' name, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, education, job and socio-economic status. Students were asked to decide as a group which individual or couple was the most fit to become a parent and to draw a list ordering individuals or couples from most to least likely to be a good parent.
- Preparation of questions and/or responses to questions: For instance, during the session about unintended pregnancy, students debated and tried to answer facts and opinion questions about abortion such as "Should male partners have a say about their partner's abortion" or "Who should pay for it?" or about adoption such as "What is an open adoption?", or about teenage pregnancy such as: "If your friend asked you to lend her money for an adoption, what would you do?" Responses were shared by the whole class and fact questions were addressed by teachers afterwards.
- Condom obstacle course: This hands-on activity took place only once in relation to the session about sexually transmitted infections, and was meant for students to experiment in pairs with the extension of male condoms, the

sensitivity of the skin through a male condom and the putting on and removal of male condoms from a penis model.

For small group activities, students were often free to group with whom they wished and they tended to congregate with the same peers, who also happened to often be same-gender. These self-grouping dynamics were intricate and probably stemmed for many different reasons related to affinities as well as familiarity, self-consciousness, shyness, or is it something else that incite most of us, and maybe adolescents more so to return to faces we are most familiar with as opposed to meet new people? This is especially true of this setting where participants met only once a week, and where some had known each other since pre-school, and seen each other every Sunday, and might even have attended the same school during the week, while others joined more recently.

In order to mix things up, about 50% of the time, teachers assigned students randomly to a gender-mixed group. Curriculum activities rarely require students to group along same gender except for two or three activities during the program such as “Personal concerns about puberty:” In this activity which took place very early in the school year, same gender-students discussed concerns with their same gender teacher and asked each other questions for fifteen/ twenty minutes before reconvening as a whole class.

## **Selection of data**

### **Choice of data.**

I conducted research in this classroom almost every Sunday from September 2007 until May 2008 which amounted to twenty four class meetings. In addition, I observed and wrote field notes after the annual Fundraiser in January and the overnight trip in

March. After each class-meeting I attended, and the two additional events just mentioned, I read, edited and refined my field notes into cooked notes.

Out of twenty four class-meetings, I fully observed and recorded during nine while two other teachers were leading; I observed and recorded students as well as co-taught with another teacher during the remaining fifteen class-meetings. Each class session always included at least one or two small group activities where students would be randomly assigned or allowed to choose a partner or partners in a pair or in a group of three or more.

During the months of September and October, I strictly observed and wrote field notes as I was still receiving consent forms. During the month of November, there were only two class-meetings during which I observed, wrote field-notes, and tried to record students although unsuccessfully. During the months of December and January, I observed, wrote field-notes, and recorded students although only student-participants (who had formally consented to participate) in small group activities. Grouping students according to whether they had formally consented turned out to be very challenging and limiting especially because students were used to self-select their group for small group activities at least 50% of the time, and I was reluctant to “group” them according to my research needs for ethical reasons: I felt that grouping students according to my “needs,” would somehow interrupt the “natural” flow of group dynamics.

Therefore, starting in February, and after I consulted with my dissertation advisor and my teaching team, I started recording selected activities and/or class discussion of any and all students based on the agreement that non-consenting students’ voices would not be used. This condition addressed my ethical dilemma. I also purchased a second

recorder and started using two recorders. I produced more recordings after these decisions were made and probably also because I became more acclimated to recording altogether!

Although I recorded entire class discussions as well as small group activities and discussions, small group activities lent themselves well to recording because they included fewer participants so that the voices were usually clearer, and easier to identify, and there was less background noise. In addition, they gave participants more “room” to discuss (and digress) “freely” without another teacher, or participants listening on and sitting nearby. Whether before small groups or whole class recording, I would let students and co-teacher(s) know that I was going to start the recorder(s). However, I found that, in general, even if students might have paid attention to the recorders (which were very small and which I usually placed below one of the students’ chair, or on a nearby table) at the beginning, they soon forgot about it in the “heat of a class discussion.” The same is true about most small group activities I recorded.

However, it is difficult to say affirmatively that students’ discursive performance was not affected by the fact that they knew that they were being recorded. In fact, it seems that the position of the recorder, and whoever the person was who was holding the recorder, or kept the recorder nearby may have impacted the discursive dynamics in the conversation analyzed in chapter six as five male students are constructing “lines” in order to complete an activity part of the “Dating and lifetime commitments” session within the relationships unit, with the support of a male teacher.

In the end, I collected a large number of data: I wrote two hundred and twenty double-spaced, typed pages of field notes from September 2007 to August 2008, and

recorded four hours and forty eight minutes of seventeen conversations from December 2007 to April 2008. Only sixteen conversations were transcribed in full out of the seventeen that had been recorded because the last conversation took place after the OWL sexuality education curriculum had been completed, and the conversation did not pertain to gender and sexuality but to spiritual explorations. The sixteen recorded conversations related to:

- ❖ Relationships - Relationship Skills: “Seeking consent” activity (Two mixed gender small activity conversations),
- ❖ Relationships - Dating and Life Time Commitments: “Yes, No Maybe So” activity (Two duplicate all boys’ small activity conversation),
- ❖ Abuse of Sexuality - Sexual Harassment and Acquaintance Rape: Answering questions from the question box as a class, presenting the reading, discussing sexual harassment and the reading (Four class mixed gender all classroom discussions + one duplicate),
- ❖ Preparing for Parenthood - Teenage Pregnancy: “Finding good parents” activity (One mixed gender whole class conversation),
- ❖ Sexually Transmitted Infections – STI Prevention: “Condom Obstacle Course” activity (One boys’ small activity conversation),
- ❖ Responsible Sexual Behavior – Unintended Pregnancy Options: “Redefining Abstinence” activity (One gender mixed whole class discussion),
- ❖ Responsible Sexual Behavior – Unintended Pregnancy Options: Answering questions and class discussion about “Attitudes about Abortion” (One mixed gender whole class discussion),

- ❖ Responsible Sexual Behavior – Unintended Pregnancy Options: “Unintended Pregnancy Facts and Feelings (questions)” activity (Two mixed gender small activity conversations),
- ❖ Responsible Sexual Behavior – Unintended Pregnancy Options: Unintended Pregnancy Facts and Feelings (answers)” activity (One mixed gender whole class discussion),
- ❖ Responsible Sexual Behavior – Unintended Pregnancy Options: “Continuum Choice” activity (One mixed gender whole class activity),
- ❖ Sexual Decisions – How Do I Decide About Sexual Experience? (One mixed gender introductory whole class discussion and class activity (completing and discussing “How Do I decide about sexual experience” questionnaires).

**Data selected.**

Although my intention had been to analyze one conversation each of boys-only and girls-only, the opportunity to record a group of girls-only did not present itself. Importantly, although the corpus included seventeen conversations, many consisted in whole class discussions in which a few non-participating students’ voices played a major role yet could not be used, and from which removing their voices would have made the conversation not comprehensible enough for analysis. In addition, the background noise in whole class discussions turned out to be an issue in comprehension and transcription that would have made the analysis too tentative.

However, as I returned to recordings and contextualized with field notes, I started noticing that conversations recorded around the topic of relationships made for rich and interesting exchanges. This particular unit led to conversations which provided a copious



sampling of discursive dynamics that seem sustained across the entire school year. The term relationship taken generally informs our whole lives in many more ways than just our sexual lives. I found that discussions around friends, boys, girls, going out, and dating, and the ways in which the intended curriculum activities evolved discursively best captured how the youth performed “relating,” and understood and enacted this relational understanding of gender and sexuality.

Therefore, out of these sixteen conversations, I selected three which pertained to the relationships unit of the curriculum and took place at a mid-point during the school year in the months of December 2007 and January 2008. They covered two specific small group activities.

Edley talks about the limitations that exist for the construction of self and other. He notes: “By looking for the different ways that people can talk about men and masculinity, we begin to understand the kinds of limitations that exist for the construction of self and other” (2001, p. 201). In this respect, the conversations and the participants I selected provide an excellent terrain for examining how young people use discourse to negotiate identity and for underlining how young people’s understanding of gender produces discourses and how these discourses positions them within the context of each conversation—although Edley refers to men and masculinity, I am including all gender identities here,- and how these discourses when performed and enacted are informed by the socio-historical limitations of culture and language for masculinities and femininities.

I contextualized the discourse from these two speech events with students’ words recorded in field notes on the days these activities were completed and during other class-meetings and events, as well as with data collected in cooked field notes written

throughout the entire study, to listen to, analyze, and interrogate the voices, words, and utterances of students-participants in the Eighth Grade sexuality education classroom.

This resulted in two discourse analyses which each are the subject of the two following chapters. The next chapter analyzes the discourse of a male student, Roger, and a female student, Lola while preparing for a role-play activity that relates to peer-pressure in friendship (a session of the relationship unit). The following chapter analyzes the discourse of five students, Roger (again), Sam, Tony, Rodrigo, Tripp, and a male teacher, Jerry, while they are constructing lines to ask someone out as part of the dating and lifetime commitment session of the relationship unit. Importantly, one male participant, Roger, is present in both conversations. Roger appears to be a major male speaker in this context and in this research as I hope the following chapters will demonstrate.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter examined the social, cultural and historical contexts in which the discourses of students in the eighth Grade sexuality education classroom using the Grades 7-9 Our Whole Lives curriculum (Wilson, 1999) are situated.

I described the Unitarian Universalist history and principles of this institutional setting as a progressive church with no dogma, involved with social justice work, located in a Northeastern city of 180,000. I presented the Grades 7-9 Our Whole Lives sexuality education curriculum as a unique program which is comprehensive, inclusive, innovative and atypical. I described how conducting research in my classroom allowed me to reassess the OWL curriculum.

I articulate how the relationship between sexuality and religion made this program relevant and unique. I showed that mostly white, upper-middle-class, sexually diverse professionals make up the congregational community which comprises the parents, students, teachers, and mentors involved in the sexuality education program I teach here. I argued that, although students were comfortable with growing up Unitarian-Universalist and with being part of this sexuality education program, the confidence they expressed in parents' sexual expertise was low and conversations around and about sexuality did not come easy between parents and their children. I described in details the physical space, the classroom resources, and the activities performed with this class.

Lastly, I described the process of selecting specific data for analysis.

The articulation of these contexts is essential background for understanding and situating the multiplicity of voices of participants in this setting, and how specific data was selected as most typical of these discourses from the corpus, in this particular setting, at this particular time, in order to proceed with the analyses which are at the heart of this study, namely the subject of the next two chapters. Hymes (1982) notes that: "... Even though one may live nearby, speak the same language, and be of the same ethnic background, a difference in experience may lead to misunderstanding the meaning, the terms, and the world of another community," (p. 25).

Even though, the adolescents who participated in this study originated from different school districts, they formed a rather homogeneous group along mostly middle-class, and white values and beliefs. Yet, their discourse style was that of a youth sub-culture with its own vernacular (Labov, 1992) and the meanings of their discourses could not be construed without a full appreciation of their context. As explained, both discourse

analyses focus on a small group activity pertaining to the relationships unit. One involves a boy and a girl, and the other involves five boys and a male teacher. One boy, Roger, is present in both analyses. In the next chapter, Lola and Roger's discourse is analyzed as they are preparing for a role-play.

## Chapter 5

### Lola and Roger: A Discursive Gender-Twisting

#### Introduction

In this chapter, I explore how, at the end of the first semester of the school year in the sexuality education classroom, the discourse of two students, Lola and Roger, constructed understandings of gender and how this discourse got enacted in their conversation. Using the transcript of two audio recordings and field-notes, I analyze the discourse of Lola and Roger as they are preparing to perform a role-play (first conversation) assigned in the curriculum, and as they debrief this preparation later the same day (transcript 2).

I examine how as they ask questions, give answers, discuss, and negotiate their conversation, these students are performing “knowing,” by using words that are “half someone else’s” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293) which means words they have heard from somewhere or someone else - public and popular media discourse, school discourse, family and parents' discourse. I show that their talk and the way they enact this talk in the classroom is contradictory and confusing.

This confusion is complicated by the fact that the activity is a role-play between a male and a female, and the participants voluntarily reverse parts: In the first conversation, the female student, Lola, performs as the male character Cordell, and the male student, Roger performs as the female character, April. In the first conversation, Lola and Roger each create a performance of the other gender based on prior knowledge and imagination. I

refer to this complicated performance as a “discursive gender-twisting.” By this, I mean that Lola and Roger each perform two different parts:

- 1- Roger as April and Lola as Cordell,
- 2- Roger as himself and Lola as herself,

And that their respective performance of gender both as Lola and Roger and as April and Cordell, as well as their performance of gender in the second conversation complicated the analysis in surprising ways. I argue that their words rarely resisted stereotypical gender representations. Lola’s and Roger’s discursive performances, both when performing as the other gender - which means when Lola performed as Cordell, the boy, and Roger as April, the girl,- as well as when working together as two students, Lola and Roger, in the eighth grade sexuality education classroom, tended to reproduce stereotypical gendered discourse.

By this, I mean that Roger, even when performing as a girl, April, tended to dominate the conversation, initiate topics, be assertive, and question his partner’s motives whereas, Lola, even when performing as Cordell, tended to agree with her partner, collaborate, ask questions to seek validation rather than questioning. I argue that Lola and Roger’s discursive representation of masculinity was grounded in the ideological caveat that “*Boys are all the same*” that is, sexual predators, whereby boys are mostly driven by hormones, and interested in girls for sexual purposes, and that the rape or sexual assault of women/girls by men/boys are inevitable.

I argue that Roger and Lola, at times, collaborated and connected in order to complete the assignment. I argue, that, as they spoke with each other either collaborating/connecting, or performing as April or Cordell, they sometimes borrowed

words and utterances that “have been voiced elsewhere in other conversations or texts, bits and pieces that have circulated and recirculated inside the workings of various texts, social groups, and institutions” (Gee, 2001, p. 114). Finally, I argue that interrogating discursive social practices is essential in order to problematize or interrupt the patriarchal process (Lewis, 1992).

### **Context of Analysis**

The conversation analyzed in this chapter took place at the end of the first semester of the school year early in December. The “Relationships” unit of the curriculum had been introduced at the previous class. This unit includes four sessions:

1. Relationships (introduction)
2. Relationship skills
3. Thorny Issues in friendship
4. Dating and lifetime commitments,

And this class dealt specifically with relationship skills.

In discussions of gender and gender roles earlier that fall in the eighth grade classroom, students often dismissed issues of gender in general: about sex discrimination against women/girls one girl, Hannah said: “*Women are treated fairly nowadays,*” and that “*They [women] are given respect. If girls are strong, people don’t do that [aggress/take advantage of women]*” (Field notes, November 4). As a response to an emancipation reading by Sojourner Truth that mentions God, Lola, another girl added: “*Thankfully America is not set on one religion so it’s not the same for women now*” (Field notes, November 4).

Simultaneously, Roger complained about “*male gender roles*” and suggested, as an example of an advantage that girls have which he would like to experience “*Get into a fight and not get punished for slapping people like girls do....*,”(Field notes, November 4). In other words, Roger says that girls may be "just as" violent as boys but that they get away with it. Even more interesting is how a female student came to defend Roger’s appeal to gendered injustice that favors women against men (Hoff-Sommers, 2001; Paglia, 2006) when she added: “*Yeah, gym teachers make the guys carry the heavy things!*” (Field notes, November 4).

Yet, a few weeks later, as students were discussing something they would like the other gender to experience, Hannah blurted out: “*Being put down in gym when you’re the one girl on the team and your team is losing, boys are yelling at you!*” Here, she was expressing frustration about verbal aggression from boys directed to a girl, something she might have experienced personally, it seems. This comment is all the more interesting since Hannah is the same girl who had remarked earlier that: “*Women are treated fairly nowadays,*” and that “*They [women] are given respect. If girls are strong, people don’t do that [aggress/take advantage of women]*” (Field notes, November 4). The fact that Hannah did not connect the first personal example where she was put down in gym for being a girl with her general statement about gender role makes for an interesting contradiction.

This tension between lived experiences and a formal classroom conversation/statement results in such contradictions that permeated students’ discourse throughout the year. Cameron (1998) notes that “whereas sociolinguistics traditionally assume that people talk the way they do because of who they (already) are, the post-



modernist approach suggests that people are who they are because of the way they talk” (p. 49). In the following two sections, I describe in more details how Lola and Roger’s talk shaped who they are as social actors in the sexuality education classroom.

### **Participants.**

*Lola* was a 13 year-old, female student in my class. She was an outgoing, smart, and articulate student, eager to share, connect, participate, as well as have fun in this class. She came from a middle-class, educated background. Her mother was an elementary teacher very involved in this church, and her father was a computer engineer and drummer. She lived on one of the fanciest boulevards in the city and was an only child.

As an eighth-grader, she attended a private K-12 school and was planning to attend the local, public magnet high-school as a freshman, for which she passed the entrance examination that fall. She came to class every Sunday with a carefully styled hair-cut at chin length. She wore fashionable although comfortable clothing with a “funky” twist. One of Lola’s typical outfits might have been a cotton mini-skirt and a tee-shirt, with a pair of striped, multicolored high-socks and white branded sneakers. She participated actively whenever she attended this class.

*Roger* was a 13 year-old, male student in my class. He was an assertive, articulate, smart student, eager to share, participate actively, joke around, and entertain his peers. He came from a middle-class educated family. Both his mother and father were university professors, and his father was, at the time, soon to become the president of the congregation. He had an older sister who attended this sexuality education program in the past. He lived in one of the nicest neighborhoods in town and had been attending the public magnet middle-school.

At the time of this study, he had, like Lola, passed the entrance examination to attend the local, public magnet high-school in the city as a freshman. He came to class wearing comfortable, clean clothing such as a pair of slacks and a tee-shirt, with his hair not especially combed or styled. He participated actively whenever he attended this class. Lola and Roger had known each other and attended church school together since childhood. Their style, clothing, hair-cuts, and shoes, helped them to be “recognized as members of a specific social group” (Gee, 1999) within which they both had developed a sense of agency (hooks, 1994): they were both active participants in this class, who expressed their views with self-confidence and assertiveness.

During the school year, they both volunteered for announcements from the pulpit in the Meeting House during service and they both contributed to a number of intergenerational services in various ways (Christmas pageant, Wholly Family service. (This term “Wholly Family” is a not very distant reference to the term “Holy Family.” This annual service celebrates four or five “families” from the Congregation. Participating families are diverse in age, gender, sexual orientation, and number.

For instance, a Wholly Family service could include a single gay man, a man and a woman with their children, two women and their child, and a single lesbian or heterosexual woman with her pet, and a family with adopted children. This diversity means to redefine the notion of family into its most inclusive understanding. During this service, each family member contributes a story about who they are and why they love their family. During intergenerational services, the entire congregation is invited to attend including all students and teachers from the church school. In addition to contributing to these services in past years, Roger performed as the Master of

Ceremonies during the annual fundraiser for this group at the end of the month of January which is a Pasta Supper organized and held by the students of this class and their parents. As a Master of Ceremonies, Roger addressed a group of approximately one hundred parents, children, and guests, including leading the silent auction. He appeared completely at ease and in control, showing himself to be a comfortable and efficient public speaker.

**Activity.**

This class session dealt with listening and communications skills in relationships. Requesting and refusing skills were demonstrated and discussed in the first part of class. Students were divided in groups at random, and given a variety of role play prompts. All of the role plays prompted a male or female student indifferently to try to convince another, not necessarily of the opposite gender, or sometimes one sibling to another, to do something considered “risky,” such as go to a party where alcohol will be available without informing parents, or go to someone’s house with a boy-friend or girl-friend while the parents are not around.

Importantly, adult professionals designed the curriculum and the role play activities. Therefore, these activities are a representation of “their” (the adults’) sense of what risky behaviors for adolescents are, which may not be considered as risky by the adolescents themselves.

The goal of this activity was for students to practice their decision-making, and refusal skills. In the first dialogue, a group of three students, two males (Roger and Tony) and one female (Lola) are heard. In the second dialogue which is a debriefing of the first conversation, these three students participate as well as another female student, Gina.

In the first dialogue, students were given a prompt for a dialogue between a boy and a girl named “Seeking consent,” which they were supposed to prepare for. Roger and Lola volunteered to role play while the other student, Tony, simply watched and is hardly heard during the first recording. Importantly, although the prompt (see below) mentions a male and a female first name, April and Cordell, and uses she and he pronouns, there was no requirement that a male or a female play either one of the parts as it was handed to students.

Their script read as follows:

*[Two older teens, April and Cordell, have been going out for several months. There’s a holiday weekend coming up, and Cordell’s parents are going to be out of town. He asks April if she will come over Saturday. April says her mom will never let her since his parents won’t be there. Cordell says her parents don’t have to know.*

*Create a role play in which Cordell tries to negotiate with April to lie to her parents about Saturday. Discussion: What would Cordell stand to gain if April consents to come to his house on Saturday? What would April gain by consenting? What could she lose?]*

Importantly, the script does not in any way require students to switch gender i.e. for a male student to perform as April, the female character, and/or for a female student to perform as the male character, Cordell. It was Roger who initiated this gender-switch from the beginning of the conversation which Lola accepted.

In addition, it is noticeable that the prompt itself right from the start introduces a theme which reproduces a traditional gender representation of males. According to Forbes (2004): “The conventional way to verify one’s manhood is through thinking and acting in

certain prescribed ways. One is stoical inexpressiveness...Another is to be in control at all times, to never admit mistakes, ask for help, or show that you don't know what you're doing. A third is homophobia...A fourth is to act physically tough, aggressive, and intimidating towards others in order to be able to compete with other men and gain access to attractive women" (p.11).

In this prompt, the male character named Cordell seems to be operating along rules of conventional manhood: He is prompted to encourage his girl-friend, April, to lie, and is expected to have ulterior sexual motives. Thus "being conniving and inciting another person, especially a girl, to lie" is presented as a male characteristic, which may be viewed as a skewing element for the role play improvisation: The male is cast as a predator. This concurs with the dominant representation of adolescent males presented as hypersexual predators (As in "boys will be boys") and the dominant representation of adolescent female as victims displaying little or no discourse of female sexual desire or interest in most sexuality education curricula (Fine, 1988).

In addition, the second "*Discussion*" question refers to what April could either *lose* or *gain* from consenting to Cordell's offer whereas the first question only refers to what Cordell could *gain* from April's consent to his offer. This discursive discrepancy relies on some underlying curricular assumptions, intended or not. Building up on my earlier observation that adolescent boys are predominantly represented in sexuality education materials as hypersexual predators, or at the very least as irreversibly "raging with hormones," (Whatley, 1991) whereas the same materials display little or no discourse of female sexual desire (Fine, 1988; Fine & McClelland, 2006), one could understand from this discrepancy that indeed boys can only gain from sexual encounters with girls,

regardless of the circumstances, whereas girls can maybe gain in some ways (intimacy or connection with partner), but most likely lose (reputation, virginity, status, and even deal with an unintended pregnancy). Thus, I argue that these curriculum questions support a dominant understanding of gender and sexuality.

### **Arguments and Findings**

In the analysis of both conversations one and two, I examine words and phrases uttered by each participant in each turn. The word utterance is used to refer to a group of words produced by a speaker or “any instance of language produced by a speaker” (Kutz, 2007). A turn is an utterance or a number of utterances attached to one speaker until another speaker starts speaking. I coded each utterance as follows:

- **SM** for students' utterances that reproduce *stereotypical* representations of *masculinity*,

- **SF** for students' utterances that reproduce *stereotypical* representations of *femininity*,

- **R** for students' utterances that *resist* stereotypical representations of gender, (this coding appears in the second conversation only)

- **C** for students' utterances that demonstrate students' *collaboration and connection*

- **OV** for students' utterances that use an “*other*” *voice* and demonstrate students' “knowing.”

The notations on the transcript are explained in this legend:

NOTATIONS	MEANINGS
-	Incomplete word
..	Pause
...	Long pause
[	Overlap
{ }	Explanation
Italics	Emphasis
( )	Inaudible

**Table 5.1: Legend of transcript**

### Section 1

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
5	ROGER	1	Mmm,	LOLA giggles softly in the background	Not coded
		2	Alright.		Not coded
		3	So you're the guy		SM
		4	I'm the girl.		SM
6	LOLA	1	Okay, I'm Cordell...		C/SF

CODING: SM (stereotypically masculine), SF (stereotypically feminine) R (gender resistant), C (collaborating/connecting), OV (Other Voice/Knowing)

In turn 5(3), Roger takes charge and tells Lola to play Cordell, the male character in the role play, while he plays the girl, April 5(4). Here he is initiating a gender-switch that was not required by the curriculum role-play script. She accepts in turn 6(1). Is Roger reproducing stereotypical masculinity gender role by telling Lola what to do or are both

students collaborating/connecting in order to complete the assignment? It seems that Lola “is” acquiescing to Roger’s direction. Importantly, Roger initiates the idea of role reversal. Thus, Roger by making this decision and Lola by accepting it, are impacting an important aspect of the following conversation: it forces the reader/listener to juxtapose two performances for each student: the one in which they speak as Lola or Roger, and the one in which Roger speaks as the girl, April, and Lola as the boy, Cordell.

Section 2

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
6	LOLA	2	Sooo, my parents are going to be out of town next weekend,	LOLA talks in “masculine voice”	SM
		3	Do you wanna come over?		SM
7	ROGER	1	Uh, my parents won’t.		SF
		2	But they’ll kill me if I go over		SF
		3	Eh, because your, your parents won’t be over there.		SF

CODING: SM (stereotypically masculine), SF (stereotypically feminine) R

(gender resistant), C (collaborating/connecting), OV (Other Voice/Knowing)

In this excerpt, I coded as SM most of Lola’s turns. Lola-as-Cordell talks with a deep masculine voice. The tone of her voice is self-assured in turn 6 (1, 2, and 3).

Although turn 6(3) uses the interrogative mood, turn 6(2) is assertive and starts with the



conjunction "so" whereby Lola emphasizes the syllable o, which adds assurance to her interrogation. Lola-as-Cordell speaks the voice of a male who initiates the conversation because he wants something and who speaks clearly and confidently. In this way, Lola gives Cordell a stereotypically masculine guise (Katz & Jhally, 2002) whereby men or boys are supposed to be in charge, assertive and independent (Kimmel, 2008). I coded Roger-as-April's turns 7(1, 2, and 3) as SF because he responds hesitantly as he maybe expect girls to respond stereotypically. He uses "Uh" in 7(1) and does not finish the sentence. Although he might mean to say that her parents "*won't be out of town,*" he starts the following line with "*But*" which implies a contradiction with what was said before.

However, there is no continuity between turn 7(1) and 7(2) so that the listener is confused. He resorts to another interjection, "*Eh,*" in 7(3) and repeats the pronoun "*your, your parents*" and the use of the negative form with "*won't*" (turn 7(1 & 3) which conveys a sense of hesitation. Tentativeness, hesitation and repetition are associated with stereotypically feminine discourse style (Lakoff, 2004). In this first excerpt, I argue that Roger is performing his representation of April using a stereotypically feminine intonation and discourse style.

In this first excerpt, I find that both Lola and Roger in performing as the other gender are reproducing dominant representations of masculine (Lola-as-Cordell) and feminine (Roger-as-April) discourse styles.

### Section 3

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
7	ROGER	4	You know we can't be together		OV

		5	If there isn't anybody around.		OV
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CODING: SM (stereotypically masculine), SF (stereotypically feminine) R (gender resistant), C (collaborating/connecting), OV (Other Voice/Knowing)

I coded these utterances by Roger-as-April as OV because he is repeating a “rule” that he has heard most likely from his parents. This socio-cultural rule stipulates that boys and girls from a certain age on (pre-teenage through adulthood) and class (middle/upper-middle) should not be spending time alone without supervision. Even if Roger is not speaking exactly his parents’ voice, he is speaking an “other” voice to express a rule expressed in public discourse with which he and Lola are familiar (separation of boys and girls in sexuality education and health classes, educational policy, institutional practice, religious discourse, and popular culture discourse).

#### Section 4

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
8	LOLA	1	Well you know,		SM
		2	You never have to tell your parents.		SM
		3	They never have to find out.		SM

CODING: SM (stereotypically masculine), SF (stereotypically feminine) R (gender resistant), C (collaborating/connecting), OV (Other Voice/Knowing)

I coded Lola’s utterances above as SM. Here Lola-as-Cordell is building on her masculine representation of Cordell. She speaks with a deep and assertive voice. Her

“tough guise” (Katz & Jhally, 2002) mentioned earlier is emphasized by the introductory conjunction “*well*,” followed by “*you know*,” and the repetition of the negative adverb “*never*.” Lola-as-Cordell is using the negative mood to insist upon and arguing about how Roger-as-April should lie to her parents in order to satisfy Lola-as-Cordell’s request.

However, it is important to remember that the idea of telling a lie is not initiated by Lola-as-Cordell but by the curriculum role play prompt (see page 6 of this chapter) which Lola is dutifully integrating into her performance.

### Section 5

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
9	ROGER	1	I’m always told	Heavy background chatter.	OV/SF
		2	To have that connection with them.	“	OV/SF
		3	But, I mean, I really appreciate our connection.	“	OV
		4	I almost feel like it viol- [	OVERLAP	OV/SM

CODING: SM (stereotypically masculine), SF (stereotypically feminine) R (gender resistant), C (collaborating/connecting), OV (Other Voice/Knowing)

I coded Roger-as-April’s utterances here as OV because he is speaking an “other” voice. He even acknowledges it in 9(1): “*I’m always told*.” In using the passive form, Roger-as-April is not arguing from his (her) own perspective, or initiative but bringing up

the words or reporting the words of someone (“*them*”) who has authority over April (her parents). In this excerpt, Roger-as-April uses the term “*connection*” twice. First, in line 9(1), the word seems to be used to mean that Roger-as-April’s parents ask her to both communicate with them and to communicate truthfully; to tell them the truth. In line 9(3), Roger-as-April is using the word “*connection*,” again. This time, he is appropriating it to describe the relationship with Lola-as-Cordell in a positive way. Roger-as-April in expressing that he “*appreciates*” his “*connection*” to Lola-as-Cordell is apologizing for not consenting to his assertively argued offer.

Using an “other” voice, or half someone else’s words and flattery rather than simply refusing are discursive strategies typically associated with feminine talk: For saying “no,” but trying to also in some way to say “yes.” By this, I mean that, although I coded these utterances as OV, Roger-as-April’s talk is more submissive than assertive thus closer to stereotypically feminine - except for using an “I” statement in 9(4) which I coded as OV/SM - Roger-as-April last turn is interrupted by Lola-as-Cordell - overlap -.

## Section 6

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
10	LOLA	1	( ) It’d be so much fun.	Heavy background chatter.	C/SM
		2	And if you told them that you weren’t here.	“	SM
		3	Your parents would never have to find	“	SM/SF

			out ( )		
		4	Don't even discuss your ( ) with them.	“	SM

CODING: SM (stereotypically masculine), SF (stereotypically feminine) R (gender resistant), C (collaborating/connecting), OV (Other Voice/Knowing)

With this interruption, Lola-as-Cordell is introducing a new element to her request: The notion of “*fun*” in turn 10(1), which is not particularly intimidating. Interrupting is a sign of her taking over Roger’s turn, and in some ways wanting to dominate the conversation, therefore I coded these utterances as SM. Turn 10(2, 3 and 4), however, does not introduce any additional argument. Although the negative adverb “*never*” and negative imperative mood and adverb “*Don't even*” are used to emphasize Lola-as-Cordell’s insistence, these utterances are a mere repetition of turn 8(1, 2 and 3). I coded turn 10(3) as SM/SF because the fact that Lola-as-Cordell is not introducing any new argument but repeating the same idea even using the same words signifies a weakening of her position that can be associated with stereotypically feminine talk.

#### Section 7

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
11	ROGER	1	Sneak out secretly.		SM
		2	Sounds like you		SM

			want me to come over at night.		
		3	I know what you're trying to get...	LOLA giggles. SF	SM
12	LOLA	1	Oopsies, you caught me.	“	SF
13	ROGER	1	All you boys are all the same!	“	SF
14	LOLA	1	What do we actually do?	Heavy background chatter.	SF/C

CODING: SM (stereotypically masculine), SF (stereotypically feminine) R (gender resistant), C (collaborating/connecting), OV (Other Voice/Knowing)

I coded these utterances by Roger-as-April as SM except for turn 13. First, Roger-as-April is reacting to Lola-as-Cordell with clairvoyance and assertiveness, almost sarcasm. By using the verb “*Sneak out*,” Roger-as-April is showing Lola-as-Cordell to his face that she has seen through his “game” and that she is not duped. Roger-as-April adds a new element in 11(2) which is not scripted by the curriculum role play as if to darken even further Lola-as-Cordell’s intentions: “*come over at night*.” Second, in line 13, Roger-as-April initiates another element which is not literally scripted in the role play (see page 6 of this chapter): “*All you boys are all the same*.” I coded this utterance as SF. Here, although Roger-as-April does not explain or develop this idea, it introduces the notion that boys are solely motivated by “raging hormones” and only interested in sexual encounters with girls as truth, a recurring theme within female discourse, and sexuality education curricula (Fine, 1988).

At the same time, Roger-as-April asserts that he both “*knows*”-10(3) “what” Cordell wants - a sexual encounter - and that he will not be fooled. With this introduction

of new argumentative elements, choice of words, and firm intonation, Roger's performance of April is taking a turn and switching to a more dominant position in the dialogue.

This is a culminating point of the discursive gender twisting I referred to earlier in this chapter: Roger-as-April's voices recognizing and calling out stereotypically dominant traits in boys in general. While Roger's words may be accepting the socio-cultural stereotype that boys are sexual predators as truth, he is representing the female character he is performing, April, debunking it and articulating resistance against it using a discursive masculine strategy.

At the same time, in this excerpt, Lola's position as Cordell is changing in parallel to Roger-as-April. First, I noted in the comments section for turn 11(3), Lola-as-Cordell giggles as a reaction to Roger's strong "putting April's foot down." Then Lola-as-Cordell agrees with Roger-as-April that Lola-as-Cordell has been "*caught*" even using the soft and almost childish interjection "*Oopsies*." With turn 12, she also agrees with the stereotype that "*boys are all the same*" meaning that boys are sexual predators. [Instead of refuting this argument from Roger-as-April, Lola-as-Cordell accepts it and even seeks clarification by asking in turn 14 "*What do we (boys) actually do?*"]

Interrogative mood is typically associated with feminine discourse style (Tannen, 2007), especially when combined with other features of speech such as hesitation or repetition. Another point which twists the discourse here, however, is that Lola-as-Cordell is asking a question to Roger-as-April about what boys do, as if April knew what boys do better than Cordell does.

However, I coded Lola-as-Cordell's utterances as SF/C because it is difficult to be sure whether Lola-as-Cordell is definitely asking Roger-as-April what boys do, or whether

she is initiating a question about the role-play itself? The next excerpt seems to corroborate the latter...

## Section 8

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
15	ROGER	1	Um, I think we're supposed to ( ) somehow.		C
16	LOLA	1	Are we?		C/SF
17	ROGER	1	I don't know.		C
18	LOLA	1	Okay...		C

CODING: SM (stereotypically masculine), SF (stereotypically feminine) R (gender resistant), C (collaborating/connecting), OV (Other Voice/Knowing)

In this excerpt, Lola and Roger are collaborating / connecting to complete the assignment. Roger follows up on Lola's question in turn 14 about the role play by giving a direction in 15(1) which Lola interrogates in 16 and accepts in 18(1). He is reading the script and making sure that they both play their part accordingly. In doing so, Roger is taking charge of the activity. I coded Lola's turn 16 as both C and SF because she is both collaborating and complying with Roger's lead.



Section 9

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
18	LOLA	2	So, I want you to lie to your parents.	LOLA laughs.	SM/SF
19	ROGER	1	What are you going to do rape me if I don't?		SM
20	LOLA	1	Probably... () [	LOLA laughing. Heavy background chatter. OVERLAP	SF

CODING: SM (stereotypically masculine), SF (stereotypically feminine) R (gender resistant), C (collaborating/connecting), OV (Other Voice/Knowing)

In this section, both students interrupt each other and they don't seem to be following each other's thread. In turn 18(2), Lola-as-Cordell articulates exactly the role play instruction that Roger has just brought up whereby Lola-as-Cordell is supposed to encourage Roger-as-April to lie to her parents. This is a somewhat serious proposal, yet she laughs as she announces it, as noted in the comments column. Here I question whether Lola is laughing because:

- She is having a hard time, as a girl, to keep pretending to be a stereotypical (dominant) boy especially asking his girl-friend to lie,
- She does not take the performance seriously, maybe is mocking it,
- She is feeling nervous about the part itself and/or her performance of it, or both?

It could be all or some of the above questions which contribute to her feminine discourse style taking over while performing a part that seems so forceful? In any case, laughter tends to put her out of her character.

Roger-as-April, in turn 19, however, does not address this suggestion about lying. He provocatively introduces a new topic: Rape. Here, his character, April, is provoking Lola-as-Cordell by insinuating using the interrogative but assertive and almost dismissive mood both that she expects him to rape her and that she is not afraid. I coded this turn as SM because Roger-as-April is dominating by offensively initiating a controversial topic and provoking Lola-as-Cordell, almost to show (s)he has no fear. I associate offensive and provocative intonation with masculine discourse style.

Lola-as-Cordell responds by continuing to laugh and using the adverb “*probably*” in turn 20 which seems like a very mild term considering the “attack.” I coded both her turns in this excerpt as SF because her choice of mild terms and her laughing imply that she is not in charge of this dialogue. While she maybe just mocking the activity, as suggested earlier, she is merely following Roger’s lead. These traits are associated stereotypically feminine discourse style. It is hard to imagine that, in this situation, a girl would make such an observation and a boy would accept such an insinuation without resisting and wanting to show he has no such intention and he is offended by it.

Section 10

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
21	ROGER	1	Oh... okay[	OVERLAP	C
22	LOLA	1	You talk.		C
		2	I have to listen[	OVERLAP	C
23	ROGER	1	Oh, okay.		C

CODING: SM (stereotypically masculine), SF (stereotypically feminine) R (gender resistant), C (collaborating/connecting), OV (Other Voice/Knowing)

I coded this section as C because Roger and Lola's tone of voice changes to sound more neutral as they are now exchanging about the activity and not role playing.

Section 11

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
23	ROGER	2	Well, we've been going out for several months	LOLA laughing	SM
		3	And now you want to rape me?!	“	SM
		4	I mean, this is totally not cool.	“	SM

CODING: SM (stereotypically masculine), SF (stereotypically feminine) R (gender resistant), C (collaborating/connecting), OV (Other Voice/Knowing)

In this excerpt, the role play resumes. I coded Roger-as-April's turns as SM. Here Roger-as-April's argumentation dominates as Lola, while collaborating with Roger,

agreed in turn 22 (1 & 2) that she-as-Cordell had “*to listen.*” In turn 23(2), Roger-as-April starts by using the interjection “*Well*” and speaks in a very poised voice which displays self-assurance. This self-assurance continues as he interrogates using an intonation expressing derision in 23(3).

Finally, Roger-as-April concludes strongly in 23(4) using the expression “*I mean,*” and the negative adverb “*totally not*” only slightly lessened by the adjective “*cool,*” which seems weak considering the offense: The idea of *rape* which is repeated in 23(3). I coded all three lines SM because although Roger is playing a female role (April’s), his discourse style is self-assured, sarcastic and forceful, thus stereotypically masculine.

## Section 12

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
23	ROGER	5	I mean, this is probably why my parents don't want me to go over to your house.	23	OV
		6	They saw something in you.		OV
		7	I mean, I see something too.		SF/OV

CODING: SM (stereotypically masculine), SF (stereotypically feminine) R (gender resistant), C (collaborating/connecting), OV (Other Voice/Knowing)

Roger-as April develops the argument started by Lola-as-Cordell in turn 18 about how Roger-as-April should lie to her parents through turn 23. However, he introduces a new idea: how April's parents have supposedly already stipulated a rule forbidding April to go to Cordell's house. This comes out of Roger's imagination and is not part of the script, but I coded it as OV because although Roger came up with it, it refers to a familiar theme discussed by middle-class parents and their children.

Here, Roger is using words that he has heard either amidst his own family experience, or that he is appropriating from television shows or films representing similar parents/child situational discourse he might have watched. In Roger's white, middle-class cultural environment, parents set guidelines and make decisions about their children's safety, education, acquaintances, and might prohibit their child to spend time with another, or to visit their home. Turn 23(6) is also coded as OV. With the utterance "*They saw something in you,*" Roger-as-April is saying that April's parents, just as he showed April does in turns 11, 19, and 23, suspect Cordell's "evil" motives. One could argue that April's parents, according to Roger-as-April speaking about parents, also adhere to the ideological stereotype that reifies boys as natural sexual predators. Yet, Roger is appropriating this expression which he repeats in 23(7).

In turn 23(7), Roger-as-April says that she "*sees something in Lola-as-Cordell.*" However, Roger-as-April's intonation changes just during this turn. Similarly to turn 9(3), Roger-as-April is appropriating April's parents' words to use them in a more positive way. By this, Roger-as-April means he sees something he might "like" in Lola-as-Cordell. This is surprising after the accusations or insinuations that he has made in the past three

excerpts. I have coded this turn as OV because Roger is repeating words that are half someone else's and that he used in the preceding turn.

However, he is almost performing an apology for his character April. As if Roger-as-April was feeling “bad” for expressing assertive suspicions toward Lola-as-Cordell and wanted to end on a nicer note? Stereotypically, empathy informs feminine discourse. In our culture, caring and expressing compassion are viewed as “innate” feminine characteristics. Therefore, I coded line 23(7) as SF as well.

### Section 13

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
24	LOLA	1	Wait.		SF
		2	So, you see something in me,		SF
		3	Right?		SF

CODING: SM (stereotypically masculine), SF (stereotypically feminine) R (gender resistant), C (collaborating/connecting), OV (Other Voice/Knowing)

This excerpt's coding is similar to Lola's previous turns. I coded her utterances as SF. Lola, although she is performing as Cordell is using what I refer to as a mostly stereotypically feminine discourse style. Maybe she is running out of imagination? She first asks Roger to “*Wait*,” (line 24(1) and in turn 24(2) simply repeats the expression he just used twice: “*See something in me*.” She is not initiating a new idea, or using any new expression or terms. In the end, she concludes with the adverb “*right*,” in the

interrogative mood which tends to make her performance tentative, seeking validation from Roger. In addition, her tone of voice is tentative as well.

#### Section 14

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
25	ROGER	1	Um, which one are we on?		C
26	LOLA	1	Last one.		C
27	ROGER	1	Oh, okay. Um.		C

CODING: SM (stereotypically masculine), SF (stereotypically feminine) R (gender resistant), C (collaborating/connecting), OV (Other Voice/Knowing)

This last excerpt in the first conversation is coded C because Roger and Lola are collaborating to evaluate how much more they need to prepare for according to the script's directions for the role play. However, it is noticeable that Roger initiates the interruption to verify the status of completion of their assignment not Lola.

In the second conversation, Lola and Roger continue talking but they are no longer performing as Cordell and April. Later on, this second conversation opens up to more participants. However, in this analysis and in the following section, I specifically selected segments of speech by Lola and Roger only.

Section 15

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
1	LOLA	1	Yeah.		C
2		2	Come over to my house on Saturday		C
		3	If you ( )		C
3	ROGER	1	Alright...		C
		2	You bring the condoms.		SM
4	LOLA	1	Can we end it that way?		SF/C
5	ROGER	1	Yeah...	LOLA giggles. Background chatter.	
6	LOLA	1	Wow.		SF
		2	Let's leave out the part about rape.		R/SF
		3	Cordell is a fine young man...		OV
7	ROGER	1	That's horrible.		R
8	LOLA	1	Oh, come on ( ) lighten up.		R
9	ROGER	1	[That totally gets me though.		R
10	LOLA	1	What?	LOLA giggles.	SF



CODING: SM (stereotypically masculine), SF (stereotypically feminine) R (gender resistant), C (collaborating/connecting), OV (Other Voice/Knowing)

I coded the first four utterances (Turns 1, 2, and 3) as C because both students are simply reintroducing the dialogue, and both use collaborative interjections such as “*Yeah*,” and “*Alright*”. In turn 3(2), however, Roger introduces a new idea when he asks Lola to “*Bring the condoms*.” I coded this line as SM for stereotypically masculine. While Roger is confirming the expected sexual aspect of the encounter that he referred to all along (performing as April) mentioning how “*Boys are all the same*” and alluding to “rape,” he is at the same time performing knowledge about how to prevent sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy.

This is a direct reference to information that has been discussed in a prior class dedicated to a presentation by a guest speaker about HIV-AIDS prevention. One can also assume that Roger’s suggestion is informed by institutional discourse in school’s health class, and public and popular discourse about (healthy) sexuality in the media, as well as conversation with parents, family physician, and peers. One curricular activity named: “Condom Obstacle Course” that addresses the use and efficiency of condoms, however, has not yet taken place. I suggest that the fact that Roger is bringing up this idea and showing up his knowledge make his words dominant and gives him a position of power within the pair.

This position is further reinforced by Lola’s cooperative stance. She instantly adopts Roger’s new idea and, instead of using the affirmative mood, she phrases her acceptance into a question: “*Can we end it that way?*” in turn 4. The question is immediately followed by more giggling on her part. Therefore, I coded Lola’s turns 4

and 5 as SF. In her next turn (6), she suggests removing the reference about rape. I coded this line as R because she is using the imperative mood and telling Roger what to do.

However, I also coded this turn as SF because of its intentional content. It seems that Lola is rethinking how this role play will reflect upon her and Roger when they perform it for the rest of the class and she opts for a milder version. Here she shows that she cares about how her peers might perceive her reference to rape, maybe concerned that, as a girl performing the part of a boy, her allusion to violent sexual behavior will reflect poorly on her. She punctuates her decision with turn 6(3): “*Cordell is a fine young man*” which I coded as OV. These words seem unrealistic in the mouth of a thirteen year old student and seem to be borrowed from an “other” voice.

I coded the following turns 7, 8, and 9 as R because Roger uses words that convey his dislike for the idea of rape – although he is the one who initiated it in the first conversation in turn 19 speaking as April–: “*That’s horrible,*” and he is expressing emotion: “*That totally gets me though.*” Emotional sharing is usually associated with feminine discourse.

On the other hand, Lola’s reaction seems rather cold and associated with masculine discourse using the imperative mood: “*Oh come on, lighten up!*” She is telling Roger what to do!

For the first time in this entire conversation (conversations 1 and 2 combined), both students seem to resist dominant representations of masculinity and femininity whereby Roger is expressing emotion and Lola is telling him not to, only to revert to her

stereotypical giggling while asking a question again “*What?*” in the very next turn (10) which I coded as SF.

The remainder of the second conversation opens up to more participants including Gina, another female student who had been preparing the same role play with another male student, Tony. Interestingly, she declares immediately to Lola that she played “*the guy.*” Although I do not know whether this was Gina’s idea or not, it is interesting that Cordell’s part was performed by the female students and April’s part by the male student in both groups who were assigned to this role play. I am focusing in the excerpt where Lola proceeds to “replay” the role play she designed with Roger for Gina and Tony, the two other participants.

#### Section 16

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
23	LOLA	1	No, we’re like. I’m like		C
		2	So do you just lighten up?		C
		3	Okay.		C
		4	I’m like, my parents are going to be out of town.		C
		5	So why don’t you come over and have sex?	??	C
		6	He’s like, are you		C

			serious?		
24	ROGER	1	[( ) your parents are going to be out of town.		C
25	LOLA	1	[They're going to be out of town.		C
		2	Wanna come over on Saturday?		C
		3	And it's like, no, my parents would never let me.		C
		4	And I'm like, why don't you lie?		C
		5	And he's like, hmm, well... okay.		C
		6	And I'm like, great, see you Saturday.		C

CODING: SM (stereotypically masculine), SF (stereotypically feminine) R (gender resistant), C (collaborating/connecting), OV (Other Voice/Knowing)

This performance differs much from the dialogue between April and Cordell developed with Roger in the first conversation. In this monologue, Lola plays both April's and Cordell's parts. She speaks fast and her voice sounds excited and friendly. In addition, she alters and adds utterances throughout such as turn 23(2): "*So, do you just lighten up*" and 23(5): "*So, why don't you come over and have sex,*" and 23(6): "*He's like are you serious?*"

She uses discursive strategies that make the performance assertive for both parts such as imperative negative question mood (*Why don't you (2), Wanna come over, see you Saturday*). She uses the "I" subject pronoun to refer to herself-as Cordell, and the

“he” pronoun to refer to Roger-as-April throughout. Thus, both participants are falling completely out of character which tends to make this role-play sound tension-free compared to the actual role-play.

Most importantly, Lola’s oral reenactment of April and Cordell’s dialogue is punctuated with the expression “*Like*.” It is used eight times in this excerpt only. I coded Lola’s performance in this segment as C because, as she is retelling the dialogue to her peers, she is definitely painting a friendlier, easier image of herself and her partner Roger, somewhat different from the Cordell and April they performed earlier. At the same time, Lola’s utterances show how much she cares about how they perceive her and how much she wants to “connect” with them using a linguistic code they all identify with such as the use of “*like*,” thus turning the activity into something less intimidating, and more of a game than an assignment.

Towards the end of the second conversation, Tony is elaborating on Lola’s dialogue as it has just been told to Gina. He alludes to Lola and Roger “*Having sex on the couch*.” Lola and Roger in the following excerpt seem to revert to their role play for a few seconds and Lola reacts with an upset and uncomfortable tone of voice immediately to Tony’s insinuation:

Section 17

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
27	LOLA	1	What!		SF
		2	That never happened!	A giggles.	SF

28	ROGER	1	Sex with him.		SM
29	LOLA	1	I was only kidding!		SF

CODING: SM (stereotypically masculine), SF (stereotypically feminine) R (gender resistant), C (collaborating/connecting), OV (Other Voice/Knowing)

I coded Lola's turns as SF. She is adamant at denying any "wrongdoing" on her part using "never," "only," and exclamation. By this, I mean that Lola is concerned about being perceived as interested in sex or "having," sex, thus being perceived as a "bad" girl and she resorts to giggling again. Roger becomes April in line 28 when he is referring to Lola-as-Cordell as "him." Lola's tone of voice in this segment is high-pitched and apologetic. This is interesting: Is she apologizing for displaying too much sexual knowledge? And because it would not be proper for a girl to make reference for a girl like herself having sex with a boy in any circumstance even when she is performing as the boy? There seems to be many voices speaking through Lola: Lola-as-Cordell who is knowledgeable about sexuality and makes demands on Roger-as-April and Lola-as-Lola whose "status" as a proper girl in this group is at risk, and who is conflicted about how much knowledge to display.

The following table displays the count of turns performed by Lola and Roger and the ratio for each student in the first conversation. Indeed, throughout this analysis, I refer to the terms turns, utterances and initiations. As Lola and Roger take turns constructing a conversation, their choice of words and the themes they encompass produce essential components of the organizational structure of their speech. According to Bakhtin (1994, in Morris p. 251), "an utterance is any unit of language from a single word to an entire text." The word initiation refers to the content of each speaker's discourse. By "initiation," I mean initiating a topic: whenever a speaker introduces a new theme or idea into the speech

interaction, they are initiating a topic. This organizational structure has implications on each participant's contribution.

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Total turns</i>	<i>Total Utter.</i>	<i>Ratio Utter./Turn</i>	<i>Initiations</i>
<i>Lola</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Roger</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>2.3</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Other</i>	<i>minimal</i>	<i>minimal</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>minimal</i>

**Table 5.2: Overview of participants' contribution**

I chose to only use the count displayed in this table for the first conversation because the conversation is strictly between Lola and Roger without any other participant. Roger overall speaks slightly more than Lola. However, the number of Roger's utterances exceeds Lola's (30 utterances v. 22). In addition, He also initiates more topics or ideas into the conversation than Lola (7 v. 2). For instance, in turn 5(3), he introduces the idea of the gender role reversal by telling Lola to play the male character's part, Cordell. In turn 11(2), he initiates the idea that the encounter would take place at night; In turn 13, he initiates the idea that all boys are sexual predators by saying "You boys are all the same." In turn 19, Roger-as-April initiates the idea of rape: "What will you do? Rape me if I don't?"

This combination of more utterances and more initiations suggests that Roger is the dominant speaker in the conversation.

## **Discussion**

This analysis leads me to three important findings:

1. Lola and Roger, whether they are role playing or acting as themselves tend to discursively reproduce stereotypical representations of gender. In particular, when they are gender switching in the first conversation, their discourse reproduces these stereotypes.

2. Lola and Roger's dialogue operates along one dominant ideological theme: Boys are sexual animals and predators and the rape or sexual assault of girls/women by boys/men is inevitable,

3. Connecting with peers matters significantly, to both Lola and Roger, in terms of status within the group or the class, and one's sense of belonging or identifying with one's group and the discursive delivery of this need to connect and collaborate is confusing and at times contradictory.

### **Reproduction of Stereotypical Gendered Discourses.**

In the first conversation, Lola and Roger were preparing for a role play. Except for eleven lines out of twenty seven (conversation 1) in which they collaborated and connected to complete the assignment, they each were playing the part of the "other" gender for most of the conversation. This decision to "switch" gender was initiated by Roger, the male student and readily agreed to by the female student, Lola. They performed another gender by using words, intonations, and grammatical features (moods, adverbs, interjections) they stereotypically associated with this gender. By this, I mean that Roger used linguistic features and intonations he stereotypically associated with feminine discourse style and Lola uses features and intonations she associates with



masculine discourse style. Their performances were informed by their own socio-cultural practice and understanding of gender as a boy or a girl.

However, I find that the female character played by Roger-as-April, starting approximately around turn 11, gradually used a more assertive, and self-assured discourse style, initiated topics and interruptions to check on the assignment, and used affirmative and I statements, all features more associated with masculine discursive strategies.

In general, Roger, in this conversation contributed more overall (he uses more utterances as shown in the above table); most importantly, he initiated many more topics than Lola. Even in the second conversation (transcript 2) where his contribution was much smaller than Lola's, Roger initiated the idea of "*You bring the condoms,*" and of "*Sex with him,*" whereas Lola was simply reporting on the role play for her peers (Gina, Tony and Roger).

At the same time, the male character played by Lola-as-Cordell, gradually tended to repeat phrases, rather than initiating new ideas, to use the interrogative mood, to agree, and to hesitate. While features such as the interrogative mood or a rising intonation would not necessarily point to a feminine discourse style, the fact that they were combined with a hesitant and agreeing voice associates these features with feminine discourse style. Most importantly, Lola-as-Cordell tended to giggle and/or laugh throughout the dialogue even when she attempted making strong statements to "manipulate" Roger-as-April." For instance, "*So I want you to lie to your parents*" was pronounced while laughing. Even if one takes into consideration that this is a "mock" role play and she may be tempted to laugh naturally, one could hardly convince a partner

to be taken seriously and lie when one is laughing, oneself, about the idea. She giggled even around the issue of rape. She may have been laughing because she was nervous or anxious about referring to a controversial topic.

However, she expressed this nervousness or anxiousness by giggling and this feature is associated with feminine discourse style. In addition, Lola seemed concerned about her reference to rape will impact her peers' perception of her during the actual performance of the role-play in front of the class when she stated: "Let's leave out the part about rape," which although I coded as SF for stereotypically feminine, and also as R for resisting gender stereotypes because the imperative mood emphasizes dominance and she was actually telling Roger what to do. It showed her attempting to play down the idea. She displayed concern about how proper the role play might sound and reflect on her and about how her peers and instructors might interpret this choice. I also coded as SF, Lola's last turns in the second conversation (transcript 2) when the two boys, Roger and Tony, are changing the storyline to insinuate that Lola accepted to have sex with a boy: "*That never happened,*" "*I was only kidding,*" because again she seemed concerned about preserving her status as a "good" girl among her peers.

Edley (2001) defines discourse as encompassing "a whole range of symbolic activities including styles of dress, patterns of consumption, ways of moving, as well as talking" (p. 191). In this conversation, Roger and Lola were using ways of moving and talking in ways that mostly reproduced stereotypical representations of femininity and masculinity.

I refer to this finding as a "discursive gender-twisting." Whenever the pair stopped role playing to check on the assignment, this happened because Roger initiated it.

Out of both conversations, I coded only four lines as R (gender-Resistant) because Roger was expressing emotions (*That's horrible, That gets me though*) which is associated more with a stereotypical feminine discourse of caring, and Lola was telling him what to do (*Let's leave out the part about rape, Oh come on lighten up!*) and masculine discourse is associated with authority. In the next section, I examine one of the main ideological messages along which the conversation unfolds: Boys, sex and rape.

### **Discourse of rape and reification of boys as sexual animal and predators.**

In turn 19, in the second part of the first conversation, Roger-as-April introduced the idea that “*All you boys are all the same.*” This phrase refers to an essentialist socio-cultural representation, similar to “Boys will be boys” that constructs boys and men as sexual predators unable to control what Whatley (1991) refers to as their “raging hormones,” and their sexual urges which supposedly informs most of their choices and judgments. Frazer & Cameron (1989) explain that “Ideology functions to legitimate power imbalances, and smooth out contradictions and disjunctions between appearances and reality,” (p. 26). Much of the discourse for this role play preparation is informed by a system of beliefs where “boys are sexual predators” (or “*All you boys are all the same*”). Although Roger introduced it, Lola never argued against this ideological premise. They both accepted it as “truth,” or “regime of truth” (Foucault, 1972). This truth, as Cameron notes, explains and justifies other power imbalances between the two protagonists.

For instance, Lola accepted without resistance to play the male character, as instructed by her male partner as well as the ideological premise that boys are natural sexual predators when Roger introduced the notion that boys are all the same, and that they may all resort to rape to satisfy their irreversible “biological” needs. Lola

unquestioningly accepted the notion that rape and sexual assault were probable. Roger-as-April said in turn 11(3) that he “knows *what (Cordell) you’re trying to get*. Later, Lola-as-Cordell, in turn 18, suggested that Roger-as-April “*lies to your parents,*” and Roger-as-April answered “*What are going to do rape me if I don’t,*” to which Lola responded in turn 20: “*Probably.*” Here, rape and sexual assault were normalized by both student’s discourse as actions that boys resort to in order to achieve sexual satisfaction.

Indeed, rape and sexual assault of women and girls were prevalent within the discourse of both male and female students. Regardless of the specific curriculum topic during class (pregnancy, abortion, body image), the notion of violence against women and girls resurfaced often. The frequent use of the term in public discourse could account for its omnipresence within the youths’ discourse. Public discourses of rape in national news reporting, for instance around abortion and other public health policies, certainly inform students’ concerns and discursive representations of rape in this class.

In fact, the word *rape* (in its various forms including *raped* and *rapist*) is pronounced forty times by participants throughout this research study (field notes and transcripts combined) and an additional six times in the curriculum itself, whereby the assault of a male on a female is assumed. These references were distributed unevenly throughout the youths’ discourse. Most of them appeared during conversations about sexual harassment (where a woman/girl had been aggressed by a man/boy, and abortion (where the question was posed of whether abortion should be legal for a woman/girl who had been raped by a man/boy).

Yet, this frequency suggests that, for a girl or woman to become victim of male violence seems inevitable and expected by both boys and girls (Davis, 2004; Wilson and

Daly, 2010). Gina, a female student, even expressed the helplessness of female victims with a story during a class discussion about sexual abuse several months after the role play: *“But you know what, it’s very hard for like girls to go [report abuse/rape] because it all depends on the guy. Like I know it sounds mean but like if the guy is kinda like a nobody like and also he does not have any like prominent role in the com., not community but in the like socially, yeah socially, then you know you can tell on him and everybody will be like, you know what, whatever, the guy’s a loser. But if something happens and the guy is a prominent like role or like people know him, or he, you become the enemy, like if, I know people, like especially when drugs are involved, and let’s say the guy is a dealer, and then he rapes one of your friends like the girl’s not going to go to anybody because she’ll be hated. I know it’s really complicated but I know it happened...Because he provides drugs to like half of C. [Her town] and people would be pissed that he’d go to jail because a girl told on him”* (Transcript 6, February 17, p. 10).

In other words, according to Gina, a boy’s “status” as a drug dealer within his community gives him the power to victimize girls without fearing repercussion. Following Gina’s rationalization, the girl victim of rape in this case even becomes guilty in front of her peers, or other students, for reporting the crime because of the dominant status of the male perpetrator. In his study of high school students, Pascoe (2007) explains that young men sexualize and dominate young women’s bodies through their actions. In Gina’s story, raping girls is an acceptable component of exerting dominance for the male perpetrator.

In this way, Roger-as-April’s suspicion of rape by Lola-as-Cordell in turn 19 of the first conversation: *“What are you going to do rape me if I don’t?”* validated Gina and

some of the girls' discourse throughout the year about the inevitability of male violence against women and girls.

However, Lola and Roger both agreed in the second conversation, in turns 6 (Lola: "*Let's leave out the part about rape*"), and 7 (Roger: "*That's horrible*") to alter their role play and do away with the rape reference. Lola initiated the doing away with the rape reference because she was concerned with how proper the role play might sound, and about her peers and instructors might interpret this choice. Perhaps, this was an acknowledgment that she, as Cordell, got carried away ending up performing violent masculinity. I coded her next turn (T2, turn 6/3) as OV because she seems to be speaking an "other" voice: "*Cordell is a fine young man.*" Roger is the one who qualified the rape reference of "*horrible,*" and I coded this turn as R because he seemed more genuinely upset about the idea than his female counterpart.

In fact, this resonated with another event in relation to violence against women in which Lola negotiated her position quite interestingly among her peers. During a class that took place several weeks after the role play, students heard two stories of abuse which both told about a female adolescent being raped by older boys. Students remained quiet at the end of the story. Lola acknowledged how "sad" the stories were. Then, she questioned what happens if "*Someone younger seduces someone older?*"

Here, Lola was alluding to a phenomenon sometimes referred to in popular culture and/or popular psychology as the "Lolita syndrome," and widely represented in the media (TV Shows, news- Roman Polanski, Dominique Strauss-Kahn; films; literature-Nabokov, and so many more), whereby a man or several men are seduced by a woman much younger than them, and even a girl under age, maybe thirteen or fourteen

years old. Such representations often confuse their audience about the “level” of responsibility of the adult because they tend to portray the younger woman or girl as the seductive and initiating “temptress.” These representations also contribute to the perpetuation of the “slut/virgin” double standard of female sexuality within the social construction of gender, whereby women who express or inspire desire are blamed for acts of abuse or violence perpetrated against them, sexual or not. Rich says that “Male identification is the act whereby women place men above women” (1986). By this, she means that the actions undertaken by men and for men’s benefits, the physiological functions and needs of men, the visibility of men’s actions even are more valued not only by men but by women. So that, in cases of sexual abuse, or assault the responsibility of the male aggressor illustrated by the hortatory narrative of “Boys will be boys” is minimized, while the female victim is scrutinized. Lola’s reference to this cultural narrative, although she did not articulate it as such, was informed by the concept of male identification defined by Rich (1986). Rather than acquiescing to statistical evidence of assault of women and girls by men, she was suggesting that “some” young girls might be bringing abuse onto themselves, and that not all males are abusers, thus “taking the side of boys.”

Lola was speaking in defense of men and boys who, she feared may be unjustly accused of aggression against women, a phenomenon referred to in popular culture as “reverse sexism.” In doing so, she positioned herself as seeking alliance with male students in the classroom and respect from them. By initiating this idea, Lola was building an identity sympathetic to boys. Gee (2001) explains that a specific “discourse-identity” enables us to be “recognized as a certain kind of person”. He says:

“...Building different identities in languages always implicate different social languages, as they are embedded in different discourses, that we enact, perform, and recognize different socially situated identities” (p. 134) . By questioning whether violence against women by men is really so inevitable and might even be caused by the way women themselves behave, Lola was performing to be socially recognized as knowing among her peers and sympathetic to boys.

Interestingly, during the role play preparation, which took place weeks before this statement by Lola, Roger introduced the notion of rape in turn 19 in the first conversation, and Lola went along with it seemingly accepting the premise that rape was inevitable. Yet, in the second conversation, a moment later, Lola decided to do away with the rape reference. While Roger was expressing emotion: “*That’s horrible,*” “*That really gets me though,*” she mocked him for being too “sensitive:” Using an “other” voice (OV), she told Roger to “*Lighten up*” and that “*Cordell is a fine young man.*” Was she positioning herself again as sympathetic to Roger, and boys against this stereotype about boys as sexual predators? As Gee writes (2001): “Discourses are ways of being certain kinds of people...And there can be complicated moment by moment negotiations between oneself and others as to which discourse will be operative for interpretation at a given time and place” (p. 110). With this contradiction in her discourse, Lola was negotiating her identity as knowing and connecting with Roger as they are both partners within the same socio-cultural background.

### **Connection, Collaboration and Confusion.**

Although I find that Roger and Lola’s discourse tended to reproduce stereotypical representations of masculinity and femininity –whether as students or as they gender



switch- whereby Roger tended to dominate the conversation by initiating topics, using strong adverbs, assertive verb moods whether he was performing as April or as a male student in this classroom, it is clear that the linguistic features both Roger and Lola used accomplished a lot more. First, I should note that although Roger initiated more topics, the turn/utterance ratio between both students was rather close and while Roger may have spoken a bit more, Lola did contribute almost as much to the conversation.

Second, the repeated use of small words and phrases such as : *“Okay, oh okay, well, um, eh, uh, wow, great, it’d be so much fun, we’re supposed to, I don’t know, last one, you talk, I have to listen”* and interrogative phrases such as *“Are we? Which one are we on?”* were almost distributed evenly between both students. With these words, they were connecting each other’s speech and constructing their conversation together as if weaving the text together for each other.

In fact, as I mentioned, some of this playfulness could account for Lola’s uncontrollable laughing or giggling at times and I had also noted in my field notes early that year that Lola seemed especially enthusiastic in general (Field notes, September 16, p. 2). Gee explains (in Hicks, 1996) that “discourses are identity tool kits replete with socially shared ways of acting, talking and believing” (p. 53). Lola and Roger as social actors shared the same intonations, interruptions, laughing (Lola more so), and usage of the same phrases and interjections. While they may have been interested in each other’s ideas, they shared a similar value-system, and were both seeking to complete the assignment successfully. Their discourse was collaborative overall and they wanted to complete the activity but also have fun and enjoy being together. Later this year, I noted

in my field notes that Roger and Lola seemed to be close in general (Field notes, March 30, p. 32).

This need for connection culminated with Lola's reenactment of the role-play preparation with Roger for three of her peers (Gina, Tony, and Roger himself) in the second conversation. Her discourse was punctuated with the word "*like*" (eight times). Her tone of voice was playful, her pace incredibly fast: She was telling the "fun" story of collaborating with Roger. The use of small words such as "*like*" made sense to these specific actors who shared a similar socio-cultural setting.

At the same time, as social actors from the same socio-cultural class, they were, together and individually, constantly negotiating their position or image within the group, and/or the class. Thus, Lola suggested eliminating the rape reference and Roger agreed ("*Let's leave out the part about rape*"). Although Roger was the one who introduced the idea in the first conversation, he now was finding it "*horrible,*" and sympathized against a violent phenomenon that "*totally gets (me) though.*" In some ways, Roger was displaying compassion and understanding for social issues vis-à-vis Lola.

One other way in which Lola and Roger connected throughout their conversation by negotiating their position with one another and within the group was by inserting words and utterances in their discourse that are borrowed from another discourse. Bakhtin says that: "The word in language is always half someone else's" (1981, p. 293). By this, he means that whenever a person utters a word or phrase, this word or phrase has already been used by many and associated with other discourses, and contexts. Thus, Bakhtin says, the speaker must first appropriate his/her own meaning for this word, and this word must be made sense of by each participant in this specific exchange.

For instance, Roger-as-April explained to Lola-as-Cordell that: “*You know we can’t be together if there isn’t anybody around*” or that he “*really appreciates (their) connection,*” or that he “*see(s) something in you.*” Roger was appropriating words and phrases from an “other” voice or texts to develop an argument that made sense to and connected him with his peer, Lola. Similarly, Lola in the second conversation declared that “*Cordell is a fine young man.*” Her words were associated with an “other” voice or other discourses that she and Roger had been immersed in: neither student was wondering what a “*fine young man*” does or looks like. Indeed, in my field notes, I noted that during the debriefing, after Roger and Lola had performed the role play in front of the class, Lola said that “*Cordell is not a very nice person*” (Field notes, December 2, p. 7). Throughout the role play preparation until after the role play was performed and while the class was discussing their role play, Lola gave a different meaning to Cordell and her performance of Cordell.

Yet, a few minutes earlier, she was appropriating these words, “*Cordell is a fine young man*” to connect with Roger and support her point for eliminating the rape reference, and making the role play “proper.”

This contradiction in Lola’s discourse is interesting. In many ways, Lola was saying two different things about Cordell at different times. Words seem to be passing through Lola as Bakhtin suggests words are constantly appropriated from other instances. Lola’s contradictory or confused discourse is similar to the “double-voiced discourse” Bakhtin suggests (in Morris, 1994, p. 13): Part of Lola is repeating words she heard elsewhere, part of her is concerned about displaying “enough” (sexual and other) knowledge to gain respect from Roger, and her peers, and part of Lola is concerned about

presenting herself (Goffman, 1959) in a sexually conservative enough stance so that she cannot lose respect from same peers as a “good” girl (Tolman & Higgins, 1996).

Roger and Lola, as speakers, “populated” these words “with their own intentions, their own accent” (Bakhtin, 1981). The words they uttered and appropriated acquired socially situated meanings as they were exchanging and became part of their social discursive performance. In doing so, however, it seems that Lola was working harder.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I examined how Lola and Roger engaged in a class activity using informal talk as social practice in the sexuality education classroom: They prepared for a role play and spent some time debriefing this preparation. As actors, they lived the social lives of two white middle-class American middle school students. Via their way of being in performing this activity and discussing it, they constructed their identity as male and female. As soon as the activity started, Lola and Roger’s talk became complicated when they decided to perform as the other gender while preparing the role play. I refer to this complication as a “discursive gender-twisting” where the entire conversation included two different kinds of speech performance:

1. Words and phrases uttered by Lola as she was pretending to be a boy named Cordell and words and phrases uttered by Roger as he was pretending to be a girl named April, as well as,
2. Words and phrases uttered by Lola as herself, and words and phrases uttered by Roger as himself.

As I examined the utterances, the intonation and the posture of both teen-agers, I found that they tended to reproduce stereotypical representations of gender whether they

were performing as the other gender, or as themselves: two students in this class. This means that Roger tended to use submissive strategies (words, moods, tone of voice) when acting as April. His utterances expressed thoughts that portray Lola-as-Cordell as a stereotypical boy who was only interested in a sexual encounter with Roger-as-April. Lola-as-Cordell used dominant discursive strategies: She questioned and ordered Roger-as-April around, initiating the action which she knew was not allowed by April's parents (visiting her at her home while her parents are away). She "played along" a stereotypical understanding of masculinity which concurred with the stereotypical understanding of masculinity expressed by Roger-as-April.

However, early in the dialogue, their respective performance started evolving. Roger-as-April tended to initiate most topics, and using a more assertive strategy. Lola-as-Cordell, or as herself, tended to follow Roger's directions, to repeat the terms he used, to respond to him, and most importantly to giggle or laugh almost through the entire second half of the first conversation. I refer to this shift as a "discursive gender-twisting."

Yet, I also found that, although Roger initiated more topics, he only spoke lightly more than Lola. In many respects, I found that their interaction was collaborative. They valued each other's company and they shared a similar concern about completing the assignment, and about their position within the class when envisioning performing the role play together for their peers and leaders.

Finally, I found that many turns of both students are used to perform knowing or to show something they know, as well as to connect with each other and with their peers,

often using words that they had appropriated from an “other” voice - popular culture, school or parents or other public discourses.

In spite of the complicated analysis due to the “discursive gender-twisting,” Lola and Roger used a combination of discursive strategies that helped them shape a sense of gender identity as male and female by often reproducing stereotypical representations of gender, and rarely resisting them. Most importantly, the moments of reproduction and resistance were intertwined with (an equal number of) moments of collaboration and connection with each other and with peers—rather than competition- in both completing and mocking the exercise.

Analyzing this conversation forces me to stop and interrogate how these youths are constructing their understanding of gender as they perform specific discursive patterns and strategies while engaged in a specific role play preparation and debriefing. Analyzing this conversation shows me to a great extent that the talk of young people in the sexuality education classroom is informed by many other discourses that they are immersed in and surrounded by. They often borrowed from these discourses in order to perform “knowing” in this classroom. As social actors, they appropriated other people’s words (popular culture, parents, teachers, news media, and other) in order to socialize, interact, and also to gain status and position themselves among their peers and leaders (Frazer & Cameron, 1989). As social actors, they constructed their gender identity by borrowing from dominant gender discourses, by resisting these discourses, by appropriating public and popular discourses and replaying/rephrasing them (Bakhtin, 1981), while collaborating/connecting to both complete and mock an assigned activity in

order to be recognized as legitimate participants to this group, in this place and at this time.

In the following chapter, I examine the speech of a group of boys which includes Roger, supported by their male teacher during a conversation while completing a curriculum activity a month and a half after the conversations performed by Roger and Lola and which I have just analyzed.

## Chapter 6

### Boys Performing Bros' Talk

#### **Introduction**

This chapter examines the discourse of a group of male students and teachers engaged in a curriculum activity at the beginning of the second semester of the school year in which this study was conducted. For this activity, students are divided in same-gender<sup>10</sup> groups and prompted to brainstorm lines which could be used to invite someone out on a “date” or to participate in a group activity, or to show interest for someone. Although the curriculum recommends that small groups or pairs of same-gender students complete the activity, this class divided itself in two groups with all male students present in one group (six students) and all female students present (eight students) in the other and was not reassigned in smaller groups which may have affected the process. The transcript of one audio recording and field notes are used to analyze the conversation between the boys and the male teacher. The analysis focuses particularly on five of the six male students, Sam, Roger, Tony, Rodrigo, and Tripp and one male teacher, Jerry, all participants to the study.

I examine how, from the very beginning, the initial curriculum activity becomes co-opted into a mockery where students compete and collaborate in creating lines as if reading from a script, how these lines are borrowed from other texts such as public and popular culture discourse, school discourse, peers, family and parents' discourse, and how most of the enunciated lines are sexualized. I argue that as they talk, interrupt, initiate topics, refute, accept, repeat, rephrase, and/or elaborate on each other's utterances,

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<sup>10</sup> Please refer to the discussion about the use of the term gender rather than sex in chapter II (review of literature), pages 21 and 22.



students construct and enact their understanding of gender identity using the discourse provided to them by the cultural history of masculinity (Edley, 2001). Butler explains that “Gender is a set of free-floating attributes ...” and “proves to be performative .... There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender ... Identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results” (1999, p. 34).

Thus Beauvoir’s premise (1949) that “One is not born a woman, but rather becomes one” means that becoming a woman or a man is something than one accomplishes by performing over and over acts that both stem from and reinforce cultural practice. Many agree that such acts include discourse as social action and refer to this phenomenon as “gendered speech” or discourse of gender (Cameron, 1998, 2001; Frazer & Cameron, 1989; Edley, 1997, 2001; Gee, 1999, 2001; Lakoff, 2004; Tannen, 2007).

I argue that, as they create sexualized lines borrowed from other socio-cultural texts, these five male students construct a sexualized identity. I argue that, as social actors, their discourse shape their own and each other’s identity so that Sam and Roger emerge as dominant speakers, and Tony and Rodrigo as subordinate speakers. I argue that all participants in this conversation find themselves constrained within the limits of hegemonic gender performance, where dynamics of power and dominance, although coupled with moments of connection, confusion and complicity promote the patriarchal status-quo.

I show that it is important to pause and analyze the processes that take place in this sexuality education classroom on that day, as well as oftentimes in many American classrooms to, as Edley (2001) states, “Capture the paradoxical relationship that exists between discourse and the speaking subject” and how “identities are produced and

culture is transformed by those performances” (pp. 190-191) in order to better understand such processes as well as processes of teaching and learning.

### **Context of analysis**

The conversation analyzed in this chapter took place in the middle of January during the second semester of the school year. Discussions and activities about friendship, relationships and issues of peer pressure had started during the month of December and continued for several weeks as part of the “Relationships” unit of the curriculum. That curriculum unit includes four class sessions:

5. Relationships (introduction)
6. Relationship skills
7. Thorny issues in friendship
8. Dating and lifetime commitments.

On the previous Sunday, students had discussed peer pressure as part of the session on “Thorny issues in friendship,” and, in general, denied being subjected to any kind of peer pressure themselves personally. On this particular Sunday, the topic at hand was “Dating and lifetime commitments.”

Class started with a reading from the curriculum about a boy aged fourteen, who explained that “dating” is very hard for him. He talks about the pressure that boys are under and how he gets “nervous about calling girls.” Some girls chuckled during the reading and boys made some sounds that could have meant that they were making fun of the boy in question. When asked whether they thought that it would be harder for girls than for boys to ask someone out, two female students agreed that it would “*be easier for girls because if they say no, they can just move on whereas for boys it’s bad for their*

*reputation,*” and that *“it’s hard for boys and girls to be rejected but it’s a bigger deal for boys because they are under this pressure”* (Field notes, January 13, p.16). Here, although some chuckling was heard during the reading, these two female students seem to be agreeing with the boy in the reading.

This introductory discussion was followed by an activity named: “Yes, No, Maybe so,” for which students are supposed to be divided into small same-gender groups, and which is at the center of the conversation analyzed here. Each group is asked to devise “lines” that could be used by one of them to ask another one out on a group or a one on one date, and to devise potential “yes” or “no” responses to these lines.

The “Dating Game” activity follows immediately after the “Yes, No, Maybe So” activity. In the “Dating Game,” each student is randomly paired with another student and has the opportunity to role-play the lines or invitations and responses that were developed in small groups. Although, it is not part of this analysis, one interesting aspect of the dating game is that students’ pairs may include any gender, so that a student may randomly be paired with either a same-gender or different gender peer. The dating game activity is viewed as an opportunity within the relationship unit of the curriculum to practice dating questions and answers with members of any gender. This is part of the broader philosophy of the curriculum which intends to teach comprehensively about a variety of sexual orientations and gender identities, and presents all gender identities and sexual orientations as equally worthy. This activity is not part of the conversation analyzed here.

The last activity for the “Dating and Lifetime Commitments” session is named “Till Death Do Us Apart.” This activity is an opportunity for students to, as a class

brainstorm and discuss marriage (including same-gender) and other lifetime commitments and is not part of this analysis either.

The “Yes, No, Maybe So” activity is the one during which six male students under the guidance of the male teacher were recorded. Their conversation is analyzed in this chapter. Although six male students and two teachers, a male and me, participated in the conversation analyzed here only five of the boys and the male teacher are heard and one other boy and I are heard only sporadically. This conversation focuses especially on these five boys: Rodrigo, Tony, Roger, Sam, and Tripp, and the male teacher Jerry. A profile of these six participants follows.

### **Participants.**

*Rodrigo* was a white, skinny thirteen year-old boy with glasses, who seemed less physically developed than some of the other male participants. He dressed casually but neat and could be the stereotypical representation of a “nerd.” He tended to keep his coat on in class, sometimes even the hood. He brought books to class and tended to keep his nose in them during class until called on it. Rodrigo’s father was from South America and his mother Euro-American. He was home-schooled and had an older brother who attended this class in a different congregation because his parents had only recently moved to the area and joined this church. The whole family spoke Spanish in addition to English and his brother spoke French as well.

Rodrigo’s discourse was somewhat sophisticated and he showed what he knew. For instance, he mentioned: “Just remembered Harry Potter,” when asked about a book/film where he liked the gender representation. At the first class meeting in December, he referred to Monty Python when Tripp, another boy in the class and

participant in this conversation, was reading with a British accent in a deep voice, and appeared both humorous and knowledgeable by referring to the game of Monopoly: “Do not go to jail, do not collect \$200.” In fact, it appeared very important for him to show what he knew and to get people’s attention. Rodrigo may have been perceived as a nerd and as a new kid on the block which did not help his “fitting in” within this group. The fact that he sounded pretty articulate and was used to participating actively in his own learning, as a home-schooled student, may have made him an easier target for other boys like Sam, who mocked and taunted him throughout a large part of the school year.

Early in the year, during the “Sexual Language” session which I did not attend, I heard from one of the teachers that Rodrigo had brought a list of terms to class. Supposedly, he had heard about this session from his older brother who had taken this class a few years before him in a different congregation and had prepared a list for Rodrigo. Maybe, Rodrigo was trying to perform as knowledgeable in this class. As a home-schooled student, Rodrigo may not have had as much experience as other students in this classroom interacting socially with boys and girls his age, so that his level of nervousness maybe have been higher than average.

Early in November, he stated “*I’m kinda staying in my jacket.*” This means he kept the hood of his coat over his head as if he were hiding. In fact, when discussing peer pressure, he admitted: “*I don’t have this problem because I don’t have many friends, close friends.*” I wonder if the girls in the class noticed his unease. Sometimes, girls interfered and asked him to stop doing something he was doing (i.e., playing with his coat) almost treating him as if he was “immature.” In a way, these girls were policing

Rodrigo and this added to the policing other boys such as Sam inflicted on him, i.e. by mocking and, at times, trying to humiliate him.

Sometimes, it seems as if Rodrigo kept his hood or his coat on as if to hide and avoid dealing with conversations that were uncomfortable such as discussion about sexual orientation and gayness. Other times, it just seemed plain disruptive. For instance, during one particular class, he kept mentioning the clock and referring to time while the LGBTQ panel was speaking, which, even if unintentional, was not showing much respect for the panel guests. As a newcomer, he seemed to be one of two students (Tripp was the other one) who brought various “props” to class at several sessions; maybe as a way of defining and displaying his identity to other students (since they didn’t know him as well as they knew each other). Throughout the year, the props included a fishing rod, several books, some kind of play dough, a can with magic cards. During the conversation analyzed here, he did bring a metal box which, at one point, became the topic of conversation and the subject of mockery of Rodrigo by Sam.

During the annual overnight trip to Boston that the class undertakes to learn about and celebrate its religious heritage, Rodrigo almost did not get off the train upon arrival at the train station. I stayed behind in the train with him as he was looking for his backpack. During the visit, he tended to be isolated from the rest of the group, although, overall, there was no incident involving him and/or Sam as I had feared based upon some of the dynamics we had observed.

**Tony** had attended this church school for many years. His father was the chair of the Religious Education Committee at the time. He was the last student to hand in his consent form and had forgotten to sign it. Tony’s parents were both white upper-middle

class professionals. At the time of this study, Tony was attending public school in one of the most privileged districts in the state. He was a fairly articulate young man and not one acting especially “cool.” He looked slightly developmentally younger than some of the other boys. He had short blond hair, was middle-sized and dressed casually.

Tony was comfortable sharing short personal stories, complaining, and interjecting during class. During the “Personal concerns about puberty” session, earlier in the school year, he was one of the first boys to refer to the importance of penis size. He told a story about a friend who would always want to talk about this and how he responded: “*Hey dude, I don’t care about how big my penis is, okay?*” When asked what he would like the other gender to experience, Tony said: “*I want them (girls) to experience a boys’ locker room conversation.*” This is an interesting comment because his tone of voice seemed to imply that such conversation is not pleasant (In general, students seem to choose examples of negative experiences to have the other gender experience). Did Tony mean that the locker room conversations he alluded to are fraught with sexist, homophobic or hypermasculine references and that they made him uncomfortable?

Yet, during the same class, the two favorite media representations of male gender he chose were stereotypically hypermasculine: *The Bourne Ultimatum* and *James Bond*! Often, Tony would take part in activities and share information more so than his male peers. For instance, during a class prior to when the conversation analyzed here was recorded, students were asked about whether they are good listeners, and whether their friends listen to them. Tony instantly shared about friend “*Adrian, he listens well,*” whereas neither of the three other male students present on this day contributed any

information about listening and talking with friends except Sam whose contribution seemed more meant at mocking the activity than completing it. When discussing concerns about body image, Tony did not hesitate to share his concern about his weight. He responded to a comment by Gina who once was discussing her sister's "pseudo-anorexia" by saying: *"I'm really jealous of people who eat a lot and stay skinny."* Tony was an active participant to this class whenever present. Tony is one of the participants whose voice was heard briefly in the second conversation analyzed in the previous chapter.

**Roger** was a white 13 year-old, male student in this class. He was an assertive, articulate student, eager to share, participate actively, joke around, and entertain his peers. He came from a white middle-class professional family. Both his parents were university professors, and his father was, at the time, soon to become the president of the congregation. He had an older sister who attended this sexuality education program in the past. He lived in a residential neighborhood in town and had been attending the public magnet middle-school.

At the time of this study, he had passed the entrance examination to attend the local, public magnet high-school in the city as a freshman. He came to class wearing comfortable, clean clothing such as a pair of slacks and a tee-shirt, with his hair not especially combed or styled. He participated actively whenever he attended this class.

During the school year, he volunteered for announcements from the pulpit in the Meeting House during service and he contributed to a number of intergenerational services in various ways such as the Christmas pageant, or the Wholly Family service<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> For details about this service, please refer to Roger's profile in chapter V (A discursive gender-twisting), page 144.



In addition to contributing to these services in past years, Roger performed as the Master of Ceremonies during the annual fundraiser for this group at the end of the month of January which is a Pasta Supper organized and held by the students of this class and their parents. As a Master of Ceremonies, Roger addressed a group of approximately one hundred parents, children, and guests, including leading the silent auction. He appeared completely at ease and in control, showing himself to be a comfortable and efficient public speaker. Roger is one of the participants whose discourse was analyzed in the previous chapter.

**Sam** was a white, sophisticated thirteen year-old boy with casual although sort of preppy dress and a fashionable hair cut: his hair came slightly above the ear and bangs tended to go over one eye. At the time, he was an only child and attended a private school. His parents were white upper-middle class professionals and involved members of the congregation. He was one of the most developmentally and physically advanced of the male participants. It seemed very important for Sam to be in the know, to act knowledgeable and to perform as a cool player in the group using humor, mockery, disruption, side talking. Sam liked to be the center of attention. Often, he used words referring to bodily functions or body part that would prompt laughter in the “audience” such as gas, balls.

For instance, earlier that year, during a discussion about things they do not like about being a boy or a girl, Sam referred to gas or gas pains twice: “*I get gas pains,*” he said. When girls were discussing cramps, he suggested that they should rather “*experience gas pains from really bad food,*” or “*getting kicked in the balls*” so that they can experience what it is really like to be a boy, and added that “*It sucks to have your*

*periods!*” Around December, Sam started playing an important part in a group of three/four students (Sam, Tripp, Roger, and often, adversely, Rodrigo) who disrupted class by mocking activities, or entertaining side talks with each other. At one point, earlier that year, Sam responded to a teacher’s criticism that boys were not contributing to the discussion about talking and listening with friends by pretending he was speaking with a computer. Referring to the first role play activity of the year, he said: “*Role playing, I heard of it, it sounds pretty stupid.*”

Yet, he, at times, demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of concepts. For instance, earlier in the year, he was the only student who could define gender identity: “*Gender Identity is what gender you are female or male, and what you think you are, how you portray yourself.*”

Sam was involved in several problematic incidents during the year. Early on, he started picking on Rodrigo and took any opportunity to show his disapproval of him, by either saying things or addressing other boys, or the entire class while referring to Rodrigo. At one point, a short time after the session and the activity described in this chapter, Sam defaced Rodrigo’s picture posted on the classroom board to make it look like a devil (every student and teacher’s photo gets posted at the beginning of the school year). This happened most likely in the evening of the Pasta Supper Fundraiser (Field notes, January 27, pp. 31 & 37). This Fundraiser takes places annually in the Parish House and partly funds this group’s overnight trip to Unitarian Universalist Headquarters in the spring. Specifically, the drawing on Rodrigo’s photo added pointy ears on his forehead, a tail at the bottom, and a smaller drawing of male genitals by themselves on

the side of his face. Sam was caught and sat through a conference with two of the teachers (Tim and myself).

At that point, he admitted that he did “*not like the way Rodrigo talks and behaves.*” When asked, he committed to leave Rodrigo alone (Field notes, February 10, pp.1-2). However, his taunting did not actually stop. It just became more subdued. It took place until the end of the school year including during the annual overnight trip to the nearest city.

At about the same time as Sam’s behavior towards Rodrigo, some of the boys (Connor, who was home-schooled as well as Roger, Tripp, and even Tony) tended to distance themselves from Rodrigo. For instance, during the overnight trip, I overheard Sam addressing Connor who was interacting with Rodrigo directly in these words: “*You’re talking to this?*” (Field notes, March 30, p. 32). By using the pronoun “*this,*” Sam was referring to Rodrigo as an object or a thing thus dehumanizing him. In this way and many others which I highlight in this chapter, Sam “policed” dynamics, especially between male students, but not only, in the class and has much impact on other participants’ status, perception of “coolness” or not within the group, and even on how some of the girls acted around or addressed Rodrigo or in reaction to Rodrigo’s actions/words.

At around the time when the defacing of Rodrigo’s photo occurred, Sam was most likely involved in another incident which took place on the evening of the Pasta Supper Fund-Raiser (Field notes, January 27, p. 31 & 37 and February 10, pp.12-13). This Fundraiser takes places annually in the Parish House where our Sunday classroom is located, and the classroom was open that evening. Without being authorized to do so, a

number of students accessed the slides<sup>12</sup> which are shown in the classroom during the course, and had been stored on one of the upper shelves in our classroom. Although the responsibility for the slides “raid” was never fully established because none of the students came forward and the incident was not further investigated after the slides were recovered and reorganized. One loose slide was found in the shelves at the next class by a student (Field notes, February 10, p. 13).

Sam was an active and major participant in this classroom, sometimes disruptive and always heard when present, which was most Sundays. He always arrived early as his parents were active in the church’s choir which met early every Sunday.

*Tripp* had attended this church school for many years. His family was known to me because my own son was both in pre-school and in church class with Tripp’s older sister. In fact, before the school year started, Tripp’s mother had asked to meet with me to discuss Tripp’s learning disability (Asperger Syndrome). Both Tripp’s parents were white upper middle class professionals.

Tripp attended a private school. He was rather tall and had a deeper voice than some of the other boys which he liked to make sound even deeper. He participated a lot (although not as much in the conversation analyzed here) but also could be disruptive, engaging in much side-talking. He liked to use his voice and his ability to imitate accents to entertain the class with humor, disruption, or actions (such as falling from his chair at one point after he had been asked to move to a different seat because he was being disruptive). When he started using a British accent in a deep voice, Tripp got a lot of attention from many members of the class. Both Rodrigo and Tony even tried to imitate

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<sup>12</sup> For a full description of the slides, please refer to chapter IV (Context of the study), page 126.

him. At one point, perhaps emboldened by the attention he was receiving, Tripp insisted that a math problem (that he had added in the question box) be solved.

Thus, he often did get in “trouble” while being distracted, having side conversations and interacting with Sam. Contrary to his mother’s concern, Tripp was quite able to argue, and discuss topics at hand, and express his opinion, as well as control his behavior when called upon to do so. At times, Tripp liked to bring props to class such as magic cards, which many participants (students and leaders) tended to treat as a Kindergarten “show and tell” type of behavior. Early in the school year, during a STI (Sexually Transmitted Infections)/HIV/AIDS presentation, Tripp demonstrated genuine concern when he questioned the speaker about whether “AIDS can ever go away?”

At other times, he questioned students’ experiences or comments. For instance, as Hannah, a female student, was complaining about being yelled at in sports because she is the only girl on her team, he said skeptically: “*It’s never happened to me, I’ve never seen that?*” Tripp used sophisticated vocabulary at times. For instance, he was the only student who, during a session about sexual harassment, defined consent accurately as “mutual agreement,” and who could contribute most definitions during the world religion jeopardy game which students play during the spiritual explorations end part of the school year. Tripp was an active participant to this class; he liked to entertain and tended to be distracted by other participants such as Sam’s.

**Jerry** was a white middle-class male in his sixties who has been teaching in the church school and a member of this congregation for over twenty five years. His wife, Dina, also a white middle-class female, had been teaching Sunday school and their two adult sons, who had attended local private schools, took part in the same church school

program. Jerry had been working freelance in the golfing industry and was now semi-retired and trying to publish his memoirs. He lived in French-speaking Africa as a young man and traveled quite a bit, especially in Mexico and India. He grew up Catholic and went to Catholic schools as a boy. He was versed in spiritual explorations and loved to engage with students about a range of topics, from religious education in Catholic schools to the Big Bang Theory.

I started teaching with Jerry in the church school's Sixth Grade many years ago when we taught the World Religions curriculum at this level. We had been partnering in the Eighth Grade class for some 10 years. While Jerry was reliable in terms of attendance, the issues of preparation and follow up were not his forte! He also did not particularly like to assert himself as an "authority" in the classroom because he preferred to position himself as an ally or "one of the guys" and to interact as a "friend" with the youths, using jokes, and humor as often as possible, rather than as a "teacher." Jerry was the teacher who supported the group of boys being recorded and whose conversation is analyzed in this chapter. The activity during which this conversation takes place is described in detail in the following section.

**Activity: "Yes, No, Maybe So."**

In this activity, students are prompted to come up with lines which could be used to invite someone out on a "date" or to participate in a group activity, or to show interest for someone. The goal of this activity is for students, in same-gender groups, to refine their skills in establishing contact with other young people, particularly with someone they like or are interested in getting to know better. The activity is described as an

*“opportunity to think and try out ways to ask people out as well as to accept and reject offer of dates.”*

Students are asked to:

- *Brainstorm lines or offers that someone could use to ask another person to join a group activity or go out on a one-on-one date,*
- *Come up with possible yes or no responses to each line or invitation,*
- *Choose someone to record your group’s responses and to present the group report.*

Students are given ten minutes and teachers are supposed to check on the groups midway to ensure that students are working on responses as well as invitations.

In general, students are either grouped randomly for small group activities or are left free to choose who they would like to pair up or group with. Interestingly, the “Yes, No, Maybe So” activity separates students by gender as if matching biological sex.

Although I should note that the curriculum allows teachers to use their own judgment in organizing the activity around a larger group or into smaller co-educational groups in case they believe that some participants may be wary of same-gender group experiences.

For this activity, the class was prompted to divide into same-gender groups as prescribed by the curriculum. However, instead of small groups, only two larger groups emerged: one with all the male students and one with all the female students. The group of girls included eight girls and no one expressed interest in dividing further. In the end, only three female participants (Lola, and Gina) contributed actively to developing questions and responses. The group of girls worked in one corner of the classroom and was rather focused although they laughed together at times. One female recorder was selected who wrote against the classroom door. The group of boys included all six boys

present. One of them, Tony, clearly wanted the group to divide further although this never happened. The “same-gender” grouping in this case forced all the boy-participants present to interact and “collaborate” on a common task whereas typically, for small group activities, boys would pair up with just one other boy or even sometimes a girl, or would be randomly grouped with one or two other male or female students.

In the next section, I proceed to a detailed analysis of segments of the conversation selected because they informed the analysis.

### **Arguments and Findings**

#### **Detailed analysis.**

The conversation analyzed in this section lasted almost ten minutes and included a total of two hundred and twenty turns. This means that each speaker could have had almost forty turns of talk each. In actuality, the break down was as follows:

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Total # of turns</i>	<i>Approximate % of all turns</i>
<i>Sam</i>	73	37%
<i>Tony</i>	36	18%
<i>Roger</i>	33	16.5%
<i>Jerry (teacher)</i>	32	16%
<i>Rodrigo</i>	18	9%
<i>Tripp</i>	7	3.5%
<i>Total</i>	199	

**Table 6.1: Breakdown of participants turns**



This table shows that Sam, Tony, Roger and Jerry, the teacher spoke the most turns whereby the number of Sam's turns was almost double of the other three speakers. Because of the length of the conversation, I selected passages that I found particularly informative rather than analyzing the whole. In order to select which parts of the conversation to not include in the following detailed analysis, I examined turns and utterances that were not contributing significantly to understanding the whole, or that were random/unrelated comments. The word utterance is used to refer to a group of words produced by a speaker or "any instance of language produced by a speaker" (Kutz, 2007). A turn is an utterance or a number of utterances attached to one speaker until another speaker starts speaking. The conversation is divided into numbered sections. I coded the selected turns/utterances as follows:

- **C** for contributing/collaborating; this code is used whenever students' or teachers' words lead to collaboration with one another and/ or taking a step towards completing the activity; This collaboration is cooperative as opposed to the collaboration mentioned below under the code S for sparring.
- **OV** is used when students' or teachers' words contribute to the completion of the activity using the voice of an "other" or using "someone else's words"; this code is used whenever students' words are borrowed from "someone else's" such as popular culture texts (television show, jokes, song lyrics or other) This code refers to Bakhtin's definition of an utterance (1981). He notes that: "An utterance is the main unit of meaning and is formed through a speaker's relation to Otherness: Other people, others' words and expressions, and the cultural world in a specific time and place, or context" (pp. 293-294). This means that when we speak we are

always using word and expressions that have been used by others, and that we appropriate these words and expressions to make meaning in the specific time, place and context in which we are situated.

- **D** for dominant dissing; this code is used whenever students' words disrespect another students' words or actions negatively,
- **S** for sparring; this code is used when students' words mock another student's action or words and followed by an exchange between these specific students. In such an exchange, students tend to construct discourse jointly for a few seconds. This discursive production, although using a competitive tone of voice or pitch, and sometimes offensive vocabulary, may be collaborative and even playful at times; this collaboration is competitive as opposed to the code C for collaboration mentioned above.
- **R** for resisting/complaining; this code is used when student's words express frustration with and resistance against another student's words or actions, or with the process.

The notations on the transcript are explained in this legend:

NOTATIONS	MEANINGS
-	Incomplete word
..	Pause
...	Long pause
[	Overlap
{ }	Explanation
<i>Italics</i>	Emphasis
( )	Inaudible

**Table 6.2: Legend of transcript**

Section 1

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
5	ROGER	1	Alright.		C
6	ODILE-T	1	Okay.		C
7	ROGER	1	<b>Pick-up lines</b> for guys.	Background conversation.	OV

CODING: C (cooperative collaboration), OV (using the voice of an “other”), D (dominant dissing), R (resisting, complaining), S (sparring, competitive collaboration)

The activity “Yes, No, Maybe So” had begun. Two same-gender groups had been formed. In the group of boys, a few seconds only into the conversation, Roger, in turn 7 renamed the activity “*Pick-up lines for guys.*” I coded this turn OV. Roger, while taking the lead in his group of boys is contributing in getting the activity starting. Although he is announcing the beginning of the activity, the term he uses “*pick-up*” is different from the activity’s original script which referred to “*inviting.*”

With this “re-naming,” he is using a popular term, “*pick-up,*” which he has borrowed from popular culture, and or from his socio-cultural environment. “*Pick up*” is often used to qualify places where people might congregate such as clubs, bars, or parties and to the opportunities they offer individuals to seek and find a partner. The term *pick up* implies that a person is picked up similarly to an object in a retail store in order to be consumed. Often but not always, it connotes sexual “consumption.” This lexical choice de-legitimizes the initial activity. Importantly, this term is subsequently adopted by the

entire group of boys and the male teacher. It is repeated by all participants throughout the conversation as if validly defining the activity.

Section 2

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
12	ROGER	1	Is that roll recording you? I hear it ( )	Laughing. Background conversation.	C
13	TONY	1	[How many girls have denied you this month?	Multiple voices at once.	S
14	SAM	1	[Oh leave it alone. ( ) recorders.	Giggling. Background conversation.	C (Roger)
15	RODRIGO	1	[Five hundred!	“	S
16	SAM	1	They’re ( ) recorders.	“	C (Roger)
		2	It’s like, that is that. God.	“	C
17	JERRY-T	1	Focus. Guys.		C
		2	What’s our first line?		C

CODING: C (cooperative collaboration), OV (using the voice of an “other”), D

(dominant dissing), R (resisting, complaining), S (sparring, competitive collaboration)

In this section, Roger (turn 12) is checking on the recorder which I have set up for the group of boys. He is interrupted by Tony in turn 13: “*How many girls have denied you this month?*” This question is addressed to the group and could relate to an

observation mentioned earlier in this chapter made by one girl at the beginning of class that Sunday. In response to a question about asking people out and being rejected, she noted that: *“It would be easier for girls because if they say no, they can just move on whereas for boys it’s bad for their reputation,”* and that *“it’s hard for boys and girls to be rejected but it’s a bigger deal for boys because they are under this pressure...”*

Here, the assumption seems to be made that girls are being asked and boys are doing the asking. In fact, this assumption also alludes in some way to the “*pick-up*” metaphor whereby boys are represented stereotypically as the ones doing the asking, or the “picking up.” At the time, Sam had instantly responded to this comment that he: *“Never had a rejection ‘cause girls just want me ‘cause I was just really mean to them in grade school and now they all want me!”* Two other assumptions are at play in Sam’s comment which is that boys are naturally mean to girls and that girls are attracted by mean boys. I will return to these observations in the discussion.

I coded Tony’s turn S. It is unclear whether Tony is addressing anyone in particular. His question can be understood as mocking in order to engage the group. Also, it follows up with Roger’s “*pick-up*” reference except Tony is actually empowering “*girls*” into “*denying*” boys, although this could be interpreted as Tony attributing all girls a “negative” trait in solidarity with other boys against girls. In this way, Tony is agreeing with the early rationale about girls being able to say “*no*,” and boys being left with the consequences of being told “*no*” and losing face. In any case, Tony’s question is ignored by all except Rodrigo. Rodrigo’s response to Tony: “*five hundred*” is ignored as well.

I coded Rodrigo's turn S because he follows up with Tony's mocking question. Here, Rodrigo is engaging with Tony and his exaggerating the number of rejections ("500") is playful. Both Sam's turns 14 and 16 are coded C because he is contributing by collaborating with Roger. In this segment, it almost seems as though Roger and Sam are speaking to each other and ignoring the rest of the group.

Jerry's turn 17 is coded as C because he is contributing to the activity in trying to lead the boys into "*focusing*." With his question "*What's our first line?*" Jerry is using the possessive article "*our*." Although he is working to keep the boys on track, his using the article "*our*" positions him as "one of the guys." Interestingly, when Jerry is referring to "*our first line*," he seems to have adopted the notion of "*pick-up lines*" introduced by Roger a few seconds ago.

### Section 3

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
18	TONY	1	My name is Mr.( )		OV
		2	There's only one thing going through my mind.		OV
		3	Can we do it?	Giggles.	OV
19	JERRY-T	1	You want to write that down?	"	C
20	SAM	1	No.	"	D
21	ROGER	1	Sure.	"	C
		2	We'll throw it out		C

			there.		
		3	And see how it works.	“	C
22	SAM	1	<b>Pick-up line.</b> Oh, here’s a good one.		C-D
		2	You wanna have sex some time?	Laughter	OV
23	TONY	1	And by that you mean a drink.	Multiple voices in background.	S
24	JERRY-T	1	There’s something to be said for honesty.		C
25	SAM	1	Hey, uh, I think you’re hot.	Laughter.	OV-D
26	ROGER	1	I don’t have a pencil.	Lots of background chatter.	C
27	SAM	1	Let’s get it on.	“	OV-D
28	JERRY-T	1	You need a pencil?	“	C
29	ROGER	1	Yeah.		C
30	TRIPP	1	So fucked.	Or so what???	D
		2	( ) shut up.	Background conversation.	D

CODING: C (cooperative collaboration), OV (using the voice of an “other”), D

(dominant dissing), R (resisting, complaining), S (sparring, competitive collaboration)

This section is rather representative of the entire conversation in that participants are speaking with and over each other’s voices, both collaborating, interrupting, and somewhat dismissing each other. I coded Tony’s turn 18 as OV. It sounds as if Tony is reciting something he may have heard somewhere else, from another voice: It could be

lines that he has memorized from a joke, or from a film, or a television show. In fact, most “lines” that participants bring up throughout this conversation seem to be “imported” in this way from an “other” voice. At times, it even feels that the boys are reading from some script although they really have no other material at their disposal than a piece of paper and pencils. In addition, turn 18/3: “*Can we do it?*” hardly qualifies as a mild invitation to *ask another person to join a group activity or go out on a one on one date*, as prescribed by the curriculum. The discourse of this invitation is both sexualized and trivialized. This trivialization of the activity characterizes most of the lines devised by the student-participants during this conversation and their content seems to be coming from someone else’s voice. Because of this trivialized content, the general tone of voice of each boy throughout the entire activity is mocking.

In fact, the activity is completed as a mockery with the teacher’s inadvertent endorsement. Turns 19 to 22 deal with the need for the group to list their lines in order to complete the activity. Turn 19 is coded as C, because Jerry, the teacher, while using the interrogative form: “*You want to write that down?*” is encouraging the boys (Sam and Roger?) to record Tony’s line. I coded Sam’s response in turn 20 as D. It is a blunt refusal: “*No,*” which I assimilate to dominant dissing (coded D). It is the first time in this conversation that Sam officially rejects the authority of the leader, Jerry, but certainly not the last one. In the following turns 21-29, I coded every participant’s turn C except for Sam’s turns. Roger’s turn 21 in response to Jerry’s request (using interrogation rather than command) to write Tony’s line (turn 18) uses conciliatory terms: “*Sure, we’ll throw it out there.*” Although Roger is willing to record Tony’s line for the group, it is unclear whether this line will or not be recorded; if it was, Tony notes much later in turn 86 that



all his lines were “*ex-d out.*” Roger’s request for a pencil (turns 26 & 29) which gets Jerry’s attention in turn 28 and results in getting a pencil, are all coded as C in that Roger seems to show his willingness to record and participate and Jerry shows he is attentive to Roger’s needs.

On the other hand, Sam’s turns 22, 25, and 27 are intertwined within this Jerry/Roger exchange. I coded these turns D because Sam is ignoring Roger’s and Jerry’s conversation and continuing on with his own contributing of lines to the activity. First, with turn 22, he repeats the term “*pick-up lines*” which validates Roger’s reframing of the activity. Then, he introduces three new lines in:

1. Turn 22/ 2: “*You wanna have sex some time?*”
2. Turn 25: “*Hey, uh, I think you’re hot,*” and,
3. Turn 27: “*Let’s get it on,*”

All of those lines I coded as OV. These three lines belong to the same register of hyper-sexualized invitations. While one of the intentions of this activity is to de-sexualize the idea of young people meeting or dating, Sam’s lines (and most lines participants come up with here) support the idea that the only goal of dating or meeting (or even just interacting with) someone – in this case, a girl, or girls – is to engage in sexual intercourse with her/them.

Although Sam is ignoring other participants, Tony, in turn 23: “*And by that you mean a drink,*” does follow up with Sam’s turn 22. I coded Tony’s turn S because while he is mocking Sam’s bluntness in turn 22 (“*You wanna have sex some time?*”), he is also engaging with him. In other words, while Sam is performing “coolness” by using

explicit language about sexual intercourse, Tony is both mocking and entertaining Sam's words.

In turn 24: "*There's something to be said for honesty,*" Jerry also follows up with Sam's turn 22 and I coded this turn 24 C. Jerry is qualifying Sam's contribution as a sign of "*honesty.*" Maybe as a concern for positive reinforcement and keeping the group of boys on task, Jerry is not addressing the hypersexual connotations but rather endorsing, if inadvertently, the trivialization of the activity.

Finally, Tripp's intervention, at the end of this segment, is short. I coded his turn 30 as D, first, because he seems to be dismissing the previous exchange and also because he uses profanity: "*So fucked up*" (he may be referring to the chaotic exchange), and "*Shut up.*"

#### Section 4

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
33	ROGER	1	[You know, Sam, may I say something?		S
		2	You (is?) like a kiddy pool.		S
		3	<b>Shallow.</b>		S
34	?	1	Yeah, oh wow.	"	
35	SAM	1	[You're like the <b>water in a kiddy pool.</b>	Background chatter.	S
		2	I can see right	Tone of voice is	S

			through you.	dramatic (performance)	
		3	No, you're like <b>the water</b>		S
36	ROGER	1	[No, kiddy pool water is cloudy.	Laughter.	S
37	SAM	1	No, no.	“	S
	SAM	2	You're like the water in a kiddy pool.	“	S
		3	You gotta yelly bell, you got a yellow belly.	“	S
		4	I can see right through you!	Tone of voice is dramatic	S
		5	Cuz it's yellow, because <b>they pee in it.</b>	“	S
		6	That's why the shallow end is so warm.	“	S
38	ROGER	1	Oh... my...my	Lots of background chatter. Tone of voice is both shocked and mocking	S
39	SAM	1	You drank the water.		S

CODING: C (cooperative collaboration), OV (using the voice of an “other”), D

(dominant dissing), R (resisting, complaining), S (sparring, competitive collaboration)

In this section, Roger interrupts the conversation, and addresses Sam directly starting with turn 33. I coded this turn S because he is mocking Sam’s utterances (turns 22, 25, and 27) and even calling him “*shallow*” in 33/3. However, while Roger seems to express disapproval of Sam, this entire section (turns 33 to 39) becomes an exclusive exchange between these two students. I coded most turns as S because Roger and Sam are building on one another’s contribution. They interrupt each other or speak simultaneously (turns 35 & 36). They borrow each other’s terms. For instance, Sam repeats (turns 35 & 37/2) Roger’s “*kiddy pool*” metaphor (turns 33/2 & 36).

In this process, although they are mocking each other, they laugh and their tone of voice is theatrical. While they are not contributing to the activity, their sparring is playful as if they were co-producing this section of the conversation. However, Roger seems to be losing patience with his partner after turn 37/5: “*Cuz it’s yellow because they pee in it*”, where Sam is referring to urine and to the color “*yellow.*” Roger’s utterances “*Oh my...my*” in turn 38 and his pitch, express a certain frustration with Sam which leaves Sam unaffected as he builds up on his reference to urine: “*You drank the water*” as if to impress on or shock his audience with the imagined notion that Roger would actually be drinking urine.

#### Section 5

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
42	ROGER	1	Oh, oh, I got another one. I got another ( )	“	C
43	TONY	1	[You	“	R

			guys writing it down?		
44	ROGER	1	Um, Bob. Just Bob.	“(It is unclear who Bob is?)	?
45	SAM	1	How about, how about we walk up and go, hey, this kinda sucks.	(it is unclear what Sam is referring to) Background laughter.	?
46	TONY	1	I’m writing that one down.	Lots of constant background chatter.	R
47	SAM	1	Hey, I’m not gonna write that.	“	D
		2	I’m not gonna. It sucks	“	D
48	TONY	1	No, it does not!	“	R
49	SAM	1	Whatever.	“	D

CODING: C (cooperative collaboration), OV (using the voice of an “other”), D

(dominant dissing), R (resisting, complaining), S (sparring, competitive collaboration)

In this section, Roger has moved away from his metaphoric exchange with Sam and in turn 42 his words show that he wants to contribute (C) further to the list of “*pick-up lines*.” However, he does not contribute a new line in this specific section. Most of the discourse in this segment is an argument between Sam and Tony about whether Sam and ROGER (“*You guys*”) have recorded or will record Tony’s previous line (turn 18). Starting with turn 43, Tony interrupts Roger to inquire about his previous line using interrogative mood. I coded this turn R because this interrogation as well as his tone of voice express some frustration. Although Tony is arguing with Sam, he is not sparring

with him, or engaging in this way. He is frustrated and wants to resist Sam. In turn 46, he answers his own question: *“I’m writing that one down.”*

Roger and Sam first ignore Tony’s question (turn 43) with turns 44 and 45 which I coded C because even though they are ignoring Tony, they are collaborating with each other. But when Tony expresses the desire to write it down himself, Sam’s turns 46 and 47/1 reject Tony’s request: *“I’m not gonna write that down. I’m not gonna,”* and even completely dismissing it as inadequate: *“It sucks,”* in turn 47/2.

Finally, Sam’s turn 49 dismisses Tony protest (*“No, it does not!”*) with a *“Whatever,”* which is pronounced with a certain amount of disdain. I coded Sam’s turns 46, 47 and 49 D because the words and tone of voice used are setting Sam in a dominant position in relation to Tony. With these words, Sam is deciding whether Tony’s contribution is “acceptable” or not, and in fact, refusing Tony’s contribution. I coded Tony’s turns 43, 46 and 48 R because although Tony wants to contribute his line to the activity and have it added to the list, his use of interrogation (*You guys writing it down?*), and negation (*No, it does not*) position him as someone who wants to call on everyone’s (maybe the teacher) attention to the unjust fact that a peer is deciding whether his lines valid or not. This is the beginning of a power struggle between Sam and Tony which continues throughout the conversation.

## Section 6

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
50	TRIPP	1	Uh, there’s this really funny one.	“	C

		2	That you plus me minus your pants equals ( )		OV
51	TONY	1	[No.		D
		2	Want to do some addition?		OV
	TONY	3	Want to do some math?		OV
52	SAM	1	[Let's (laugh).. okay.	Laugh	D
53	TONY	1	[Take off		OV
		2	Out of bed.		OV
		3	Without your clothes.	Said in a quieter voice.	OV
		4	And multiply.	“	OV
54	ROGER	1	Okay.		D
55	SAM	1	I'm not gonna write that down	Multiple voices talking in the background.	D
		2	About the ( ) and go ( ).	“ Laughs.	D
56	TONY	1	Take ( ) That was mine.	Lots of background chatter.	R
57	ROGER	1	Wait, here's a good one.	Static. Background chatter.	C-D
58	TONY	1	[Do you wash your clothes with		OV

			Windex?		
		2	'Cause I see myself inside of you.		OV
59	ROGER	1	Yea.		D
60	SAM	1	Now that		D

CODING: C (cooperative collaboration), OV (using the voice of an “other”), D

(dominant dissing), R (resisting, complaining), S (sparring, competitive collaboration)

Tripp changes the direction of the conversation with turn 50 which shows he would like to contribute a new line to the activity and he starts narrating a “sexualized equation.” However, Tony interrupts him to rephrase the line as if he had recognized it from a joke he has heard before. Because Tony does not only interrupt Tripp but also utters the word “No,” I coded this turn 51/1 D as Tony is dismissing Tripp’s articulation of the joke.

I coded Tripp’s turn 50/2 and most of Tony’s turns (51/2&3 and 53) OV because they are both contributing to the renamed activity by using an “other” voice or “someone else’s words” (Bakhtin, 1981). The line that Tony and Tripp contribute refers to bodies without clothes, sexual intercourse and reproduction. Similarly to the previous section, Roger and Sam’s words in turn 54 and 55 express disdain. Roger’s “*Okay*” is pronounced slowly and skeptically as a dismissal rather than an agreement. Sam, again, in turn 55, decides that Tony’s (and Tripp’s) contribution will not count. I coded Roger and Sam’s turns 54 and 55 D because they are both in a dominant position which allows them somehow to critique and reject Tony and Tripp’s contribution.

Of course, Tony protests again in turn 56 which I coded as R. However, his protest is ignored as Roger announces another contribution in turn 57 which is why I



coded turn 57 both C and D. Still, Tony does not give up and interjects a new line in turn 58: “*Do you wash your clothes with Windex ‘cause I see myself inside of you.*” Tony, by using the expression “*I see myself inside of you*” is referring to vaginal-penile intercourse. While Sam has mostly been coming up with graphic or sexualized lines, it seems that Tony is yearning to insert his own “sexualized” mark, and maybe to emulate or gain Sam and Roger’s approval. Yet, Tony’s new line is not received as he hopes. As a response, Roger’s turn 59: “*Yeah*” and Sam’s turn 60: “*Now that...*” are both pronounced with a similar scornful intonation and Roger moves right on to contribute his own new line.

#### Section 7

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
61	ROGER	1	[Did you hear ‘when you fell from heaven’?		OV
62	SAM	1	[No, I’m so, I <i>hate</i> that commercial!		S
		2	I’m a duh ( )	Stutters and rebounds. Laughter.	S
63	ROGER	1	What?	Laughter.	S
64	TRIPP	1	Did it hurt when you fell, did it hurt when you fell from heaven and got impaled ( ) on the ( )?	“	OV

65	TONY	1	[Next time you fall from heaven why don't you try to land on me?		OV
66	ROGER	1	[Did it hurt when you fell from heaven and got impaled on my dick?		OV
67	SAM	1	I love that one!		S
68	TONY	1	[Next time you ( )		OV
69	SAM	1	[Yeah, I was a <i>virgin</i> .	Background laughter.	OV
		2	I'd be like fall again and		S
		3	Now go to hell ( <i>pause</i> )	Lots of background chatter.	S

CODING: C (cooperative collaboration), OV (using the voice of an “other”), D

(dominant dissing), R (resisting, complaining), S (sparring, competitive collaboration)

This segment is interesting because four of the male student-participants are co-producing a new line which Roger had announced in turn 57 in the previous section. The line itself seems to be known by all of them and according to Sam's turn 62 refers to a commercial all the boys have watched, but from which they alter the content to add sexual connotations (*impaled, impaled on my dick, virgin*) - to which Sam adds a profanity (*go to hell*) -.

Therefore, I coded every turn in which a participant (Roger's 61 & 66, Tony's 65 & 68, Tripp's 64, Sam's 69) is constructing a part of this line OV. It is notable that Sam who, at the beginning of the section, is only commenting on the choice of line which he first mocks: “*No, I'm so, I hate that commercial*” in turn 62, completely changes his mind

in turn 67: “*I love that one.*” Thus Sam, at the end of the exchange is saying the opposite of what he said at the beginning of it. This contradiction is interesting because it informs the interaction that takes place between participants: Students in this section latch, speak simultaneously, interrupt, repeat each other’s terms or phrases, and, as in Sam’s case, utter contradictory statements, in a way that sounds belligerent and I coded these turns S.

Yet, more cooperating is actually taking place than it seems in what Cameron (1998) would name a “joint production” (p. 277). Importantly, this line has been announced and introduced by Roger which could be why Sam validates? Indeed, Sam seems more interested in Roger than in other participants as the following section emphasizes.

#### Section 8

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
69	SAM	4	Okay, Roger.	“	S
70	TONY	1	Why does he ( )	“	S
71	SAM	1	[I don’t know why,	“	S
		2	But he’s like ( ) to screw everything up.	“	S
		3	I don’t know why.	“	S
		4	He thinks like, he thinks that we can’t have fun with anyone	“	S
		5	Because he thinks		S

			you'll fuck it up in some way.		
72	TONY	1	Oh, no way.		S
73	SAM	1	But Roger, shh, Roger. We need to know.		S-D
		2	What do you believe in?		S
		3	Uh, bros before girls or girls before bros?		OV
74	JERRY-T	1	Oh, really. ( )	Background discussion.	?
75	TONY	1	Bros before ( ).	Almost inaudible.	OV
76	SAM	1	Okay...sure.	Laughter. Lots of background chatter.	S
77	ROGER	1	No. It's like bros before bros.		OV
78		2	No homos.	Laughing. Background chatter.	S-OV
79	SAM	1	No homo.	Sexually moaning.	S-OV

CODING: C (cooperative collaboration), OV (using the voice of an “other”), D (dominant dissing), R (resisting, complaining), S (sparring, competitive collaboration)

In this section, Sam is first addressing Roger directly in turn 69, and then continues speaking of Roger using the pronoun “*he*” in his subsequent turn 71. While the content of turn 71 and the repetitive use of the pronoun “*he*” focus on criticizing Roger: “*He thinks*” (repeated 3 times), “*he’s like.*” Sam almost seems frustrated at Roger and questions Roger’s attitude using the phrase “*I don’t know why*” twice, and uses profanity such as “*screw everything up*” (turn 71/2), or “*fuck it up*” (turn 71/5) which may sound

offensive. Tony appears to be going along with Sam's idea in turns 70, 72 and 75 even though Sam has continuously been rejecting Tony's contributions in one way or another. I coded most of the turns in this section S because Sam - with Tony's help - is mocking or provoking Roger. Roger's following turns are also coded S because he engages playfully with Sam and Tony (mostly Sam) as if the three were jousting or sparring.

In turn 73, Sam is setting the floor for a "performance." First in turn 73/1, he uses the expression "*shhh*" to ask for other students to quiet down. This is the first time in the conversation that Sam resorts to a word meant specifically to silence/"*shush*" the group in order to be heard and this is why I coded this specific turn D in addition to S. Then, by using the pronoun "*we*," ("*We need to know*"), Sam pretends to be speaking on behalf of the whole group. He is claiming the floor and everybody's attention to ask Roger an important question: "*What do you believe in? Bros before girls or girls before bros?*" This expression is borrowed from popular culture and I coded each turn using this phrase OV in addition to S. In general, this phrase uses the term "*hoes*" instead of "*girls*" but, Sam, who usually does not shy away from using profanity, did not recall the phrase fully or intentionally changed the original phrase to a milder version. His tone of voice is theatrical as he declares these words. Similarly, Roger chooses an alternate answer and comes up with his own phrase in turn 77: "*No, it's like bros before bros*," thus avoiding the term "*hoes*" as well as Sam had. This is somewhat of a complex statement, though, because, even though Roger confirms his allegiance to "*Bros*," ("*Bros before*") in the first part of the phrase, he repeats the term "*Bros*" in the second part. This leads us to wonder whether he means that certain "*Bros*" come before other "*Bros*." In other words, certain "*Bros*" in this setting are more important to him than others. Could he be connecting

with Sam in just repeating the word “*Bros*”? The fact that this exchange ends with both of them using the same term: “*No homos/homo*,” suggests that the boys are “in tune” or connecting. The tone of voice and the use of slang sound offensive and I coded these turns S for sparring.

However, this sparring is complicated by the fact that Roger and Sam follow up on each other’s ideas, repeat the same terms, and this even in tune, suggesting more connection than offensiveness. This almost establishes a level of complicity between them. In addition, I coded these turns OV because the expression “*No homo*” is a common fixture of young people’s discursive strategies borrowed from popular culture.

According to undergraduate students and internet sources, it was coined by the rapper Lil’ Wayne and functions as a hetero/gender-normative disclaimer that allows a person, typically a male, to make a compliment, or say something personal or nice to another male without risking being perceived as gay or gender-deviant if the phrase is uttered immediately after. Thus, while Roger first responds in favor of “*Bros*” to Sam, he immediately after covers himself by uttering: “*No homo*,” so as not to be perceived as overly affectionate towards Sam, which might jeopardize his “real boy” or straight boy status.

As I mentioned in an earlier chapter, the sexuality education curriculum in use in this program addresses all sexual orientations and gender identities on an equal footing, and students, in general, demonstrate thoughtfulness and repeatedly question the situated difficulties of people who are attracted by their same gender. Therefore, the discursive choice of “*no homo*” reflects a contradiction between students’ classroom discourse of

understanding and sympathizing with gay and lesbian issues and the hegemonic hetero/gender-normative everyday discourse of dominant masculinity.

However, the most interesting aspect of this section is that its main participants, Sam and Roger, are, once again, “sparring” (I coded most turns S) and connecting at the same time. Sam’s interrogation and seeming offensiveness towards Roger, Tony’s connecting with Sam, Sam’s dramatic tone of voice as if part of a performance in turn 73, the repetition of items by the three speakers (“*Bros before bros*”, “*No homo-s*”) contributes to this exchange being a joust-filled although playful one. This segment of the conversation is a joint-production in which they all take part. In addition, each last turn uttered by Sam and Roger point to a level of discursive (“*No homo-s*”) complicity between Sam and Roger and I coded these last two turns S (in addition to OV): Together, Sam and Roger are speaking the words of hetero/gender-normative policing.

#### Section 9

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
84	ROGER	1	Alright. Do we have any more?		C
85	SAM	1	Okay... I've gotta ( )		C
86	TONY	1	( ) ex-ed out all of mine.	Background conversation. Lots of background chatter. Hard to hear.	R

87	ROGER	1	Well do you have any more?	“	C
88	TONY	1	I have more. I do have more. I can't think ( )		C
89		2	( ) a very special girl.	“	C
90	SAM	1	What?	“	D
91	ROGER	1	What?	“	D
92	TONY	1	You seem like a very special girl.	“	C
93	ROGER	1	Yeah, I got another one.		D
		2	I got another one.		C
		3	You guys ready		C
		4	Is yo' dad a terrorist?	Voice change.	OV
		5	Cuz you da bomb.		OV
		6	Mmmm. Hah.		C
94	SAM	1	Ouch.		S
		2	That was <i>awesome!</i>	Sarcasm? Lots of giggling.	S
		3	Did you make that one up?		S
95	ROGER	1	No, my sister gave it to me.	Laughing	S
		2	She's like, here's a bunch of <b>pick-up lines</b> ( ).		S



96	TONY	1	[So you did this with your sister too?		S
97	TRIPP	1	( ) <b>pick-up lines</b> on them.		S

CODING: C (cooperative collaboration), OV (using the voice of an “other”), D (dominant dissing), R (resisting, complaining), S (sparring, competitive collaboration)

Roger sets the activity back on track in turn 84 asking his peers for more lines. In the next few turns, Tony is trying to get recognized. However, he first complains about his lines having “all” been “*ex-ed out*” in turn 86 which I coded R. Tony is frustrated because even though Roger is asking for more lines, he and Sam did not validate any of Tony’s previous lines. Interestingly, Roger utters a conciliatory question and offers him the floor in turn 87: “*Well, do you have any more?*” although the term “*well*” sounds a bit condescending, Tony does contribute a new line, in fractions, in turns 88, 89, and 92: “*You seem like a very special girl.*” I coded Roger’s and Tony’s turns 87 and 88 C because they are seemingly working together.

However, in turns 90 and 91 coded D, Sam and Roger both reject Tony’s first utterances of the new line with one word: “*What?*” which is uttered in the most dismissive pitch and when Tony repeats this line in full in turn 92, Roger ignores it completely as he exclaims: “*Yeah, I got another one.*” I coded this turn D again because, even though Roger prompted Tony for a contribution in turn 87, Roger dismisses Tony’s contribution to move on to his own line. It is unclear what informs Roger and Sam’s criteria for “valid” lines but it is quite possible that they deem this line too straightforward compared to the graphic and sexual content of most other lines contributed during this activity, just simply not mocking the activity.

Regardless, there is no time for Tony to react or protest, as Roger announces and utters his new line, in turn 93 which gets Sam's immediate attention (turn 94), as well as Tony's (turn 96) – even though his own line just got rejected yet again - And Tripp's (turn 97). The line in question is uttered in turn 93/4 and 5. And is designed from their socio-cultural environment: "*Is yo dad a terrorist 'cause you're da bomb*" and, therefore, I coded it OV.

However, Roger pronounces the line with a somewhat quizzical intonation and the subsequent exchange is coded S because each participant, including Roger, speaks back and forth as if jousting, and connects in mocking the line and even the activity. Roger in turn 93/6 uses interjections "*Mmm. Hah*" as if to express self-congratulations. Sam in turns 94 follows up with another interjection to mock him: "*Ouch,*" and adds a sarcastic comment: "*That was awesome, did you make that one up?*"

In his response to Sam in turn 95 where he claims that he received this line from his sister, Roger is openly mocking the activity all together using the expression "*Here is a bunch of pick-up lines.*" Roger is emphasizing the fact that the lines are borrowed from someone else or are someone else's words in the last turns of this part of the conversation. Tony's turn 96 and Tripp's turn 97 corroborate Roger's idea and Sam's comment (turn 94).

The four boys are sparring and the tone of their voice (especially Sam and Roger's) is not offensive but playful. By playful, I mean that, for instance, Sam's tone of voice and choice of words here are in no way dominantly dismissive as the ones used in previous sections to dismiss Tony or even Jerry, the teacher.

In addition, I wonder about Roger’s open mocking of the activity in turn 95 and the support he receives from his peers: Why it is so important for Roger, and indeed for this group of boys to mock the activity by strictly reporting/re-crafting lines from their socio-cultural capital rather than creating original lines. Is the activity threatening in a way that one would prefer to mock it rather than to expose oneself? Is the activity nothing but an excuse to perform one’s knowledge of media and popular culture texts? Is resisting completing *any* activity in the way the curriculum prescribes it necessary to the performance of young “hip” masculine discourse? Or is going along with it simply too boring? I will return to these questions in the discussion.

Section 10

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
99	RODRIGO	1	[Ha!! I saw it.		S
		2	I saw the box! I saw the box!		S
100	SAM	1	I saw the box!	Imitating Rodrigo’s voice mockingly.	D
		2	Stop it Jeffrey. My ( ) to it. ( )	The use of the name Jeffrey is unclear but maybe some unpopular popular culture character that Sam is naming Rodrigo after to insult him?	D

101	RODRIGO	1	I knew it was there. ( )	Lots of background chatter.	S
102	SAM	1	[Oh fishing rod.		D
		2	( ) awesome. I've always wanted a (...)	Lots of background laughter and talking.	D
103	RODRIGO	1	( ) for twenty-five dollars. Careful.	Lots of background chatter.	S
104	JERRY-T	1	[Yeah, yeah. Actually.	“	C
105	SAM	1	Twenty-five dollars for a bunch of ( )?	“	D
106	RODRIGO	1	[Yes.		S
107	JERRY-T	1	[Let's think of some strong words ( ).		C
108	SAM	1	[Twenty- five dollars for three tin cans?		D
109	RODRIGO	1	Yes!		S
110	SAM	1	Crap		D
111	JERRY-T	1	This is getting us nowhere.		R
112	RODRIGO	1	Yes, twenty-five dollars for three tin cans.		S
113	JERRY-T	1	[I mean, there are	Lots of background	R

			no ( ).	chatter.	
114	SAM	1	Is that dollars or squizzards?		D
115	JERRY-T	1	But! Do they have ... <b>pick-up lines</b> ?	Trying to get boys back on topic	C
116	SAM	1	Why did you bring a fishing pole to ( )?		D

CODING: C (cooperative collaboration), OV (using the voice of an “other”), D

(dominant dissing), R (resisting, complaining), S (sparring, competitive collaboration)

In the earlier section “context of analysis,” I explained under Rodrigo’s profile that he was one of three students who tended to bring “props” to class on most Sundays. This section of the conversation is informed by the fact that Rodrigo had brought some items with him to class the day this conversation took place. One item was a tin box that may have contained cards (such as magic cards) or more tin cans inside of it (?), and a fishing pole-pen which is a gadget with the shape and look of a small fishing pole that can also write. These two items are mentioned and referred to in this segment of the conversation and lie at the heart of it. It is possible that the box/can had been confiscated by one of the teachers at an earlier time of class because it was distracting and I noted in my field notes (January 13, 2008, p.15) that I had asked Rodrigo to put his “tools” away. An alternate possibility is that it had been taken away and hidden by one of Rodrigo’s peers.

In any case, the conversation had been going on for four minutes and 25 seconds by then, and Rodrigo had remained mainly on the side of it until now. This is his first significant contribution when he exclaims, in turn 99 that he “*Saw the box.*” From this exclamation, an exchange between Rodrigo and Sam ensues. Sam responds instantly to

Rodrigo's interjection by repeating Rodrigo's sentence while mimicking Rodrigo's voice (higher pitch) and intonation in a very deliberate and sarcastic manner. From this mimicking, it is clear that Sam is mocking Rodrigo. Rodrigo responds to each one of Sam's comments or questions with a certain assurance in his voice. In turn 103, he mentions the price of his box is "*twenty five dollars*" proudly, and responds "yes" twice to answer Sam's question in turns 106 and 109. He even advises Sam to be "*Careful*" as if he wanted to "resist" Sam's taunting; indeed, every one of Sam's turns in this section is dismissive of anything Rodrigo says. In turns 102 and 116, Sam refers to Rodrigo's fishing pole. First, he ironically uses the adjective "*(Oh fishing rod) Awesome. I've always wanted a ...*" Then, he simply questions Rodrigo's motives: "*Why did you bring a fishing pole to...?*" In regards to the box, Sam uses and/or repeats demeaning terms to qualify the box in each one of his turns 105, 108, 110 and 114:

4. "*Twenty five dollars for a bunch of ...*"
5. "*Twenty five dollars for three tin cans,*"
6. "*...crap?*"
7. "*Is that dollars or squizzards?*"

Words such as *a bunch of*, *crap*, and especially *squizzards* are ridiculing Rodrigo's priced item.

For this reason, I coded all of Sam's turns in this section D. I coded Rodrigo's turns S because although Sam's discourse is actively working to disrespect Rodrigo, and diminish his standing within the group, Rodrigo continues to soldier on and respond to Sam in an attempt to spar with him. Interestingly, Jerry, the teacher, who contributes five

turns to this part of the conversation, does not interfere with Sam and Rodrigo's interactional sparring and Sam's dominant taunting of Rodrigo.

In turns 107: “*Let's think of some strong words*” and 115” “*But do they have pick-up lines,*” Jerry is attempting – almost desperately as his tone of voice betrays - to redirect the conversation towards completion of the activity and I coded these turns C for collaborating to complete the activity. However, I coded turn 111: “*This is getting us nowhere*” and turn 113 R. I wonder if Jerry by “*this*” is referring indirectly to Rodrigo and Sam's exchange but these words express Jerry's frustration maybe with both Sam's treatment of Rodrigo - although none of Jerry's words specifically address it - and with the fact that students are not on track.

#### Section 11

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
117	TONY	1	They ex-d out all of my <b>pick-up lines</b> .		R
118	JERRY-T	1	They what?		C
119	TONY	1	Ex-d out all of my perfectly reasonable <b>pick-up lines</b> .		R
120	JERRY-T	1	Well, I know, I think you can definitely get to put one in right now,	From this point on, JERRY (teacher) and SAM are constantly overlapping	C
		2	Take Tony's.		C

121	SAM	1	No, I don't like Tony's.		D
122	JERRY-T	1	[Go ahead.		C
		2	You get one.		C
		3	You get one!	Laughter.	C
		4	You don't have to like it. You get one.		C
123	SAM	1	Okay, we'll save it as an extra. Now ( )		D
124	TONY	1	[ ( ) I ask you out ( )		C
125	JERRY-T	1	[Alright. But just make sure it's in there.		C
126	SAM	1	Okay. Let's think of another one.		D
127	TONY	1	But.		R
128	ROGER	1	Name ( ) for Star Wars.		D
129	SAM	1	Oh, oh god. Okay, I got this. I got this.		D

CODING: C (cooperative collaboration), OV (using the voice of an "other"), D

(dominant dissing), R (resisting, complaining), S (sparring, competitive collaboration)

This section is mostly dedicated to Tony claiming, with Jerry's support, for Sam (and, perhaps, Roger) to restore his lines in the group's list. In turns 117 and 119, which I coded R, Tony's repetition of the same terms: "*They ex-ed out all my pick-up lines*" shows his frustration with Sam and Roger. (Although Tony does not name them, it seems



clear that Sam and Roger are whom the pronoun “*They*” refers to). Although, Tony tries to contribute another line in turn 124, his attempt is unsuccessful and gets no one’s attention except Jerry’s, so that his use of the conjunction “*but*” in his last turn 127 expresses more frustration. Meanwhile, Jerry has been insistently taking on Tony’s plight in order to either convince Sam (or Roger, or both) to officially accept Tony’s lines by adding them to the written list, or to support Tony as follows:

- “*Take Tony’s!*”
- “*Go ahead!*”
- “*You don’t have to like it!*”
- “*Alright, But just make sure it’s in there!*”
- “*Well, I know, I think you can definitely get to put one in right now,*” (To Tony)
- “*You get one*” (repeated three times to Tony)

Most of Jerry’s turns (120, 122, and 125) in this section are directed at Sam (and Roger?) and using the imperative or negative mood. I coded all of Jerry’s turns C because he is collaborating with Tony and attempting to “discipline” (although quite mildly) Sam into respecting Tony’s contributions.

However, Sam’s response is consistent with his previous discourse of disrespect and dominance. In turn 121, he uses negative terms and mood “*No, I don’t like Tony’s*” to refuse the teacher’s suggestion and thus to reject the teacher’s authority. Even when Sam, after Jerry’s insistence, seems to be accepting by using the word “*Okay*” – although still with a dismissive tone of voice - in turn 123, he adds: “*We’ll save it as an extra,*” thus putting his own disclaimer on Tony’s line so as to not fully adhere to Jerry’s request. In fact, Sam continues by rapidly moving on; his utterances in turns 126 and 129,

although they allude to contributing more lines, continue, in some way, to be indirectly dismissive of Tony’s contributions and Jerry’s request and excitedly (“*Oh God!*”) place himself back at the center of the conversation with the repetition of the I pronoun

1. “*Okay. Let’s think of another one.*”
2. *Oh, oh God. Okay, I got this. I got this.*

Here the term “Okay” does not signify Sam’s agreement with Jerry or Tony but that he is ignoring them and continuing on and I coded Sam’s turns D. Thus, Jerry’s intervention is unsuccessful in either restoring Tony’s lines, or establishing any authority.

## Section 12

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
34	SAM	1	[Roger, stop	Background.	S
135	JERRY-T	1	The negative responses.		C
136	SAM	1	[Roger, stop giving the tape recorder a blow job.	Laughs.	S
137	ROGER	1	And negative.	Giggling. To Jerry?	S
138	SAM	1	Yeah, I know, the tape recorder is hot on you	“	S
139	JERRY-T	1	We’ll see. We’ll see.	Background	C
140	RODRIGO	1	[Anything that Sam	Background chatter.	S

			says, do, no shout-outs allowed.		
141	TONY	1	My life ( ) to kill.	???	S
142	ROGER	1	Alright, alright.		S
143	JERRY-T	1	How many we got?		C
144	SAM	1	Two.		D (144, 146, 149)
		2	We'll work.		D
145	TONY	1	[No, we got four.		R
146	SAM	1	[One sec, one sec.		D
		2	Now we don't.		D
		3	Give us a sec.		D
		4	Quiet, quiet. We need to ( )		D
147	TONY	1	Make him ( )		R
148	JERRY-T	1	Two plus Tony's.		C
149	SAM	1	That equals two.	A boy laughs.	D
		2	Okay, now.	Laughter.	D
		3	Okay, well okay, "we" count ( ).		D
150	JERRY-T	1	I'm countin' on you.	Lots of background chatter.	R

CODING: C (cooperative collaboration), OV (using the voice of an "other"), D (dominant dissing), R (resisting, complaining), S (sparring, competitive collaboration)

Sam starts this section by addressing Roger directly with turns 134, 136, 138 which use words seemingly engaging in another sparring exchange with Roger: “*Roger stop, stop giving the recorder a blow job*” using the graphic term “*Blow job*,” and even mocking Roger by pretending that “*The tape recorder’s hot on (him).*” Is he redirecting the attention to himself away from Tony’s, and to his desire to spar with Roger?

In the first nine turns of this section (turns 146 to 142), Roger, Tony, Rodrigo, and Jerry all contribute a few words at a time which seem to build up on Sam’s introduction. I coded Jerry’s turns here C because the words he uses are meant to keep the activity going, whereas Roger’s, Tony’s, and Rodrigo’s words in turns 137 and 142, 140, and 141 respectively, are engaging with Sam’s sparring introduction (turns 134, 136, and 138). Rodrigo’s turn 140: “*Anything that Sam says, do, no shout-outs allowed*” is interesting. These words are pronounced with a playful tone of voice but addressed directly to Sam as if to provoke or resist him. Thus, I coded all of these turns S.

The second part of this section (from turn 143 on), however, seems to build up further on the tensions between Tony, Jerry, and Sam observed in the first part (turns 134-142) of the section. Jerry’s question in turn 143: “*How many we got?*” aims at bringing the boys’ focus back onto recording the lines to complete the activity. Yet, it rekindles the same dynamics between Tony and Sam observed in the previous section. Sam is insisting that the number of “official” lines for his group is “*two*” in turn 145, and that “*two plus Tony’s*” (Jerry’s turn 148) still “*That equals two*” in turn 149. Thus, Sam continues denying Tony’s contribution to the activity. In turn 146, he states that “*Now, we don’t (have four lines),*” and uses small words to silence Tony – and possibly Jerry? - Such as “*One sec, one sec,*” “*Give us a sec,*” “*Quiet, quiet, we need to...*” I coded most of

Sam's turns (144, 146, 149) D because Sam is continuously disrespecting both Tony's and Jerry's requests; even when he uses the term "Okay" (three times in turn 149), his tone of voice while saying this word is dismissive, not agreeable.

In spite of Tony's protest in turn 145: "No, we got four" and his appealing to the teacher in turn 147: "Make him," as well as Jerry's trying to reassure Tony, Sam is refusing to collaborate with Tony and to follow the teacher's directions. In fact, he asserts his (and Roger's) own authority when he utters in turn 149/3: "Okay, well, we count," and I coded all of Sam's turns D. I coded Tony's and Jerry's turns in the second half of this section R because the words they use and their tone of voice express increasingly more frustration with Sam's dominant stance. In fact, in turn 150, the phrase "I'm counting on you," is uttered with a nervous laugh that expresses more skepticism than confidence on Jerry's behalf.

### Section 13

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
151	TONY	1	If I told you		C
		2	you had a beautiful body,		C
		3	Would you hold it against me?	He says these three turns twice. The first time very quietly	C
152	SAM	1	I probably would stab you in the eye.	Laugh	D
153	TONY	1	Can you like write	Short pause before	R

			that down... Please?	please	
154	SAM	1	Oh, I thought you were talking about( )	Laughter. Many voices.	D
		2	Oh, here's your hat back.	Laughs.	D
		3	I been sittin' on it for like half an hour.	“	D
		4	So I would never use it again.	“	D
155	RODRIGO	1	We know that.	“	S
156	SAM	1	I have butt cooties.	Tony is making a clown horn sound, and singing louder and louder over voices (background)	D
		2	Uh, you know what sucks?	“	D
157	RODRIGO	1	[Hey, put that down	“	R
158	SAM	1	Farting.		D
159	RODRIGO	1	( ) down.		R
160	SAM	1	( ) farting	He makes a farting sound .Laughs.	D
		2	Oh really? Watch my, watch right there.	<b>TONY is singing over voices</b>	D

CODING: C (cooperative collaboration), OV (using the voice of an “other”), D (dominant dissing), R (resisting, complaining), S (sparring, competitive collaboration)

Immediately, after Jerry's turn 150, Tony moves right on with a new line which he utters first very quietly and then repeats in turn 151: "*If I told you you had a beautiful body, would you hold it against me?*" Here, Tony's offering of a new line shows his persistence towards contributing lines no matter what, even when being ignored, or disdained by his peers. I coded these turns C. What informs Tony's persistence is not completely clear. Is it his willingness to compete with other boys in performing "sexualized line re-crafting," his studiousness to participate to the activity, his perseverance against Sam's dominance, his playfulness?

In any case, Sam's response in turn 152 is pronounced in a quiet decrescendo and deliberately: "*I'd probably stab you in the eye.*" By this, Sam is responding to Tony's line as if it had been addressed to him: Sam, as a somewhat more physically developed, heterosexual boy, with a deeper voice being asked by a same-gender peer, Tony who is slightly shorter than Sam and whose voice has not yet deepened. Therefore, Sam's response using offensive terms ("*Stab you in the eye*") is implying two things:

1. That Tony is asking him a question showing that he is interested in Sam in a sexual way so that Tony is either *gay*, or, *gender-deviant*,
2. That he (Sam) is so ferociously heterosexual and masculine that he would respond violently to such an invitation, therefore that he is not only not *gay* but also strong (*masculine enough*) and willing to commit a violent act against someone who is *gay* or *not masculine enough*.

Of course, this language "imagined" by Sam should not be taken literally. In other words, Sam surely would never commit such act. However, Sam's discursive performance is growing increasingly hetero/gender-normative and even homophobic, and

this time at Tony's expense. I coded this turn D. This is paradoxical because the intended curriculum designed this activity but especially the following activity to include all sexual orientations and gender identities so that as explained in the context of analysis section of this chapter students might be paired with a same gender peer when the time comes to practice the lines developed within their group.

Tony interrupts Sam with a frustrated, even annoyed tone of voice in turn 153 to urge him to "*like write that down ... please?*" The word "*like*" expresses distress and the word "*please*" is pronounced a few seconds after the word "*down*" is uttered, as if Tony was self-moderating his speech to compensate for losing his cool in a way not appropriate for white, middle-class discourse. I coded this turn R.

The remainder of this section, however, shows no evidence that Tony's line has been accepted by Sam. In turn 154/1, Sam evades Tony's request to write down the line (turn 153): "*Oh I thought you were talking about (...)*," and redirects the conversation away from Tony to address Rodrigo in turns 154/2 to 160 in an exchange which will last till the end of this section. Sam introduces a new topic related to Rodrigo's hat and with it more demeaning references to Rodrigo himself and his hat. In turns 154/3 & 4, Sam alludes to returning Rodrigo his hat explaining that he has "*been sitting on it for like half an hour*," and that Rodrigo should "*never use it again*." By this, Sam means that he somehow has "infected" Rodrigo's hat. In turn 156, he clarifies that he infected the hat because he has "*butt cooties*." This expression is a term familiar to elementary schools' jargon; especially elementary school playgrounds (Thorne, 1993), to refer to an imaginary disease that others inflict to stigmatize the victim so as to exclude her/him from peer activities. Except here, Sam is self-qualifying this term. In turns 158 and



160/1, however, this reference evolves to the term “*farting*.” In other words, Sam intimates that he has been intentionally and still is passing gas on Rodrigo’s hat.

There is something provocative and demeaning about Sam’s lexical references towards Rodrigo similar to Sam’s referring to Rodrigo’s tin can as “*a bunch of crap (worth) squizzards*,” earlier in section 10. Rodrigo first laughs as a response to Sam’s sarcasms and even attempts to talk back in turn 155: “*We know that*,” and I coded this turn S. But then, he wants to make him stop in turn 157 and 159: “*Hey, put that down (x2)*” and these words are uttered with an annoyed (maybe upset?) tone of voice which is why I coded these turns R. Rodrigo’s request is met with more provocative words and stance from Sam in turn 160/2: “*Oh really? Watch my, watch me right there!*”

At this point, Sam who is still holding the hat towards his bottom imitates a farting noise ... I coded all of Sam’s turns in this first part of the section D because his discourse is demeaning and trying to both ridicule and humiliate Rodrigo in a dominant way. Interestingly, Tony started making a sound half way between singing and humming around the time when Sam uttered turn 156 (“*I have butt cookies*”). Tony continued making this noise over Sam’s and Rodrigo’s voices until Sam finished uttering turn 160. Could this sound express Tony’s frustration and exasperation with Sam’s dominance, first for ignoring his own (Tony’s) contributions and requests, then by mocking and ridiculing Rodrigo?

Section 14

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
161	JERRY-T	1	Do you guys have a line yet	JERRY speaking over all the other voices	C
		2	That has the remotest chance of being accepted?		C
162	SAM	1	Yes.	Loud.	C
163	ROGER	1	Probably not.		C
164	TONY	1	[If I told you you were beautiful would you		C
165	SAM	1	[Our first one.		D
		2	Let's have sex. It's a good one.	Giggles.	OV
166	JERRY-T	1	The remotest chance.	“	C
167	SAM	1	[Number 2, number 2, number 2	“	D
		2	Is your dad a terrorist, cuz you're da bomb!	“	OV
168	JERRY-T	1	I mean,		C
		2	let's try to come up with something where		C
169	SAM	1	isn't that ( ) [ ( )		C
170	JERRY-T	1	someone might		C
		2	say yes		C
171	TONY	1	Why'd you ( )?		R
172	SAM	1	Yeah ( ) on the high bar		D
		2	and ask a bunch of	Several voices.	C

			girls ( )	Hard to hear.	
		3	Yes, I do.	Speaks in a different voice. Imitating someone.	C
		4	My name is ( ) Homage to the Ninth.	“	C

CODING: C (cooperative collaboration), OV (using the voice of an “other”), D (dominant dissing), R (resisting, complaining), S (sparring, competitive collaboration)

In turn 161, Jerry changes the conversation with a question to redirect the focus back to the activity: “*Do you guys have a line yet, that has the remotest chance of being accepted?*” Jerry’s intonation in turns 161, 166, 168, and 170, and the use of the word “*yet*”, of the superlative in “*remotest chance*”- which he repeats in turn 166 -, of the expression “*I mean*” (turn 168), and of the verb “*might*” (turn 170) do show that he might be losing patience or is even skeptical about the boys’ willingness (or ability?) to complete the activity. Jerry is also introducing the notion that the lines might/should be “*accepted,*” (turn 161), and that “*someone might say yes*” (turn 170). By this, Jerry is referring to the initial purpose of the activity to “*create lines to invite someone you are attracted to or interested in to participate to an activity as a group or to go out on a one on one date.*”

Instead, this activity has been transformed into a discursive mockery and competition whereby most of the lines crafted by the participants are “*pick-up lines*” that have been sexualized. While Jerry, in previous parts of the conversation, has been encouraging these male participants to be sincere and honest—and will keep doing so in the next section-, his tone of voice in these turns (161, 168, and 170) is somewhat

exasperated with a point of cynicism, as if he was now himself mocking the activity. Clearly, the boys' work has hardly been informed by the notion of sincerely engaging another person, or of reciprocity. Jerry's candid use of the words "*being accepted*" may appropriately refer to a realistic concern of young males (or any human being of any age for that matter).

However, this concern has not been literally articulated or visible within the discourse of this group; unless, of course, the co-opting and mocking of the activity were in and of itself their indirect articulation and strategy to avoid expressing and /or addressing such concern? In any case, although Jerry's pitch is slow (almost theatrical) and mocking, his words are engaging the boys to keep up "working" and it still seems as if he is speaking as one of them when he utters the imperative "*Let's*" in turn 168/2: "*Let's try to come up with something.*" I coded all of Jerry's turns in this section C.

Tony, Sam, and Roger all follow up with Jerry's overture although in different ways. While Sam and Roger both answer Jerry's question from turn 161 in opposite ways: Sam responds affirmatively ("*Yes*" in turn 162) and Roger negatively ("*Probably not*" in turn 163), Tony starts repeating the line he had introduced in an earlier part of the conversation (turn 151), and which had been dismissed/mockered by Sam: "*If I told you you were beautiful, would you...*" I coded these three turn C because the boys are collaborating in a certain way.

However, Sam interrupts Tony immediately in turn 165 with words showing that he is not even acknowledging Tony's contribution yet again because he is responding directly to Jerry: "*Our first one...*" and I coded Sam's turn 165 D for this reason. Immediately after, Sam interrupts Jerry this time in turn 167/1: "*Number two, number*

two,” and I also coded this line D. In the rest of this exchange, Sam proceeds to interject the two lines that he and Roger have come up with before. I coded Sam’s turns 167/2 and 169 OV. Here, however, Sam is intertwining his words with Jerry’s words. While he is enunciating the two lines, he continually ignores Tony and Jerry by interrupting them or speaking over their voices (or even Roger’s voice). When Tony, frustrated, protests in turn 171: “*Why’d you (...)?*” which I coded R, Sam ignores him further in turn 172 which I coded D again as he starts uttering a new line idea.

Section 15

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
173	JERRY-T	1	[I can give you a little... tip.	Background chatter.	C
		2	A little sincerity.	Chuckling.	C
174	SAM	1	[Plus, he was saying	It’s unclear who “he” is referring to	?
175	ROGER	1	We are being sincere, man.	Laughter.	C
176	SAM	1	To be completely honest,		C
		2	I really want to do you	Lots of laughter including teacher. Multiple voices.	OV
177	JERRY-T	1	I understand the limits of completely honest.	“	C
178	SAM	1	You might do that with	“	C
179	JERRY-T	1	[But sincere... ( )		C
		2	Still potential there.		C
180	SAM	1	[Uh	Chuckle	?
181	RODRIGO	1	I’ll be honest.		C
		2	I like you.		C
		3	Will you go out with me?		C

182	JERRY-T	1	Hopefully, it works.	Many voices at the same time.	C
183	RODRIGO	1	[Yes!	“	C
184	SAM	1	[Definitely not!	“	D
		2	Definitely not. I will not go out with you.	“	D
185	RODRIGO	1	Right	With a whining intonation	R
186	SAM	1	I just said no everybody.	Chatter and laughing in the background.	D
		2	D’you need help?	Talking to RP	C
187	ROGER	1	No.	Someone is saying something in a high-pitch (chipmunk) voice in the background.	C
		2	That was kinda cute.	Referring to Sam’s turn 184?	C
188	SAM	1	Okay.		C
189	RODRIGO	1	Just do it.	Referring to wanting his line added to the list	?
190	TONY	1	Yeah right.		R

CODING: C (cooperative collaboration), OV (using the voice of an “other”), D

(dominant dissing), R (resisting, complaining), S (sparring, competitive collaboration)

A “cacophony” similar to the one observed in the previous section characterizes this section. Participants speak over each other’s voices, either interrupting or following up on another speaker’s utterances, or introducing a different topic. In turns 173, 177, 179, and 182, Jerry is still developing his advice to the boys to use “*sincerity*” in creating their lines. Jerry’s use of the words “*little*,” (“*a little tip*,” “*a little sincerity*”), in turn 173, of the term “*understand*” in the phrase “*I understand the limits*,” in turn 177, of the adjective “*sincere*” in turn 179, and of the adverb “*hopefully*,” in turn 182, add a note of sympathy to his leading them toward completion. I coded Jerry’s turns C. While Sam’s

turn 174 first ignores Jerry's turn 173 about sincerity, and continues with the topic he was addressing earlier, Roger does respond directly to Jerry repeating the word "*sincere*," and address Jerry with a sympathetic word "*Man*" which seems to reciprocate Jerry's sympathetic note. I coded Roger's turn C. Sam also refers to Jerry's words by using the phrase "*To be completely honest*" in turn 176/1 (coded C), except that the line he creates in 176/2 is once more just as sexualized as any one of his previous lines: "*I really want to do you!*" I coded this turn 176/2 OV because Sam borrowed it from a socio-cultural text. Rodrigo in turn 181 also responds to Jerry's invitation to be sincere and prefaces the line he contributes to the group for the first time by the phrase: "*I'll be honest.*" Indeed, Rodrigo comes up with a very simple and non-sexualized, "*completely sincere*" line: "*I like you. Will you go out with me?*" which I coded C.

While Jerry is still speaking, Sam instantly reacts to Rodrigo's contribution in turn 184 in which he repeats twice the negative adverb "*Definitely not!*" and adds the negative statement "*I will not go out with you,*" and, with turn 186 in which he announces "publicly" that he "*Just said 'no,' everybody!*" Sam's response here is very similar to the situation described in turns 151 and 152 of section 13. In that segment, Sam was responding to Tony.

Here, Sam is responding to Rodrigo's line as if it had been addressed to him: Sam, as a heterosexual/masculine boy, being asked by a same-gender peer, Rodrigo, who is physically less developed and whose voice has not yet fully deepened, to go out with him. Although Sam is using terms that may not sound as offensive to respond to Rodrigo (Turn 184: "*Definitely not*") as he had to Tony (Turn 152: "*Stab you in the eye*"), his discourse implies that Rodrigo is asking Sam out, thus showing sexual interest in Sam so

that Rodrigo is gay. In addition, in turn 185, Sam adds a public announcement to his “rejection” of the invitation uttered by Rodrigo and appropriated by Sam when he states: “*I just said ‘no’ everybody.*” Sam’s words are meant to disrespect Rodrigo, to demean the “other” and elevate himself in a dominant masculine way.

This is another incidence of Sam’s discursive hetero/gender -normativity and even homophobia, and this time at Rodrigo’s expense. I coded this turn D. This is paradoxical because the intended curriculum designed this activity but especially the following activity to include all sexual orientations and gender identities so that, as explained in the context of analysis section of this chapter, students might be paired with a same gender peer when the time comes to practice the lines developed within their group. Rodrigo utters a one word response to Sam’s put down: “*Right*” with a whining tone of voice in turn 185. Tony, who has not been heard since turn 171 in which he was complaining to Sam about something (“*Why’d you?*”) and was coded R, seems to express annoyance again with turn 190: “*Yeah right*” and I coded both Rodrigo’s turn 185, and Tony’s turn 190 R. Interestingly, Jerry, the teacher, remains silent (as he had in the previous instance in turn 152) throughout this exchange; Roger’s utterances in turn 187/2, on the other hand, seems to be approving Sam’s mocking of Rodrigo which Roger qualifies of “*kinda cute.*”

#### Section 16

<b>Turn</b>	<b>Spkr</b>	<b>Utt</b>	<b>Text/Speech</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Codes</b>
191	SAM	1	To, to be honest	Said slowly as he is writing/recording it	C
192	ROGER	1	[I know, I		C



			know		
		2	A physical one.		C
193	SAM	1	I want		C
194	ROGER	1	If you had a parrot,		C
		2	would you have your parrot		C
		3	on this shoulder		C
		4	and then you put your arm		C
		5	around her ( )	Background chatter.	C
195	SAM	1	[I want to park	“	C
196	RODRIGO	1	[Ay	“	C
197	TRIPP	1	And then, and then	“	C
198	SAM	1	[No, no, no	“	D
		2	One sec	“	D
199	TRIPP	1	And then they say, um	“	C
200	SAM	1	[quiet, quiet, quiet	“	D
		2	Okay, hey, quiet, quiet, quiet.	“	D
		3	Yo, yo. Yo! Hey!	Yelling.	D
		4	Shut up.		D
		5	Okay.	Background chatter	D
		6	To be honest,	“	D
		7	I want to park my car	“	OV
		8	in your garage	“	OV
		9	and then go and	hesitating	Explaining
		10	No, I want to park my car	Correcting himself/Smiling	OV
		11	in your garage	“	OV
		12	And then go inside and have sex.	Laughter	Explaining
201	RODRIGO	1	Sam has the tape		C
202	ODILE-T	1	Oh, Sam has the tape.		C
		2	We need that over there.	Background chatter.	C
203	TONY	1	Kids nine!	???	R
204	ODILE-T	1	This is on #2		C
		2	You must've	Background chatter.	C

			touched it.		
		3	You must've pushed the red button.	“	C
205	TONY	1	Good one captain	“	S
206	SAM	1	...Be honest,	“	OV
		2	I want to park my car in your garage	“	OV
		3	And then go inside and have sex.	“	Explaining
		4	That's awesome.	“	D

CODING: C (cooperative collaboration), OV (using the voice of an “other”), D (dominant dissing), R (resisting, complaining), S (sparring, competitive collaboration)

Similarly to sections 14 and 15, there is much overlap in this passage of the conversation with participants all speaking at once and speaking over each other's voices especially from turns 191 to 200. In turn 191, Sam repeats the phrase “*To be honest*” returning to the notion that Jerry introduced which had been uttered by most participants in the previous section to preface a line. Roger and Tripp are working on a “narrative/line” of their own in turns 192 to 199. I coded turns 191 to 200 C because Sam, Roger, and Tripp seem to be constructing text together.

However, the voice which is the most clearly heard in this segment is Sam's. The fact that Sam might have been holding the tape throughout the entire conversation surfaces when Rodrigo utters (to me) in turn 201 that: “*Sam has the tape.*” Indeed from turns 198 to 200, Sam's discourse is actually claiming the exclusivity of the floor by first interjecting small words (similar to the shushing in turn 73, section 8) such as: “*No* (repeated 3 times), *one sec.*, *quiet* (repeated four times), and then just yelling words to successfully interrupt everyone else and force them to listen to him: “*Yo, yo, hey.*” I coded Sam's turns 198 and 200/1-6 D because his onomatopoeic discourse and his loud tone of voice are dominating the conversation and silencing other participants to

monopolize the floor. Starting with turn 195, Sam's motive becomes clear and it appears that he is really working independently on creating a new line: "*I want to park...*" After silencing other participants and gaining their attention, Sam is still struggling to "remember" and utter his new line which comes to fruition in turn 200, first in utterances 7 to 9: "*I want to park my car in your garage and then go and...*" Then in utterance 10, Sam corrects himself and starts over: "No, *I want to park my car in your garage and then go inside and have sex.*" Finally, Sam utters the line a third time in turn 206: "*I want to park my car in your garage and then go inside and have sex,*" which he concludes with words of self-satisfaction: "*That's awesome.*" I coded most utterances of this line OV because Sam is recalling this sexualized graphic phrase referring to sexual intercourse from another socio-cultural text, possibly a joke or lines from a film or TV-show.

However, what is most interesting about this latest line is that his retelling is slightly "off." By this, I mean that Sam recollected the phrase "*I want to park my car in your garage*" which is a metaphor for vaginal-penile intercourse from some cultural text and to this metaphor he added the explanation for the metaphor: "*And then go inside and have sex,*" which is why I noted "Explaining" as a code next to these instances. Although he is contributing a new line, Sam is silencing other speakers in order to proclaim it multiple times and getting the floor to himself. Sam has been laboring for the past several minutes first towards obtaining silence from his peers and towards re-crafting this "*awesome*" line so that he can articulate it into the tape which he has been holding. The line is uttered three times with a content intonation by Sam who even finishes with a compliment to himself: "*That's awesome*" in turn 206/4. With these words, Sam's performance is one of self-confidence and self-satisfaction. Sam's re-crafting of this

“*awesome*” line potentially positions him as a dominant, cool, and, most importantly, knowledgeable speaker of sexual metaphors.

Yet, Sam had to say the line over a few times since turn 195 and hesitated as he was demanding silence from his peers, maybe struggling to remember “the way the joke goes,” and to “get it right. Still, his retelling of the line is redundant. This leads to questioning whether Sam did or did not understand the metaphor. Sam’s insistence on his peers being silent, his hesitation, and his repetition of the line with its redundant addendum definitely express confusion on Sam’s part. Importantly, while most adult listeners would easily identify the redundancy, none of the participants comment on Sam’s last and “*awesome*” re-crafted line’s redundancy.

As the conversation is coming to an end and as this group of boys has been competing for the past eight minutes to create sexualized and graphic pick-up lines in order to simultaneously mock and complete the activity at hand, the redundancy in Sam’s line goes unnoticed by all. Meanwhile, Tony’s turn 203 shows that he has been keeping his own count of the lines contributed by his peers (“*nine*”). He expresses his frustration with the actual number of lines that were created by the group “*Kids nine*” as opposed to the number of lines that were actually recorded and “validated” by Sam and/or Roger (two). I coded this turn R. He probably transforms this frustration into mocking Sam when he utters in turn 205: “*Good one, captain*” because Sam gets caught for having made a wrong move with the recorder and I coded this turn S. Is Tony “not buying Sam’s behavior” and becoming increasingly frustrated with Sam’s dominance?

Section 17

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
207	TONY	1	Will you please write my line down	“	R
208	ODILE-T	1	Write down every line.	In the background.	C
209			( )		
210	SAM	1	Hey Roger, where’s that other one you had in your coat?		C
211	ROGER	1	That one?		C
		2	I didn’t ( ) in my coat.	Lots of background chatter.	C
212	ODILE-T	1	[Are you ready?	In the background.	C
213	TONY	1	No! I need to write them all down.		R
214	JERRY-T	1	My guess is		C
		2	They’re a lot readier.	Chuckles	C
215	ODILE-T	1	Well, let them ( )		C
216	JERRY-T	1	[I know I’m going on a limb here		C
217	ODILE-T	1	Alright, when you’re ready	Lots of background chatter.	C
218	JERRY-T	1	[Alright, back in the block.		C
219	ODILE-T	1	[we can stop the tape		C
220	TONY	1	And we’re going to		C

CODING: C (cooperative collaboration), OV (using the voice of an “other”), D

(dominant dissing), R (resisting, complaining), S (sparring, competitive collaboration)

This is the last segment of conversation. After turn 220, the two groups of students (girls and boys) will be reconvening as a class in order to proceed to the

following activity named “The Dating Game,” in which students are randomly paired and asked to practice invitation and refusal or acceptance using their newly crafted lines.

Tony’s frustration returns in turn 207 coded R in which he insists that Sam “*write my line down*,” and in turn 215 in which he vows to “*write them all down*” himself as a response to my question in turn 212: “*Are you ready?*” While I supported Tony’s request from turn 207 to “*write down every line*,” although I was unaware at the time of Tony’s tribulations and frustration with Sam, Sam completely ignores Tony’s request uttered in turn 207 and engages in small talk with Roger instead in turn 210 which I coded C. Jerry expresses some wishful thinking in turn 214: “*My guess is they’re a lot readier*” although the expression: “*My guess*” does not exactly convey self-assurance and although his next turn 216 expresses uncertainty: “*I know I’m going on a limb here.*” I coded all turns in this last section C except for Sam’s turn 210, and Tony’s turns 207 and 213 because the activity is coming to an end and most participants’ utterances especially teachers’ aim at regrouping students and proceeding to the next sequence, such as, for instance Jerry’s turn 218: “*Alright, back in the block*,” or my turn 217: “*Alright, when you’re ready*,” whereby the term “*alright*” is a marker for transitioning.

In the following section, I examine participants’ contributions quantitatively.

### **Overview of participants’ contribution.**

The conversation analyzed in this section lasted almost ten minutes and included a total of two hundred and twenty turns. Because of the length of the conversation and the number of participants, I continue the analysis with a table displaying the contribution of each major participant. This contribution is counted in terms of turns and utterances, initiations, and interruptions. According to Bakhtin (in Morris, 1994), “An utterance is

any unit of language from a single word to an entire text” (p. 251). As each participant takes a turn constructing the conversation, their choice of words and the themes they encompass produce essential components of the organizational structure of their speech.

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Total turns</i>	<i>Approx. % of all turns</i>	<i>Total utterances</i>	<i>Approx. of all utter.</i>	<i>Ratio utter. / turn</i>	<i>Topic Initiation</i>	<i>Interruption of another participant</i>
<i>Sam</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>37%</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>44%</i>	<i>1.69</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Tony</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>18%</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>1.28</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Roger</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>16.5%</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>1.33</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Jerry (teacher)</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>1.19</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Rodrigo</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Tripp</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>3.5%</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>1.29</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>199</i>		<i>278</i>				

**Table 6.3: Overview of conversation**

At first glance, Table 6.3 presents Sam as the dominant speaker with the most turns (seventy two), and utterances (one hundred and twenty three) overall representing 37% of the total turns and 44% of the utterances. Tony was in second position with an overall contribution of almost 18% of the total turns and 17% of the utterances. He was followed closely by Roger with 16.5% of the total turns, and Jerry, the teacher, with 16% of the total turns. Rodrigo’s portion was minor (only 9%), although larger than Tripp’s (3.5%). The rest of the conversation was occupied by minor players such as me (I am heard giving directions several times), and Connor (who was not heard after his one and

only line) and makes up the remaining twenty three turns (there were 222 turns in the whole conversation).

As far as initiating topics, Tony, Roger, and Sam were essentially tied and account for 80% of the total. Tony and Roger had eleven initiations each, Sam had ten initiations. It appears as if they all initiated topics rather evenly. However, in terms of interruptions, Sam and Tony outnumbered other participants by a very large number. From these observations, one might infer that the floor was dominated by Sam and Tony.

Another important element which impacts the structure of participants' speech is the ability for each of them to initiate a topic of conversation and the likelihood that a particular topic is followed up or not in the subsequent conversation. The word initiation refers to the content of each speaker's discourse. By "initiation," I mean initiating a topic: whenever a speaker introduces a new theme or idea into the speech interaction, they are initiating a topic. For instance, in turns 22 to 32, Sam was introducing lines (for instance: "*Let's get it on*" in turn 27), and Jerry, Tripp, and Roger himself were both discussing getting a pencil for Roger, and/or commenting on Sam's lines. Another example of initiation was when, in turn 33, Roger said: "*You know, Sam, may I say something? You is like a kiddie pool. Shallow.*" In doing so, Roger was changing the course of the conversation. Although he was responding to Sam's lines, he was critiquing them. By addressing Sam in this way, he initiated a topic: critiquing Sam's choice of lines by calling Sam shallow. This initiation redirected the conversation because Sam responded to Roger and they exchanged with each other for the upcoming seven lines.



A third element which impacts the analysis is the frequency of interruptions between participants. The level of interruption is an important indicator during any speech event: Are participants interrupting each other and if yes, who is interrupting whom and how often? A count of turns, utterances, initiations, and interruptions is displayed in Table 6.3. Importantly, the response to any interruption, i.e. whether the interruption is ignored by the rest of the group or followed up by one or more members of the group, informs the analysis. The example of topic initiation used above, Roger’s turn 33, happened to be an interruption as well as an initiation. As I explained above, this interruption was followed up by Sam and the two boys, Roger and Sam, exchanged for another seven turns about the topic Roger interrupted to introduce. This interruption (and initiation) qualifies as one that is being followed up or entertained. On the other hand, in turn 164, Tony interrupted Roger to repeat a line he had mentioned before because he wanted Roger and Sam to accept it: *“If I told you you were beautiful would you...”*

However, Tony’s turn was not acknowledged as Sam interrupted him with turn 165: *“Our first one”* in which he is responding to Jerry not to Tony. Tony’s turn 164 is an example of an interruption which is not followed up or entertained. I added a table (Table 6.4) displaying specifically the interruption frequency and the response to these interruptions for the two speakers with most turns: Sam and Tony.

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Total Interruptions of others</i>	<i>Interruptions ignored by others</i>	<i>Interruptions entertained <u>only</u> to be dismissed</i>	<i>Interruptions entertained by others</i>
<i>Sam</i>	18	10	0	8
<i>Tony</i>	17	9	6	2

**Table 6.4: Detailed interruptions**

Sam and Tony interrupted with comparable frequency, and a comparable number of their interruptions remained ignored. However, eight instances out of sixteen of Sam's interruptions were followed up by one or more participants. Tony himself showed much attention to Sam. Many times, Sam's interruptions were entertained by Roger or by Jerry. This positioned Roger as an important partner to Sam. On the other hand, although Tony interrupted almost as many times as Sam, his interruptions were not acknowledged except twice (out of seventeen interruptions) as opposed to Sam.

The detailed analysis will show that, although Tony contributed many "lines" to the activity, a number of his turns focused on having these lines accepted or validated (written down on the group's list), sometimes with the teacher's help (Jerry), by Sam and Roger. Unfortunately, in spite of his insistence, Tony was not successful at having his lines recorded "officially" on the group's list. Ultimately, Tony did not give up; in his last but one (#215), as the activity was coming to an end and the group of boys was being asked whether they were ready, he exclaimed: "*No, I need to write them all down!*" In addition, several of Tony's turns were dedicated to expressing frustration precisely because his lines were not being validated, in spite of, at times, the teacher's intervention.

The fact that most of Tony's interruptions were not followed up, in addition to, as shown in Tables 6.3 and 6.4, the fact that Sam spoke the most turns (37% of total) and utterances (44% of total) throughout, this conversation tends to position Sam as the dominant speaker in this conversation. Yet, the timing of this development is of interest. Many of Sam's interruptions took place in the first half of the conversation between turns 23 and 73. He stopped interrupting between turns 74 and turn 174. Most of the interruptions that took place between turns 23 and 73 happened to be entertained by the

group. However, in the second part of the conversation (after turn 174), out of Sam's ten interruptions, six were ignored. Thus, towards the end of the conversation, Sam seemed to be losing the floor to Roger and Tony.

These two tables allow the following preliminary observations about this conversation:

- Sam was the dominant speaker, although his dominance faded towards the end of the conversation,
- Tony was spending a large amount of time trying to assert his position or resisting Sam's dominance with little success,
- Roger and Jerry were both important participants,
- Roger seemed to be both supporting and resisting Sam's dominance in some way,
- Rodrigo's contribution seemed limited in terms of turns, utterances, interruptions and initiations.

In this section, I have referred multiple times to participants' interactions and discourse in relation to the assigned activity which consists in *brainstorming lines or offers* and *recording* them on a sheet of paper. In the next section, I continue the analysis by examining how the group of boys renamed this activity and how the renaming was a reframing that affected the process and the nature of the activity away from the intended curriculum.

### **Materials.**

#### ***"Lines" as script.***

Although the activity required each group to, among other thing, select a recorder for the lines and the responses to lines, this step was never literally addressed by the

group of boys. (In fact, this group never created responses for the lines they came up with either – “Yes, No, Maybe So,” as articulated in the activity’s name- they only completed part one of the activity which consisted in brainstorming lines). Throughout the conversation, the only material in the boys’ possession was a piece of paper and a pencil which were meant to write the lines they were creating. It is unclear who was holding a sheet of paper at any particular time, and who was or not holding a pencil although it seems throughout the conversation that Roger, and Sam were, at times, both holding a sheet of paper, and that Sam, Roger, and Tony may all have been holding a pencil. Tony referred twice (turns 117 and 119) to the fact that they (Sam and Roger) “*Ex-d out all of mine,*” and questioned several times whether they were “*Writing them down.*” Thus, he was able to see the content of the sheet and may have even gotten a hold of it by the end of the conversation when he stated: “*Now I need to write them all down*” (turn 215). At the end of the conversation, it became clear that Sam had been holding the recorder (provided by me) for the group which may explain why his voice was heard clearly throughout the conversation as opposed to other participants, at times.

Another important observation about the conversation is the fact that, throughout their talk, the boys kept referring to the “lines” they were creating in such a way that they were giving the impression to be literally reading or extracting them from some material in their possession in the classroom. For instance, Roger in turn 58 says: “*Wait, here’s a good one.*” The word “*here*” is misleading because, as listener, we may think that he was reading from a script of sorts whereas the only paper material in use was the sheet of paper they were listing their lines on.

The content of the “lines” in question which I listed in the following section, seems clearly all imported from the boys’ socio-cultural and media environment (television, jokes, films). In fact, Sam admitted this much when he stated in turn 62: “No...I hate that commercial.” Yet, the participants did not have any material support in their possession. It is almost as if an assimilation of the lines as “materials” took place. The sources and the lines had all been memorized and were being recalled for the purpose of this activity. In doing so, the boys were performing their knowledge of “lines” borrowed from their socio-cultural media environment as well as displaying their skills in introducing, reporting, and using them –appropriately/accurately or not. In order to demonstrate this point, I have listed in the table below (Table 6.5) all of the instances that refer to “lines” as “materials or re-crafted imports from an “other voice”:

<i>Turn</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Text/Speech</i>
7	Roger	<i>Pick-up lines for guys</i>
17/2	Jerry	<i>What’s our first line?</i>
21/1	Roger	<i>We’ll throw <b>it</b> out there</i>
22	Sam	<i>Pick-up line. Oh, here’s a good one</i>
42	Roger	<i>I got <b>another one</b> (x2)</i>
93 (1&2)		<i>“ “ “ (x2)</i>
43	Tony	<i>You guys writing <b>it</b> down?</i>
46	Tony	<i>I’m writing <b>that one</b> down</i>
47	Sam	<i>Hey I’m not gonna write <b>that</b></i>
50	Tripp	<i>There’s <b>this really funny one</b></i>
55	Sam	<i>I’m not gonna write <b>that</b> down</i>

56	Tony	That was <i>mine</i>
57	Roger	Wait, <i>here's a good one</i>
62	Sam	No, I'm so, I hate <i>that</i> commercial (here the reference to a commercial makes the borrowing evident)
67	Sam	I love <i>that one</i>
84	Roger	Alright. Do we <i>have any more?</i>
85	Tony	Ex-d out <i>all of mine</i>
87	Roger	Well, do you have <i>any more?</i>
88	Tony	<i>I have more. I do have more</i>
94	Sam	Did you make <i>that one</i> up?
95	Roger	No, my sister gave <i>it</i> to me  She's like: "here is a bunch of <i>pick-up lines</i> "
97	Tripp	... <i>Pick-up</i> lines on them
115	Jerry	But do they have <i>pick-up lines?</i>
117	Tony	They ex-d out all of my <i>pick-up</i> lines
119		Ex-d out all of my perfectly reasonable <i>pick-up</i> lines
120	Jerry	I think you can definitely get to put <i>one</i> in right now
121	Sam	No, I don't like Tony's
123	Jerry	You <i>get one</i> (x3)  You don't have to like <i>it</i>
123	Sam	Okay, we'll save <i>it</i> as an extra
125	Jerry	But just make sure <i>it's</i> in there
126	Sam	Okay. Let's think of <i>another one</i>

129	Sam	<i>Oh, oh God. Okay, I got <b>this</b>, I got <b>this</b></i>
143	Jerry	<i>How <b>many</b> we got?</i>
145	Tony	<i>No, we got <b>four</b></i>
148	Jerry	<i><b>Two</b> plus Tony's</i>
149	Sam	<i>That equals <b>two</b></i>
153	Tony	<i>Can you write <b>that</b> down, please?</i>
161	Jerry	<i>Do you guys have <b>a line</b> yet that has the remotest chance of being accepted?</i>
165	Sam	<i>Our <b>first one</b> ... It's a <b>good one</b></i>
207	Tony	<i>Will you please write <b>my line</b> down?</i>
208	Odile	<i>Write down <b>every line</b></i>
210	Sam	<i>Hey Linc., where's <b>that other one</b> you had in your coat?</i>
213	Tony	<i>No I need to write <b>them</b> all down</i>

**Table 6.5: Reference to lines as script**

This table demonstrates the frequent usage of the word “*lines*” (or “*pick-up lines*”) or words referring to said “*lines*” by any participant. It emphasizes how the entire activity focused on the creation of lines which was only one item required for the curriculum activity. It illustrates how these “*lines*” did not just originate from the participants’ imagination but were borrowed from socio-cultural texts as material either indirectly (i.e., turns 50 or 57) or overtly (i.e., turns 62 or 95). It also shows both collaboration and tension within the group of boys and the teacher in order to contribute lines and for these lines to be validated, or recorded.

### *Lines as sexualized “Pick-up” lines.*

While this list shows, among other, that an activity was being completed and revolved around constructing “lines,” Roger, as shown in Table 6.5 in turn 7, introduced a different title for the activity: “*Pick-up lines for guys.*” While the activity had been explained and described to students as “*brainstorming lines to invite someone,*” the idea of creating lines to “*pick up*” someone was introduced by Roger. With this, the activity was presented under a different light from what the curriculum had intended.

Importantly, Roger’s “reframing” of the lines described by this activity as “*pick-up lines*” was tacitly adopted by the entire group including the male teacher: the term “*pick-up lines*” was used seven times throughout the conversation by any participant to refer to the lines the boys were designing or arguing about as part of this activity. I have underlined this term in the above table (table 6.5) to emphasize the repetition of the term.

Roger’s reframing of the activity and the fact that the whole group endorsed the activity as the creation of “*pick-up lines*” as opposed to the “*brainstorming lines of offers or invitations*” changed the nature of the activity from one in which students were asked to think reasonably and seriously about being interested in or attracted to another person and to imagine ways of talking this person into going out or spending time together as a group or as a couple into a mockery. In this process, the activity became an exercise in which the boys competed and collaborated to come up with as many lines as possible borrowed from jokes, commercials, movie scenes, and song lyrics, that “*guys*” might use to “*pick up* (girls).” These lines were not a production from the boys’ imagination as much as a reproduction from memory of socio-cultural messages they heard somewhere else, or “Words that are half someone else’s” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293). Most importantly,



the lexical content of these re-crafted lines was sexualized and, at times, trivial. In order to visualize this content globally, I have listed each re-crafted line contributed by students throughout the conversation in Table 6.6 below.

#	Turn	Speaker	Text/Speech
1	18/1, 2,3	Tony	<i>My name is Mr. (...), there's only one thing going through my mind: Can we <u>do it</u>?</i>
2	22/2	Sam	<i>You wanna <u>have sex</u> some time</i>
3	25	Sam	<i>Hey, uh, I think <u>you're hot</u></i>
4	27	Sam	<i>Let's <u>get it on</u> (Marvin Gaye?)</i>
5	50/2	Tripp	<i>That you plus me minus your pants equals (...)</i>
6 &	51/1,2/ 53/1, 2, 3, 4	Tony	<i>(Want to do some addition, want to do some math: Take off, out of bed, without your clothes, and multiply</i>
7	58	Tony	<i>Do you wash your clothes with Windex 'cause I see myself <u>inside of you</u></i>
8	61	Roger	<i>Did you hear when you fell from heaven..?</i>
9	64	Tripp	<i>Did it hurt when you fell from heaven and got <u>impaled</u> (...) on the (...)</i>
10	65	Tony	<i>Next time you fall from heaven why don't you try to <u>land on me</u>?</i>
11	66	Roger	<i>Did it hurt when you fell from heaven and got <u>impaled on my dick</u>?</i>

12	92	Tony	<i>You seem like a very special girl</i>
13	93/4, 5	Roger	<i>Is yo' dad a terrorist 'cuz you da bomb</i>
14 &	151 164	Tony	<i>If I told you had a <u>beautiful body</u>, would you hold it <u>against me</u>?  (repeated)</i>
15	165/2	Sam	<i>Let's <u>have sex</u></i>
16	176	Sam	<i>To be completely honest, I really want to <u>do you</u></i>
17	181/1, 2, 3	Rodrigo	<i>I'll be honest, I like you, will you go out with me?</i>
18	191,193 200/7-12 206/1, 2, 3	Sam	<i>To be honest, I want  <u>To be honest, I want to park my car in your garage</u>  and then go inside and <u>have sex</u>   (repeated)</i>

**Table 6.6: Overview of content of re-crafted lines**

In this collection of re-crafted lines, Sam and Tony contribute the same number of lines (six each), more than Roger (3), Tripp (2), and Rodrigo (1). Although most lines by Tony and Sam refer to sexual behavior or intercourse, Sam's expressions are more graphic than Tony's. With this lexical demonstration, Sam is performing his knowledge of sexually graphic terminology and setting himself somewhat apart from the rest of the group although each participant's discourse seems to be striving for contributing sexually

graphic representations. Interestingly, only two turns (# 12 and 17 which are bolded in the table) stand out as none-sexualized lines. Sixteen out of eighteen lines are sexualized. I will address in the discussion how it is not coincidental that the only two lines which are milder are uttered respectively by Tony and Rodrigo and are both put down by Sam.

The detailed analysis, the overview of participants' contribution, and the description of materials provided several findings which I now address in the discussion.

### **Discussion**

The analysis led me to four important findings:

1. Rather than completing the initial activity, participants reframed it into a mockery,
2. This process produced moments of connection, confusion, contradiction and complicity between participants (students with students, and students with teacher).
3. Participants self-constructed sexualized/heteronormative subject positions using an "other" voice -someone else's words-.
4. This process produced dynamics of power and dominance between participants (students with students, and students with teacher) that promoted the hetero/gender-normative status quo.

**Rather than engaging in the initial activity, participants reframed it into a mockery.**

While the curriculum prescribed dividing the class into small same-gender groups, I explained earlier that both groups of boys and girls each remained as a whole. In the group of boys, the fact that Tony had insisted about being assigned to smaller groups before the beginning of the activity is especially interesting. These boys had known each other for several years, and Tony had a sense of who he might want to be working with or not, and perhaps even of the fact that Sam and Roger might end up

dominating the activity. Tony was the only one who voiced a reticence to remaining in one large group and the fact that his wish was not “heard” right from the start is consistent with the way his contribution was ignored or dismissed as the conversation analyzed here unfolded. It is unclear why the teachers present (Jerry and I) did not randomly assign them into small groups of two and three boys although, as a teacher-researcher participant, I am aware that I was, at times, challenged by this type of decision-making during the research study. For whatever reason, the small groupings did not happen and this grouping certainly impacted “the range of ways of talking” (Frazer & Cameron, 1989, p. 33) at play in this conversation. Also, it might have had an effect on the amount of work accomplished and the fact that only one item (*1. Brainstorm lines*) was addressed from the initial curriculum activity instead of three (*1. Brainstorm lines, 2. Create response to lines, 3. Select a recorder*).

In any case, the activity took a decisive turn at the very beginning of the conversation when Roger in turn 7 reframed it into creating “*Pick-up lines for guys.*” Students started jousting and competing in recalling narratives from their socio-cultural memory to list as their own lines as Table 6.5 which shows the number of references to “lines as materials” demonstrates. Frazer and Cameron (1989) explain that: “People’s accounts, to each other and to themselves, are a continuous procedure of glossing, by which the social world becomes a place, and a series of happenings, which make sense and have meaning. This meaning itself is, of course, constantly negotiated and constructed; as is the significance and reference of utterances” (p. 29).

In this “place” (our classroom) and due to a “series of happenings” (history of these boys in this and past years, formal description of activity, failure to “resize” the

group), Roger negotiated the meaning of this description while the activity had been described in details by teachers using specific language. The entire group followed his lead and constructed a different meaning for this activity. No matter how many times (10) the words honesty, sincerity, honest, or sincere are uttered by students or teacher during this conversation, creating authentic or thoughtful lines from scratch as directed was not what this did.

As I explained in the context section of this chapter, several girls had alluded to the difficulties for boys to invite girls, to the pressure boys feel of being rejected, and to the fact that these rejections were much more consequential for boys than they are for girls (Field notes, January 13, p. 16). Undoubtedly, the issue of dating and asking a person out was and had been on the boys' minds and they may have abundantly been reminded of it by the news media, popular culture and public discourse, social networks, their peers, and even their parents and family but taking this issue seriously in this specific setting appeared impossible or threatening. With their comments, the girls introduced the notion that boys are supposed to be asking or inviting and that it might even be inappropriate for girls to ask. Goffman (1977) explains that "Routinely, courtship will mean that a male who was on distant terms comes to be on closer ones, which means that the male's assessing act – his ogling – constitutes the first move in the courtship process" (p. 309). Although dating practices may have diversified widely since, Goffman's rendition may not be as old-fashioned as one might think (Tolman & Higgins, 1996). Indeed, during this very class, Jerry, the male teacher, although he was playing the devil's advocate, had commented that "*Boys might get the wrong idea if a girl asks a boy out*" (Field notes, November, p. 18). Interestingly, Sam had instantly responded to the

girls' earlier comment that he "*Had never had a rejection because he was always mean to girls in grade school and now they all wanted him.*" In this way, he was accepting the premise while dismissing its effect on him specifically, thus making it a non-issue for him.

Later on, Tony alluded to the girls' comment when he uttered the question "*how many girls have denied you this month?*" in turn 13. The term "*denied*" is of interest as it constructs the action of boys asking as expected and the refusal of girls as faulty. Even if Tony may be asking a rhetorical question, he is blaming the girls by using a negative verb ("*denied*"). Both Sam and Tony's remarks are dismissive of the idea that asking out may require skills, or may be an uncomfortable venture.

Edley and Wetherell (1997) explain that the "ways in which men are positioned by a ready-made or historically given set of discourses...limits the construction of self and others" (p. 201). Here, the "cultural history of masculinity" (Edley & Wetherell, 1997) limited the male participants into choosing to address this issue by turning it into derision and reproducing existing socio-cultural discourses about gender and sexuality rather than exposing vulnerability. Roger's insistence upon the fact that his sister gave him a "*bunch of pick-up lines*" in turn 95 is a good example of language that constructs him as someone who is not concerned about the issue of asking people out, so much so that he brings his older sister into the conversation to joke about "listing" pick-up lines. Indeed, during the role-play activity following this conversation, Roger exclaimed (January 2008 field notes, p. 19): "*I would never use these lines*": This is another confirmation that the activity was not taken seriously.

In contrast, although the group of girls was not reassigned in smaller groups either, the process in which they completed the activity was different. I noted in my field notes (January 13, p. 18) that the girls stood together in one corner of the classroom, and that, although only three out of eight girls were actively speaking and one of them was using the door to write, everyone listened, laughed and worked together from what I could observe. The process in the girls' group seemed collaborative in a more traditional way, and their collective contribution during the follow-up activity ("The Dating Game") indicated that their work did not produce similar discursive dynamics to those observed in the boys' group.

**This process produced moments of connection, confusion, and complicity between participants (students with students, and students with teacher).**

*Participants' sparring resulted in joint production of discourse.*

Cameron (1998) explains that "Analyses of men's and women's speech style are commonly organized around a series of global oppositions, e.g. men's talk is 'competitive,' whereas women talk to forge 'intimacy' and 'connection;' men do 'report talk' and women do 'rapport talk.'" Yet, she adds that this conventional opposition is problematic because some women's talk is not only "conventionally cooperative" and some men's talk is not merely "competitive" (p. 55). As discussed in previous sections, two speakers exerted dominance and directed the conversation while two speakers were subordinate and everyone else sort of went with the flow.

However, it is important to attend to the fact that several sections of this conversation consisted in playful sparring between participants associated with joint production of discourse and co-construction of lines. For instance, in turns 61-69, most

speakers in the group were engaged in constructing the same line. They latched, finished each other's sentences and repeated the same lexical items across turns, as well as using small connecting terms such as "*okay, then, yea, like*". This is what Cameron (1998) names a "'Joint production' (where) participants are building on one another's contributions so that ideas are felt to be group property rather than the property of a single speaker" (p. 55). Similarly, in turn 94-97, most of the speakers, except for Jerry, engaged in an exchange with each other around mocking the activity - although not exactly on task!

Finally, in turns 192-199, most speakers except for Sam and Jerry, cooperated on a new line which never came to fruition because Sam successfully silenced everyone to take the floor and utter his own final line starting with turn 200. Therefore, parts of the conversation can be judged as cooperative and as an opportunity for participants to connect with each other and even with Jerry, the teacher, who himself, took several steps to encourage the student-participants to complete the activity, and keep them on task by using phrases such as "*focus, guys!*" paced the conversation with small connecting words such as "*yeah, well, really, go ahead, we'll see (x2)*", and attempted to use inclusive language to act as one of the "guys" such as "*What's our first line?*" or "*How many we got?*"

***A sometimes confused Sam struggled to maintain his dominant position, and constantly sought and secured Roger's complicity.***

Sam's talk in this conversation constructed him as a dominant speaker performing hegemonic masculinity. Yet, in turns 62 and 67, Sam uttered the exact opposite statement ("*I hate that commercial/I love that one*"). However, Frazer and Cameron (1989) note



that it is important to identify “the constraints and norms which affect speakers in social situations, causing them to produce contradictions ...” (p. 28). In other words, as students are co-constructing a new line, thus producing joint discourse, Sam’s speech is affected by this moment of cooperation or connection. In addition, Frazer and Cameron (1989) add that “Uttering two different opinions within seconds or minutes is like the socio-linguistic phenomenon of code-switching (p. 37). Thus, she says “the relation between what a person says and how things really are with them is entirely random” (p. 36). So that this contradiction is not necessarily a sign that Sam’s discursive dominance is lesser as much as that his speech is carried by the dialogical movement. In addition, while Sam resorted to hetero/gender-normative language and policing (turns 152 and 184), he never crossed certain lines. For instance, he was sophisticated enough to be sure to never use the word “fag,” and to exchange the word “*girls*” for the word “*hoes*” in the phrase “Bros before girls” (turn 73). This level of sophistication contributed to construct him as dominant.

However, when comparing interruptions by Sam and Tony in detail, while 8 out of Sam’s 18 interruptions were successful in getting him the floor, I noted earlier that this success faded around the second part of the conversation (near turn 174) because 6 of Sam’s interruptions were ignored. In addition, at some point, Sam needed to resort to small interjections to try to silence his peers. For instance, in turn 73, he used the term “*sh*” for the first time and this trend climaxed in the latter part of the conversation starting with turn 188 where Sam attempted to articulate his last line and used a multitude of silencing terms such as “*No (x3), one sec, okay (x2), hey (x2), quiet (x3), you (x2), shut up.*” At the same time, Sam was struggling to articulate the said line and had to rephrase

it a few times. When he finally did, and qualified his own line as “*awesome*,” the line was redundant which he did not realize and neither did any other participant: “*I want to park my car in your garage*” is a metaphor for a man initiating vaginal-penile intercourse with a woman and therefore the additional piece “*and then go inside and have sex*” was redundant. Thus, Sam, while performing as a sexually knowledgeable, cool adolescent did not understand the line he borrowed from other texts and was confused, although his discourse remained self-confident. This self-confidence, however, relied much on his complicity with Roger with whom he several times engaged with in sparring (turns 33-39, 71-79, and 136-138), whose attention he was constantly seeking, and whose opinion he valued and respected so that Roger’s lines were the only lines Sam ever included in his recording of the collection. Therefore, Sam’s discursive strategies to dominate the conversation were supported by Roger’s own discourse throughout the conversation, even if Roger tended to resist him as well at times.

**Participants constructed sexualized subject positions using an “other” voice - someone else’s words.**

While students throughout the year resisted, at times, stereotypes that construct adolescents as risk-taking, and sexually out of control, the content of the lines re-crafted by this group of male students is highly sexualized as demonstrated in Table 6.6. The first line, for instance, uttered by Tony is emblematic: “*There’s only one thing going through my mind, can we do it*” (turn 18). It is but one example, however, as most of the lines (see Table 6.6) position its speaker as seeking exclusively sexual intercourse, not just spending time together, much less a date or a relationship. Only two lines were not sexualized in the entire collection uttered respectively by Tony and Rodrigo. How ironic

that an activity designed “to encourage an atmosphere which would facilitate honest and intimate discussion of ... sexuality ..., to encourage clarity of expression, listening skills, self-disclosure and critical analysis” (Frazer & Cameron, 1989, p. 35) became a joust based on crafting lines for “picking-up girls.” Pascoe (2007) notes that the idea of “Getting girls” allows “Boys to find common ground in affirming each other’s masculinity” (p. 319).

Choosing graphic phrases seeking sexual intercourse is a mechanism by which the participants became “both the products and the producers of discourse” (Edley, 2001, p. 190). By this I mean that, on one hand, the boys are uttering/producing sexualized lines and, on the other hand, they are producing/constructing their identity as both sexually knowledgeable and sex-obsessed. This is what Edley (2001) refers to as the “discursive construction of subject-position” (p. 209). According to Edley (2001), subject positions can be defined as “identities made relevant by specific ways of talking” (p. 198). As they utter sexualized phrases, the male participants in this conversation reproduce a traditional discourse of masculinity that constructs them as the holders of “raging hormones” whose “hormonal sex drive is uncontrollable” (Whatley, 1991). I have mentioned that the lines consisted of sexualized phrases and expressions that the boys recalled from other texts and these lines were coded OV for “other voice” throughout the analysis.

In fact, one these texts, or voice may have been the voice of several girls throughout the year who questioned: “*Why (are) the boys always ‘talking about sex?’*” One of them, Gina, an outspoken female student in this class, often shared narratives supporting the notion that boys are “naturally” sex-obsessed. For instance, during a discussion about redefining abstinence which took place three months after the

conversation analyzed here, students were brainstorming reasons why one might decide to have sexual intercourse. Gina remarked (Transcript 9, March 9, p. 2): “*Yeah, seriously, like a guy’s like, ‘oh, if you really like me, then, you’re going to pleasure me or whatever!’*” thus reinforcing the notion that sexual intercourse is the only thing boys are interested in and that desire and pleasure are predominantly a masculine concern (Fine, 1988).

Edley (2001) notes that “When people talk about things, they invariably do so in terms already provided for them by history. Much of it is a rehearsal or recital. Indeed there is often no telling how conversations will turn out. What it does mean, however, is that conversations are usually made up of a patchwork of quotations from various interpretative repertoires” (p. 198). Edley (2001) refers to interpretative repertoires as “ways of talking about objects and events in the world” and as “building blocks of conversation, a range of linguistic resources that can be drawn upon and utilized in everyday social interaction” (p. 198). In this conversation, the sexualized discourse embedded in the participants’ collection of lines borrows from the traditional hypersexual masculine interpretative repertoire.

Furthermore, Bakhtin (1981) explains that “There are no neutral words and forms – words and forms that can belong to ‘no one,’ ...All words and forms are populated by intentions ... The word in language is half someone else’s...It exists in other people’s mouths, in other people’s contexts, serving other people’s intentions” (p. 293-294). As social actors, the boys in this conversation borrow language from other texts to construct a hypermasculine identity characterized by seeking and performing an abundance of heterosexual intercourse as represented in their socio-cultural environment. These texts -

popular culture, peers, school, and news media - provide language for them to articulate the representations readily available in the media and reinforced by public and institutional discourses, including most sexuality education programs (Nelson Trudell, 1993; Whatley, 1991). These representations “positions males and females as adversaries in a ‘sexual game’ in which boys endlessly pursue ‘it’ while girls fight to keep from giving ‘it’ away” (Ashcraft, 2001), similar to the script of April and Cordell presented in the previous chapter. In addition, as noted throughout the detailed analysis, the speakers deliver each sexualized line with, at times, an ironic, theatrical, and often mocking intonation. Bakhtin (in Morris, 1994 notes that “It is often ironic and mocking intonation which reveals the presence of double-voiced discourse, the presence of two differently orientated speech acts”, (p. 15-6). Here the boys’ discourse is using both a sexualized voice that constructs a sex-obsessed hypermasculine identity, and a mocking voice to connect with each other as adolescents in this specific setting.

**This process produced dynamics of power and dominance between participants (students with students, and students with teacher) that promote the patriarchal status quo.**

As argued in the detailed analysis, from one of the first turns in the conversation (turn 7), Roger reframed the activity by renaming it “*Pick-up lines for guys.*” This phrase was uttered within seconds and the conversation developed around this theme for the next ten minutes or so. During this speech event which lasted only ten minutes much “happened.” Discourse happens so rapidly in the present that none of the actors in this conversation had any awareness of exactly what was “happening” as is usually the case in this type of conversation or exercise. Edley (2001) notes that: “Gender comes to be

understood as something that is done or ‘accomplished’ in the course of social interaction” (p. 192). In section 5 of the detailed analysis, I noted that a power play began between Tony and Sam. However, the dynamic of power affected each and all participants. Edley (2001) explains that “Establishing one’s identity as a man is a messy and complicated co-production. It is fashioned through social interaction, subject negotiation and (...) inextricably bound up with the exercise of power” (p. 194).

In this conversation, the exercise of power by certain participants over and between others was both present and invisible to the participants. It was not addressed by the teachers. Everyone, students and teachers became co-opted and participated in this exercise. It felt as “natural” as any conversation involving a group of more or less rambunctious boys. This is the characteristic of hegemony. Connell (1997) defines hegemony (a term coined by Gramsci) as “a social ascendancy achieved in a play of social forces that extends beyond contests of brute power into the organization of private life and cultural processes. ... Hegemonic masculinity is always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women” (p. 23). In this conversation, the patriarchal status quo was promoted as Sam performed hegemonic masculinity as a stereotypically masculine and dominant speaker, Roger performed as a “new man,” a term coined by Rutherford (in Edley & Wetherell, 1997, p. 204). He is more ideologically subtle and sophisticated, but just as dominant a speaker as Sam, if not more; Rodrigo and Tony performed as subordinate speakers and other participants, the two teachers, and Tripp, were just “going with it.”

*As a speaker, Sam performed “hegemonic masculinity.”*

As mentioned in the context section of this chapter, Sam had been a student in this classroom for years and his parents were both active members of the congregation. He attended every class, always arrived early (his parents were both involved in church business on Sundays and sang in the choir), and was one of the most outspoken male participants. In general and in this specific conversation, Sam spoke often and used multiple discursive strategies to assert his dominance vis-à-vis peers and teachers.

I view Sam’s discourse, however, not as just determined by the lexicality of his utterances, or his abundant interruptions and initiations but also by his physical stance and appearance. In his examination of language as social and cultural practice, Gee (1999) explains that “Making visible who we are and what we are doing always involves a great deal more than just language” (p. 17). Gee refers to discourse with a little “d” as “language-in-use” or stretches of words and utterances but he explains that Discourse with a capital D or “Big D-discourses are always language plus ‘other stuff’ and that “If you put language, action, interaction, values, beliefs, symbols, objects, tools, places, together in such a way that others recognize you as a particular type of who (identity) engaged in a particular type of what (activity) here and now, then you have pulled off a Discourse” (1999, p. 18). Sam was more robust-looking than most males in this group. His voice was deep; he wore his hair in a stylish over the eye fashion and went to private school. These traits are not linguistic but they were crucial in helping Sam be recognized as a “cool” or knowledgeable participant. They were an integral part of his dominant stance and an important component of his big D-Discourse style.

Of course, in addition to these traits, Sam never shied away throughout the entire year from performing his knowledge of anything and everything related to sexuality, sexual materials and tools, and sexual news of any kind. He would dominate most discussions by making comments and declarations often during general class discussions such as those in the following paragraph.

Early during the year, while discussing sexually transmitted infections, Sam shared about condoms: *“I spend hours at the pharmacy reading the boxes”* (Field notes, October, p. 12), and another time, referring to early condoms made of animal skin: *“What if you’re like in the Woods of Alaska? You’re like “I really want to have sex. You kill an animal and then wrap its intestines and make ends meet. That’s something Native Americans do”* (Field notes, November, p. 20). A month after the conversation analyzed here took place, he exclaimed during class how he had *“learned about labia stretching on this website”* (Field notes, February, p. 7). A month after a discussion about abstinence, he elaborated about abstinence for lesbian couples and proposed: *“What about strap-ons?”* (Field notes, March, p. 13). In the same month, he admitted randomly: *“You watch so much porn, you get sick of it”* (Transcript 9, March 9, p. 8).

A final example took place while students were filling up an individual questionnaire about how they make and have made sexual decisions during which, he asked: *“How do you spell lingerie?”* and then volunteered a fantasy (?): *“I was in Norway and I was too drunk and, um, (...) Norwegian female with lingerie wandering around walked up to me in the street and then we had a crazy threesome”* (Transcript 16, April 13, p. 25).



In addition, to performing knowledge about sexuality, Sam, at times, uttered indirectly misogynistic remarks during class discussions. For instance, in December (one month and a half before the conversation analyzed here), students performed a role-play in which a girl, April is asked by a boy, Cordell to visit him at his house while his parents are away (this role-play activity is at the center of the conversation analyzed in the previous chapter). Afterwards, during the debriefing, one teacher asked what April would gain from accepting Cordell's offer. While one girl explained: "*A child,*" Sam exclaimed: "*You gain child support*" (Field notes, December 2, p. 8).

Later on during the school year, during a discussion about unplanned pregnancy in March (a few weeks after the conversation analyzed here), he said: "*I'm sorry but it seems like the guys get blamed too much for pregnancies*" (Transcript 14, March 30, p. 17). Thus, in both of these examples, which are not isolated cases, Sam's discourse implied that pregnancy is really a woman's responsibility, and, may even consist in a way to trick a man in order to receive child support. His suggesting that women become pregnant in order to malevolently circumvent men is misogynistic, and maybe also be inspired by other texts from his socio-cultural environment.

It is notable that although several male and female students shared much information in this class, and commented often on issues of sexuality, bringing in examples from their own life, or the news media and questions, Sam was the only participant who overtly displayed his "internet" knowledge and admitted to watching pornography, and at the same time, postured as an experienced sexual player. This may be a sign that, perhaps, more questions need to be asked about pornography and, as

Carlson (2011) argues, it “needs to become part of a ‘complicated conversation’ in education” (p. 20).

In the conversation at hand, Sam performed hegemonic masculinity using several discursive strategies such as hailing, interrupting, rejecting, ignoring, shaming, uttering profanity and references to bodily functions, silencing “other” participants and resorting to hetero/gender-normative policing.

First, I argued after overviewing each participant’s contribution that Sam was a dominant speaker in this conversation. Goffman (1977) comments that “The management of talk will itself make available a swarm of events usable as signs. Who is brought or brings himself into the immediate orbit of another; who initiates talk, who is selected as the addressed recipient, who self-selects in talk turn-taking, who establishes and changes topics, whose statements are given attention and weight and so forth” (p. 324). I noted in Tables 6.2 and 6.3 that Sam spoke 37% of total turns and 44% of total utterances which was more than any other speaker. Furthermore, as noted in Table 6.4, Sam interrupted 18 times (more than any other speaker) and 8 out of these interruptions were successful in redirecting the conversation, unlike Tony who interrupted almost as often as Sam but only succeeded in getting the floor twice after interrupting.

In addition, 38 out of Sam’s 73 turns were coded D for dominant dismissal. These dismissals varied from initiating a new topic immediately after another participant has just contributed something, thus openly ignoring their contribution, to refusing another participant’s suggestion or contribution (including the teacher) by using negation (*No, I don’t, I will not, I’m not gonna, We don’t, Definitely not*, all of which Sam used multiple times each), or interjections to question (*Okay, What?, Whatever!*), or silencing

another or other participants (*Shh, quiet, hey, yo, shut up, ay, one sec, give us a sec*). In comparison, only five of Roger's turns were coded D and one turn each for Tripp and Tony, while none for Rodrigo or Jerry.

Secondly, Sam uttered more profanity than any other participant (*Kinda sucks, it sucks, shut up, go to hell, fuck it up, screw everything up, sucks*). Of all participants, only Tripp used profanity once – and made constant references to bodily functions and body parts (*Pee in it, virgin, crap, squizzards, blow job, butt cooties, farting (x2), have sex (x4), get it on, “do” you*) – while Roger pronounced the word “*dick*” once, and Tony used the phrase “*do it*” once, and no other participant made any such reference. In addition, all of the lines contributed by Sam are completely sexualized and rely on such lexical usage as was shown in Table 6.6.

Here, it is interesting to insert some observations from my experience watching and listening to students over the years during the Sexual Language session which takes place every year during the second class-meeting in this program. During this class, students are separated in two same gender groups. They are given a list of words for specific body parts (including but not limited to male and female genitals) and sexual behaviors (i.e. masturbation, cunnilingus) and asked to brainstorm and compete in listing any synonym for the given term whether from scientific, slang or everyday language. In “Naming of Parts: Gender, Culture, and Terms for the Penis among American College Students,” Cameron (1992) reports conducting a similar experiment with two groups of students, one of males and one of females, who worked separately and who collected respectively 144 and 50 synonyms for the term penis. Thus, the group of males found almost three times as many terms. My observation of a similar exercise, although, the two

groups of students were working in the same classroom, and competing against each other which greatly affected the dynamics, has been that, year after year, the group of boys is a lot more vocal, usually takes over the exercise and wins the “competition.”

What I argue is that uttering profanity and referring to body parts and bodily functions is not “just about masculinity.” As Cameron (1998) notes, “It is a performance of masculinity. What is important in gendering talk is the ‘performative gender work’ the talk is doing; its role in constituting people as gendered subjects” and “Men are under pressure to constitute themselves as masculine linguistically by avoiding forms of talk whose primary association is with women/femininity” (pp. 59-60). Thus, my first and second points emphasize Sam’s stereotypically masculine discourse style.

Thirdly, Sam engaged in two instances in hetero/gender normative policing, exposing first Tony in turn 152, and then Rodrigo in turns 184 and 186. Connell (1997) explains that “The most important feature of contemporary hegemonic masculinity is that it is heterosexual.” In these discursive instances, Sam was affirming his heterosexuality and hoping to expose Tony’s when he pretended he would “*Stab you (him) in the eye*” if Tony was to “*hold (his body) against (his: Sam’s)*”, as well as exposing Rodrigo when he declared in front of the entire class that “*Definitely not, I will not go out with you (Rodrigo).*”

However, I used the term hetero/gender-normative because, rather than simply hetero-normative policing, Sam’s discourse style emphasizes gender expression inadequacy on Tony’s and Rodrigo’s behalf. Cameron (1998) explains that the term ‘gay’ is not so much *sexual* deviance as *gender* deviance” (p. 53). Sam’s utterances highlight Rodrigo and Tony’s “failure to measure up to [his] standards of masculinity”

(Cameron, 1998, p. 53). Indeed, Tony, as noted earlier, was not quite as physically developed as Sam and his voice was not deep. As to Rodrigo, he was a short and skinny “homeschooled kid,” who dressed conservative, wore his hair very short, had glasses, talked “smart,” and brought books, tin cans, and a fishing-pole-pen to class.

Sam’s offensive discourse towards Rodrigo in this conversation is not atypical of Sam’s attitude and discourse towards Rodrigo throughout the entire year. While, in this conversation, Sam constantly ignored Tony’s request to “*write his lines down*,” using several indirect strategies, Sam’s ways of talking to Rodrigo seemed to carry another dimension, as, for instance, in turns 99 to 114, where Sam mockingly imitated Rodrigo’s voice and used several insulting phrases (*Crap, squizzards*) to label his fishing-pole-pen, or in turns 156 to 160 where Sam pretended to be passing gas endlessly on Rodrigo’s hat. In fact, a few weeks after this conversation took place, Sam was involved in an incident (Field notes, January, pp. 30-31) in which he defaced Rodrigo’s classroom photo<sup>13</sup>. Sam’s verbal bullying of Rodrigo was repeated in class throughout the school year, and during the overnight trip.

Homophobia and gay-bashing, even they often confuse sexual orientation or gender expression, are fundamental tenants of sexism (Pharr, 1997), and Sam’s discourse using homophobic taunting and resorting to misogynistic statements at times contributed in constructing Sam’s dominant masculine guise.

In addition, at around the same time when Rodrigo’s photo defacing took place, Sam was involved in another incident which I refer to as the “slides” incident or raid (Field notes, January 27, p. 30-33). This incident took place on the evening of the Pasta Supper Fund-Raiser. This fund-raiser takes place each year, in the Parish House where

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<sup>13</sup> For a detailed description of the incident, please refer to Sam’s profile in this chapter on page 199.

the Sunday classroom is located, and the classroom door had been open that evening. Some students accessed the anatomy, lovemaking and masturbation slides which are shown in the classroom, and had been stored on one of the upper shelves in our classroom. The responsibility for this incident was never fully established; it may have involved Roger as well as other students including some girls because none of the students came forward and the incident was not further investigated after the slides were recovered and reorganized. It seems highly likely that Sam had been involved in this transgression of rules.

Thus, in subordinating Tony and especially Rodrigo, by demeaning and ridiculing others, in using multiple discursive strategies, including a misogynistic and homophobic stance, and in transgressing rules whenever possible, Sam performed hegemonic masculinity. His ways of talking to Roger in this conversation, however, were much different as I examine in a subsequent section.

***Roger occupied a dominant position as the “new man.”***

As described by Rutherford (in Edley & Wetherell, 1997), the “new man” refers to a post-modern ideological representation of men in popular culture which contrasts with that of traditional masculinity in that he “represents the ideal partner for the modern, liberated, heterosexual woman” as a “softer, more sensitive and caring individual, who also avoids sexist language, changes nappies, and loves to shop all day for his own clothes” (Edley & Wetherell, 1997, p. 204). While Roger may not have quite matched this description, his ideological discourse style was sophisticated and he never resorted to profanity or any of the stereotypically masculine features utilized in Sam’s discourse to assert dominance. By using sophisticated discursive strategies, and collaborating with

peers and teacher, Roger postured post-modern masculinity. Yet, while supporting Sam's dominance, he assumed a dominant position, possibly more so than Sam himself.

Although Roger's overall contribution to the conversation was smaller than Sam's or Tony's (16.5% of total turns and 16% of total utterances), only five out of Roger's 33 turns were coded D for dominant dismissals whereas 15 are coded C for contributing/collaborating. In addition, Roger's dismissals consisted in either interrupting a peer by initiating a new topic (once) or just initiating a new topic without acknowledging the previous speaker (once), or uttering small interjections such as "*okay, yeah (x2), what?*" with a skeptical, and dismissive intonation. Roger's ways of talking were mostly poised. He consistently acknowledged the previous speaker whether student or teacher using phrases such as "*Sure, yeah, alright (x3), well, I know (x2)*" showing he was paying attention to other speakers' language. In fact, he even used the sympathetic word "*man*" to address Jerry at the same time as demonstrating that he listened to him when he uttered in turn 175: "*We are being sincere, man*" as a response to Jerry's vehement calls for sincerity and honesty. This helped construct Roger as friendly and even humorous.

Roger contributed only two lines to the groups' collection (see Table 6.6) which are coded OV because borrowed from other texts. The first one, although it includes a reference to a body part ("*dick*") is co-constructed with Tony and Tripp and imported from a television commercial. Although it included a reference to the penis and used the word "*impaled*," it did not directly point to sexual intercourse per say. The second one, as Roger proudly conceded was supposedly borrowed from his sister, although this phrase could be borrowed from popular culture as well. Its content alludes to praising the

interlocutor's beauty or physical appearance: "You're da bomb." Although, as Kimmel notes (2013), it is interesting to remark in passing "How the words used to describe women's beauty – bombshell, knockout, stunning, and femme fatale – are words that connote violence and injury to men," both of Roger's lines seemed rather mild and far less graphic than Sam's. Furthermore, Roger never engaged in any demeaning or insulting linguistic exchange with any of the participants, or displayed overt nastiness in any way as Sam had.

However, although Roger's discourse is more collaborative and sophisticated than his peers,' he manages to assume a powerful position in this conversation. First, much like Sam, Roger had been attending this church school for many years and was extremely comfortable in this setting. Both of Roger's parents were actively involved in the congregation and his father was about to become church president the following fall. Roger, much like Sam, was also robust-looking, taller than Sam, thus taller than most male students in the class as well as articulate and outspoken. Roger's big D-discourse (Gee, 1999) helped him be recognized by peers and teachers as a knowledgeable and respectable member of this group. Edley (2001) notes that "Discourse encompasses a whole range of different symbolic activities including styles of dress, patterns of consumption, ways of moving as well as talking" (p. 191). Roger dressed casually but did not miss an opportunity to assert his masculinity via athletic identity (Carlson, 2011, p. 13). For instance, while discussing clothing styles and a specific store in town, a week prior to when this conversation took place, Roger mentioned that he did not know this store because he did "*not go shopping to that kind of stores. I go to City Sports!*" (Field notes, January, p. 4).



Secondly, Roger was, after all, the one speaker who in turn 7 impacted the entire process when he uttered: “*Pick-up lines for guys.*” This line was less than benign and Roger’s leadership was not only followed up by all participants but it reframed the activity into a mockery and a very different exercise from the one intended by the curriculum. Somehow, Roger’s discursive performance was more idealistic than Sam’s yet rather powerful, although he presented himself (Goffman, 1959) very differently from Sam.

Thirdly, although Roger did not initiate it, he participated somewhat in Sam’s use of hetero/gender-normative language or his hetero/gender-normative policing. For instance, after Sam pretended that Rodrigo was asking him out in turns 181-186, and responded negatively thus exposing Rodrigo to ridicule, Roger remarked that “*That was kinda cute*” in turn 187. Was he referring to the way in which Sam had mocked or demeaned Rodrigo and being congratulatory? It is difficult to say for sure. However, even though Roger postures the ideological mindset of a “new man,” he certainly never took a stand against such incidents (Sam and Tony in turn 152, and Sam and Rodrigo in turns 181-186). Roger confirmed his allegiance to Sam when repeating the phrases “*Bros before bros*” and “*no homos.*” Here, by repeating the term “*no homo,*” Roger, although he did not initiate it, adhered to Sam’s hetero/gender-normative discursive policing.

Thus, Roger’s mature and poised talk allowed him to perform in solidarity with Sam without showing vulnerability. In other words, he “played both sides of the fence.” Importantly, he achieved dominance and obtains respect from peers, including Sam, and teachers, without ever subordinating another participant or showing disrespect to the teacher(s). So much so that he implicitly ended up in charge of validating other speakers’

lines, especially Tony's, side by side with Sam, as exemplified by Tony's turn 117 who exclaimed: "*They ex-d out all of my pick-up lines*" whereby the pronoun "*they*" refers most likely to both Sam and Roger.

Certainly, Roger's language, at other times throughout the year, demonstrated some insight about gender performance. For instance, a week prior to when this conversation took place students were assigned a case study to discuss peer pressure. In Roger's group's case study, a boy entered a chat room online while his parents were not home, and started a conversation with a stranger while his male friend was sitting by, and becoming uncomfortable. Lola, a girl in Roger's group (who was his partner in the previous chapter), suggested that: "*He should just tell them 'no' and walk out.*" Roger immediately blurred out: "*You say this because you are a girl!*" (Field notes, January, p. 12).

Here, Roger indirectly was saying that boys "cannot" just walk out or "say no" when encouraged by male peers to transgress rules, or engage in behaviors that they know, or have been instructed, are risky. By alluding to the different standards and expectations from boys compared to girls, Roger was acknowledging the pressure for boys to act dominant and engage in risky behaviors as opposed as to act reasonably and follow rules. Kimmel (2008) in "Michael Kimmel on Gender: Mars, Venus, and Planet Earth, Men and women in a new millennium," defines three codes of masculinity:

1. "Be a big wheel," [be powerful, rich independent]
2. "Be a steady oak," [be cool, impassible, unemotional]
3. "Give'm hell"[take risks, be fast and furious]

In this excerpt from my field notes, Roger was validating Kimmel's third rule whereby a boy who refuses to engage in risky behavior in front of one or more boys jeopardizes his standing as a "real" boy/man. While "hegemonic masculinity is a relational concept in which there are 'real' men and there are weak others against whom real men are defined," (Banjoko, 2011), Roger's discourse sought to "Disassociate (...) [himself] from the feminine" (Banjoko, 2011). In fact, Roger often addressed standards of masculinity in class. However, as I mentioned, Roger's discourse style was sophisticated. When he occasionally uttered a seemingly misogynistic comment, he made sure to twist it with a small interjection such as, for instance, was the case, early on in the school year during a discussion about gender roles when he uttered: "*If Eve screwed up the world, why don't we beat up women all the time...No, just kidding!*" (Field notes, November, pp. 1-3). Nevertheless, because of his articulation of the necessity of transgressing rules as a performance of masculinity, I suspect that Roger took part in the "slides incident" (Field notes, January, pp. 30-33) with Sam.

However, Roger's dominance emerged also in the sense that he was the only participant who retained Sam's attention (even Jerry, the teacher was unsuccessful at getting Sam to either listen to or obey him) and who succeeded at resisting Sam's hegemony at times. Indeed, Roger took on Sam several times throughout the conversation (turns 33-39, 73-79, 93-95) and when he did so, he gained Sam's attention. For instance, early on, Roger engaged in a sparring exchange with Sam where he admonished him by calling him – or his lines – "*shallow,*" (turn 33) after Sam uttered, in cascade, three sexualized lines, and he used the phrase "*Oh... my...my*" at the end of this exchange as if to express exasperation with Sam's sexualized lines or references to bodily

functions (urine). Roger, although he used the terms “*impaled*,” and “*dick*,” at one point, did not utter any particularly sexualized line throughout the entire conversation.

Importantly, Roger, while he did not exactly take a stand to stop Sam when he was taunting Rodrigo several times in the later part of the conversation, he never participated in it.

In fact, it is possible that Roger might be neither condoning nor liking Sam’s dominant discourses based upon his contribution during the Coming of Age ceremony at the end of the school year. During this event which takes place in the Meeting House during the regular Sunday morning church service in May, each student in this class is invited to share a Credo, or brief statement of beliefs and values from the pulpit to the entire congregation. Credos are designed by students with the help of their mentor during specific activities outside of this class. Credos are rehearsed in the Meeting House on the day prior to the Ceremony with the Director of Religious Education as coach and moderator. In general, this process allows no surprise (bad or good) for the actual Credo reading on the day of the celebration. However, while I am unsure what part of his credo Roger actually rehearsed, his actual credo that year came out as quite a surprise to me and my co-teachers. I noted in my field notes that Roger, in his credo declared to the congregation including all parents, friends, and families (Sam’s and his own included) of students, referred several times to Sam by using his name, and condemned repeatedly Sam’s mischievous behavior, as well as mocked it (Field notes, May 18, p. 19). I recall that this had been a topic of conversation between co-teachers during the coffee hour directly following the service. Thus, it seems that Roger did take a stand from the pulpit,

in the end, once the school year was practically (but not quite) over, in expressing disagreement with Sam's performance in class.

Yet, in the end, Roger's "new man's" discourse style did not prevent other peers' subordination, or interrupt the patriarchal order, because Roger, as all participants, was caught in the present moment of: "A social ascendancy achieved in a play of social forces that extends beyond contests of brute power into the organization of private life and cultural processes" (1997); a moment of 'hegemony' where culture is naturalized.

*Tony and Rodrigo performed as subordinate speakers, and everyone else (Tripp and teachers) was just going with the flow.*

As I discussed in the previous sections, Tony and Rodrigo's discourse was subordinated by Sam and Roger's dominant stance. First, both students' big-D discourse, as explained earlier, did not construct them as equally respectable as Sam and Roger: their shorter size, their younger voice, and their "book-smartness" constructed them somehow as "less" masculine in this setting and in this conversation.

As a result, no matter how many lines Tony contributed to the collection (a total of six, which is as many as Sam in Table 6.6), and in spite of the fact that he contributed 18% of the total turns and 17% of the total utterances, 15 out of his 36 turns were coded R for resisting/expressing frustration. The only one of Tony's turns that was coded D for dominant dismissal was when he interrupted Tripp, a minor speaker, to correct Tripp, to rephrase his line and to appropriate it (turn 51) which is interesting because, as Tripp was a minor participant, Tony's words rejected Tripp's as his had consistently been rejected by Sam, thus reminding us of Freire's (1970) powerful concept about the oppressed becoming the oppressor. In other words, while Tony was contributing a great deal to the

activity per say, his contribution was disrespected and ignored so that his discourse mostly consisted in trying to resist the dominant players, Sam and Roger, and occasionally appealing to Jerry, the teacher, for acknowledgment. Although, Jerry did interfere in turns 120-125 and 147-150 and attempted to convince Sam to acknowledge Tony's work, Jerry was unsuccessful.

As to Rodrigo, his contribution was minimal (9% of total turns) and he contributed only one line to the collection which was instantly put down by Sam in turn 184. In fact, Rodrigo was taunted for minutes at a time by Sam in turns 100-114 about his fishing-pole pen and his tin cans, in turns 154-160 when Sam pretended to be passing gas on his hat and in turn 184 when Sam's language implied that Rodrigo's gender expression and/or sexual orientation were inadequate. In every instance when Rodrigo contributed, he was ridiculed by Sam. Edley & Wetherell (1997) note that "Those who are not us define who we are" (p. 208).

In the case of Tony and Rodrigo, although they contributed lines, engaged in playful bantering several times in the conversation, and attempted to construct "alternative, counter-hegemonic identities for themselves, their discourse could not challenge the status-quo, and Sam and Roger's talk helped construct their identity as subordinate speakers. Rodrigo was especially marginalized. None of the other participants' ways of talking intervened to challenge the status-quo either. The teachers especially were silent in addressing Rodrigo's bullying throughout the conversation. Everyone seemed caught in the hegemonic forces at play.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined a group of male students engaged in a class activity using informal talk as social practice in the sexuality education classroom: They were assigned to devise lines to invite someone they “like,” and/or are attracted to, and are interested in going out with or participating in an event with. They live the social lives of white middle-class American middle school students. Via their way of being in performing this activity and discussing it, they were constructing their identity as males.

As soon as they started working, the activity was reframed into a mockery. Students contributed lines as if they were read from a script using an “other” voice, or words that are “half someone else’s” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293) and that were borrowed from their socio-cultural environment. In doing so, they uttered/produced mostly sexualized lines and produced the sexualized identities of subjects who create “*pick-up lines*” in order to succeed in “getting girls” (Pascoe, 2007, p. 319) with sexual intercourse as a unique goal “*in mind*” as if they were solely driven by their “raging hormones” (Whatley, 1991).

As they spoke, students were constructing their gender identity and, in performing masculinity, they were using words provided for them by history and cultural practice (Edley, 2001) and they were negotiating their position within the group. Dynamics of power and dominance intertwined with moments of confusion, connection, contradiction and complicity in this gendered performance. Sam’s discourse constructed him as a hegemonically masculine and dominant speaker. Roger’s talk constructed him as a more idealized version of masculinity, a “new man,” as, if not more, dominant a speaker as Sam. Tony and Rodrigo emerged as subordinate speakers, with Rodrigo ridiculed and

bullied. All participants, students and teachers, performed along the culturally dominant status quo in which “the interplay between different forms of masculinity is an important part of how a patriarchal social order works” (Connell, 1997, p. 22). While these male students re-voiced “dominant notions of valued masculinity which are reinforced and taught by films and televisions shows that focus on adolescence and the high school experience” (Meyer, 2011, p. 231), they were also enacting and perpetuating these notions.

Even if moments of cooperation and connection between participants occurred, a hierarchy of dominance emerged. Even with the resisting of Tony, and the posturing of Roger as a post-modern, milder version of masculinity, who ended up condemning Sam’s behavior, later on, in his Coming of Age Credo, and even with the benevolent sympathy of the teachers, the “bullying and stigmatization of gender non-conforming males,” (Carlson, 2011, p. 23) such as Rodrigo, was not addressed in the classroom where the patriarchal status-quo prevailed.



## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusion**

#### **Symmetry of findings**

In this qualitative study, I listened to and interrogated the voices of adolescents in the eighth grade sexuality education classroom in relation to their understanding of gender, and I analyzed their discourse during two activities related to relationships. By discourse, I am referring to the concept of little-d and big D-discourses as defined by Gee (1999) where little-d discourse refers to words and conversation, and big-D refers to signs, clothing, symbols that enable a person to be recognized as the member of a specific group.

The analyses showed that students' language was often confused and contradictory because human speech is carried by the dialogical movement (Frazer & Cameron, 1989), and, at times, by the anxiety of how we are being seen. In addition, the youths constantly borrowed words and utterances from other texts, appropriated them and "populated them with their own intentions" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293). Importantly, I argue that participants' discourse tended to follow a gendered script. Symmetry appears from the findings from the analyses as the following table demonstrates:

<b>Discursive gender twist</b>	<b>Boys performing bros' talk</b>
Mocking the activity	Rather than completing the initial activity, participants reframed it into a mockery
Connection, collaboration, and confusion.	Moments of connection, confusion, contradiction and complicity between participants (students with students, and students with teacher)
Reproduction of stereotypical gender discourse	Dynamics of power and dominance between participants (students with students, and students with teacher) that promote the patriarchal status quo
Discourse of rape and reification of boys as sexually obsessed and predators	Participants constructed sexualized subject positions using discourses from popular culture

**Table 7.1: Symmetry of findings**

Students in both analyses spoke in ways that more or less mocked the activity. Although the mocking was visible through hesitation, giggling and laughing in the first analysis of Lola and Roger, the mocking prompted by the renaming of the activity in the boys' analysis was so clear that it led to a reframing of this activity into a different exercise, the creation of pick-up lines, from the one intended by the curriculum. It is difficult to estimate whether this mocking, while it was a way for students to connect with peers, and take ownership of their work, limited or enabled students' learning.

Maybe it was a way of critiquing activities designed by adults that may not fully reflect the preoccupations, or the universe these youth are coming of age in. After all, digital technology may be impacting the frequency – or lack thereof - and level of comfort during face-to-face interaction (Ito, Baumer, Bittanti, Boyd, Cody, Herr-

Stephenson, Horst, Lange, Mahendran, Martinez, Pascoe, Perkel, Robinson, Sims & Tripp, 2010; Turkle, 2012), so much so that planning activities which require students to directly ask each other out, or ask to come over to one another's house without resorting first to texting or social media maybe too far-fetched, even if such situational scenery abounds in films and television shows. Certainly, in the case of the boys' analysis, this renaming and reframing of the activity led by Roger impacted the discursive strategies used by all participants, and especially their resorting to an "other" voice, or other texts in order to construct sexualized lines.

### **Reproduction of gender script**

While it was important for Roger and Lola to connect, and their words often expressed a certain level of collaboration and even closeness, they tended to reproduce stereotypical discourses of femininity and masculinity, whether they were acting as themselves or as another gender. Lola was, at one point towards the end of the conversation, caught in the uncomfortable "slut/virgin" binary discourse whereby she would be either saying too much or not enough about sexuality, thus jeopardizing her proper status among her peers.

Similarly, the conversation between the five boys and the teacher was dominated by Sam's hegemonic discourse of masculinity, disrespecting peers' lines except for Roger's, using hetero/gender-normative policing, bullying Rodrigo, attempting to silence everyone, and rejecting the teacher's appeals to collaborate and to take his suggestions. Led by Sam's heterosexual discourse of sexual "player" or predator, much of the boys' discourse focused on recalling sexualized lines, and stories to re-craft them into pick-up lines, even if the boys connected and wove text together through jousting with words and

posturing at times. This discourse constructed a sexualized subject position for the boys aligned with the one depicted in the first conversation between Lola and Roger which reified boys as sex-obsessed.

Importantly, as they talked, the participants to this study strived to be recognized (Gee, 2001) as knowledgeable and full members of this group. However, their discourses were limited by the cultural history of masculinity and femininity (Edley, 2001). Goffman (1977) says that “Gender is the opiate of the masses” (p. 315) and that our beliefs about masculinity and femininity is tightly coupled with our performance of gender. In this classroom, gender is often understood and enacted stereotypically through participants’ discourse.

### **Resistant discourse**

However, students’ talk in this study also showed that it is “possible for men and women to performatively subvert or resist the prevailing codes of gender” (Cameron, 1998). Lola’s discourse style was powerful at times, and she fully partook in the discursive twist. Roger, in both conversations emerged as a “new” man (Rutherford, in Edley & Wetherell, 1997, p. 204). Although Roger’s little-d and big D-discourses supported Sam’s dominant masculine stance in the boys’ conversation, he represented a milder version of masculinity who uttered mostly collaborative words, who listened, and whose language mostly respected peers and teachers. At the end of his first conversation with Lola, his language pointed to the acknowledgment of sexual violence of men against women as a social problem, as he preferred to do away with the rape reference. While he was concerned about being perceived by Sam as a “*Bro...No homo*” and used the same code-words, his own language never included profanity, or hyper-sexualized terms; in

fact, on one occasion, at the beginning of the boys' conversation, he used disapproving words and an exasperated tone of voice to qualify Sam's lexical choices ("*I think you're hot*" and "*Let's get it on*"), and his references to urine. Maybe he was trying to impact the course of the activity to not become the sexualized construction it did? He notably disapproved of Sam in his credo during the Coming of Age celebration at the end of the school year.

In any case, Roger's discursive stance is a sign of hope for change. Tony was trying to resist Sam's dominant masculine discourse throughout the entire conversation although unsuccessfully. In general, his personality was outgoing. He shared in class, at times, about his friends; he was not afraid of complaining about his weight which he thought was excessive, and he was pretty articulate. Rodrigo, although he struggled as a newcomer to the class, with little experience [because of home-schooling] of interacting with such a group of boys *and* girls, especially talking about sexual issues, was articulate and knowledgeable in his own way, and he also attempted to resist Sam's dominance, although unsuccessfully, as well. In this way, these boys' voices also acted as counter-hegemonic.

Thus, there is a hope that these three boys might develop and hone skills to tame a dominant speaker at some point in the future, in the sense that these boys are only thirteen and fourteen. One can imagine that, in a few more years (some of them might be sophomores in college by now), they might be successful in establishing a more respectful conversation, resist the hegemony of males like Sam, and interfere when necessary to denounce a hetero/gender-normative offense such as the ones perpetrated by Sam.

### **Dominant discourse in a progressive context**

Lastly, the discrepancy between the inclusive discourse of the curriculum and the prevalence of hegemonic discourses remains troubling. As I have underlined throughout the study, and more so in chapter IV, this sexuality education site, because of its utilization of an inclusive, atypical, innovative and comprehensive curriculum, especially in terms of its discourse of equality between other gender and same gender relationships, is presented as uniquely progressive. In this way, the reproduction of gendered talk and Sam's discourse of hegemonic masculinity resorting to gender-normative and homophobic bullying seem disheartening. To some extent, the mocking and reframing of activity by most students may be part of a counter-hegemonic resistance to the curriculum texts and activities.

Sam who throughout the school year expressed interest and compassion when issues of same gender inequality were discussed could not connect these observations with his own normative discourse. This tension between lived experiences and a formal classroom conversation/statement resulted in many contradictions that permeated students' discourse throughout the year, probably as a result of powerful socio-cultural forces that shape gendered discourses.

### **Limitations**

Being a teacher-researcher in a classroom that I was most familiar with, and in an institutional setting, a church, of which I am a member presented challenges that ended up enlightening me about my professional relationships there, and empowering me in my work in general. It is possible that being so close to the setting may have had an impact

on my interpretation and perspective of some of the events and conversations I relate. However, it also brought depth and a better sense of awareness to my analysis. In addition, the fact that I have been and am part of the teaching team for this course hopefully inspired confidence to most participants in allowing me to record their voices, and observe them, much more so that if one were an outsider and stranger to the setting.

Importantly, the group of students I observed was a rather homogeneous group of white, middle-class youth and from a socio-economic background close to my own, and participants who had chosen a rather progressive setting. These facts limit the scope of the study.

### **Implications**

This qualitative study based on discourse analysis is positioned within the current conversation in educational and gender research and means to contribute to a better comprehension of how gender, masculinities, femininities, and sexualities are shaped discursively and socially, rather than simply biological attributes. The site for this study provided a unique opportunity for research because of the rarity of such sexuality education programs. More research is needed in exploring the discourse of young people's understandings and enacting of gender in and out of the sexuality education classroom. For instance, analyzing the discourse of groups or pairs of students grouped by gender identity completing the same activity could refine some of the findings for this study. Similarly, replicating the boys' conversation in chapter six but dividing the boys in smaller groups, or recording more pairs of students switching gender during role-play activities might result in different analyses, or might support some of these findings.

As a result of this and more studies of young people's gender talk and enactment, teachers may become more sensitive to the importance of gender in students' ways of acting and interacting. Parents, educators, policy makers, and students may see different possibilities for approaches to curriculum and youth education.

### **Benefits**

Spending long hours observing in the setting, writing continuous narratives, collecting documentary evidence, and examining attentively the discourse of students and teachers provided me with invaluable insights and reinforced my praxis and my convictions about the importance of being attentive and always conscious about being an example of thoughtfulness, acceptance, as well as lucidity and clarity for my students, as often as possible. Bell, Washington, Weinstein, and Love (2003) say that: "We are in many ways texts for our students...In some respects, we are both the messenger and the message...Self-disclosure is an important part of this process and one of the most powerful ways of teaching is through modeling the behavior we hope to encourage in others" (p. 474). Bell et al's words resonate with me as I return to the classroom.

Having grown up in another culture provided me with a different lens to examine how we teach about sexuality, and how we do not formally teach about gender. Omer Fast (2013), a German-American-Israeli artist says that "People who cross between cultures have a better grasp of how much of any one culture is provisional" (Fast, 2013). This lens adds another dimension to how we think about our socio-cultural environment and our sense of normalcy.



## **Teaching about sexuality**

Researching my sexuality education classroom has allowed me to recognize more fully the importance of teaching about sexuality in a context that is more than health-related. Our sexuality is an essential component of our humanity. By essential, I mean that not only are we born sexual regardless of sexual organs and social gender construction, we grow up yearning to experience sexual pleasure and intimacy regardless of gender and sex. Unless we opt to remain asexual for part of our life or forever, experiencing sexual pleasure and intimacy positively affects our identity, our health, our self-esteem and our ability to feel empowered in society.

Most importantly, experiencing sexual pleasure and intimacy instills our sense of connection to the “sacred.” This unique experience of communion with something sacred, bigger than us is the reason why we need to address sexual pleasure and intimacy when teaching sexuality education. Clearly, lovemaking and sexual intercourse, whether anal, oral, or vaginal are high-risk activities (STIs, unwanted pregnancy) which do require information and education.

However, if our sexuality education programs and our institutional discourses fail to address sexual pleasure and intimacy, our youth fail to understand and appreciate the most important aspect of our sexuality: our ability to connect at a sacred level with oneself and with one another. I argue that accepting and living fully our sexuality and speaking an accurate discourse while addressing or teaching about our sexuality increases our expectations for young people of treating their own sexuality-ies seriously and responsibly. Experiencing a spiritual communion can be a goal and this goal cannot be attained if only the dangers of human sexuality are addressed and the tools for attaining

this goal such as full disclosure about pleasure, intimacy, protection, prevention, (including sexual abstinence) and the tools to achieve them are kept secret or avoided.

Once we include the need for a spiritual component within our sexuality education discourse and public discourse about sexuality by addressing sexual pleasure and intimacy for all gender identities, the information we deliver sounds more sincere and its ability to resonate with our youth increase tremendously.

Therefore, all essential components of our sexuality, including our natural and emotional need for sexual pleasure and intimacy, regardless of ethnicity, race, class, gender identity, or sexual orientation must be addressed in our public discourse and in public education throughout the nation if we hope to offer our youth a realistic message that they might take in and take on. As role-models, parents, and educators, we need to relax our minds. We need to stretch our timid or downright hypocritical, puritanically-based approach which constructs any adolescent sexuality as deviant, or dangerous. The millions of dollars invested into abstinence-only sexuality education during the Bush administrations have been less than conclusive in curbing the adolescent rates of STIs and teen pregnancy because the programs they support deny our youth's need to explore and develop as sexual beings. This has not worked for us. As statistics show, 41% of young people aged 18-19 knew little or nothing about condoms, and 75% knew little or nothing about the birth control pill (Guttmacher Institute, 2012). Sexuality and sexuality education belong to a different category from alcohol and substance abuse. American society is challenged time and time again by this understanding.

Yet there is no alternative but to be truthful to our youth if we are to invest in their sexual well-being, physical health and spiritual fulfillment: A healthy, safe, non-

exploitative sexuality is not just a great thing. It is a right/rite of passage to fully inhabit our world and to connect to one another holistically.

### **Hopes and a hopeful story**

I am hopeful that the Our Whole Lives philosophy, as represented by its curriculum and by this sexuality education site is succeeding in some ways in teaching positively about sexuality, sexual diversity, and religious acceptance in spite of the, at times, gender-normative discourse of students. Lola's reference to Jesus as a "cool dude" for being in a relationship with both a man (John) and a woman (Mary-Magdalene) as described in chapter IV may have been an example of this understanding. Similarly, given students' enthusiasm in attending and discussing issues in general throughout the school year, I am confident that some important learning took place.

Even though the use of the Anatomy/Lovemaking/Masturbation DVD which has replaced the black and white slides is sadly prohibited outside of Unitarian Universalist sexuality education sites because of liability<sup>14</sup>, I am hopeful that the use of this curriculum which has been implemented in other independent settings throughout the United States, such as Planned Parenthood clinics' youth sexuality education programs, may spread to a much wider audience. Also, I know that an upgrade for the Grades 7-9 curriculum manual has been planned which might include guidelines for addressing and confronting pornography.

Indeed, teaching inclusively and comprehensively about sexuality education has brought some rewards over the years, such as, for instance, my reconnection, three years

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<sup>14</sup> A program named "About your sexuality" which preceded the "Our Whole Lives" program received a lot of bad publicity in the 1980s after a parent sued a church for supposedly showing the slides to his child without his permission. The controversy was largely discussed in the media and hurt the Institution. A permission slip signed by at least one parent has been mandatory ever since for acceptance into the program which is why the slides now DVD are not available for the general public.

ago with a student who had once attended this sexuality education program many years before and who happened to attend a college course about Gender and Society I was teaching that fall. At the end of our first class, a student, Alan, came to talk with me as students were leaving the classroom. “Hi, you don’t recognize me? I know you and you know me” Alan said. I stood there believing Alan but unable to recall him or where we had met before. “Oh come on, it’s not fair, tell her more” Amanda, a friend of Alan who was standing by, hinted. Another student was taking some time packing her book and things before finally leaving. “I was your student at church. My last name is H. You knew me as Lena H. then. Don’t you remember me?”

Of course, I remembered Lena H. She had been a student during one of the first years I taught this sexuality education program at my church. She had long blond hair and was a shy student, somewhat isolated from the rest of the class at the time. That girl was very different from the young, self-confident man with a sleek smile on his face standing in front of me. I remembered having long private conversations with her and meeting her mother during that school year. “Well,” Alan said, “Here I am. I am Alan now!” And he went on to explain how he was in the process of transitioning from female to male and taking testosterone injections with the support of his mother and family.

I drove home with goose bumps all over my body that afternoon. “Wow, I thought to myself.” This student seemed so happy to come up to me and share his new “me.” Alan had attended my sexuality education class as Lena and had metamorphosed over seven years into Alan. A student whom I had known as a pre-adolescent and interacted with in this church school sexuality education program had transgendered and was taking a Gender and Women’s Studies course! I could hardly get over this. I was

both surprised and happy. Maybe some of the work I did helped Alan through the difficult exploration of his gender identity. Maybe his participation in a comprehensive program where all gender identities and sexual orientations are not only included but presented as part of the “normal” range of human experience facilitated his decision making and transformation.

What a thrill for me! As I look back on years of working in classrooms with thirteen and fourteen years-old “talking about sex,” I cannot remember anything more thrilling. I realized later on that I had been almost speechless in front of Alan. A week or so later, I wrote on his first response how delighted I felt to welcome him back as one of my Gender and Society’s students. Alan’s story may be another example of some of the success of this program.

Indeed, teaching about human sexuality to teenagers can be a daunting effort. Students come and go into the eighth grade Coming of Age classroom. They learn about relationships, discuss issues of gender and sexuality while constructing and performing their knowledge of both. Yet, how do we measure how young people will apply safe methods to protect their sexual health, will engage responsibly in sexual activities, will seek to develop consensual and intimate relationships with partners they trust and who respect them, will develop enough self-confidence to communicate about their sexual history and identity, their needs, joys, and concerns with their intimate partner (s), will acquire a better sense of where they fit on the sexuality and gender continuum? What is the most important component of sexuality education? Is it its factual content or the inclusive approach and attitude of the facilitators who teach it? Or both and even more? For a moment, reconnecting with Alan made it all worthwhile.

While completing this work was empowering at many levels, it was transformative in terms of personal growth. Learning to appreciate my experiences as a daughter, a sister, a friend, a partner, a lover, a spouse, a parent, and a step-parent, and my voice as a yogi, a chorister, a linguist, a school teacher and administrator, a college instructor, and a sexuality educator has been a demanding and rewarding task. I have invested love and energy to reach this academic step and would have done it no matter what (Vaccaro & Lovell, 2010). I enjoyed the support of family, friends, and dedicated faculty, and, while my own mother could not have envisioned these possibilities for me, I am completing this doctoral work thanks to her. E.B. White (1952) said that “Once you begin watching spiders, you haven’t time for much else.” Personally, I hope to be a better watcher of my students and a better listener of their voices for a very long time.

Appendix A, Chapter V: A Discursive Gender-Twisting, Conversation  
1, Role-play preparation- 12/2/07-1:58m- Tony, Roger, Lola

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments
1	TONY	1	Hello, hello.	Background chatter of other students during the entire recording.
2	ODILE-T	1	You can't move it.	
3	ROGER	1	Okay [	OVERLAP
4	TONY	1	Hello, hello.hello?	
5	ROGER	1	Mmm,	LOLA giggles softly in the background
		2	Alright.	
		3	So you're the guy	
		4	I'm the girl.	
6	LOLA	1	Okay, I'm Cordell..	
		2	Sooo, my parents are going to be out of town next weekend,	LOLA talks in "masculine voice"
		3	do you wanna come over?	
7	ROGER	1	Uh, my parents won't.	
		2	But they'll kill me if I go over	
		3	Eh, because your, your parents won't be over there.	
		4	You know we can't be together	
		5	if there isn't anybody around.	
8	LOLA	1	Well you know,	
		2	you never have to tell your parents.	
		3	They never have to find out.	
9	ROGER	1	I'm always told	Heavy background chatter.

		2	to have that connection with them.	“
		3	But, I mean, I really appreciate our connection.	“
		4	I almost feel like it viol- [	OVERLAP
10	LOLA	1	( ) It'd be so much fun.	Heavy background chatter.
		2	And if you told them that you weren't here.	“
		3	Your parents would never have to find out ( )	“
		4	Don't even discuss your ( ) with them.	“
11	ROGER	1	Sneak out secretly.	
		2	Sounds like you want me to come over at night.	
		3	I know what you're trying to get...	LOLA giggles.
12	LOLA	1	Oopsies, you caught me.	“
13	ROGER	1	All you boys are all the same!	“
14	LOLA	1	What do we actually do?	Heavy background chatter.
15	ROGER	1	Um, I think we're supposed to ( ) somehow.	“
16	LOLA	1	Are we?	
17	ROGER	1	I don't know.	
18	LOLA	1	Okay...	
		2	So, I want you to lie to your parents.	LOLA laughs.
19	ROGER	1	What are you going to do rape me if I don't?	
20	LOLA	1	Probably... ( ) [	LOLA laughing. Heavy background chatter. OVERLAP
21	ROGER	1	Oh.. okay.[	OVERLAP
22	LOLA	1	You talk.	



		2	I have to listen.[	OVERLAP
23	ROGER	1	Oh, okay.	
		2	Well, we've been going out for several months	LOLA laughing
		3	and now you want to rape me?!	"
		4	I mean, this is totally not cool.	"
		5	I mean, this is probably why my parents don't want me to go over to your house.	
		6	They saw something in you.	
		7	I mean, I see something too.	
24	LOLA	1	Wait.	
		2	So, you see something in me,	
		3	right?	
25	ROGER	1	Um, which one are we on?	
26	LOLA	1	Last one.	
27	ROGER	1	Oh, okay. Um.	

Spkr = Speaker

Utt = Utterance;

**Appendix B - Chapter V: A Discursive Gender-Twisting  
Conversation 2 Roleplay Debriefing- 12/2/07-3:18m- Lola,  
Roger, Gina, Tony**

**Topic: Relationship skills**

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments	Codes
1	LOLA	1	Yeah.		
2		2	Come over to my house on Saturday		
		3	If you ( )		
3	ROGER	1	Alright..		
		2	You bring the condoms.		
4	LOLA	3	Can we end it that way?		
5	ROGER	1	Yeah...	LOLA giggles. Background chatter.	
6	LOLA	1	Wow.		
		2	Let's leave out the part about rape.		
		3	Kordell is a fine young man..		
7	ROGER	1	That's horrible.		
8	LOLA	1	Oh, come on ( ) lighten up.		
9	ROGER	1	[that totally gets me though.		
10	LOLA	1	What?	LOLA giggles.	
11	?	1	That's probably not going to work.	Background conversation.	
12	?	1	( ) from you.	"	
13	GINA	1	I was the guy.		
14	LOLA	1	Me too. I was Kordell.		
15		2	I was Kordell too.		
		3	Yeah!		
16	GINA	1	Yeah.		
17	LOLA	1	owned it. ( )		
18		1	[Listen to me.	Background conversation.	
19	GINA	1	And I was just like. Um.		
		2	I smoked them. But ( )		
20	LOLA	1	[But I wonder what he will think.		
21	GINA	1	[Okay		
22	TONY	1	I ( ) one and I coughed		
23	LOLA	1	No, we're like. I'm like		
		2	So do you just lighten up?		
		3	Okay.		

		4	I'm like, my parents are going to be out of town.		
		5	So why don't you come over and have sex?	??	
		6	He's like, are you serious?		
24	ROGER	1	[ ( ) your parents are going to be out of town.		
25	LOLA	1	[They're going to be out of town.		
		2	Wanna come over on Saturday?		
		3	And it's like, no, my parents would never let me.		
		4	And I'm like, why don't you lie?		
		5	And he's like, hmm, well.. okay.		
		6	And I'm like, great, see you Saturday.		
26	TONY	1	[But he like went over and he made you like get something to eat.		
		2	And your parents went ( )		
		3	and you guys were having sex on the couch!		
27	LOLA	1	What!		
		2	That never happened!	A giggles.	
28	ROGER	1	Sex with him.		
29	LOLA	1	I was only kidding!		
		2	A what? A what?	Background chatter.	
	LOLA	1	Uhuh, uhuh, uhuh.	Lots of background conversation.	
30	TONY	1	( ) And um, the girl, right, her parents were right.		
		2	( ) all over her.		
31	A	1	Ewww!		
32	TONY	1	And then her parents came and they jumped, right.	Pretending they were engaging in oral sex?	
		2	he jumped ( ) and he wound up in ( ) like hitting her.		
33	LOLA	1	That would hurt so much.		
34	ROGER	1	Well, yeah it does.		
35	GINA	1	That would suck.		
36	ROGER	1	Yeah, you know how guys hurt.		
		2	It hurts when you see	Because they would	

			another guy getting ( )	have been abruptly interrupted during oral sex	
		3	Hurting just for weeks.		
37	TONY	1	Uh, and then there was a doctor ( )	A laughing.	
38	LOLA	1	That would be so uncomfortable.		
		2	Gina What if		
	GINA	3	[What?	Inaudible background voice. Squealing.	
	LOLA	1	Ill, no!		
		2	My friend role plays. She's like, look at my role playing site.	Background discussion.	
		3	I'm like, thanks, but no.		
39	TONY	1	Oh, role playing totally ( )		
40	GINA	1	[No.		
		2	so many people are really, really bad at it though.		
		3	She's like, and then I sucked her smoothly on the neck.		
		4	I was like, god, you suck.		
41	TONY	1	Especially ( ) cheap ( ).		
42	GINA	1	I love you too ( )	A laughing. Lots of background conversation.	
		2	Like this guy Anthony ( )	Lots of giggling.	
		3	Wait, wait. ( )	"	
43	?	1	No. ( )		
	LOLA	1	What?		

Appendix C, Chapter VI: Boys Talking Bros' Talk

1/13/08-9:39m- teachers: Jerry (MALE), Odile (FEMALE)-Tony, Roger, Rodrigo, Tripp, Connor, Sam

1 female student at one point from across the room

Topic: Relationships, dating and lifetime commitments

Turn	Spkr	Utt	Text/Speech	Comments
1	ODILE-T	1	Okay, here we go.	Static.
		2	On each side.	"
2	ROGER	1	There's a problem.	" Background conversation
3	ODILE-T	1	Now don't kick it.	
4	TRIPP	1	Eyyy.	Static. Multiple voices.
5	ROGER	1	Alright.	
6	ODILE-T	1	Okay.	
7	ROGER	1	Pick-up lines for guys.	Background conversation.
	JERRY-T	1	Yea	"
8	SAM	1	Um, take five.	"
9	JERRY	1	[The, they have like a ghost in the chair.	Multiple voices.
10	RODRIGO	1	Hermaphrodite.	Laughter. Background conversation.
11	CONNOR	1	Do you know where my sister is?	Background conversation.
12	ROGER	1	Is that roll recording you? I hear it ( )	B laughing. Background conversation.

13	TONY	1	[How many girls have denied you this month?	Multiple voices at once.
14	SAM	1	[Oh leave it alone. ( ) recorders.	Giggling. Background conversation.
15	RODRIGO	1	[Five hundred!	“
16	SAM	1	They're ( ) recorders.	“
		2	It's like, that is that. God.	“
17	JERRY-T	1	Focus. Guys.	
		2	What's our first one?	
18	TONY	1	My name is Mr.( )	
		2	There's only one thing going through my mind.	
		3	Can we do it?	Giggles.
19	JERRY-T	1	You want to write that down?	“
20	SAM	1	No.	“
21	ROGER	1	Sure.	“
22	?	1	We'll throw it out there.	
		2	And see how it works.	“
23	SAM	1	Pick-up line. Oh, here's a good one.	
		2	You wanna have sex some time?	Laughter
24	TONY	1	And by that you mean a drink.	Multiple voices in background.
25	JERRY-T	1	There's something to be said for honesty.	
26	SAM	1	Hey, uh, I think you're hot.	Laughter.

27	ROGER	1	I don't have a pencil.	Lots of background chatter.
28	SAM	1	Let's get it on.	"
29	JERRY-T	1	You need a pencil?	"
30	ROGER	1	Yeah.	
31	TRIPP	1	So fucked.	Or so what???
	?	2	( ) shut up.	Lots of background conversation.
32	?	1	Where'd you get that?	Background Conversation. Heard "only in third recording not fourth.
33	?	1	Oh my god.	"
34	ROGER	1	[You know, Sam, may I say something?	
		2	You is like a kiddy pool.	
		3	Shallow.	
35	?	1	Yeah, oh wow.	"
36	SAM	1	[You're like the water in a kiddy pool.	Background chatter.
		2	I can see right through you.	"
		3	No, you're like the water	
37	ROGER	1	[No, kiddy pool water is cloudy.	Laughter.
38	SAM	1	No, no.	"
		2	You're like the water in a kiddy pool.	"
		3	You gotta yelly bell, you	"

			got a yellow belly.	
		4	I can see right through you!	
		5	Cuz it's yellow, because they pee in it.	"
		6	That's why the shallow end is so warm.	"
39	TONY	1	Oh.. my	Lots of background chatter.
40	SAM	1	You drank the water.	
41	TONY	1	Oh god! ( )	"
42	SAM	1	It says ( ) It says ( )	"
43	ROGER	1	Oh, oh, I got another one. I got another ( )	"
44	TONY	1	[You guys writing it down?	"
45	ROGER	1	Um, Bob. Just Bob.	"
46	SAM	1	How about, how about we walk up and go, hey, this kinda sucks.	" background laughter.
47	TONY	1	I'm writing that one down.	Lots of constant background chatter.
48	SAM	1	Hey, I'm not gonna write that.	"
		2	I'm not gonna. It sucks	"
49	TONY	1	No, it does not!	"
50	SAM	1	Whatever.	"
51	TRIPP	1	Uh, there's this really funny one.	"
		2	That you plus me minus your pants equals ( )	
52	TONY	1		



			[No.	
		2	Want to do some addition?	
		3	Want to do some math?	
53	SAM	1	Let's (laugh).. okay.	Laugh
54	TONY	1	[Take off	
		2	Out of bed.	
		3	Without your clothes.	Said in a quieter voice.
		4	And multiply.	"
55	ROGER	1	Okay.	
56	SAM	1	I'm not gonna write that down	Multiple voices talking in the background.
		2	about the ( ) and go ( ).	" E laughs.
57	TONY	1	Take ( ) That was mine.	Lots of background chatter.
58	ROGER	1	Wait, here's a good one.	Static. Background chatter.
59	TONY	1	[Do you wash your clothes with Windex?	
		2	'Cause I see myself inside of you.	
60	ROGER	1	Yea.	
61	ANGELA	1	[ That one's stupid. And that's all I know.	Background. She is in a girls-only group
62	SAM	1	Now that	
63	ROGER	1	[Did you hear 'when you fell from heaven'?	
64	SAM	1	[No, I'm so, I <i>hate</i> that commercial!	

		2	I'm a duh ( )	Takes on another voice. Laughter.
65	ROGER	1	What?	Laughter.
66	TRIPP	1	Did it hurt when you fell, did it hurt when you fell from heaven and got impaled ( ) on the ( )?	"
67	TONY	1	[Next time you fall from heaven why don't you try to land on me?	
68	ROGER	1	[Did it hurt when you fell from heaven and got impaled on my dick?	
69	SAM	1	I love that one!	
70	TONY	1	[Next time you ( )	
71	SAM	1	[Yeah, I was a <i>virgin</i> .	Background laughter.
		2	I'd be like fall again and	
		3	Now go to hell	Lots of background chatter.
		3	Okay, Roger.	"
72	TONY	1	Why does he ( )	"
73	SAM	1	[I don't know why,	"
		2	but he's like ( ) to screw everything up.	"
		3	I don't know why.	"
		4	He thinks like, he thinks that we can't have fun with anyone	"
		5	because he thinks you'll fuck it up in some	

			way.	
74	TONY	1	Oh, no way.	
75	SAM	1	But Roger, shh, Roger. We need to know.	
		2	What do you believe in?	
		3	Uh, bros before girls or girls before bros?	
76	JERRY-T	1	Oh, really. ( )	Background discussion.
77	TONY	1	Bros before ( ).	Almost inaudible.
78	SAM	1	Okay.. sure.	E laughs. Lots of background chatter.
79	ROGER	1	No. It's like bros before bros.	
79		2	No homos.	Laughing. Background chatter.
80	SAM	1	No homo.	Sexually moaning.
81	?	1	Come on guys.	
82	SAM	1	Molly's my home girl.	
83	TRIPP	1	No he's not.	
84	SAM	1	Oh yea.	
85	ROGER	1	Alright. Do we have any more?	
86	SAM	1	Okay... I've gotta ( )	
87	TONY	1	( )ex-ed out all of mine.	Background conversation. Lots of background chatter. Hard to hear.
88	ROGER	1	Well do you have any more?	"
89	TONY	1	I have more. I do have more. I can't think ( )	

90		2	( ) a very special girl.	“
91	SAM	1	What?	“
92	ROGER	1	What?	“
93	TONY	1	You seem like a very special girl.	“
94	ROGER	1	Yeah, I got another one.	
		2	I got another one.	
		3	You guys ready	
		4	Is yo' dad a terrorist?	Voice change.
		5	Cuz you da bomb.	
		6	Mmmm. Hah.	
95	SAM	1	Ouch.	
96		2	That was <i>awesome!</i>	Sarcasm? Lots of giggling.
		3	Did you make that one up?	
97	ROGER	1	No, my sister gave it to me.	Laughing
		2	She's like, here's a bunch of pick-up lines ( ).	
98	TONY	1	[So you did this with your sister too?	
99	TRIPP	1	( ) pick-up lines on them.	
100	SAM	1	Prom has two m's in it. Nah just joking.	
101	ROGRIGO	1	[No!! I saw it.	
		2	I saw the box! I saw the box!	

102	SAM	1	I saw the box!	Imitating Rodrigo's voice mockingly.
		2	Stop it Jeffrey. My ( ) to it. ( )	"
103	RODRIGO	1	I knew it was there. ( )	Lots of background chatter.
104	SAM	1	[Oh fishing rod.	
		2	( ) awesome. I've always wanted a (...)	Lots of background laughter and talking.
105	RODRIGO	1	( ) for twenty-five dollars. Careful.	Lots of background chatter.
106	JERRY-T	1	[Yeah, yeah. Actually.	"
107	SAM	1	Twenty-five dollars for a bunch of ( )?	"
108	RODRIGO	1	[Yes.	
109	JERRY-T	1	[Let's think of some strong words( ).	
110	SAM	1	[Twenty- five dollars for three tin cans?	
111	RODRIGO	1	Yes!	
112	SAM	1	Crap	
113	JERRY-T	1	This is getting us nowhere.	
114	RODRIGO	1	Yes, twenty-five dollars for three tin cans.	
115	JERRY-T	1	[I mean, there are no ( ).	Lots of background chatter.
116	SAM	1	Is that dollars or	

			sckizzards?	
117	JERRY-T	1	But! Do they have ...pick-up lines?	Trying to get boys back on topic
118	SAM	1	Why did you bring a fishing pole to ( )?	
119	TONY	1	They ex-ed out all of my pick-up lines.	
120	JERRY-T	1	They what?	
121	TONY	1	Ex-ed out all of my perfectly reasonable pick-up lines.	
122	JERRY-T	1	Well, I know, I think you can definitely get to put one in right now,	From this point on, JERRY (teacher) and SAM are constantly overlapping
		2	Take Tony's.	
123	SAM	1	No, I don't like Tony's.	
124	JERRY-T	1	[Go ahead.	
		2	You get one.	
		3	You get one!	Laughter.
		4	You don't have to like it. You get one.	
125	SAM	1	Okay, we'll save it as an extra. Now ( )	
126	TONY	1	[( ) I ask you out ( )	
127	JERRY-T	1	[Alright. But just make sure it's in there.	
128	SAM	1	Okay. Let's think of another one.	
129	TONY	1	But.	
130	ROGER	1	Name ( ) for Star Wars.	

131	SAM	1	Oh, oh god. Okay, I got this. I got this.	
132	ODILE-T	1	[Right now you should be working on your responses ( ).	In the background.
133	SAM	1	[Uh.. You want to get the ( )	Laughter. Background discussion.
134	TONY	1	It's like, it's like.	
135	JERRY-T	1	After you finish,	
		2	then you can just anticipate	Lots of chatter. Many voices. Hard to distinguish.
136	SAM	1	[Roger, stop	Background.
137	JERRY-T	1	the negative responses.	
138	SAM	1	[Roger, stop giving the tape recorder a blow job.	Laughs.
139	ROGER	1	And negative.	Giggling.
140	SAM	1	Yeah, I know, the tape recorder is hot on you	“
141	JERRY-T	1	We'll see. We'll see.	Background
142	RODRIGO	1	[Anything that Sam says, do, no shout-outs allowed.	Background chatter.
143	TONY	1	My life ( ) to kill.	???
144	ROGER	1	Alright, alright.	
145	JERRY-T	1	How many we got?	
146	SAM	1	Two.	
		2	We'll work.	
147	TONY	1	[No, we got	

			four.	
148	SAM	1	[One sec, one sec.	
		2	Now we don't.	
		3	Give us a sec.	
		4	Quiet, quiet. We need to ( )	
149	TONY	1	Make him ( )	
150	JERRY-T	1	Two plus Tony's.	
151	SAM	1	That equals two.	B laughs.
		2	Okay, now.	Laughter.
		3	Okay, well okay, we" count ( ).	
152	JERRY-T	1	I'm countin' on you.	Lots of background chatter.
153	TONY	1	If I told you	
		2	you had a beautiful body,	
		3	would you hold it against me?	
154	SAM	1	I probably would stab you in the eye.	Laugh
155	TONY	1	Can you like write that down... Please?	
156	SAM	1	Oh, I thought you were talking about( )	Laughter. Many voices.
		2	Oh, here's your hat back.	Laughs.
		3	I been sittin' on it for like half an hour.	"
		4	So I would never use it again.	"



157	RODRIGO	1	We know that.	“
158	SAM	1	I have butt cooties.	Tony is making a clown horn sound (background)
		2	Uh, you know what sucks?	“
159	RODRIGO	1	[Hey, put that down	“
160	SAM	1	Farting.	
161	RODRIGO	1	( ) down.	
162	SAM	1	( ) farting	Laughs.
		2	Oh really? Watch my, watch right there.	TONY singing
163	JERRY-T	1	Do you guys have a line yet	JERRY speaking over all the other voices
		2	that has the remotest chance of being accepted?	
164	SAM	1	Yes.	Loud.
165	ROGER	1	Probably not.	
166	TONY	1	[If I told you you were beautiful would you	
167	SAM	1	[Our first one.	
		2	Let’s have sex. It’s a good one.	Giggles.
168	JERRY-T	1	The remotest chance.	“
169	SAM	1	[Number 2, number 2, number 2	“
		2	Is your dad a terrorist, cuz you’re the bomb!	“
170	JERRY-T	1	I mean,	

		2	let's try to come up with something where	
171	SAM	1	that ( ) [( ) isn't	
172	JERRY-T	1	someone might	
		2	say yes	
173	TONY	1	Why'd you ( ) ?	
174	SAM	1	Yeah ( ) on the high bar	
		2	and ask a bunch of girls ( )	Several voices. Hard to hear.
		3	Yes, I do.	Speaks in a different voice. Imitating someone.
		4	My name is ( ) Homage to the Ninth.	"
175	JERRY-T	1	[I can give you a little.. tip.	Background chatter.
		2	A little sincerity.	Chuckling.
176	SAM	1	[Plus, he was saying	
177	ROGER	1	We are being sincere, man.	Laughter.
178	SAM	1	To be completely honest,	
		2	I really want to do you	Lots of laughter including teacher. Multiple voices.
179	JERRY-T	1	I understand the limits of completely honest.	"
180	SAM	1	You might do that with	"
181	JERRY-T	1	[But sincere...( )	
		2	Still potential there.	
182	SAM	1	[Uh	Chuckle

183	RODRIGO	1	I'll be honest.	
		2	I like you.	
		3	Will you go out with me?	
184	JERRY-T	1	Hopefully, it works.	Many voices at the same time.
185	RODRIGO	1	[Yes!	"
186	SAM	1	[Definitely not!	"
		2	Definitely not. I will not go out with you.	"
187	RODRIGO	1	Rite	With a whining intonation
	SAM	1	I just said no everybody.	Chatter and laughing in the background.
188		2	D'you need help?	
189	ROGER	1	No.	Someone is saying something in a high-pitch (chipmunk )voice in the background.
		2	That was kinda cute.	
190	SAM	1	Okay.	
191	RODRIGO	1	Just do it.	
192	TONY	1	Yeah right.	
192	SAM	1	To..to be honest	Said slowly as he is writing/recording it
193	ROGER	1	[I know, I know	
		2	a physical one.	
194	SAM	1	I want	
195	ROGER	1	If you had a parrot,	
		2	would you have your parrot	

		3	on this shoulder	
		4	and then you put your arm	
		5	around her ( )	Background chatter.
196	SAM	1	[I want to park	“
197	RODRIGO.	1	[Ay	“
198	TRIPP	1	And then, and then	“
199	SAM	1	[No, no, no	“
		2	One sec	“
200	TRIPP	1	And then they say, um	“
201	SAM	1	[quiet, quiet, quiet	“
		2	Okay, hey, quiet, quiet, quiet.	“
		3	Yo, yo. Yo! Hey!	Yelling.
202	?	1	Shut up.	
203	SAM	1	Okay.	Background chatter
		2	To be honest,	“
		3	I want to park my car	“
		4	in your garage	“
		5	and then go and	“
		6	No, I want to park my car	“Smiling
		7	in your garage	“
		8	and then go inside and have sex.	Laughter
204	RODRIGO.	1	Sam has the tape	
205	ODILE-T	1	Oh, Sam has the tape.	

		2	We need that over there.	Background chatter.
206	TONY	1	Kids nine!	???
207	ODILE-T	1	This is on #2	
		2	You must've touched it.	Background chatter.
		3	You must've pushed the red button.	"
208	TONY	1	Good one captain	"
209	SAM	1	Be honest,	"
		2	I want to park my car in your garage	"
		3	And then go inside and have sex.	"
		4	That's awesome.	"
210	TONY	1	Will you please write my line down	"
211	ODILE-T	1	Write down every line.	In the background.
212			( )	
213	SAM	1	Hey Rog, where's that other one you had in your coat?	
214	TONY	1	That one?	
		2	I didn't ( ) in my coat.	Lots of background chatter.
215	ODILE-T	1	[Are you ready?	In the background.
216	TONY	1	No! I need to write them all down.	
217	JERRY-T	1	My guess is	
		2	they're a lot readier.	Chuckles
218	ODILE-T	1	Well, let them ( )	
219	JERRY-T	1	[I know I'm going on a limb	

			here	
220	ODILE-T	1	Alright, when you're ready	Lots of background chatter.
221	JERRY-T	1	[Alright, back in the block.	
222	ODILE-T	1	can stop the tape [we	
223	TONY	1	And we're going to	

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