GENDER, SPACE AND LINGUISTIC PRACTICE IN AN INDO-GUYANESE VILLAGE

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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University of Toronto

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Gender, Space and Linguistic Practice in an Indo-Guyanese Village

ABSTRACT

Doctor of Philosophy
1998
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This is a study of language use and language socialization based on twelve months of field research in an Indo-Guyanese village between 1994 and 1996. The dissertation includes an historical account of the village, a description of the language varieties currently in use and discussion of fieldwork and methodology. A number of chapters are devoted to a consideration of gender and linguistic practice viewed from various theoretical paradigms. This includes a consideration of pronoun variability as well as analyses of several disputes. Finally, I consider the use of affective strategies basic to the process of language socialization. I examine two moments in the affective shaping of children’s communicative bodies. In the first case, long before the child uses language productively, caregivers begin to inculcate a certain way of understanding the body. The values that I have labelled autonomy and age-graded/gendered solidarity are embedded and passed on through the very practices of holding and caring for children. With emerging linguistic skills comes exposure to a range of caregiver verbal strategies which more precisely direct children in community based moral and social education. In the second moment which I discuss, children move out of the position of dependents. This happens early for all children but has different consequences for boys and girls. All children develop peer groups but for girls the development of such relations tends to be restricted by the fact that early on they are expected to contribute to the household
economy. For some this means a very rapid transition from dependent (up till age four) to
caregiver (by age seven they may be caring for their siblings). For others it means contributing
to household labour in other ways - for instance cooking and cleaning. Boys on the other hand
are not expected to work in the same way. They are encouraged to engage in various semi-
productive activities like fishing and birding. Between the ages of 7 to as old as 18 they
experience a kind of personal autonomy and freedom that is unrivalled in the village. The
dissertation concludes with a discussion of the pervasive gendering of language and action in
the community.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL LIFE IN THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The following is a consideration of the social uses and functions of language in small, rural, Indo-Guyanese community. The work is derived from my fieldwork experience in Guyana between 1994 and 1996. In this introduction I situate the present work in relation to the existing literature on language and social life in the Anglophone Caribbean.

1.1 ETHNOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVES ON THE SPEECH COMMUNITY

'Speech community' is, arguably, the central concept in both quantitative sociolinguistics and anthropological approaches to discourse. Data coming from creole speaking communities in the Caribbean has, however, raised a number of problems for existing theoretical models of speech community. The study that follows contributes to this ongoing rethinking of the speech community concept from a creolist perspective. In this introduction I discuss some previous work on the speech community which focuses on CEC (Caribbean English Creole, cf. Winford 1993) data before introducing the major trajectories of the present work.

1.1.1 TRADITIONAL APPROACHES TO SPEECH COMMUNITY

Perhaps the most well known definition of speech community is that advanced by Gumperz (1962:31):
[A linguistic or speech community is][...] a social group which may be either monolingual or multilingual, held together by frequency of social interaction patterns set off from the surrounding area by weaknesses in the lines of communication.

While Gumperz emphasizes frequency of social interaction, Hymes (1967:18) suggested that the speech community be defined in terms of what was shared. He writes (1967:18):

A speech community is defined, then, tautologically but radically, as a community sharing knowledge of rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech. Such sharing comprises knowledge of at least one form of speech, and knowledge also of its patterns of use. Both conditions are necessary.¹

Labov's understanding of speech community is more complex and more precise. For Labov, the speech community is manifest in shared norms of evaluation.

That New York City is a speech community, and not a collection of speakers living side by side, borrowing from each other's dialects, may be demonstrated by many kinds of evidence. Native New Yorkers differ in their usage in terms of absolute values of the variables, but the shifts between contrasting styles follow the same pattern in almost every case (1966:7).

Discussing the production and evaluation of post-vocalic (r) in New York City, Labov (1968:247) remarks:

This result is typical of many other empirical findings which confirm the view of New York City as a single speech community, united by a uniform evaluation of linguistic features, yet diversified by increasing stratification in objective performance.

Labov contrasts shared norms of evaluation, the defining feature of the speech community, with the heterogeneity of production.

The term community assumes something held in common. The heterogeneity that the speech community shows in speech production is matched by a relative homogeneity in norms of interpretation: both rest on shared linguistic knowledge (1980:369).

¹ Hymes definition of the speech community, like his notion of communicative competence, was, in part, a reaction to prevailing Chomskian notions. Chomsky (1965:2) had written “Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community.”
It is this relation between shared evaluation and different norms of production which allows the sociolinguist to construct a community grammar in the form of variable rules for groups rather than individuals.

The construction of complete grammars for idiolects, even one's own, is a fruitless and unrewarding task; we now know enough about language in its social context to realize that the grammar of the speech community is more regular and systematic than the behavior of any one individual. Unless the speech pattern is studied within the overall system of the community, it will appear as a mosaic of unaccountable and sporadic variation (Labov 1969:759).

Labov's conception of the speech community is thus intimately tied to his formulation of variable rules. Bickerton's (1973a) rejection of the variable rule paradigm for GC can thus be seen as a rejection of the Labovian notion of speech community. For Bickerton, different productions are the result of the operation of different rules - these rules being unevenly distributed across the community thus giving rise to a continuum. In his work on AAVE (BEV), Labov recognized the possibility for the uneven distribution of rules within a "community".

While Labov suggested an overly close relation between white and black copular production rules (Baugh 1983), he posited absolute differences between the two groups in other areas.

For some variables, New York City Negroes [sic] participate in the same structure of social and stylistic variation as white New Yorkers. For other variables, there is an absolute differentiation of white and Negroes which reflects the process of social segregation characteristic of the city (Labov 1968:248).

Labov's early work on the relation between white and black groups seems to prefigure his later arguments concerning de facto segregation and divergence (Labov and Harris 1986). Strikingly, Labov (1980b), while suggesting that Philadelphia consists of two distinct speech communities (white and black), argued that it was possible to posit a single creole speech community for
1.1.2 REASSESSING SPEECH COMMUNITY FROM THE CREOLE PERSPECTIVE

Two major critiques of the notion of speech community have emerged from work on CEC communities. Winford (1988), taking issue with Labov’s notion of speech community, argues that the existence of a continuous dimension of linguistic variation (i.e. a continuum) and shared norms for the evaluation of linguistic variants does not imply a single community grammar. Winford’s (1990, 1993) most recent work, in fact, has demonstrated significant discontinuities in basilectal and upper mesolectal grammars (arguing against Bickerton’s 1973a, 1973b analyses which assume underlyingly identical grammatical categories for creole and English “copular” variants - see Appendix 1).

Rickford (1979, 1985, 1986a, 1986b) has developed this notion of discontinuities in an extended ethnographic case study of Cane Walk. For Rickford the speech community of Cane Walk is characterized by both concord and conflict. Members of CaneWalk’s two major social classes (Estate Class and Non-estate Class) agree in some areas and disagree in others.

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Table 1.1 SPEECH NORMS AND SPEECH USE IN CANE WALK, GUYANA

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2 Labov’s argument is based on the analysis of two speakers. One is a Belizean accommodating to acrolectal targets while the other is white speaker of AAVE.
One important aspect of Rickford's analysis of the speech community is the way it combines research on variable patterns of use and evaluation with research on discourse level patterning. In later work (1986a, 1991) Rickford has shown the way in which EC and NEC Cane Walkers exhibit 'dramatic differences' in language use, specifically in their use of nine singular pronoun categories (cf Rickford 1986b:217). The work of Winford and Rickford forces a reconceptualization of speech community along two dimensions. Winford's work emphasizes the problematic notion of both a "community grammar" (Labov 1969) and a "seamless continuum" (Bickerton 1973a, 1975). Rickford critiques the notion that a speech community must necessarily be characterized in terms of shared norms of evaluation.

1.1.3 COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

The notion of community that I employ in the current work differs somewhat from those reviewed above. All of the models reviewed attempt to define speech community as something evidenced in speech behaviour. Rickford's important revision is to point out that whether such norms and usages are shared or not is an empirical issue. However, that "communities" exist in advance of the linguistic and social practices in which they are made manifest is assumed in all cases (even if the problems of defining boundaries are readily acknowledged). The title of Labov's (1980b) article is somewhat misleading given that the question that he asks is not "is there a creole speech community?" but instead "is there a single creole speech community?". Thus far, then, speech community has served as a useful heuristic device in sociolinguistic and anthropological linguistic work - that is, it has operated as a term meaningful to the researcher. In recent social theory (and some sociolinguistic work), a general
acknowledgement of the way in which community is also a meaningful category for social
actors has emerged. Anderson (1983) has provided a brilliant account of the way in which
"imagined communities" serve the ends of political powers. In the course of his discussion he
writes (1983:6):

...all communities larger than the primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and
perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet have developed a similar notion of "community of practice" in
several papers (1992, 1995). They note that Gumperz's earlier definition of the speech
community "does not directly address social relations and differentiation among members of a
single community (though implicitly treating differentiation as revealing "sub-" communities). Nor does it make fully explicit the role of practice in mediating the relation between language and society (1992:464)." In contrast, they suggest (1992:464):

A community of practice is an aggregate of people who come together around mutual
engagement in an endeavour. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations- in short, practices- emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour. As a social construct, a community of practice is different from the traditional
community, primarily because it is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages. (This does not mean that communities of practice are necessarily egalitarian or consensual- simply that their membership and practices grow out of mutual engagement.) In addition, relations between and among communities of practice, and relations between communities of practice and institutions are important: Individuals typically negotiate multiple memberships (in families, on teams, in workplaces, etc).[...]

Combining the suggestions of Anderson and Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, in this work, I
attempt to show the way in which ideological notions of community emerge in and through
linguistic practice. Such an approach has a number of implications for the study of variation, discourse and social process.
1.1.4 IDEOLOGIES OF COMMUNITY - Egalitarianism

One of the central ideas in the present work, then, is that ideologies of community are multiple. Rather than posit a single, overarching community within which certain aspects of verbal behaviour and grammar are shared while others are not, I suggest that participants invoke particular ideological notions of the community in framing interactions. This is possible because no single notion of social relations and community is overwhelmingly dominant to the exclusion of all others (as both Rickford 1985 and Williams 1991 have demonstrated for Guyana). In the first case, villagers draw on competing notions of egalitarianism and hierarchy. Williams (1991:114) thus suggests that:

Cockalorums consistently express two views of the nature of social life, one positive, the other negative, linked respectively to the precepts of egalitarianism and to the precepts of hierarchy[...] Therefore, with reference to these competing sets of precepts, an individual’s actions are always subject to at least two contrasting interpretations. Any action raises the question whether the person is trying to adhere to egalitarian norms of equality, solidarity, and generalized reciprocity, or to hierarchical norms of inequality, individualism, and competition.

Wilson (1973), noting the gendered aspect of this dynamic relation, captured the tension in terms of an opposition between reputation and respectability. For Wilson (1973:98) notions of respectability are both the justification and the rationale for differential distribution of resources:

When some people in a society become and remain wealthier than others, or when they occupy positions of power and prestige over others, they must establish a right to such advantages. Why should they, rather than others, be so well-off? Innumerable doctrines in various societies of the world develop rationales to answer this question: the rich and powerful may be descended from first settlers or mythical ancestors; they may simply be more devout in their worship of God, so that their prosperity is no more than just a reward; they may be superior human beings because they are white, or Chinese, or civilized. On Provedencia a large part of the rationale, which is itself a form of social value, is bound up with the idea of “being respectable.”
Respectability, for Wilson, is part of the symbolism of colonial order - its churches, its pigmentocracy, its manners of speaking etc. In dynamic tension with such social values is the idea of reputation. Reputation is focussed on male virility manifested in offspring. It is symbolized in both the sweet talk that a man uses to entice women and the bawdy stories that he reserves for all-male company. To his credit, then, Wilson makes every effort to show the way in which this ideological universe is not simply floating above and somehow informing everyday life, but is instead deeply embedded in both the mundane and extraordinary practices of social actors. This said, there are a number of outstanding problems with the work. As Besson (1993) has demonstrated, the phenomena which come together in Wilson’s sphere of “respect” are only contingently and circumstantially linked. Thus in Provedencia, Wilson finds that the church is strongly associated with women and the elitist values of respectability and has little revolutionary potential. Besson, however, discussing her research in Jamaica, shows that the Baptist Churches of Trelawny have, since slavery, been involved in left-wing, anticolonial and anti-elite struggles and that women have been instrumental in such movements. Whatever the fit in Provedencia, Wilson’s attempt to extend his thesis to the entire Caribbean must be treated with some trepidation.

In this study I look closely at the pervasive notion of egalitarianism in the village. In fashioning community through linguistic practice, villagers consistently draw on this ideological characterization of community. However, the way they do this points to the instability of any one formulation of egalitarianism and its potential for multiple interpretations.\(^3\) Egalitarianism.

\(^3\)Williams (1991:170) writes

Egalitarianism is not,\([...]\), a set of precepts aimed at specifying the conditions or mode of conduct for absolute equality. Instead,\([...]\), it is (in proverbial language) a code requiring
in the Guyanese context, is in fact a cluster of interrelated ideas and values about the place of the individual within a community of others. Thus, on the one hand, egalitarianism includes the expectation that individuals should be free to go about their daily activities without undue hindrance from others. As such, egalitarianism emphasizes the value of individual autonomy. On the other hand, egalitarianism includes a strong ethic of solidarity whereby individuals are expected to play an active role in maintaining enduring social relationships based on age-grades, kinship, residential proximity and economic cooperation (note that both of these aspects are incorporated in Wilson’s (1973) “reputation” notion). This is, as Williams (1991) notes (cf. footnote 3), a highly qualified egalitarianism - one built partly around the asymmetrical obligations of kinship. The values of solidarity are also strongly rooted in the social and economic relations of traditional Indo-Guyanese village life. Up until the mid part of this century, many rural Indo-Guyanese people were still farming rice in a traditional manner. This meant sowing and weeding rice by hand and ploughing fields with oxen. Labour, for this labour-intensive economy, was organized around the patrilocal domestic unit, as was most ritual and much of everyday social activity in general. The traditional pattern gave rise to a particular kind of local village solidarity, one that is strongly gendered and age-graded. It is this cluster of individuals to recognize that "wan hand kyan wash or clap." That is to say, everyone should understand that all accomplishments and their enjoyment are made possible by assistance attained from others; therefore, everyone should be willing to assist others. As they struggle to become somebody, they should struggle equally hard to demonstrate, through their everyday actions, (1) their respect for the human dignity of others without reference to class position, (2) their willingness to engage in generalized reciprocity, (3) their desire to avoid actions that damage their own reputations and those of others and (4) their willingness to submit to and participate in processes of mediation that treat formal litigation as a last resort. The characteristics of social action are necessary because all humans, as humans deserve one another's respect. In short, [...] , we may note that egalitarianism, when applied to evaluations of individual differences and of interpersonal conduct, provides criteria for a moral stratification of the social order that Cockalorums attempt, with limited success, to align with the economic criteria on which class stratification is otherwise based.
values which includes an emphasis on personal autonomy and solidarity (or family corporatism) that I refer to as a qualified egalitarianism.

Egalitarianism, then, includes strong expectations that an individual will actively maintain relational ties based on friendship and kinship through mutual engagement in activities ranging from religious and domestic work to drinking and gossiping. For example, at least once a year most Hindu families in the village do a Jandhi or Puja to make offerings to the deodats and ask for blessing. Even a poor family will invite large numbers of people and is obliged to feed all of them. The family hosting the religious event will, at these times, call on friends and kinspeople to assist in the cooking and in a number of other tasks. Many people are thus expected to involve themselves in some way in the work - either as guests or as helpers. Those that do not attend are often seen as unwilling and selfish and may be subject to strong social sanction from their network of close associates. Similarly, each member of the household is expected to fulfill certain obligations based on their gendered and age-graded position. Those that do not comply are considered mannish "disagreeable, antisocial" and may be forced to leave the household permanently.

This is not to say that individuals must comply to every whim of public opinion. There is an operating counter-force to this strong ethic of structured cooperation in the value placed on personal autonomy (particularly in relationships between peers). Indo-Guyanese adults in the village do not take kindly to those who believe themselves authoritative enough to order and direct a supposed equal’s action. They may remark explicitly that such behaviour carries the implication of an hierarchical relationship. Of course, relationships based in hierarchy do manifest themselves, especially between older and younger siblings, husbands and wives, a
husband and his wife's family etc. However, even in cases where the subordinate is compliant, they frequently criticize the other for treating them like a small child, or getting them like wan ass. Generally, adults vigorously defend their right to unfettered action and personal autonomy. Consequently an attempt to coerce another will often be interpreted as an act of eye-pass, a denial of one's personal integrity and dignity. Egalitarianism is thus a highly complex and, in some ways, contradictory or tenuous cluster of ideas and values. It implies both the repudiation of hierarchy through the defence of personal autonomy and the active maintenance of relatively solidary relationships through mutual engagement in task activity.

1.2 GENDER AND EGALITARIANISM

Ideologies of the egalitarian community are firmly embedded in the social and economic (i.e. domestic) organization of the community. Given that women and men are differently positioned vis-a-vis these social and domestic structures, their relation to the multiple ideologies of the egalitarian community also differ. In interaction, men and women invoke notions of community strategically and within the limits set by their relative social positions. When community is envisioned as structured in terms of an age-graded and gendered solidarity, women are likely to find themselves in a disempowered position relative to senior men. In such cases women often respond with claims to autonomy, that is, an alternate way of understanding the egalitarian community (for an example see Pria's remarks in chapter 6).

There are two important points to make on the relations between gender and egalitarianism. In the first case, it should be noted that a woman's position within the community envisioned in terms of an age-graded and gendered solidarity is not solely determined by her gender. Some
women are the heads of their own households and tend to frame interaction in terms of age-grading and asymmetrical obligation as frequently as do men in a similar position. Notions of autonomy, on the other hand, are more often used by those in a relatively disempowered positions. Although this group often includes women, particularly the wives of men who live in their patrilocal yard, it also includes junior men and children. Gender is thus not a category which can be understood in isolation from other kinds of social and economic categories. This said, given that there is a dominant system of marriage and kinship which structures the domestic organization of most households, certain generalizations about women in the village can be made. In fact, if we want to explain patterns of variable pronoun usage for men and women it is necessary to look at both the predominant position of women and the exceptions to the rule (that is, we need to look at both the differences between men and women and the variation within each group, see chapter 5).

1.3 Socialization and Egalitarianism

Similar issues arise in the discussion of socialization. Here again I consider the way in which multiple notions of an egalitarian community are invoked in interaction. In an extended discussion, I discuss the possibilities for emphasizing autonomy on the one hand, and age graded and gendered solidarity on the other in interactions with children. In socializing practices, such as elicitations, caregivers model projected scenes in which the child is expected to occupy a particular social role. These routines and forms of interaction provide the child with an opportunity to play out social relations based in both conceptions of the egalitarian community. This kind of social learning is thus important to the reproduction of the dynamic
tension between ideas about autonomy, on the one hand, and age-graded and gendered solidarity, on the other.

1.4 BETWEEN PRACTICE AND IDEOLOGY - THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

Participants to an interaction rarely, if ever, say “I am autonomous” or some local equivalent. Nor do they say “you are obliged to do this for me because I am your big-brother.” That is to say, they rarely invoke notions of the egalitarian community using explicit means. The reasons for this are not entirely clear. However, it suffices to say that speakers use other devices for achieving these interactional goals. One means to this end that I have found to be very common is the linguistic construction of lived space. The way people are related to particular spaces is an index of more general social relations and participants exploit this potential in framing interaction. We thus find speakers, at various times, attempting to locate themselves, through a variety of linguistic means including deixis, in spaces which they claim to own or to which they claim some privileged access. Related to this linguistic characterization of space is bodily comportment. Movements of the body involve, minimally, access to the immediate space which it is inhabiting (and inhabiting in a certain manner). Gestures, postures, and movements can also index multiple notions of egalitarianism in addition to performing a number of other conversational functions. These issues come together with the emphasis on gendering practice in my discussion socialization and caregiver strategies (chapter 7 and 8).

1.5 THE SPEECH COMMUNITY RECONSIDERED - MORE METHODOLOGICAL PRECAUTIONS

In Learning How to Ask, Briggs (1986) provided a groundbreaking analysis of the
interview as a culturally specific kind of speech event. The central argument of that work, as I understand it, was that competence in the interactional roles and metalinguistic cues associated with the interview was unequally distributed across different speech communities. The use of the interview in communities where it is not recognized as a distinct speech event thus realizes a set of power relations and, at the same time, reproduces a kind of scientific hegemony. In later work, Briggs has developed a notion of speech community and language ideology which emphasizes not only the differences between, but also the differences within, particular groups. He writes (1992:388):

I will argue against viewing ideologies of language simply as part of the linguistic background shared by members of a speech community. I will suggest that such a perspective is not only empirically unsound and unenlightening but also enters into the process through which scholars naturalize their own interpretive authority.

Briggs develops his position as a critique of Rosaldo's (1982) paper. He suggests (1992:388) that:

like a number of students of linguistic ideology, she presents Ilongot thinking about language in essentialist terms, positing a single linguistic ideology that would seem to be distributed homogeneously throughout the community.

In opposition to such us/them ideas about linguistic ideology, Briggs (1992:388) argues that:

ideologies of language are socially distributed. I would argue, however, that the relationship between contrastive ideologies and social differentiation is vastly more complex than a mere correlation would suggest. It is not simply the case that men conceive of language in X terms and women in Y or that shamans assert Z about language.

In the preceding pages, I have argued that such a view might be extended to the notion of speech community itself and that social actors are not in complete agreement about the ways in which the speech community and its norms are constituted. With Briggs, I want to argue that ideologies of community are socially distributed and that these contrastive ideologies cannot be
easily assigned, one-to-one, with some identifiable social group within a given community. Rather, people participate in each other's linguistic ideologies. They tacitly ratify them in conversation to suit their own ends, that is, strategically. Besides this, members of the group I am discussing share a great deal in terms of knowledge and beliefs about speech and language (i.e. linguistic ideology). However, this body of shared knowledge, this linguistic ideology, is neither wholly consistent nor neutral. By inconsistent, I mean to say that it contains within it contradictions - like the one between solidarity and autonomy - which participants can manipulate in interaction, first stressing one aspect, then another. When I say it is not neutral, I mean that it expresses and realizes relations of power and privilege in the community. This raises a number of methodological problems to which I now turn.

If linguistic ideologies (and power) are socially distributed with differences being manifest both between anthropologist and subject group (Briggs 1986) and within the subject group itself, we must, as researchers, be careful to recognize just whose metacommunicative devices (Briggs 1986:53,83) we are employing in our research methodologies (and whose interests they serve, i.e., who they frame as authoritative, irrational, etc.) Given the existence of multiple notions of how the speech community is constituted, researchers should be aware of the potential for multiple norms and multiple metacommunicative strategies, each intimately tied to relations of power and authority.

This danger is compounded by the fact that, when researchers enter a field site, they are likely to encounter the dominant speech community ideologies first since its proponents are usually in the most powerful and most public social positions. The temptation at this point is to focus on acquisition, and to avoid distraction by seemingly deviant norms and usages. How
many authoritative anthropological voices have been built on the borrowed authority of an old and respected shaman, a chief or a local politician? Such political figures are often at pains to impose their own reading of the speech community. And of course, in so far as this is the dominant (or hegemonic) ideology, backed by significant resources (political, military, economic), other members of the group are likely to ratify the anthropologist’s choice to study the “authenticated” representation of their “culture”.

Ideologies of language have the capacity to naturalize relations of power. When they are naively absorbed into anthropological methodology, anthropologists participate in the reproduction of those power relations. Consider, for example, the emphasis on named speech events in the ethnography of speaking (Hymes 1968[1962]). Such an approach does not acknowledge that lexicalization patterns are sensitive to the social distribution power as well as to objective differences between the referents. In Guyana, for instance, women’s talk about others who are not present is often referred to as talk name. Talking name is considered a feminine activity despite the fact that men engage in very similar verbal activity. When a group of men are asked what they are doing in such cases, the normal answer is abi a gyaf “We’re just chatting”. I once made a serious faux pas when, in the midst of a friendly conversation where I was asked “what do you think of person X” (a person my interlocutors were at the time denigrating), I responded mi na waan taak neem “I don’t want to talk name.” The person who had asked me was a major political player and a senior man in the village. He looked shocked and replied mi na taak neem bai - mi oonli aks wa yu tink “I don’t talk name - I only asked what you think.” The unintended implication of my remark was that the men were engaging in womanly/feminine behaviour. Of course, such ideologies not only legitimize male “gossip”, they
also trivialize evaluative talk by women (an important mode of social control in the village). Ideologies of this kind can be invoked to make women seem essentially petty, divisive and backbiting. While I am not denying that some practices that women engage in fall within the semantic field covered by a term like talk name, I argue that such metalinguistic terminology is necessarily ideological and embedded in relations of power. Terms such as talk name gender practice and the participants engaged.

Methodological sophistication (cf. Briggs 1986) then, depends on the researcher attending not only to possible communicative hegemonies between groups but also within them. The naive acceptance of named speech events and dominant linguistic ideologies can lead to the reproduction of existing power relations and the preservation of existing stereotypes in the scholarly literature (an issue to which I return in the conclusion).

1.6 Variation, Discourse and Self-Comportment

It seems fair to assume that disciplinary boundaries have been erected along the lines defined by a dominant linguistic ideology in the western intellectual culture (Rumsey 1990). Thus we divide up the labour of studying referential meaning and structure (the linguists), from that of studying usage (the variationists, the sociolinguists), from that of studying practice and behaviour (the linguistic anthropologists and conversational analysts). While there is obviously some leakage between these disciplines, it is not hard to find people that will defend both the “reality” of the classification (in the facts) and its heuristic value. While there are a few exceptions (Rickford 1979, Eckert 1989, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1995), most studies focus on one or another aspect of the total linguistic/communicative fact. Very few studies have
attempted to integrate these lines of inquiry (cf. Eckert 1997 for a recent example, also Ochs 1986). In this work, I suggest that a complete understanding of variation cannot be understood without reference to the way in which variants are part of larger stretches of discourse. Without an understanding of what social and interactional work variants do in texts we are not able to explain their distribution. But the issue goes deeper than this. To paraphrase John Haviland (1986), anthropologists, like the speakers they study, meet words, not abstracted from the everyday lives of social actors, but in the course of doing work, achieving social ends and pursuing interactional goals. To separate out on or another aspect as the most legitimate is necessarily subtractive. While such methods may fit well with the dominant linguistic ideology of North American academic culture, they often clash with the expectations and beliefs of the people studied. In this work (beginning in Chapter 4) I have attempted to show the way in which villagers’ understanding and awareness of language and language variation is intimately tied to their understanding of both social acts and social actors. Villagers do not readily accept the separation of “linguistic variety” from the everyday uses to which it is put. Discussions about people’s attitudes towards “creole”, “English”, “AAVE” or some other variety, abstracted from the uses to which they are put, are thus somewhat misguided and artificial in many contexts. For the villagers I discuss in this work, Creolese is not an abstract code but a way of being, acting, seeing and feeling - it is, in Bourdieu’s (1977) words, a habitus. People thus display competence in Creolese not only through mastery of a grammar but also in ways of holding the body, in postures, gestures, glances, and even in precisely timed rhythmic inhalations. Speaking, being part of this complete body hexis, is corporeal and is properly studied in the context of the body and its movements. As Briggs (1992:399) reminds us, our
own scholarly terminology often characterizes communicative practice in a way that is completely at odds with native realities:

It would be highly inaccurate [...] to suggest that such “linguistic ideologies” refer exclusively to dimensions of linguistic structure and use. These ideologies focus just as squarely on social relations, particularly social inequality, concepts of the person, epistemological categories, and the like. It may thus be misleading to speak in a comparative vein either “linguistic ideologies” or “ideologies of language” in view of the fact that these ideologies will often encompass cultural foci that appear quite extraneous. If analysts simply pull out those elements that conform to their definitions of language and linguistics, the character of these ideologies - and particularly their functional relations with the discourse practices in which they emerge - will be displaced by an empirically and theoretically impoverished caricature that offers the advantage of ready incorporation into existing analytic frameworks. We have certainly become sufficiently sophisticated to know that we cannot look for direct counterparts to analytic concepts in situated discourse practices, whether in Western or non-Western societies. I fear that referring to ideologies that regulate and empower discursive strategies as “linguistic ideologies” may excuse researchers from exploring dimensions that extend beyond even a broader definition of the term “linguistic.”

While we should, then, be conscious of the fact that formal variation and the exploitation of heteroglossia provides “metalinguistic means through which members demonstrate their competence, as well as validate others’, in a speech community” (Jacobs-Huey 1997), we should also not lose sight of the way in which such devices are integrated into a more complete set of semiotic strategies. Furthermore, as I argue in Chapter 5, it is important that we rethink language variation itself in terms of the socialized and gendered body and local expectations for self-comportment.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENT WORK

In Chapter 2, I introduce the village, focussing on historical developments which have led to the overwhelming importance of rice farming and particular forms of social and economic organization. Specifically, I trace the development of patrilocal groups in the village and point
to the ways in which they now come into conflict with the system of wage labour. In this chapter, I introduce the analytically important notion of a qualified egalitarianism. In the second chapter, I also introduce the spaces of the house, the yard and the road and discuss their ideological importance.

Chapter 3 discusses my personal and professional relation to the village, its spaces and its inhabitants. I have tried to give an account of the way in which the fieldwork was itself co-structured and co-authored by particular village members. I also discuss the importance of race and gender in the village with specific reference to my own negotiated and emergent social location.

Chapters 4 and 5 are concerned with the language varieties spoken in the villages. In the first, I give a brief structural description of the most focussed varieties before moving to discuss native perspectives on the language and the variation contained therein. In Chapter 5, I turn to a quantitative analysis of pronominal variation focussing on the effects of gender. Here, I give a pragmatically and ethnographically based solution to a quantitative problem of inconsistency. In these chapters, I also lay the ground for a more contextual account of language use in the village.

Chapter 6 develops the contextual approach to language with an in-depth analysis of a particular text. Here I give an account of women’s struggles against restrictions on their movement. I am concerned to show the way in which two women collaboratively produce oppositional frameworks in the course of challenging the dominant ideology regarding women’s rights to movement and the gendering of space. Thus, while this chapter further develops the account of language-use in relation to gender and spatial organization which I introduce in
Chapter 4 and 5, it also serves as an introduction to the last two chapters which focus on language socialization.

Chapters 7 and 8 are concerned with the reproduction of spatial organization and ideologies of community through socializing linguistic and cultural practices. In the first of these two chapters, I look at the manipulation of children’s bodies as a precursor to later regulations on the movement of bodies through space. I argue that even before they become competent users of language, children receive an education in the ideologies of autonomy and age-graded solidarity. I then turn to linguistic strategies in the socialization process including teasing and shaming. This then leads to a discussion of the social construction of gender in adolescence, looking at the way in which the contexts of everyday life change dramatically for boys, on the one hand, and girls, on the other, as they make the transition to adulthood. This chapter concludes with discussion of local ideologies of communication and the role they play in the socialization process. Finally, in the last substantive chapter, I look at one kind of language socialization practice: elicitations. In such routines caregivers model projected scenes for novice language-users. These routines provide detailed characterizations of “typified” acts of speaking. Through such interactions children learn about the meanings of kinship, spatial organization and language use and the way the three phenomena are interrelated. In the conclusion I return to the overarching themes of the work in a consideration of ideological hegemony, linguistic practice and modes of resistance.
CHAPTER TWO
THE VILLAGE: RHYTHMS OF WORK AND THE CULTURE OF LIVED SPACES

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Just beyond the Mahaicony River, on the road which leads through East Coast Demerara to Berbice, is a string of four unusually bright "lively" villages - Huntley, Airy Hall, Dundee and Novar. Some three miles from this road, along sometimes treacherously muddy backdams, lies the village of Champagne. This cluster of settlements forms the focus of the present study of linguistic practices and language socialization in rural Guyana.

Despite a rather particular history, the villages in the area, at least superficially, resemble others up the East Coast (cf. map 2.2). Along the road are the biggest houses. A few are grand even by North American standards, with high fences locking in cars, trucks, tractors and trucks along with the house. More common are the two-story painted wooden or cement block houses which belong to the more or less well-to-do people of the road. Often these people have a shop, or minor clerking jobs or, perhaps, wealthy relatives living outside ("living in America or Canada"). Behind these houses are about a hundred one and two bedroom houses that belong to working people. These wooden houses are usually raised on stilts to keep from being flooded. The bottom house is a hard-packed mud floor that is daubed every week. It is here that a family will spend most of its day with the man, if he is home from work, in the hammock, the wife cooking at a fireside or upstairs on a green stove and the children and friends, visitors and kin coming and going. When the man is out, the women will often gather
to sit and gyaf here in the cool shade of the house after the morning work of washing out and cooking breakfast (the mid-day) meal is done. Two can comfortably recline in a hammock together to talk.

The village itself is divided into locally recognized spaces quite clearly indicated on map 2.1.
People generally accord the road a prominent position in their descriptions of the village and M., the author of this map, began by drawing in the road through the centre of the page. Inland, the village is bounded by the old railway line, now simply referred to as "the line" which is actually a canal carrying water from the Lamaha Conservancy to the fields of rice and gardens kept by the villagers. Seaside, the village is bounded by the canal. Eastern and Western boundaries are marked by the dams which are both tracks into the agricultural areas and waterways used for drainage and eventually leading to the sea kokers. Within this one village we calculated that there were about 600 people resident at the time.

2.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Somewhat of an anomaly, the area remained relatively unpopulated and untouched by the ravages of a colonial regime hungry for land, productivity, people and profit. Colonisation of the area was so insignificant that Schomburgk, whose A Description of British Guiana was published in 1840, devotes only a short paragraph to it:

The hamlet of MAHAICONI, on the small river of the same name, consists of about thirty houses, with tradesmen and shops of different descriptions. Some settlements are springing up near the small river Abari; and as the high road from Georgetown to New Amsterdam leads through these villages, they are chiefly recommendable for industrious emigrants (1840:76).

Of course, by the time Schomburgk wrote his description, one colonial venture, the production of cotton, had already been attempted and, by all accounts, failed due to falling international prices. Rodway (1897:76), the most prolific contemporary historian of colonial life in Guyana, wrote:

The downfall of cotton was most disastrous to those concerned in its planting. Three-fourths of the coast estates were abandoned altogether and have remained uncultivated
ever since. All that long stretch between the Berbice River and the Corentyne, as well as the Mahaicony Coast, once glowed with the flowers of that handsome shrub, and some cotton estates turned into cattle farms on the East Coast have remained uncultivated since its downfall.

Plantations were abandoned and the area was left in the state described by Schomburgk for some time. Meanwhile, in other parts of British Guiana, planters continued to invest in sugar plantations and the labourers needed to keep such an industry "profitable." East Indian indentured labourers became the planters' worker of choice in the colony, and a course was set in which a strong historical association between "the coolie" and sugar cane would be established in the minds of many the colony's residents. With the end of slavery in 1833 came the establishment of free African villages such as Buxton and the emergence of a particularly African cultural adaptation to "free" life in colonial Guyana (see Bartels 1977, Moore 1995, Rodney 1981, Williams 1984). That the contemporary socio-cultural and socio-linguistic situation owes much to these developments has been well documented by other researchers (cf. Jayawardena 1963, 1968, R.T. Smith 1995, Williams 1991, Despres 1967, 1970, 1975a, 1975b, Rickford 1987b) and is not in question here. However, the Mahaicony region (and possibly parts of West Coast Berbice, cf. Silverman 1976, 1978, 1979, 1980) remains anomalous with respect to this general historical path. In 1883, a number of East Indians acquired the Estates of Dundee and Novar and began to plant rice, setting the region on its own particular historical trajectory. This was not a world of drivers and plantation overseers. Instead, it became the world of East Indian corporate family groups tied together by relations of friendship, kinship and competition.
2.1.1 The History of Rice Farming in Guyana and the East Indian Family as Corporate Group

The colonial history of the Mahaicony area would have perhaps remained unremarkable had it not been for the inevitable cycles of international economic crisis that plague capitalist modes of accumulation (Harvey 1989). It was largely the international market that caused the failure of the monocrop plantations of the area and the fortunes of their owners, although environmental conditions, labor problems and conflict between colonial powers also assisted in this. As it was, however, and as Rodway (1897) notes, by the mid-nineteenth century, the estates of the Mahaica-Abary region had fallen into ruin. The planters had left, the labourers had been removed, and the once rich, husbanded agricultural land had turned to bush. Given the rather precarious position of sugar in world markets, planters must have been reticent, if not completely incapable, of turning these abandoned estates to large-scale cane production. In fact, in other areas at the time, most planters were content to ride out the chronic labour shortages and falling prices by maintaining a stripped down production process (Rodney 1981).

It was in this context that a group of East Indians, some from Windsor Forest, others from Haarlem and Cane Grove, all having completed the terms of their indenture, bought the land of Novar Estate for 54 an acre in 1883 along with two Africans (Potter 1975). The land had been surveyed and divided into plots in 1880, and it is likely that rice was already under cultivation there by that time. Although it is impossible to fix the date at which rice-growing actually began in the region, it is apparent that, within a few years of buying the land, East Indians, who had now bought out the original African partners, were the cultivators of flourishing rice fields which were often pointed to as a great success by white colonials.
William Russell (1886) gave a lengthy description of the rice production process in these early East Indian villages. He concludes his discussion by drawing attention to Novar and Dundee:

Harvest arrived, with need of additional hands, to reap the crop while it was crisp and dry; and here came the first clash between manager and rice grower, the one wishing to keep his mill supplied, the other wanting to save his rice. I decided in favour of the rice grower, as the reaping was not likely to employ too long a time. The workers, with a small toothed reaping hook, smaller in size but much the same as the now obsolete tool formerly used for reaping in the old country, cut the head of grain off with about
a foot of stalk, which being made into small sheaves after remaining in the sun for a time, were finally conveyed to the barn, a rough structure thatched with cane bands. A stake was driven into the ground at one end of the barn; by freely ramming the surrounding earth, a threshing floor was secured say about 12 feet in diameter. The bullocks were yoked close together and made to walk round this stake, while sheaf after sheaf was thrown under their feet and shaken up so as to bring every part under the tread of their feet. It was simply astonishing how quickly the grain was by this means separated from the straw, the paddy being from time to time swept into heaps and put into bags, for the winnowing operations. This was done in a clear space, exposed to the wind, by the well known ancient system of letting fall from a sieve. The paddy once ready for market, a ready sale was found for it on the estate.

Harvest over, water was let on, and a fine ratoon crop came up as by magic, little inferior to the first. After reaping this crop, the land was again treated in exactly the same way by puddling as at first, of course the work being much easier.

For want of labour, in 1872 the rice cultivation ended. The whole of the above description can be applied to the venture in rice cultivation which has been carried on for several seasons on Novar and Dundee, in the Abary district, by the coolie proprietors of those estates (1886:106-107).

Despite Russell's allusions to "as by magic" and "much easier" (and his persistent omission of an agentive subject), it is obvious that such procedures were highly labour-intensive.

Traditional rice growing in Guyana required the labour of a large group of adults willing and able to work according to the needs of a seasonal growing cycle. Russell was one of a group of highly influential sugar planters who argued for the continued support of rice cultivation in Guyana by the colonial government.¹

While Russell and others tended to portray themselves as friends of the "coolies," in fact, their primary motive was once again to secure a labour force for sugar plantations. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, planters again faced a labour shortage (Potter 1982, Rodney 1981). The first and second waves of East Indian indentured labourers had now finished their service and most were looking for opportunities off the sugar estates (Potter

¹Some did not agree. A correspondent for the 'Daily Argosy' wrote in 1883: "[...] after crossing the Mahaicony the land is mainly devoted to rice-growing and cattle-rearing by small Indian proprietors, all presenting a dreary sight" (cited in Potter 1975:156).
1975, 1982). To import more indentured labourers, if possible, would be costly, so planters made every effort to maintain some hold on the labour force composed of ex-indentured labourers. One strategy was to allow these persons a plot of land on the estate which could be used for the cultivation of rice as a cash crop. Another was to encourage the establishment of East Indian rice-growing villages which were within a short distance of a plantation. Dundee and Novar became such villages. In comparison with the kinds of bitter struggles waged against emancipated Africans intent on securing land for the establishment of free villages, East Indians were encouraged by the local plantocracy, although this support did have its limits. The colonial government and the local plantocracy made every effort both to see that rice was established as a major crop in the colony and to insure that they maintained control over the market on which it was to be sold. To this end, the Rice Growing Company was established in the year of 1895 (Potter 1975). Its objectives were:

1. To acquire and empolder land (i.e. prepare it) for rice growing;
2. To grow the rice and/or let the land;
3. To erect a mill in Georgetown;
4. To purchase paddy, mill it and sell it; and
5. To assist, under certain conditions, individual efforts to grow rice.

The Rice Company was the first official body to argue for extensive “rationalization” of the rice-growing industry. Such processes had widespread effects on the political-economy and social organization of East Indian, rice-growing communities, and it is not surprising that the first steps were taken by eager colonials who believed they had discovered the East Indian’s “natural” calling.
After investigating several districts where rice was being cultivated by East Indians, and especially reporting enthusiastically on the progress being made at Novar, Mahaicony, the committee recommended that a block of land be selected on the Abary Creek, where a rice plantation would be set up, complete with all necessary reaping and threshing machinery and a pumping engine for drainage and irrigation purposes.

The planters reported that although the East Indians had done well to get the industry started, their methods were very primitive and they lacked the necessary implements for efficient production. The company’s plantation could be envisaged as a kind of demonstration model, and would provide an “object lesson” to the small growers (Potter 1975:239).

Well before the planter elite expressed any interest in rice and rice-growing, East Indian families were cultivating two or three crops a year on old estates and newly established village plots like those surrounding Novar and Dundee. But mechanization was to introduce new demands on rice growers in Guyana. As noted above, traditional rice-growing requires high investments of labour but relatively little in the way of cash outlay. It has been noted by several scholars (see particularly Despres 1967) that there was a good fit between the kinds of labour demands of traditional rice-growing and the East Indian family or household group. Despres (1967: 89) writes:

The pattern of these economic activities is functionally related to (the) kinship structures [...]. Rice cultivation is primarily a family proposition. This is particularly the case among sugar workers who combine wage employment with cash crop farming.

Families combined into larger patrilocal corporate groups of the sort described by Despres (1967). With a group of this size, rice cultivation on a large-scale could be managed efficiently and cost effectively. Oral reports confirm that such corporate groups did function as both economic and as religious units. In the early nineteenth century, residents of Dundee still performed the Gau Puja/gau puuja/ “village ritual”) in large corporate groups.
Old people say that when they were small it was usual for the village to do a yearly work called the Gau Puja. Gau, they say, means village and this was the work that would enlist the help of one or more deodats (i.e. divinities) in protecting the village from wrong and misfortune. The site of the work was some boundary. People would kill one or two goats for the "boundarymaster". All the men would attend - black, Moslem and Hindu. Today the boundarymaster no longer protects the village as a whole. Instead, he hangs on trees in a particular yard and the house owner must do his work alone. It has become a guarded and secretive ritual. At night, the man will go out and offer a prayer for the house and family. Offerings are made of white rum, bread, cheese and cigarettes. Many people consider this work dangerous - if one forgets or lapses, for whatever reason, the boundarymaster is likely to "get vex" and will hold onto a house member. In such cases, it is necessary to bring in a medium who is able to contact the spirit and become its voice. The village work has become individual work and the boundaries have been redrawn ritually around the house where they used to be around the village. A work that was once done for the safety of all members of the community has become a dangerous individual venture. When I ask why this has happened the oldest man in the village tells me that nowadays people can afford to do the work themselves and when one person does the work they receive more blessing - the blessing is more concentrated (Fieldnotes, II:23).

The dissolution of such corporate groupings was never completed and they are today still important for the organization of ritual, work and authority as I show later in this chapter. However, colonial observers considered such traditional rice cultivation methods and labour organization both inefficient and "primitive." The first moves made toward mechanization, however, yielded disappointing results (Hanley 1975, 1979). Between 1909 and 1915, the colonial government, working with American capital, granted extensive concessions along the Abary creek and inland from coastal villages. After some problems with the equipment, rice was cultivated along a tract of 7920 acres. With the coming of World War I, the Americans left and East Indian tenants took over the land, returning to traditional methods of cultivation:

But the example was not lost, for in the same year an East Indian with a 99-year lease of 602 acres on the Mahaicony Creek, imported a tractor and ploughs. He had laid out what was described as a 'well-organised estate with pumping station, irrigation trenches and a complete rice-milling plant...with several large ranges for the accommodation of labourers'. Although others did not readily follow his example, and
it was to be some years before ‘mechanical appliances’ replaced animal power, the general level of cultivation among the East Indian farmers improved considerably by 1915 (Potter 1975:297).

In a report which argued for continued mechanization of the rice producing sector in Guyana, Douglas, nevertheless, described the American venture as “ill-fated and unsuccessful (1930:37).” However, he did note that one enterprising cultivator had adopted many of the mechanical innovations successfully:

A most interesting visit was paid to the property owned by Jugdio Bros., on the Mahaicony River, on both sides of which considerable areas are sown to rice. This venture occupied two years; but by means of this canal, coupled with pumping plant installed on the banks of the river, it is possible to irrigate a considerable area of land in times of deficient rainfall. Here also the maximum development was observed in the application of cultivating machinery consisting of tractor-operated ploughs and harrows, mechanical threshers, and reapers and binders—all, be it noted, of American origin.

The Abary River rice scheme was, incidentally, promoted by Americans, and it is rather more than probable that the Mahaicony idea of mechanical tillage, harvesting and threshing, together even with some of the earlier tractors themselves, was derived from that ill-starred venture (1930:37-38).

The experiments in mechanization at Abary and in West Coast Berbice, although not themselves wholly successful, had the effect of ushering in a new way of rice cultivation in Guyana. After the experience at Abary, a number of farmers began to modernize the cultivation process. In this way, people like Jugdio not only improved the quality of the rice grown, but also greatly expanded the scale of production. The turn to mechanization had wide-ranging economic and social consequences. First of all, it tended to edge out the small producer or patrilocal extended family in favour of larger landholders who could use mechanized technology more efficiently. Those small producers who did embrace mechanization were unlikely to get adequate return on their investments (Hanley 1975, 1979). But more often than not, small producers (those farming between 3-10 acres) would not have been able to put up the cash
outlays involved in mechanized production. Tractors, pesticides, insecticides, specialized paddies, etc. - this was a very different business from the one described by Russell in the late nineteenth century. As small producers were edged out, and small-scale production became increasingly less cost-efficient, a few corporate groups began to buy up rice land and continued to modernize the production process and increase the scale of production. Big rice farmers turned more and more to wage labour. The overall effect was the establishment of two relatively stable, interrelated, labour systems - one based on wage labour and class relations, the other based on domestic labour, kinship and family based corporate groups.

Depending on their commitments, scholars tend to see the East Indian cultivators in Guyana as very conservative or as particularly modern. Thus, Potter (1975:297) suggests that:

The diffusion of new ideas and techniques into the traditional industry of rice-growing was bound to be a slow process with the conservative East Indians. The millers with their strictly commercial approach encouraged the move away from subsistence attitudes.

On the other hand, Hanley (1979:175-179) argues:

There can be no doubt that the traditional system was extremely arduous and made heavy demands on the members of the family and neighbours, so that most people were quite happy to move to a more convenient form of production...In addition there were status elements involved in the move to more modern cultivation methods. The tractor came to be seen by farmers as the symbol of modernity and progress, with the result that to have such a machine parked conspicuously underneath the house became just as much a status symbol as the motor car parked in front of the suburban house, and in neither case was very much attention paid to how effectively the expenditure could be justified... Although farmers still speak nostalgically about the old system, the women are almost universally glad that it has passed, since they had to do so much of the planting and reaping in addition to their usual household duties and many state that they would never go back to the fields again...anyone choosing to revert to traditional methods when mechanized ones are available would risk ridicule and derision from fellow farmers.

It would seem that Potter and Hanley are talking about two quite different situations and, in
fact, their remarks are directed to periods separated by fifty years. However, it is more important, I think, to recognize the validity of both descriptions and the possibility that two value systems were operating within a larger economy. The conservativeness of East Indian farmers can be at least partially attributed to the facts of structural integration, whereby family structure, community organization and rice production are all functionally interrelated. On the other hand, the keenness with which modernity, in the form of the tractor and other tools for mechanization, was embraced is more obviously linked to the emerging cash economy, wage labour system and associated systems of hierarchical status distinction and class alignment.

2.1.2 WHY RICE?

With the exception of the large-scale production schemes, rice-growing is no longer a highly profitable business in Guyana (Hanley 1979). The turn to mechanization and the move away from traditional forms of labour organization meant that input costs began to outweigh returns for small cultivators. In a series of articles, Hanley (1975, 1979) has attempted to explain the reasons for continued government and international aid support for rice-growers in the face of a growing recognition that such agricultural projects are no longer economically viable. Also in question is the devotion of agriculturalists to rice despite the fact that three quarters of them had total incomes below the US target for aid assistance of G$600 (US$270) in 1980. Hanley (1987) suggests four interrelated reasons for the continuing importance of rice and small-scale cultivation in Guyana. Of particular importance are the vast infrastructural investments that have already been made by Guyanese and colonial governments as well as by small and large-scale producers. These include the extensive systems of drainage and irrigation in the form of canals, kokers, sluices and water conservancies as well as machinery such as
pumps, tractors, combines and even small airplanes. Another aspect of the preexisting infrastructure is the bureaucratic and informal organization of productive activity in the form of farmers’ committees, millers’ associations and rice-growers’ lobbies. Added to this base are the historical developments which have taken place in reaction to the plantation society. Plantation agriculture had an enormous and long-lasting effect on the Guyanese economy, such that most productive activity is focussed on export value rather than on local, national use- this despite the efforts of PNC governments to create a self-sufficient peasantry in the 70's and 80's (the “feed, clothe and house” campaign cf. Premdas 1995). Hanley further notes the strong relations between ethnic ideology and certain kinds of productive activity. “Indianness” has become strongly associated with rice-farming such that to grow rice is in fact a performance of “Indianness” (Hanley 1987).

For farmers, justification for rice growing, even on a small scale, is found in the fact that it allows one to live and work without the constant presence of a bossman (especially since the emergence of mechanized cultivation). To be able to “work to please oneself” is a goal many Guyanese, farmers or otherwise, hope to achieve. Such an emphasis on autonomy has far-reaching consequences for social process, as I detail in the following chapters.

2.2 CONTEMPORARY ECONOMIES

The situation in Mahaicony is perhaps rather different from that in other rural areas. Mahaicony was one of the very first areas to see mechanized production and the commercialization of the rice industry seems to have advanced furthest here as a result. Today very few people are small independent cultivators (unlike say Black Bush Polder). Instead, most
are wage labourers, working for the few people (or companies) that have large holdings in the area. One such producer is Mankad. He lives in the village, owns the mill, hundreds of acres of rice land and rents out as much more from others. A few others grow on a large, yet not quite so impressive, scale. There are also the large government schemes. Of course, there are still a few small-scale producers who rely on friends and family members to assist at shai (/shai/ “sowing rice”) and cut (/kot/ “harvesting rice”) times. The returns here are minimal and all the small producers that I know supplement their rice-growing income with a number of other activities.

For most people, the rhythm of work is very regular despite the variety of productive activities in which villagers involve themselves. The character of the village and the movement of bodies through it changes throughout the course of the day. In most cases, it is the woman (eldest daughter or mother) who wakes first to put on rice and begin sweeping out the dead and dying mosquitoes and cockles that litter the floor. Soon after, the men wake and go to clean their teeth on the road or from the back porch. As the trucks, minibuses, cars and bicycles come out onto the road, the hum of activity grows more intense. People appear at landings, toothbrush in hand, calling out marnin “morning” and wa hapm “what’s up.” Groups of men gather by the road to smoke cigarettes and read the paper while women start to ready the children for school. A few well-dressed individuals stand up to stop transportation into Georgetown. Inevitably, some gyaf is initiated concerning the day’s activities, work to be found and/or who made noise (was talking hard) the night before. As the trucks come out, labouring men hurriedly drink tea (usually one or two roti, curry and a hot drink) and catch a ride to their work site in the rice fields. After the men leave, the women get a chance to take tea and gyaf
something with a neighbour. Children have to be dressed and escorted to school before the
work of washing out the house, daubing the floor, attending to gardens and fetching eggs can
start. With the labouring men gone, by about seven or eight o’clock the pace begins to slow
somewhat. Some women work as domestics in other people’s houses and they will hurry to
clean out their own house so as to free up the rest of the day for wage labour. The carpenters
and shop owners, the men that work in Georgetown, line the road waiting for minivans to carry
them up to town or down to Berbice. Women often make one or two stops in the morning by a
friend’s house to talk name or story (i.e. gossip) and get the latest news. Throughout the day,
carts pass carrying greens or fish or clothing, and perhaps some religious pictures. The more
confident will call for the cart to enter the yard while others rush to the road carrying bags.

Sometime in the afternoon, the rice workers return from work. Many, if not most, stop
by one of the rumshops strung along the road. Now is a time for serious talk as well as the
joking banter of male peer groups. If their wives don’t send someone to fetch them earlier, men
usually make their way home for dinner around five or six o’clock, by which time the curry and
rice are waiting. The women have spent the afternoon hours in gyaf, cleaning and cooking, etc..
Table 2.1 gives an account of the variety of income producing strategies which members of a
single household may engage in.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2.1 SUMMARY OF INCOME-PRODUCING STRATEGIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>ITEM OR ACTIVITY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greens/Kitchen Garden</td>
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<td>Creole Fowl</td>
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<td>TABLE 2.1 SUMMARY OF INCOME-PRODUCING STRATEGIES</td>
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<td><strong>White Fowl</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Duck</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Sheep or Goat</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Cow</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Fishing</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Roadside Stand</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Household specialities</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Box (a local lottery)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Table 2.1 Summary of Income-Producing Strategies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Garden</strong></td>
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<td>The gardening business can’t make you rich! There are the usual problems of supply and demand (on national, regional, and personal levels - if you sell 100 lb shallot everybody wants them, if you sell 500 lb you have to carry them home with you). A single gardener is able to plant about 100 lb shallot every 8 weeks (14 beds) which will yield about $100,000 if they sell at top price ($100/lb), but there are a number of complicating factors besides those of the market, including neighbours, animals eating them out, drought, problems with transportation to market. A number of expenses must also be accounted for, including fertilizer, disease spray, land transportation, labour for weeding. All in all, the average full-time gardener is probably lucky if he/she makes the (lower) average day-pay of $500-1000.</td>
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<td><strong>Jobwork</strong></td>
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<td>Most frequently, this refers to bagging and loading paddy the payment for which rarely exceeds $15 a bag resulting in a daily pay of $500-800. This usually leaves a substantial portion of the day free for other activities which makes it particularly attractive for younger men who want to spend at least some of the afternoon lining by the road. Jobwork also includes weeding, for which people usually receive between $500-1500 for a half day’s work. Contract jobs are also considered “job work”. This includes carpentry and major public works (weeding and cleaning trenches, building kokers and bridges, etc.). Payment usually works out to about $1200/day for a workman and $2000 for a bossman.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Daywork</strong></td>
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<td>Private and government rice producers usually pay by the day. Bosses and workmen usually receive the same $600/day (bosses are required to do less manual work) at private firms. The work is regular and there is the opportunity to make overtime pay (1 ½). Government producers pay less ($450-550/day), but the work is lighter and there is more job security and benefits (including paid holidays and sick days). Women also do daywork. This is usually domestic labour in one of the big houses. Payment for work gendered feminine is considerably lower, rarely exceeding $200-300/day.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Salaried Employment</strong></td>
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<td>This includes salaried employment with government (offices, schools, inspectors) and private businesses (insurance being the most common, and some rice executive jobs). The local government employs at least two people to run the village office as well as nurses, medics and, of course, teachers. Payment is minimal with junior teachers earning about $500/day and headmasters about $2000/day. The more prestigious jobs (such as working for the regional chairman) usually pay much better (between 2500-4000/day) and often include “side moneys”.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shop</strong></td>
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<td>Owning and operating one’s own shop is the aspiration of many villagers. It does not involve the kind of acquiescence to extra-local authority as do the jobs cited as “salaried employment”, but at the same time, carries with it a good deal of social and material rewards. Shops can be quite profitable if they have local backing in the form of capital, patronage and the willingness of the local authorities to turn a blind eye to small infractions (operating without a liquor licence). Well-to-do families will often set up a shop. If the woman is to run it, the shop will carry all kinds of provisions, perhaps a few articles of clothing and often drinks and biscuits. If the man is to manage the shop, it will most likely be a rumshop with his friends and male family being the primary patrons.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rice Land</strong></td>
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<td>The problems and possibilities of rice producers have already been discussed and will not be repeated here.</td>
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2.3 THE PUBLIC FACE OF KINSHIP - PORTRAITS OF THREE PATRILOCAL GROUPS

Despite changes in the organization of labour, the traditional communal and patrilocal system is still very much a part of the social character of the village. Thus, while the main areas of productive labour are not organized around the corporate group of a patrilocally extended family, many other kinds of work and activity are. House-painting, various construction projects, car mechanic work, and tomb-building will often involve men who belong to an old corporate group (or two allied ones). More pronounced, perhaps, is the assembly of corporate groups at various kinds of religious work, including death rites, jandhi and the various pujas.

Despite the well known and often cited expression *aal abi a wan famalii* “All of us are family,” people have a fairly firm sense of who they can, and, who they can’t, call family. Thus although the notion of family is often fictively extended, the importance of “blood” is made quite explicit in everyday talk. This exclusive and corporate nature of family is expressed in the proverb *famlii stik a ben bo ii na brook* “the family-stick can bend but it can’t break.” As I discuss, with reference to a particular case, in the next chapter, such family solidarity is motivated, at least in part, by the recognition that the patrilocal group has a very public face. People in the village are not often considered in the singular - more often their actions are considered to be expressions of the family character. This public face of the patrilocal group has serious implications for its members. Political positions, favours, and respect all hinge on the name and reputation of the family. Besides its importance in terms of reputation, the patrilocal group figures prominently in the organization and distribution of both property and domestic authority. In the first case,

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² It should be noted that wage labour (day work or job work) is often done in “crews.” Rice producers do not hire individuals but groups of men who are used to working together. The composition of these crews usually shows the influence of patrilocal group allegiances.
although some groups are landless, patrilocal group property is still generally inherited by the sons. As I have discussed earlier, patrilocal group land holdings previously functioned as the main productive resources in a system of labour-intensive peasant agriculture. Today, few people still farm their patrilocal group land holdings (although there are exceptions - see below). With the move to wage labour, landholdings have thus become less important as economic resources. Often they have been sold or are rented out to large rice producers. Still, the idea of a patrilocal group landholding, embodied most obviously in the sentiments attached to the yard, is of central cultural importance. The rights to houses, house plots, and yards are reckoned in terms of patrilocal group membership. The death of a younger, propertyed male is often followed by a number of disputes in which relatives make claim and counter-claim to various properties. In the case of older household heads, the structure of authority between younger and older siblings has usually had time to work itself out and disputes are avoided. But land in the village is more than an economic resource. It is central to an individual’s sense of personal identity. Kinship and other kinds of social relations are continually expressed and realized in the daily movements of people through the spaces of the village (Chapters 6-8).

The patrilocal group is also, of course, vital to the organization of domestic authority. Because they hold property in common, members of the group often have a reason to meet and make decisions as a collective. During these meetings, one senses a tension between the official distribution of authority and the practical realization of social power. Officially, the oldest resident male is the household head (the patriarch). Practically, decisions are made not by a lone individual but through the alliance of several siblings. Members of a family will frequently, and quite openly, state that they have a favourite sibling. Often this is the one to whom they
are closest in age or, alternatively, the one to whom they feel maternal/paternal. These special affective bonds are important in politicking, and a favourite sibling can usually be called upon to champion one’s cause (in fact, it is expected and others will note that “those two stick together”). Despite the possibility for such strategic alliances, the ideology of age-graded and gendered solidarity is a powerful force structuring authority. It is expressed in a multitude of everyday activities, some of which I discuss in the following chapters.

Relations between patrilocal groups are also of great importance. It is here, in fact, that the public face of kinship is most obvious. Some groups are thought to be allied or otherwise linked while others are opposed. Relations of alliance between groups may come about through marriage, economic cooperation, childhood friendships, and are often reinforced through ritual. In such cases, the ideology of age-graded and gendered solidarity is extended to another family and children will be instructed to call this person “uncle” or “aunt.” In general the authority that senior adults and household heads draw from their domestic group is extended to non-kin relations. Thus, senior people often send out unrelated children on errands. Refusal to comply is inevitably interpreted as eye-pass “an act of flagrant disrespect.” This said, it is not hard to sense how the competing structures of hierarchy within groups and those between groups result in a tense field of social interaction. Thus, young members of the most powerful patrilocal groups will sometimes claim authority over much older members of lower-ranking

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Members of closely allied groups take a very active role in one another’s yearly religious work (sometimes serving as stand-in hosts, helpers, cooks etc.). During dead-work they often spend up to 13 days with the family. A special ritual day called rakii involves the making of special fictive kin bonds between women and the men they take as brothers by tying bracelets on their wrist.

Hindi kin terms are generally reserved for use with “actual” kin. The exception is boujii “brother’s sisters’s wife” which is often used creatively to express a relationship not so much to the woman but to her husband (i.e. brother).
patrilocal groups.

In conflict situations, members of a patrilocal group will attempt to rally support from their group. Although disputes often take place within the patrilocal group, when they occur between two groups they tend to be more public. Inevitably, at some point, the two families meet on the road to have it out. Such conflicts, though relatively infrequent, are remembered for a very long time and the relations of “not talking” that result sometimes extend over more than one generation.

The overall character of patrilocal groups varies along a number of dimensions including their size, their status, their level of internal integration and the degree to which they act as a corporate entity. Some patrilocal groups have even dissolved and their members, for all intents and purposes, are individuals. To give a sense of this varying importance of the patrilocal group, I now give three brief portraits.

2.3.1 **BOLO**

This is one of two families reviewed here that trace their patriline back to the original purchase of the estate in 1883. Although Bolo officially encompasses a number of other families (Bolo was father to four sons and three daughters), it is the family that now occupies his house that is most associated with his name and reputation. These are the children of Michael, Bolo’s youngest son. People report that Bolo was rich by local standards. The family had significant plots of rice land, a large yard and a fairly grand house. Bolo’s authority is also legendary in the village. During Michael’s time as household head, peasant rice farming was generally abandoned, and the first important steps towards wage labor were made. The family’s
fortunes gradually diminished. Today, the 11 living children of Michael occupy a range of social and economic positions. While Nancy and Shanka live in two of the smallest houses in the village and face periodic shortage, Kota and Joe both own relatively successful bakeries. Papso is a prominent local politician, construction boss, government employee and sweet-man. Dada has moved to America and occasionally sends remittances. The rest of the siblings occupy stable working class positions depending on the wages of at least one regular worker and a number of other supplementary forms of income. Although all members occasionally visit the family property and their mother who lives there, some are more involved than others. Gobin and Papso play an important role in the maintenance of the patrilocal group (which now extends over three generations) and its property (Michael's house and the yard). This is particularly true for Gobin because he lives on this property in his own house. Papso lives across the road. His involvement stems from his prominent role in the village and his fairly high position in the network of adult men. Many people consider him responsible for the family and the actions of its members. He takes on this role frequently and often acts as the final judge and arbiter in family disputes. Complainants seek him out to resolve any difference involving individual members of the patrilocal group. Gobin and Papso also play an important role in policing the actions of the inhabitants of the patrilocal group house. This includes their mother, Kay, and several of her adolescent grandchildren. Papso is often called into the yard to talk to his mother and his nephews. When there is a problem with noise or uncleanness, it is Papso that usually receives complaint. In more extreme cases, or in cases where one or more members see Papso as biased, Kota, the oldest brother still living in Guyana may be called in to settle things. Each of the three sisters explicitly allies herself with one or more of the brothers. Such
alliances are reinforced by close relations between the brother and the sister's husband. This affine, known as *bonai*, is almost always more effectively integrated than are in-marrying wives. In the case of the Bolo, the in-marrying wives make alliances primarily amongst themselves rather than with the sisters (i.e. the daughters of Michael). In the one case where this was not true (i.e. where the in-marrying wife was closer to the sisters than to the other brother's wives), the other in-marrying wives pursued a fairly relentless strategy of scandal against her.

Although this group has a very public face and, people believe, a strongly expressed collective “character,” members frequently come into conflict with one another. Conflicts most often arise over property, perceived *eye-pass*, and talk which leads to scandal. The brothers often feel that one or another of the patrilocal group members has not lived up to their obligation as kin. Such a failure to live up to an obligation based in kinship (such as attending religious work) is taken as disrespectful and as an indication that the offending party thinks he is too important to bother with the others.

Despite this, it is hard not to notice the way in which the group coheres. The patrilocal group is a source of strength and social power for its members. This is learnt very early. When a young man threatened to beat her, a nine year old girl, a member of the Bolo group, turned to him and said quite proudly *yu kyaan biit Bolo - nonbadii kyaan biit Bolo* “You can’t beat the Bolo, Nobody can beat a Bolo.” Conflicts involving senior members of the group often escalate into battles of a corporate nature. The Bolo tell several stories that explain present relations with other families. In one case, a problem arose because a neighbour to Gobin and Papso believed that Papso had informed his supervisor at work when he took extra long breaks and days off. Every night this neighbour would drink rum and, when he got home from the rumshop, would
begin to cuss Papso. One day, Gobin asked Papso if he had never heard the man cussing him? Papso was furious. That night he took the man out drinking himself. When they parted, Papso secretly hid himself in Gobin's bottomhouse. But he got impatient waiting for the man to start cussing him and before he heard anything he jumped out, knocked down the front gate, and threatened the man with a cutlass. When the men began to cuss each other, they were joined by other members of their respective patrilocal groups. Eventually, the police were called into break up the fight.

2.3.2 Teeli

Much smaller than Bolo is the group known as Teeli. The core members of the group are the children of Baker John, five brothers and one sister. Of the five brothers, two have gone “outside,” one to American and one to England. The latter, the eldest and a doctor, has been very successful. When he visits, he is treated with respect and some curiosity. After twenty years outside the country he seems, in his speech and demeanour generally, more English/white than Guyanese/Indian to many people. As one brother died early, and the sister lives with her husband, the real core of this group consists of two brothers who occupy the house of the now deceased Baker John. While Old Baker John built a reputation on his knowledge of several languages (Hindi, Arabic) and a profound understanding of Hindu theology, his sons are known more for their jokey and good natured sense of humour. The two brothers are both slight but assertive and charismatic. The youngest, Tus, operates the shop which is located at the front of the yard. This is one of the most popular shops in the villages and it is where both the more powerful bosses and the tightly knit crews of workers come to drink. One group of senior men
(ages 30-40), who form a highly integrated group, comes here everyday, either to arrange work crews, to organize other kinds of collective labor, or just to sit, gyaf and drink rum in the afternoon. Although the core patrilocal group is small, the brothers have a very reliable and tight circle of long-standing friendships. The older brother, Pank, is one of the few remaining small-scale rice producers in the area and such friendships are crucial to his economic survival. The core group of friends regularly assist Pank in the field. In return, those who help out are accorded special privileges in the shop. They are given credit, allowed behind the counter, given free rum and food. These men are accorded the status of fictive kin in the household. Both brothers place great importance on their friendships. Unlike many other men in the village the Teeli do not involve themselves in public politics and other institutions of legitimated authority like the Mandir. Rather, they draw support form their central role in the male solidarity network.

Both brothers married women from the immediate area. This has had rather different implications for each. The older brother’s wife belongs to a large local family. The marriage allowed Pank to call upon many people at times when labor is needed for rice cultivation and harvesting. In general, relations between the Teeli and Pank’s wife are very good and there is a high degree of cooperation between the two families. The younger brother, Tus, married a woman from a once time quite wealthy family. The group has, however, recently seen some financial difficulties and have called on Teeli for assistance. When Tus eventually refused, his wife took money from Teeli funds to give to her sister. Police were called in and for some time things were quite tense within the patrilocal group. However the problem was eventually resolved without surfacing as a public dispute between the two groups.
2.3.3 Pakar

In contrast to the families reviewed above, the patrilocal group known as Pakar is essentially a female enterprise. Currently the patrilocal group land is occupied by Zizaan and her daughters Ashan, Shana, Fasia, and occasionally Shamaroon. Bat, the youngest of three brothers, also lives here. The central economic interest is a well stocked shop and lumber yard. Shana and Bat also keep gardens in which they farm shallot. Fasia does some seamstress work. One of the two non-resident brothers is a water carrier. Using a donkey and cart, he collects water from a pump near the family shop and carries it up the road to a village where there is no public water facility. The other brother is well known locally. He is the owner of a very large shop in New Amsterdam and has strong connections, locally with the police and with customs officials, and, internationally, (in Surinam) with traders and exporters. Pakar himself, now deceased, is remembered by his family as a pious and learned man who was poor but fluent in Arabic, Hindi as well as Sanskrit. Others remember him as a "nak man" who pretended to know ritual curing in order to get close to various young women in the village. Pakar’s children are less involved in the local mosque and village ritual life than their father was. They draw social power mainly from their particularly stable economic position. Ashan recounts that they were not always well-off. In 1964, during the racial riots of the Burnham years, flour was banned as an import. Tally, however, had a contact in Surinam who could provide him with flour. He brought it across and Ashan sold it. According to Ashan, people came from all over Guyana to buy flour from her shop.

Pakar keep a very tightly knit corporate group and, although they have a great many acquaintances and business contacts, they eschew the pursuit of “friends” (i.e. popularity).
Those constantly in pursuit of friendships, they note, usually end up "brooks" (without resources). Pakar advocate keeping company (and their private "business") within their own group.

In their relations with other patrilocal groups, Pakar attempt to appear generous and benevolent. Loyal and reliable employees are rewarded with reasonable pay, consistent work and assistance in times of need. Pakar are quick to assert that they cannot be trifled with, however, and when somebody crosses them, they are relentless in their pursuit of "satisfaction." When a boy who had worked for them (whom they had taken pity on) stole jewellery, they not only tracked him down through several villages but also found out his accomplices and pushed the issue to public attention. Later, they arranged to interrogate the boy so as to get all the details on how their neighbours had been involved in the crime. After a year or so, they employed the neighbour as a casual laborer secure in the knowledge that she would not try to steal from them again. In disputes, Ashan calls on the authority inhering in the ownership of patrilocal land and in the leadership of a powerful patrilocal group. When a worker for one of the large-scale rice producers came to buy cement, a dispute arose over how many bags he had loaded into his cart. When Ashan went to count the bags, he held her hand. Ashan was furious and sent him out of her yard without his cement. Later, the man's superior had to come and apologize. Ashan complained that, by holding her hand, the worker had taken his eye and passed her. Ashan resented the implication, which she drew from this action, that, in relations of status, gender was more important than age and social position (as the head of a powerful patrilocal group Ashan was certainly the young man's superior). His hand-touching, she felt, implied the possibility of a sexual/romantic relationship. In this, he was very much over his mark.
(i.e. "he had exceeded himself" "he was mistaken"), Ashan remarked.

Ashan, like other household heads, was thus quick to draw on the authority and social position that comes from the ownership of property. In one case, a man was building a new toilet for his house which was on land that belonged to Ashan. Ashan told the workmen to put the toilet to the side rather in front of the house where she would have to look at it. When a report got back to Ashan that the man’s wife had been 

askin him over this (asking if Ashan was not his wife), she went straight down to their house and told them that, if it happened again, she would throw them out.

It should be noted that although Pakar illustrates the range of patrilocals groups within the community, this situation is quite rare. In most cases, patrilocals group authority is, at least officially, structured around a male voice.

2.4 MARRIAGE, POWER, GENDER

A central theme of the present work is the way in which social relations between men and women are negotiated in interaction. It is thus necessary to give some details regarding the impact of kinship and marriage on these social relations. Rather little attention has been paid to gender and domesticity in East Indian Caribbean communities. This is particularly striking in comparison with the enormous literature on matrilocality in Afro-Caribbean communities (for an overview, see Smith 1988). As is the case with matrifocal Afro-Guyanese communities, in East Indian villages one finds a strong association of women with the domestic. In a patrilocals setting, this is less a source of social power than it is a hegemonic device for maintaining gender inequality. Many researchers of Afro-Caribbean households have argued
that a public/private dichotomy is incapable of adequately describing the social organization of everyday life. In their day-to-day lives, women bridge the public and private, domestic and political (see Berleant-Schiller and Maurer 1993).

In the patrilocal context of the Indo-Guyanese village, however, a number of powerful forces attempt to keep domestic and public/political separate. At the local level, women are, in most cases, excluded from overt participation in public politics. As I have described above, women are also generally excluded from overt participation in the workings of the patrilocal group as a political unit.

As I show in later chapters, gender inequality seems most extreme for married women who live with their husband's patrilocal group. Female affines are not structurally integrated in the same way as male ones. While the wives of senior patrilocal group men draw authority from their husband's position (and must be accorded a certain respect as boujii "big brother's wife" or father's brother's wife), the wives of junior members often find themselves in a difficult position vis-a-vis the patrilocal group with whom they live. Slight, or even perceived, breaches of what is considered proper for a married woman in terms of movement, self-comportment and social interaction can turn into serious charges of misconduct as they circulate. Women who join a patrilocal group as an in-marrying wife often find themselves at odds with both the senior men and the other women in the patrilocal group. The relatively disempowered position of the married women is exaggerated in the cases where village exogamy is practised. When a woman comes from far away to live with her husband's patrilocal group, she can't easily call on her own group for support when she finds herself at odds with her husband. Not surprisingly, perhaps, men often express a preference for this kind of marriage arrangement. One young
man told me explicitly that, mi na gu mariid wan a dem gyal wa de orong ya - mi gu marriid wan gyal fan far “I won’t marry a girl from around here - I am going to marry a girl from far way.” I asked him why he said this. He replied, wen mi biit shi shi mas kyan gu hoom “When I beat her she must not be able to go home.” When the wife’s patrilocal group is both relatively integrated and living close-by, they can provide support in conflict situations. In one case, a girl married a boy from a neighbouring village. As is customary, they started their married life at the home of the husband’s father. They brought all the gifts that had been received at the wedding, along with other property that they owned individually. However, after a few months, relations began to break down between the new wife and her mother-in-law. The husband’s mother claimed that the now quite-pregnant wife was too lazy, argumentative, and disrespectful. On a number of occasions, this new wife showed up at her father’s house in tears. Finally, the conflict became so heated that, while the husband was at work, the mother told the wife to leave the house. At this point, the husband and wife went to the wife’s father and asked if he would accept them into his house. He did. That night, a group of thirty men from the patrilocal group (and myself) were rounded up. The wife’s father borrowed a tractor and trailer from his boss and all of us made the trip to the next village. It was a noisy crowd, and when the crew reached the husband’s family’s house, a row quickly ensued between the two household heads. In the meantime, the property was gathered up and everybody returned to the wife’s father’s house feeling vindicated. In a minority of cases, then, a husband and wife will move into the home of the wife’s family. But this usually happens only after some altercation with the husband’s group.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YARD--PATRILOCAL GROUP</th>
<th>HOUSE OF... (REFERENCE NUMBER FOR HOUSE)</th>
<th>NUCLEAR UNIT (#) = # OF CHILDREN RESIDENT</th>
<th>VILLAGE EXOGAMY PRACTISED</th>
<th>PATRILOCAL RESIDENCE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bolo</td>
<td>Kay (1)</td>
<td>Kay (widow) (0)</td>
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<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kay (1)</td>
<td>Bramnie and Kavita (2)</td>
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<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gobin and Seeta (2)</td>
<td>Gobin and Seeta (3)</td>
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<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakar</td>
<td>Zizaan/Ashan (3)</td>
<td>Zizaan (4)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shana (4)</td>
<td>Shana (1)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Bagi and Dari (5)</td>
<td>Bagi and Dari (4)</td>
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<td>Pank and Baby (2)</td>
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<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiga</td>
<td>Mama/Moses (9)</td>
<td>Mama (2)</td>
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<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rohan and Channo (10)</td>
<td>Rohan and Channo (2)</td>
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<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ben and Goolin (11)</td>
<td>Ben and Goolin (3)</td>
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<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Naga and Siima (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nancy and Shanti (12)</td>
<td>Nancy and Shanti (2)</td>
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<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singh</td>
<td>Leila (13)</td>
<td>Leila (3)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persaud</td>
<td>Baby and Husband (14)</td>
<td>Baby and Husband (1)</td>
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<td>yes</td>
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<td>Deo and Shalini (0)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Papso and Isha (15)</td>
<td>Papso and Isha (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dinna</td>
<td>Dinna and Ma (16)</td>
<td>Dinna and Ma (2)</td>
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<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Sun (17)</td>
<td>Sun (3)</td>
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<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 VILLAGE EXOGAMY AND PATRILOCAL RESIDENCE FOR 20 DOMESTIC UNITS.

Looking at table 2.2, it is apparent that, despite the preference of some men mentioned above, there is no clear pattern of village exogamy. However, there does seem to be a clear preference for patrilocal residence. Of the twenty nuclear units in the sample, 11 (55%) were formed through village exogamy. Of the same twenty nuclear units, fourteen (70%) were
practising patrilocal residence defined as, in the case of marriage, residence with the husband's father's family, and, in the case of unmarried household heads, residence on their father's property.

2.5 **HOUSE AND YARD**

With houses spread along both sides of the road and stretching back, both towards the backdam (the line side of the road) and into the pasture (the sea-side of the road), Dundee-Novar is a densely populated village. Houses are generally of wood or brick construction, consist of one or two floors, and may or may not be recently renovated depending largely on the recent fortunes of the family (cf. Plates 1-2). Along a single plot (a parcel of land usually surveyed during the colonial period), a corporate group's history can be roughly estimated. At the road corner is the biggest of the family's houses and often it incorporates a shop, a repair service for cars, a carpenter's work place, or some other business. Most of the road houses have two floors, are fairly recently painted and have large yards with a tractor or car strategically parked for public viewing. At the centre of the Dundee road stands the local "bossman's" house, impressive in size and dwarfing all that surround it. Mankad's house was built in the booming years of rice cultivation in the 1980's. Not far away is his family's rice mill which stretches out into the backdam area to the line. Tractors, combines, jeeps and trailers are scattered across the area between two large processing plants. Other families have smaller enterprises (ten tractors, two jeeps etc.) and as such, these people make up the local village elite. They live somewhat removed from the small dramas of everyday life along the road. They are more mobile and their network extends to others in a similar class position outside the
village. They claim that they spend more time minding the books than they do other people’s affairs. In fact, they often attribute their success to this ability to live separate from the “common” people in the village who “drag others down.” While their presence is somehow less physical, it is nevertheless powerful in its mystique. They are seen driving out in expensive vehicles imported from the U.S., they entertain important people behind the thick walls and iron gates of their compound, and when they talk to you, you stop, listen and comply. There is a distinctly feudal character to the social relations between bossman and village. The bossman has a phone and enough economic resources to support local initiatives and small projects. A tight circle of loyal workers are crucial to the production process. These are the managers who run cultivation in the field, production in the mill and marketing in town. The managers live in modest houses away from the road. Arriving early and leaving late, the manager is distinguished by his loyalty and responsibility.

As I have discussed, the domestic unit in Indo-Guyanese villages is typically a patrilocal one and inheritance is patrilineal. This means that, after marriage, a woman often leaves her parents’ home to go live with her husband’s family - or more specifically to go live on her husband’s father’s land (cf. Despres 1967). At first, the new couple may live in the husband’s father’s house. If this is the case they usually take over the bottomhouse (/batmhouse/) which is the space between the concrete or mud ground floor and the first raised floor of the bungalow which is about twelve feet off the ground on four corner posts.

It is more usual to construct a small dwelling at some distance from the main house though still within the yard. This new house often - in fact, in most cases - offers very meagre amenities. It is usually some way from the road. If it is not on risers the usually hard packed
mud and daub floor can become pit of mud during the rainy season. Most often it is a simple one-room construction with a small overhang under which is kept a green (kerosene) stove. Water may or may not be available close by. Fowl, dogs, and cats may cohabitate the general living area even if they are kept out of the house.

The yard, enclosed by a six foot fence, may contain several houses belong to members of the same patriloc al extended unit. It is thus a fairly direct mapping of a salient kinship grouping onto physical space and has become strongly associated with the notion of an extended patriloc al corporate group. Members of this group (both men and women) may enter freely without being challenged by others. This is true for just about everybody who can trace a direct link through their father or mother to the patrilineage. Non-resident wives of men who belong to this patrilineal unit enjoy considerably less freedom, certainly less than male affines. They may call out at the gate, they may only come infrequently (and then for a special purpose) or they may refuse to enter altogether. But, as noted above, in many cases wives live in the yard. These women are in a particularly tenuous position. They are ever under the watchful eyes of their husband’s extended family, they are often economically dependent on this family, and they are always in a subordinate position vis-a-vis this unit. The yard, even more than the house, is not their own and they do not enjoy the sense of security that members of the extended patriloc al unit draw from it. For members, the yard symbolizes shared obligation based on kinship, as well as generalized reciprocity and corporate identity. With respect to these meanings, the wife is always a stranger.

The house and the yard are, in this way, very much delimited spaces. Villagers are quite aware of who goes in and out of both their own and their neighbour’s yards, at what times and
for what reasons. People often keep dogs and this adds to the feeling of impermeability given by the yard fencing (cf. Plate 3). Depending on the relationship, a visitor will often call out to the house resident before entering the yard. Once they see that somebody is at home and they are invited to come through the gate they will then go into the yard space. Often, however, they will wait at the road for the resident to come out and talk at the corner. Such behaviour is subject to a range of interpretations:

G. was settling down for the evening in the hammock. In front of him was a quarter bottle of white rum, a few pieces of fish in a plastic bowl, water and a little glass of coca-cola. S. sat on a bench stitching a small square of cloth. The children were dozing on the concrete floor of the bottomhouse. Suddenly, we heard yelling at the front gate. One of the young men who lived in front came running back calling for G. to come to the front. "Wa leedii, mi en noo shii" replied G "shi kyaan kom ya? Shi tuu big fu kom ya". He started grumbling. He was a little boy that should jump when this lady calls for him? No he won't go to the front. He works hard and now is his time to relax. Then S. must come the young man says and he goes in front. Pria gets up labouriously from what she is doing she mutters something about people not having manners - but it is unclear who she is talking about. G. gets up and follows her. There is some yelling so I get up and go to the front. It is a dispute about the visitor's husband and G.'s cousin. Much to the visitor's displeasure the two have become involved while living outside (New York) and have decided to live together. The visitor wants G. to talk to his cousin. She won't come in the yard till she gets some satisfaction. A crowd has now gathered in front and G., wary of another scandal quickly gathers everybody up and hurries inside the yard to the house (Fieldnotes II:38).

The house is the place of respectability, good relations with family and neighbours, and the site of religious work. While at times it is liable to rock on its stilts with the hollering of a passionate husband and wife, it is nevertheless popularly considered a haven from the ruckus goings-on of the road. As Jayawardena noted (1963), when conflicts between two villagers reach a certain level they are taken to the house of one of the offending parties. But this is not a venture to be undertaken lightly. To take a quarrel to a person's doorstep is to push it to the next stage. Everybody has a cutlass at home and, when pushed, they will wield it, although it is
rarely the case that anybody is seriously injured.\footnote{Of the 20+ cutlass wielding incidents that I witnessed during the course of the fieldperiod, only two ended with somebody being seriously injured (i.e. cut). There is a proverb relevant to the discussion insofar as arguments often involve family members: \textit{family cutlass na cut deep}.}

As I discuss in later chapters, the delimited spaces of house and yard interact in interesting ways with the emergent spaces in which interactional encounters take place. For instance, calling out to passers-by on the road is an important means by which the boundaries imposed by the yard fencing become permeable. Caregivers spend a great deal of time instructing children to use language in this way (Chapter 8). Often, conversations will be carried on across the yard fencing. In this way, linguistic practices serve as bridges across physical, economic and legal boundaries and, although the bounds of house and yard serve as well-understood demarcation lines establishing public from private, the ambiguous nature of these lines is strikingly illustrated by the practice of \textit{cussing} and \textit{talking hard} (discussed in Chapter 6). Despite the dominant belief that men (are supposed to) talk louder than women, women are well-known for their ability to \textit{cuss} and \textit{quarrel}. Women sometimes use loud, shrill voices to engage an audience which is outside the immediate interactional field of the house. If a man has been drunk for days, or won't help around the house, he is in danger of receiving a \textit{cussing up} from his wife. This lets surrounding neighbours know not only of his behaviour, but also of his inability to control his wife.

These spaces, then, are not simply functional. Rather, they are imbued with a great deal of meaning and sentiment. A married or otherwise grown man who is homeless, unless the house was destroyed by some disaster, is likely to endure much tormenting from others. Often people live in houses which are not, strictly speaking, their own. They may be looking after it...
for relatives who have gone outside (i.e. America & Canada) or they may be living on the charity of a patron (sometimes employers will lend houses for particularly loyal workers). In such cases, people frequently remark that the man plays big ("acts important, successful") but that it is not his own house. In contrast to the world outside, in which the male worker is obliged to follow the directives of his superiors both at work and within his own kin-group, in his house the adult male is the self-professed "boss". This is expressed in an authoritative way of inhabiting the house - usually reclined in the hammock, standing on the veranda, taking breakfast or drinks. The adult male is a picture of relaxation and comfort. Others swirl around answering questions, fetching refreshments, doing chores. Status and authority is thus naturalized in the indexical meanings of movement and immobility.

Women seem to be less concerned with status meanings attached to houses than are men. Women frequently note the aesthetic qualities of different houses, the spaces of privacy it affords, the modernity of the kitchen etc. Women also tend to occupy the house rather differently than do men. For a wife, the house is a place of work, not one of relaxation and remove from the world of obligation to others. As a man relaxes in the hammock, the woman of the house usually keeps busy cleaning, cooking and directing children. She may sit, but it would be highly unusual for her to relax while her husband was engaged in some task. As Smith and Jayawardena (1959:337) remark, the "official" structure of familial authority is expressed in eating arrangements:  

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6 It is important not to overemphasize the completeness of male control in the house and family. In some families men are absent from the house a great deal of the time and this obviously changes things. Also one should note that women often play a pivotal role in constructing the power relations within which they may be subordinate. This is more than just complicity. The active and constructive role that subordinates play in constructing relations of power has frequently been over looked (cf. Goodwin and Goodwin 1990 on the collaborative construction of hierarchy in children's
Eating arrangements emphasize the authoritarian position of the males, and particularly of the husband-father. As head of the household he is usually served alone at the table whilst women and children eat their food sitting on the floor, probably in the kitchen. Other adult males may eat at the table, either with the head or after he has finished [...] it is a general rule for the womenfolk to see that the men and children are served before they eat themselves.

Most importantly the house is not her own. A wife simply cannot make claims to patrilineally-inherited property except through her husband (and of course except in her own patriline cf. Ashan). Even a sixty-five year old woman who has lived in the same house for close to fifty years cannot claim to own the property. As I have discussed above, major decisions concerning the house, such as those concerning its upkeep, who should be allowed to live there, the moral standards the inhabitants must maintain while they live there etc., are almost always made, at least “officially,” by the grown sons. Smith and Jayawardena (1959:339) remark:

When a male head dies his wife should manage the household and property until such time as the eldest son can take over the headship of the household, obtaining assistance in the meantime from her husband’s male kinsmen...Most of the important decisions are made by the adult son who also acts as the family’s male representative.

One of the responsibilities of the male-head is to regulate and police the movement of people in and through the house and yard. Male authority, localized in patrilocal group’s landholding, is thus directly tied to the way in which women’s everyday movements are restricted. It is thus within the house that married women spend most of their time. Rickford’s (1979:140) description of the situation seems to be accurate for most rural communities:

One important difference between men and women is that the men enjoy more freedom to move beyond the house and the village. They can often be found outside the home or liming the streets-- whether as young boys off to the seawall to catch birds, as teenagers on their way to a movie, or as adults congregating by a corner for a gaff. By contrast, the female’s place is considered to be in the home, and it is there that

argument and Keating 1994 on the role of one woman’s active participation in the expression of power - from which she is excluded - in spatial arrangements.)
the women of the community can most typically be found: cleaning, caring for young children, preparing meals, washing clothes, and so on. They are seen less often on the streets than men -- usually when they are out shopping, or on their way to the home of a friend or neighbour for a visit. (Women never socialize in rum shops.)

It should be noted that women are kept in the home not only by the pressure of household duties, but also by the protective attitudes of their fathers and husbands. These attitudes are fairly well-entrenched in Guyana as a whole, but particularly so in East Indian communities. A striking example of this protectiveness of chauvinism is the high proportion of women who had been taken out of school at an early age because their parents feared that their education might lead to involvement with members of the opposite sex.

The social relationships of kinship and domestic authority are thus embedded in the organization and occupation of particular spaces. As I show in later chapters, space is an important resource which participants to an interaction draw on to express a range of social relations and interactional roles.

2.6 THE ROAD

The road is populated both by villagers and passers-by. People walk up and down the road from Berbice to Georgetown selling everything from vegetables to the latest fashions. Women gather in small groups along the road carrying bowls in which to collect the fish sold by men on bicycles. Buying fish, as mundane as it may seem, is an important arena for status competition among neighbours. There is a locally understood prestige scale according to which fish are ranked. While individuals may have personal likes and dislikes, everybody is aware of the prestige values associated with certain types of fish.\(^7\)

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\(^7\)Thanks to Ralph Premdas for helpful insight on the organization of prestige with regards to local fish markets.
Unscale fish, such as *kuras* and *catfish*, are believed to be bottom-feeders which scavenge dead animals and fish from the bottom of bays and harbors. Scale-fish are usually found in deeper water and in smaller numbers. Similarly, except at certain times of the year, *hasar* is much less plentiful than *houri*. The regular character of market availability is superimposed with cultural meaning. The cheap and low-status fish are interpreted as dirty and, in some ways, unfit for human consumption. When women go to the road to buy fish, they regularly engage in status competition with each other and at the same time haggle with the seller. Such transient arenas give the road its flavour as a place where people are engaging in social activity where reputations are won and lost. Groups of men, young adults and children often gather by the roadside to *gyaf* or discuss some business. Often a family or a couple of young women will be seen walking down the road, sheltered from the sun with an umbrella, dressed in their best clothing. *Waaa - yu a waak out* "What? - you’re taking a stroll!" somebody will call at them. The road is very much a communal place where everybody who one knows and is on good terms with must be greeted. It is a place to *lime* "hang out" and enjoy the company of friends, but it is also a place which can be dangerous especially to young women:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale-Fish</th>
<th>Salt Water</th>
<th>Fresh Water</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Snapper</td>
<td>Hasar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Banga</td>
<td>Talapia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basha</td>
<td>Houri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsacle-Fish</td>
<td>Kuras</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catfish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3 Categorization of Some Fish Commonly Eaten
Both R and G had kept a small stand by the road for some time. Being brothers, there was more than a little competition to the endeavour. Who would get the sauris needed to make the chutney? Who would attract more of the young men who like to stop and goaf before they go in for supper? During harvesting time, the men were forced to work late and they left the stalls to the women. G's wife S and R's daughter M. began selling by the road and both attracted unusually large numbers of customers who would sit on logs or benches facing the road by their respective stands. Loyalties were strong to one or the other liming stands. As time passed, people began to talk about some especially regular patrons at both stalls. Soon there were rumours that S. was carrying on with a young man from a neighbouring village. She suggested that her rival M. had started the rumour in order to tarnish her reputation and stain her name. Soon people were suggesting that M. herself had been caught in the house of a young man who lived across the road from her stand. The rumours exploded one day in a public busing by the road, the two women grabbing and pushing one another until M.'s mother intervened and was treated to a smack in the face from her daughter. That night G., inspired by a full bottle of white rum, went to the stand and broke it apart. People watched from their verandas as G. yelled about his wife's infidelity and smashed the "Queen Bee" into firewood. Of course, this was taken as confirmation of the rumour that S. had in fact been carrying on with that boy from the neighbouring village. The next morning G. announced that he would not build back the stand - it was too dangerous and the road was not a place for women. A few months later, M.'s father and mother learned of her poor standing in secondary school and they stopped selling by the road. Family members complained about the imprudence of letting a young girl stand up and sell things by the road - what did the parents expect? (Fieldnotes I:56)

The movement and activity of the road is considered dangerous in relation to the stability and structure of the house. Men often say that the road makes women get wild and uncontrollable and that the house is their proper place. And while women may not share this attitude completely, they usually deride a girl who spends too much time on the road instead of in the house doing her work. One girl was given the false name "roadrunner" (after the song rather than the cartoon) and this became a well-known index to her reputation as an uncontrollable, wild and ultimately dangerous individual (see chapter 7). The road, along with the rumshop, is considered public space, and, while there are certain exceptions to this general rule, public space in rural Guyana ultimately belongs to men. This division of spaces is sometimes hotly contested but, in general, it is well-established and carries with it the force of tradition.
2.7 The Rum Shop

Rum and the rumshop are pivotal in the cultural life of the villagers. As one enters, the male voices immediately drown out the sounds of the road. Around a table, on which is sitting one or two large bottles of white rum or vodka, a jug of water, a plate of ice, some Coke and perhaps a plate of cutters (kotas "snacks eaten while drinking"), sit three to five men of various ages. They look up and greet you - if they know you or know something of you, then a story is likely to ensue - if they don’t, then you will be treated to a friendly greeting, and questions as to where you come from and who is your family (unless, of course, you are not Indian). Everybody experiences the effects of rum and the pull of the rumshop at one time or another, be it directly or indirectly.

To stress its cultural importance is not to underestimate the degree to which alcoholism, a legacy of a colonial regime in which all productive activity was focussed on the manufacture of cane, is a real and very destructive force in the community. The shop is, of course, the prototypical male domain - a place where male gyaf is given a place of great importance, where talking out some story can lead to violent encounters when a man reaches back home, where the talk man and the joke man reign supreme above all others. People gather here to hear their own stories again and again.

Women are expected not to enter a rumshop. On occasion, however, a wife will fetch her husband. Even at these times she does not enter. Standing up on the road outside the shop she may call in to the man who is sitting closest to the entrance. The husband will usually go home quietly at this point (if a woman is ready to go and fetch her husband it is usually because he has been there for the better part of a day), trodding along the road behind his wife.
Rum and rum drinking are deeply embedded in daily life. Rum is used, in a more pure form called *highwine*, as a remedy for colds. It is also used in religious work for the spirit known as the *Boundary-master*. Most importantly, perhaps, it is used in the rituals of male peer groups performed daily in the shops along the public road and in bottomhouses of private homes.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have introduced the major forms of social organization and have illustrated the way in which these social structures are embedded and realized in locally recognized spatial divisions. I have also tried to give an account of the historical developments leading up to the present situation. In the following chapters, I look closely at the way in which spatialized linguistic practices both reproduce and contest the dominant models of kinship, gender and domestic authority.
Chapter Three
Methodological Positionality.

3.0 Brokers in Fieldwork

Because anthropologists and linguists often study communities other than the ones in which they live, entering and assuming a role in the host community becomes an important part of anthropological and sociolinguistic methodology. A great deal has been written about this process from both methodological and theoretical perspectives (Labov 1972, Rickford 1979, 1997, Clifford 1983, Scheper-Hughes 1992: 1-30). In the following, I want to give an account of the way in which I was integrated into the community I studied, and how the nature of that integration affected the present work as well as its author.

One never knows all the members of a community - be it a village, a town or a city - in the same way or to the same extent. People create webs of relations in which some individuals are central and others are relatively more peripheral. My fieldwork experience has led me to believe that this web has something of a concentric character, whereby the relations at the center tend to structure the relations which are more peripheral. In the following, I call these central people “brokers.” Brokers are people who open up possibilities for the expansion of a web or network, but in doing so, exert a good deal of influence on the way in which these new relations are manifested. As relations become more localized, and centered around a particular group of people, the influence of the broker becomes more specific. However, when one is first entering a country or nation-state, the influence of the broker is very general and global.

In my case, entry into rural Guyana was facilitated by a woman whose name had been given to me by another linguist. Shalini had worked with various linguists studying the
language of the area that I was interested in - East Coast Demerara. Because she was raised in the area, and was also university-educated, she made an ideal field assistant for linguists working on grammatical structures. She was able to provide them with naturalistic recordings made in her home community, which is a small settlement about 3-4 miles in from the public road. It is small and isolated and the creole variety is rather more homogenous than that found in more densely populated areas. The members of the community are semi-peasant farmers who own small tracts of land and divide their time between working their own rice land and working that of the big farmers'. I soon found that although Shalini was both knowledgeable and helpful, her ability to assist me in sociolinguistic work was in part limited by her membership in the small backdam community. To begin with, she was unable to make recordings and do ethnographic research in the main village community by the road. Because she was already known in this community, entering for the purpose of research was next to impossible. Known as teacher-gyal, Shalini, like just about everybody else from neighboring villages, was the object of some suspicion and derision to the people on the road who believed that she was bigitty (/bigiti/ “full of oneself”). This reputation was in part due to the fact that she had received a college education and lived in town, and in part due to the fact that she belonged to an extended family who had left the roadside village, gone to America and had subsequently severed all ties with their fellow “countrymen.” It was arranged that I should, with my partner and daughter, live in the fairly grand house that this family had left behind. After five days in the village and a number of walks up and down the public road, I was called off by a group of men taking a break from work. They called me off saying ee bai, yuu a wait bai or potogii? “Hey - are you white or Portuguese?” The exchange was short and, at the time, I had
trouble understanding the importance of the question. Later, I came to understand that such distinctions were vital to the way in which people in the village understood others with whom they were not familiar. That same day, I was called off by another group of men liming (/laim/ "to hang out") in front of their family yard. They called me over and quickly found out my name, my reason for coming to the small village of about 600 - which I gave as wanting to learn creolese - and where I was staying. I was made an honored guest in the typical Guyanese manner - beer and rum was bought on credit, a dinner was prepared and taken. After dinner, I was invited to accompany my host Raja to a wake which was taking place in neighboring village. I went and met a number of other men and women in the context of a ritual known as dead-work or thirteen day.

Raja, his immediate nuclear family and members of his extended patrilocal unit, became my most important contacts. All became brokers - opening up possibilities for research with other people with whom they were associated. Raja, and his brothers Nancy and Papso, also took it upon themselves to teach me Creolese and the variety of the language with which I am familiar is the one that they felt was most appropriate to informal, casual relations between men of roughly equal status (cf chapters 4 and 5).

When I mentioned that I wanted to find four children to record, friends and relatives were contacted. I was introduced and times for recording were arranged. The initial selection of people who would be appropriate was thus not my decision. When I made recordings in other people's houses, Pria, Raja's wife, would almost always accompany me. This greatly facilitated the ease with which I was able to incorporate myself into the ongoing domestic life of several different households. Pria and I also spent many hours talking about children, caregiving and
language learning. When I mentioned I was interested in some ritual or event that took place in the village, the appropriate “older head” was located. A steady stream of teachers and local experts on language, rice-growing, house-building, and village history were invited by my hosts to come and instruct me. For this guidance, I am extremely grateful. My point is, however, that the assistance of Pria (Raja's wife), Raja, Dada and Nancy was integral to the completion of this work and their perspectives on life and language in the village are firmly embedded (with little chance of being dislodged) in the following chapters. Their selection of informants, their influence on my way of thinking, and their consistent guidance in the field work process, has not only imparted knowledge but also a particular bias. All are strongly committed to the village in which they live. Unlike others, with the possible exception of Dada, they do not strive (or, in some cases, believe it possible) to leave the village. They do, of course, look to opportunities beyond the village, but for the most part are concerned to improve their lot by staying put. Other villagers are different in this way. Some show much less commitment to the focussed networks of the village in which Dada and Nancy are central. Others are less involved than Raja and Dada in the local struggle for power which operates through the transmission and display of esoteric religious knowledge and the making of appointments in local village councils. Unlike Pria, many women are demure, soft-spoken and (at times) subservient - they strive to be “proper” at all times. Many wives, also unlike Pria, have comfortable relations with their husband’s family. Still other women, such as Shank, cultivate *jokey* and locally charismatic public selves engaging in behavior more typical of “reputation”-seeking men (cf. Wilson 1973). The peculiarities of each person’s life have thus shaped the present work in innumerable ways.
My integration into the patrilocal group known as Bolo (see chapter 2) and the nuclear family headed by Raja and Pria was extremely rapid. An arrangement was made for me to eat with the family and for tape recordings to be made in their house and another in the same yard. I began to spend a great deal of time in their company. I was given a book name ("name considered to be one's right name, usually derived from Hindi") and a false name ("name used for informal, everyday contexts- usually indexical or iconic" cf. chapter 7) by Dada as a sign of community and family membership. Membership in the patrilocal group was ritually conferred on me through raki (/raakii/ "a ritual in which bracelets are exchanged"), a day when women tie bracelets on men they take for brothers. I was accorded the status of a younger brother in the group. I was younger than all the 9 brothers and 3 sisters but was accorded a special position on account of my education and economic standing. It was agreed that the house in which I was living was both too expensive and too far away so an arrangement was made for me to move into a new house close by.

The house I moved into was owned by a group of sisters and their mother collectively known as “Pakar dem” (see chapter 2). These people had a shifting set of alliances with the Bolo who they generally acknowledged as “good” people despite a tendency towards theft and playing big. Ashan and Shana, the principal Pakar, provided exceptionally important commentary on village events and persons which often conflicted and differed from that which I received from the Bolo. They also introduced me to a wider range of people than I had been in contact with before. Most important about the move from one house to another was the fact that it effectively cut me off from one group of contacts (with the village elite who managed the first house) and made my association and integration in the other group much more complete.
When I moved a heated conflict ensued with Indi, the woman who was in charge of the house. She believed that I was breaking a contract with her and the altercation furthered the impression that I did not belong in the elite group. (This group is of course also divided into factions and the disagreement with Indi did effectively open up alliances to some other opposed members of the elite group).

The expulsion from the elite circle in the village forced me to rethink the project design in which I had proposed to investigate class differences in language socialization strategies. I had already realized that the middle and elite class groups in the village would probably not be willing to participate in the study. I found that they believed that the study was a useful and interesting one but would not acknowledge that they, along with the working class people, were possible objects of study. They informed me that they did not speak the Creolese and that they behaved just like "civilized" people anywhere when talking to children! Also, the non-laboring population in the village have a very different attitude towards their houses. The house is not open to visiting in the same way and people are not usually called in off the road as they are by the working people. In the end I decided to focus comparison on the difference between the peasant farmers of the backdam community and the wage-laborers of the road.

As I became more local and more a part of a patriloclal group, I became a more common target for suspicion, derision, and gossip. Like local people generally, my actions and behaviors were subject both to public scrutiny and evaluation. There were those who believed I had exceeded myself, that my intentions were less than honorable, or that I was guilty of eye-pass. One group was particularly put out by my integration into the Bolo. This was the group of young men of roughly my own age (the oldest was about two years younger than me but
generally they were much closer in age than were those who belonged to the group into which I was adopted. I had been adopted into the age-grade directly above them and they were expected to pay respect to me (which entailed not only various forms of deference but also being ready to run errands at my request). Part of my instruction in village life was in giving directives to lower status others. At first, I tried to maintain an uneasy balance by which I accepted membership in both age-graded sets - I drank, joked and cussed with both sets of men. However, eventually conflict arose when members of the younger group were told to leave by those in the older group, or to behave themselves in my presence.

Eventually, the younger group found a way of indicating their displeasure with the situation. While I was away on a trip to visit members of another family in Berbice, they broke into my house and stole a number of items. When I returned and discovered what had happened and who had done it, I was left in a quandary. Should I pursue the matters with the authorities and risk further alienation from the younger set as well as from the patrilocal unit as a whole? Or, should I leave it and risk loss of face that could be damaging to my ability to conduct research, perhaps even jeopardizing my own safety? In the end I made more of an emotional response to the situation than a calculating one. Feeling betrayed by my own group and friends, I charged the young men and even came to a public standoff and minor scuffle with one of them. The incident changed the course of my fieldwork.

From that point, my relationship with the unit known as Bolo became strained. Though some members of the group attempted to distance themselves from the event, downplay its importance or even, to some degree, side with me over their own family, the theft introduced a kind of contradiction that could not be resolved. There is a proverb, famlii stik a ben bo ii na brook
“The family stick can bend but it can’t break” which my friends who were not Bolo thought was particularly relevant in this case. Any concession to me by members of the Bolo logically entailed an admission of their own “guilt” or, more properly, shamefulness (on guilt and shame see chapter 7). At the same time, until some local version of justice was handed down (social sanctions for those responsible) I was left without, in local terms, satisfaction. More to the point, I was, according to a number of friends, made to look like wan ass. But the Bolo could not publicly acknowledge the incident without public humiliation. The charge that “they” (that is members of the patrilocal unit - members under their authority) robbed someone who lived nice with them, who lived like a brother with them is quite serious. The incident was very embarrassing to the senior members of the group and they did their best to carry on like it never happened.

The most immediate result of the incident was that I found myself in a social institution known as not-talking with several village members including the young men who had broken into my house and a few others who had publicly sympathized with them. Not-talking involves more than a conscious refusal to engage in verbal interaction, it is more properly characterized as a total avoidance strategy. Two people who are not-talking tacitly agree upon certain divisions and borders within the village. Each person stays within the space allocated to them. Alliances are quickly made, and networks contracted, so as to allow life to carry on as normal with the one exception being that each person completely excludes the other from their daily activities. As one can imagine, such an arrangement is difficult to maintain in a village of six hundred. It is even harder to maintain within an extended family. Inevitably, conflicts arise.

While the conflict limited the scope of my research somewhat, I think it made it much more realistic for just this reason. Villagers are not free to go anywhere they like and they
themselves live lives limited in scope by virtue of social relations of the sort I have described. It was the conflict with the young men that really drove home the importance of space and its occupation for me (cf. chapter 6-8). It was a rather difficult lesson about the way social power was inscribed in local geographies. I found myself sticking much closer to my allies, their homes, my little territories, and in this way I began to live a life much more like everyone else than I had previously. My group of friends, outside my adopted patrilocal group, thus became much more important as companions, instructors, informants and as brokers.

Let me make a few final comments about the role of brokers in shaping anthropological fieldwork. The first point is that, unless they are employed by the researcher, brokers generally have the upper hand in the relationship. I found it was very difficult to persuade my brokers to do anything that they did not already want to do. This meant that recordings were not scheduled despite my intention to conduct a longitudinal study. Brokers and other informants essentially set the schedules and the field researcher must attempt to follow it. Furthermore, because alliances between people are never stable, my ability to visit and record the people with whom I had first made arrangements for recording were constrained by the current state of their relations with the relevant broker.

3.1 RACE/GENDER/CLASS - SOCIAL LOCATIONS AND FIELDWORK

One's social location is also a process. Constructed in real-time discourse, it nevertheless draws upon both individual history and ideologically normative ideas about who people are or who they can legitimately claim to be. Social location is thus at one and the same time both fixing and shifting. Guyana is a post-colonial nation at the bottom of the economic order both
internationally and regionally. Rural Indo-Guyanese villagers, at the bottom of the national hierarchy (with the possible exception of Amerindian peoples), are well aware of their international position even if they don't have the tools necessary for an analysis of commodity fetishism and globalization that would give some explanation of their predicament. Every day, villagers sit down to watch *The Young and the Restless* through which they are exposed to “American culture” and “American concerns,” even if it is a fairly reified representation of such phenomena. The important point is that villagers recognize *The Young and the Restless* and similar American exports as cultural products rather than as representations of daily life. *The Young and the Restless* thus gives villagers an idea of the imaginary possibilities of American life (particularly for leisure, recreation and privacy) but does not serve as their main reference point for “what life is like in the U.S.” (the often exaggerated reports by returned immigrants seem to figure much more centrally here). The representations on American television (and other forms of media) fit well with the well established and long-standing cultural tradition of racial stereotyping. Racial stereotypes have been much discussed in the literature on Guyana (see Bartels 1977, Drummond 1980, Williams 1991). As Williams argues, an individual's actions and behaviors are often interpreted on the basis of a set of enduring racial stereotypes which introduce a ranking of the various contributions made by particular racialized groups to the Guyanese national identity. These stereotypes are sites of contestation between rival groups. Such contestation manifests itself both at the local and interpersonal level, in arguments and narratives about race as well as at the national level in public and policy and development agendas. One scheme of stereotypes places whites at the top of this hierarchy, associating them with the elite institutions of education, government and international administration. In the
same scheme, Afro-Guyanese are assigned a relatively high role on the basis of their role as middle class civil servants and bureaucrats, etc. Indians are renowned for their business sense and their hard work. As Williams and Bartels have documented, the cultural struggle between those who place themselves in the Indian group and those who place themselves in Afro-Guyanese/Black group takes place on a number of different levels. My fieldwork in Guyana was, of course, structured in part by such racial stereotypes. In the community where I worked, whites were generally renowned for the erudition, their appreciation of high culture and their abilities in the international marketplace. Many people expressed, at various times, the belief that Indians were much "closer" to whites than they were to the Afro-Guyanese (a number of criteria were used for making such judgements - including hair, attitudes towards sex, marriage, ethics, etc.). At the same time, whites are often considered physically inferior to Indians and lacking in various forms of commonsense. When I first arrived in Guyana, I was bombarded with questions about how whites stayed (i.e. "what they are like," "what are their essential qualities"). Despite my many long winded explanations for why culture and behavior could not be so easily correlated with race or skin color, many people persisted in the belief that all my actions were the necessary expression of my whiteness. During my stay in the village, a small boy to whom I had become personally attached died as the result of severe burns on his legs and lower torso. His death was very troubling to me, as were the reactions of the other villagers. Rather than engage with the situation at an emotional level, I became very involved with the work that follows a death in Guyana. After spending the day digging a grave and carrying sand, stone and cement for the tomb, a discussion took place between a number of villagers. They believed that I was some kind of racial anomaly, that this behavior - to work for somebody else
was racially atypical. At some point, in order to preserve their stereotype of what white people are like, many people felt it necessary to recategorize me as redman ("a person of mixed African and European ancestry") or as Portuguese (/potogii/ Portuguese were brought to Guyana as indentured laborers and people consider them distinct from the European elite). Many people to whom I was introduced as a whiteman remarked that they had never heard a whiteboy talk raw. For the most part, as long as I spoke Creolese, I went unnoticed with people assuming I belonged to one of the local lineages of Portuguese people. While this absorption into a group of people who are considered "Guyanese" in a way "whites" never could be made life somewhat easier (and was somewhat satisfying on a personal level), the realization that, despite anomalies, racial categorizations are firmly embedded in people's everyday understandings of the world was distressing. It seems to me that very few people actually rethought racial categorization because of my presence. They generally believed that whites were unwilling to listen, uninterested in anything but themselves and highly normative in the values they place on speaking and behaving properly. My anomalous behavior seems to have had little impact even on the people with whom I was most closely associated. I do not want to suggest that people in the village are incapable of rethinking racial stereotypes nor do I want to reify their experience of the world of racial differentiation and oppression. My point is a simple one - it is easier to recategorize an individual than it is to rethink an entire set of categories especially when there may be social institutions which hold them in check.  

3.2 INFORMANTS AS CO-AUTHORS

1And certainly I do not want to deny the very powerful social and historical forces which have gone into shaping this racial ideology.
As I have indicated in the forgoing discussion, my control over the fieldwork process was far from complete. My relations with people in the village were structured in part through a colonial discourse about the nature of race and racial difference. These relations were of course also structured in part by assumptions (my own included) about the relevance of my gender. I was quickly integrated into a male group despite my interest in children and the women who care for them. The assumption that I would be most comfortable talking with relatively high status men at first made conducting research on language socialization rather difficult. I soon impressed upon people that my work involved observing children. Some people decided that this was in fact a ruse, and that my real reason for spending time in the houses was to get close to married women. Although rumors quickly spread about me being *there with* (/de wid/ “sleeping with”) various women, I managed to maintain my contacts with the mothers with whom I worked. This was in large part due to Pria's ability to persuade friends and her willingness to champion my cause with various women in the village.

In the present study, I have tried to take native speaker intuitions and explanations about linguistic practice seriously. My training in linguistics and anthropology has taught me to always look for the deeper meanings in what people say - the way what they say reveals something unsaid. Yet, for a variety of reasons, I have tried to relax this hermeneutics of suspicion (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982) and take the people in the village who were willing to spend many hours talking about their language, history and culture more as collaborators and co-authors than as informants. At various points in the following, I find traditional scholarly explanations lacking and instead turn to explanations offered by native-speakers and villagers. I am guided to do this by the realization that rationalizations for behavior very often affect the
way in which that same behavior is structured (Silverstein 1979). At the very least, I would argue that a complete understanding of practice is unlikely to be attained if the researcher is unable or unwilling to attend to the phenomenal and subjective world within which actors live. In so far as many villagers were willing to share their insights with me they have become co-authors. I suspect that even those few people who refused to talk to me have, in some way, influenced the writing of this work.

3.3 THE FIELD PERIOD AND THE SAMPLE

The field period for this research was spread out over three calendar years. There were a number of reasons for organizing the field research in this way. Initially, I was concerned that I should be able to return to Canada at some point to visit with my daughter (then just two years old). After some time spent in the village, I realized there were other good reasons for breaking up the field component. First, it was nearly impossible to write while I was in the field. During daylight hours and much of the evening, various social engagements claim one’s attention. Maintaining social relations becomes a full-time occupation. By the time I retired to my house, it was inevitably dark and infested with mosquitoes. Although I kept a journal, there was little opportunity for sustained descriptive writing. Making transcripts in the field also proved difficult, primarily because of the many demands made on my time by neighbors, friends and adopted kin. It was therefore necessary to leave the village in order to assess the progress of the research project. Breaking up the field period also allowed the study to incorporate a more extensive time frame. This, in fact, turned out to be quite important since a number of social relations went through extensive change during the field period. Furthermore, the longer
temporal frame allowed for a fuller account of the socialization and developmental processes documented in chapters 7 and 8. After an initial field period in 1994, during which time I decided upon a research area and gained primary exposure to the language variety, I organized the research into two periods over 1995-1996 (cf. Table 3.1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAY</th>
<th>JUNE</th>
<th>JULY</th>
<th>AUGUST</th>
<th>SEPTEMBER</th>
<th>OCTOBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field period begins</td>
<td>Recordings begin</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lil’ Kumar comes to live in the village</td>
<td>“Theft” story &lt;this chapter&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY</td>
<td>JUNE</td>
<td>JULY</td>
<td>AUGUST</td>
<td>SEPTEMBER</td>
<td>OCTOBER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return to field to live in Raja’s house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>return toToronto.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER</td>
<td>DECEMBER</td>
<td>JANUARY</td>
<td>FEBRUARY</td>
<td>MARCH</td>
<td>APRIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mando turns 3 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>Preliminary analysis of field materials (Toronto)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nankaran dies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 SCHEDULE OF FIELDWORK

Most of the naturalistic recordings were made in the first period while the second was spent engaged in interviews and elicitation sessions with adult villagers. In addition, I conducted most of the ethnographic work on the organization of space in the second period. As I have mentioned, the composition of the sample of children (whose interactive contexts form the focus of chapters 7&8) was not random. Rather it was structured by the nature of my integration into the community. Generally the children come from two patrilocal groups of roughly equal social standing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patrilocal Group 1</th>
<th>age</th>
<th>Patrilocal Group 2</th>
<th>age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lil Kumar</td>
<td>8-24 mos</td>
<td>Leezi</td>
<td>7-8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mando</td>
<td>30-46 mos</td>
<td>Deevii</td>
<td>4-5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia</td>
<td>0-15 mos</td>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>0-10 mos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siion</td>
<td>4-5 years</td>
<td>Shamir</td>
<td>27-43 mos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lex</td>
<td>7-8 years</td>
<td>Shabir</td>
<td>6-22 mos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiga</td>
<td>10-11 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby</td>
<td>4-5 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumar</td>
<td>7-8 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kavita</td>
<td>9-10 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.2 Children in the Sample**

During the field period, I recorded over eighty hours of naturally occurring interaction and just under ten hours of interviews and performances of stories. The vast majority of the naturalistic recordings were made surreptitiously. I had, at the beginning of the field period, asked a number of people if I could make recordings with their children and various caregivers. In most cases this involved securing permission from both the mother and the father and any other adults who were resident. Some people refused but most people agreed. I explained that they would not know when I was recording and when I was not because the tape recorder would not be openly displayed. As such, I think it is safe to say that in most cases participants were either unaware that they were being taped or did not care. In the few cases where participants did become aware, for one reason or another, a marked shift in style is quite obvious. The naturalistic recordings include examples of a number of different genres only a small section of which are represented in this work. Included are toasts on a wedding anniversary, folk songs, arguments between men, between women and between children, oral histories, pedagogical discourse, caregiver-child interaction, heated debate, casual conversation (i.e. *yaf*), recitation of
religious doctrine, the proceedings of a puja and words spoken in the course of possession by a Dutchman’s spirit.

Most of the interviews were conducted fairly late in the course of fieldwork and I was able to use my knowledge of metacommunication derived from participation in some of the above events to direct and structure the interview in ways that were locally acceptable. Such metacommunicative norms include the pacing of question and answer, the system for overlap and turn-taking, and the use of particular lexical items which can be used to cue cultural knowledge. In this regard, I found that it was particularly important to frame the interview situation as pleasant gyaf rather than as question-and-answer. Interviews are, for some people in the village, strongly associated with the interrogations carried out on a rather alarmingly frequent basis by the local police/militia. For others, the thought of being asked questions about language and life in the village conjured up unhappy memories of the Guyanese colonial and post-colonial school system. It was thus important for me to stress that I only wanted to gyaf and that the questions I was asking na ga rang an rait ansa “don’t have a wrong and a right answer.” I used different metacommunicative means to achieve these ends depending, in part, on the gender of the interviewee. If a man was being interviewed, I would usually ask them to come to Raja’s house and we would have a few drinks, eat lunch and then gradually move into the interview. With women, the situation was somewhat different. In some cases, I was invited to the woman’s house to conduct the interview. This happened more often in cases where the woman was not married. On several occasions, I arrived to meet not one but several local women busily engaged in talk. In each case, these turned out to be exceptionally good interviews. With no men present (other than myself), the women would cook, dance, sing, joke
and drink. After some time at this, I would be allowed to ask my questions and received long and detailed answers. Not all the interviews I conducted went so smoothly, however. In one case, the interviewee spent the entire time looking out toward the road to see if her husband was coming. In most of the interviews with women, a fairly relaxed atmosphere was jointly created through the exchange of greetings and a few jokes. Often, one or two friends were also present and this helped to create a more relaxed atmosphere. Of course, it would be wrong to say that participants understood these situations as something other than interviews. However, interviews are complex genres and have, embedded within them, conversations, asides, and casual gyaf.

I also spent good deal of my time “interviewing” children, most often, at times when they were left in my care by their parents (I too became a caregiver in the village). These communicative situations were markedly different in structure than those conducted with adults. Usually they range over a great many genres and topics, the participation is fluid and the overall style of discourse is very lively. Most of these children had little experience with formal interviews and thus tended to treat the communicative situation simply as playful interaction with a caregiver. The ease with which these “interviews” were conducted was also facilitated by the lack of ambiguity in terms of role structure and participation. As Briggs (1986) notes, the interview presupposes the interactional roles of an interviewer who asks questions and an interviewee who answers them (even if we allow for some flexibility). Problems arises when such interactional roles conflict with local role expectations which divide up interactional work differently. Thus, in the Mexicano community he studied, Briggs found that younger people (himself included) were expected not to ask repeated and direct questions
of their elders (except in particular circumstances). In the interviews I conducted with children, however, expectations regarding questioning and those concerning local status relations coincided neatly with the interactional roles of interviewer and interviewee. Because I was of higher status in the system of age-grading, I was allowed and expected to ask the questions necessary for conducting the interview.

The social relations within which I was engaged by members of the village and that I have sketched out in this chapter are quite typical and the reader will find that, in the following chapters, the same social roles reappear in slightly different guises and with different occupants. The manner in which I was integrated was thus not only important for achieving ethnographic research goals, it in fact became part of the research itself. My participation in joint activity was thus not just a means to an end but a major part of the process through which ethnographic, interactional and linguistic data was "collected".
4.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I give an account of GC as a pragmatic system. As I have suggested in the introductory chapter, this means integrating analyses of formal variation with other aspects of talk which are more commonly understood as pragmatic (deixis, affect and stance etc.). I attempt to achieve this integration through an extended discussion of native speaker awareness. In the first section, then, in order to relate the present work to previous research on linguistic variation in Guyana, I look at the nature of sociolinguistic variation in the village and, specifically, at the way native speakers understand this variation as reflecting (and, occasionally, as constituting) social structure. My particular interest in this discussion is the way in which formal variation is related to the way in which villagers understand their community - both its boundaries and the way it is internally differentiated. Following the description and analyses of variation, I consider in more detail the interactional negotiation of context in talk. As I have discussed in the introduction, one way in which participants frame interaction as occurring in an egalitarian community of a certain type is through the linguistic construal of space and the participants' relations to it. It is therefore worth spending some time describing the structural devices which GC uses for relating speech event participants to the context of speaking. With regard to this last aspect of contextualization, in the later part of this chapter I discuss the use of formal variation in GC for marking speaker's orientation to the message in terms of affect or stance and thus revisit the initial discussion of variation and code-
choice from a rather different perspective. Finally, to close the discussion of native speaker attitudes and awareness, I consider the way in which metalinguistic items (verbs of speaking) categorize and characterize speech-interaction along a number of dimensions.

4.1 Variation in the Creole Continuum

To give a general sense of both the differences between basilect and acrolect and the abilities of speakers to move between them, consider the following two texts which were produced by the same speaker as samples for a matched guise test.¹

4.1.1 "Creolese"/BASILECTAL SAMPLE

Jack: yu noo fu kuk dok korii?
   *do you know how to cook duck curry?*

W: yes bai mii noo fu kuk a dok korii
   *yes, I know how to cook duck curry.*

Jack: mi wan fu noo tel mii nou
   *I want to know - tell me will you?*

W: yu wan mi fu tel yu hou fu kuk a dok korii?
   *You want me to tell you how to cook duck curry?*

Jack: yea
   *yes*

W: arait piknii - yu gu get yu dok an yu kot am op an yu wash am klii::n

¹My first attempt to elicit two samples of speech for a matched guise test with a different speaker had failed because the woman was unable to approximate either the basilect or acrolect consistently. The speaker who produced these texts was originally from a country area but had moved to Georgetown when she was eighteen. A hairdresser, she enjoyed returning to the country for a day to gyal with friends. Matched guise and subjective reaction tests almost invariably use men if they use only one voice. I wanted to use a woman because of my interest in beliefs about women and language and socialization.
alright child - you will get a duck and you cut it up an you wash it clean

an den yu goo lait op a faia an yu put an a kahaarii fu hat- le ii hat and then you light up a fire and you put on a kahari to heat - let it get hot

an wen a kahaarii hat yu yu chroo in a ail an bai taim a ail a hat and when the kaharii is hot you-you throw in the oil and by the time the oil is getting hot

pan a faia yu gu grain op yu masala - yu noo wa masala? on a fire you will grind up your masala - you know what masala is?

Jack: mi noo masala a wa yes I know what masala is yes

W: wel yu gu grain op a masala wid a gyarlik an a onyan an a pepaa - yu well you will grind up the masala with the garlic and the onion and the pepper - you

noo abii-diiz piiopl laik plentii hat pepa? soo wen yu don grain op a masala know we like a lot of hot pepper? So when yu have finished grinding up the masala

yu goo bonjee am in a kahaarii. an wen yu don bonjee a masala gud den you will bunjay it in the kahari. And when you have finished bunjaying the masals then

yu gu teek a dok miit an chroo am in an yu gu bonjee a dok miit an yu gu you will take the duck meat and throw it in and you will bunjay the duck meat and you will

lef am lil l'am a born out lil bit biika a-a rank waata de dee so yuu gu le am born out lil leave it a little and let it burn off because there is rank water in it so you will let it burn out a little

bit an wen am don born out den yu gu teek hat waata an chroo am op tap a da le a miit bit and when its finished then you will take hot water and throw it on top of that so that the meat

bai: l an wen a miit don bail an a dok saf iinof da yuu kyan chuu am boils and when the meat is finished boiling and the duck is soft enough so that you can chew it

den yu teek am dong pan a stoov an yu iit am wid a rais an yu enjai am then you take it off the stove and you eat it with rice and enjoy it.

4.1.2 ENGLISH SAMPLE

Jack: ...kuk dok korii? ...cook duck curry?
W: wel yuu wud laik tuu noo hou tuu kuk dok korii? wel yu get di miit - yu get a dok an
well you would like to know how to cook duck curry? Well yu get the meat - you get a duck

yuu kliin it an yuu kot it op kliin an yu wOsh it - okee? wen yuu finish wOshing dii
you clean it and you cut it up clean and you wash it - O.K? when you finish washing the

miit an soo fOrth yu get dii ingriidiients tuu kuk di korii wich iz di masala di garlik di
meat and so forth you get the ingredients to cook the curry which is the masala the garlic the

onyon di pepor along wid di korii poodar - kee? den yu lait op di stoov an yu put on di
onion the pepper along with the curry powder - O.K? then you light the stove and you put on the
di pOt weer yu gona kuk di korii in to hOt an yuu chroo a litl Oil an put
the pot in which you are going to cook the curry in to heat up and you throw in a little oil and put

it fo hat kee? den yu grain op di masala aloon g wid di ada ingriidiients az ai tOld yuu
it to get hot - O.K.? then you grind up the masala along with the other ingredients as I told you

the garlik an di onyon an di pepaa an soo fort wen yu finish grainin di masala an di Oil
the garlic and the onion and the pepper and so forth wen you finish grinding the masala and the oil

iz hat yu chroo it in tu di Oil an yuu kuk it a litl yu ondastaand? yuu bonjee it soo wen
is hot you throw it in to the oil and you cook it a little - you understand? you bunjay it so when

yuu finish bonjeeing it yuu chroo in di dok miit in tu di pOt an den yu kuk it wel wid
you finish bunjaying it you throw in the duck meat in to the pot and then you cook it well with
dat yu wil get a litl wOta soo yu liiv di wOta to sima dong - okee? soo wen its finisht
that you will get a little water so yu leave the water to simmer down - O.K.? so when its finished

simmaring den yu ad hOt wOtaa fo di miit tu bOil an wen di miit iz finisht bOilng yu
simmering then you add hot water for the meat to boil and when the meat is finished boiling you
gona chek it an den yu-yu ad di di styuu on tOp íñof styuu an den wen yu finish
will check it and the you-you add the stew on top - enough stew and then when you finish

bOilng yu teek it af an dat iz di wee tuu kuk di dok korii
boiling you take it off and that is the way to cook the duck curry
## 4.1.3 Contrasts between Basilectal and Acrolectal Varieties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>TEXT 1</strong></th>
<th><strong>TEXT 2</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHONOLOGY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or&gt;a</td>
<td>a eg. faia</td>
<td>a–or eg. sima, pepaa–pepor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O&gt;a</td>
<td>a eg. hat</td>
<td>a–O eg. hat–hOt, wOsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C#&gt;0</td>
<td>0 eg. biika</td>
<td>C eg. dat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC#&gt;C#</td>
<td>C# eg. saf, grain</td>
<td>CC# eg. tOld, ondastaand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tl&gt;l</td>
<td>l eg. lil</td>
<td>tl eg. litl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dh&gt;d</td>
<td>d eg. wid</td>
<td>d eg. dat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>th&gt;t</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>t–th eg. fOrth–fort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n&gt;ng</td>
<td>ng eg. dong</td>
<td>ng eg. dong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oi&gt;ai</td>
<td>ai eg. ail, enjai</td>
<td>Oi eg. Oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEXICAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaharii–pot</td>
<td>kaharii</td>
<td>pot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>predicate serialization</td>
<td>wash-kliin</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MORPHOSYNTACTIC</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronouns (1st singular)</td>
<td>mi</td>
<td>ai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronouns (possessive)</td>
<td>yu</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronouns (3rd neuter sing.)</td>
<td>am</td>
<td>it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complementizer</td>
<td>fu</td>
<td>fu/tu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>copula</td>
<td>0 eg. wen a kaharii hat</td>
<td>iz eg. di Oi iz hat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completive</td>
<td>don eg. wen a miit don bail</td>
<td>is finished eg. iz finisht bOilin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>irrealis/future</td>
<td>gu</td>
<td>wud/gona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>articles</td>
<td>a (generalized)</td>
<td>di</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DISCOURSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>address</td>
<td>piknii</td>
<td>yuu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse marker</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ookee, yu ondastand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 Contrasts between Texts 1 & 2
As shown in table 4.1, the texts above illustrate many of the salient differences between more basilectal and more acrolectal varieties in Guyana. Phonological differences, even in this small sample, tend to be more often expressed as statistical tendencies than as categorial differences. Thus, although we find non-creole, acrolectal segments in text 2 (e.g. or, Oi, th, etc.), in most cases, these alternate with the creole variant (e.g. or—a, O—a, th—t). In some cases, the speaker did not approximate the acrolectal phonology for text 2 (e.g. she realized dh as d in *dat*). In terms of lexical selection, the speaker distinguished a basilectal variant *kaharii* “pot used for making curry” from what she considered the more English and metropolitan *pot*. In fact, *kaharii* is used in the mesolectal and acrolectal registers of East Indians in Georgetown. The speaker here seems to be equating the basilect with the expression of an East Indian racial identity (and, by default, the acrolect thus becomes ethnically “unmarked”). In terms of lexical differentiation, there is the hint of a very productive basilectal process of predicate serialization in the expression *wash am kliin*. The two texts are most clearly differentiated at the level of morphosyntax with the speaker employing a range of devices to distinguish basilect and acrolect. Included here are variation in the pronouns (mi—ai, am—it), complementizers (fu—tu), and copula (O—iz). Completes are marked with the basilectal tense-aspect marker *don* in text 1 but with adverial *finsht* in text 2. Further, in terms of tense-modality-aspect marking, we find that, in text 1, all unrealized clauses are marked with *gu* or *gaa*, whereas, in text 2, the speaker distinguishes between conditional clauses marked with *wud* (e.g. yu wud laik tu noo...) from future unrealized marked with *wil* (e.g. yu wil get a lit l wOta) or *gona* (e.g. yu gona chek it). Finally, the speaker marks all noun phrases with a generalized *a* in text 1 but uses *di* in text 2. This pattern seems to indicate that the speaker has not fully acquired the
basilectal system for articles (see the appendix). Finally, in terms of discourse features, the speaker uses the address form piknii in text 1. Like the equation of basilectal forms with East Indians (evidenced in the use of kahaari only for text 1), this usage seems influenced by the ideology which associates creole varieties with the oldest generation in the community (see below). This said, drawing attention to the way in which social relations between participants (speaker and hearer) are determined by the system of age-graded and gendered solidarity with the use of kin terms as well as age and sex sensitive terms (piknii, bai) is very much a part of the discourse-pragmatic system of basilectal creole. The absence of obvious basilectal discourse tags in text 1 (checking the receipt of information and its comprehension, such as, yu onastan?, yu noo?, yu noo hou?) is rather striking when compared with the numerous uses of ookee “OK” and yu ondastand in text 2. Whether this reflects, on the one hand, a stereotype of creole discourse as more monologic and creole speakers as less responsive to the audience, or, on the other, a lack of pragmatic competence on the part of the speaker, is unclear.

The two texts are quite useful in illustrating the contrasts between basilect and acrolect at a number of levels. In fact, when test subjects in the matched guise listened to the two samples they were invariably impressed at the speakers’ (sic) abilities. None of the respondents doubted that the two texts were in fact produced by different speakers. The texts also illustrate the ways in which speaker competence is limited and the way in which the speaker compensates for such limits. In the activity of making a recording of “real” or “raw” (see below) Creolese, the speaker drew on certain stereotypes both in places where her competence was not complete (eg. the articles) and in places where contextualization was required (eg. in her use of lexical selection to ethnically mark one of the texts, and in address to indicate the social
relations between participants). The texts thus, while illustrating salient contrasts, go further to reveal local ideologies about the social characteristics of the speakers who typically use these varieties and the contexts in which they occur.

4.2 **Native Perspectives on the Language**

Structural differences of the kind illustrated above do not go completely unnoticed by native speakers. I say completely because native speaker awareness, like that of the analyst, is always partial although certain individuals do show an acute understanding of the nature of variation in the continuum. The question of what native speakers take into account when assessing language variation and what they find significant or noteworthy in this respect is a fascinating area of study and one which touches on important recent developments in linguistic anthropology (the general concern for reflexivity, metapragmatics and language ideology). Of course, native speaker evaluations have been apart of sociolinguistic study at least since Labov (1966) and Lambert (1967). Matched guise tests measured people's evaluations of different speech varieties in a community showing that members typically and routinely correlated linguistic variation with different social and personal characteristics of speakers. In the following I report on research I conducted into the question of native speaker attitudes towards the varieties Guyanese Creole.

4.2.1 **Local Terms for Linguistic Varieties**

As I argue in the following chapter, language, in the rural Indo-Guyanese villages with which I am familiar, has a particular importance as both a symbolic field and as an instrument
through which battles for symbolic capital are waged. After more than thirty years of empirical sociolinguistic research in a range of speech communities, there can be little doubt that linguistic resources, arising from the facts of structural variation, are important to every speaker of whatever language ("so-called" monolinguals and multilinguals alike). So without wishing to dispute the universal nature of social and stylistic variation in language, I think it is necessary to stress the particularly salient role that language plays in so-called "post-colonial" situations, particularly those in which creole languages are spoken by the majority of the population. The combination of socio-political and linguistic factors in Guyana, for example, has given rise to a situation in which language is very much a primary index of social position. Dale Bisnauth, a member of the late Jagan's PPP government, wrote in the PPP (People's Progressive Party) paper, the Sunday Mirror:

I went to a small dinner party not so long ago, by invitation. A properly sari-clad woman ranted and raved about those who had recently come into the lime light so to speak, of Guyanese life by the accident of politics. The recency of their arrival was apparently an offense as was the perception that "they" were not as educated as she was with her two degrees and all, or as possessed of the social graces as she was, la de da and so on[...] she berated some of us for our incapacity to speak the Queen's English properly and for our penchant to mis-match nouns and verbs; and others of us for being so obviously Philistine culturally[...] I know that few of us, given our slave and indentured background, are really of the manner/manor born, when you come down to it, whatever we may pretend and whatever may be our affectation... But the new snobbery revolves around education in English, ability to speak that language properly, some capacity to appreciate culture and to support its development, conspicuous consumption, the ability to acquire things and possession of relatives abroad. The ability to claim some connection with persons in perceived high places, also counts (1995:35, emphasis added).

The gender of the participants in the reconstructed scene is probably not a coincidence. Suffice for now to say that language, specifically the difference between English and Creolese, is on just about everybody's mind at some time or another.

It is not surprising, then, to find that native speakers have a fairly elaborate set of terms
for talking about language and linguistic differentiation. At first sight the native metalinguistic vocabulary for structural linguistic variation seems to be somewhat “overlexified” (Halliday 1976). However, on closer examination, it appears that most of these terms do not refer to structural characteristics alone. If we were to make a first approximation of the metalinguistic vocabulary for code varieties it would incorporate the following terms arranged from Creole (left) to English (right) poles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basilect</th>
<th>Mesolect</th>
<th>Acrolect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creolese</td>
<td>broken-down language</td>
<td>deep English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raw talk</td>
<td>mix-up talk</td>
<td>talking proper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>broad talk</td>
<td></td>
<td>proper English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brawlin’ talk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patwa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coolie talk</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 Metalinguistic Vocabulary for Code Varieties

On the basis of the correlations I have made between native terms and those of the creolistics literature (e.g. basilect-mesolect-acrolect) one might be led to a number of erroneous conclusions regarding the way native speakers classify different kinds of linguistic production. While the set of terms in the top row (Creolese, broken down language, deep English) do seem to take as their primary criteria for classification structural features, the others generally do not. The other terms, in characterizing and classifying different kinds of linguistic production, associate structural features of language varieties with various functions of speaking and salient characteristics of the speaker, situation and context (thus, it is rather difficult for native speakers to answer a question like “when is it appropriate to use raw talk” because the speech variety is itself part of the context). Most obvious is the relation of structural characteristics
and language functions. For example, as I show later in this chapter, the acrolect is associated with politeness while the basilect is linked to with cussing and “unruly” (often anti-authoritarian) behaviour despite the fact that the situation is much more complicated than such a one-to-one mapping implies.

4.2.2 THE SPEECH ECONOMY

English and creole varieties do not exhaust the resources available within this speech community and despite the fact that this is not the focus of the present work some mention should be made of other varieties in use in the speech community and the way the total repertoire (Gumperz 1968) is natively understood as constituting a speech economy (Hymes 1974).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVERYDAY VARIETIES</th>
<th>Deep English</th>
<th>Mix-up Talk</th>
<th>Creolese/Raw Talk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English-Based</td>
<td></td>
<td>Coolie Talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESOTERIC VARIETIES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gibberish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-English Based</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hindi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 THE SPEECH ECONOMY

I have divided the esoteric languages into English and non-English based varieties. However such a classification is in some ways inadequate. So-called Coolie-talk is really Creolese (ie. GC) with a greater contribution from Hindi and/or Arabic in the lexicon and some Hindi phonological features such retroflex alveolar stops. Only a few people in the village speak a variety which others would call Coolie talk. In general it is a remembered variety but not one that speakers command. Gibberish (/giberi/) is, according to local accounts, the African version
of Coolie talk. According to the few speakers that I know, *gibberish* was a secret language used by the real “congo niggers” in Guyana. The most proficient speaker I was able to find was a woman in her eighties of mixed African, Indonesian and Dutch origin who had strong ties to Surinam. Her father, she told me, was an independent landowner of mixed Indonesian and Dutch heritage who had found himself in Guyana and once there took an African mistress (her mother). It was the mother who spoke the variety Cousin Dina called *gibberish*. In fact, the present-day variety of *gibberish* which I recorded is GC with syllabic and/or consonantal insertions. Although it sounds strange to speakers of GC it is not a grammatically or phonologically distinct system. John Rickford (p.c.) tells me that it is quite commonly used as a children’s play language in Guyana. What is interesting about both these varieties is the way they take an essentially ethnically unmarked variety (i.e. GC) and make it ethnically charged through the addition of features that are interpreted as essentially “Indian” or “African”.

Hindi (really Bhojpuri - cf Gambhir 1981, 1983) and Arabic are languages restricted primarily to religious experience in Guyana. While most Hindus, including a number of local pandits, have only superficial knowledge of Hindi, educated Moslems often have fairly developed levels of competence in Arabic and some are able to converse quite freely in it. This difference no doubt has to do with the religious traditions as they are manifested in Guyana. Devoted Hinduism does not depend on a sophisticated knowledge of Hindi. Rather devotion in Hinduism is expressed through daily prayer, annual ritual, fairly regular church attendance and an involvement in the institution of the church as well as knowledge of Hindu mythology. Knowledge of Hinduism is regularly transmitted in English or Creolese, Hindi generally being used only for prayers and bajan (religious music). Moslem religion, on the other hand, is
strongly embedded in the learning of Arabic and children attend language classes as part of their religious instruction. All prayer, and some conversational dialogue, in the mosque is in Arabic. Many magi, in contrast to the pandits, show a fairly deep knowledge of Arabic.

Despite the presence of a number of esoteric languages, the most salient dimension of linguistic differentiation, the one that local people take into account when evaluating a speaker on the grounds of their speech, is the Creole-to-English one. I discuss the degree to which people are aware of such variation and in what capacity in the following sections.

4.3 Native Awareness of Variation

4.3.1 Regional Variation

The variation that native speakers remark upon most often, and seem most sure of, is that between inhabitants of different regions in Guyana. The village studied is located at the border between East Coast Demerara (ECD) and Berbice (it is the last major settlement before Berbice). There are a number of commonalities between the community studied and the neighbouring Indo-Guyanese villages in West Berbice like Bushlot. Rice farming has been particularly important in both areas. Inhabitants of the village, when questioned about language use, however, tend to exaggerate differences between themselves and their Berbician neighbours. When I initially mentioned to people that I was interested in the creole language I was more often than not told that I was in the wrong place and that I needed to go to Berbice because people around “here” don’t speak like that anymore. The Berbician’ reputation for speaking the “real” creole is so widely accepted it is interesting to speculate as to its origin. Even Bickerton (1973a) seems to accept this myth. In fact, of course, people in Berbice show
just the same kinds of variation as is found in ECD and in other rural areas (some speakers are primarily acrolectal while others are primarily basilectal). The idea that the basilectal speakers are somehow more basilectal than people from other areas does not seem to be true based on my own observations. But many inhabitants of the village where I conducted fieldwork argue that Berbician creole preserves a number of features which creolists would call archaic. Included here are “sing-song” intonation patterns, the use of fi rather than fu as complementizer, and the expression bring out mii it "give me my food." This last supposed characteristic of Berbician creole is so often cited as evidence for the more raw nature of the variety that I am led to wonder if there was some otherwise forgotten story or joke behind it. Despite native speaker intuitions of this kind, the growth of major centres like Rose Hall, New Amsterdam and Rosignol (not to mention smaller, but nonetheless significant, villages and settlements like Black Bush Polder and Bushlot, Blairmont) has no doubt led to increasing linguistic diversification in the area and the adoption of more acrolectal varieties in a significant portion of the population. Still, villagers' association of raw talk with Berbice is worth investigating further. It is interesting to note, for instance, that language in this case seems to index more general ideas about social relations. Villagers believe that Berbicians are not only more creole-speaking but also that they are more traditional, backward and superstitious. In this regard it is instructive to note that the stock “berbicianism”, bring out mi it, plays out stereotyped and traditional gender roles (a man demanding his food from a wife who has spent the afternoon cooking). This, then, is not only a statement about language variety but also about an interactive context and about social relations.

People are also aware of, and occasionally comment on, something loosely labelled tong-
"taak" “town talk”. This variety is probably not indigenous to Georgetown (although cf. Walter Edwards 1984, 1994). Rather, it is the fairly upper mesolectal variety spoken by the large numbers of people who live outside Georgetown but rely on the capital to make a living. This heterogenous group includes all kinds of sellers and hucksters and, most prominently, the minibus drivers and conductors. A regular column in Guyana Chronicle, appropriately titled Right here in G/T, is written in a rather stylized version. The following sample is representative:

...Whatever the cause though, I could feel it coming on...a strong attack of nostalgia. The fus’ signs does show up when you gyaffing old-time story with aidren what you ain’t reason foh a long time, an yu find that nuff a you sentences starting with: “You could remember when...?” The other day (“Remember...The Radian B.” Guyana Chronicle, November 14, 1995).

Or,

And you remember, wha’ you looking at as a fast conquest today, might turn-out foh bu you death-warrant in tights. After all, half the fun ‘a them action is looking back with satisfaction, right? So wha’ sense it mek if you ain’t gon deh-bout foh reminisce? Think, me-brother. We gon catch-up (“Death-warrant wearing tights.” Guyana Chronicle, Oct 21, 1995).

The variety, which features near categorical use of non-basilectal markers such as first person subject ai “I”, habitual marker doz (limited to non-past contexts), progressive -ing, quotative and adnominal laik “like” as well as a great many colloquial expressions (ai de man “I’m hanging in there”) is similar in many ways to what has been labelled AAVE both in its contexts of use and a number of its salient structural features (for instance, copula patterns cf. Bickerton 1973a, Winford 1992). As a recognizable style of speaking or register, it holds a good deal of sway among the younger male set in the village who are concerned to present a more experienced and less rural self image (cf. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1995 on the parallel behaviour of “burnout” boys). The variety is incorporated into a larger set of non-verbal signs and overall body-hexis (cf Bourdieu 1991). When combined with a certain mode of dress (loose fitting
monocolor pant-shirt combination, expensive brand name track shoes or "boots", and the ubiquitous kangol furgora hat) and a certain way of holding one's self (in certain places particularly the road but also in chinese food restaurants, rumshops etc) it indexes a local notion of bad boy/man. This person is someone who should not be troubled, someone who is dangerous and likely to do anything if pushed. The body-hexis seems derived from what is typically understood as a male Afro-Guyanese mode of comportment: the musculature is relaxed but ready, the hands and arms always exposed (never in the pockets or under each other), the head and the hat are often tilted down hiding the eyes, legs, if sitting, are outstretched, if standing, may be loosely crossed. The cigarette is held loosely in the mouth between hard and somewhat dramatic inhalations. The overall effect is a self-projected immobility or calm which is quite at odds with the dominant stereotypes of East Indian masculinity. Such modes of comportment, including associated ways of speaking, are readily

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2 Williams (1991:107) discusses a similar kind of person whom she labels "virago":

In many respects, the term virago coincides with the US Afro-American designation "bad-ass nigger." In this sense, a virago is a person who is quick to anger and equally quick to settle disagreements violently. Unlike bullies, viragoes do not usually instigate fights, but like them, when confronted or "crossed" by others, they are unlikely to seek a compromise resolution to the disagreement.

3 I do not want to reify racial difference here. It is more proper to say that some young Indo-Guyanese men model themselves partly after a particular interpretation of urban masculinity which is very much influenced by Afro-Guyanese culture. Although cultural practices are not distinctly African or Indian, people's interpretations often are. See Drummond (1980) on the nondiscreteness of cultural practice in Guyana and Bartels (1977) and Williams (1991) on the enduring importance of racially polarized stereotypes. It should also be noted that the young East Indian men in town (those who work with Afro-Guyanese and mixed people) take a decidedly anti-racist position. Unlike the young men in the rural villages, urban East Indians who belong to the minibus crews are quite vocal about the injustices of both East Indian and African brands of racism.

4 Williams (1991) provides a fascinating discussion of supposedly "ethnic" differences in attitudes towards activity in general and work in particular. "Stereotypes of an ethnic segment's relative emphasis on work sum up these contentions: East Indians work to live, Africans work when all else fails,
recognized by people in the village. The older generation has a remarkably ambiguous attitude. While labelling these people (often their own kin) *bad bai* "bad boy", *tiif-man* "thief", *cockish* "unreliable", *kaisuutee* "lazy" etc., they simultaneously remark on their *stylings* "fashion sense" and are impressed with their ability to *reason* "sweet talk" with women. Men are perhaps more likely to tend toward the latter evaluation than are women although this is not unambiguously the case. The main point is that the acrolect and upper-mesolect is rather heavily stratified or heteroglossic in Bakhtin's (1981, 1984) sense. The indexical value of formal variants in these upper registers is underspecified and it is only through their combination with other kinds of signs (bodily comportment, dress etc.) that they become meaningful. These younger men and women are not targeting the varieties spoken in schools despite the fact that statistical evidence might indicate that they are relatively more acrolectal than others in the village. Neither is this a "standard" in the sense of a legitimized variety. Rather, the prestige it commands is essentially covert and its use distinguishes the younger speaker from both people considered rural and backward (the figures of patrilocal authority among them) and from those labelled *biggity* "arrogant", *English-duck* (i.e. the figures of institutional and bureaucratic authority).

4.3.2 Social Variation

Any community in Guyana shows some linguistic differentiation according to socio-economic class (Rickford 1979). From the campus of UG (University of Guyana), to the market of Georgetown, to the rural villages discussed here, the contrast between relatively acrolectal or mesolectal and relatively basilectal varieties is used to signal social differentiation.

and Portuguese and Chinese work only long and hard enough to accumulate sufficient capital to let it work for them" (1991:57).
Such associations between linguistic variety and social position do not escape native speaker awareness. Rather people regularly comment on the relative appropriateness of a particular linguistic variety and a particular social identity. Such associations, I have found, are usually already racialized. Particular ways of speaking are not only associated with working or rural people but with rural people of a certain racial group. This amounts to saying that class, in this community is not conceptualized in a purely abstract way. Of course in discussing class differentiation within their community people less often racialize what they say because the ethnic identity forms the interpretive backdrop of class discourse. In such cases, as I argue below, the intersection of gender and class comes to the fore. However I want to first discuss the way in which linguistic varieties are associated with particular racialized class identities.

The joke (story) which follows, given to me by one informant but also well known, provides a rather striking illustration of the way linguistic differentiation is linked to race, class and gender. I have marked stereotyped basilectal items with underlining, acrolectal ones with double underlining.

**BABUU, HIS WIFE AND THE DOCTOR.**

*Narrated by Gobin Singh*

   
   *One day Babuu took his ailing wife to the doctor. When Babuu went*

2. *dakta aks Babuu Babuu wat iz yor prablim*
   
   *the doctor asked Babuu “Babuu, what is the problem?”*

3. *see dakta mi na noo mi waif sik*
   
   *Babuu replied “Doctor, I don’t know my wife is sick.”*

4. *see ookee weet am gona ten tuu hor jos nou*
   
   *The doctor said “O.K., wait, I am going to attend to her in a minute.”*
5. When it was her turn, the doctor called her in, the doctor listened to her insides, and the two of them came out, and he told Babuu “Babuu, your wife wants sexual intercourse.”

6. So Babuu said “Doctor, give her what she wants. I brought her here so that you could give her what she needed. I don’t know what she wants - you give her what she needs.” So the doctor said “Babuu, are you sure you want me to give your wife sexual intercourse?” He said yes.

7. “Yes, Doctor what (you) think I’m telling you - give her what she wants. I will pay the money?”

8. Anyway, Babuu made a gesture like this and the doctor called his wife and took her in the room and he started to have sex with her. So after the doctor took some time,

9. Babuu (rapping on chair) rap a dii door “Doctor, what is taking you so long?”

10. The doctor replied “Babuu, wait a minute please I’m giving your wife sexual intercourse.”

11. “OO I thought you were doing the other thing.”

The story, in its use of code switching to convey changes of participation and role, gives a striking illustration of the way in which language serves as an indirect index of social position and ethnic identity. I say indirect because these fairly abstract qualities (ethnicity and class) are constituted by the direct indexical meanings which the variety makes to immediately obvious personal qualities (such as a lack of intelligence, or ignorance generally).
There is a flipside to this picture, however (cf. Rickford and Traugott 1985, Rickford 1985). Many folkheroes (as opposed to folk-stereotypes like Babuu) are crafted in creole discourse. Balgobin is the consummate creole-using, anti-authoritarian folkhero and his stories are well known in the community.

Balgobin Gets the Point.

Narrated by Deonarine (Papso) Singh

1. yuu noo Jak - yuu noo BaalGoobin? brait bOy...
   You know Jack - You know Balgobin? He’s a bright boy

2. wel Baalgoobin de pan di bla-di tiicha de pan di- mis de pan de blakboord-
   Well Balgobin was there at the - the teacher was there - Miss was there at the blackboard

3. dis a di mis ï get an wan shart skyoornt yu noo? wen shii sit dong pan di cheer
   This is the miss, she had on a short skirt - you know? When she sat down on the chair

4. Baalgoobin de a front ii a bou dong ii hed an ii a -- ii see ii gat a ( ) big (baks)
   Balgobin was up at the front. He would bend down and he aa - he said she has a big box

5. - a gon gii yu a jook wan wan jos nou -teek it op-
   I’ll give you a couple of jokes in a minute. Take that up (an aside to his son)

6. yuu noo - an shi star rait pan di blakboord
   You know? And she started to write on the blackboard.

7. “tyuu plos tyuu iikwal foor mainos wan you get chrii aad tyuu tu dat yu get faiv”
   “Two plus two equals four minus one you get three add two to that you get five.”

8. yu noo an sh-shi tek a tur rong di klaas fu sii huu a pee otenshon
   you know an sh-she took a tour around the class to see who was paying attention

9. Baalgoobin de a di outsai ii na de insai di ting
   Balgobin’s mind was not inside. He’s not all there - inside.

10. shii see Baalgoobin yu get di paint
    She said “Balgobin, did you get the point?”

11. se noo mosii gaa:n in
    He said “No, it most have gone in already.”
12. Then Miss peeped outside where she saw there were two donkeys in the shed

13. The point already went in

14. The Miss said "Oh God, Balgobin, that is what you were doing just now?"

15. Miss, I was just looking at the point.”

Here Balgobin plays on the word /point/ “point”. In line 10, the teacher asks if Balgobin “gets the point”. For the teacher the point means the “reason” or the “idea behind something”. Her usage of this term is both acrolectal and, within that realm, strongly associated with the bureaucracy of education (a domain in which examples have singular justifications, in which problems lead to wrong or right answers etc.). Balgobin achieves miscommunication here by taking point in its metaphorical and Creole sense as referring to male genitalia. He thus uses the question from the teacher and the reference to the point to redirect attention towards two copulating donkeys outside the classroom. The fact that this is intentional miscommunication is clearly indicated in the last line where we find Balgobin using the acrolectal register (ai woz) to excuse his misapplication of basilectal rules for lexico-semantic interpretation. Many other stories feature the wise yet irreverent, creole-speaking Guyanese hero getting the better of an authority figure. Such stories point to a set of beliefs about language and other indices of class position which are at odds with the stereotype of Babuu presented in the first story. If Babuu’s language variety indexes ignorance and a lack of intelligence, that of Balgobin indexes a crafty, untrained but highly respected intelligence and resourcefulness. It is important to note that Balgobin is bidialectally competent. In line 11, Balgobin uses the long aa which, as Rickford
(1987b) has noted, is a stereotype of rural East Indian speech or broad talk. In line 15, Balgobin displays competence in the acrolectal end of the continuum by his use of subject pronominal ai (see chapter 5) and inflected copula woz. As I argue in the following chapter, it is this ability for bidialectalism that is highly valued in the community. Basilectal usages, in the context of known bidialectal abilities, are taken as expressions, not of ignorance, but of wit, resourcefulness, cunning etc. Such contradictory attitudes towards language varieties have already been documented for the Caribbean (Patrick and McElhinny 1994) and Guyana in particular (Rickford 1985).

The connection between ethnicity, class and language which is part of the popular Guyanese imagination also became part of Bickerton’s (1973a) hypothesis regarding decreolization. Despite the fact that he provides no statistical (or implicational) evidence to show a strong correspondence between race and linguistic variation, he pronounces:

It is perhaps a regrettable fact that the most important covariable of linguistic behaviour in Guyana is not age, occupation, education, income, or even urbanization, but ethnic identity—i.e., whether the speaker belongs to the African or the East Indian community...As a result of socio-economic forces operating in Guyana over the last century or so, the bulk of the African population has moved well away from the basilect, while much of the Indian population has not.

While I cannot at this time provide empirical evidence to support my position, I think it is a mistake to make race the primary correlate of linguistic differentiation in Guyana. If agricultural workers are predominantly of East Indian descent in Guyana, it is likely that Creolese (especially the more basilectal varieties) is associated with this group. However, this situation has come about as the result of a complex interaction between race, “ethnic culture,” colonial ethnic stereotyping and socioeconomic development (cf. especially Williams 1991).

Such a sociolinguistic scenario cannot be understood as the direct result of socio-economic
forces working on ethnic or racial communities.\(^5\)

Whatever the complexities involved in the historical path leading up to the present situation, there can be little doubt that native speakers do make associations between linguistic differentiation and racialized class identity. The connection between linguistic differentiation and gendered class identities is somewhat more complicated. In the following chapter I discuss statistical differentiation in relation to gender: for the moment I want to consider only the ideology connecting ideas about class, gender with ideas about linguistic differentiation. I have found the recent work of Sherry Ortner particularly helpful in thinking through this problem. In thinking through the ways in which class was systematically mystified in Anglo American and Jewish American culture, she writes (1991:171):

The particular pattern I want to focus on here is the displacement of class frictions into the discourse and practice of gender and sexual relations. The basic point, which emerged for me more or less accidentally as I read a set of community studies with initially, no particular agenda, is this: gender relations for both middle-class and working-class Americans (I have only glanced at elites to this point) carry an enormous burden of quite antagonistic class meaning. To turn the point around, class discourse is submerged within, and spoken through, sexual discourse, taking “sex” here in the double English sense of pertaining to both gender and the erotic. And while the general point of displacement holds for both middle-class and working-class discourse, it works differently in each case.

The kernel that I want to take out of Ortner’s complex argument is that class is often thought through (or disguised within) discourses of gender and sexuality. With regards to linguistic variation in Guyana it is interesting to note that while structural variation is most often associated with age, what could be broadly labelled “functional variation” is associated with

\(^5\) This brings us to the central debate in Guyanese social history - the ways in which class, ethnicity, and race have been co-constructed in the colonial and post-colonial periods. The interested reader is directed to the work of Jayawardena (1980), Drummond (1980, 1981), Bartels (1977), Williams (1991) as well as Despres (1967), Smith (1995) and Premdas (1995).
gender, sexuality and class. So, while Creolese is associated strongly in native speaker ideology with the oldest generation in the community, cussing and talking hard is associated with a class of rural, working class people, and particularly with women (cf. chapter 6). At the same time, and this is the important point, these same kinds of speech practices (for example cussing) are associated with structural variants of the language. How does this relate to gender and class? My point is that when thinking about linguistic differentiation according to class and gender native speakers make strong associations between these social categories and particular “ways of speaking” which are taken to exemplify personal characteristics. In the case of class and ethnicity, a connection is made between the social category and personal characteristics (such as ignorance) which are expressed in interaction (such as when Babuu is duped by the Doctor). In the case of class and gender, an association is made between a certain group of socially situated women, particular interactive routines (e.g. cussing) and the personal characteristics (lowly class origins, ignorance, a lack of intelligence) that they supposedly index. The association between gender, class, race, on the one hand, and structural/lectal variation, on the other, only comes at the next indexical level (see figure 4.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ethnicity/class</th>
<th>personal characteristics</th>
<th>structural variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(getting duped)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INTERACTIONAL ROUTINES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(cussing)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>gender/class</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ie. ignorance)</td>
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**Figure 4.1 ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN SOCIAL CATEGORIES, PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND STRUCTURAL VARIANTS.**
Another important connection for many speakers also exists between ways of speaking and the gendered use of space (cf. Chapter 6, 7, 8). When asked, "who speaks more creole men or women?", many native speakers replied that women do because they are removed from a variety of public spaces, including school, at a young age. One informant made this set of logical relations quite explicit: creole comes from the "home environment" and a woman, in the traditional pattern, is restricted to the home. Therefore women tend to use more creole. This notion of an association between linguistic varieties and certain contexts of speaking (home, school etc) is what I call the subordinate ideology of stylistic differentiation (see section 2.3.3.).

It is important to note that such ideas about stylistic variation have effects on the way people think about social differentiation too. The relations between class, gender and language are discussed in more detail in chapters (6, 7).

I attempted to elicit ideas about the relations between language, class and gender during a matched guise test. Conducted with 17 speakers, the test revealed strong associations between linguistic varieties and stereotyped characteristics of the speakers who might produce them.\(^6\) The test did not, however, reveal particularly sharp cleavages within the speech community either along class or gender lines. The results are rather different from those discussed by Rickford (1979, 1985) for the plantation community he studied, and I would suggest that such differences are the result of the particular history of socio-economic relations in this community. The following questions were asked of each respondent (Listed by the number they appear under in Figures 4.2 and 4.3):

---

\(^6\)The test was conducted with 9 women, 8 men, 9 people who belong to the class of labouring people and 8 who do not. The recording used is reproduced at the beginning of this chapter.
1. *Huu moor big?* (Older)  
Who is older?

2. *Wich wan a dem tuu yuu go aks if yuu bin waan bara monii?*  
Which one would you ask if you wanted to borrow money?

3. *Huu yuu go waan fo yuu basman?*  
Who would make a better boss?

4. *(if dem tuu bina sarch fo wok) Huu go faim wok moor kwik?*  
Who would find work first?

5. *If yuu ga prablm (an yu waan taak dis ting out) huu yuu go taak wid?*  
If you had a problem who would you talk with about it?

6. *Wich wan a dem tuu a duu wiid’?*  
Which one does weeding?

7. *...a plant gyardin?*  
plants a garden?

8. *...a stee hoom wid shii piknii dem?*  
stays home with her children?

9. *...a wok in afis?*  
works in an office?

10. *...a wok a di bank?*  
works at the bank?

11. *...a sel ting pan di peev? a wan striit venda?*  
sells things on the street?

12. *huu out a dem tuu go akt bigitii?*  
would act “biggity”?

13. *...go buuz/kwaril op wid shii neeba?*  
would abuse her neighbour?

14. *...go taak mati neem?*  
would talk “mati’s” name?

15. *...go kos an taak hard?*  
would curse and talk loud?
16. ...noo fu kük?
knows how to cook?

17. ...go mek wan gud waif (fo wan man)?
would make a good wife?

18. ...a liv gud wid piipl?
lives good with people?

The results are given below in figures 4.2 and 4.3. Figure 4.2 contrasts the responses of men and women. Figure 4.3 contrasts those of working class and non-working class respondents.

Values for the chart were calculated as the percentage of respondents who choose the basilectal (more creole speaker) for each question (The samples are reproduced at the beginning of this chapter). Thus, for example, in the case of question number 1. (*huu moor big?* “Who is older?”) 60% of the non-working group, 67% of the working group, 57% of the women and 70% of the men choose the more creole speaker. Generally the responses indicate strong agreement about the ways in which linguistic varieties are associated with occupation (questions 6-11). There is less agreement about the personal characteristics of the speaker (questions 12-18). In this category we find that all community members tend to associate the less-creole (more English) speaker with acting *biggit* “arrogant” (question 12), but that they disagree about who is likely to engage in both abuse with a neighbour (question 13) and talking name. The “non-working class” group (40% for question 13, 25% for question 14) and the women (38% for question 13, 43% for question 14) do not associate these characteristics with the creole speaker as unambiguously as do the men and working class groups. Women again pattern with the “non-working class group” in question 17 and question 18 with both groups showing a strong preference for the basilectal speaker. All groups consider the basilectal speaker more likely to *cuss* and *talk hard*. Men as a group show the most unambiguous responses indicating that they
hold the strongest stereotypes linking language to social position and personal characteristics.

Thus the male group scores unanimous responses in five different categories (Questions 6, 8, 9, 12, 15).
Figure 4.2 Men’s and Women’s Evaluations
Figure 4.3 WORKING AND NONWORKING SUBJECTS' EVALUATIONS
4.3.3 Stylistic Variation

One of the most important characteristics of native linguistic ideology, as I have already discussed with regards to gender, is the association of structural variation and the native typology of speech practices or acts which emphasizes purposive functionality (cussing, gyaffing, talkin' nice etc.). Creole varieties are thus strongly associated with cussing and talking hard. In fact, when I first expressed an interest in learning creole I received instruction only in particular genres. This included instruction in calling off and cussing. Native speakers (both male and female) often told me that I was not speaking hard enough or that I needed to be more assertive with my interlocutors and more direct with those assumed to be subordinate (most often women, children and adolescents). Stylistic variation in the community is thus very much influenced by this association of structural with functional properties. Because code varieties are associated with practices which realize social relations, shifts between varieties on the creole to English continuum become bound up with notions of politeness, deference and solidarity. Thus, native speakers associate speaking creole with addressees of similar or lower social standing and associate speaking more English varieties with addressees of higher standing. When asked with whom they would adjust their speech, the community as a whole generates an implicational array of addressees (Table 4.4).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nancy</th>
<th>Dingy</th>
<th>Randolf</th>
<th>Charles</th>
<th>Shalini</th>
<th>Kota</th>
<th>Stinka</th>
<th>WeWe</th>
<th>Deo</th>
<th>Mama</th>
<th>Zinii</th>
<th>Moses</th>
<th>Seeta</th>
<th>Rita</th>
<th>Indar</th>
<th>Champa</th>
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C=Creolese, E=English, M=Mixed

Table 4.4 IMPLICATIONAL ARRAY OF ADDRESSEES BY SELF-REPORTING

At the top of the array are the working class men who report no adjustment. At the bottom are the non-working class people for whom the use of Creolese is restricted to particular addressees.

For the higher classes, then, this adjustment to addressee reduces to a simple equation between acrolectal codes of speaking and politeness. When I asked whether she thought Creolese should be used in schools, Champa, certainly the most acrolectal speaker I interviewed and a teacher at a local school, remarked:

Cham: I don’t go for that. When they go for read in the textbook they will not understand a hell what they are reading. So if we go down to meet them and to suit them we are getting nowhere and we want to build let-we-say in some term an egalitarian society. - ok - so if we have them now - like I’m spreading it in my home we maintain certain language- so when even children comes, we have vegetables to sell, they come and they have to speak properly. I insist not that directly but in a jovial way I put it nicely to them maybe well you can say this so if they come the first time...second time time... third time they will say it and when you come you can please say good afternoon first.
Champa here makes a direct association in this passage between speaking properly and a set of norms for social interaction that embody what is typical (though highly idealized) of polite, middle class behaviour in Guyana. At the same time, most acrolectal speakers rationalize adjustment “down” the continuum in terms of problems with comprehension. They argue that they must accommodate to the most creole speakers if they want to make themselves understood but at all other times the addressee is obliged to accommodate “up” to them.

Zinni, a shopkeeper notorious in the village for her sexual jokes and hard talking manner, similarly remarks on the connection between acrolectal styles and politeness.

Jack: If yu gu taak wid wan minista in di govament, nou?
   “If you’re going to talk to a minister in the government, now?”

Zinii: yu gu uuz lil inglish - dis iz riispektabl piipol - shoo dem lil disiplin
   “You will use a little English - These are respectable people - show a little discipline.”

Only the working class men seem to resist this equation of structural variation with politeness, Thus Nancy, Dingy and Randolf all remark that they will not adjust for a minister in the government.

Nan: yu gu gatu spiik seem krioliiz wid am biikaz mi na noo inglish
   “You have to speak the same Creolese with him because I don’t know English.”

Ding: wel hou mii noo fu taak - laik hou mi a taak tu yu - jos soo mi a taak tu dem
   “Well how I know to talk- like the way I’m talking to you- I talk to them the same way.”

In terms of linguistic ideology these speakers are purists who believe that adherence to basilectal variants in such contexts signals solidarity. However, although these people make explicitly purist statements, I show in the next chapter that they in fact exploit a wider range of the symbolic resources available in the continuum than do other less “purist” speakers (cf chapter 5).
It seems then that we have uncovered another set of contradictory attitudes in the community. One group of speakers associates the English varieties with politeness and creole varieties with a lack of deference while another group associates the creole with solidarity and English with distance. One way to think about this is in terms of the difference between positive and negative politeness (cf. Brown and Levinson 1987). For the highest social group, speaking English implies social distance and non-familiarity which is highly valued among members of a social group who are consciously trying to distance themselves from the “parochial” character of the village. Social distance and non-familiarity thus becomes a kind of negative politeness. Champa articulates this ideology in the following passage (she is responding to my question of whether children start to talk differently when they enter school):

Cham: yes we insist that they speak differently. (in what way?) - You ask the child her name. You want the child to respond to what is your name? The child will tell you immediately - give them one answer - what is your name. Instead of saying “my name is...” the child will bluntly say, like in my- our - little, “what is your name?” the child will say “Raja Singh” well I don’t want that I want you to say “my name is Raja Singh.”

In this passage, Champa makes an association between non-acrolectal styles and the reliance on background knowledge such that the presupposition of intersubjective familiarity becomes an indirect index of status equivalence. The idea here is that, when speaking creole, people are less explicit and this reliance on implicit meanings indexes familiarity between the speakers (cf Bernstein 1964). On the other hand, the explicitness of her English does not imply a relation of familiarity and, by extension, a shared background of knowledge. Thus English becomes associated with a demonstration of negative politeness - that is, a respect for the interlocutor’s autonomy and privacy. On the other hand, for some of the working class speakers, creole varieties are associated with positive politeness - that is, an indication that speaker and hearer
know and approve of each other and that they share a common “world view” which serves as interpretive backdrop and against which interaction can take place. This association is not accidental. Creole varieties are primarily associated with life in small villages where privacy and the values of individualism are rather subordinate to the values of an age-graded and gendered solidarity. Afrolectal varieties, on the other hand, are prototypically associated with the socially and geographically mobile middle classes who are considerably less involved in the social structures of kinship and less susceptible to community evaluation.

These ideologies of adjustment (or non-adjustment) to addressee in which language is taken as an index of social relationship (i.e. politeness) exist along side another set of ideologies concerning stylistic variation which take as basic the association between linguistic variety and the context of speaking. Because this ideology is less often expressed, I term it the subordinate theory of stylistic accommodation. The dominant theory, with its emphasis on the social position of the addressee, is remarkably similar to the theories of social and stylistic variation proposed by Bell (1984). Note that it suffers from some of the same failings insofar as it does not adequately deal with the problem of social power and target choice. If we assume that two speakers come together to communicate and that they command different, but overlapping, ranges of a socio-stylistic continuum at some point we need to ask how they negotiate a “target”. How, for instance, do Guyanese speakers decide that, when speaking with a minister in the government, it is more appropriate for the working class, creole speaker to accommodate up than it is for the minister to accommodate down? The subordinate ideology answers these questions with its emphasis not on addressee but on the context of speaking. In this sense it is more like a native theory of diglossia (cf. Ferguson 1959, Winford 1985a) in which different
varieties are considered appropriate in particular places and for certain purposes. Most central is the belief that Creolese is appropriate for everyday discourse in the home whereas English is more appropriate for talk in the “public” sphere of one’s life. This view is clearly expressed in interviews with native speakers:

Jack: hou yu gu taak wid yu bodii
   how would you talk to your brother?

Mos: krioliiz wen yu de hoom
    Creolese, when you’re at home

Jack: an hou yu gu taak wid yu mischris?
   And how would you talk to your wife?

Mos: krioliiz wen yu de hoom bo if yu de in kompanii in som poblik plees yu gatu
    Creolese when you are at home, but if you’re among other people in a public place you have
taak nais an diisen inglish
    to talk nice and decent English.

Indar makes a similar connection between socially meaningful spaces and language variety:

Jack: Yuu noo raa taak a wa?
   Do you know what ‘raw talk’ is?

Ind: it comes from the home, home environment, where the home, the parents especially speak this way of communicating, is a method of communicating for them, they get over what they want to say very easily - and sometimes this raw talk the child brings it to the school situation, it gives a problem to the teacher, because the teacher asking the question will have to rephrase and go back to the raa taak to get over what he or she is trying to say. It is the home environment and the community which have a lot of bearing on this raw talk.

Jack: if yu gu a makit nou and yu gu taak to wan oman wa ga staal de - hou yu gu
   If you go to market and you’re going to talk to a woman with a stall there - how would
   yu taak tu shi?
   you talk to her?

Indar: I will speak more standard English - How are you? How much for the oranges? What is the cost of the bananas - my status - people around might say look how this chap act
Jack: an hou yu doz taak tu yu mischris?
And how do you talk to your wife?

Indar: Same. but sometimes we mix. it makes some enjoyment. If the mistress doesn't understand
I break it up. I do speak it at home. I speak the raw talk at home.

As I have mentioned, native speakers use this ideology to think about differences between
men's and women's use of the linguistic continuum. An important aspect of this subordinate
ideology is its recognition of the way in which linguistic variation is intimately tied to the social
distribution of power. Implicit is the understanding that people who do not command more
English varieties will be excluded from particular contexts of speaking, or at least, in Bourdieu's
(1991) words, "reduced to silence".

4.4 ASPECTS OF THE INTERACTION BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND CONTEXT IN GC
DISCOURSE

So far I have tried to show the complex way in which variation is related to social
position and interactive context in native linguistic ideology. In the last section on stylistic
variation, I briefly considered the use of language in establishing interactive contexts and social
relations. It is to this issue that I now turn in the following discussion of grammaticalized
devices for relating speech act participants to the context of speaking. I return to the issues of
formal variation as part of a consideration of the way stance and affect are marked in GC
discourse. This issue is also taken up in the next chapter.

4.4.1 DIMENSIONS OF CONTEXT

The grammatical and lexical apparatus of a language typically encodes some aspects of
context and not others. Most commonly encoded cross-linguistically are the dimensions of
space, time and various aspects of participation (including speaker stance, affect, evidence as well as speaker-hearer alignment). We have, based on the existing literature, few available descriptions of creole languages from this perspective. Although certain relevant areas of creole grammars have been subjected to intense scrutiny (such as tense and modality), most often this research has been concerned with the grammatical or syntactic behaviour (sometimes semantic) of particular preverbal markers in isolated sentences rather than within naturally occurring linguistic practice as such. In the following I sketch out a few areas of GC grammar that are central to the pragmatic organization of everyday talk.

4.4.2 SPATIAL ORGANIZATION OF TALK

As I discuss in later chapters, talk is anchored to locally meaningful spaces. In rural Guyanese villages the spaces of the house, the yard and the road are particularly important in this respect. Because people draw authority and legitimacy (in short, because space is imbued with meanings concerning the rights and privileges of specific persons) speakers attempt to situate themselves and their interlocutors in relation to particular configurations of space. In fact, rights to speak are largely dependent on where one speaks from - although at times people may attempt to strategically obscure their situatedness. A major part of this anchoring happens in the negotiation of HERE, which I define as the shifting and mutable, yet tacitly agreed upon, region in which social interactions take place (cf. chapters 5&7). By locating themselves and others within or outside the HERE and by fixing its boundaries, speakers orient and position themselves as they establish situational relationships of hierarchy, solidarity and autonomy (cf. M.H. Goodwin 1990, Keating 1994). The interactional process of fixing the HERE is
complicated by the fact that, in any community, space is imbued with multiple meanings and is divided up by multiple and sometimes overlapping boundaries. Thus a single objective position in physical space may be conceptualized in any number of ways depending on the way in which it is framed - the particular boundaries and territorialities that are foregrounded. Schegloff (1972:97) remarked that:

(For any location to which reference is made, there is a set of terms each of which, by a correspondence test, is a correct way to refer to it. On any actual occasion of use, however, not any member of the set is 'right'. How is it that on particular occasions of use some term from the set is selected, and other terms are rejected?

Schegloff argues that each place term (and the frame it indexes) is drawn from a more inclusive set and that this process of selection relies on interlocutors extensive knowledge of what might be called “cultural geographies” (Schegloff 1972:103). Such cultural or commonsense geographies may be organized in hierarchical terms (as Schegloff 1972:103 argues for mainstream American understanding of political geography) or in quite different ways (cf. Chapters 1, 6 and 8 on the commonsense geographies of the village and its parts). It is this cultural geography that allows for recognition of place terms in the sense of “the ability to bring knowledge to bear on them, to categorize, see the relevant significance, to see 'in what capacity' the name is used.” (Schegloff 1972:111).

Because space is organized according to local frames of significance (Hallowell 1954) and because, in talk, selectional process are brought to bear on the great many ways of conceptualizing a given place at a given time, deixis always anchors interaction and interactants to a cultural rather than a purely physical organization of space. As Keating (1994) and Goodwin (1990) have demonstrated, cueing the spatial organization of an interactive sequence can be meaningful at a number of different levels. For example, because space can be owned,
interactants can make special ties between themselves and/or others and specific locations in interactive space (Goodwin 1990). Schegloff (1972:117) calls these $R_m$ (Relation to Member) spaces and notes that what sets them off from other types of place formulations is the fact that people belong to them (and, at the same time, they belong to people). While Schegloff (1972) suggests that 'home' is especially key here (cf. Levinson (1983:84) and Fillmore (1975:50ff) on deictic anchoring to a home-base), in fact communities vary in the specific focus of this belonging-to-ness and the deictic organization of spaces may be organized differently as it interacts with other factors including inheritance, kinship, domestic structure and, of course, property.

Particularly important for designating relations between participants and context are, then, are locational deictics which, in GC, show most of the distinctions present in other varieties of English as well as some innovative forms. GC has deictic forms as locative adverbs (e.g. ya or hia “here”, de or deer “there”), demonstrative adjectives (e.g. dis ting “this thing”, (d)a tting “that ting”) demonstrative pronouns (e.g. da (a) di man de “that is the man”) and deictic verbs (e.g. kom “come”, gu “go”). Deictic verbs show many of the same ambiguities as their English equivalents (Fillmore 1975, Levinson 1983). According to Anderson and Keenan’s (1985) classification, basilectal GC is essentially a tree-term, distance-from-speaker, system which involves, somewhat peripherally, a relational feature of visible/non-visible as a second dimension of contrast. This is illustrated in the system of locative adverbs.
Basilectal GC also has a system of post-posed deictic markers (cf Rickford 1987b:174-175). These show up especially clearly and most often in plural noun phrases such as dem de “those” but can also be used, often with affective meaning, with singular nominals as in dis ting ya “this here”, dis man ya “this man here”. The system of root and post-posed deictic terms, showing possible combinations and apparent gaps, is illustrated in Table 4.6.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROOT</th>
<th>-dis</th>
<th>-da</th>
<th>-ya</th>
<th>-de</th>
<th>-diiz</th>
<th>-tuu</th>
<th>-chrıı</th>
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<tr>
<td>abi</td>
<td>abi+dis</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>abi+diiz</td>
<td>abi+tuu</td>
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<td>yu +de</td>
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<td>aiyu+diiz</td>
<td>aiyu+tuu</td>
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<td>dem+da</td>
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<td>da+N+da</td>
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<td>dem+N</td>
<td>dem+N+dis</td>
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</table>

Table 4.6 THE SYSTEM OF ROOT AND POST-POSED DEICTICS IN GC
As Danziger (1994) and Hanks (1990) have illustrated, spatial deictics always make reference to an object or a region by establishing its position relative to the location of some speech act participant(s). This ground for deictic reference is not necessarily the speaker. Many languages, Mopan Mayan among them (Danziger 1994), exhibit 2nd person spatial deictics which locate a region in proximity to the addressee. A smaller number of languages have 3rd person spatial deictics (again cf. Danziger 1994) which may be marked as visible and invisible. The very idea of a 3rd person spatial deictic, discounted by most general understandings of deixis, suggests that our theoretical models of communication, which stress the dyadic or, euphemistically, the “face-to-face” nature of speech, may be based on a particular linguistic ideology which ultimately derives units of analysis from the distinctions embedded in grammar (cf Silverstein 1979). In fact, GC grammaticalizes, in the deictic system, aspects of interactive context that are not the focus of many other English systems. In this regard we might note the particularly complex system which locates an animate or inanimate non-participant (dem or dis or da) in relation to the position of the speaker (dis, da, ya, de). Such a system differs from that described by Danziger (1994) and Hanks (1990) for Mayan languages in which the non-participant or 3rd person serves as indexical ground. In the GC system, as in some other dialects of English (this-here etc.), the third person, or non-participant, is the referential figure of an array of deictic expressions. I discuss the contextualized use of this system in chapter 6.

4.4.3 TEMPORAL ORGANIZATION OF TALK

The contextual frame of talk includes more than the spatial organization of participants. Equally crucial to all kinds of interaction, but particularly complex in narrative, is the temporal
organization of events. Like spatial deixis, temporal deixis anchors participants to cultural relevant formulations of the HERE-NOW. Because NOW is always the point in time occupied by the current speaker (and therefore claiming a right to speak is always a claim to inhabit the NOW), interactants frequently negotiate its boundaries in talk. In Guyana, a frequently heard interjection is *jos nou* “just now” (or “in a minute”) which is used to mean “let me talk and you will get your chance after.” In narrative, speakers orient their unfolding stories vis-a-vis a situational NOW of the telling. Thus narrative always involves at least two temporal frames distinguished by Jakobson (1957) as E' (speech event) and E" (narrated event). The relationship between the two is complex and speakers actively manipulate it to achieve stylistic and textual effects. As Hanks (1996a) and many others (Banfield 1978, Haviland 1996, Hickmann 1985, 1987, 1993, Silverstein 1993, Volosinov [1929]1973) have noted, multiple frames of narrative (and reported speech) involve complex transpositions of the indexical ground. In reported speech, for instance, deictic reference is not necessarily anchored to the HERE-NOW of the narrating context. Thus in a report such as:

1. Mary said to John “don’t come around here anymore.”

Said by June to Joe, the “here” is not necessarily identical with the place in which June and Joe are located - although it may be. To calculate the referential value of the spatial deictic it is necessary to relate it to the framing report construction “Mary said to John” which is temporally situated in the past relative to the exchange between June and Joe. The temporal organization of multiple frames thus allows for the tracking of referents across a number of situational contexts.

Temporal deictics are important metapragmatic cues. What Silverstein (1993) calls the
metapragmatic calibration of $E^s$ (the event of speaking from which metapragmatic framing is achieved) and $E^n$ (the event which is narrated) is often the salient cue for genres in "oral" literature (proverbs, ritual speech often being uniquely framed with what Silverstein (1993:52-53) calls 'nomic calibration' i.e. as emanating from some timeless or eternal realm, for example, "it is said/written"). Calibration is also an important area of stylistic creativity in narrative. Reportive calibration (where $E^s$ and $E^n$ do not coincide) is strongly associated with an explicit metapragmatics (such as the use of framing metalinguistic verbs), whereas, reflexive calibration (where $E^s$ and $E^n$ coincide) is strongly associated with an implicit metapragmatics (i.e. contextualization cues, the use of co-occurring referential and non-referential indexicals, poetic-textual structure). But narrators play on this disjunction and may attempt to achieve explicit metapragmatic framing with reflexive calibration (e.g. ma tel yu... - "I am telling you...") or pseudo-implicit framing of reports which are metaphorically "brought into" the narrating ($E$s) frame. Narrators often use quotatives which focus attention on the interactional point at which the message is received rather than when it is produced. A clear example of this is the report frame, hiir am nou... "hear her/him now...". This form recreates the "original" voice by collapsing the audience of the speech event with that of the narrated event. Such devices represent a sophisticated ability to manipulate the habitual anchoring of talk for aesthetic and other interactional purposes.

Besides lexicalized time deictics including adverbs (now/then) and demonstratives (this/that), temporal organization of multiple frames is achieved through the use of tense marking. In GC, tense is indicated by the interaction of preverbal marking with the inherent lexical semantics (Aktionsart) of the verb. All verbs in GC fall into either stative or non-stative
classes (for discussion cf Bickerton 1973a, 1975, Givon 1982, Rickford 1987b, Winford 1993). Unmarked stative stems are interpreted as present, unmarked nonstatives as past (cf. chapter 2). Past is indicated for stative verbs by preverbal marking with *bin* so that *bin* with statives indicates “not now” (i.e. a terminated state). For non-statives, *bin* indicates an “anterior” event. Although there is a good deal of disagreement, anterior is generally taken to mean that the event preceded some other reference point or tense locus which is not necessarily the time-of-speaking (cf. Chung and Timberlake 1985:209 for discussion of such systems). Rickford (1987b) argues, after analysing one text showing particularly frequent uses of *bin*, that, with stative predicates *bin* is used in cases where the ‘no longer’ component can be taken as an implicature rather than implication. Rickford notes that for the use of *bin* to be felicitous it is not necessary for the state to be terminated in the “real world”, rather, felicitous use depends upon the speaker’s attitude towards the events and their continuing relevance to ongoing conversation. Rickford (1987b:139) writes:

...(T)here is one...situation in which Irene’s usage of *bin* would be justified - if she were to tell us that she did not know (or care) whether the states in question were still in existence. Intuitively, this is what is crucial for the reader or listener to infer from her narrative—that whether or not the states in question are still in existence at the time the narrative is being told, they were in existence at the point in the past when the events referred to in the narrative were taking place.

This suggests that it might be useful to treat the “no longer” component that Bickerton associates with stative *bin* as an implicature rather than a strict implication. For non-statives, the unmarked stem indicates a past action. In this system *bin* indicates that the action denoted by the predicate is not only past but also anterior, at least ideally. Rickford (1987b:141) summarizes Bickerton’s argument as follows:

Bickerton’s (1975:47) explanation is that although an action might be “past” simply because it occurs prior to the moment of speech, it must also be “anterior” to another
action or actions to take *bin*. Given two events that are sequentially ordered in real life as E1 and E2, only E1 would "anterior" and thus eligible for marking with *bin*. There is an additional qualification, however. As Bickerton (109) notes, a nonstative predicate only requires marking as anterior "when the speaker inverts normal narrative order (i.e., refers to an earlier event after a later one)." Elsewhere (53), he makes the point even more explicitly: "even where one [past event] occurred prior to another, both can be handled by the English simple past, but (unless the actions are sequent ones in a narrative) creole will normally give the [-anterior] one the stem form and the [+anterior] one the marked-past form".

In his analysis of one narrative text Rickford (1987b) finds that the absolute condition on out-of-sequence actions being marked with *bin* (i.e. when narrative sequence and real life events are not iconic) does not hold at all times. He thus concludes (1987b:143):

The solution to these "problem" cases is to revise Bickerton's analysis to provide for optional marking with *bin* when anterior E1 precedes E2 in narrative sequence, as against the obligatory marking when anterior E1 follows E2 in narrative sequence, *bin* marking on non-anterior E2 would still be excluded. The possibilities are these:

- E1 (*bin* or 0) . . . E2 (0 only)
- E2 (0 only . . . E1 (*bin* only, out-of-sequence anterior event)

We might think of the optional inclusion of *bin* when E1 and E2 are iconically sequenced as a reflection of the redundancy that creole systems, like other full-fledged languages, contain.

Perhaps it should not surprise us that tense marking is used primarily to indicate relevance (or following Givon 1982, Pollard 1989, Winford 1993 foreground and background information).

Co-presence always potentially, by the very facts of contiguity, implies a degree of relevance.

However the same does not hold for events/states that occur at different points in time.

Relevance (or irrelevance) in these cases must be indicated by some explicit means.
4.4.4 PARTICIPANTS AND PERSON DEIXIS

Participation is never simply a matter of being present in some situation where interaction is taking place. Rather, the interactional frame of participation is continually negotiated and, at each point, achieved (cf. Goodwin and Goodwin 1990). Like the other dimensions of context discussed to this point (spatial and temporal), participation frames are established, in part, through the use of deixis. Thus, in some cases, the negotiation of participation may be marked in the text in the use of person-deictics and thus tracked by the analyst (in other cases a full analysis will depend on attention to other aspects of the sequential organization of talk). Because person-deictics in most, if not all, languages make a distinction between participants (1st and 2nd person pronouns) and non-participants (3rd person pronouns), speakers are able to manipulate, in their talk, the structure of participation - who is being talked to and who is being talked about. However, participation is not always marked in the deictic structure of messages. The phenomenon labelled “indirection” refers to the establishment of participant frames without explicit marking by deictic or anaphoric elements (Fisher 1976, Morgan 1991, 1993, 1996, Reisman 1970). Volume, gaze, gesture and a number of other non-referential indices (including silence or non-ratification) may thus be used to communicate information about participation frames.

As Levinson (1983, 1988) has noted, however, personal deictics in a given language only grammaticalize a subset of the participant roles which are distinguishable in actual interaction. He remarks (1983:68):

Although person deixis is reflected directly in the grammatical categories of person, it may be argued that we need to develop an independent pragmatic framework of possible participant-roles, so that we can then see how, and to what extent, these roles are grammaticalized in different languages. Such a framework would note that the
speaker or spokesman can be distinct from the source of an utterance, the recipient distinct from the target, and hearers or bystanders distinct addressees or targets, and that sometimes such distinctions are grammaticalized in non-obvious ways.

While such an approach is no doubt of considerable analytical interest for the cross-linguistic study of grammaticalization (particularly grammaticalization of "context"), the imposition of such a grid on naturally occurring interaction may obscure, to some extent, the active manipulation of the emic, categories that are grammaticalized (cf Hanks 1990:154) especially when these emic categories do not coincide with those which may seem analytically significant.

As with other pronominal systems (Silverstein 1976b, Hanks 1990), GC pronouns can be arranged according to a number of referential hierarchies. Thus plural pronouns differ systematically in their potential levels of inclusiveness (cf Hanks 1990:186):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1st person pl.</th>
<th>2nd person pl.</th>
<th>3rd person pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abi</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aiyu</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dem</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 INCLUSIVENESS OF PRONOMINAL REFERENTIAL CATEGORIES

The hierarchy of referential categories can also be illustrated in a reverse manner. Rather than the inclusiveness of the referential categories, we can arrange categories according to the extent to which they characterize the referent:
Table 4.8 Hierarchy of Characterizing Features of Pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>case</th>
<th>dual</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>ili/an/dem</td>
<td>(?)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>yu/aiyu</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>mi/abi</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Different types of information are more salient, through the coding features of participant deictics, in different forms.

Looking at the plural pronouns we see one of the most important areas of grammaticalization of pragmatic information in GC. The 1st and 2nd person plurals are highly salient in native speaker awareness (which probably should not surprise us since they are +continuously segmentable, +unavoidable referential cf. Silverstein 1981 and chapter 4). When asked to identify creolese (/kriioliizi/), raw talk (/raa taak/), or broad talk (/braad taak/), speakers nearly always made reference to these items. Consider the following answers to the question, a wa raa taak? “what is raw talk?”:

2. laik hou abi a taak, “Like how we are talking.” (Charles)
3. raa taak a laik wen mi an yu a taak - aiyu an abi an soo, “Raw talk is like when me and you are talking, ‘aiyu’ and ‘abi’ and so on.”(Rita)
4. abi an aiyu, “‘abi’ and ‘aiyu’”(Stinka)

Many other examples could be given to show the salience of these terms as indices of the entire idealized (because no one speaks a "pure" creolese as defined locally) system of basilectal creole. Rickford (1987b:197) refers to them as "highly marked basilectal elements." While this
is no doubt relevant to our understanding of local interpretations of the system, it is also relevant to our understanding of the deictics themselves. Besides the general cognitive factors isolated by Silverstein (1981), we might also suggest a number of other local and historically particular factors that make abii and aiyu particularly salient in relation to the superstrate:

(a). they differ PHONOLOGICALLY from cognate and comparable acrolectal terms (aal a wii, wii, mii, aal a yuu, yu)

(b). they differ in terms of their REFERENTIAL FUNCTION (yu - refers to both singular and plural addressee, aiyu for plural only.)

(c). they differ in INDEXICAL FUNCTION (aiyu - computes multiple addressee from the indexical ground of the speech signal)

(d). they differ in METAPRAGMATIC FUNCTION (aiyu - characterizes the speech situation as involving an explicitly multiple addressee)

Considering for a moment the indexical and metapragmatic function of these terms, note that abii and aiyu together form an opposition which potentially divides the speech participants into two mutually engaged and mutually co-present groups. In this, the system differs form the English counterpart which does not differentiate explicitly between singular and plural addressee (on the historical reasons for this see Silverstein 1985c).

It is instructive to compare the historical trajectories of English personal deictic plurals, on the one hand, with the creole forms, on the other. In English, the second person plural developed into an index of deference and social power (cf Brown and Gilman 1960, Silverstein 1985c). Silverstein (1976a) notes:

...it is a shift out of the realm of the singular, where an individual is referred to, and into the realm of nonsingular, where, as it were, the summed number of individuals
referred to is greater than one. This makes the addressee count for more than one social individual to his persona accrues the social weight of many, as compared with the speaker.

In CC, and other creole languages, the 1st and 2nd plurals are often used to indicate solidarity or, at least, commonality between individuals - that is, common situation, common understanding etc. (for an example cf. the passages at the beginning of this chapter from the matched guise. The speaker remarks - *yu noo abii-diiz piiopl laik plentii hat pepa*). It is, then, significant that creoles do not allow the extension of plurality into the indexical realm of social statuses. It indicates, perhaps, a greater concern for co-presence and co-identification which either arrested grammaticalization (if you see *aiyu* developing from English “All of you”) or encouraged regrammaticalization and calquing (if you see *aiyu* developing from an African substrate).

4.4.5 STANCE

In every speech community a great array of devices are used to indicate the speaker’s attitude vis-a-vis some referentially encoded message (Besnier 1990, Labov 1984, Ochs 1992, 1996b, Ochs and Schieffelin 1989). Ochs (1996) and others divide such indices into affective and epistemic classes (although Besnier 1990 includes epistemic within his general category of affective). Such classifications are problematic for a number of reasons. First, they tend to preclude consideration of what, in grammatical discussions of modality, are termed deontic meanings. Deontic meanings have to do with speaker’s assessment of “obligation” rather than “possibility”. In this area GC shows similar ambiguities as other varieties of English. Thus:

6. *ii mos gu, “He/she has to go.”*
can mean either "He/she is obliged to go" or "He/she is certain to go." However in past contexts only the epistemic interpretation is possible:

7. ü mosi gaan, "he/she must have left."

The deontic past sense is conveyed by 8 or 9:

8. ü bin mos gu, "he/she had to go"
9. ü bin fu gu, "he was supposed to go."

All natural languages, including GC, make distinctions of this kind (Palmer 1986). It is further possible that some languages mark both deontic (obligation) and epistemic (possibility) through the use of what has been termed affective stance. Certainty, epistemic stance seems to be cued through "emotional" involvement in communities where subjective or experiential assessments of events are taken seriously (Labov 1984). This is certainly the case in Indo-Guyanese villages. In one illustrative case, a woman had been accused, by her own family, of allowing her nephew to bring his then girlfriend to her house for romantic engagements. The girl, who was under fourteen at the time, upon being questioned by her father, admitted that she had had sex with the boy and that the act had taken place at Shanka’s house. Shanka faced serious disapproval from her family and attempted to persuade them that no such thing had happened. The sincerity of her account and her certainty of its accuracy is cued by a number of features. Not the least important of these is her use of markers of affective or emotional involvement, that is, intensity.

(4.1)

| Sh = Shanka  |
| A.K. = Kay (Shanka’s mother) |
1. Sh: dem na lak op bramii? dem kech am wee?  
   "Didn't they lock up B.? Where did they catch him?"

2. A.K.: a workplees (2.0)  
   "his workplace."

3. Sh: soo wa-a a wa rilii hapm? wa dem see?  
   "so what really happened? What did they say?"

4. A.K.: ii see dem kom-(kom) mit ke-kech am in yu ruum  
   "He said that they came and caught him in your room."

5. Sh: huu dem? kech am in mii room? //huu dem?  
   "Who is 'them'? They caught him in my room? Who is 'them'?"

   "Baby Singh too."

7. Sh: -oo- beebii sing kom he?  
   "Oh - Baby Singh came here?"

8. A.K.: beebii sing see shi bin haid onda di bed  
   "Baby Singh said that she was hiding/hidden under the bed."

9. Sh: beebii sing bin hia fo sii da?  
   "Baby Singh was here to see that?"

10. A.K.: mii na noo gyal  
    "I don't know dear."

11. Sh: wel (a da) wa di poliiis na tel mii notin? le shi kom bak hia wid poliiis (0.5) dem bina a  
    "Well that's it. Why didn't the police tell me anything? Let her come here with police () they were"

12. mii hous? a wa dem duu a mii hous? if dem kom hia wa dem duu? wai shi na stap shii  
    "at my house? What did they do at my house? If they came here what did they do? Why didn't she stop her"

13. daata (fu wa shi doz den bin kom out wid a man)  
    "daughter ()"

14. A.K.: (if shi bin) duu  
    "If she did"

15. Sh: WA DEM GA FO DUU - DUU WA?  
    "WHAT DO THEY HAVE TO DO? DO WHAT?"

16. A.K.: (a hou shi // )  
    ("How is it...")
17. Sh: // an if wa shi duu yestodee nou shi piknii kyan bii takst wid out morsii de
“and if she do that yesterday now her child can be beaten without mercy there?”

18. beebii sing waan man shiself wa shi de de shi shart a man shiself
Baby Singh wants a man herself just as she is there - she is short if male company herself.”

In this short excerpt from a larger exchange, it is possible to see the major ways in which
Shanka defines her stance relative to what she is saying. Shanka’s basic strategy is to take the
position of ignorance or not knowing. She immediately (line 1) takes the position of the one
who is lacking relevant information and, by extension, the interactional role of questioner. In
line 3, Shanka asks for general information about what “really” happened, thus implying that
there is a good deal of false information (what didn’t really happen) available or in current
circulation. When she finds herself immediately implicated in the story (line 4) she begins
pressing for specific information first about the identity of the participants (5, 7, 9) and then
about the event itself, specifically the motivation of the main actors (what do they have to
do?). She also questions the procedural fairness of the police (11) and the motives of the girl’s
mother (12). Notice Shanka’ use of the discourse marker oo “Oh” to indicate the receipt of new
information in line (7) (cf. Levinson 1983:311,353). Its use here is obviously sarcastic
indicating a problem with the factual record (i.e. what actually happened) since Shanka knows
that Baby Singh was, in fact, not at her house. In line 15 Shanka marks her distress and
increasing emotional involvement by a marked rise in amplitude. Combined with the question
“What do they have to do?” the increase in volume keys a genre of more public argument
which I discuss in the next chapter. It is partly through her “emotional” or “affective
involvement in the interaction that Shanka constructs her discourse as “certain” or “accurate.”
This involves not only a certain interactional alignment vis-a-vis other participants (i.e.
questioner) and information (i.e. lacking relevant information), but also a certain subjective
state (exasperated, beleaguered) keyed through voice quality as well as in the sequence of questions.

In a situation where one finds a strong correlation between the levels of a language a person commands along a continua of creoleness to standardness and the same person's social class membership, it is not surprising that switches from one variety to another should be used to indicate the speaker's attitude towards the message (and for that matter the situation, the addressee and a whole host of other contextual features). In fact switches from more to less creole varieties represent the most salient kind of nonreferential index in Guyanese villages (as I have discussed earlier). Indications of stance are just one of the effects speakers achieve through switches between varieties (see above). Of crucial importance here is the fact that villagers make a strong association between the levels along a creole continua and levels of education in the legitimated school system. This means that for certain kinds of knowledge switches to more standard varieties may indicate greater certainty (along with greater authority). Often, questions which go unanswered will be repeated in a more acrolectal or mesolectal "voice" as in the following example from a rumshop gyaff between several adult men:

(4.2)

Ro = Rohan (Nancy’s older brother)
Pank = Pank (Member of the patrilocall group whoe owns the shop where interaction takes place).
John = John (Panks’ best friend)
Nan = Nancy (Rohan’s younger brother)
Ch = Chiree (Rohan and Nancy’s cousin, Friend to Panks and John)

1. Ro: ee pank le më hiir nou yu noo mis mana
   "hey Pank, let me hear now - do you know Miss Manner?"
2. Pank: na worti
   "Don’t start."

3. John: ( ) mis mana
   "( ) Miss Manners"

4. Pank: ii iit jringk mis mana
   "he eats and drinks Miss Manners'"

5. Nan: wa yu tel mi bai?
   "What are you trying to tell me?"

6. Pank: bota an bred
   "butter and bread."

7. Nan: ai bai wa yu gu tel mi? eeh
   "Hey boy what are you going to tell me?"

8. Ro: di man see ii waan hia mo
   "The man said he wanted to hear more..( )"

9. Nan: foking ( )
    "fucking ( )"

10. John: na arguu bai
    "Don’t argue boy"

11. Ro: noo badii na harguu hia - di man na laik fu hiir laang taim stoorii noobadii na harguu
    "nobody is arguing here - the man doesn’t like to hear old-time story nobody is arguing"

12. hia fu fait – yu noo mis mana? aks am if noo huu mis mana?
    to make a fight - you know Miss Manners? Ask him if he knows who is Miss Manners?"

13. John: booloo yu shit op
    "Bolo you screwed up"

14. Nan: mis mana a darsii muma or
    "Miss Manners is Darsi’s mother or.."

15. John: ah ha darsii muma
    "ah ha Darsi’s mother"

16. Ro: eh he we shi bin liv den?
    "eh he where did she live then?"

17. Ch: ee?
    "eh?"
18. John: shi neem iz beebi na darsi muma
   "her name was Baby not Darsi mother"

19. Ro: we shi bin liv?
   "where did she live?"

20. Nan: am nat am beebii muma
   "am not Baby mother"

21. John: beebi a di muma da-a-a mis mana
   "Baby is the mother that is Miss Manners"

22. Ro: we shi bin liv?
   "Where did she live"

23.---->John: WE SHI BIN LIV? wer shi woz living?
   "Where did she live? Where did she live?"

24. Nan: eh?
   "huh?"

There are a number of interesting aspects to this exchange. In relation to the above discussion of oo “oh”, it is interesting to note the use of the GC discourse marker eh he in line 16 which conventionally indicates the receipt of new and relevant, often unexpected, information. Like oo “oh” in the previous exchange, eh he is here used sarcastically indicating that the speaker believes that the information received is problematic. Regarding the use of mesolectal “voices” to constitute authoritative stances, note line 23 in which John repeats the question that had previously been formed (in 16, 19 and 22) as we shi bin liv “Where did she live” first with an increase in amplitude and then as wer shi woz living. The exchange is an extended joke on Nan. Ro and John believe that Nan frequently makes claims to knowledge which he does not actually command. Here they replay a joke which has been used previously to show up his false claims. “Miss Manners” is not a real person in the village but a literary persona who appears in the local newspapers. The exchange also hinges on the knowledge that literacy levels vary across individuals. Ro, knows that, unlike himself, Nan cannot read particularly well. He thus
assumes that rather than admit ignorance Nan will assume that “Miss Manners” is a local person whose whereabouts can be made the topic of discussion.7

But it is not always the case that authority is constructed through the use of more English varieties. Certain domains of knowledge are considered knowable only through sustained engagement in a creole-speaking, rural community (living there, growing up there, maintaining ties there, etc.). When pronouncing on these domains of knowledge speakers can use the more creole varieties to indicate greater certainty. Of course certain objects and techniques may be considered to occur in more than one domain of knowledge. With respect to agricultural knowledge, for instance, villagers tend to show varying degrees of respect for both school (or “book”) knowledge and practical knowledge. It is in fact not uncommon for two men to argue vigorously in a rumshop over such issues, one using the most basilectal creole and drawing on experiences in the rice field and the other using a more standard variety and drawing on technical knowledge of experts and science. Thus while villagers respect science, school and education to a high degree they also say yu kyaan tel mi jimii kak mek ram goot “You can tell me that Jimmy’s cock is a ramgoat.” In short, villagers value the knowledge gained through personal experience and transmitted as local wisdom in Creolese. Local traditions of knowledge are strong and leave the complete hegemony of an English equated with authority incomplete. This means that while speakers do mark stance by using different varieties the specific variety that they use to do this will also be determined by the particulars of the

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7Rumshop gyaf between men frequently involves just this kind of sparring and joking - as well as heated debate - over details of seemingly little consequence. Where someone lived, how they died or how they lived, and particularly their ancestry or genealogy become matters around which social relations are built in conversation. Participants emerge as knowledgeable, authoritative, humorous in the course of such talk. The matter of talk seems of little importance.
In framing previously occurring discourse, speakers use lexical selection to mark stance. Thus, as Kiparsky and Kiparsky (1971) illustrated, some verbs take a factive complement whereas others do not. Other more subtle markers of stance may also be found in processes of lexical selection. Thus *tell*, although not factive, is essentially an accomplishment verb (VanValin and LaPolla nd:29). The inherent lexical semantics of *tell* include the notion that the person told has been informed, or been made aware of something. Note that *inform* is factive and therefore *tell*, by implication, contains a weak factivity.

4.5 METALINGUISTIC PREDICATES AND LINGUISTIC IDEOLOGY

When reporting and eliciting discourse (see chapter 8) speakers select particular predicates to frame the utterance they are bringing into their own talk. In these processes of lexical selection, speakers draw on a metalinguistic vocabulary which is organized in particular ways. This organization reflects and shapes the way in which users of a particular language understand, interpret and talk about the pragmatic organization of grammar. A metalinguistic vocabulary breaks the continuum of different kinds of talk into discrete types. In reporting speech, a speaker generally selects a particular term which construes that token reported as member of a type. Metalinguistic vocabulary is also embedded in the interactions termed elicitations which I discuss in chapter 8. Metalinguistic vocabulary thus plays an important role in language acquisition and socialization.

These terms (and their grammatical properties) are used for thinking through speech, for talking about speech, for interpreting speech as well as for framing it in conversational
interaction. The terms thus impose a finite classification on a field of potentially limitless variations and possibilities. As such, metalinguistic vocabulary is never neutral but instead carries with it ideological assumptions about prototypical speech styles, events and participants (cf. Lindstrom 1992). Thus, despite very similar structural and formal properties, two instances of speech may be considered instances of different generic types if one does not meet the criteria for inclusion in a particular category. One very common measure for inclusion in a particular category appears to be the gender of the speaker. Speech events such as busing, quarrelling, rowing are gendered feminine with native speakers taking the participation of one or more women in the event as a presupposition (cf. Edwards 1978). One outcome of this is that women’s conflict is often written off as some necessary expression of “femaleness” whereas men’s is likely to be taken as indicative of some larger social problem that requires resolution. Similarly, although both men and women “gossip”, talking-name is generally considered a feminine activity. Men’s gossip thus tends not to be stigmatized or, often, even recognized in the same way as women’s.

4.5.1 THE LEXICO-GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE OF METAPRAGMATIC DESCRIPTORS:

Looking in more detail at the metalinguistic predicates of a language, we find that they characterize contexts of speaking through both their lexical and grammatical properties. All predicates characterize the situations or events to which they refer partly through the selection of arguments and the projection of thematic roles upon them. While it is obvious that this is the case, linguists have not as yet reached definite conclusions about the number and nature of
these roles (cf. Andrews 1985, Palmer 1994, VanValin and LaPolla n.d.). It can be said with some certainty however that grammatical roles compose a finite set of distinctions made in the lexico-grammatical structure of a given language coding, through a variety of means including word order and prepositional assignment, the relations of an argument to its predicate. In English, for example, the grammatical role of Goal is marked by the preposition to, Beneficiaries by for, Agents with by in passive constructions etc. Processes such as passivization affect the marking of grammatical roles but not their semantic relation to the predicate (the Agent is still the instigator of the action even if it is marked with by in the passive construction rather than appearing in sentence initial position).

Metalinguistic verbs in GC such as kos “curse”, kaal “call”, taak “talk”, tel “tell”, gyaf “chat”, all take an agentive NP in initial position in active sentences. This is the notional role of speaker. They differ significantly in how they characterize the notional role of addressee or co-participant. Gyaf typically codes this NP as an Agent using the comitative case-making preposition wid: i i a gyaf wid a man de “He’s gyaffin with that man.” Tel, kal and kos all appear

---

8 However for the purposes of the argument at hand I will employ minimal inventory of roles although further investigation may well reveal that further distinctions are necessary. One must first of all make a distinction between grammatical relations, grammatical roles and notional roles. Grammatical relations are in many similar to the familiar notions of traditional grammar Subject, Object, Indirect Object etc. They refer to formally marked categories that play important functions in the syntactic processes which are at work in a given language. The marking of grammatical relations is held constant across syntactic processes such as passivization while the meaning changes: i.e. the A of passive and the A of an active construction are formally identical but their grammatical roles (Agent and Patient) differ. Notional Roles are the parts played by (actual) participants in acts denoted by a given predicate. While grammatical roles form a finite set, notional roles do not since for any given predicate we can identify a specific, contextual role - i.e., for speak - speaker, for talk - talker etc. Notional Roles follow from the inherent lexical semantics of the predicate whereas grammatical roles follow from lexico-grammatical structure. Finally, grammatical roles (in generative theories of grammar, sometimes referred to as theta roles) characterize the relation of an argument to its predicate.

9 This grammatical role has been received attention in discussion of split conjunct and is taken as marking a NP moved from conjoined subject position: mi an ii a gyaf, mi a gyaf wid am.
to code the addressee in a patient like position but this is somewhat misleading. While *kos
obligatorily codes addressee as an unmarked bare NP (i.e. direct object), *kal and *tel allow
marking with the Locative preposition pan.

10. *i *kos pan mi
11. *i *kal pan mi, “He called me.”
12. wel wen sombadii kom tel lai pan mii, “Well when somebody comes and tells
lies about me.”

Pan is used in GC where action is directed to a surface as in mi doz gu an plee pan da greev “I used
to go and play on the grave” (Rickford 1987b:147, line 346), mi fain am pan a teebl “I found it
on the table”, huu klaim pan am “Who climbed on it?”. Such evidence indicates that GC makes
at least a three way distinction of grammatical relations which code addressee in metalinguistic
constructions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient-like</th>
<th>kos</th>
<th>tel</th>
<th>kal</th>
<th>taak</th>
<th>gyaf</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pan</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuu</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wid</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9 Lexico-Grammatical Coding of Addressee

*gyaf* codes Addressee in a fully agentive (comitative) case whereas *kos* codes Addressee as a
patient. In the middle are the locative markings associated with *pan* and *tuu*. Note the apparent
anomalous coding of a Patient-like addressee with *gyaf* as in:
13. *i gyaf op mii, "He chatted me up/ He fooled me"

14. *i gyaf mii. "He fooled me."

Such usages in fact support the argument that bare NPs are best considered Patients. In cases such as 13 and 14 the *gyaf is a kind of manipulative talk through which the addressee is tricked into doing something (sexual intercourse, lending some item, handing over money) by persuasive and flattering words. In such cases the addressee is more directly affected by the action denoted by the predicate. Metalinguistic predicates can thus be differentiated in terms of the way they characterize the role of addressee. Some predicates, which take a patient-like direct object, characterize the addressee as relatively passive and as something acted upon by the participant coded as Agent. Others characterize the addressee as more agentive and the speech event as genuinely reciprocal. It is likely that all languages make such distinctions.

Speech communities differ, however, in the way they evaluate each end of this agent-to-patient continuum and in the meanings attached to particular points. As I have noted some genres of speech are considered particularly “feminine” in Guyana. Some too are more likely to be used to describe male activity. A case in point is *gyaf which, although frequently used to describe interaction between women, is typically associated with exclusively male domains like the rumshop. There is a degree of contestation here, no doubt. This said, it is safe to say that, comparing patientive *kos and agentive *gyaf, native speakers tend to associate the former with women and the later with men. The description that inheres in the semantic domain of metalinguistic vocabulary is thus not neutral. As I show in the following chapter it has wide-ranging consequences for the interpretation of talk and the everyday lives of native speakers.
4.6 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I have tried to give an account of the way GC functions as a pragmatic system. I have suggested that the linguistic variation studied by Bickerton (1973a, 1973b, 1975) and Rickford (1986b, 1987) is particularly important for marking social relations and statuses as well as for framing interactive contexts. In constructing texts, and the contexts in which they occur, speakers also rely on the use of temporal and spatial deictics and well as various affective keys. Such devices indicate what relation obtains between participants and a message and, at the same time, help to frame speech as an instance of a particular type. Native categories which typologize talk into discrete units are revealed in metalinguistic terminology which itself has some unique grammatical and lexical properties as I have described. In the following chapters, I look at the contextualized use of formal variants and grammaticalized pragmatic devices in select conversational interactions. This allows me to further the analysis of particular features sketched here and, at the same time, detail their role in the social and interactional processes which reproduce and contest the dominant ideas about community.
CHAPTER FIVE

TAKING NATIVE-SPEAKER AWARENESS SERIOUSLY: MORPHOLOGICAL VARIATION AND GENDER

5.0 PREAMBLE

In this chapter I continue the discussion of linguistic variation and gender which I have briefly initiated at several points in the last chapter. I find that the situation resists simple explanation and forces us, instead, to recognize the way in which language and gender are indirectly and constitutively linked. In conclusion, I look at gender and linguistic variation in relation to the nature of patrilocal group authority. The explanation for the complex phenomena of gender-based variability, I suggest, requires attention to the major focus points in the earlier discussion of the relatively egalitarian community. Specifically, it is necessary to examine the way in which the patrilocal system of kinship, marriage and domestic organization differentiates men and women at a general level and at the same time allows for a certain degree of variability which I have documented in chapter 2. Accordingly, in this chapter, I attend to the particulars of individual positioning within social structure while recognizing the enduring and widespread effects of a sex-gender system which positions men and women quite differently with regard to symbolic and socio-economic resources.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Although English-lexified, creole-speaking communities in the Caribbean have received a great deal of interest from sociolinguists, very little attention has been paid to gender as a correlate of linguistic variation. Sophisticated models of grammatical description have been
developed in order to account for the high degree of variation found in these communities characterized as "creole continua" (Bickerton 1973a, 1973b, 1975, Rickford 1979, 1987b) and a vital debate has emerged concerning the social implications of this variation from the perspective of a rather highly idealized (i.e. genderless) speaker capable of moving "up" and "down" the continuum and possibly in other directions as well (Edwards 1983, Rickford 1986b, 1987a, 1987b). Still, although researchers have been very sensitive to the possibility, even probability, of multidimensional variation (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985, Rickford 1987b, Garret 1994), few if any have considered the use of linguistic variants as constitutive markers of gender. In some ways, then, the situation contrasts markedly with sociolinguistic research done in communities outside the Caribbean over the past thirty years. From its inception, sociolinguistic research in North America and Great Britain has taken linguistic variation which correlates with "sex" differences as a primary topic of study (Cheshire 1981, Labov 1972, 1980a, 1990, Trudgill 1972a, 1972b). However, and as the switch in terminology is meant to indicate, this research has by and large been based on a model which sees linguistic variation as a direct correlate of sex differences (cf. critique in Eckert 1989). Only recently have researchers begun to question the notion of a direct indexical link between linguistic variation and sex (Eckert 1989, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992, Friedrich 1989, Gal 1978, 1989, Ochs 1992). In a recent review of the literature Eckert wrote that:

Gender differences are exceedingly complex, particularly in a society and era when women have been moving self-consciously into the marketplace and calling traditional gender roles into question. Gender roles and ideologies create different ways for men and women to experience life, culture and society.(...)Despite increasingly complex data on sex differences in variation, there remains a tendency to seek a single social construction of sex that will explain all of its correlations with variation. This is reflected in a single coefficient for sex effects in variable rule or regression analyses of variation. This perspective limits the kind of results that can be obtained, since it is restricted to
confirming the implicit hypothesis of a single type of sex effect or, worse, to indicating that there is no effect at all. (Eckert 1989: 247. Emphasis added.)

One finds, on reviewing the sparse literature on gender related variation in Caribbean creole-speaking communities, that researchers have often substituted sex for gender and have not found significant correlations. In the words of Rickford “basilectal pronoun usage in Cane Walk is strongly correlated with social class but is almost completely unaffected by sex membership” (1991:612). Similarly, in the same volume, Escure (1991:604) remarks of the Belizean community she studied that:

Most of the findings emerging from this study suggest that there is no consistent difference between women’s and men’s speech patterns: women do not overwhelmingly use more prestige variants than men; men do not especially favour vernacular forms; men and women do not systematically differ in the quantity of speech they produce. Such results are indeed interesting in that they reflect a society in which gender roles are less polarized than, say, in a white middle class context.

Escure’s suggestion that a lack of linguistic differentiation correlates, in Belize, with concomitant lack of polarization in gender roles is questionable on a number of grounds. First, there is no independent reason for supposing that social role differentiation necessarily leads to linguistic differentiation (cf. Schieffelin 1987). Secondly, the idea that gender differences should be consistent necessarily leads to the assumption of a one-to-one relation between linguistic form and social identity when, in fact, it is possible for gender based differences to show up at many different linguistic levels or not at all. Recent work in ethnography, conversation analysis and social theory suggests that gender difference is complex and multidimensional, and we might expect linguistic variation to show the same complexity

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1Escure (1991:602-604) argues, however, that a certain group of women (the middle aged group) are developing what she calls a “bipolar” repertoire which reflects their role as brokers between multiple levels and multiple values of the society.
despite the fact that it may not "mirror" role differences at all times, in all contexts, in all places (Thorne 1990, Goodwin 1990, McElhinny 1995). It certainly seems unlikely that gender roles will "translate" only into those variables which can be mapped onto a simple standard to non-standard continuum. Third, once we see the ways in which the very language use under investigation is constitutive of the gender differences being reported it is apparent that there is a kind of circularity to claims which see direct relations between them (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992).

In the following I employ ethnographic and statistical models to investigate the ways in which language use is indirectly and constitutively related to gender differentiation in rural Guyana. The analysis focuses on the various meanings associated with variants in a verbal repertoire and the way in which these meanings in turn become linked, through various forms of social practice, to local understandings of men and women as socially located actors. I argue that gender effects have been missed or misinterpreted largely because the notion of metalinguistic awareness has not been thoroughly theorized in sociolinguistics. I compare the analyses of Labov (1972, 1990) with Silverstein (1981), concluding that gender effects cannot be understood without taking account of the fact that metalinguistic awareness is conditioned by the referential and indexical attributes of the linguistic elements involved, attributes of linguistic form which are detectable only if one attends to discourse level patterning.

5.1.1 **SEX, GENDER AND LINGUISTIC VARIATION IN ANGLO-CARIBBEAN CREOLE SPEECH COMMUNITIES**

Winford (1991a:575) writes:
Very little work has been done on sex differentiation in language in the Anglophone Caribbean. Most of the primary sociolinguistic studies of the area, such as Winford (1972) or Edwards (1975), confine their sample populations to men, while others, such as Akers (1981), treat sex-based variation as incidental to other concerns, or rely on rather limited data.

This is a surprising situation given the general acknowledgment in sociolinguistics that gender/sex-based differences in language-use constitute one of the primary areas of variability and change in progress (Labov 1980a, Trudgill 1972a, 1972b). It is unclear to this point why gender has been so radically under-theorized in creolistics - especially since it has figured so prominently in other kinds of social-scientific investigation in the Anglophone Caribbean (i.e. anthropology, sociology etc - for an overview cf Trouillot 1992). While a few exceptions do exist (Escure 1991, McWhorter 1997, Nichols 1983), gender has generally been written off as insignificant in accounts of variability within creole-speaking communities - as evidenced in the many studies which use, rather unapologetically, "male-only" sample populations (see the quote from Winford (1991a:575) above). Those studies which have not confined the sample populations to men have often reported no significant differences between men and women.

The classic study of sociolinguistic variation in Guyana is Rickford's 1979 thesis. Rickford begins by showing that with singular pronoun categories lumped together there seems to be little difference between men and women of the same class:

\[2\]McElhinny (1997) has pointed out that empirical gaps of this kind are often generated by androcentric definitions and analytical categories. In this regard, the commonsense notion that it is the local, male solidarity networks that produce the most authentic creole has had an effect on methodology and research design. There is a certain scholarly "machismo" operative in creole studies which takes the imagined, "completely other", basilect as the only authentic object of creolistics. That this leads to an almost complete lack of attention to issues of gender is not surprising in that, in many cases, gender is expressed in terms of shifts of social and stylistic importance (thus corrupting the imagined homogeneous basilect).

\[3\]Bickerton 1973a, 1975 includes no discussion of gender differentiation in his work.
Within the EC, the women are slightly more basilectal than the men (.77 vs. .74), but only by a very narrow margin. In general, these statistics provide no support for the suggestion made in chapter four that differences in the socialization patterns of males and females might have their correlates in linguistic behaviour.

Rickford (1979: 366) then goes on to break up the categories in order "to demonstrate that the equivalence of the sexes shown...is not merely a function of aggregating the various subcategories." Although Rickford does find significant degrees of variation between men and women within some individual subcategories (to be discussed below) he concludes that (1979:368) "it is this constant balancing out of differences - where they do exist - which produces the overall impression of equivalence between the sexes." Such an argument is based on the assumption of equivalence between different subcategory variables within a single grammatical category (i.e. pronouns). However, we may find that different subcategories and the variants therein actually have different meanings for their users. Given this situation, we might hypothesize that men and women are using the creole-to-standard range differently.

While maintaining the idea of a single more-to-less creole dimension we want to investigate the peculiarities of each variable thus revealing the various indexical meanings that are commonly attached to particular pronominal subcategories.

5.2 THE VARIABLES USED IN THIS STUDY

Pronouns in Guyanese Creole, as Allsopp (1958) Bickerton (1973a) and Rickford (1979) have illustrated, show a kind of robust variation along a number of dimensions and this makes them particularly well-suited to variation analysis. The focus on pronouns in studies of variability in G.C. should not be taken, however, to indicate that other areas of the grammar are more homogeneous - this is most certainly not the case. Pronouns have been chosen here
because they are easily identifiable and analysable along both linguistic and social dimensions ("copulas", the other grammatical category described in Bickerton's (1973a) classic study, as Winford (1990) has shown, are a rather more problematic case).

Basilectal singular pronouns contrast morphologically with corresponding mesolectal and acrolectal ones in a number of subcategories. This is illustrated in Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>OBJECT</th>
<th>GENITIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>mi</td>
<td>mi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ai</td>
<td>mai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>yu</td>
<td>Basilect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yorz</td>
<td>Acrolect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd/masc</td>
<td>(h)ii</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hiz</td>
<td>Mesolect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fem</td>
<td>ii/shi</td>
<td>Basilect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>horz</td>
<td>Acrolect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neut</td>
<td>ii</td>
<td>Basilect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>its</td>
<td>Acrolect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1 MORPHOLOGICAL BASILECTAL, MESOLECTAL AND ACROLECTAL PRONOUN CONTRASTS

In actual usage, speakers in the sample did not approach the acrolectal end of the continuum in trinomial subcategories. We are thus left with binomial variables in each category. We can also exclude for our analysis those subcategories which show little or no variability despite the potential for it. Genitives show variation when the Guyanese population is considered as

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4 I have purposefully excluded variants which differ at a phonological level since such cases require levels of explanation which are beyond the scope of this chapter. Rickford (1979, 1981) gives comprehensive accounts of vowel laxing, h deletion, and t deletion in pronoun forms. Vowel laxing produces the alternation between forms such as mi and mii, shi and shii.
However the corpus used here is confined to relatively basilectal speakers many of whom either do not command the acrolectal forms or do not use them with any great frequency. For this reason, I have included genitives in the analysis only at select points since variation is not robust enough to give a detailed analysis of this category. We are left with the variables isolated in table 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>subject</th>
<th>object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>3rd/ masc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi</td>
<td>am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(h)i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2 MORPHOLOGICAL BASILECTAL AND RELATIVELY ACROLECTAL PRONOUN CONTRASTS ADJUSTED TO INCLUDE ONLY RELEVANT CATEGORIES

The analysis that follows thus focuses on variability in two subcategories: 1st person subjects and 3rd person objects.

5.3 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

If we take genitives, 3rd person objects and 1st person subjects together and look for differences between men and women we find that men appear to be using slightly more

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5 There were a few exceptions to this rule. Genitives are included only in the calculations which assess overall variability for all pronoun subcategories (Table 5.3) in part to make the results comparable to those reported in Rickford 1979.
basilectal variants than women.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of basilectal variant</th>
<th>total</th>
<th>varbrul weighting for rule application (basilectal variant)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>0.568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>0.422</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3 DISTRIBUTION OF BASILECTAL SUBJECTS (1ST), OBJECTS (3RD) AND GENITIVES BY SEX OF SPEAKER

However, if we break up the analysis into pronominal subcategories the results are more complicated. Thus we find that with regard to first person subjects (alternation between *ai/mi*), women appear more basilectal:

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6 The sample for the present study consists of workers, a few teachers and shopkeepers (with fairly equal distribution or men and women). Each token was coded for the class of the speaker (worker or non-worker). The effects for this parameter were of marginal importance with non-workers showing a slightly greater tendency for mesolectal variants. The worker-nonworker divide here is rather artificial. Unlike plantation communities in Guyana (Jayawardena 1963, Rickford 1979, 1986) the village in question is not marked by an unambiguous and locally salient class division. Patterns of interaction are not so much conditioned by socio-economic class in this context (in at least one case a shopkeeper and a worker were best friends). There is another problem with the application of straightforward class-analysis in this context. As Nichols (1983) has noted, occupation (the primary index of socio-economic class in most studies) is almost always already a gendered notion. (There may be some exceptions to this generally applicable statement, cf. Rickford 1986 on the "emic" status of class distinctions used in that study). When sociolinguists assign class groupings across gender groups, for instance to a husband and wife, a potential arises for misidentification since it is often the case that work conditions differ considerably for each gender (cf. Nichols 1983). For this reason, in order to explain some of the effects of class, age and sex interaction I have analysed patterns for individuals rather than as members of particular categories.

7 Results were generated using the Goldvarb program designed by David Sankoff. Factor weightings in excess of 0.500 indicate a positive effect on the realization of the variant. Significance is usually accepted for weightings of 0.550 or higher.
Table 5.4 DISTRIBUTION OF BASILECTAL 1ST PERSON SUBJECTS BY SEX OF SPEAKER

This is consistent with the results reported in Rickford (1979). In the subcategory of objects, again consistent with Rickford's (1979) analysis of Canewalk, men appear slightly more basilectal than women:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of basilectal variant</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>varbrul weighting for rule application (basilectal variant)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>0.379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>0.663</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5 DISTRIBUTION OF BASILECTAL 3RD PERSON OBJECTS BY SEX OF SPEAKER

The relatively minor effect of speaker's sex is magnified if we consider only the most stigmatized forms in this group: the use of basilectal marker *am* for animate objects (cf. Rickford 1979):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of basilectal variant</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>varbrul weighting for rule application (basilectal variant)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>0.554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>0.453</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.6 DISTRIBUTION OF BASILECTAL 3RD PERSON OBJECTS FOR ANIMATE REFERENTS ONLY BY SEX OF SPEAKER

It is worth noting that the distribution of variants described in this paper seems relatively stable
across time and geographic location. Rickford's (1979) findings concerning the distribution of variants between male and female groups match, in many respects, those reported here despite the fact that the data was collected over twenty years ago in a rather different community. In both my corpus and that reported by Rickford (1979:367) men show a higher frequency of acrolectal variants than women in the subcategory of 1st person subject (ai). Similarly, Rickford reports the same complex patterns of object variation as those discussed here (see below and Rickford 1979:368).

Now supposing that basilectal variants in each subcategory had similar pragmatic-indexical values in this community (i.e. that saying *mi* as opposed to *ai* and saying *am* as opposed to *i/šii/it* amounted to essentially the same thing) we might agree with Rickford (1979) that there is a levelling out of differences which gives the overall impression that gender is relatively insignificant. Alternatively, if we accept that different variables within the pronominal category may be associated with quite distinct indexical meanings we might still attempt to explain gender differences according to a single coefficient for sex along traditional Labovian lines. Thus, we might suppose that women are lagging in the use of variants that are stigmatized within the larger community (stable sociolinguistic variables) while they lead in changes that carry local of overt prestige (changes in progress). But this explanation (the classic "gender pattern" cf Fasold 1990, Labov 1990) is not appropriate either. While *am* as 3rd person object might classify as a variant stigmatized in the larger community (see below), *ai* most definitely carries local overt prestige as opposed to *mi*. Women's behaviour in this community thus does not conform to what has traditionally, but controversially, been labelled the "gender pattern" (cf critique of "gender pattern hypothesis" in Coates and Cameron 1989, Eckert 1989,
5.4 VARIATION WITHIN AND BETWEEN CATEGORIES

Why do men and women differ in their use of these variable categories? There are a number of possible explanations for the observed facts. We might, for instance, suppose that one of the variables does not correlate with a unidimensional creole-to-standard continuum. This possibility has never, so far as I know, been used to explain the kinds of gender-related facts we are dealing with here. However, the possibility that variation in "creole continua" is not restricted to a single dimension has been suggested on several occasions. Washabaugh (1977), for instance, suggested that variation in Providencia could not be explained according to a single dimension. Rather it was necessary to take account of a distinct casual-to-formal dimension (a separate dimension of stylistic variation). Such a situation seems highly unlikely given what we know about the relationship between social and stylistic variation (Bell 1984) and Bickerton (1977a) argued convincingly that the variation discussed by Washbaugh could in fact be explained in term of universal phonological processes. More convincing is the description of several communities in Acts of Identity. Le Page and Tabouret Keller (1985) argue in that monograph that, within a single creole-speaking community, speakers orient themselves towards several distinct and often ethnically marked targets. While this is no doubt the case for communities such as Belize and perhaps Guyana, such arguments do not, in and of themselves, detract from the persuasiveness of a theory which models some variants along a single more-to-less creole dimension shaped by both social (Rickford 1979, 1987b) and language universal (Bickerton 1973a) factors. As such, we might argue that one of the pronominal variants we are
dealing with in the following (ai/mi, ii/shii/it/am) is actually a “gender marker” and is off the unidimensional continuum. However, such an explanation is ultimately inadequate for several reasons. First, as Eckert (1989) argues, there is no convincing evidence for a unique gender marker in other speech communities (despite the fact that the “iconic” values of particular variants such as “question intonation” might be indirectly correlated with gender - see also Ochs 1992). Second, and more importantly, on the basis of native speaker interviews, it appears that the creole-to-standard dimension is the salient one for the evaluation of both variables. In order to address this last kind of evidence, however we need to examine the nature of metalinguistic awareness and its treatment in the sociolinguistic literature.

5.4.1 METALINGUISTIC AWARENESS:

The problem of what different variants mean to and for their users within a community has not been thoroughly theorized in variationist sociolinguistics (for an exception see Lavendera 1978). The question can, I think, be addressed as two separate but related problems: awareness and local significance or meaning. This is simply to say that in order for variants to have distinct and analyzable indexical meanings (i.e. indicating class membership, region of origin etc.) users must be aware, to some degree, of the potential for variation within a particular category. The classic statement on the question of awareness in variationist sociolinguistics comes from Labov (1972) whose variable phonological rules depended on equivalence (i.e “different ways of saying the same thing” - cf. Lavendera 1978). More precisely, phonological variables, of the sort Labov first discussed in Sociolinguistic Patterns, are referentially equivalent but pragmatically differentiated. It was native awareness of this latter
quality that Labov used as the basis on which to divide sociolinguistic variables into three categories:

Some linguistic features (which we will call *indicators*) show a regular distribution over socio-economic, ethnic, or age groups, but are used by each individual in more or less the same way in any context. If the social contexts concerned can be ordered in some kind of hierarchy (like socio-economic or age-groups), these indicators can be said to be *stratified*. More highly developed sociolinguistic variables (which we will call *markers*) not only show social distribution over socio-economic, ethnic, or age groups, but can be ordered along a single dimension according to the amount of attention paid to speech, so that we have *stylistic* as well as *social stratification* (Labov 1972: 283).

The third type of linguistic variable Labov calls a *stereotype* and describes as follows:

a number of sociolinguistic markers rise to overt social consciousness, and become *stereotypes*. There may or may not be a fixed relation between such stereotypes and actual usage...Most communities have local stereotypes, such as `Brooklyness` in New York City which focuses on `thoity-thoid` for *thirty-third*: in Boston, the fronted broad *a* in `cuh` and `pahk` receives a great deal of attention. Speakers of the isolated Cape Hatteras (North Carolina) dialect are known as `hoi tiders` because of the backing and rounding of the nucleus in *high, tide, etc*...Such social stereotypes yield a sketchy and unsystematic view of linguistic structure to say the least. In general, we can assert that *overt social correction* of speech is extremely irregular, focusing on the most frequent lexical items, while the actual course of linguistic evolution, which has produced the marked form of these variables, is highly systematic (Labov 1972: 292).

The categorization is based, then, on a notion of differing levels of awareness (evidenced in the effects of attention paid to speech, i.e. style shifting). Working within a Labovian model, we could then distinguish each type in terms of its position on a feature matrix of the following sort:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature Type</th>
<th>Individual Awareness</th>
<th>Conscious Social Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>indicators</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>markers</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stereotypes</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5.7 Feature Matrix for Indicators, Markers and Stereotypes.*
Labov's general theory of sound change in relation to the sex of the speaker hinges on the distinction between changes emanating from above and below consciousness (Labov 1990). Thus, women, according to the traditional sociolinguistic wisdom, favor the incoming prestige form in cases of change from above and are innovators in change from below (Labov 1990:205-220). In the first case, the change is most often explained in terms of women's greater sensitivity to overt prestige, a greater reliance on symbolic over material (political or economic) power by women, or a tendency, on the part of men, to reject overt expressions of middle-class values in favor of working class notions of "masculinity" (cf Trudgill 1972a). Labov (1990) interprets the tendency for women to innovate in the case of changes from below in terms of the asymmetry of child care responsibilities. Women, having more contact and more often serving as models, tend to pass on the changes in which they are leading to the next generation more effectively than do men.

To the extent that researchers have been attentive to this issue, they have generally taken Labov's categorization as a starting point, with most work unquestioningly accepting that markers are the variables best suited to sociolinguistic analysis (because they show regular distribution along two dimensions not being affected by speakers' conscious attitudes toward speech varieties). The method has then paralleled in some respects, the exclusion of native speaker intuitions in Americanist and early anthropological linguistics and is potentially open to the same critique leveled at those schools (see Silverstein 1981, Woolard 1992).

Under the assumption that native speakers are aware that variation is a possibility for a particular category, and that the variants are accorded stylistic and social significance (i.e. that they are markers or stereotypes), the referential peculiarities (lexical, morphological etc.) of the
variable are left out of the analysis (Lavendera 1978). In many cases, this seems to have been the direct result of dealing with phonological rather than syntactic or morphological variables. Discerning the effects of the referential and indexical characteristics of a variable also requires the analyst to examine variants in their larger discourse context. However, variationists have rarely taken the discourse and interactional functions of variants into account in their analyses (see Eckert 1996 for an exception).

Rather than examining the referential and pragmatic peculiarities of the variables in question, most research, then, has circumvented the problem of what variants mean to/for their users by positing some kind of standard-to-nonstandard interpretive frame through which native speakers assess the social and stylistic significance of particular variants. Included here are oppositions between creole and English, basilect and acrolect, vernacular and formal registers. One confusing aspect of all these oppositions is the degree to which they are informed by native (i.e. locally meaningful) categories versus categories invented by the analyst. Most studies do not directly address the degree to which the analytic categories used are part of native speaker metalinguistic awareness or discourse (for an exception see Hill 1987). However, in order to make a convincing argument for change or variation as a result of "stigmatization" or "prestige" it is necessary to show that native speakers share, to some extent, the analytic categories adopted by the analyst.

In fact, Indo-Guyanese creole-speakers do tend to think of variation as aligned along a creole-to-standard continuum (cf. Rickford 1987b, see also chapter 3). As I have discussed in the previous chapter, the polar extremes are referred to as raw talk (/raa taak/) or Creolese (/kriolliz/) on the one hand and deep English (/dii engish/) on the other. Native speakers often
refer to more mesolectal varieties as mix-up talk (/miiks-op taak/) or as broken-down language (/broken dong langwij/). When queried as to why the creole end of the continuum should be called raw most informants responded by insisting that it en gat noo inglish in it “It doesn’t have any English in it.” So it would appear that native-speakers do, at least in some cases, evaluate speech production in terms of a unidimensional continuum.

In the case of the variables discussed here, there is little doubt that villagers evaluate the variants according to a creole-to-standard dimension and that they do not directly equate either variable category with men or women. Evidence for the saliency of the creole to standard continuum comes from native speaker intuitions about the two poles of linguistic variation in their community. The variation between ai and mi is thus often exploited in cases where one person mimics or mocks another: the use of theacrolectal variants being strongly associated with acting like an English duck. Variation in third person objects is evaluated in similar terms. In this case it is the basilectal marker that is marked. As Bickerton (1973a) and Rickford (1979) have noted, am usage is associated with country-origins, and East Indian ethnicity.

Bickerton (1973a:659) writes:

[...] am is salient because it is the only basilectal form in the system which is not perceived to be present in the acrolectal system (allowing for phonetic alternation[...]). It therefore becomes stigmatized: it always occurs, for instance, in imitations by Africans of rural Indians, even though many of the latter have wholly or partially abandoned it.

In interviews, people often give examples of raw talk which contain am. As one of the few elements which is not a part of the English system am has become, perhaps, the salient marker of the creole variety. In Labovian terms, it is a stereotype. Such observations by native speakers indicate that both variables are evaluated in terms of an emic creole-to-English interpretive
frame. We thus do not need to postulate the existence of distinct local, and non-referential indexical meanings. The explanation for differences in usage is rather to be found in the particularities of each variable at the referential and pragmatic level. If we look closely at the way these items function in discourse it is possible to account for differences in usage by men and women in terms of the categories themselves and in terms of male and female strategies for text-construction. Such an explanation is based on the realization that the variables are caught up in a number of functional subsystems simultaneously. Thus, they are locatable in terms of a standard to non-standard continuum and, at the same time, function as referential items in actual utterances. This leads us to adopt a rather different perspective on metalinguistic awareness from that proposed by Labov, one which takes into account the suggestions made by Silverstein (1981:2):

For the native speaker, the ease or difficulty of accurate metapragmatic characterization of the use of the forms of his [sic] own language seems to depend on certain general semiotic properties of the use in question. That is, the basic evidence we have for awareness of the pragmatic dimension of language use, susceptibility to conscious native testimony, is universally bounded by certain characteristics of the form and contextually-dependent function of the pragmatic markers in speech.

While the three factors Silverstein isolated in that study\(^8\) do not reveal significant dimensions of contrast for the variables discussed here, his suggestion that metalinguistic awareness is "universally bounded by certain characteristics of the form" is, nevertheless, a powerful and useful supplement to Labov's argument concerning the influence of regularity, systematicity and ubiquity.

Traditional linguistic terminology, which lumps into a single category 1st, 2nd and 3rd

\(^8\)Silverstein (1981) isolates the following factors: unavoidable referentiality, continuous segmentability, relative presuppositional quality.
person referring forms, conceals an important difference between deictic and nondeictic lexical items. As has been pointed out many times before (Jakobson 1990[1957]), so called 1st and 2nd person "pronouns" differ from the 3rd person forms in so far as they make reference to an entity (usually a person) only by indexing a shifting role in the speech event. 3rd person referring forms do not on the other hand rely on such speech event variables in making referential sense. The implication is that the use of 1st and 2nd person forms (and their variants) is more indelibly bound to the way in which social actors occupy speech event roles whereas 3rd person forms are more bound to the way in which speakers make reference to entities "outside" the speech event. As it turns out, this difference has effects on the way in which speech is gendered in this speech community.

5.5 Subjects - The Pragmatic Values of 1st Person Subjects

Because first person reference is necessarily self-referential (referring, that is, to the shifting role of speaker), acrolectal variants take on special, or foregrounded, meanings in this context. Specifically, the prestige meanings associated with acrolectal variants (ai) are predicated of the speaker in this case. Ai usage thus involves not only an assertion of acrolectal competence, as do other elements of the idealized acrolectal code, but simultaneously a foregrounding of the assumed identity of the speaker.

The explanation for differences here, then, may involve the way in which men and women differ in interactional style generally - specifically the way they assume positions as authoritative speakers. For men the use of ai is associated with the presentation of self as respectable and removed from the rural or working-class lifestyle. Often this occurs in cases
where the speaker is attempting to manipulate a hearer who might be sensitive to such forms of social distinction. The manipulation depends on assuming a position of respectability. Consider the following (elicited) example of a prayer to god.

NS:    if mi gu sit dong in mi alta nou -mi gu see mi noo fu taak tuu gad
       if I go an sit down in my altar now - I will say I know how to talk to god
       - mi (mo)s kom mi (mo)s see oo gad ai wan(ch) yuu protek mii, ai wan
       - I have to come I must say “o god I want you to protect me, I want
       yuu giv mii helt an strenget, ai wan yuu protek mi hous, protek mii
       you to give me health and strength, I want you to protect my house, protect my
       piknii dem, yuu noo? dem kaina wee da.
       children you know? that kind of thing

Women also use ai with manipulative predicates in request-type acts. Consider the following example in which a aunt is requesting her nephew (3 years) to talk:

SS:     ai want yuu taak yuu mos taak le mi hiir hou i a taak
       I want you to talk you most talk let me hear how he talks

Men also characteristically use ai when calling-off women on the road. Usually the woman is someone not completely familiar with the speaker. The following is a reported example:

TS:     wel yu gu star prooch shi- yu noo- kyer wan- kyer english langwidj
       well you will start to approach her -you know? - use a - use the english language
       tuu shi- see heloo. ai lov yuu beabii wats op- yu noo- ai laik di
       with her - say “hello I love you baby what’s up? -you know? I like the
       wee yuu wak-
       way you walk

The particular effect of the acrolectal pronoun is, in this case, linked to its pragmatic and referential value. Because it is necessarily self-referential the assumed acrolectal, cosmopolitan identity of speaker is foregrounded. Felicitous usages of ai index authority, respectability and
middle-class values generally. Especially important for men, I believe, is the way in which such uses are associated with idealized middle-class sex-gender relations based in romantic love. Women generally avoid the use of ai because such presentations of self are, for them, more likely to backfire. Women will often be called on their uses, and an audience may contest the assumption of such an obviously non-rural identity. In one case that I recorded in my field notes, a young woman who was taking basic secretarial lessons in the village called out to a friend across the fence:

girl: hai darling, ai goin in, ai gon sii yu leeta

hi darling, I'm going in, I will see you later

A group of young men overheard the call and proceeded to mock the girl. The boys called out hai hai ai goin in ai goin in fo leson ai komin out leeta “hi, hi I'm going in I'm going in for my lessons, I'm coming out later.” My impression is that women, as opposed to men, are much more likely to be called on such usages if people suspect that they might be assuming a role beyond their country origins. Similarly, women are more likely to be labelled biggy in “talking-name” sessions both by men and other women. Although men are also subjected to this ridicule it is less likely to have damning effects for their reputation - and may go on for some time before they even become aware of it. Furthermore, young men often use ai in situations where the key is fairly playful. When calling off a girl on the road with ai lov yu “I love you,” a young man cannot expect to be taken seriously. There are too many co-occurring signs (such as dress, the location of the interaction) which indicate that he is not what he is pretending to be and that his

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9The idea of romantic “love” between a man and woman - a kind of equal partnership based on mutual respect - is not part of the dominant village and creole idiom. More often gender relations between married adult men and women are conceived of as a power struggle and a hierarchical ordering (the “proper” hierarchy is to have the man as boss but this is frequently not the case - men who cannot control their wives are the butt of a great many jokes between other men).
intentions are less than completely sincere. In this sense the usage is perhaps playfully manipulative - the challenge is to see if one can trick the girl or woman into thinking that the speaker is other than a local, working-class male and, of course, this is rarely successful. Women who use ai are more likely than men to be interpreted as self-elevating - hearers will often assume that these women actually believe themselves to be a member of the class who habitually use ai.

5.6 THIRD PERSON OBJECT VARIATION:

As already noted, women, as compared to men, appear to be more basilectal in their use of first person subjects, whereas, in the subcategory of third person objects, they appear more mesolectal. Looking carefully at the variants involved, the third person objects present us with a rather complicated problem. As the basilectal pronominal system gives way to more mesolectal patterns, case distinctions are lost and animacy and gender distinctions are added (Bickerton 1973a, Rickford 1979). In using the mesolectal terms, then, speakers must assess the referent's relative animacy and its gender (for animates). Not surprisingly then, one finds that both the gender and the relative animacy of the referent has an effect on the frequency of variant pronouns usages.

So the relative position of each variant on a more-to-less creole dimension is tied to the kinds of semantic and referential distinctions introduced. Thus am is most basilectal and is most infrequent when it is used as a referring term for feminine referents (see below). Again the peculiarities of the variable seem to have an effect on the way it is interpreted in terms of more-to-less creole interpretive frame. Specifically, there are more and less favoured environments for the use of am and these depend crucially on characteristics of the referent.
As it turns out, although we find men and women using *am* at only marginally different frequencies (Table 5.5), women overwhelmingly avoid using *am* in its most creole and stigmatized contexts (for animate referents, Table 5.6). Another way to put this is to say that women lead in the change by which *am* becomes functionally specialized for reference to inanimate referents. The changes in the category of third person object involve the introduction of important semantic distinctions (cf Bickerton 1975). Here the salient functional dimension is referential rather than pragmatic (the focus is on non-participants to the speech event rather than on the values and qualities associated with any of the persons occupying participant roles).

5.6.1 ANIMACY AND GENDER EFFECTS:

Speaking of the variable use of *am*, Rickford (1979:359-360) remarks that there is some indication that it is acquiring (or has acquired) a certain degree of specialization as an appropriate form for neuter (or non-human) objects...*am* is still a more stigmatized form than any of the corresponding subject or possessive forms in the basilect, but speakers seem to operate with a rule that says: if you are going to use it, use it more often for neuter objects than any other.

The data here confirms such a tendency to reserve *am* for inanimate referents. This is clear from the results of a binary coding:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% basilectal variant</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>varbrul weighting for rule application (basilectal variant)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>animate</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>0.419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inanimate</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>0.722</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.8 EFFECTS OF ANIMACY ON THE VARIABILITY OF 3RD PERSON OBJECTS. (% of *am* usage)
However the effect of animacy of the referent is rather more complicated than this binary distinction suggests since it interacts with gender-of-referent effects. In fact, if one codes for the gender of the referent according to a tripartite scheme which distinguishes male, female and neuter entities one finds that neuter (or inanimate) and male referents overwhelmingly favor basilectal marking but female referents do not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>referent</th>
<th>% of basilectal variant</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>varbrul weighting for rule application (basilectal variant)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>0.155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>0.781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuter</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>0.731</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.9 Effects of referent gender on the variability of 3rd person Objects.

It is apparent that female referents favor the use of a mesolectal variant (shii/i) while male and inanimate favor marking with basilectal am. What accounts for this strong dispreference for basilectal variants in the feminine subcategories? One possible explanation is that native speakers are more aware of the non-standardness or creole nature of am when it is used for female referents. Although he does not say this explicitly we might expect this to be the position taken by Bickerton. According to Bickerton change within the creole continuum is organized by the universal principles of partial selection and least effort (cf 1973a: 644). Applying these principles Bickerton suggests that change proceeds in an orderly fashion and he attempts to show that diachronic change and synchronic variation are two sides of the same coin: the implicational relationships of synchronic variation mirroring the way in which change has spread throughout a subsystem like pronouns. He argues that the basilectal grammar has the
following pronominal forms in the third person:

STEP 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>subject</th>
<th>genitive</th>
<th>object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>masc. fem. neut.</td>
<td>masc. fem.</td>
<td>masc. fem. neut.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>am am am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and that change occurs first in the feminine subject, giving the following:

STEP 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>subject</th>
<th>genitive</th>
<th>object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>masc. fem. neut.</td>
<td>masc. fem.</td>
<td>masc. fem. neut.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>shi i</td>
<td>am am am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next mesolectal form introduced is the neuter object *it*:

STEP 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>subject</th>
<th>genitive</th>
<th>object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>masc. fem. neut.</td>
<td>masc. fem.</td>
<td>masc. fem. neut.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>shi i</td>
<td>am am it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bickerton then suggests:

At this stage gender differentiation is interrupted, as the change process 'recognizes' the salience of *am*...the principle of least effort ensures (a) that replacement will precede rather than accompany gender differentiation, and (b) that a form in the system will constitute the replacement. The system is now:

STEP 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>subject</th>
<th>genitive</th>
<th>object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>masc. fem. neut.</td>
<td>masc. fem.</td>
<td>masc. fem. neut.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>shi i</td>
<td>i i it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender differentiation of the object is then completed by the transference of another existing form from the subject class:
The strength of Bickerton’s analysis is in its apparent parsimony and the overall neatness with which it seemingly accounts for a wide range of facts. However, in this case at least, his explanation is neither completely convincing nor comprehensive. Two questions remain unanswered. First, no explanation is given for why gender differentiation should proceed by the introduction of feminine rather than masculine forms (step 2). Secondly, it is unclear why animacy distinctions precede gender distinctions in the subcategory of objects. More problematic, I think, is the statistical evidence which both Rickford (1979) and the present study bring to bear. In fact the ordering of changes should, on the basis of statistical distributions, go in the opposite direction from what Bickerton suggests given the relatively infrequent occurrence of *ii* and *it* in discourse. In step three, Bickerton suggests that *ii* and *it* actually precede the introduction of *shii*. Given statistical evidence which has shown a very strong dispreference for basilectal variants in the feminine subcategories, this situation seems highly unlikely.

Rickford (1979), discussing the problem of gender differentiation in third person subjects (and suggesting that the same reasoning might be applied to the objects), attempts to explain the dispreference of basilectal variants in feminine subcategories:

> we can infer that native speakers avoid the genderless forms not only because they are obviously non-standard, but also because they pose potential problems of reference

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10Bickerton’s implicational scales are rife with “rule conflicts” and “deviances” in this area (cf Bickerton 1973a:660-661). See Pavaone (1980) for a discussion some problems with implicational scaling.
and understanding of a particularly acute type [...] if one speaker's *hi* is always masculine while the other's may be either masculine or feminine, the potential for getting characters mixed up is very great (1979:361).

According to Rickford, then, referential ambiguity is resolved by a general statistical tendency such that, in otherwise unmarked contexts, *am* refers to male and inanimate referents whereas *shii* is the unique referential term for feminine referents. While this seems to fit the observed facts of statistical distribution, it does not explain the preference for mesolectal marking in the feminine subcategory.\(^{11}\) The referential ambiguity could just as efficiently be resolved by a statistical tendency to take *am* as referring to feminine and neuter/inanimates and *ii* as referring to male referents. In such a case we would expect to find the distributions reversed with male referents strongly favoring mesolectal marking over feminine and inanimate ones. So Rickford's suggestion that the dispreference for basilectal variants in the feminine subcategories is the result of pressures to be referentially unambiguous does not explain the original selection of the feminine subcategory as the one to be differentiated.

Perhaps, then, the explanation should be sought in the interaction of animacy and gender effects and sex of speaker effects. We have already seen that the variation is affected by the animacy of the referent and that women are leading the change by which *am* acquires a specialized function as an appropriate referring term for inanimates only (Tables 5.8 and 5.9). Women avoid the use of *am* when referring to animate referents. At the same time women and men favor mesolectal marking in the feminine subcategory (Table 5.9). This complex pattern of sex-based variability seems resilient to simple explanation. However we might suppose that

\(^{11}\)Rickford (1979:359) himself remarks that he is unsure whether his suggestions should be taken as an explanation.
women have set a community norm here. Women, more than men, tend to reserve \textit{am} for inanimates and prefer gender-marking pronouns for animates. If women lead in this general process it is not too hard to imagine that they set a pattern in which mesolectal marking is preferred for feminine subcategories in particular.

Some support for this suggestion comes from the way in which men and women differ in their use of \textit{am} and the mesolectal variants. Although basilectal variants are strongly dispreferred for both men and women in the feminine subcategories, men are more likely than women to use \textit{ii} for male referents while women are more likely than men to use \textit{shii} for female referents. Such patterns seem to indicate an area of contestation between men and women. When men talk about other men they use the term marked for gender and animacy more often than women do. When women talk about other women they use a term marked for gender and animacy more often than men do.
Thus, figure 5.1 shows that the influence of gender and animacy of referent effects is partially collapsed for men as opposed to women with differences between the categories being relatively contracted for the male group. For men, the change seems to be between more and less creole (or basilectal) ways of saying the same thing. This is to say that, for men, the alternation between am and its mesolectal variants is determined more by the social, than the referential, significance attached to each variant. As noted above, and in much other work on the problem, am is strongly involved in the expression of working class solidarity and local values. Social and
stylistic factors no doubt affect women’s usage of the variants too. However, for women
another, referential, dimension becomes particularly salient. In avoiding the most stigmatized
uses of am in reference to animates an association between this form and inanimates is set.
Furthermore, women show a strong preference for mesolectal, that is explicit gender and
animacy, marking for members of their own sex-based category. This acts to highlight or
foreground the animacy of the referent in discourse. It appears then that women and man are
using the variability of the pronominal system quite differently. For women, more than men,
characteristics of the referent, in addition to the social and stylistic factors, play a major role in
determining patterns of variability.12

The following is an example showing the general preference for mesolectal marking for
feminine referents and basilectal marking for neuter/inanimate referents. S is complaining to
her sister-in-law (Sh) that a young girl who lives next door was climbing on her fowl pen to pick
plums and subsequently broke it but would not tell her mother (Miss):

S.: shi a pik plom. wen mi aks shi yestodee see shi na tel mi se shii
she was picking plums. When I asked her yesterday she didn’t tell me that she
brook am dong shi na ansa -- shi klaim pon di foul pen an brook am
broke it down she - she didn’t answer -- she claimed on the foul pen and broke it down

dong...shi aks mi at hou (inaudible) den mi se shi na big iinof fu
down... she ask me if ( )
then I asked if she wasn’t big enough to
tel Mis da shi klaim pon-
tell Miss that she had climbed on

Sh: -oo yea
-oh yeah

12 In accounting for such a situation we might suppose that either, men are not attending to the
relative animacy of the referent, or, that they are purposefully characterizing all referents unremarkable
with regard to animacy.
S.: - am brook am. mi na gu tel shii
          - uhm broke it. I'm not going to tell her

koz shi gu kos. shi don bina kos dis maarnin mi en noo fo wa
because she will curse. She was already cursing this morning for I don't know what

The next example illustrates the alternation between the mesolectal term for feminine referents (shii) and basilectal term for masculine ones (am). Kavita (Kav) is telling me how she, her mother, and her aunt had been playing with a little girl Mando (3 years) who was also present at the time this report was given. During the course of the telling, Kavita’s brother Kumar (Ku) asks Mando to repeat her performance from the day before. Kavita tells Mando to curse Kumar (Kavita’s brother), switching to the basilectal pronoun (am) in doing so:

Kav: yestodee Mamii tel antii Beebii fu tel shii toch mii an shi toch shi
       yesterday Mama told Aunty Baby to tell her to “touch me” and she touched her

so an mi tel shi toch mi so an shi toch mi abii tel tel shi don noo
like this and I told her “touch me” like this and she touched me we told to tell her “right-on”

hiir shii mii don noo <laughs>
this is what she said - “right-on”

Ku: toch mi de Mandoo
touch me there Mando

Kav: sok yu teet pon am kos am tel i le i gu beed i doti skin
suck your teeth on him - curse him - tell him to go a wash his dirty skin!

5.7 INTERPRETATIONS OF COMPLEX GENDER-BASED PATTERNS OF VARIABILITY

To summarize the argument to this point, I have demonstrated that the two variables

---

13 It is likely that am in this example is marking affect. The interactional routine which the children refer to here as toch mi and don noo are phatic and themselves affect marked. When one friend says to another toch mi the two make fists and touch lightly. The significance of the gesture is highly contextual but usually indicates agreement or approval of something said immediately prior to the routine being initiated. The expression don noo (lit. “known”) often accompanies such a gesture. It also marks agreement, approval and/or interactional alliance.
discussed show significant but seemingly inconsistent effects for the sex of the speaker, arguing that these inconsistencies are not due to the effects of a multidimensional continuum (i.e. neither of these variables directly index gender or any other social category). Instead they tend to be evaluated by native speakers in terms of their position on a single creole-to-standard continuum. To explain differences in their use by men and women I have suggested that it is necessary to look at the internal structure of each variable, particularly the way in which speakers reach metalinguistic awareness through an understanding of pragmatic and referential qualities. In the case of aɪ/ɪ alternation, I have argued that differences between men and women are a result of different text-building strategies. Specifically, because these are deictic forms, indexing speech act variables, they have rather specific indexical entailments: aɪ usage foregrounds an assumed identity for the speaker - one that is relatively more difficult for women, as opposed to men, to sustain. In the case of alternation between aɪ and its mesolectal variants, I have suggested that women show a rather different kind of sensitivity to the referential or semantic distinctions involved, in addition to social and stylistic factors. Patterns of use with feminine, masculine and neuter referents (figure 1.) indicate that men and women employ rather different strategies in marking animacy through the use of pronominal variants. Having discussed the importance of the referential and pragmatic peculiarities of each variable I now consider the general implications of sex differentiation in relation to recent work on the relationship between speaker's gender and linguistic variation.

In the situation I have reviewed here it is not possible to characterize women as either significantly more standard or more creole than men. Both of these explanation, however, might have been offered given either emic or etic intuitions. In the former case, although in
many cases people refuse to even postulate, native speakers will sometimes remark that women are more basilectal (more creole-speaking) than men. A variety of reasons are suggested for why this is the case ranging from the moralistic insistence on the effects of teenage pregnancy and removal from the educational system to normative ideas about the dominance of male members in rural Guyanese households.

On the other hand it might be surmised that women are more sensitive to overt prestige and men to covert forms especially given the importance of male solidarity networks and crews which has been well documented (Abrahams 1983, Wilson 1969, 1995[1973], chapter 1). Wilson (1969), for example, argued that men in Providencia were much more oriented towards local reputation as opposed to supra-local values of respectability. Men’s networks tend to be more embedded in informal associations between villagers rather than in the institutional structures of church and school. Although Besson (1993) has criticized this work for its one-sided interpretation of institutions like the church in the Caribbean, few ethnographers have challenged Wilson’s central argument concerning the pivotal role of informal and local associations in the organization of men’s daily activities in the Caribbean. Though women are involved in local social networks such associations tend to show less commitment to the covert values attached to speaking creole. Creole speech, associated as it is with unruly behavior (Abrahams 1983) and certain kinds of peer relations, seems to be more strongly tied to the male networks than to women’s.

Since, however, both explanations posit uniform effects for the sex of the speaker neither is sustainable given the facts of variant distribution (cf. Eckert 1989). This leads me to suggest an alternate explanation, one that I think explains the distribution of variants as a
result of social and cultural forces at work in the community. As I have argued earlier, women seem to be more open to charges of acting biggity and therefore are more likely to avoid forms such as *ai* which foreground the speaker. At the same time women are also frequently characterized as “country”, stupid, ignorant and, perhaps most importantly, uneducated and creole speech is often taken as a marker of such personal qualities. Women are thus likely to avoid *am* and other highly stigmatized markers. For men the extreme basilectal end of the continuum is used a sign of solidarity and allegiance to an oppositional value system (women can also participate in this but face the possibility of misinterpretation by others) (cf. Rickford Traugott 1985). But it should be noted that for men the real symbolic payoff comes from an ability for “bilectalism”, that is a display of competence in both basilectal and mesolectal or acrolectal varieties (see chapter 4). For the competent bilectal speaker, creole (basilectal) usages (what community members recognize as real *raw talk*) are interpreted as strategic choices rather than the necessary expression of a lack of education and resultant illiteracy.

This becomes clear once we look at the patterns for individual speakers. In general, speakers can be grouped, on the basis of their usage of both variables, into one of four categories: acrolectal, mesolectal, basilectal and mixed code users.

**ACROLECTAL**: 5% or higher rate of non-basilectal usage in subject
50% or higher rate of non-basilectal usage in object

**MESOLECTAL**: 5% or lower rate or rate of non-basilectal usage in subject
50% or higher rate of non-basilectal usage in object

**BASILECTAL**: 5% or lower rate of non-basilectal usage in subject
50% or lower rate of non-basilectal usage in object

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14 Of course all of these are false attributions. In general, and in this sample, women in the village have as much formal education as men.
MIXED-CODE: 5% or higher rate of non-basilectal usage in subject
50% or lower rate of non-basilectal usage in object

While the dividing points seem somewhat arbitrary, the division of speakers in this way into relatively focused (three categories: acrolectal, mesolectal, basilectal) and relatively diffused (one category: mixed code users) groups does seem to correlate with salient social categories in the village.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>SUBJETS % of non-basilectal variant</th>
<th>OBJECTS % of non-basilectal variant</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACROLECTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gigi</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>worker</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MESOLECTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanka</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>worker/housewife</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinii</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>shopkeeper</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kavita</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumar</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASILECTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mama</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>housewife</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeta</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>housewife</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIXED CODE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WeWe</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>worker</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>47</td>
<td>baker</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>f</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>shopkeeper</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gobin</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>worker</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>worker</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.10 Categorization of Speakers According to Frequency of Non-Basilectal Variant in Two Subcategories

Notice that all the women, with one exception, fall into the focused categories along with the

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15I have included only those speakers for whom a sufficient number of tokens was available to get a sense of their patterns as individuals rather than as member of sex-based groups.
children. We should note the apparent anomaly of the female worker Gigi falling into the acrolectal focussed group. Gigi is well traveled and in fact currently lives outside the community in question. Her husband is frequently called away to work for extended periods and at this time Gigi travels both to town and to visit her family who reside in the village. Her rather acrolectal patterns reflect this extensive travel, especially her familiarity with the capital which is unmatched by anyone else discussed here with the possible exception of Ashan. As an aside, it is instructive to note that villagers who had known Gigi since she was a small girl often suggested that she had forgotten where she came from and who she really was. Moses, the other member of the this acrolectal category, however, is highly respected and considered to exceptionally intelligent by many of his fellow villagers.

The basilectal users - Mama and Seeta - are both married and living with their husband’s patrilocal group. As such, they face the most severe restrictions on their movement (patrilocal group “honor” being partially dependent on their “reputation”, see chapter 1). Another set of women are in the mesolectal group. Obvious social differences distinguish these women from those in the basilectal group. First, mesolectal speakers Rita and Zini are employed and thus not restricted to the house in the same way as other women (i.e. Mama and Seeta). Secondly, neither lives with their husband’s patrilocal group. The other mature woman in this group, Shanka, is not permanently employed. However, she no longer lives with her husband and maintains a good deal of personal autonomy with respect to her patrilocal group. Unlike other poor and working class women in the community, Shanka is free, in many contexts, from the surveillance of men and the social sanctions which can be imposed by a patrilocal group.
In contrast all the mixed-code users, with one exception, are male. It is revealing to note that the one exception is an unmarried shopkeeper who is the undisputed head of her family of four resident sisters, their mother and one child (see my description of the Pakar in chapter 2). (Note that men in the village frequently commented on ways in which Ashan was "unwomanly" and, to them, unattractive sexually). She has a wide range of contacts and has traveled extensively (to England and also all over Guyana). Kota, a baker, who sells his product right up and down the road from Rosignol to Mahaicony is also well traveled both locally (with his everyday work) and regionally (having worked in Brazil, Suriname and Trinidad).

To some extent then language use seems to correlate with actual and potential opportunity for travel. However such correlations breakdown when we consider the bulk of the mixed code users - the male workers. With little experience of any other place than the village and its surrounding environs, their usage does not seem to correlate with extensive travel. Although not restricted to the home as are their wives, they have neither the resources nor the opportunity for extensive travel. What unites them with the other mixed code users is their position within their own nuclear kin-groups and domestic units. All of these people are the generally acknowledged public heads for their domestic unit. They thus have the authority, at least in some contexts, necessary for the felicitous use of ai. They also have local standing or reputation enough for the felicitous use of am. Even the youngest member of this group (WeWe), who is only 17, is the only employed member of his nuclear family which includes his grandmother and two of his cousins. With the exception of the acrolectal group members, all the focussed users, including the children in the mesolectal group, are relatively disempowered within the context of their own families in comparison with the members of the mixed-code
While I do not want to overstate the dominance of men in the symbolic marketplace, since many women do use both the basilectal and relatively acrolectal varieties in some contexts, statistical analysis does seem to indicate a situation in which women are more tightly constrained in their use of the symbolic resources potentially available. As such, the situation resembles that described by Hill (1987) for Nahuatl speaking women. Hill (1987:158) remarks of the Nahuatl women in her sample:

It seems likely that women may experience active exclusion from male patterns and that this is the reason they are at once both less Mexicano and less Spanish than men[...]. I might propose that women in Mexicano communities are, in fact, marginal to major social arenas dominated by men: the system of community offices, with which power coding is associated, and the system of compadrazgo and male friendships with which the solidarity code is associated[...]. They (women) are clearly sensitive both to stigmatizations that emanate from the norm of speaking castellano and to stigmatizations that emanate from solidarity-code purism about speaking mexicano [...]. Rather than think of the speech norms of women as marginal to a core of male norms, we might instead think of women's speech as highly constrained within a narrow range of possibilities, at the same time less Mexicano and less Spanish than men's speech, whereas men are able to use the full range of code variation.

On the other hand, the situation I discussed here contrasts rather sharply with that for Detroit High School students described by Eckert (1989). Eckert (1989:256) argued that "deprived of power, women must satisfy themselves with status. It would be more appropriate to say that women are more status-bound than men." She goes on to suggest that (1989:256): "(w)hereas men can justify and define their status on the basis of their accomplishments, possessions, or institutional status, women must justify and define theirs on the basis of their overall character." According to Eckert (1989:256), then, "symbolic capital is the only kind that
women accumulate without impunity." The evidence I have discussed here, particularly in the light of findings by both Hill (1987) and Eckert (1989), thus points to some interesting points of cross-cultural variability:

1. The distinction between doing and speaking, between power and prestige, between power and the symbolism of power (symbolic capital) is a cultural one and is thus susceptible to a variety of local interpretations. We would expect that some communities will be more attentive to the action in talking and will therefore not show the same kinds of gender differences in this regard as that described for Detroit teenagers.

2. The distinction between action and talk is likely to collapse in communities which have experienced large-scale disenfranchisement. In a community where everybody is relatively disempowered vis-a-vis a larger metropolitan center or colonial metropole, symbolic distinction, instantiated in part through language use, will take on increased significance and may, in fact, be dominated or jealously guarded by men. In such a situation symbolic resources cannot be accumulated with impunity.

I have argued that the sociolinguistic situation in this rural Indo-Guyanese community should force us to re-examine previous sociolinguistic descriptions of Anglophone Caribbean Creole communities and explanations of gender-based difference in general. The situation described, in terms of the statistical distribution of variant forms across male and female groups, is remarkably similar to the one described by Rickford (1979). This leads me to
conclude that we are dealing with fairly stable patterns probably common in many predominantly East Indian communities in rural Guyana. I have attempted to explain the differences in terms of enduring gender roles and the particularities of each variable. Once the particulars of the variables themselves are taken into account, I think it is possible to see a general pattern emerging: men (particularly a certain subset of working-class men) tend to use a greater range of the continuum with regard to pronouns. Women on the other hand seem to be more restricted to a focussed area of the continuum. At the same time, women and men differ in their use of the forms themselves. In the case of 1st person subjects this entails a favoring of the basilectal variant whereas in the case of the 3rd person objects it entails that the change they lead in (towards a specialization of am for inanimates only) takes a rather definite direction (i.e. a preference for mesolectal marking in the feminine subcategory). In both cases women and men show a very complex (yet sometimes quite different) kind of variability that indicates a great sensitivity to the values of particular referents along a number of different social, referential and pragmatic dimensions.

The situation I have discussed is significantly different from that described for Detroit teenagers by Eckert (1989). In that investigation speakers, both male and female, seem to have fairly equal access to the symbolic resources embedded in language. This situation no doubt reflects the common ideological separation of “practical” and linguistic or symbolic action in many western speech communities (the distinction between language and action, power and prestige etc. - cf. Rumsey 1990). In the community discussed here language and linguistic styles seem to much more closely associated with “real” power and are thus more jealously guarded. In this case “impunity” is no more guaranteed in the symbolic realm than in the economic or
political ones. Given this situation, women restrict their speech productions to a focused variety in the continuum, presumably one they feel most suits their standing in the local community. Men, on the other hand, are more like to range over several styles, drawing on the symbolic markers thus available. At the same, there is evidence that, while leading in the change which brings in the less “solidarity” marked basilectal variants, and therefore perhaps in some ways excluded from expression of local identity, women are perpetuating a linguistic categorization that foregrounds their own animacy in their use of 3rd person object pronouns.

We should be aware, too, of the possibility that a restriction to a certain speech style, indicated by a relatively narrow use of the variation available, may itself indicate a concern for the accumulation of symbolic capital. It is not, in fact, possible to equate a greater range of linguistic variation directly with a greater concern for, or greater investment in, the vagaries of the symbolic marketplace. In some situations, there may be a greater symbolic payoff in using a narrow range. In fact, I have argued that women in the village considered here ARE motivated, in their linguistic behavior, by a concern to present an appropriate image of themselves. This motivates both their rejection of the most stigmatized variants and the most prestigious ones - they are walking the thin, and relatively safe, middle ground. This should not be taken to mean that men are not concerned with the moral person they present through various symbolic practices, including speech production. They too are motivated by a concern to display themselves symbolically. In this case, however, it is the men who have more invested in displaying multiple group or community memberships through their use of linguistic variants. I have suggested that this is in part the result of specific political and economic factors that have affected rural people in the Anglophone Caribbean (i.e. a situation of relative disempowerment
vis-a-vis a metropole).

In the village there is a generally held belief that women should spend more time than men in home and in many ways their movement is restricted. However to take this as the reason for sociolinguistic differences would be a mistake. Lack of exposure cannot be used to explain the dispreference for a variant like ai which is widely known in this community. Furthermore, to equate restrictions on movement with sociolinguistic patterns is to miss the ethnographic generalization that women must be careful both in how they move through the community (and who they interact with etc.) and how they talk - both concerns emanating from a common community-based construction of gender roles. As Eckert (1989) has reminded us, ultimately it is power which motivates and constrains linguistic usage and in the case discussed here this power takes very local forms. Wide ranges of linguistic usages, such as those evidenced by the people I have labeled mixed-code users, require that the speaker occupy a certain social position to be effective. The generally observed pattern in which women are more focussed on a particular variety reflects the exclusion, with some exceptions, of women from such positions of local, kinbased authority.
PLATES
Plate 1. Typical working class wooden house

Plate 2. The yard, the road and two roadside houses
Plate 3. The yard

Plate 4. Bottomhouse
Plate 5. Children by the road

Plate 6. Brothers of a single patrilocal group returning from religious work
Plate 7. Grandmother and grandson
CHAPTER SIX

CUSSING UP AND TALKING HARD: AFFECTIVE DISPLAYS OF “PASSION” AS CHALLENGES TO GENDERED TERRITORIALITY

Coolie Mother

_Jasmathie live in bruk-
Down hut big like Bata shoe-box,
Beat clothes, weed yard, chop wood, feed fowl
For this body and that body and every blasted body,
Fetch water, all day fetch water like if the whole -
Whole slow-flowing Canje river God create
Just for she one own bucket

Till she foot-bottom crack and she hand cut up
And curse swarm from she mouth like red-ants
And she cough blood on the ground but mash it in:
Because Jasmathie heart hard, she mind set hard.

To hustle save she one-one slow penny,
Because one-one duty make dam cross the Canje
And she son Harilall got to school in Georgetown,
Must wear clean starch pants, or they go laugh at he,
Strap leather on he foot, and he must read book,
Learn talk proper, take exam, go to England university,
Not turn out like he rum-sucker chamar dadee.

David Dabydeen (p. 62 Book of Caribbean Poetry)

"Polite language is a symbol of high status and...people of high status and aspirants to it refrain(ed) from adopting the customary mode of conducting disputes. Thus abuse and assault are characteristically low-status methods of disputing (Jaywardena 1963:89)."

6.0 PREAMBLE

In this chapter, I again take up the discussion of language and gender relations, this time in an extended analysis of a particular stretch of conflict talk. In attempting to discern the
extent and the limits of patrilocal authority, as well as the strategies women develop for contesting it, I am again drawn to the investigation of spatial organization and bodily comportment. I find that, in contesting the way in which domestic and social relations are structured in the village, women simultaneously question the gendering of space and bodily comportment. Performances of passion are discursive sites in which women are allowed certain rights to speak. Occupying such a speaking position is itself, however, a risky undertaking since, in such cases, the speaker is particularly dependent on audience ratification.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

I have suggested in chapter 4 that, when making spatial descriptions, participants draw on the background knowledge of a commonsense geography in giving shape to the interactional and narrated spaces designated in a conversational sequence. One aspect of such conversational place formulation that has not been extensively discussed in the literature is the role it plays in verbal conflict. Because the regulation of bodies in space is so intimately tied to the exercise of social power in the village I am discussing and elsewhere (see chapter 2 and Duranti 1994, 1997, Foucault 1979, Keating 1994) place formulation in conversation often becomes the object of heated dispute. Although some mention has been made of the way talk and participants are related to property spaces (Goodwin 1990, Levinson 1983, Schegloff 1972) place formulations have generally not been theorized as sites of contestation in discourse. However, the fact that participants work with an at least partially shared commonsense geography does not entail perfect agreement about the "rightness" of particular place formulating moves in conversation.
In the analysis that follows I attempt to clarify two aspects of the relation between verbal dispute and place formulation. First, because space is closely linked with social power, place formulations are the site of a great deal of negotiation and contestation in discourse. As such, I am concerned to show the way in which, while participants sometimes ratify one another's place formulating moves, they do not always agree on particular characterizations of locatable spaces. Instead, participants tend construe space strategically to suit their own ends and achieve their own interactional goals. Second, spatial descriptions and place formulations are resources which members draw on for expressing certain kinds of social relationships. As such, the analysis that follows pays close attention to the role of place formulations in the collaborative construction of oppositional frameworks (see Goodwin and Goodwin 1990).

In the particular transcript that I present a woman engages in an affective display of passion (/pashon/ “a state of uncontrollable and intense emotional disquiet”) during which she contests the ways space and gender are co-constructed. In her talk, she confronts her husband and his mother and charges that they unduly restrict her movement. But her talk presents a challenge beyond the referential content of her words. Through an increase in volume and a shrill intonation - which can be heard from a great distance - she establishes a participation framework which reaches beyond the delimited spaces of the house and yard (see chapter 1). In using this register she brings into the interaction neighbours and bystanders who would otherwise be non-participants and, in this way, recontextualizes her own talk as public discourse. She then uses spatial and personal deictics to realign these people into larger participant structures and to anchor herself to a place removed from the house. The public and performative nature of the talk is also cued through numerous affective keys including
interrogatives, parallelism, fronting and lexical items locally considered curse words. Her talk then breaches, and thus challenges, the boundaries that delimit the gendered spaces of the house, yard and road. In the exchange the woman and her mother-in-law collaborate to produce an oppositional alignment central to which are their conflicting constructions of the space within which the interaction is taking place. In conclusion, I discuss the problematic outcome of the event. For while the challenge was effective insofar as it publicly humiliated her husband and eventually forced him to allow her more freedom, it also increased her marginalization within the community. When a woman engages in such hard talk it is generally taken as a sign of her immorality and indecency. Family and friends commented afterwards that cussing and fighting of this sort was not proper and that it shamed the family with which it was associated.

6.1.1 WOMEN AND DISPUTING IN THE GUYANESE CONTEXT

The interaction that I discuss is a dispute between two women. Given the gender of the participants, and the potential for reproducing existing stereotypes of men and women, it is necessary to say a few words about the social foundations of interpersonal conflict in this community before moving to an analysis of the transcript. In Guyana, as in many other places (see for example Kulick 1992, 1994), women have a widely accepted reputation for being argumentative, divisive and prone to verbal dispute. Such a stereotype exerts considerable influence both on native accounts of verbal interaction (Sidnell n.d.4) and scholarly writings (for an example see Edwards 1978). Despite the tendency to psychologize and gender argument in this way (treating it as the inevitable expression of an essential femininity), it is, in
fact, apparent that certain social forces tend to give shape both to the production of conflict and local interpretations of its verbal manifestation. The first thing to note is the way in which women, particularly married and junior women (i.e. daughters), often find themselves living under the authority of a senior man. As I have described in chapter 1, residence in this community is primarily patrilocal so that married women tend to live with their husband’s families. Patrilocal units, consisting of several nuclear families occupying a plot of patrilineally inherited land, have a very public face. Others tend to judge an individual’s actions in terms of the overall character of the group and this leads group members to vigorously defend their reputation or name against scandal. For a number of reasons that cannot be adequately described here,¹ the result is a situation in which women, more than men, find it necessary to cultivate moral persons that are “respectable” and “proper”. In the face of a very active gossip-system women are frequently called upon to publicly defend themselves and their actions. This then leads women to engage in certain kinds of dispute which men generally avoid.²

The other major implication of the patrilocal social system which is relevant to what follows has to do with the organization of space and the regulation of movement which I have discussed in chapter 1. Within the village gossip-system, evidence of immoral or disrespectful behaviour is often creatively generated. Thus, seeing someone on the road and headed in a certain direction is often taken as an indication that that person is making an illicit visit to a lover. Circumstantial evidence of this kind can be very damaging to the personal reputation of


²Men do sometimes engage in conflicts about “respectability” and moral character. I am making a statement about a statistical tendency which has given rise to a feminization of verbal dispute in ideological terms.
both a woman and her husband. Husbands who are considered to have unfaithful wives are the objects of much derision. Added to this is the widely held belief among men that women cannot be trusted and must therefore be controlled by senior men (i.e. a father or a husband). In an attempt to preserve and protect their own reputation and "good name", then, men make strenuous efforts to keep women at home under the watchful eye of their own patrilocal group. Married women must always have a reason and an intended destination when going out. Policing the movement of bodies through space thus becomes a primary arena for the exercise of male authority and power. Women, however, do not always submit to the regulations of senior men. They frequently devise reasons for leaving the house and engage in visiting on a regular basis despite their husbands', sometimes firmly physical, reprisals. Women are often forced to defend their rights to movement and their general personal autonomy against the impositions of their affinal patrilocal group. This tension between wife and patrilocal group, expressed in terms of rights to movement, thus also leads to a greater involvement by women in certain kinds of verbal dispute.

6.2 AMBIGUITIES IN THE GENDERING OF SELF-COMPORTMENT

Girls are also more likely than boys to have their marriages arranged by their parents according to the traditional Hindu custom, and keeping them closer to the home helps prevent disruption of such plans and to increase their attractiveness as potential marriage partners. At Hindu wedding receptions, the women usually remain upstairs talking and fussing around the bride, while the men drink and dance among themselves downstairs (Rickford 1979:140-141).

As I have described in chapter 2, the spaces of the house, the yard and the road are very much meaningful to people in the village. Part of this meaning arises out of a gendering. But gender in
this and in other cases interacts with other locally meaningful categories. In particular, it is apparent that spaces become associated with certain activities including ways of speaking, ways of holding the body, and ways of interacting with others more generally. This co-construction is particularly evident in the way the road and the house become sites of heterosexual exchange as Rickford’s comments above suggest.

According to Wilson (1969, 1973 and Abrahams 1983) the road in the Anglophone Caribbean is associated with male reputation for virility, peer groups, loose morals and sexual activity. In the village these attitudes are expressed in ways of holding the body, and ways of speaking on the road. Men usually sit or stand with some clear view of what is going by. They may be drinking, playing cards or gyafing. When a young woman passes, the young men say heloo lov! ai lov yu! “hello love - I love you” or waa gyal, yu shain op “what gyal! you dress up!” Such remarks draw attention to the woman’s appearance, and to the possibility of heterosexual relations. Women, on the other hand, do not usually stand by the road. Instead they walk along it at a reasonable speed, usually with an umbrella or something to keep the sun off their face and well covered by Sari or western style clothing.

If somebody “big” addresses them politely the woman is expected to call back politely. If a boy calls them off they may cut-eyes and increase their pace. Rarely do “proper” Hindu or Moslem women enter prolonged engagements with men in these situations - even if they are on friendly relations with them (the exception is when they have some joint business to attend to -

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3 Cut-eye involves a look to the face and then down and across the body. It may be combined with suck-teeth or stchuups in which air is sucked into the mouth through the teeth and lip to produce a unmistakeable ideophone. Both gestures are commonly taken to express disgust or disrespect. See Rickford and Rickford (1976).
school etc.). So the appropriate response would seem to depend on the age and status of the man involved. If it is a young boy who is mannish ("full of himself") the best thing to do is to cut-eye and keep moving. If he is older and well respected then a polite "thank-you uncle" would be more likely. If the man is on roughly equal standing with the woman a quick exchange may ensue in which recognition is acknowledged.

During an interview which probed native speaker attitudes towards language use, I asked the following question:

1. an if yu sii wan bai/gyal wa yu laik pan di rood hou yu gu taak tu ram - english or moor kriioliiz? (if you see a boy/girl that you like on the road how would you talk to him/her? English or more creolese?)

While men usually suggested that they would use more English in this situation, women, on the whole, began by stating that the boy would have to talk to them first. One woman said:

2. wel bai ga kom taak tu mi fors - if mi star taak I gu see - wa shi a plee, yu sii da gyal ga kiip shi plees ("Well, the boy has to come and talk to me first - if I start talking (to him) he will say 'What is she up to? That girl, you see, must keep her place.")

Conversational sequencing in such situations can, in this way, be strongly gendered. There is a

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4 The question then becomes what constitutes "proper" behaviour. A number of women in the village do cultivate moral, public persons that do not fit the usual model of "proper". Unfortunately discussion of the entire range of responses which are possible for women in Indo-Guyanese villages is beyond the scope of this chapter. This said it should be noted that a woman's situatedness in these communities is not simply a matter of language, ideology, economy or other structural factors but instead is determined by a complex interaction of these factors as well as each woman's way of responding to them - based on the set of enduring dispositions which have developed through her life-course (Bourdieu 1977). In the following, I focus on one woman in particular whose plight, and responses seem, in many ways, suggestive of a larger group of Hindu women who live in the rural community where I conduct fieldwork and who are married to agricultural labourers. But many other women in the village do not conform to the image that Dabydeen (see the poem at the beginning of this chapter) draws at all.
set of expectations which in practice are variably instituted. Most people attribute such expectations to the “traditional” way. They may cite as evidence of the traditional way the avoidance rule that, big bodii kyaan taak tu lil boujii “big brother should not talk to little brother’s wife”. The traditional way specifies appropriate modes of comportment for women in public places such as the road. Although it exerts considerable influence it also contradicts, in many ways, expectations and ideas about the nature of social relations in “modern” or “urban” settings. Some women thus align themselves with “modernity,” opposing this to the backward traditions of the village men and women.

If the road is associated with illicit heterosexual relations, the house symbolizes the sanctity of the proper Hindu marriage (cf. Smith and Jayawardena 1959 on Hindu marriage in Guyana). The house most often has its origin with the nuclear unit breaking off from the extended group and sentiment reflects this. The greatest insult of the PNC regime from a male, East Indian perspective was the way it threatened the sanctity of the house and family. Black policemen could, at any time, come into one’s house, take what they wanted and abuse one’s wife. The sacred “Indianness” of the house and the heterosexual union is symbolized in the house altar. Every Hindu home I visited from the smallest backyard one-bedroom to modern roadside dwellings contained an altar at which prayers would be offered daily. These altars are made up of a shelf holding numerous religious pictures which depict Hindu deities (Krishna, Latchmi, Ganish, Anuman etc.) Also contained in the altar are vases and flowers along with

5 The PNC (People’s National Congress) controlled local, regional and national government under the leadership of Burnham and Hoyt up until 1992. The party was marked by a predominantly Afro-Guyanese membership. It has been implicated in a number of rigged elections and crimes against the local population. Most East Indians in Guyana considered the regime oppressive. (see Premdas 1995)
brass plates upon which offerings of burning incense, camphor, leaves and fresh flowers are made. The care and use of this altar is the responsibility of all family members and the practices surrounding it, in the division of responsibility and distribution of authority, ritualize heterosexual and family social relations.

"Traditional" wisdom is somewhat contradictory, containing seemingly incommensurate ideological positions on the gendering of talk. For while there is certainly an image of the docile "traditional" wife, this is balanced by an image of the hard-talking, cussing woman. The hard-talking woman, as a stereotype, is often contrasted with the polite, soft-spoken yet confidently self-assured middle class, modern, women of Georgetown (and elsewhere cf. Edwards 1978 and my concluding chapter). This is a pervasive stereotype and one that women themselves draw on in daily negotiations with others (as I show below). Note that the same woman who is quoted above answered the question, *huu a kos moor man or homan?* ("Who curses more men or women?") quickly with the following:

3. *wel nachorilii homan dem see homan strengt in dem mout soo dem doz kos moor* - "well naturally women. They say that a woman's strength is in her mouth so they curse more."

The self-assertiveness associated with *cussing* (cf. Sidnell forthcoming) is at odds with the stereotype of woman as subordinate to men (especially husbands). The act of *cussing* also involves a level of (public) performance which is not traditionally expected of women. Such performances problematize women's relegation to the delimited space of the house insofar as they expand participation to include people located outside the space of the house and yard (i.e. the domestic group of the patrilocal unit).
6.3 BACKGROUND TO THE TRANSCRIPT

Pria and Raja had established a small roadside stand about four months before the events discussed here took place. At this stand, rather ironically named the “Queen Bee”, they sold salseeoo with sauri (a local snack made with flour and water), biscuits, and cigarettes to people passing by as well as to young boys and girls, adolescents and adults who were, for one reason or another, on the road. Pria ran the Queen Bee as her own project - it had been her idea, she made the salseeoo, she kept the little account book of debts. Most often she and one or two of the children would sit at the little stand and serve anyone who was buying.

Most of the patrons were men between 15 and 25 years old who lived in the immediate vicinity. They would come to sit on the bench, gyaf, smoke cigarettes and occasionally to play cards. The Queen Bee, located near a number of locally important houses, became a popular spot to meet friends and lime “hang out”. Often one found ten to fifteen people lined along the road. Many of the men and boys were Raja’s nephews who lived in the same and neighbouring yards. Another group of about 4-5 young men (ranging from 20 to 25 years in age) also met regularly at the Queen Bee usually around six or seven o’clock. They were better off economically than most - one owned a car, another had a stake in a large coconut estate, another was a teacher. One of them, Lennie, whose father was the owner of various properties including a hotel, became quite good friends with Pria. They would sit next to each other and gyaf and joke. Rumour that the two were carrying on an illicit affair did not take long to spread. Soon everybody seemed suspicious. Raja got word of this and became much more protective and involved in the Queen Bee. He would come out early, tell Pria to go inside the house and sell the goods himself. In various way he let Lennie know that he was no longer welcome. The
gossip became more intense however and when Raja went to his sister Gigi’s for an overnight stay he returned to find Pria involved in a new story. Apparently Pria had signalled from her veranda to Lennie who was riding his bike along the road at dusk. Raja’s nephews had apparently watched her as she indicated that Raja was out of the house and that he should enter through the backdam. After hearing this Raja started drinking. Early on in the evening he and Pria began quarrelling. They were loud enough so that people at the roadside, about sixty-seventy feet away, could hear quite clearly what they were saying. The fight ended with Pria, by this time bleeding from the top of her head, leaving to go to her father’s house with her children. That night Raja broke up the Queen Bee with great fanfare. He then went into the pasture (the sea-side of the road - i.e. away from his own house) and cried outside his estranged brother’s house. The incident was greatly embarrassing to Raja’s patrilocal unit. The brothers and their wives remarked that Pria’s hard-talk made the family look low class and dirty. One of the wives sent her husband - Raja’s big brother - to talk to Pria. She was told she must come back home, and stop quarrelling, cussing and making public displays of this kind as it belittled the family and was unfitting of their status. Although they didn’t confront her directly, they also told me that they believed it was true that she had been carrying on an affair with Lennie. All the brothers and their wives agreed that the problem was with Pria’s upbringing. She was backdam people, cane-cutting people, people who didn’t know any better. Raja, who took his suspicions of his wife’s infidelity to be confirmed, intensified his watch. He demanded that she stay home. He demanded that she ask for permission to leave the house when she had somewhere to go. When she stayed too long he would come and collect her. Other members of the extended patrilocal unit also intensified the watch. This included A.K., Raja’s mother, who
lived in the main house in the same yard with Raja and Pria. A widow, Kay enjoyed certain kinds of freedoms not usually associated with younger women. As a woman of 65 years she was removed from the heterosexual market place and was therefore allowed to walk out when she pleased. In fact she was known as a walker. This caused some embarrassment to the family too. According to them she was often drunk and bathed infrequently.

Just previous to the interaction that I present Pria had come in from the road and was situated near the gated entrance to the yard. Kay, Pria’s mother-in-law, was standing in front of her house. As the interaction progressed, Pria moved to the back of the yard and into the small house that she shares with Raja. Raja entered the yard from the road just after Pria, walked to the back, and retired in the bottom house hammock. Kay remained in front of her house. These spatial relations are sketched in Figure 6.1.

![Diagram of the layout of the yard and main house with movements of the participants marked]

Figure 6.1 PARTICIPANTS’ MOVEMENTS THROUGH THE SPACES OF ROAD, YARD AND HOUSE.

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6 Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the participants.
The movements of the participants help to differentiate major units of talk in the overall organization of the sequence (on the use of the body in differentiating talk units see C. Goodwin 1984, on overall organization see Levinson 1983:308-318). As will become clear in the following analysis, the interaction can be broken into four units. In the opening sequence (lines 1-9), Pria and Kay indicate their major concerns and their reasons for engaging in the dispute. For Pria, this has to do with the over-zealous policing of her movements by Kay, Raja and the rest of the patrilocal unit. Kay’s concerns clearly revolve around the relations between her house and Pria’s nuclear family. This section ends with Kay adopting the position which Pria claims has driven her to engage in this conflict (specifically, she suggests that Pria is “not proper,” that she is immoral). Kay thus offers Pria a conversational opening for the airing of her concerns (i.e. the opportunity for disagreement and direct confrontation). This section correlates with Pria moving into the yard space from the road and taking her position facing Kay. The second unit contains Pria’s major claims regarding the unwarranted actions of the patrilocal group. This is an extended turn at talk which Pria produces facing her principle addressee (Kay). In the third unit, which is a transition point in the interaction, Pria makes a conversational move that is remarkably similar to Kay’s earlier one. Thus, when no one replies to Pria’s complaints, she changes the topic to that which Kay has introduced in the opening sequence. She thus introduces her opponent’s talk just as Kay did for her earlier. This section ends with Pria moving back to her own house. In the final section, Kay makes her complaints regarding the actions of Pria and Raja. By this time, Pria and Raja have retreated and Kay is occupying the space to the side of her house. The combination of bodily movement through
space with precisely timed and formulated conversational moves thus differentiates the most salient units in the overall organization of the interaction. For the analyst such coordinated action is striking evidence of the skillful collaboration which goes into the production of conflict talk and oppositional formats.  

6.3.1 THE TRANSCRIPT

The transcript starts with Raja returning from the road where he has been out looking for Pria. In the time he has been out, Pria has returned from her father’s house. Kay began quarrelling upon her return, charging her with infidelity, immorality, indecency and warning her that Raja has been out looking for her and is now returning.

(6.1)

Kay=Kay (Pria’s mother-in-law, Raja’s mother, Michael’s wife
Pria=Pria (Kay’s daughter-in-law, the in-marrying affine)
Raja=Raja (the youngest son of Michael)
Shan=Shanka (Raja’s sister, Kay’s daughter)

1. Kay: gud
   “good”

2. Pria: a gud i kom a koota gu gatu tu tel am wan ting
   “its good he’s come Kota will have to tell him something”

7 Although I raise the issue of collaboration later in the paper the topic deserves separate and full-length treatment. A survey of the literature on discourse in the creole-speaking Caribbean reveals notions of “noise” (Abrahams 1983, Reisman 1970), “busin” (Edwards 1978) etc., all pointing to the absence of cooperative collaboration in talk. In Reisman’s widely cited (1974) paper, he argues that Antiguan discourse is characterized by an extreme individual assertiveness, on the one hand, and an almost pathological scanning, on the other. A number of scholars have suggested that such “conventions” of disorder arise in opposition (or as resistance) to European or metropolitan, that is “polite”, modes of discourse. However, it should be apparent that the display of opposition, conflict or even “disorder” in conversational interaction is always a product of the collaboration of the participants involved.
3. Raja: hool di batm a di geet
   *"hold the bottom of the gate"

4. Kay: aa- AIYU SKONT NA MAIN MI WAN DEE -- AIYU NA MI GI NOTIN (0.5) GUD
   *"all of you cunts haven't looked after me a single day - you don't give me anything"

5. Pria: na gu fait huu na beta // man
   *(I don't fight) one who is no better than me"

6. Shan: // noo noo* fait yu tuu (1.5)
   *"don't fight you two"

7. Kay: yu skont na praa ( )- insaid a hee (4.0)
   *"you cunt (you're) not proper – inside of here"

9. Kay: yu skont (5.0)
   *"you're a cunt"

As I turned on my recorder\(^8\), Kay had just finished warning Pria that Raja was coming into the yard from the road (figure 6.1).\(^9\) She also claimed that Pria's infidelities, wanderings and constant quarrelling with Raja had shamed the good name of her husband's family. She concludes with a resounding and rhetorical "good" in line 1 (i.e. 'I am glad you understand me and ratify what I am saying.'). Despite this apparent attempt to close the interaction early on (cf. Schegloff and Sacks 1973), the two quickly establish an oppositional format in the following lines. In line 2, Pria uses third person pronouns (i.e. non-participant deictics) to creatively establish a participation framework in which Kay, and not Raja, is the principal addressee. At the same time as this establishes a speaker-hearer dyad (Pria and Kay) it allows

\(^8\) I had been recording that day at Raja's house. Raja's three children had been telling stories for me about a half-hour before this incident occurred. My recorder was close by so when things started to get heated I gathered up my bag quietly and went to the front of the yard. Everyone who was present knows me well and considered me, at the time, to be a member of Pria and Raja's family. Shanka, Raja's sister, was one of my primary informants in the field.

\(^9\) Although, as an older widowed woman, Kay was allowed privileges to speak, she was frequently not believed. She had a reputation for *talking name* and people used to say, *shii lov tu de in yong piipli stoorii* 'She loves to get herself into young people's business.'
Pria to individuate herself in relation to Raja. But in line 4, Kay refuses to ratify this attempt at individuation and instead refers to Pria in the plural (əjyu). Pria and Kay are thus attempting to establish different oppositional formats in participant structure:

**Table 6.1 Conflicting Oppositional Formats**

In terms of the establishment of a participation framework, then, opposition is created on at least two different levels. At the first level of opposition, both Pria and Kay construct opposition through the use of pronominal forms or participant deixis (see Table 6.1). The second level of opposition is constructed through the non-ratification, by Kay, of Pria's attempt to individuate herself (i.e. in conversational sequencing).

The oppositional formats established in participant structure also have a spatial dimension to them. In each case an individual is opposed to a group of some importance to local social organization (the nuclear family and the patrilocal unit). These groups correlate with the salient social spaces of the house and the yard as I have discussed in the previous section. This initial spatial opposition reappears in a number of guises throughout the interaction, particularly the last section in which Kay speaks (lines 20-24).

There is another level at which opposition is collaboratively produced in these first few
lines. In line 2, Pria claims that Kota, the big brother in the patrilocal group, will have to “tell” Raja something. In Indo-Guyanese villages one common form of dispute resolution is giving complaint. This involves an offended party asking a superior (a big brother, a father etc.) of the offending party to use their authority to bring that offending party in line. Pria is threatening such an action in line 2. The threat is somewhat ambiguous however. A few days earlier, Kota had been called in to talk to Kay about her behaviour. Although the two had reached an agreement, Kay’s behaviour in this interaction is quite obviously transgressive. Pria is thus implying that Kota could also be brought into control Kay. Kay is in fact attending to this implication and, as I show below, responds to it in line 4. Kay’s response is structured as a parallel construction (Jakobson 1966):

\[
\begin{align*}
aiyu & \text{ skont na main mi wan dee} & | & | & aiyu & \text{ na mi gi notin} \\
\text{‘All-you haven’t looked after me a single day’} & | & | & \text{‘All-you don’t give me a thing’}
\end{align*}
\]

Kay here equates general care and concern expressed by the verb mind (/main/) with giving. The verb mind implies not only providing economically but also emotionally. To say that you mind someone in this community means that you are responsible for them. Adults mind children. Kay’s parallelism takes giving (money etc.) as an index of minding. The absence of one entails the absence of the other. This constitutes a response to Pria’s threat insofar as minding is a relationship of mutual and asymmetrical obligation. Thus, someone who minds you is also someone that you owe something to and whose authority you are obliged to acknowledge. If a woman wishes to repudiate a man’s control over her she will say i na main mii ‘He doesn’t look after or control me.’ If a man says this about another man the imputed/disputed relation
implied is one between father and son, big-brother and little-brother. Thus, Kay implies that Pria's threat is empty. Since they do not mind her, they have no right to tell her what she can and cannot do, where she can go, or how she must behave.

Returning to our discussion of participant structure, notice the way in which the oppositional formats delineated above (Table 6.1) match the social relations Kay is drawing on in line 4. In each case, the oppositional format opposes an individual to a supra-individual unit which is more than the sum of its parts (i.e. a family, a patriloclal unit). Kay's remarks in line 4 draw on her construction of Pria and Raja as constituting a nuclear family which is a single domestic unit, has its own internal structure and has relations, as a single unit, with others. The implication here is not only that the two houses (that of Kay's deceased husband and the one belonging to Pria and Raja) have completely independent domestic economies but also that there are no relations of solidarity, obligation and respect based on asymmetric kinship structures between them. If this were true, it would mean a constant state of non-cooperation between two households in the same yard.

Continuing the analysis of the oppositional format in the first few lines, we can note that in line 5 Pria explicitly ratifies an oppositional alignment between herself and Kay. This is a complex move by Pria, for while she acknowledges the emergence of opposition (i.e. a "fight"), she claims that she will not engage in such an activity. The reason given for this purported non-engagement is (moral) equivalence between herself and Kay. Pria claims specifically that she will not fight with someone who is no better than herself. In fact, this statement, far from removing her from the opposition, furthers her earlier threat to inform Kota

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10 This is true insofar as villagers tend to take a very practical (as opposed to official) perspective on kin relations (the distinction is from Bourdieu 1977).
of Kav's behaviour. Pria's suggestion of an equivalence between herself and Kay, while disguised as a withdrawal from conflict, points to the possibilities of a counter attack, one in which Kay's own transgressions of patrilocal authority are held up to scrutiny. Kay maintains the oppositional format in line 7 by responding to Pria's assessment of equivalence with an unmitigated and dispreferred second. Denying their similarity, Kay claims that Pria is not "proper". Not inconsequentially Kay links Pria's immoral behaviour to expectations for proper conduct in specific places. She ends her assessment of Pria's behaviour with insaid hee 'inside here' thus making the connection between place and ideas about comportment explicit. There is an ambiguity here which, in this case, is probably an artifact of the recording process as much as anything else. It is unclear whether Kay means:

a. you must be proper inside of here

b. you are not even proper here, inside the yard

In either case, however, Kay's remarks, given that the locally and contextually salient space which the speaker and addressee could be said to be "inside" is the yard, serve to invoke patrilocal authority and "respectability" and, at the same time, to construe the interactively negotiated boundaries of "here" in terms of corporate group property (i.e. the space of the yard).

Even in these few lines, then, the interlocutors have introduced discourse entities (participants, social groups) which have readily recognizable relations to spatial organization. Note first the nonobvious way in which Pria situates herself within the yard space but at a remove from Raja's small house at the back through the use of deictic kom "come". Her spatial placement, as she constructs it, thus supports both her claim to individuation (because she
separates herself from the family's house) and the defence of her own actions (she is not now on the road - she has returned). When she says *a gud i kom*... she uses her own position in interactive space as indexical origo (cf Fillmore 1973, Klein 1983). Her presupposed position in relation to socially meaningful spatial arrangements of the house and the yard thus becomes part of the background knowledge on which she draws later in the interaction. Kay is also construing the spaces of the house and yard in a particular way. As I have noted, she stresses the independence of the two households. This analytical separation of the house from its surroundings becomes the focus of her attack later in the exchange.

After being *cussed* by Kay, Pria launches into a monologue of her own. This is delivered in a high-pitched and markedly louder voice than her previous utterances. Most people I talked to took this stretch as the pivotal moment in the exchange and suggested that this was an example of a person speaking out of *passion*. Pria uses a number of affect marking features to index this emotional state including an increased amplitude, higher pitch, curse words and rhythmic, parallel structures. Since people who *get their passion* are usually not held responsible for the outcomes of their actions in the same way as those who are cool and calculating there are good reasons why Pria would use such an affect-marked register (on affect marking see Ochs and Schieffelin 1989).

Note that, in terms of the participant structure, Pria is again attempting to distance herself from her husband Raja in her use of a *mi* "I" vs. *ii* "he" contrast (lines 2, 10-16). Kay, likewise, again refuses to ratify this individuation and instead addresses Pria in the plural (*aiyu* and *dem*) repeatedly (lines 4, also 20, 23, ). Kay is unwilling in this way to take Pria as a participant on her own and aims her attack at the nuclear unit. *Aiyu* contrasts directly in the
paradigmatic set of pronouns not only with *yu* 'you' but also with *abi* 'all-of-us' and the implication of a speaker plus others is strong here even though Kay uses *mi* 'me' in referring to herself. This then creates an opposition between the two houses and between the patrilocal unit - *(abii)* - and Raja and Pria - *(aiyu)*. Pria then takes the floor:

(6.2)

10. Pria: (shi kyan gu out) an mii kyaan gu noowee (0.5)
    "(she can go out) and I can't go anywhere"

11. ii mos tel mii wat a klak mi mos gu (huu) wat a klak mi mos kom bak (0.7)
    *he has to tell me what time I most go (huu) what time I most come back*

12. mii kyaan gu a rood noowee yu mos kom an luk fo mii an saarch fo mii mi no
    *I can't go on the road anywhere you must come and look for me and search for me I don't*

13. noo wa skont yu a luk fo mii an saarch fo mii mi na noo (1.0)
    *know what the fuck you look for me and search for me I don't know*

14. - MII DON TEL YU IF MI WAN TEEK MAN ras yu kyaan stap mii (7.0)
    - I've already told you - if I want to have another man *(ras)* you can't stop me

15. mii a big homan fo miself an mii mos noo rang an mii mos noo rait
    *I am my own adult woman and I have to know what is wrong and know what is right*

16. so mi na frigin onastan wa mek ii ga saarch fo mii (5.0)
    *don't understand why he must search for me*

Pria's attack here is not only directed at Raja but at the patrilocal unit as well. This is particularly apparent in Pria's alignment of the participants. Note that she refers to both Kay and Raja using 3rd person, nonparticipant deictics *(Kay in line 10 and Raja in line 11)*. So to whom is this segment addressed? Shanka is close by but the volume with which Pria delivers this stretch of talk indicates that she wants her words to reach other ears. The audience, it appears, is essentially anybody who will listen. By this time a number of people were gathered outside the fence which marks the extent of the yard. Her talk in this way breaches an important boundary which divides the space of the patrilocal group from that of the village as a
whole (i.e. the yard fencing). At the end of line 11, having made her public announcement, Pria takes Raja as her principal addressee. The content of her speech here focuses directly on the social meanings of spaces and the movement of individuals within them. She uses modal kyan 'can' and kyaan 'can't' to characterize a realm in which social actors’ use of, and movement through, space is limited by conditions of possibility and obligation.\footnote{I think the sense - epistemic or deontic - we give to these auxiliaries in this context depends on the interpretation vis-a-vis a surrounding co-text. Pria could be indexing a world of impossibility (an epistemic interpretation) when she says mi kyaan gu new ee if we take this as an outcome of the social world (I can’t go anywhere - I have too much work to do). The deontic meaning is perhaps more direct (I can’t go anywhere because other people stop me).} Kay is allowed to walk around but Pria’s movement is restricted by Raja’s supervision. This irrealis world that Pria constructs recreates the spatial arrangements of the house and the road. Thus Pria uses the referring expression a road (‘on the road’) along with the deictic verbs gu ‘go’ and kom ‘come’ in orienting participants to this hypothetical space modelled after the one they are inhabiting. Note that the indexical ground on which these verbs rely for their interpretation is not, in this case, the position of the speaker at the time of speaking. Modals effect a transposition of this ground and substitute for it a hypothetical one, thus detaching the description of narrated space from the interactional space within which it is made. Although when Pria uses gu ‘go’ (line 10.11) the irrealis and realis grounds match, when she uses kom ‘come’ the ground is transposed to somewhere outside the spaces of the house and yard. So Pria is not only creating a hypothetical world in which she is situated outside these boundaries but is also taking as the ground for her utterance the place at which Raja will (or does) find her. There is an ambiguity again here. Pria is claiming that Raja’s behaviour is unwarranted and shameful because she only goes to visit friends and family. At the same time she implies that this place where Raja will
find her could be the site of a transgression of the heterosexual union. The latter interpretation seems consistent with the next line in which Pria increases her volume to tell Raja that she can take another man if she wants to and he can’t stop her. But this threat is mitigated when she claims status as a big-woman. Most importantly, Pria is arguing that she is a mature adult and should be granted respect and rights to autonomy that go along with such status. She concludes with a claim about the fundamental moral autonomy of the mature and capable person.12

Pria’s remarks here are met with silence from the other participants despite the long pauses in lines 13, 14, 16. These are obviously potential turn-transition points but Pria’s interlocutors refuse to engage here and thus do not ratify what she is saying. This absence of a reply helps make Pria look unbalanced, irrational and perhaps also passionate insofar as the silence is taken as an indication that Pria has failed to engage an addressee. Faltering in this way, Pria makes a rather surprising move in line 17. Now she uses the plural deictic in self-reference aligning herself with Raja and asserting the relevance of the nuclear unit. She thus now ratifies the participant framework that Kay had tried to establish in the first few lines. Furthermore, Pria now brings the talk back to the topic that Kay had originally introduced - that is, the economic relations between the two houses. In a striking instance of collaboration within the midst of conflict this concession suddenly brings Kay back into the exchange. Kay reasserts the oppositional structure in line 18 through an obviously aggressive interruption,

12It is interesting to note the alternation between modal kya(un) ‘can’t’ and modal mos ‘must’. Whereas kya is somewhat ambiguous between epistemic and deontic meanings, mos is (in this case) unambiguously deontic predicating as it does a domain of obligation. In line 10 (ii mos...) the obligation is predicated of Raja - (i.e. Raja is obliged by his own sense of male authority to come look for her). This same source of obligation can be inferred from the instances of mos in lines 11 and 12. In line 15 however the source of obligation shifts from Raja’s moral authority to a more general social ethic. In line 15 Pria is evoking a world of rights and obligations deriving from social and community norms (i.e. a big-woman is responsible for her own moral actions).
upgrading her contribution so as to drown out Pria. Pria’s remarks in line 17 are a report of a question which has been asked previously, specifically an inquiry into a loan that has not been repaid. This reporting of an interaction which has already taken place has the effect of focusing attention not on the money that is owed but on the social relations that have broken down.

Kay’s response to this is a highly dispreferred one. Not only does she interrupt Pria and refuse to, once again, respond to the question of the money she also attempts to suspend the turn-taking system with the pre-announcement *le mi tel yu somting* ‘Let me tell you something.’ (see Levinson 1983:345-364). Sequences like this provide fairly incontrovertible evidence that, despite the appearance of disorder in conflict talk, participants collaboratively produce oppositional alignment structures through close attention to the content, form and sequencing of prior talk and their interlocutors positioning (a point made persuasively by Goodwin and Goodwin 1990).

(6.3)

17. Pria: abi aks wa kom pan tuu twenti eet yuu see wan faIV // shi gu kompleen ( ) gu gu luk fo mi
we asked what was left from two-twenty eight you said five //

18. Kay: // LE MI TEL YU SOMTING yu mos tink a
//let me tell you something you most think this is

19. Pria: a gu luk fa*
lookin for

20. Kay: Raja daadii prapatii A MII PRAPATII DIS an mi hozban prapatii **(1.7) gud
Raja’s father’s property - this is my property and my husband’s property  good!”

Once again we find that participants use space and spatial organization as a symbolic field on which to create an oppositional alignment. Here Kay uses what Schegloff (1972) called an \( R_m \) expression: “Another sort of term can be abbreviated as \( R_m \), for “relation to members.” Such forms as “John’s place,” “Al’s house,” “Dr. Brown’s office” are among those intended”
Such expressions point to a "belongingness" relationship of person to place. The specific claim Kay is making goes deeper than this however. She not only claims that she belongs to this space but also contests Raja's (and, by extension, Pria's) rights to any part of it. She uses the proximal demonstrative dis as post-position (a mii prapatii dis 'This is my property') to reference a space which is within her immediate perceptual field. The effect is not only to characterize the space of the yard as without internal divisions but also to situate herself unambiguously within it. The referent of dis is clearly the yard as a whole (which she presents ostensively to the audience) and the form relies, for its interpretation, on the notion of a unit of land tied to the patrilocal unit as indicated in the surrounding co-text (a mii hozban prapatii 'it is my husband's property' line 20). So Kay here claims to own the entire yard and at the same time characterizes this space as undivided and homogenous (so that da would in this contrastive set refer to something located outside the perimeter of the yard). In fact Kay's claims to property rights of this sort do not match local expectations or rules of inheritance (and thus she also challenges these too). She goes on:

(6.4)
21. Kay: NONBADII KYAN NOT TEEK DEM AI PAS MII TODEE AN DEM BILIV A
   "nobody can take their eye and pass me today and they believe that it is
22. DEM HOUS A MAIKL PRAPATTI KYAAN TEEK DEM AI PAS MII GUD ( )
   their house - it is Michael's property - they can't take their eye and pass mii - good ()
22. RAIA AND RAJA WAIF
   Raja and Raja wife."
<pause 26.0>
23. WAN Kras de INSAI DIS HOUS NO? A KRAK A KRAS LAIK AIYU SKONT KYAAN
   There is a "cross" inside this house, no? a "cross" a "cross" it seems as though all of you cunts can't
24. DON TAAK (NOTIN KYAN) YUU RICH AZ DA KANKRIT BATMHOUSS AN SO - A KRAK
   finish talkin (nothing can't) you're as rich as that concrete bottomhouse and so on - it's a "cross"
Kay continues to make claims to property in lines 20-22 asserting that Pria and Raja’s actions, given that she is owner of the property on which they live, is tantamount to *eye pass* (/ai pas/ “some expression or behaviour taken to indicate a lack of respect” cf. Jayawardena 1963). In lines 23 and 24 Kay effects another construal of the spaces of the house and yard. In line 23 she uses proximal demonstrative *dis* “this” to talk about Raja’s house: *wan kras de insai dis house no?* ‘There is a ‘cross’ inside this house no?’ *Kras* is both Raja’s local falsename and a term for some string of bad luck. What is particularly interesting is the way she uses *dis* “this” to refer to the house thus bringing it into the same proximal frame of the yard. Remember that this is the space over which she has claimed ownership through the authority of her dead husband (line 20). Immediately after this she refers to the concrete bottomhouse using the distal demonstrative *da* “that” in line 24. This situates Raja, who is seated in the bottomhouse, outside the space associated with the patrilocal unit. Moreover, the opposition of proximal to distal spatial frame establishes a boundary between what Kay claims as her property (including the yard and Raja’s house) and what she constructs as Raja’s property (the concrete bottom house).13 Although *dis* and *da* do prototypically make reference to physically proximal versus physically distal locations, this usual interpretation can be suspended in certain contexts. The house (referred to as *dis*) and the bottomhouse (referred to as *da*) are at exactly equal distances from Kay at the time of speaking. Kay uses the default values of these demonstratives to characterize space in terms of social, rather than physical, relations. As Levinson (1994:857)

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13 The insult is meant to go further than simply saying Raja is not the owner of his own house and yard. Kay is charging that Raja must live by the charity of others. About a week and half earlier I had given Raja the money to lay concrete over the daub floor of the bottomhouse. The two of us along with one other spent a couple of days laying it out and filling it in with sand, rock and concrete. Everybody in the yard knew what we were doing and who had financed it.
notes "There are many sociological aspects to [...] deictic dimensions, e.g., whether to describe some space as 'here' or 'there' may depend on whether one thinks of it as near 'us' or near 'them,' this being sociologically defined."

6.4 AFFECTIVE DISPLAYS OF PASSION:

I have argued that, in the interaction presented above, Pria clearly indexes an affective state of passion in her speech. She uses a variety of culturally recognizable cues to achieve this metamessage. Most obvious is the increase in volume and the occurrence of locally recognized curse words but one might also note the use of rhetorical dependent interrogatives (mi na noo wa skont yu a luk fo mii) and parallelism (lines <10-11>). Rather than seeing this display of "emotion" as a somehow natural outcome of frustrating circumstances, it is perhaps more useful to understand it in context as a strategy (Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990). Pria is, in her speech, challenging strongly held (hegemonic) notions about rights to movement within the village. At the same time she is challenging the authority of her husband and his patrilocal unit. Such transgressions are often met with firm, sometimes physical, reprisals in the form of beatings and further restrictions on movement. However, in assessing what is to be done with people who have broken some aspect of the local village (or patrilocal) code of conduct, persons may take into consideration their emotional state at the time when the transgression was committed. A person who is cold and calculating (i.e. a thief) will usually be punished more severely than a person who acts out of passion. Passion is considered an involuntary state. In fact unlike other emotions it seems to be conceptualized as part of the extra-personal context. Thus although a person may be said to be "passionate" it is more usual to say something like, ii de in wan pashon
"he/she is in a passion." Such locative constructions seem always to be used when the state is brought about by something beyond the control of the experiencer. Thus one may say, *ii de in wan prablm* "he/she is in trouble." The implication is that the situation is now beyond his or her control. Villagers also use possessive constructions to talk about passion as in, *wen mi get mi pashon* "when I get my passion." Again the implication is that the "emotion" somehow exists outside the core of the person. While not assuming to understand the intricacies of local theories of emotion at this point I would venture to say that Pria uses an affective display of passion here so as to avoid some of the problematic repercussions of her verbal attack on Raja and the patrilocal unit. There is the chance that she will be excused from blame if people are willing to accept this as a genuine display of passion. When making such assessments people usually take into consideration the events leading up to the display and Pria is also careful to make this context clear in her discourse. Unfortunately for Pria people did not generally accept this as a genuine display of uncontrollable passion. My impression from interviews is that such judgements of legitimacy are more often made of men than of women (i.e. rights to feel passion are unequally distributed by gender). Women are more often stigmatized for affective behaviour of this sort. In fact, as I have noted (cf. chapter 5), busing, cussing and other forms of arguments are generally feminized and a woman's engagement in such conflict talk is typically taken as the inevitable expression of her femininity rather than as an index of some deeper social problem which requires resolution. Women's exclusion from power, authority and "public discourse" is thus naturalized in local ideologies of talk which link particular genres to underlying (i.e. essential) psychological tendencies and from there to gender.

While the audience recognized that Pria was indexing a state of passion, most remarked
that this was not genuine. They suggested that the frequency of such outbursts indicated that they were more theatrical than uncontrollable. Several people I talked to after the incident occurred remarked *shii a plee se shi hed na gud bo shii get nof sens*, “She pretends that she has lost her head but she has plenty of sense/ she is smart/ she knows what she is doing.”

Members of the extended patrilocal group believe that Kay is a drunk and therefore do not hold her responsible for her verbal outbursts. Pria, however, cannot claim to be under the influence of alcohol. Rather, she contextualizes her speech as affective and occurring as the result of an emotional state beyond her immediate control. Besnier (1990) remarks:

> In many societies, women can only express affect (and sometimes have a public voice at all) in specially bracketed situations or through the use of particular genres. Thus “veiled” and “ambiguous” genres such as chanting, weeping, or speaking in tongues, the performances of which often involve altered states of consciousness, are frequently but not always, gender polarized. One characteristic does seem to apply cross-culturally: the low social evaluation of such genres on the part of either men or the entire group.

In the case I have examined above, it appears that the speaker uses contextual cues to bracket her speech as an instance of a particular affect-marked type. Pria gains a certain critical voice on gender relations through a culturally interpretable (altered) state of consciousness even if local people refused to recognize its legitimacy.

### 6.5 Conclusions

As I have mentioned, most people did not accept Pria’s speech as a genuine display of passion. Instead, they suggested that it was indicative of her low-class origins, her malevolent-divisive nature and her self-interested intelligence (her “sense” in the local variety). Although at first, Pria seemed to have gained some ground with her affines because Raja was forced to allow
her more freedom in order to prevent another embarrassing display, in the end she was further stigmatized and lost face with neighbours and the affinal patrilocal unit. People avoided her and gossiped that she was low and not proper. Pria's use of this culturally interpretable register thus seemed to backfire at least in part because the interpretive community would not recognize its legitimacy. As Tom Stoppard's Player from Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead remarks, "audiences know what to expect, and that is all they are prepared to believe in" (1968: act two, p.62). Ultimately, in the case under discussion, it was, as the Player suggests, the audience and the audience's expectations that were most important in determining the meaning and efficacy of Pria's display. However, the example I have discussed points to the possibilities for contesting the local construction of gender and domesticity through the organization of space and expectations for bodily comportment. As I have discussed in chapter 1, in-marrying wives who live with their husband's patrilocal group are in a particularly disempowered position. As such, despite the reaction of the local community, it is important that we recognize the partial efficacy of Pria's performance of passion. As I discuss in my concluding chapter, such strategies of resistance as discussed here are but one option. Other women in other socio-economic positions develop other strategies which are sometimes more successful in contesting the co-construction of space gender and authority.

In terms of the implications for the study of spatial description and conflict talk, evidence of the kind examined here suggests that spatial description and place formulation in verbal dispute is both a major area for the expression of conflict and, at the same time at least under certain social conditions, an important object of conflict itself. Spatial orientation, while relying on a background of partially shared knowledge (i.e. a commonsense geography) is also a
resource for participants and, as such, can be strategically manipulated to achieve interactional goals such as the production of oppositional formats and participant structures. In terms of the analysis of verbal dispute it is further apparent that inhabited spaces are important areas for the negotiation of identity and alignment in conversational interaction. Participants to an interaction orient themselves to space not only as a set of identifiable locations but as field imbued with social meaning (Hanks 1990) which is thus an important resource for situating oneself in relation to others and in relation to an emergent interactional text. We have seen that such interactional ends are accomplished collaboratively through the use of deixis, through the description of spaces which are related to important social groupings and through the physical movement of bodies in space. Verbal disputes of this kind thus provide one kind of evidence that spatial conception in discourse is achieved through the joint actions of participants.
CHAPTER SEVEN

DEVELOPING A HABITUS FOR EVERYDAY LIFE: THE CONTEXTS
OF CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

7.0 INTRODUCTION

In attempting to understand language use within a broader sociocultural framework, it is useful to consider the way in which the practice of talk involves not only the expression and transmission of referential messages, but also a mode of self-comportment - a way of holding oneself that is appropriate to the social situation. Consider what is involved in this latter aspect of talk. The participant must be able to sort through all the possible information available in what could be loosely understood as the physical context, as well as in the co-text, to come up with what is relevant to the ongoing interactive sequence. I have touched on these issues briefly in chapter 3 and reexamine them in the next chapter through a consideration of elicitation strategies. The general concern here is to show the ways in which talk and context are actively co-constructed; that context, even at its seemingly most basic spatial level, is creatively constructed in talk. By way of introduction to this set of complex problems, in the present chapter I consider the contexts of early childhood in a more general sense. My main concern is to show the way communicative bodies are constructed through socio-cultural principles. Following Ochs (1988), I consider the use of affective strategies as basic to this process. Three moments in this affective shaping of the communicative bodies of children are discussed. In the first case, long before children acquire language, caregivers begin to inculcate a certain way of understanding the body. The values that I described as autonomy and age-graded/gendered solidarity in the introduction to this work are embedded and passed on through the very
practices of holding and caring for children. In the second moment, with emerging linguistic skills comes exposure to range of caregiver verbal strategies which more precisely direct children in community-based moral and social education. Guyanese strategies, like those of Samoans (Ochs 1988), can be usefully contrasted with those most familiar to white middle class North Americans insofar as they are less child-centred and more child-decentring. In the final moment I consider here, children move out of the position of dependents. This happens comparatively early for all children but has different consequences for boys and girls. All children develop peer-groups but for girls the development of such relations tends to be restricted by the fact that early on they are expected to contribute to the household economy. For some this means a very rapid transition from dependent (up till age four) to caregiver (by 7 they may be caring for their siblings). For others it means contributing to household labour in other ways - for instance cooking and cleaning. Boys on the other hand are not expected to work in the same way. Rather, they are encouraged to engage in various semi-productive activities like fishing and birding. Between the ages of 7 to as old as 18 they experience a kind of personal autonomy and freedom that is unrivalled in the village. Although they may be called on by superordinate kin to fulfill short term tasks most of their time is spent with a peer group. Boys quickly recognize that although they are given considerable freedom to roam with their peer-group, when called upon by higher ranking kin they must comply or face serious punishment. Girls on the other hand do not experience the same kinds of freedom to engage in peer activity. Early on they are expected to contribute to the household economy and by the time they enter the heterosexual economy (with the onset of puberty), they face the same restrictions, though usually less severely enforced, as do their mothers (see Chapter 6). These socialization processes have the
effect of laying down or inculcating what I term the creole-habitus by which I mean a locally managed, generative schema for self-comportment, perception and interpretation. Embedded in this set of schemes for action are the salient cultural principles of autonomy and age-graded, gendered solidarity which are vital to the reproduction of the social group.

7.1 THE PLACE OF CHILDREN IN THE WORLD OF ADULTS.

If, after reading the literature on socialization and language socialization one were to make a single cross-cultural generalization it would probably be this - communities differ in the degree to which caregivers regularly adjust interactional routines to suit the linguistic and cognitive abilities of the child. On the one hand we find communities, like the white middle-class in North America, in which interactive sequences are routinely adjusted to the perspective and abilities of the child or infant. Such child-centeredness in caregiver-child interactional organization is usually associated with a set of folk-theories regarding individual intention and the autonomy of mind (cf. Ochs 1982). On the other hand we find communities in which the child is expected to adjust to adult perspectives, interactional abilities and generally fit itself into an existing social milieu that is often highly stratified, with age nearly always figuring as one of the primary organizing principles of this stratification. Such strategies of child rearing are often associated with a folk-theory of mind which is more dialogic, which sees individual actors as less than completely autonomous individual agents, and which emphasizes, instead, the unfinalized (Bakhtin 1986) nature of thought and utterance and the ultimately impenetrable nature of mind. Whereas in Samoa, the decentring is evident in the absence of a specialized register (i.e. babytalk), the emphasis on intermediaries (providing basic instruction in status
hierarchies), and in the use of elicitation routines, among the egalitarian societies of the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea (Schieffelin 1990), decentering is most obvious in the emphasis placed on assertive speech acts or "hard words". In an egalitarian society where social interaction is based on the principles of reciprocity and obligation, language is understood as a tool for manipulation and the attainment of personal goals. As such, Kaluli caregivers make an effort, in part through the *ElEma*-elicitation routine (cf. Schieffelin 1990), to instruct children in the uses of language as an instrument of assertion. In terms of verbal strategies, Ochs (1982) has suggested that the child-centered pattern is canonically associated with the expansion sequence whereas the child-decentering pattern is associated with the elicitation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSPECTIVE/ROUTINE</th>
<th>CHILD-CENTRED</th>
<th>CHILD-DECENTRING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>adjusted to the child - ideology</td>
<td>child adjusts to adult - ideology</td>
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<td></td>
<td>of egalitarian social relations</td>
<td>of stratified (Samoan) /age-graded (Kaluli) social relations</td>
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<td>THEORY OF MIND</td>
<td>intentional-autonomous individuals</td>
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<td>downplayed, complex (or binary) models of self</td>
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<tr>
<td>VERBAL STRATEGIES</td>
<td>expansion, baby-talk</td>
<td>elicitation</td>
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Table 7.1 Child-Centered and Child-Decentring Caregiver Strategies

A central question for the present study, then, is how Indo-Guyanese strategies in the village fit into this range of cross-cultural variability. The problematic nature of the question when applied to a case like Guyana, I think highlights something important about child-rearing practices, something that may have been missing in many studies of socialization. Although child-rearing practices do reflect (or reproduce) salient cultural principles (Ochs 1982, 1992), it
is important to recognize that, like other cultural practices, these routines are embedded in ongoing socio-economic processes. Thus, for instance, child-decentring seems to be related to a certain social situation in which autonomy and individual achievement is relatively subordinate either to, on the one hand, local systems of kin-based stratification (and the politics of lineage - as in Samoa) or, on the other, to economic adaptations which are organized centrally around reciprocity and obligation (Kaluli). At the other extreme, it is not difficult to see the way in which child-centering strategies, so familiar to the Anglo-American middle class, are linked to the emphasis on individualism and individual achievement in the economic marketplace. In cases such as the North American one, where one finds a major preoccupation with maintaining or even raising class position across generations, it is likely that caregivers will place an emphasis on the individual child's presumed talents, abilities or skills which are the key to her "success" (e.g. "Oh, she's going to be a doctor!" - said when the child bandages a doll).

Child rearing practices thus become indices of class just as the presumed "results" of such practices do - i.e. "decent" "respectable" and "respectful" children, thieving children, scandalous children, etc.. In Guyana, there is a fairly clear split between those practices of child rearing that are associated with "polite" culture and those associated with rural working class culture and the socio-economic relations of the village. In a general way this dimension of variability maps onto the variability described in the chart above. This is to say that, within the broader cultural framework of an official or legitimated "Guyanese" cultural tradition (which is

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1 I have heard from a number of sources that Jane Collier at Stanford is working on the problem of socialization in relation to changing socio-economic circumstances. Unfortunately I have not been able to access this work.
most closely associated with urban middle and upper class of Georgetown), practices which are "child-centred" are highly evaluated. This includes baby-talk, doting on small-children, interpreting their early movements and vocalizations and generally placing them at the centre of the social interactions where they are present. At the same time, within the more localized, more firmly embedded, culture of village life such behaviour, especially from mothers, is considered excessive and, to a certain extent, self-elevating. Thus, in the village context, the child is more likely to be rewarded and praised for behaviour that most resembles adult practices such as *cussing* and *calling out* (see the next chapter), independence and physical strength. The "childlike" qualities of the child are rarely praised or encouraged (such as children's ways of speaking, crying, dependence on the mother or other caregiver). Now any caregiver is likely to draw on both sets of norms (child-centering/child-decentring) depending on the situation, the audience, and a number of other contextual parameters. This said, the latter framework (the one in which the child is decentred) tends to play the dominant role in most households - especially those households which maintain a strongly working-class domestic economy. However, assuming that the historical shift towards wage labour and away from patrilocal group authority (which I documented in chapter 2) continues, we would expect to see child caregiver strategies gradually and consistently move towards the child-centered pole of the typology laid out in table 7.1.

However, in working-class households where the male adult is a labourer in the rice fields and the female adult is at home, little extra time is available to devote to specialized interaction with infants and children. Mothers are busy (or exhausted) for a good part of the

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2 Representations of such behaviour frequently find their way onto local TV sets in commercial advertising.
day (see Chapter 6). This does not mean that mothers and children do not interact, it only means that such interaction is not modelled as a specialized genre of “interaction with children.” Children, when they are home from school, are incorporated into the daily routine of domestic labour. When incorporation of children into the everyday activities of adults is not possible (or when they are actively excluded from adult activity such as drinking), children tend to create highly independent and self-regulating peer networks. Although opportunities for peer-networking are limited by the exigences of a gendered economy, a great deal of education goes on here. Peer-network practices of this kind tend to be removed from the economy of “caregiving” to the extent that the children themselves are removed from it.

As it stands, whereas child decentring fits tongue-and-groove with existing and deeply embedded systems of age-grading, gendered patterns of movement and socio-economic relations of obligation based on kinship, child-centred strategies often clash with expectations based on these principles. For instance a doting and “overly” attentive mother faces possible social sanction for misdirecting her attentiveness especially if child care starts to interfere with her ability to defer and serve people who are accorded greater status - like a husband’s older brother or father. Such doting is likely to be taken as self-elevating in these contexts indicating that a mother believes that she and her children are of greater importance than high-status guests. Generally, then, child-decentring strategies are more often adopted in everyday interaction. At the same time everybody is aware that in certain situations child-centred

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3The language of peers and caregivers has in the past hidden the kinds of labour that are done by children and I do not wish to continue this tradition (Schlegel 1996). In section 6.4.1 (below) I discuss the ways in which daughters (and sometimes sons) become caregivers at an early age. In stressing the importance of peer networks however I want to bring to light the degree to which children create their own, often transitory, social worlds sometimes independent from adults.
strategies appear more “sophisticated” and are more highly evaluated. Some variation is thus apparent in this as in all communities. One thing that should be noted about the case I discuss here is the way in which the natural dependence of children on others potentially contradicts the ideal of autonomy which I have suggested is central to adult social organization (see Chapter 1). In light of this it is perhaps not surprising to find that the emphasis on kin-obligation, specifically the relationship whereby one person mind “cares for” another - becomes central to the way people think about relations between parents and children. The relation between parent and child is the prototypical example of non-autonomy and dependence. The move out of this condition, the time when a person becomes an adult is metaphorically extended to relations of status between non-kin - thus “big” refers both to age and to status.

7.2 CHILDREN’S BODIES - AN EDUCATION BEFORE THE ONSET OF LANGUAGE

The value of autonomy and its limits in the face of age-graded/gendered solidarity are embedded in the way a child (or any person for that matter) knows its own body. Long before they are engaged in verbal routines, children learn about the social milieu through the way they are handled by caregivers, peers and others. This kind of education is particularly important for the preverbal infant but socialization by such means continues throughout the life course. Thus, the restrictions on movement that I have documented for adult women should be understood as a continuing form of socialization that works in part through the body. The

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4 And of course it is crucial that we don’t equate child-centred strategies with “affection”, “care” or “love”. Decentred strategies are embedded in an elaborate pedagogy just as are child-centred strategies. The difference is not in the quantity or quality of the attention given to the child. In fact child decentred strategies often involve elaborate routines some of which I discuss below.

5 On the metaphorical extension of mind to relations between adults see Chapter 6.
education that the child receives through the handling practices of others reflects cultural schemes that the caregivers have for organizing ideas about the child's body and how one, as an adult, should interact with it. Caregivers employ a number of terms to describe the bodies both of children and adults. One descriptor that, when used in reference to children, is usually cause for some concern is fine meaning thin and generally weak. Caregivers often associate being fine with sickness and may make this association explicit by the use of the term maaga which refers to a thinning out of the body as the direct result of sickness, thus people say ii get maaga when a child is losing weight due to vomiting or malnutrition. Generally, at least with regard to children, fineness is negatively evaluated (and associated with illness) whereas being "fat" is positively evaluated and associated with health. The preference for robust bodies is carried on into the aesthetics of later life although it may come into conflict with other (perhaps foreign) notions of beauty. Children are encouraged to eat when food is available. Parents worry less about a child who is a good-eater even if they complain occasionally that ii belii na gat batm “His belly is a bottomless pit”.

The general concern to produce, both though reproductive and cultural processes, children that are robust is part of the more general concern to impart a sense of independence early in life. A child who is always carried by its mother, who can't be put down at all and who is prone to sickness is both a liability and sign that something may be wrong with the lineages that produced it. As soon as an infant is capable of holding up its head it starts to spend a good deal of its time physically detached from the mother. When at home the infant is often placed in a hammock and rocked when agitated. After a time caregivers will take the child out and allow it to roll around on a burlap rice sack or on the wooden floor of a raised house. By 4 to 6
months the child is well accustomed to sucking on pieces of cake or biscuit which supplement breastfeeding. Various “teas” are also used as supplements to breastmilk, especially by mothers who spend time out of the house working or who have problems lactating. Often, the responsibility of “looking” after a child (making sure it stays in its mat or in the hammock, that it does not cry too much, that it is relatively dry) falls on an older sibling, usually a girl. All caregivers, children and adults alike, try to foster the independence of the child and will not hold it for extended periods unless it is sick. By the time the child can crawl, it is allowed to roam around the house and its perimeter with minimal interference from others. If there are other children in the yard, the moment the child starts walking it enters a new set of relations with its peers. Parents encourage siblings to chase and entertain one another and generally refuse to involve themselves in disputes.

The use of the hammock and the floor by caregivers has the effect of producing, in the child, a certain independence with regard to the use of space. In addition, caregivers are also protective of their own bodily space and, in fact, police it quite diligently. Children who cling to their mothers are regularly told na kom kana mi “Don’t get to close to me/get me into a corner.” A mother may complain that a child a hombog mi “is bugging me/restricting me/ getting in the way.” The cultural need to defend one’s personal space, stemming from particular ideas about the nature of the body and privileges to move about unhindered, is of course exacerbated by the high daytime temperatures and the fairly epidemic incidence of various kinds of skin mites and head lice. There is usually both a literal and metaphorical sense to the expression mi skin a skrach mi “my skin is itchy,” which mothers frequently use as a rationale for not allowing their children to touch them.
All this should not be taken as an indication that people, including parents and children, do not touch each other or that they maintain some impermeable cushion of air around them. This is, of course far from the case. In fact, if communities vary in terms of the norms for touching and physical contact, the Indo-Guyanese village is no doubt towards the more tactile end of the scale. Two boys or two men will often share a hammock or a bed and generally partners “male friends” have a fairly physical relationship expressed in everything from nonserious sparring to affectionate hugs and holds. At weddings, when barriating, men dance together for hours in a style that seems distinctly homoerotic with one man “winding” down the other’s leg. Women who are friends also hug, although the touching and handling of one another seems more perfunctory and ritualized. Men and women who are not related may also, without any implication of a sexual relationship, touch each other under certain conditions. If the woman is older and has taken on a fictive kin role (like aunty) then it is acceptable. If they are ritually attached to each other as platonic friends they may also engage in physical exchanges without any implication of a sexual relationship. One such ritualized relationship is “rakii” in which woman take male friend as fictive “brothers”.

It will be noticed that all the relations discussed so far are between adults or between adolescent peers. In the case of relations between adults and children physical shows of affection, in fact physical displays generally, become inflected with status. Whereas children are often directed to distance themselves from caregivers, adults reserve a right to manipulate in various ways the child’s body. Every day, caregivers in most households (especially during school session) comb their children’s hair and pick nits and head lice. Children generally resist at first and are forced to submit sometimes with a firm hold on their arms or a leg around their
midsection. A great deal of tears are shed over such daily routines.

Force is also exercised on children’s bodies in other ways and in other contexts. Boys of about four years and older often have a special “uncle”, a close friend or relative of their father. This man will often indulge them with sweets and certain kinds of attention the child is unlikely to get elsewhere. Often, this uncle will also stimulate the boy’s genitals to produce an erection. In most cases, the child struggles at first but eventually gives in. Such forced stimulation, it is suggested, encourages the growth of the penis and the development of a healthy (i.e. heterosexual) appetite. The lesson for the child, it seems, is in the futility of resisting the will, which poses as benevolence, of adult men who hold respected position in the household.

Although the child spends a good deal of time wandering about the yard relatively unhindered by others, the early experience with adults provides a lesson on the restrictions that an age-graded and gendered solidarity imposes on autonomy. The manipulation of the child’s body from an early age, when combined with the aggressive defence of the personal autonomy of the caregiver, provides the child with an early model for relating status, autonomy and obligation. These models serve as basic frames for understanding later interactional routines.

7.3 AFFECT AND Social Control

One of the most important means that caregivers in all communities use to control the behaviour of children is affect or the expression of “feeling” and “emotion” (cf Ochs 1988, and articles in Schieffelin and Ochs 1986). Caregivers both index their own affect and attempt to arouse particular emotions in children. While the development of affective competence in
children, that is the ability to encode and decode linguistic expression of culturally particular understandings of human emotion, is in and of itself an interesting topic, in the following I am more concerned with the way in which the indexing of affect by caregivers in interaction facilitates the transmission of the broader socio-cultural values of autonomy and age-graded/gendered solidarity which I have argued are central to the reproduction of a relative egalitarianism in the village. I have argued that before the onset of language, children are to some extent educated -through the handling of their bodies- in both the importance of individual autonomy and the limits that are imposed on it by social relations of kinship and status. With the emergence of linguistic and interactional competence the child’s education in this system of values moves to a different level. The child’s role in instructional routines becomes much more that of an active participant. Whereas the early, pre-linguistic education which operates seemingly directly on the body takes the child as a manipulable and passive entity, the later verbal routines to which I now turn always engage the child as an active participant in some sense. If we are to take Vygotsky (1978, see Cole 1985, Wertsch 1985) at his word, we would expect that such learning which relies on the active engagement of the learner is generally more effective. At the same time the prelinguistic education serves a vital role in inculcating the most basic outlines of a dispositional habitus (cf Bourdieu 1977).

7.3.1 Directives - Indexing Age Graded and Gendered Solidarity

Directives not only direct an addressee to do certain things in a certain way (perform an action) they also by virtue of their form establish or index various kinds of social relationships between participants to an interaction (cf Brown and Levinson 1978, Ervin Tripp 1976,
Goodwin 1990, Silverstein 1987). Caregivers in the village give many more directives to children than children do to caregivers. Directive use indexes status and, because age is a primary measure of status in the village, directives generally flow from older to younger participants. Children occasionally issue directives of their own to caregivers but these almost always mitigated. The most common form of mitigation is particular intonation contour and tag na “now”.

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1. taak tu (r) am, na m a? “Talk to him now, ma”

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2. gu fa (r) am n a? “go get it now.”

Children are notorious for having hard ears - that is to say, for not listening and, by extension, not heeding the directives of their parents. As such, parents often feel it is necessary to use vocatives of the sort “ee bai”, “ee gyal” and directional directives like “wach mii” as in the following example.

M: ee bai wach mii wa bodoo neem “Hey boy, look at me. What’s Bodo’s name?”

Such directives are important injunctions of the type Bourdieu (1977) discussed in his consideration of habitus. These sequences of directive-response (where the child’s preferred response from the child is essentially non-verbal, i.e. complying to the directive by adjusting body orientation and location) have the effect of instantiating age-graded relationships through control of the subordinate’s body. This form of education prefigures a set of operations through which power is exercised and social relations based on gender, age and status are displayed.
7.3.2 Threats, Fear and Physical Violence

When directives are insufficiently persuasive, caregivers often rely on the use of threats of physical violence (cf Ochs 1988). Most often these threats take one of two forms. The first is an explicitly performative type: *ma waarn yu* “I’m warning you”. The utterance is elliptical implying impending action on the part of the caregiver. The second type is a rather peculiar utterance. *Ma biit yu* translates as “I am beating you” or “I beat you (habitually).” Caregivers never threaten *ma gu biit yu* or *mi gu biit yu* or *mi doz bitt yu*. Imperfective *a* in GC is usually interpreted as having progressive or habitual meanings (see the appendix to this work). However neither of these meanings fits the context here. Rather the imperfect marker here signals an impending action. This leads us either to rethink our interpretation of the imperfect marker or allow for the possibility that in this context (and the usage of *a* with this sense does seem to be restricted to this context) the imperfect marker has certain metaphorical extensions.

Threats of the sort discussed are particularly important to the inculcation of the values of age-graded and gendered solidarity and in fact are used as indices of asymmetrical kinship relations throughout much of the lifespan. A relatively small uncle (i.e. not the big Chacha for his patrilocal group) will threaten and “warn” his nephews until they reach the age of maturity (when they are “big” and have their own families) and occasionally even after this. Occasionally conflicts arise between uncles and nephews. In one such case that I recorded a nephew (17 years old), pushed to anger by what he felt were actions aimed to *take advantage on him*, threatened to hit his uncle. He was thrown out of the yard by the uncle. Looking at the
transcript below, it is possible to see the way a dispute over ownership of a bicycle quickly transforms into one about the relative social positions of the participants. Specifically, Stinka's attempt to stand up to Ben (i.e. to assert his personal autonomy) flies in the face of expectations based on an age-graded solidarity.

(7.1)

Stink=Stinka (Ben's nephew, Kay's grandson)
Ben=Ben (Stink's uncle, Kay's son)
Kay=Kay

1. Stink: huu bai baisikl ting laik daa?
   *who bought the bicycle parts like that?*

2. Ben: wa raang?
   *what's wrong?*

3. Stink: mi want am put am an mi baisikl
   *I want them to put on my bicycle*

4. Ben: fo waa?
   *for what?*

5. Stink: da baisikl da da mii oon da mi oon da
   *That bicycle there, that's mine, that my one there*  
   <laughter>

6. Ben: bai luk a de da bina (greesiz) yu kyee // de*
   *boy look at there that was ( ) you're carrying // there*

7. Stink:  
   // da* mii baik daa mii bin bai dima put am an de
   //that is my bike there I bought reflectors and put them on

8. Ben: <goes for S.> kom le mi slap yu //skont*
   *come let me slap you // cunt*

9. K:  
   // Ai:*  
   //hey

10. Ben: huu bai da?
    *who bought that?*

11. Stink: MI BAI DA PUT AM DE MI A BAI AAL A WA DE AN DE AAL AAL
    *I bought that and put it there I bought all that is on there - all - all*
12. Ben: teek out (Bramii)
    move out of the way
13. K: NA BIIT AM EE EE
don’t beat him hey hey
14. Ben: ( skont mm?
( ) cunt eh?
hey hey - what the fuck did you beat him for? what you beat him for? what the fuck you knock him for?
16. Ben.: ee? ee?
    eh? eh?
17. Stink: (yu) wan kom faít mii? (Stinka picks up coconut grater)
you want to come and fight me?
18. Ben: jos da yu moda skont a uuz
    that alone you (skont) will use (to beat me)

Living in the same yard, uncles and nephews may have long standoffs of this sort trading threats until the younger one backs off. Here the conflict arose over disputed ownership of a bicycle. Although participants often begin to argue about rights and privileges to material property, the conflict most often moves to issues of age-graded respect and kin-based obligation. In this exchange, Stinka’s behaviour obviously contradicts expectations based on age-graded solidarity, first, in his refusal to accept Ben’s authority and decision regarding the bicycle (evidenced in his pleading in lines 5, 7, 11) and, then, in his unwillingness to retreat when the dispute becomes physical (in line 17 Stinka picks up a heavy flat iron rod used for grating coconuts and threatens Ben with it). Ben’s attempt to assert a superordinate position (appropriate given his position as uncle in a kin-based system of stratification) is apparent not only in his aggressively physical role (line 8) but also in his attempt to occupy the interactional role of questioner (a role he usurps from Stinka in lines 2 and 4). Stinka, on the other hand,
despite his assertion of autonomy and relative economic independence (when he says that he bought the things on the bicycle), seems to ratify Ben's understanding of kin-based authority precisely by generating a rationale for his claims to the bicycle (mi bai da put am de), thus expressing an acceptance of the assertion that in normal circumstances he would not have any right to it. Stinka delivers this passage with exaggerated prosody thus framing it as a public plea for "justice". The uncle need not justify his claims to property in these terms. Rather his claim is based solely on his superior social position. As the conflict progresses, then, the object of disagreement shifts from the realm of property to that of social obligation and respect (couched in terms of physical supremacy).

Although, in later life, such exchanges tend to be associated with men, within the nuclear unit, the mother is often the one that issues threats and warnings of this sort. It is a part of her domestic responsibility, at least in many households, to enforce a certain amount of discipline through physical punishment. In fact a great deal of variation is apparent in way this responsibility is divided between the parents, the seriousness with which it is approached and the degree to which threats are matched with actual beatings. In some cases, mothers are in charge of corporal punishment, while, in others, it is the father who takes on this responsibility. The parent who is not charged with the responsibility of corporeal punishment often takes an extremely indulgent role and may even side with the children in characterizing the threatening parent as unreasonable and tyrannical. This parent often adopts more child-centred strategies including babyltalk and various other forms of adjustment to the perspective of the child.

As I mentioned earlier, variation in this regard seems at least partially conditioned by a class orientation. This became apparent when I asked the following question in the course of an
interview: 'if you hear your child curse, what would you do?' Answers to this question were of three types. The most common answer was an immediate *beat them*. The rational for quick, punitive action is usually based on a notion of respect. *Cussing* offends the relations of asymmetrical obligation and respect that are central to the reproduction of age-graded and gendered solidarity. A number of people gave what appears, on the basis of ethnographic observation, to be the more honest answer - that they would do nothing. Some respondents clarified that although they would usually ignore such behaviour they might punish the child in some circumstances particularly if the cussing took place in the presence of *respectable* people. In fact *cussing* is regularly elicited from small children and generally caregivers admire the kinds of self-assertion it displays. Finally, a few respondents told me that they would quietly take the child aside and explain that this behaviour was not appropriate. They thus suggested that they would follow a child-centred strategy in which they took the perspective of the child into account when deriving a suitable instructional routine. Such behaviour seems remarkably rare. The responses to the question then, despite the fact that they do not mirror in any accurate way actual instructional practices, reveal the range of options potentially available for caregivers in terms of social control.

While threats, like directives, seem obviously associated with the teaching of age-graded and gendered solidarity (and are often reproduced in the conversational discourse of husband to wife) they can also become part of the teaching of personal autonomy. Father and uncles (particularly *Chacha* "Father's brother") are often very (playfully?) physical and confrontational with their small boys. Repeated threats like *kom let mi brook yu boonz* "Kom let me break your bones" or simply *yu wan ded na bai* "You want to die now boy" are
commonplace in these kinds of relationships. While the teaching of social place in the solidarity system seems to be the first effect of such threats, a later effect is the assertion of autonomy. Thus in one case a small boy (1 year 3 mos.) was continually threatened by an uncle who lived in the same yard. He developed a cowering posture when the uncle approached and would run away whenever he heard the man's voice. At the same time he was receiving instruction from his father (a much younger but well-known rival of the uncle) in showing power (i.e. displaying muscle, hitting and managing pain). At about two years the little boy's attitude towards the threatening uncle changed - while he would still run when the man approached he would first make a display of fearlessness (showing muscle and picking anything that was around that could serve as a weapon) until at the last minute he retreated.

7.3.3 Teasing and Self Assertion

Caregivers often engage in extended "teasing" routines with children in which some threat is made (i.e. take away some item belonging to the child) in order to elicit a defiant response from the child. Often another adult coaches the child in making a correct response to the mock "threat". Such routines have the obvious effect of encouraging self-assertion in the child and caregivers typically make what it is they want the child to say quite clear through elicitations. It should be noted that teasing relies on the child's growing understanding of meta-communicative devices (specifically voice quality) and that such routines index a range of keys (e.g. mock : serious, Hymes 1974:58). More than just a form of social control, teasing is a "presentation of techniques, procedures and modes of interpretation" (Schieffelin 1986:166, see also Eisenberg 1986, Miller 1986). This complexity is particularly apparent in the way
teasing routines encourage alliance making and self assertion through the interpretive process. The following example illustrates some of the complexities of teasing. Here an aunt first (Pria) threatens to eat a candy the small boy (Sha) had been given. The boy starts to cry. This is a culturally dispreferred response as it is taken as an index of dependence on others. When the boy does not respond in the preferred way (which is to assert autonomy) the caregiver (Pria) gives explicit verbal instruction in the way of an elicitation (*tel am no*). When the boy does not respond to this, the other participants (specifically his cousin 9 year old Kavita) up the stake of the teasing session - first threatening to kill his father and then to carry away his little brother. Finally Raja (the uncle) elicits an explicit framing strategy from the boy (*tel am a jook yu mek*):

(7.2)

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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Pria</td>
<td>gi mi piis switii bai gi mi piis yu (g)u gi mi? <em>give me a piece of the sweetie boy give me a piece are you going to give me some?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Sha</td>
<td>ya    <em>yes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Pria</td>
<td>teek aal? aal? le mi iit aal <em>shall I take all of it? Let me eat the whole thing</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Sha</td>
<td>&lt;cries&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Pria</td>
<td>yea le mi iit aal. ( ) wa mek? <em>yes let me eat it all ( ) why not?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>tel (am) bodoo neem -(wa bodoo neem) <em>tel him you brother's name (what Bodoo's name?)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Kav</td>
<td>Dodii we mi slipoorz? <em>Dodii where are my slippers?</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
8. M: ee bai wach mii wa bodoo neem
   *hey boy - look at me/pay attention - what is Bodo's name*

9. M: (i na gu iit am han mii han mii)
   *he won't eat it give it to me*

10. Pria: kom gi mi piis ( ) na wori wid shii kom
   *come give me a piece - don't worry about her come*

   <Baby goes to get a piece>

11. Pria: tel am noo
    *tell her know*

12. Kav: gi mii piis
    *give me a piece*

13. Pria: tel shi noo
    *tell her "no"*

14. Kav: wach ma gu kil Tukii nou
    *watch - I'm going to kill Tukii now*

15. Sha: a-a <negative>
    *a-a*

16. Pria: shi (g)o kil Tukii ( ) hala pon shii
    *she will kill Tukii - holler at her*

17. Mama: kaal shi le shi ( )
    *call her let her*

18. Pria: kal shi kal shi ( )
    *kaal her kaal her*

19. Raja: (we yu gu) kyeri Bodoo. luk Kavta gu
    *where are you going? To carry away Bodo? Look Kavta is going to*

20. Raja: kyeri Bodoo. tel shi a jook yu mek
    *carry Bodoo. Tell her it was just a joke you made!*

What is particularly interesting about the exchange, besides the emphasis that caregivers put on
the assertion of individual autonomy and the protection of privilege, is the way in which,
through the incorporation of elicitation routines, the boy is encouraged to, himself, frame the
ongoing interaction as an event of a particular type - at first as a defence of himself (*tel am no* line 11) and then as a plea for mercy (*tel am a jook yu mek* line 20). I discuss such elicitations in more detail in the next chapter.

The lesson about personal autonomy and the defence of privilege that children learn through these routines is an important one. As I have argued, the counter-force of age-graded solidarity often makes the defence of oneself and one's privileges extremely difficult. My own realization of this came about in the following way. At several times I felt I wanted to do something for lower status and younger members of the patrilocal group with which I was associated through fictive kinship. In one case I gave gifts to two of the lowest ranking members of the group. One was of exceptionally low status because his mother had had him out of wedlock. Both she and the father married other people and the boy was never integrated into either nuclear group. Thus illegitimate, he depended on the charity of his maternal grandmother and the extended group. The other child was low status primarily because his mother was poor and also without a husband. He could therefore not call on the protection of a father when bullied by his various cousins. Although he did some times threaten to tell his mother of a wrong-doing, given the structure of authority within the patrilocal group, this did not carry the same force. Within days (in one case less than a few hours) the gifts that I gave to these people (in one case a child’s toy which no one else had any use for) had been taken away by older cousins. These items were never seen again. The children whom I had given them to, while acknowledging that it was bound to happen, seemed more defeated and subordinate than before they had received the gifts. The importance that caregivers attach to the teaching of personal autonomy is thus not trivial.
Teasing routines with small children as targets are related to the shaming practices which all people experience later in life. Teasing provides instruction for children in ways of managing aggressive verbal attacks from others and this is vital to the maintenance of a public face in later life. Caregivers are well aware of this need to inculcate a “thick skin”.

7.4 **BOYS AND GIRLS - THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER**

The social category of gender becomes particularly salient in later childhood. As in other relatively impoverished communities children are incorporated into domestic and even market economies at a very early age. By the time they reach five years children are accustomed to performing daily chores such as sweeping and washing out the house, picking up, and carrying water. By the time they reach nine, girls are generally capable of cleaning out the entire house, washing wares and a few can even cook roti. In some homes young female children are charged with most of the childcare for their siblings. Childcare duties can begin as early as five or six years old. This movement into a gendered world of work and social obligation is the topic of the following section. I focus especially on the way oppositional notions of such categories are constructed through the practices of caregivers.

7.4.1 **EXPECTATIONS OF GENDERED BEHAVIOUR IN LATER CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE**

Children’s peer groups up until the ages of ten or eleven show little evidence of polarized notions of gender. All children engage in games such as marbles, bumpa or cricket, as well as role playing games in which they fashion their own ephemeral social roles and statuses. In such activities there is little evidence of polarization in terms of linguistic patterns. Both boys and
girls use a great number of unmitigated directives and the emphasis on hierarchy vs. alliance or cooperation does not seem particularly pronounced in one group over another. In later life, as I have mentioned, it is the boys' (rather than girls') alliances that are particularly obvious and displayed through social action (although such alliances often involve a hierarchical dimension). Play among the younger children (up to 12 or 13), while highly age graded, is often conducted in mixed gender groups. However, from the ages of about seven to ten children experience a number of radical changes. Girls, as I have mentioned, become more involved in the domestic economy and the reproduction of the household unit and are thus removed from the peer groups to large extent. Boys, on the other hand, carry on with heavy investments in their peer groups, playing cards, riding bicycles, birding, fishing, playing cricket and marbles. Gender and linguistic practice are actively co-constructed in this process (Goodwin 1990, Goodwin and Goodwin 1990). Girls are more involved in the domestic economy and are likely to be on the receiving end of directive-response sequences. In contrast, the boys are more involved in the flexible and contested relations of the peer group.

7.4.2 SHAME AND SHAMING

A number of anthropologists have pointed out the central role that notions of shame play in maintaining social control in small social groups (see Ochs 1988, and the articles in Peristiany 1966). Ideas about shame are often compared with the more familiar notions of guilt (more familiar to the middle class in North America) and most writers have noted that while guilt is centred around an understanding of personal conscience, shame is more fundamentally connected to public evaluation. When I first arrived in the village, and in fact throughout my
stay, I found the emphasis on shame as opposed to guilt quite troubling. I took it for granted that appeals to personal conscience (being a common, human idea of what is the right and proper or fair thing to do) would find sympathizers and be an effective strategy for bringing people around to my way of thinking. However, in making moral decisions, people were invariably more concerned with the question of who would find out than with questions about the intrinsic right or wrongness of the action. This is not to imply that Indo-Guyanese villagers (or any other people for that matter) are without some abstract moral code. Rather, I question, in the first place, the degree to which action, in any community, is actually based on this code and, secondly, I would question the common assumption that such an abstract code is somehow inherently “better” or more advanced because it is seemingly disinterested or “impartial” (on such notions see the brilliant critique in Young 1990:98-116). In Guyana personal involvement is not so unequivocally associated with bias or unfairness as it is in other communities. More often than not, people involve themselves only in those disputes where they feel they have something at stake. The importance of moral evaluation and public scrutiny is also apparent in the social institutions of eye-pass and proving story. Eye-pass is a real or imagined affront to one’s human dignity (cf Jayawardena 1963, Williams 1991). Charges of this sort appeal to local notions of equality and basic rights to be treated with respect. More importantly, in the social practice of making eye-pass charges and, just as importantly, defending oneself against such charges, villagers hold each other’s actions up to public scrutiny and evaluation. Proving stories occur when a dispute reaches an impasse. Both offending parties will be called together along with any peripheral participants to the dispute who may have made claims in the course of the resolution process. The idea is that the truth should be hashed out
when everybody is present because people are more likely to tell lies when the person they are talking about is absent (a reasonable assumption). A number of disputes were brought to partial resolution in this way during the course of my fieldwork. A proving story creates its own public and participants are careful to stock the “jury” with their own supporters. More to the point, such dispute resolution procedures provide ample opportunity for shaming those who have acted in ways that are considered inappropriate or unacceptable (see Brenneis 1984, and Morgan 1997, on similar procedures in Fijian and African-American communities respectively).

One of the ways in which shame lingers and continues to have a lasting effect in terms of social control is through the practice of giving falsenames. All East Indian people in the village have what is considered to be their bookname. Deonarine, Raja, Baal, Siiram, Pankalee, Pria, Kasilla, Isha, Ashan, Shamaroon are typical examples. However these names are not frequently used and, in fact, a number of people are almost never called by their real book name except in the context of religious rituals. This is much more often the case for men than it is for women, although there are a number of important exceptions. False names often make reference to some key point in a story about the individual to whom they are ascribed and this then indexes a whole set of assumptions about the person so named. The names are not always used to shame. Sometimes, rather, they valorize some presumed characteristic of the referent. Thus occasionally a man’s name indexes his virility - e.g. Shaf “Shaft.” However, most names either have no directly discernable connotations or they have strictly shaming implications. In the first category are names like Faalin, WeWe, Nancy, Shanka. Such names make very tenuous associations between the people so named and whatever else falls within their referential scope. However a number of names do describe the referent. This class includes names like Kras
“cross/bad luck”, Lunt “fuck-up -(Hindi)”, Kakman “Cockman”, Pongman “Poundman”, Stinka “Stinker” which are deemed appropriate because the referent is considered to exhibit the qualities described by the lexical item (see Kay’s use of Kras in the chapter 5). These names can be used to shame the referent in the right context.

Other names are more explicit and more unambiguously shaming. One little girl, who by seven was the primary caregiver for her six month old brother, earned the nickname Lazy. In another case, 14 year-old boy who held a full time but low paying job at the rice factory was labelled Eat and walk walk. A man who was considered to be both a drunk and miserly (a very unpopular combination) was given the name Dinner-rum because he was rumoured to carry home a little half-bottle of rum every night to drink by himself. A number of young men who had in common the tendency to refuse work when it was offered were called Dundee Millionaire. Such names may last a day or a life time.

Even more descriptive names are used when a story is just breaking, although these names may also stick for a long time. A man who had stolen gold jewellery from his neighbours and subsequently been found out was given the moniker Goldman. The young men who refused to do rice work (see above - Dundee Millionaire) often called the set men employed as tomb-makers and grave-diggers, Diggas (possibly derived from niggers and obviously contemptuous). When a group of older boys broke into my house and stole a cassette player they collectively earned the name Jack(s) Tape (tape is the word commonly used for a cassette player) and Jack(s) Thing(s) which was a source of great embarrassment for their families, particularly their

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6 Although the names discussed here are used in a number of different contexts, it is most insulting to use them as call-names. In the case of Diggas, the young men used this name to call off the other group across a crowded road. Eventually it led to a confrontation and the name-callers, who were younger and smaller, backed down
father with whom I was well acquainted at the time.

Shaming through name giving and address is thus a very common form of social control in the village. Reviewing the cases I have discussed the reader will notice that, for the most part, they involve men and that most of the shame involves notions of laziness or thievery (two strongly associated concepts in the village - people often remark that a young man who doesn't work is bound to end up a thief). When women are shamed in this way the name more often indexes assumptions about their sexuality and licentiousness. A case in point is Roadrunner. This was one of the names which just about everybody in the village knew and used in reference (while, in address, they tended to use her other false name Chinee). But the use of shaming in controlling presumed "aberrant" behaviour went much further than false names in this case. People felt compelled on many occasions to push the young woman till she responded - they taunted her both with the name and with other insults. Because she refused to conform to the dominant model which related gendered categories of persons to social spaces she was subjected to intense and regular shaming. In the following example a little girl, Baby notices Chinee running by in the yard of the next house and calls out to Chinee addressing her as Roadrunner. Baby's aunt, Gigi, then instructs her to insult Chinee in other ways. Note the way in which others get involved after Baby initiates the routine. It is in such a way that shaming becomes "public".

(7.3)

| Baby | Baby (Gobin's daughter) |
| Gob  | Gobin (Gigi's brother, Baby's father) |
| RR   | Roadrunner |
| Jack | Jack (the researcher) |
| Gigi | Gigi (Gobin's sister, Baby's aunt) |
1. Baby:  <calling out>  Roodrona  
   *Roadrunner*

2. Gob:  Roodrona wan Roodrona tuu Roodrona nak dong di ool man shuu-
   *Roadrunner one Roadrunner two Roadrunner knock down the old man's shoe*

3. RR:  -moda skont  
   -mother skunt

4. Gob:  Roodrona wan-
   *Roadrunner one*

5. Gigi:  -<laughs>

6. Jack:  -wa shi see? wa shi see?  
   *what did she say? what did she say?*

7. Gigi:  yu moda skont  
   *your mother skunt*

8. Gob:  EE GYAL A HUU YU TAAK TU? EE? GET BAK YU SKONT YU NOO?  
   *hey girl - who are you talking to? get back here you skunt, you know?*

9. Gigi:  (yu hiir dem) big word. laik shi smook doop  
   *you hear those big words - she acts like she smokes dope*

10. Jack:  arait arait alrait na fait op  
    *alright, alright don't fight*

11. Baby:  <laughs>

12. Gob:  wen shi pas bak hii  
    *when she passes back here again*

13. Gigi:  (yu tee pin)<laughs>...shi mad da gyal gatu smook doop biiiv yu () gatu  
    *(you taping?) she is crazy that girl must smoke dope (I believe) you must*

14. see shi smook doop  
    *tell her she smokes dope*

15. Jack:  shi dadii kom (nou) wen i sii-shi na gu de a rood aal dee  
    *her daddy came home when he come she won't be on the road all day*

16. Baby:  yes shi dadii a kom  
    *yes her father came home*

17. Jack:  -shi dadii de hoom?  
    *is her daddy at home now?*
In the exchange Gigi encourages Baby to tell Roadrunner that she smokes *dope* (referring to any narcotic but most commonly marijuana). According to Gigi, drug use is the only possible explanation for Roadrunner’s behaviour. In addition to the her reputation for sexual impropriety and her disregard for community norms regarding the gendered use of space, Gigi reaches the
conclusion that Roadrunner is a drug-user on the basis of her disrespect for male authority figures. When Roadrunner mutters moda skont in line 3, Raja interprets it as a cuss addressed directly to him. Under this interpretation, Roadrunner’s utterance breaks a number of strongly held rules for social interaction between younger and older and between female and male villagers. Gigi’s response is to instigate a public shaming by having Baby tell her that she smokes dope. Smoking dope in this East-Indian community is strongly associated with crime, stigmatized and lowly origins and often madness (there is also an association with neighbouring Afro-Guyanese communities). The choice of Baby, a four year old, as the mouthpiece (or animator - cf Levinson 1988) is strategic. Gigi does not want to implicate herself too deeply in the disputes of the village and since shaming does not require an authoritative speaker but rather a sympathetic audience, Baby’s voice is ideal.

7.5  ADOLESCENCE AND THE HETEROSEXUAL MARKET

7.5.1  SPACE, SOCIO-ECONOMIC RELATIONS AND THE TRANSITION FROM CHILDHOOD

The stories of Roadrunner, Pria (chapter 6) and Rohan’s girls (chapter 2) highlight the ways in which men and women, boys and girls are differently caught up in the heterosexual market and the social organization of space in the community. This co-construction of sexuality, space and gender is particularly important in the transition from childhood to adolescence. Male and female children are generally allowed the same kinds of freedoms with regards to movement through space although, practically speaking, female children may be somewhat restricted by the fact that they are expected to work and must therefore stay close to the house. In adolescence things change dramatically in terms of rights to movement. Girls are
generally sent out of the house only for immediately practical reasons. They may be sent to the shop, to the Mandir, to sell greens etc. Otherwise they are kept close to the house. They may be removed from school if they show little academic potential and/or an increasing interest in boys. Roadrunner was scorned because she did not make this transition from childhood to adolescence in terms of movement. Boys, on the other hand, are sent out of the house so as to keep it uncluttered. There is a general dispreference for a boy who stays at home all day - a houseboy. Boys are encouraged to walk-out with their friends, to go fishing, to go birding, to play cards and they may even be given bicycles to achieve these ends. In later life it is the boys with cars, trucks or some other motorized vehicle that tend to earn the highest standing both among their peers and among the adult community. Knowing the area beyond the village, being able to handle oneself with all sorts of people, knowing the possibilities of town-life and being competent in its vernacular are all qualities that are highly evaluated for young men (compare Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1995). Most of the older boys in the village try to cultivate such an image of themselves. It should be noted that a few women also cultivate “male” styles. They adopt the mode of dress (baggy pants, expensive brand name American jerseys or T-shirts, kango hat etc), styles of speaking, and modes of self-comportment (see Chapter 3). They are or claim to be well travelled. A few such women escape public evaluation because the manner of self-comportment is tied to an occupation for which they must travel and look after themselves such as selling goods along the road. Most, however, are considered immoral and not proper. They may work for three months in one of the Chinese restaurants and then move on somewhere else. They seem never to be integrated into the community. Women who adopt such strategies are very much in the minority and tend to be marginalized.
Generally, by adolescence, the major characteristics of gender differentiation in the village are beginning to be adopted. This includes manners and styles of speaking of course also. Boys, in addition to cultivating *town-talk*, are developing modes of authoritative *grandstanding* similar to the older men. Some young women and older girls adopt more demure and deferential speech styles. While some become exceptionally quiet, others are brash and jokey. Many more switch between multiple "women's voices" depending on the context.

Girls must learn to balance the expectations of respectability, emanating primarily from their patrilocal group but also from the community at large, with the world of a rapidly changing youth culture. Girls do not live in a world separate from boys despite various restrictions on the nature of their social relationships. In their interactions with boys their own age the girls do not always adopt the styles of speaking and behaviour which are normatively expected of them - demure, deferential, respectable. The heterosexual market contains within it the contradiction between modernity and traditionalism. Thus girls may orient to either the urban “cool” (and, with it, the styles typically associated with the young men of Goergetown) or the rural traditionalism of the village (see my discussion of ambiguity in the traditional pattern in chapter 6). The second option is, however, much more common.

For the boys, adolescence is a time of territorializing impulse (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Boys stake claims to places where they can *lime* “hang out” freely without interference from others particularly senior members of their patrilocal group. In one complicated case a group of cousins came to occupy their grandmother's house. The patriarch had died and all the sons were now married and had established their own houses. The sons threatened to take over the house and look after their mother (a poor family, the sons would have liked to sell the
The old woman, fiercely defensive of her own autonomy, gradually allowed a number of her adolescent grandsons, most of whom had been in trouble with their fathers, to move into the house. This resulted in a number of tensions. First it undercut the authority of the fathers (the old woman's sons) and made it impossible for them to control the behaviour of the young men. Secondly, it provided some defence of the house's assets by the old woman. Despite a norm of patrilineal inheritance, the sons were unable to secure the property and it remained in the hands of the grandmother. The young men, and this is my main point, made a great show of occupying the house. They held the balcony like a defensive position. Someone was always looking out. A number of scuffles ensued over their unruly behaviour in the house which, people remarked, shamed the memory of the patriarch and the group generally. Arguments also arose over the use of property and the relative right over the house and the yard within which it was located.

Later territorializing projects (for example, building a house) are related to community sanctioned transitions such as marriage. But before marriage, and until late adolescence, boys move in peer groups attempting to occupy and defend places within which they can claim autonomy. In contrast to the behaviour of the boys who are perpetually defending these spaces against various forms of intrusion, girls seem motivated, by the time they reach adolescence, by a "detransitorializing" impulse (again see Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Rather than securing space in which they can assert their autonomy, girls and women are more concerned to resist, mitigate and otherwise challenge the way in which gendered bodies are restricted to particular spaces. They attempt through various strategies to erase the lines of territory that hem them in.

In chapter 6 I discussed one woman's use of *passion* and affect marking. I have also discussed
the story of Roadrunner. Generally women plot and scheme to get away from the circumscribed space of house and yard. They organize and participate in community sanctioned daytrips. They jealously protect their privilege to go to market in part through their, at some times vigourous, defence of an authoritative discourse regarding knowledge of food, wares and the exchange market. Women are often in charge of the domestic economy and use this work to justify various outings. Once arrived in the market, women spend much of the time socializing. Young women often accompany their mother on such expeditions and may even be allowed to venture out on their own when they reach a certain age. The construction of gender roles in the village thus results in a situation in which women must maintain economic relations (with market sellers, with various women who can be counted on to hold goods and give them on credit) in order to have social ones. Because women’s social relations are in large part justified through economic relations, the maintenance of such economic relations becomes vital to the maintenance of their entire social network outside the home. Rather than depending on social relations to fulfill economic needs, women rely on economic relations (and economic justifications) to maintain their social network. This reversal of an economistic logic points to the various ways in which women construct their own - partially independent - social worlds within parameters largely set by male interests. Here, as elsewhere, women use the dominant stereotype of appropriate feminine conduct (in this case, the stereotype of the woman who is hardworking and responsible for domestic reproduction) to achieve their own social ends (see the conclusion to this work).

7.6 Socialization and Local Theories of Language and Meaning.
The work of Ochs (1982, 1986a, 1986b, 1988, 1992, 1996), Schieffelin (1986, 1990) among others (see Demuth 1986, Peters and Boggs 1986, Schieffelin and Ochs 1986, Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo 1986) has been instrumental in demonstrating the way in which language socialization is organized through local theories of meaning and language. Although all children do learn a language, they do not learn that language in the same way or through the same interactional mechanisms in all communities. Language-learning is deeply embedded in the processes by which communities and ideologies are reproduced.

With this in mind, we should note that a great deal has been written about ambiguity in Caribbean language and culture (see Fisher 1976, Kochman 1986, Morgan 1991, 1993, 1996, Reisman 1970, 1974) but little has been said about the way in which such ambiguity is managed in everyday interpretive practices - specifically those which attempt to attach referentially and pragmatically unambiguous significance to utterance segments. Although people in the village, as in other Caribbean communities, play with ambiguity and the open-endedness of language they also, at times, attempt to reach unambiguous interpretations. There is always, however, a general recognition of the potential for ambiguity. Further, people are well aware of the fact that appearances and surfaces significance can be deceiving. The centrality of ambiguity within the communicative ideology of this community thus extends to interpretative practice. Language, and other behaviour, is always approached with an awareness that what people mean is not always simply derivable from what they say. As Duranti and Brenneis (1986) following Bakhtin (1981) and Vygotsky (1978) remind us, the audience is a co-author and plays a necessary role in relating significance to the formal shapes of verbal messages. This gap between what is said and what is meant is negotiated differently in different communities.
To begin with, different communities assign "directness" and "indirectness" different values and often associate each style with particular kinds of social actors (Keenan 1974). Furthermore, the kinds of background information which are taken as relevant to the interpretive process vary across different communities (Morgan 1991).

People in the village are well aware that the meaning of what is said is also not constrained by a speaker's professed or imputed "intentions." The familiar notion of eye-pass is a good example of this extension of meaning beyond the purely referential content of verbal production. "To eye-pass someone is to...belittle and humiliate him, to ignore his rights and claims. The notion of lowering a man's dignity and prestige by repudiating what is justly his due is the essence of this term (Jayawardena 1963:72)." There are no conventionalized "force indicating devices" (Levinson 1983) for eye-pass. As Jayawardena (1963:76) notes:

an eye-pass dispute can be generated by a variety of circumstances. Objective evidence, such as the acquisition of superior social status symbols or conspicuous use of wealth is not necessary. A subjective impression that some slight has been offered, and an accumulation of such slights lead eventually to a violent climax the antecedents of which are often obscure.

Eye-pass is a breach of the moral code of egalitarianism such that the offender's unjustified claim to social superiority or control over another person lowers the prestige of the victim. It is essential to note that eye-pass is often not purposive action. "The intention to eye-pass may be present or absent. Or it may be deduced by inference" (Jayawardena 1963:76). This being the case, an act becomes eye-pass only when it is interpreted as such by the victim. We might say, then, that eye-pass consists of two interrelated (or dialogic) acts or moments. The first is the giving of eye-pass, the second, the recognition and interpretation of it as such. Note that although the first moment is temporally prior, the second defines the first retrospectively.
Along with the possibilities of indirection and ambiguity go the possibilities of insincerity. Speakers may not only resort to indirection but also to lies and deceit. A popular expression in the village is *yu kyaan tel me jimii kak mek ram goot* "You can’t tell me Jimmy’s cock is a ram goat." The philosophy behind this proverb is one that recognizes language as a potential resource for illusion, persuasion and confusion. Other proverbs also emphasize the deceptive role of language, for instance, people often remark *dag wa bark plentii ron wen taim kom fu fait* "A dog that barks a lot runs when the time comes to fight."

People in the village thus tend to think of other’s behaviours more as part of a well thought-out performance than as the expression of some deeply buried and essential identity. Thus people often remark on the disjuncture between appearance and reality by saying that someone is *playing big* or that they *plee se dem hed na good* "They’re pretending they’re mad."

The proverbs and the experience of *eye-pass* charges laid and received instill a general recognition that the addressee (or the interpreter generally) to any interaction must sort the truth from the untruth. People have little sympathy for those who are incapable of this. *Sensey Bill* "Smart Bill" and *Stupity Bill* "Stupid Bill" are both folk-heroes in children’s stories, but it is always Sensey Bill that comes out on top. Remember also the story of Babuu and his wife at the doctor’s office from chapter 4. A great importance is attached to the kinds of intelligence which allow one to make appropriate assessments of the people one comes into contact with.

Such local theories about the way in which discourse works explain a number of preferred strategies in language socialization. If speakers and their messages cannot always be taken at face value (because of the potential for insincerity and deceit) and if messages are open to a number of interpretations above and beyond those which their speakers intend, there is a
necessity, when speaking, to make as explicit as possible both the referential content and the contextual frame of one's talk. In the course of elicitations children may be encouraged to clarify or reframe their utterances when misinterpretations occur (e.g. tel am jook yu mek). When children are instructed to convey messages, caregivers invariably check that the messenger has understood the message correctly. Children are also sometimes encouraged not only to convey a message but also, if necessary, to defend this message against the charge that it is untrue.

At a more general level one should note that early language education focuses on particular speech genres which are relatively finalized in Bakhtin's (1982) terms - that is, ones in which the potential for ambiguity, misinterpretation and deceit is relatively minimal. In cases of cursing the choice between interpretations is essentially binary - between serious and non-serious. In calling again the choice is binary with calls usually being interpreted as friendly but in highly marked contexts also construable as insulting (cf. the discussion of diggas above). Similarly, invitations to graft present children with relatively transparent frames for speaking (see the extended discussion of elicitations and metalinguistic terms in the following chapter).

Rather than instruction in ambiguity, the most frequently discussed feature of Caribbean discourse, children receive instruction in its management. Being able to deliver unambiguous messages and being capable of sorting through the potential ambiguities in the words of others are important skills in the village and caregivers show recognition of this in the types of instruction they offer to novices.

7.7 Conclusions

In this chapter I have discussed some of the ways in which infants and children are
socialized in the village. Consistent with the programmatic statements by Schieffelin and Ochs ed. (1986) and Schieffelin and Ochs (1986), I have attempted to show both the way children are socialized to use language and the way they are socialized through language use. In the discussion, I have suggested that a variety of linguistic practices are instrumental in inculcating an understanding of the competing values of autonomy and age-graded solidarity. I have also suggested that an important aspect of this inculcation process is the way it differentiates along the lines of gender. The consequences of this differentiation are far reaching. The socialization process reproduces, through this differentiation, the positioning of men and women in a domestic economy and ideas about gendered rights to spaces and movement. As such, socialization practices play an important role in the reproduction of a hegemonic ideology of gender relations. This is evident also in the way young men are allowed the freedom, and often encouraged, to roam the village and pursue their interests, whereas young women are quickly integrated into the dominant domestic and heterosexual economies of the village. In the last section of the chapter, I discussed, in general terms, the way in which children are socialized to use language in a way consistent with local expectations and ideologies of communication and meaning. In the next chapter, I take up this issue in more detail and attempt, in the process, to integrate the major themes of gender, space, socialization and linguistic practice into a single argument.
CHAPTER EIGHT

LEARNING SOCIAL AND SPATIAL LOCATION THROUGH ELICITATIONS

8.0  INTRODUCTION - ELICITATIONS, SPATIAL ORIENTATION AND SOCIAL RELATIONS:

Caregivers in many communities frequently direct children to say something to someone else. In studies of language socialization such routines have come to be known as elicitations (Briggs 1986, Ochs 1982, Ochs and Schieffelin 1984). Elicitations provide novices with detailed contextual scaffolding upon which they are expected to construct their own utterances. At the same time, they expose children to a great deal of information about the social world in which they live. Elicitations indicate who should be spoken to, in what manner and what should be said. In short, an elicitation models a projected scene in which the child is construed as talking to a definable social other.

These routines can also provide the analyst with a rich area for the investigation of native metapragmatic knowledge (Silverstein 1976a, 1993) - that is, knowledge about the uses and functions of language. The modelling of speech contexts in elicitations is achieved by construing speech as an instance of a particular type or genre which is indicated by the framing metalinguistic predicate (for example: tell, curse, ask etc.). Like other predicates, the verbs used in elicitations are open to analysis by standard linguistic techniques which reveal differences in transitivity, as well as lexical and grammatical meaning (Silverstein 1985a). Metalinguistic predicates are combined in elicitation routines with directives such as look and watch which indicate the manner of perceptual focus and deictics such as here, there, come and go which locate participants in relation to locally meaningful spaces. Co-occurring linguistic elements of this
sort function to provide detailed characterizations of acts of speaking including information about the ways in which bodies should be coordinated with socially recognized spaces. Thus each type or genre, as modelled in elicitations, has its own peculiarities regarding the social, spatial, and temporal organization of participants.

My main concern in the following is to show that knowledge about social location and spatial location is mutually embedded and that talk is one of the major instruments for the development and transmission of this kind of complex cultural knowledge. Contrary to traditional interpretations of linguistic interaction, such as those of Saussure (1983[1915]) fig 8.1, which characterize speech as the transfer of referential messages between disembodied and abstracted individuals, the elicitations routines I discuss cannot be understood without reference to the social and spatial contexts which they simultaneously presuppose and instantiate or entail.

Figure 8.1 SAUSSURE'S EXCHANGE CIRCUIT.

The manner of instruction in such elictation routines is always sensitive to the importance of gender and relations based on age and kimgroup membership. One could say, then, that this is instruction in the social practice of language - that is, talk grounded in community-based ideologies and social relations. Elicitations, insofar as they direct novices in appropriate ways of
inhabiting lived spaces, are injunctions of the type Bourdieu (1977) and Mauss (1932) found so important in the inculcation of a body hexis and habitus. This ability to inhabit space in a culturally interpretable manner, which is instilled in part through elicitations, involves an orientation of oneself and others to important boundaries and borders which mark off one space from another. Participation in any act of speaking involves, among other things, the establishment of some emergent and interactionally negotiated sense of what counts as HERE as opposed to THERE. These emergent spaces are not defined according to purely objective criteria such as actual, physical proximity or visibility. Rather, the interactional HERE of a particular act of speaking is always construed relative to some sense of the way in which space is partitioned into locally recognized subspaces such as houses, yards, rooms etc. and within the frame of some activity (be it primarily verbal or otherwise) which delimits the range of possible denotata for deitic elements in speech (cf. Silverstein 1993). There is always a mapping, through the mediation of an activity frame, from a local sense of geography to an emergent spatial context of speaking. Now insofar as the enduring local geography embodies or realizes important social distinctions, such as those between men and women or between members and nonmembers of particular kin-groups, these same distinctions are likely to be of importance in the way

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1 Hanks (1990:516) writes: “‘Here-now’ is never a sheer physically reality to which we can meaningfully apply objective measures. As the ground and by-product of communicative practices, it is inevitably a lived space made up of perspectival subspaces, costructured with the corporeal fields of human actors, and located within a broader sociocultural frame space. Frame spaces provide the field of possibilities from which the actual conditions of linguistic practice are derived and against which the present is commonsensically understood.”

2 “...many of the spatial, temporal, and objectural divisions signalled by indexicals are predefined by things like architecture, activity spaces, calendars, work rhythms, and the sociocultural values of objects” (Hanks 1996a:222). At the same time the range of “predefined” things or regions to which such indexicals could refer is potentially infinite. This then accounts for the necessity of some level of metapragmatic regimentation or delimitation - that is, some sense of what it is that participants are engaged in, what Silverstein (1993) calls an interactional text.
emergent contexts of speaking are construed in elicitations and in other verbal routines (on socio-spatial organization and social relations see Bourdieu 1977; on the linguistic coding of spatial distinctions see Levinson 1992, 1996). In what follows I first give some details regarding the role of the body in talk and then move to discuss the ways in which the local geography of the village in question embodies salient social distinctions between men and women and between kin and nonkin. I then illustrate some of the ways in which these distinctions are mapped into the emergent, interactionally negotiated, spatial contexts of elicitation routines.

8.1 BODY SCHEMA, SPACE AND HABITUS:

In his theory of HABITUS, loosely defined as a set of durable dispositions which incline agents to act and react, perceive and interpret in certain ways, Bourdieu accords a special importance to the ways in which the body is trained so as to inhabit space in particular ways in particular contexts. According to Bourdieu (1977:94), the body is always made or manufactured through social process:

...treating the body as a memory, [communities] entrust to it in abbreviated and practical, i.e. mnemonic, form the fundamental principles of the arbitrary content of culture. The principles em-bodied in this way are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness, and hence cannot be touched by voluntary, deliberate transformation, cannot even be made explicit; nothing seems more ineffable...than the values given the body...through injunctions as insignificant as 'stand up straight' or 'don't hold your knife in your left hand.'

The inculcation results in the production of a durable BODY-HEXIS which generates an infinite series of appropriate bodily postures, gestures and ways of speaking for a particular context. Such a shaping of the body and, particularly, its way of inhabiting lived spaces, is inculcated from a young age. Highly arbitrary aspects of a culture thus become part of the seemingly
natural order of things. What we tend to forget, perhaps, is that manners of speaking, no less than eating or walking, are inevitably corporeal and are thus subject to similar forms of injunction and inculcation. As Hanks (1996) notes “what distinguishes different genres and different fields is not whether they engage the body but how they engage it.” Certain orientations of bodies to space are in fact presupposed by particular acts of speaking. For an obvious case of this one might consider a telephone conversation, or a greeting, a secret gossip session, a “talking-to”, a proposal of marriage. All such activities presuppose some particular organization of interactive space. In speaking, we unthinkingly orient our bodies so as to more or less match these expectations of how a typical exchange of such and such a type should be played out - we may stand up, project our voice further, change the direction of our gaze etc. Typical ways of speaking - part of their unique contextualization - is, then, ingrained in the ways our bodies inhabit interactive space.

Marcel Mauss had, of course, introduced the concept of “techniques of the body” and habitus to anthropology as early as 1935. He suggested in ‘Techniques of the Body’ that seemingly natural bodily techniques such as walking, swimming and nursing had their own cultural history and were in fact always imbued with value. But the body hexis organizes more than just the obvious and readily observable activities mentioned by Mauss. More fundamental are the ways in which apperceptive schemas and ways of orienting oneself to interaction become ingrained in the individual through the process of socialization. As Hallowell (1955:184) noted, coordinated action always depends, in the first case, on the ability to orient oneself and co-interactants to emergent spatial frames:

The human individual is always provided with some culturally constituted means that are among the conditions which enable him [sic] to participate with his [sic] fellows in a
world whose spatial attributes are, in part, conceptualized and expressed in common terms. Ontogenetically, self-orientation, object-orientation, and spatio-temporal orientation are concomitantly developed during the process of socialization.

In the following I take orientation to be the ability of the self-aware actor to locate his or herself in relation to the boundaries and spaces laid out within a tacitly agreed upon local geography. This ability is obviously reflexive in that it relies on the capacity to perceive oneself as process, rather than a fixed point, in space. Much of everyday language production and interpretation is dependent on this reflexive capacity for orientation. For instance, the referent of deictic words such as "here" or "there" is always made relative to some GROUND and in most cases it is the body of the speaker which serves this purpose. However, it is not the purely physical body but always some local understanding of it that is mobilized in such referential practices. This involves, according to Hanks (1990, 1996a), a locally organized and generative corporeal schema through which self-aware actors assess the feasibility of potential modes of perceptual access. Part of this self-awareness must inevitably involve considerations of the way in which the actor is understood in relation to salient social categories. Participants to an interaction take into account not only their spatial location but also their social position vis-a-vis others. In fact, social engagement always involves an interaction between the participant's awareness of both social and spatial positionality. Thus parties to an interaction can show deference or elevation in interactive routines by occupying spaces in certain ways (Duranti 1994, Keating 1994). At the same time, participants, when inhabiting interactive space must be aware of the way in which certain moves may presuppose a certain social position, and, therefore, how they are partially restricted in the way they comport themselves.
8.2 Learning to *kaal* across spatial boundaries:

Female caregivers often encourage female children and infants to *kaal* to somebody passing by on the road but men and small boys rarely if ever engage in such behaviour. Most often the recipient of the *kaal* is some socially important other - an aunt, a grandmother, a brother, a sister etc. - so *kaal* elicitation carry a lot of information about the ways in which linguistic interaction is sensitive to social relations based on obligation, kinship and status differences. But *kaal* elicitation also carry with them a good deal of information about the spatial organization of talk and about the ways in which bodies should be oriented to one another. *Kaal* presupposes an addressee who is located somewhere outside the immediate HERE of an ongoing interaction. Thus in elicitation caregivers never say *kaal mii* but instead *kaal am/ii/shii*. This restriction to third person pronominal, as opposed to participant deictic, indicates that *kaal* is associated with a movement from outside to inside a shared interactional space. As it happens, this shared interactional space seems to be always homologous with the bounded spaces of the house or the yard. The following example illustrates this mapping from local geography to interactional space. Shanka, a mother of 12, is encouraging her youngest, Alicia (8 mons) to *kaal* to Ranii who is a family friend. She first asserts that Alicia is competent in such routines (1.) and then encourages her to show Seeta (Shanka’s sister-in-law) and myself. There is some confusion though as Seeta is unclear as to who Alicia habitually calls - Rakii (a friend of Seeta’s) or Ranii. What is revealing about this confusion, I think, is that Rakii had been walking along the road just prior to this elicitation routine. Seeta immediately assumes, based on the spatial arrangement of possible participants, that Rakii is the expected target. Shanka clarifies that it is in fact Ranii not Rakii. She then props up Alicia, who had been
lying in her arms, and faces her out towards the road bouncing her slightly so as to get her attention. With body oriented correctly to space - so that the prospective speaker is faced out from the house toward the road - she directs Alica to *kaal* <fig 8.2>.

Figure 8.2 Spatial organization of the first *kaal*-elicitation routine (Transcript 8.1, lines 1-12)
1. Shankā: ya -shi a kaal Taiga. Ranii wa Ranii see bad bad Ranii doz alweez
   yes -she calls to Tiger. Ranii - what- Ranii say she is bad ba(d) Ranii always

2. se shi bad yu bad ( ) shi a gu duu kaal fo Ranii
   say she is bad - you're bad ( ) she is going to call for Ranii

3. Seeta: Rakii shi a see?
   is it "Rakii" she says?

4. Shankā: Ranii
   "Ranii"

5. Seeta: kaal Ranii
   call Ranii

6. Shankā: shi a kaal Taiga pleen Taiga
   she calls Tiger dearly "tiger"

7. Seeta: kaal Ranii
   call Ranii

The distance from the bottomhouse, where we were seated, to the road is about sixty or seventy feet. Although the road is raised so as to form a kind of stage from the perspective of the houses, it is often difficult from this distance to make out who it is, exactly, one sees. Shankā is aware of this potential difficulty and when Alicia does not respond to the first elicitation attempt, she redefines the task so that it relies less on the ability for long-distance perception and recognition. First, she gives verbal information that is meant to substitute for the visual cues. She tells Alicia that Ranii is coming (line 8). She also supplements the manipulation of Alicia's body with verbal cues wach "watch" meant to direct her attention and indicate the
mode of access to perceptual information.

(8.2)
8. Shanka: wa Ranii see? kaal antii Ranii luk Ranii kaal shii wach Ranii a kom
what does Ranii say? call aunty Ranii - look Rani i- call her - watch Ranii is coming

9. Seeta: wach
watch

10. Shanka: wach Ranii <laughs> SWAa kaal Ranii
watch Ranii watch call Ranii

11. Seeta: kaal shi
call her

12. Shanka: kaal shi
call her

Unable to get Alica to kaal to Ranii. Shanka encourages the little girl to change her perceptual focus. Ranii had been outside the perimeter of the yard on the road and Shanka had directed Alicia to look out from the house. Now, Shanka encourages Alicia to look out from the house but to a place within the space of the yard (line 14, <fig. 8.3>).

Figure 8.3 SPATIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE SECOND KAAL-ELICITATION ROUTINE (Transcript 8.2, lines 13-15)
This *kal*-routine, then, takes as the salient boundary the one that divides space of the nuclear family, which is the house, from the space of the patrilocal unit, which is the yard. It therefore contrasts with the earlier elicitation which was primarily oriented toward the boundary which separates the yard from the road. This change in spatial orientation is reflected in the change in the target participant. Ranii is not a family member and thus the salient boundary for her is the one that marks membership in the patrilocal group from non-membership - i.e. the yard space. However in the following Alicia is encouraged to *kaal* her brother Taiga who is a member of the extended patrilocal unit. For Taiga the salient boundary is not the yard perimeter - he is free to cross it at any time and, in fact is constantly coming and going. Instead the boundary of particular importance for the orientation of Alicia and Taiga is the house perimeter. Alicia is within this perimeter while Taiga is outside it. Further Taiga is not a member of the nuclear family so he does not have full privileges with regard to this space - he can be told to leave by an adult family member at any time.

(8.3)
13.Seeta:  
*kaal Taiga den*
 *
call Tiger then*

14.Shanka:  
*wach Taiga (a) kom wach Taiga a kom kaal Taiga -luk i de wach*
 *
watch Tiger is coming - watch Tiger is coming - call Tiger - look he's there watch*

15.Seeta:  
*kaal Taiga*
 *
call Tiger*

During this exchange Shanka begins gesturing at Taiga thus using her body as signalling medium. She also uses the deictic verb *kom* to construct an alignment between participants and an orientation to space. Because Shanka and Alicia are essentially sharing the same space (Alicia on her lap) the ground for this deictic reference includes their shared location and perceptual orientation. But the actual placement of participants at the time, with Taiga in the yard but
outside the space of the house, and the four of us seated around the bottomhouse table, indicates that the deictic ground here is more extensive and, in fact, includes the shared interactional space which the proximate participants are currently inhabiting - i.e. the bottomhouse. This construal of space is reinforced in line 14, when Shanka specifies a location THERE which Taiga is inhabiting against the same interactional ground.

As I noted earlier, while female caregivers frequently elicit *kals* primarily from female children, I have never witnessed adult men engaging in such routines with children of either sex. It might be surmised, then, that women in this community have developed communicative practices such as *kaling* routines which partially mitigate, if not challenge, the ways in which their movement through the spaces laid out in a local geography is restricted. In *kaal* routines, women seize on the opportunity for social interaction that presents itself when a friend or family member is passing by. Such routines, then, transform mundane and instrumental uses of the road (i.e. getting from a to b) into a form of social engagement. As such, *kaling off* (and visiting exchanges which are thereby precipitated) is an important means by which women can circumvent restrictions on their movement and, by extension, restrictions on the quality and quantity of their social relationships. From this perspective, *kal*-elicitation routines open up possibilities for visiting and the dissemination of knowledge between women. Notice that adult women are not only socializing novices in this way, but are also using them strategically to achieve their own ends, that is calling in a friend to visit.

8.3 Learning to *kos* and claiming rights to inhabit interactive space.

In the next example, a young girl, Mando, (3.3) is encouraged to *kos* by an older girl
named Kavita (9). The recipient of the kos in this projected frame is Kavita’s little sister and Mando’s distant cousin, four year-old Baby (4.9). The children had been playing in the bottomhouse of Kavita and Baby’s home for some time with Mando coming and going periodically. Mando lives with her parents in her great-grandmother’s house which is in the same yard. She therefore has an ambiguous relationship to the emergent play area in comparison with Baby and Kavita.

1. **Baby:** **EE GYAL** (muv fram deer) WA YU KOM HIA FA? yu wan mi kyeer yu bak a hey girl, move from there, what did you come here for? Shall I carry you back to

2. Linda dem?
   Linda’s house?

3. **Mando:** ya
   yes

4. **Baby:** wel guwan yu wee
   well go - on your way

5. **Kavita:** tel-kos shi
   tell - curse her

6. **Kumar:** riimuv from deer. riimuv from deer (mandoo)
   remove from there remove from there Mando

7. **Mando:** ( ) from hee? riimuv from he
   ( ) from here? remove from here

8. **Baby:** riimuv an stee ( ) pikcha
   remove and stay ( ) picture

9. **Mando:** (Beebii)
   (Baby)
10. Kavita: kos shii
         curse her

11. Kavita: tel shi. kos shi
tell her curse her

12. Mando: (yu moda)
            (your mother)

13. Kavita: yu moda
            your mother

            your mother your mother

15. Baby: fok af (aal)
          fuck off (all of you)

16. Kavita: az shi kosh yu kosh shi bak
            as she curses you - curse her back

17. Baby: fok af
          fuck off

18. Kavita: kyaan duu yu notin kos shi bak
            (she) can't harm/trouble you curse her back

          fuck off

20. Kavita: kosh shi bak
            curse her back

          fuck off

22. Kavita: kosh shi bak na mek plee fu ko(r)s shi kosh shi bak
            curse her back - don't fool around - curse her - curse her back

23. Baby: fok af ( )
          fuck off

24. Kavita: (yu kosh shi Manda) <whisper>
            you curse her Manda

25. Baby: (yu noo) fu kos? yu laarn?
          you know how to curse? you learn?
26. Kavita: kosh shi bak
curse her back

27. Baby: (wee til shi dadii kom mi gu tel am)
wait till her daddy comes - I am going to tell him

28. Kavita: yuu na kos shii? sh- shi na ga kors bak yu?
did you not curse her? mustn’t she curse you back?

In order to understand why Kavita instructs Mando to *kos* specifically (not some other verbal activity) and to understand the kinds of information that Mando is there by exposed to we need to examine the place of the elicitation within a surrounding context which includes both preceding utterances and the background assumptions of contextual relevance that are partially shared by participants. We might begin by noting that *kos* is conceived of as an almost physical, as opposed to verbal, action: the linguistic component of a locally recognized *kos* being combined in practice with threatening postures and quick movements of the hand and head. The occurrence of the lexical items locally classified as *curse words* is thus a necessary but not sufficient criterion for a given utterance to be considered an act of *kosing*.

Given this emphasis on physicality, it is not surprising that *kos* is strongly associated with, and hence indexes, a certain structuring of interactional space. In the practice of *kosing*, interacting bodies are mutually engaged by lines of perception and close proximity. Because *kos* as a practice is so strongly associated with interaction between highly proximate participants, the metalinguistic predicate *kos* in elicitations presupposes this proximity for the projected context. Looking at the transcript we find that the small girl Mando is invited to *kos* in line (10) only after her antagonist(s) has threatened to move her from the immediate space of ongoing interaction (lines 1-2, 4, 6, 8). A more detailed examination of the opening line reveals that Baby is using a number of different indexicals to characterize her relationship to Mando and
Mando’s relationship to the emergent play area. From the start she uses an address strategy which indicates an age-graded relationship. Such a call to attention - EE GYAL is typical of parents to children especially when combined as it is here with an increase in volume. From there Baby goes on to use spatial deictics to establish the contested nature of the interactive space. Baby first establishes an opposition between an unmarked HERE and a marked THERE which is coterminous with Mando’s location (muv fram deer). This makes Mando’s position cognitively salient. Baby then characterizes HERE as a space which encompasses both Mando and herself (wa yu kom hia fa) and opposes this with the space occupied by Linda dem. As Linda and her extended family live in the neighbouring yard Baby’s opposition clearly establishes the “here” of the emergent interactive space along lines defined by property and inheritance through kinship within the LOCAL GEOGRAPHY. The fact that Mando’s young parent’s have no property of their own whereas Baby’s family may claim to own a house and part of the yard is highly relevant and forms an important interpretive backdrop to the interaction. These spatial relations are schematized in figure 8.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HERE “wa yu kom hia fa.”</th>
<th>NOT HERE “Linda dem”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>=the play area (ie. Mando and Baby’s location)</td>
<td>=Linda’s yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=the yard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THERE “muv fram deer”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=Mando’s location</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8.4 SPATIAL ARRANGEMENTS AND PARTICIPANTS (Transcript 2, line 1)

Baby further establishes the relationship between Mando and herself by suggesting that Mando

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3Baby is alternating between absorbtive and non-absorbtive readings of HERE. When she says “muv fram deer” THERE and HERE are aligned exclusively with each participant inhabiting a distinctly bounded and separate space. When she says “wa yu kom hia fa” the exclusive relation has collapsed and now HERE includes the region that was formerly undertood as THERE.
should have a purpose in coming to Baby's family's house - thus Baby asks *wa yu kom hia FA*? This indicates that Mando is not a member of the immediate household and patrilocal
domestic unit since household members need not have a reason for occupying the space of the
their own house. Finally Baby suggests that she *kyeer* Mando back to Linda's house. *Kyeer* in
Guyanese Creole is not exactly synonymous with English carry although it can indicate an
action whereby an agent manually transports an object such as an infant. But *kyeer* can also
mean something like English *escort* - as in *ma gu kyeer yu a Suuz Daik* “I am going to take you to
Suuz Daik.” It indicates that one person is more capable or agentive than the other.

So Baby is doing a lot of indexical work here to establish a context wherein Mando must
respect her authority, comply to her directions and recognize her own limited privilege vis-a-vis
a now established interactive space. When Kavita elicits Mando to *kos* in line (5.) she is
construing a projected context in which Mando defends her privilege to occupy the same
interactional space as Baby. While Baby's contextualization relied on a variety of indexical
signals - a number of which I haven't discussed here - Kavita's projected frame uses lexico-
grammatical structure and the lexical-semantics of a verb which typifies speech interaction. As I
mentioned above *kos* refers to an action that is conducted between highly proximate
participants and it thus presupposes this for the projected frame which Kavita is establishing.
Furthermore of all the verbs used in elicitations, *kos*, in terms of its lexico-grammatical
structure, most characterizes the argument which codes addressee as a patient, that is as a
directly affected entity (see chapter 3). As such Kavita's elicitation to *kos* entails a defence by
Mando of her privilege to occupy the space within which the interaction is taking place. Now a
defence of this sort must draw on some understanding of the way in which people can be
legitimately related to definable places (cf. Goodwin 1990). As I have already suggested, a number of criteria are used in assessing such multiple relations. In this case, Baby is clearly prioritizing a notion of the inalienable right of a nuclear family to occupy the space of their own house. Kavita, on the other hand, seems to invoke two notions. While foregrounding the fundamental autonomy of the individual and associated privileges to go about one’s daily activities unhindered by others, she simultaneously invokes the importance of patrilocal group membership which, in some cases, can override nuclear group membership as the salient cultural criteria relating people to spaces.

In peer-focused activities such as the one discussed here involving elicitations to *kos*, children learn ways of negotiating body and interactive space which are vital to the protection of their individual autonomy. Such *kos*-elicitation routines seem not to be so highly gendered as ones involving *kal*. Since both boys and girls must develop abilities to defend their privileges to occupy interactive space, coinciding in many cases with patrilocal or nuclear group landholdings, this lack of gender differentiation is perhaps not surprising.

8.4 CONCLUSIONS:

Evidence of the kind presented here suggests that complex forms of spatial orientation in communicative practice do not derive from a basic dyadic model of the sort suggested in Saussure’s diagram reproduced at the beginning of this chapter. Rather, spatial orientation involves an anchoring to local spaces and an ability to shift one’s perceptual focus in ways appropriate to an infinite variety of situations. Instruction here proceeds by modelling linguistic practice as an instance of a particular type for which contextual parameters, such as the relative
location, directionality and perceptual focus of participants, can be set. The knowledge derived from elicitation routines speaks not only to the child's developing linguistic and communicative competence but also the child's emerging understanding of the way space is partitioned into smaller units. In addition, these subspaces such as yards, houses, and the road are always understood and negotiated relative to one's social location. Thus children learn both a local geography and spatial orientation for communicative practice in and through the categories of gender and kin-group membership. To conclude, it is apparent that, through elicitation routines, children are learning important lessons not just about the uses and functions of language but also about the nature of the social space within which everyday life takes place. By extension children also learn about the relevant social categories of kin-group membership, gender and age ranks. The analysis of elicitations, then, highlights the way in which knowledge about social categories, spatial arrangements and bodily comportment in talk is embedded within complex interactional routines. As such, they are an important resource for analysts and language learners alike.
CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS

9.0  POWER, STEREOTYPE AND THE GENDERING OF TALK

At various points in the preceding pages, I have suggested that traditional ideas about women and gender difference play an important role in the organization and interpretation of talk. Thus, in chapter 5, I suggested that women's avoidance of the acrolectal pronoun variant ai was motivated by a need to protect oneself from charges of acting bigity. At the same time, women tend to avoid solidarity-coded am because such usages can potentially mark them as country, stupid and ignorant (especially when am is used in its least favoured context - for reference to animates). In terms of discourse level patterning and self-comportment, I argued in chapter 6 that the interpretation of women's role in verbal dispute is strongly influenced by dominant ideas about the relation between language and gender. The strong connection between argument and femininity is captured in the proverb, man strengt de in ii han, homan wan de in shi mout “A man's strength is in his hand, a woman's is in her mouth.” The idea that busing (a name given to women's argument in Guyana) is essentially feminine (and restricted to the working class) has also influenced scholarly writing. Thus Edwards (1977:196) working in the framework of the ethnography of speaking writes:

_Busin_ interchanges are engaged in by working class women in Guyana. The usual social purpose is to settle an _eye-pass_ dispute between socially equal women. Each contestant tries to re-establish social equality in the face of what is perceived as an attempt by her

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1Edwards, embracing the tools of ethnography of speaking, does not recognize the ideological and interpretive nature of metalinguistic terminology (“named speech events”). Speech practices and their objective characteristics are thus equated with the terms and definitions native speakers give to them in the process of interpretation.
adversary to assert social dominance.

The restriction of busing to working class women is made even more explicit in a long footnote in which Edwards (1977:211-212) suggests:

Middle class women do not engage in busin contests since among middle class people busin is a strongly stigmatized working class behaviour pattern [...] In conflict situations (including those involving eye-pass) middle-class people in Guyana generally defend their social rights and points of view with reasoned argumentation - frequently, but not necessarily, in the presence of others who act as arbiters. These altercations, however, never become as loud or as publicly oriented or as personally abusive as busins [...] Because men do not buse each other in Guyana, one frequently finds cases where women buse against men, secure in the knowledge that men are prevented by the social rules from responding in kind. If a man in such a situation attempts to buse, he opens himself to the insult of being labelled an anti-man (i.e. a homosexual).

It is, however, hard to reconcile these assertions with Edward's own data. In the example Edwards presents, Johnson, the current mate of one woman and the former mate of the other, involves himself in the dispute from the start. His involvement, however, goes completely without comment in the analysis. In the midst of what Edwards calls a "classic" busin session, Johnstone is most certainly involved. The following is an excerpt from the transcript presented in Edwards' (1977:200-201) paper:

Johnson: Look woman, you're disturbing me.
Joan: You are supposed to pay some money to the court. What happen?
Johnson: Look woman, why you don't stop pester ing me? I don't want hear anything from you about any money. If you want your money, why you don't go to the court? I don't have any business with you. Why you don't drop dead? Go along about your business, eh! (Johnson leaves the window, door being shook violently.)

(Millicent (to Joan) Why you don't go away and stop bothering people.
Joan: I didn't come to you. I come to Johnson.
Millicent: Well if yu come to he, yu come to me too.
Joan: How you come in this? Why yu don't keep out?
(standing now on Johnson's mother's back steps).
Millicent: Keep out? Keep out? He is me husband and whatever involve he, involve me. And he ent want see you.
(Johnson comes back to the window)
Joan: Why you don't keep out, yu red whore yu.
Remarkably, Edwards seems quite oblivious to the way in which participation is negotiated at the beginning of this excerpt (with Joan attempting to address Johnson and Millicent claiming to speak for him). Even more remarkable is the way Johnson's violent outburst is completely ignored in the analysis. It is as though the local ideology of speech events makes the native observer/researcher unable or unwilling to recognize male involvement in routines that are classified as *busing*. It seems, then, that the linguistic ideology which associates disputes of this kind with the expression of an essential femininity is powerful enough to shape scholarly discourse on the subject.² Outside of scholarly discourse, at the more local village level, the effect of this ideology is to frame women's disputes as inevitable (being the expression of what is fundamentally female) and divert attention away from the social causes of the conflict. One might ask whether this ideology, implicated in a metalinguistic terminology which separates out women's argument and accords it special treatment (i.e. lexicalization), is, in some sense accurate. If, then, one were to compare verbal disputes which have women as their main

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²These stereotypes of creole women and argument were already present in colonial writings. In the collection edited by Abrahams and Szwed (1983) we find several cases where colonial writers make a connection between women, dispute, irrationality and disoderliness. The remarks of Charles William Day (1852: vol II, 111-114) are typical:

A negro market place presents some droll scenes, and a stroll through one never fails to repay a looker on. Billingsgate must hide its diminished head, must be silent, at the vituperative vocabulary of a couple of infuriated nesses. So excitable are these people, that a fourth of an hour never elapses without a 'scene'. Such gesticulation, such pantomime, such a roll out of unintelligible phrases, making it difficult to recognize one's own language.
participants with those involving men, would it possible to find significant differences in conversational structure? That is to say, is the distinction made in metalinguistic terminology based on observable differences in the structure of the arguments themselves? In table 9.1, I have compared four disputes which differ along two dimensions: the gender of the participants and the relatively public nature of the event itself. The latter is measured in terms of the number of non-participants who were involved as overhearers.

<table>
<thead>
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<td>aggressive upgrading interruption</td>
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<td>curse words</td>
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<td>yes</td>
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<td>other initiated repair/ clarification</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 9.1 Some Formal Features of Disputes over Four Instances**

In terms of the formal features of conversational structure, the disputes seem to be just as obviously differentiated in terms of their public or nonpublic character as they are by the gender of the participants. However, the ideological nature of metalinguistic terminology is
seen in the way it singles out women's arguments as a particular type (despite the lack of obvious distinguishing formal features), focuses attention on them, and characterizes them in a certain way. This gendering of language and self-comportment is hegemonic in so far as it has become a part of the resources people use in making sense of the world (i.e. traditional wisdom and “commonsense”). Such strategies are, as I have demonstrated in chapter 6, firmly embedded in the everyday practices through which people are gendered.

I have pursued these questions, and raise them again here, in order to emphasize the way in which the notion of speech community is inflected by power. I have suggested that people invoke notions of the egalitarian speech community in talk. In doing so they alternatively emphasize notions of autonomy or age-graded and gendered solidarity. Similarly, participants to an interaction invoke alternate notions of gender in order to frame talk. I now turn to a consideration of the way in which challenges to the hegemonic gendering of self-comportment are embedded in the multiple ideologies of the egalitarian community.

9.1 MODES OF RESISTANCE

9.1.1 THE “TRADITIONAL” PATTERN

While women's role in dispute processes tends to be interpreted as the expression of something essentially feminine, this does not make traditional strategies of hard talk necessarily or completely ineffective. Although, in the example I discussed in chapter 6, I have emphasized the way in which Pria was interpreted as low-class (and was therefore stigmatized) such strategies are, in fact, an important means by which women use traditional stereotypes to mitigate forms of gender inequality in the village. Because women are considered prone to such
affect marked and public displays, because they are women, they are expected to engage in them. This, then, is a discursive space for women within the traditional pattern. During public displays of this sort, women shame husbands (and other opponents) by exposing aspects of their behaviour (or imputed behaviour) that would otherwise not be held up to public scrutiny. Women, for instance, frequently suggest that their husbands do not live up to “traditional” notions of masculinity. They may charge that their husbands are unable to provide for their families, that they are socially impotent (i.e. that they are bossed around by everyone else - that they can’t stick up for themselves), or that they are sexually “inadequate” (that they are auntyman “homosexual”). This kind of strategy uses dominant stereotypes of women (as prone to verbal dispute) and men (as ideally “masculine”) to publicly shame husbands. But such strategies also work at a more basic level in so far as the wife’s aggressive role in the conflict talk is itself an icon of the husband’s failing authority. Such verbal strategies thus draw on and, at the same time critique, the ideology of age-graded and gendered solidarity which presupposes a relation of asymmetrical obligation between wife and husband. In making this critique women often draw on notions of autonomy as the constitutive feature of the egalitarian society. Thus, in chapter 6, we saw that Pria claims status as a “big woman” who must know wrong and right for herself. Women, then, in contesting the traditional gender roles manipulate both aspects of the ideology of egalitarianism. However, while contesting the details of particular instantiations of the traditional gender pattern (such as in a particular marriage), these strategies, nevertheless, seem to reproduce the hegemonic gendering of talk. In such performances women appear divisive, prone to argument, excessively emotional and even irrational. Such strategies do not, therefore, seem capable of deconstructing the dominant notions of gender
differentiation and inequality in the village.

9.1.2 Other Forms of Resistance

In contrast, the move of some women into what are traditionally male roles does seem to deconstruct hegemonic notions of gender difference. Women may occupy both working class and more upwardly mobile “male” roles. In the first case, women who, for various reasons, become the sole economic providers for their households often cultivate public faces that are particularly assertive. Most often, these women eschew performances of passion like the ones noted above and instead prefer more “controlled” argument and debate. Although deft in the serious, decision making genres which are typically dominated by men, these women also engage in gyañ which is punctuated with sexual humour. Although these women do not move freely in male spaces such as the rumshop, they do often hold their own private drinking sessions during which they sing love songs in which women figure as the sexual and emotional aggressor. Such occasions also set up contexts for otherwise demure women (who may be invited) to explore other forms of gender performance. As Goodwin (1988, 1990) has consistently demonstrated the meaning and significance of gender difference emerges with particular contexts of activity. Earlier, I mentioned that widowed women, many of whom fall into this category now under discussion, often find themselves in a very tenuous position facing periodic shortage more frequently than others. The domestic authority which these women hold thus does not mirror their economic standing and, very often, they are some of the poorest people in the community. Despite moving into many male roles, female household heads are paid women’s, not men’s, wages. This said, the same women are, for the most part, removed
from the scandal network and find it less necessary to cultivate “respectable” representations of themselves. In fact they seem to explicitly reject such concerns for respectability in their sexual joking.

Women may also occupy more upwardly mobile socio-economic positions which are typically associated with men. As I mentioned in chapter 2, Ashan and her sisters, the Pakar, became the owners of a very successful shop in the village. While the domestic structure in this case was quite obviously age-graded, with the senior sister acting as family head, it was not gendered in the usual way. The brother was “kept” by the sisters and was subordinate to them. Ashan and her sisters explicitly rejected the idea that men were necessary to the running of a successful business. Although male workers were frequently employed on a day-to-day basis, all executive decisions were made by Ashan in consultation with the next oldest sister. Women like Ashan upset the traditional hegemonic gendering of social roles and economic order. Their movement into male roles both in domestic structure and in the economic marketplace effectively deconstructs traditional notions of gender difference. The resultant uneasiness which resulted among others (both male and female) points to the importance of such strategies in promoting social change. In interactions with others, Ashan draws on both typically male and typically female speech styles. I have already illustrated the way in which Ashan’s ability to frame interactions in terms of both her positions at the head of the domestic unit (within an age-graded and gendered solidarity) and as an autonomous individual is illustrated in her variant pronominal usage.

9.2 Socialization, Gender and Power
Women's important role in socialization also points to possibilities for resistance to the hegemonic gendering of social roles and practices. However, in most cases, socialization practices seem to reproduce rather than to challenge the traditional pattern. Thus, women are frequently involved in the policing of other women's movement, and in the shaming practices which I documented in chapter 7 and which play into notions of "respectability." Socialization practices clearly reproduce both the ideologies of egalitarianism - as autonomy and as age-graded and gendered solidarity. Such practices also seem to reproduce traditional forms of gender difference and inequality. All caregivers socialize girls and boys differently. Girls are dressed up in pretty dresses and an attempt is made to keep them neat and clean. Boys are generally allowed to run freely, first naked and then in bokta "underpants." Male caregivers are more likely than women to engage in "fear" routines with young boys (see chapter 6) but generally the differences between boys, on the one hand, and girls, on the other, is evident with both male and female caregivers. So while caregiver strategies do not seem to deconstruct dominant ideologies of gender difference (in fact, as caregiver strategies, explicitly oriented towards reproducing the "way things are" from the participant's point of view, they are more likely to be motivated by a desire to inculcate such difference), they do include instruction in routines which mitigate the constraints on women's social lives. I have made this case in the discussion of kal-elicitations and it should be noted that women frequently instruct small girls in cussing and hard talk too. As I have argued earlier, however, such strategies do not contest difference per se but do offer partial solutions to those whose lives such difference and inequality constrain.

Socialization practices seem more devoted to the reproduction than the contestation of
existing power relations. At the same time, such practices provide explicit training in manipulating the multiple notions of community which are potentially available at any interactional juncture. As such, socialization practices, while reproducing the power relations between men and women, are also vital to the reproduction of the means by which such relations of inequality are mitigated and contested in talk.

9.3 Variation, Discourse and Ethnography: The Reciprocity of Perspectives

Rickford writes (1988:55):

Only a handful of studies within creolistics have dealt with pragmatics, conversation and discourse analysis, or the analysis of speech acts or events, although these aspects have become more central within sociolinguistics over the past decade. This is not in itself a bad thing, since it could be argued that these kinds of approaches are less relevant in theoretical and practical terms to the kinds of communities in which pidgins and creoles are spoken.

While I agree with Rickford (1988:55) when he goes onto to argue that “some creolists are reverting to variation-blind and context insensitive descriptions, whether in old-style structuralist or new-style generativist molds”. I find the analytical separation of “discourse” and “variation” troubling. As a number of studies have demonstrated, many variable features of language are controlled by discourse phenomena (for examples see Ochs 1986a, Eckert and McConnell Ginet 1995). As I have argued in Chapter 4, some aspects of pronominal variation in G.C. require a discourse-based explanation. The general point here is that qualitative and qualitative perspectives, rather than being incompatible, can be mutually illuminating.

The situation has changed significantly in the ten years since Rickford made these remarks. Increasingly common are fusions of mainstream linguistic perspectives (which has rediscovered variation through optimality theory) with sociolinguistic techniques and
methodology (for example Sells, Rickford and Wasow 1996). At the same time, some
variationists are moving closer to discourse-based approaches (which draw on recent work in
the study of context in linguistic anthropology). It appears that divisions are once again
asserting themselves between closely related disciplines through new alliances and contingently
reciprocal perspectives. Meanwhile, linguistic anthropologists have been reassessing techniques
for linguistic typology and description in an attempt to clarify the functionality of some of the
more troubling areas of linguistic structure. Finally, linguistically grounded social theorists and
conversational analysts are operationalizing theoretical perspectives on language that can
adequately deal with the complex co-construction of gender, social location and activity in
linguistic practice.

So where does creolistics fit into this changing landscape? One way to answer this
question is to ask what we don't know at this point. When I ask this question I am not so much
concerned with knowledge in terms of disciplinary divisions or theoretical schools. We certainly
don't know much, for instance, about discourse markers in any creole variety (and the relation
of such elements to processes of grammaticalization). However the answer to the question is
not, I think, to send a hundred and one CA specialists out with tape recorder in hand.
Specifying the precise meanings of eh eh in an infinite variety of contexts, while of potential
significance to the development of a culturally sensitive CA, would not, it seems, be of much
relevance to the vast majority of creole-speakers in Guyana.

This is not to say that CA or discourse based approaches should not be applied to
creole-speaking communities. On the contrary they may turn out to be indispensable. For when
we ask what we don't know it is the people and the communities that should be considered, not
abstract notions of a "language" or "the range of variability."

As such, one answer to the question of what we don’t know would involve the relation of gender to language. As I showed in chapter 5, there are very few variationist studies of creole-speaking communities that consider the import of gender in any depth. While variationist techniques have been very useful in illuminating the relevance of socio-economic class, we have to admit that they have largely failed in adducing the relevance of gender in the context of creole-speaking communities of the Caribbean. In chapter 5, I suggested that this situation resulted not from any lack of differentiation in the speech community but from a general misconception of the way in which gender becomes relevant to social actors. Such arguments have become increasingly common in gender and variationist studies. As it turns out, the importance of gender may only be revealed by perspectives that combine qualitative and qualitative, variationist and discourse approaches.

There is another reason why discourse and pragmatically based approaches to language are relevant to the communities studied. As a number of scholars have shown, this level of linguistic organization is not neutral. Rather ideologies of language have the power not only to shape the way people talk, and interact generally, but also to naturalize relations of power and privilege. I have argued that the conceptual organization of conflict talk in the village naturalizes relations of power between women and men. This ideology, embedded in ways of thinking about language, makes women seem irrational, prone to argument and trivializes the kinds of oppression that they face daily. The application of current CA and anthropological approaches is drastically needed in order to arrest the process by which these stereotypes are recreated in the academic and applied literature. Creolistics and creole studies would thus, I
think, only benefit from greater cooperation between variationists, theoretical and descriptive linguists, conversational analysts, anthropologists and those working in the areas of social, post-colonial and feminist theory.
APPENDIX 1
A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE VARIETY

0.0 INTRODUCTION

The following is a brief sketch of some aspects of GC phonology, grammar and lexis. This account is intended to serve as guide to the transcripts provided in the text and as a general reference tool in the discussion of grammatical features and morphosyntactic variability. The reader is directed to the sources cited in the text form more detailed accounts.

1.0 PHONOLOGY

The set of phonological contrasts employed in GC and some of the allophonic and sociolinguistic variation found in more creole varieties is discussed by Wells (1982) and in Sidnell (n.d.5). GC shares a number of well known phonological features with other Anglophone creoles. Most characteristic is the neutralization of the opposition between /th/ and /t/ and between /dh/ and /d/. Thus, father is pronounced /fada/ and thing is pronounced /ting/.

Also, following Wells (1982), we might note systematic reduction of consonant clusters as another characteristic GC shares with the Anglophone creoles generally. As Wells (1982:566) notes, the “phonotactics of consonant clustering is sociolinguistically sensitive” and people generally vary socially and stylistically in the degree to which they realize consonant clusters.

However in some cases, such as /sen/ for send and /hool/ for hold an almost invariant use of the reduced form may well indicate an underlying form which does not contain the final consonant.

In formal speech styles, then, final clusters must be reconstructed and added to “reduced” underlying forms thus giving rise to the possibility for hypercorrection (cf Rickford 1987b,
Patrick and McElhinny 1994). Another feature that GC shares with JC (Patrick 1996) is glide insertion. The palatal glide appears between velar consonants and a following open vowel (cf Wells 1982:569). Thus cat is realized as /kat/, gas as /gas/, car as /kar/, can as /kan/ etc. The glide does not appear in cases where the vowel is derived from a backed vowel in the lexifier language (English). So corn is not /kon/ but instead /kan/ and coffee is not /koff/ but instead /kaif/. In GC word final /t/ is variably realized. It occurs most frequently in monosyllabic words (i.e. when it is stressed) such as car /kar/. However, several items seem to have been lexified as r-less and rarely occur in anything but r-less form /hia/ or /ya/ for here, /nii/ for near, and /de/ or /dee/ for there. It is very infrequent in unstressed, word final positions (teacher, father, mother).

The vowel system of GC is strikingly similar to that of JC (Wells 1982:581). Excluding rare acrolectal variants, the vowel system includes the following phonological contrasts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i</th>
<th>ii</th>
<th>u</th>
<th>uu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>ee</td>
<td>o→</td>
<td>oo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>ai</td>
<td>aa</td>
<td>ou</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 VOWEL INVENTORY FOR GC

The vowel /a/ is marked with an arrow to indicate the possibility for backward movement.

Certain lexical items, such as come, are variably realized with a backed vowel as in /kɔm/ or /kɔm/. Such variation is relatively rare however and seems to be restricted to particular lexical items. Note that in the basilectal system a number of the low vowels and diphthongs are merged. Thus the /a/ of other dialects (GenAm pot) is realized as /a/ as is the initial vowel in the diphthong in boy - /ɔy/ becomes /ai/. This makes for some rather amusing homonyms such as lawyer and liar /lɔa/.

The long /ɔ/ of other varieties of English (in R.P. cloth, and talk) is
realized as /aa/ in basilectal creole varieties. This last feature appears to be a stereotype, in the Labovian (1972) sense, of East Indian and rural speech in Guyana (cf Rickford 1987b). The vowels of face /fees/ and place /plees/ are long monophthongs. There are a number of phonological processes that have affected the shape of individual words. These include metathesis as in ask /aks/ and vowel insertion as in arm /aram/.

2.0 LEXICON

As the terms “English lexified” and “Anglophone creole” indicate, the lexicon of GC and related varieties is derived mainly from the English dialects of Great Britain. In predominantly East Indian villages however a number of semantic domains are covered by Hindi terminology. This is especially the case for the relatively specialized vocabularies of kinship, cuisine, and religion. The Hindi component combines with an earlier African one to produce a rather distinctive lexicon. In addition, as with other Caribbean Creoles, the GC lexicon includes a number of elements from Portuguese, Spanish and also from the English working class dialects of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Older people often remark that the Hindi kinship system is no longer understood or used properly by the younger generation. Nevertheless there are a number of Hindi terms in everyday use in the village. They are listed below with the genealogical definitions:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HINDI TERM</th>
<th>GENEALOGICAL RELATION</th>
<th>ENGLISH GLOSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aja</td>
<td>fa. fa.</td>
<td>grandfather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aji</td>
<td>fa. mo.</td>
<td>grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nana</td>
<td>mo. fa.</td>
<td>grandfather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nani</td>
<td>mo. mo.</td>
<td>grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chacha</td>
<td>fa. br.</td>
<td>uncle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chachi</td>
<td>fa. br. wi.</td>
<td>aunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mausa</td>
<td>mo. si. hus.</td>
<td>uncle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mausi</td>
<td>mo. si.</td>
<td>aunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mamu</td>
<td>mo. br.</td>
<td>uncle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mami</td>
<td>mo. br. wi.</td>
<td>aunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bonai</td>
<td>si. hu</td>
<td>brother in law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baujii</td>
<td>br. wi.</td>
<td>sister in law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saroo</td>
<td>wi. si. hu.</td>
<td>brother in law</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. HINDI KIN TERMS IN COMMON USE IN THE VILLAGE**

Kinship terms are marked morphologically along two salient dimensions: gender of the referent, and nature of relation (father or mother's side). Kin terms referring to females have suffix/-i/, those referring to males have suffix/-a/. Root terms for kin on the mother's side begin with a nasal segment (either /n/ or /m/) while terms for kin on the father's side do not (cf Rampaul 1978).

The set of Hindi kinship terms in the village is somewhat contracted when compared with non-diaspora East Indian communities (Rampaul 1978). The contraction is not random, rather it is the terms for ego's juniors which have been abandoned. In the village the very use of a Hindi term is taken, in itself, as an addressee or referent honorific insofar as it indexes a "traditional" contextual frame of respect. The terms, as a paradigmatic set, then, have taken on this second-order indexicality (cf Silverstein 1996). The use of Hindi terms for juniors (such as beti "daughter" and beta "son") is therefore is rare and somewhat contradictory.
The semantic domain of cooking is similarly populated with many Hindi lexical items. Thus greens are referred to as baigan or balanjii “eggplant”, bajii “calaloo/spinach”, aluu “potato”. Curry is cooked in a kaharii “a round pot” and roti on the tawa “a flat, thick pan”. When cooking the curry one must let it bunjee “let it cook covered, simmering in its own water”. For daal “split peas cooked with water, garlic and oil” it is necessary to first chonkee the masala “add mixed spice to hot oil.” The rolling out of roti is referred to as beelee. One popular local song goes: “mamii beelee rotii, dadii chonkee daal, mamii beelee rotii, bodoo iit out aal.”

Religious practice is also commonly talked about using Hindi rather than English words although people are quite comfortable in exchanging church for mandir or mosque. Esoteric religious knowledge involves a number of Indian place-names as well as the names and qualities of deities (Hanuman, Ram, Ganish, Lachmii etc.). Everybody in the village can describe what is involved in Jhandi¹ and various types of Puja².

Besides the Hindi element in the lexicon, people often note the presence of what they term “creolese” words (cf. Bullen-McKenzie 1978). As opposed to the Hindi terms discussed above these words are considered to have been borrowed from Afro-Guyanese populations or, alternatively, are reasoned to be the spontaneous creations of East Indian immigrants. In fact many of the lexical items and phrases can be shown to have some connection (either through borrowing, calquing or loan translating) to African sources. Villagers classify the following as particularly “creolese” words.

¹ Jhandi “The religious ceremony of thanksgiving to Hanuman, performed by a pandit; it is held on a Tuesday or a Saturday.”(Allsopp 1996:312)

² Puja “An act of prayer and worship of a Hindu deity, either by an individual or collectively in a ritual ceremony.” (Allsopp 1996:454)
An important word of uncertain origin is “matii”. This is used in a variety of contexts but usually denotes a person who is of similar standing, status and age (cf. Williams 1991). One’s “mati-man” is one’s equal. It is also used as a reciprocal pronoun in expressions like *dem gii mati jringk* “They gave each other the drink.”

3. MORPHOSYNTAX

3.1 PRONOUNS

Singular pronouns are discussed in some detail in chapter 4. The plural 1st and 2nd pronouns (*abi* and *aiyu*) are discussed in chapter 5 and see also chapter 6. Here I just sketch out the system for interrogative, relative and reflexive pronominal reference.

Interrogative pronouns in GC share a number of characteristics with those in other varieties. Bickerton (1981) and Lefebvre (1993) have both used interrogative pronouns as sources of evidence in their respective claims concerning creole genesis. The interrogative pronouns can be classified into morphologically complex and simple groups.
Table 4 INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS

A basic two-way distinction governs the choice of relative pronouns. *Wa* is used for embedding all clauses except those that refer to locations and some human referents. In the former case only *we* or *wisaid* is appropriate. In the latter case *wa* alternates with *huu* (on other complex sentences see 1.6-1.7).

1. *di plees we yu a liv* "The place where you live."
2. *di gyal wa/huu yu laik* "The girl that you like."

As Rickford notes some speakers also allow 0-marking of relative clauses in some contexts (Rickford 1987b:150-151, Bickerton 1981:62). Reflexive pronouns usually take the form of compounds on non-reflexive forms, thus; *iiself, siiiself* etc.

3.2 DEIXIS:

The system of spatial and temporal deixis is discussed in chapter 4.

3.3 ARTICLES:

The article system which marks an noun phrase as definite/generic/specific has received some attention in the literature on GC. Bickerton uses this system in his arguments for a language bioprogram (1977b, 1981). The GC system is schematized alongside English in Bickerton 1981. The examples are from Bickerton (1977b:58):
3. mi bai di buk, "I bought the [presupposed known to speaker] book."

4. mi bai wan buk, "I bought a [presupposed not known to speaker] book."

5. mi go bai buk, "I shall buy a book or books [even speaker does not know which]."

In fact, the system is much less monolithic than Bickerton suggests (cf. Mufwene 1992 on the notion of non-monolithic grammars). This is due in part, no doubt, to a constant interference with English which accounts for the frequent occurrence of the underspecified article *a* in discourse (cf. the "creole" sample reproduced at the beginning of chapter 3 where *a* serves as a generalized article in all contexts). The form is often used rather than *wan* as an indefinite specific article as in S.E.. However in many cases *a* occurs as a reduced form of demonstrative *da*. In addition *a* is used in many cases where both definite and indefinite senses are possible as in, *yu gu lait op a faia,* "you will light a/the fire."

4.0 THE SIMPLE VERB PHRASE

4.1 COPULAR AND ATTRIBUTIVE PREDICATION

Bickerton's (1973a) analysis of the GC creole continua isolated a set of structures in the basilect which he considered copular on the basis that comparable English constructions employed the verb "be". This set included the following types:
Bickerton argued that the basilectal copular system distinguished between equative and possessive (marked with *a*), attributive (marked *O*) and locative (marked with *de*) and that this system slowly gave way to the English one using "to be" (Bickerton 1973a). Winford (1990, 1993) and others (Alleyne 1980) have questioned the assumption that one can isolate a unified category of copular constructions in the basilect. Winford (1990, 1993) shows that *a* and *de* are used in a wider range of contexts than Bickerton originally reported. For example *de* is used not only in locative expressions but also in assertions of absolute existence like the following:

6. mi de, "I’m okay."

7. work na de, "There is no work."

*De* is also used in existential structures where English uses *there+is*:

8. miit de in de "There’s meat in it."

9. piipol de a tap de "There are people up there."

Finally *de* is also used in certain attributive structures:

10. di piknii de smaal yet "The child is still small."

11. di piknii de in chrii yiir "The child is three years old."
Winford's reanalysis of attributive structures shows the degree to which basilectal (and probably mesolectal) grammars differ from acrolectal ones, providing strong evidence that the "polylectal" and "seamless" nature of the continuum has been overstated (Bickerton 1973b). Winford shows that, unlike adjectives in more standard varieties of English, attributives in GC and similar varieties combine with various T(ense) M(odality) and A(spect) categories (examples 12 & 13 from Winford 1993:185):

12. di piknii go/ don/ bin/ mos sik "The child will be/is already/was/must be sick."
13. di waata go/ don/ bin/ mos blak "The water will be/is already/was/must be black."

Winford argues that the such sentences "demonstrate that items like sik, big, blak, ool, etc. in fact function like intransitive verbs predicating a certain characteristic or quality of the subject NP (1993:185)." Winford goes onto show that the behaviour of such predicates with regard to TMA categories is not uniform. Rather only the attributive predicates which Winford labels PHYSICAL PROPERTY can combine with progressive a marking (examples 14-16 are from Winford 1993:186):

14. di piknii a sik "The child is getting sick."
15. di waata a hat "The water is getting hot."
16. di daag a ded "The dog is dying."

Other attributive predicates combine only with kom "come", get "get" or ton "turn" (cf Winford 1993:187). The predicates that can combine with progressive marking share a relatively non-stative, dynamic character. Winford therefore suggests that one can divide attributive predicates into processual and stative subclasses. The evidence of possible transitive uses of
some attributive predicates which is presented by Alleyne is also relevant (cf Alleyne 1980, 1984, 1987, Winford 1993:195). Alleyne argued that "adjectival" uses of sik "sick" and raip "ripe" were in fact passives derived from active sentences. The sentences in (a.) would then be derived from active counterparts listed as (b.).

17a. di piknii sik "The child is sick."
17b. di waata sik di piknii "The water made the child sick."
18a. di mango raip "The mango is ripe."
18b. di son raip di mango "The sun ripened the mango."

Whether we agree with Alleyne's analysis or not, the transitive uses of attributive predicates is further indication of their processual and dynamic (rather than stative) character.

The discussion of "copular" structures and attributive predication specifically highlights the fact that certain areas of the basilectal grammar diverge from S.E. and otheracrolectal varieties in terms of underlying grammatical categories (cf. Bickerton 1975, Rickford 1987b).

Such grammatical focussing results in a polarization of basilectal and acrolectal varieties which is in some ways similar or parallel to the kinds of polarization one sees at the level of language use (cf. Rickford's 1986 discussion of class polarization in the use of pronouns).

4.2 T(ENSE), M(ODALITY), A(SPECT) CATEGORIES

The system of tense, modality and aspect has been the subject of much debate in the literature on GC in particular and creole languages generally (Bickerton 1975, Givon 1982, Mufwene 1984, Pollard 1989, Singler 1990). For the moment I want only to discuss the general character of each category in GC and give some sense of the way they combine.
discuss past marking in terms of temporal deixis in chapter 5.

As is well known, GC makes use of a distinction between stative and nonstative verb types (cf. Bickerton 1975, Winford 1993). The interpretation of unmarked stem forms depends on whether the verb is stative or non-stative. Unmarked verb stems which are dynamic or non-stative are past and completed.

19. mi ron “I ran”
20. ii it “he ate”

Stative verbal roots which are unmarked refer to states presently in existence:

21. mi noo “I know”
22. mi waan waan “I want one”

TMA markers, following Winford are outlined below, for GC:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TENSE</th>
<th>past</th>
<th>future</th>
<th>bin</th>
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Table 6 BASIC MEANINGS FOR TMA MARKERS
(adapted from Winford 1993: 99)

With dynamic verbs, TMA markers combine to give the following specifications for the event/action.

23. mi it “I ate”
24. m(i) a iit “I’m eating”
25. mi don iit “I’m finished eating”
26. mi bin iit “I had eaten”
27. mi gu iit “I will/would eat”
28. mi fu iit “I am to eat”
29. mi kyaan iit “I can’t eat”
30. mi mos iit “I must eat”
31. mi bin a iit “I was eating”
32. mi bin gu iit “I was going to eat”
33. mi bin fu iit “I was to eat.”
34. m(i) a gu iit “I going to eat.”
35. mi bin kyaan iit “I couldn’t eat.”

This gives the reader some idea of the way in which TMA elements combine in simple clauses. A great deal has been written about the meanings and orderings of TMA markers and cannot be repeated here. The interested reader is directed to the excellent overview in Winford (1993) or the works of individual authors (Bickerton 1975, Givon 1982, Mufwene 1984, Pollard 1989, Singler 1990).

5.0 PASSIVES

GC passives resemble in many respects the passives of related varieties. As Winford

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3 Bin requires a more complex analysis and is not really amenable to English glosses of this kind (cf. chapter 3)
notes (1991b:256), most studies on creole passives begin by pointing out that many of the features of the "European canonical passive are not to be found in creole languages." However, as Winford goes on to argue, drawing on the work of Sierierska (1984), passives do not generally share a great deal of features cross-linguistically (and in some respects the European canonical passive is rather peculiar). Winford adopts Siewerska's characterization of the passive as a construction in which:

(a). There is a corresponding active, the subject of which does not function as the passive subject;

(b). The event or action expressed in the passive is brought about by some person or thing which is not the passive subject, but the subject of the corresponding active:

(c). the person or thing if not overt is at least strongly implied.

According to such a definition GC has a number of different passives including the following:

36. waeva ting Noel gu niid kyan put wansaid "Anything that Noel will need can be put on the side."

37. di rais don kuk "The rice is finished cooking."

38. aal di ting dem sel "All the things were sold."

Note that in GC the passive interpretation is not indicated by verbal morphology as in S.E.. Rather a passive interpretation is derived from the interaction of three factors; 1. word order, 2. the inherent lexical semantics of the verb, 3. the relative animacy of the NP in subject position.
Craig (1975:3) comes to similar conclusions when he argues that there are three conditions on passivization in JC:

(a). only *activity-do-transitive* verbs can passivize

(b). no stative verbs can passivize

(c). the subject of the verb must be incompatible with its inherent activity

Echoing Craig's (1975:3) condition (c), Alleyne (1987) argued that sentences such as (39) with animate subjects are likely to be interpreted as active rather than passive since human subjects are more likely to be agents than patients in this context (or at least this is the default interpretation for this syntactic context)

39. *di piknii-dem kis aredi

However a general constraint on non-animate subjects does not appear to hold for GC passives. Thus (40, from Winford 1991b:261) is acceptable:

40. yu stab “You've been stabbed.”

As Winford (1991:271) illustrates passive construction are formally indistinguishable from anticausatives in GC and related varieties. Anticausative constructions are formed by the "same" syntactic process which makes a transitive object the subject of an intransitive.

41a. dem bai brook di fens “The boys broke the fence.”

41b. di fens brook “The fence was broken/The fence broke.”

In many Creole varieties including GC such constructions are actually ambiguous between passive readings, in which an agent is implied (S.E. “The fence was broken”), and true
anticausative readings in which the event or action seems to occur spontaneously (S.E. “The fence broke”).

6.0. **COMPLEMENTATION**

GC marks complementation with se or fu (other forms of complementation including those with causative and immediate perception type matrix predicates are discussed in Winford 1993). Although both types of complementation have been the subject of a good deal of debate it is possible to give a purely descriptive account without becoming enmeshed in the theoretical issues. As Winford (1993:291) notes:

Certain subclasses of CTP’s (complement taking predicate) are associated with specific complement types in CEC. Thus, predications which assert, report or express truth-value judgements about their complement tend by and large to have indicative type complements with ITR (independent time reference). By contrast, CTP’s which express commands, requests, desires etc. typically have non-indicative type complements with DTR (dependent time reference).

6.1 **COMPLEMENTS WITH SE:**

Generally, se introduces S-like complements with ITR. That is to say that “the time reference of the complement is in no way logically bound by the time reference of the matrix predicate” (Winford 1993:190 citing Noonan 1985). Such indicative complement types contrast with the non-indicative type which do not allow overt TMA specification, are typically in irrealis mode, may or may not be S-like and are introduced by fu. It is possible to divide the predicates with which se combines into a number of distinct classes. The following classes incorporate the verbs most commonly combining with se. (Winford 1993:292-293 mentions a number of other classes of verbs.)
A. UTTERANCE PREDICATORS: In such constructions se introduces a complement of reported speech. The construction may report the speech directly (43,46) or indirectly (42,44,45,47). In indirect constructions we find a shift of deictics so as to characterize contextual parameters in terms of the reporting rather than the reported event. In both cases the se is optional. Predicates counted as members include both generalized verbs of speaking (tel, taak) as well as predicates which more precisely identify the illocutionary force of speaking (kwaril, kos, beg, aks, daut).

42. Shi na tel mii se shi brook am "She didn’t tell me that she broke it."
43. gyal a taak se maa yu goo a tap yu iit brekfos? “The girls said ‘Ma, you went upstairs, did you eat breakfast?’” (Rickford 1987b:229 line 1132)
44. Shi a kwaril se -wel se da Mis- wa mek Mis na wan mariid “She quarrels saying -well saying- saying that Miss- why doesn’t Miss want to get married.”
45. daadii i a kos se aiyu diiz a taak out shi “Daddy, she is cursing saying that all of you are talking about her.”
46. an den mi tel am -aa- den mi beg am see i na biit mi soo oo bai oo bai “And then I told him -aa- then I begged him not to beat me saying ‘oo boy oo boy’”
47. Rohan a daut se i na get di juuwol “Rohan was arguing that he didn’t have the jewel.”

B. PROPOSITIONAL ATTITUDE PREDICATORS: In example (48) the se follows (biliiv) a verb which expresses “an attitude regarding the truth of the proposition expressed as [...] complement” (Noonan 1985:113, cited in Winford 1993:292). In many cases the “attitude” indicated for
the subject diverges from that of the speaker (as in 48).

48. ii biliiv se ii tuu big fu kom "He believes he is too important to come."

C. PREDICATORS OF KNOWLEDGE AND ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE: Here what is described is the "state or manner of the acquisition of knowledge" (49,50) are examples with predicates ondastan "understand" and fain "find".

49. shi na ondastan se da a di bai laik di gyal "She doesn't understand that it's the boy who likes the girl."

50. (a)n yu fain se(e) yu doz si dong a di step an i gun staat taak. "And you sit down on the step and he would start to talk." (Rickford 1987b:178, line 687)

D. PRETENSE PREDICATES: Here the speaker indicates a discrepancy between the default interpretation of some action (including speaking) and the "reality behind it" (a discrepancy, that is, between appearances and reality.) Predicates in this class include plee "play" and fuul "fool".

51. na plee se wel yu greet fu see eeniting to mi "Don't act like you are to good to say anything to me."

6.2 COMPLEMENTS WITH FU

In contrast with se complements which are S-like and have ITR (independent time reference), complements to fu are generally reduced and have DTR (dependent time reference). The analysis of fu complements is extremely complicated and scholars disagree on a number of
points including the categorical status of fu (Winford 1993) and the nature of the complement introduced (i.e. whether it is infinite, finite or neither cf. Bickerton 1981, Mufwene 1989, Washabaugh 1975, 1977, Winford 1985b). For our purposes it is necessary only to give some indication of the types of structures in which fu is used to introduce a complement. Some examples are given below (52-54 from Winford 1993:309):

52. Jan staat (fu) mek monii “John started to make money.”
53. Jan tel Meerii fu mek monii “John told Mary to make money.”
54. Jan wok haard fu mek monii “John worked hard to make money.”

As Winford (1985b, 1993) has noted the complements in such cases describe something “hypothetical or unrealized”, a possible future and it is in this sense that fu’s functions as complementizer and as modal auxiliary are semantically related. Winford classes the predicates which take complements introduced by fu in the following way:

A. ASPECTUAL OR INCEPTIVE: such as staat “start” do not have the irrealis mode of other types.

Winford (1985b) argues that such instances of fu are modal auxiliaries not infinitival complementizers (as suggested by Bickerton (1981) and Washabaugh (1977)) and that the inceptive matrix verb takes a VP complement. Such an analysis is supported by the fact that fronting such complements is unacceptable as it is for other VPs.

55. *a fi/fu mek moni Jan staat

Winford finds further support for his position in cases where f1/fu alternates with other auxiliaries such as imperfective a (56-57 from Winford 1993:314):

56. Jan staat fu krai “John started to cry.”
57. Jan staat a krai “John started crying.”

Finally as Winford remarks his explanation better accounts for the alternation between \textit{fi}/\textit{fu} and \textit{O} in such structures.

B. MODALITY PREDICATORS: Predicates such as \textit{gat} “got” and \textit{hong} “bound” take a subjectless \textit{fu} complement as in:

58. hou moch touwil yu gafu get wen yu de a grong? “How many towels do you need to get when you are on the ground.”

C. DESIDERATIVE AND ACHIEVEMENT PREDICATES: Predicates such as \textit{waan} “want” and \textit{hoop} “hope” express desire that the complement proposition be realized. Winford suggests that these can be divided into two classes. CLASS A have experiencer subjects and allow a subjectless \textit{fu} complement only if the understood subject is coreferential with that of the CTP (complement taking predicate) as in the case for \textit{agri}, \textit{hoop}, \textit{fiil}, \textit{pramis}. These resemble the class of achievement predicates (\textit{laarn}, \textit{noo}, \textit{manij chai}) which also take \textit{fu} complements only in cases of agent-agent coreferentiality. CLASS B includes predicates such as \textit{waan}, \textit{ekspek}, \textit{raada} with which subject-subject coreferentiality is optional.

59. ii na fiil fu gu “He doesn’t want to go.” (Class A)

60. yu ondastan wa a chrai fu shoo yu? “Do you understand what I’m trying to show you?” (Achievement)

61. mi noo fu taak tu gad “I know how to talk to God.” (Achievement)

62. di pikni waan fu sliip “The child wants to sleep.” (Class B)
63. di piknii waan sliip “The child wants to sleep.” (Class B)

63. di piknii waan Meerii fu kom bak tunait “The child wants Mary to come back tonight.” (Class B) (example from Winford 1993:318)

_Fu_ is optional in cases of agent-agent coreferentiality, e.g. “Jan waan (fu) sliip”. The basic finding after many years of research in this area is that _fu_-complements cannot be equated with SE structures like _to_-complements (Bickerton 1981) or _for-to_-complements (Washabaugh 1975, 1977). A great deal of evidence has been marshalled in support of such a uniqueness position with regard to these structures. 1/ In decresolized varieties _fu_ is often replaced (in some contexts, e.g. with _tel_) not by _to_ but by _mos_ (another auxiliary); “replacement by _mus_ is in keeping with the typical strategy, adopted by the CEC speakers, of importing SE forms which appear to them to be functionally equivalent to particular creole forms, and of replacing the latter by the former without any immediate change in CEC grammar itself.” (Winford 1985b:604, cf. also Roberts 1980). 2/ Despite Bickerton’s assertions to the contrary (and Winford’s apparent acceptance that changes of such a kind are taking place in basilectal CEC)⁵ “_fi_ does not occur as a pure infinitive marker as SE to does in the type of sentence like To err is human.” (Roberts 1980:30). 3/ Unlike _for-to_ complements in SE (For Mary to sell them would be difficult) the _fu_

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⁴ Although as Winford (1993:318) notes _fu_ is optional here, there is a potential semantic difference. _Waan_ often occurs in more metaphoric contexts where it is roughly equivalent to “needs” as in _di wiil waan ail_ “The wheel needs oil”, or _ii pan waan rob_ “The pants need to washed.” In such cases the subject which appears to be doing the “desiring” is not animate. The “desiderative” sense of _waan_ appears to be suspended in such contexts. Note that _fu_ is not acceptable here, thus *_ii pan waan fu wash_. So the sentence _di piknii waan sliip_ is ambiguous and indicating either that “The child wants to sleep” or “The child needs to sleep.”

⁵ Bickerton (1981) allows as grammatical the constructions _fi kech taiga na bin iizi_ “To catch a tiger wasn’t easy.” Winford (1985b:606ff) provisionally allows such sentences and provides an alternate explantion to that of Bickerton’s based on extraposition.
structures in roughly equivalent *i haad fu Meerri fu sel dem so* cannot be moved to subject position because it is not a constituent (cf Winford 1985b:609).^6

7.0 VERB SERIALIZATION

Serial verb constructions (SVC) are found across a great variety of language groups including those of West Africa and Papua New Guinea (Foley and Olson 1985). They are also well attested in the creole languages of the Caribbean. Typical examples are (from Winford 1993):

64. Mieri waak go a maakit "Mary walked to the market."
65. Jan bring moni gi shi "John brought money for her."
66. Di pikni tall paas mi "The child is taller than me."

The examples illustrate the various functions associated with the second verb in a serial construction. Grammatical relations (directional in (64), benefactive in (65), comparative in (66).) are marked by a verb where in other languages they are marked by prepositions or complementizers. However, the second verb does more than "mark" relations between verbs and their arguments and as such serial constructions are not solely "valence increasing strategies" although this seems to be one of their functions. As Lord (1973) remarks the second verb "is always in some sense a further development, result or goal" of the first. The degree to which the two verbs are semantically integrated depends, in part, on the level at which the predicates are "serialized" (see below).

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^6 As Winford (1985b) notes such structures should not be confused with instances of front focusing which involve the fronting of constituent as in *a fi mek moni fan kom*. For an explanation of why such structures are grammatical see Winford (1985b, 1993).
7.1 SVC'S AND OTHER MULTI-PREDICATE CONSTRUCTIONS

Sebba (1987 cited in Winford 1993:212) has suggested the following defining characteristics of a serial verb construction:

in a sequence of the form \( V_1 \ldots V_2 \)

(a). Both \( V_1 \) and \( V_2 \) must be lexical verbs, i.e. must be capable of appearing as the only verb in a single sentence.

(b). If it is possible to conceive of \( V_1 \) and \( V_2 \) as denoting separate actions at all, then both \( V_1 \) and \( V_2 \) must be interpreted as having the same tense and aspect. Thus, for example \( V_1 \) may not be interpreted as "past" if \( V_2 \) is interpreted as "future".

(c). There must not be an ascertainable clause boundary between \( V_1 \) and \( V_2 \), i.e., they must be within the same clause.

(d). No conjunction should separate the verbs in sequence.

Citing Foley and Olson (1984), Winford adds that SVC's "are heavily constrained so that some core arguments are shared by all the verbs in the series" (Foley and Olson 1984:24). The most common restriction is that all verbs in the construction must share the same subject.

Based on the above criteria it is possible to distinguish SVC's from other forms of verbal linking such as coordination and parataxis. Distinguishing cases of coordination from cases of serialization is fairly straightforward. Winford gives (1993:214) the following examples:

67. Jan bai wan buk an gi di pikni "John bought a book and gave (it to) the child."

68. Jan bai wan buk gi di pikni "John bought a book for the child."
69. Jan ron an kom ina di hous "John ran and entered the house"

70. Jan ron kom ina di hous "John ran into the house."

As the glosses indicate the two structures are semantically distinct. Whereas in the coordinate sentences (67, 69) the meaning of the second verb depends entirely on its independent status, in the SVC (68, 70) the second verb takes on a specific function related to its role in the particular construction. In addition to semantic differences SVC's, unlike subordinate structures, never contain a coordinating conjunction. Finally, SVC's never allow independent tense/aspect marking of the serialized verbs. This contrasts with coordinate constructions as the following example illustrates (from Winford 1993:214):

71. Jan bai wan buk an go gi di pikni tumara "John bought a book and will give it to the child tomorrow."

SVC's must also be distinguished from paratactic constructions. In both paratactic structures and SVC's we find a "subject NP followed by a series of verb phrases, without overt markers of coordination" (Winford 1993:216). The two constructions differ in a number of respects. First paratactic constructions allow independent tense/aspect marking of the linked verbs. According to Noonan this correlates "a crucial semantic difference, namely that paratactic constructions contain two assertions, ie, each clause is separately asserted, whereas serial constructions contain just one, encompassing the entire construction" (Noonan 1985:77 cited in Winford 1993:216). Furthermore paratactic constructions are subject to Ross's (1967) coordinate structure constraint which prohibits extraction from a coordinate structure. Winford illustrates this with the following example:

72. di haak kech di chikin iit it. "The hawk caught the chicken and ate it."
8.0 **Front Focussing and Copying Structures**

All languages have devices which alter the syntactic packaging of information in the clause to achieve pragmatic effects such as bringing particular referents into focus. The *it*- and *Wh*-clefts along with cases of left and right dislocation are examples of such syntactic devices which operate in S.E. (passives, dative movement also involve information packaging in this sense cf Foley and Van Valin 1985). Typically, such constructions move a clausal constituent closer to the beginning (or end in the case of right dislocation) of the sentence. Foley and Van Valin (1985:355-358) give the following examples for S.E.

74. It was a sandwich that Ron ate. (*it*-cleft)
75. It was Ron who ate a sandwich. (*it*-cleft)
76. What Ron ate was a sandwich (*wh*-cleft)
77. The one who ate a sandwich was Ron (*wh*-cleft)
78. John's knife, I accidentally cut myself with it (left dislocation)

C.G. and the Caribbean English Creoles generally are well known for their fronting capacity (Markey and Fodale 1983). In his discussion of focus in JC and BC (Barbadian Creole), Roberts (1991) isolates two devices used in JC which are also common in GC. The first he compares to the English *it*-cleft. Examples follow (79-80):

79. a di mango Jan iit "It was the mango that John ate."
80. a da shii a duu "That's what she does."

Like S.E. *it*-clefts the pragmatic focus on *di mango* is essentially contrastive (it was the mango -
not something else - that John ate). Note the use of the particle *a* in sentence initial position. While some authors gloss this as a FOCUS particle the fact that, in more mesolectal varieties, it is replaced by *iz* indicates that it has more than just a superficial affinity with equative *a* (Rickford 1987b:184). Such preposed focus particles also occur optionally in interrogatives (81) and may be used to indicate contrastive focus for NPs that have not undergone fronting (82).

81. a wa dem duu a mi hous? “What did they do at my house?”

82. a mi gu bring di touwil chuuzeed “I’m going to bring the towels on Tuesday.”

Fronting also occurs in the absence of *a*. The following example is from Rickford (1987b) and, as he notes, gives a sense of the range of elements that can be topicalized:

83. ya yu gu bring Nana? “Here you’ll bring Nana?” (Rickford 1987b:241 line 1247)

In this case the adverbial deictic *ya* is topicalized through fronting. More common is NP fronting as in the following example:

84. foor yiirz ii get “He is four years old.”

Rickford (1987b:240) remarks, “(o)ne other area that seems to require further research is the details of GC topicalization, in particular, the question of what kinds of elements are eligible for sentence fronting and topicalization with and without *a* or *iz*.” The following example indicates that fronting can operate on elliptical structures:

85. a bina sikx chiken a oonlii chrii ma sii “There were six chicken ( ) but only three I see.”

The other syntactic device discussed by Roberts (1991) which is used to bring a particular
constituent into focus is copying. As Roberts (1991:291) notes of similar constructions in JC, copying has no structural parallel in S.E. but does in some West African languages.

86. a pelt ii pelt a brook ii fuut “A pelting, that's what broke its foot.”
87. a de ii de “There, that’s where he is.”
88. na chupit di gyal chupit? “Stupid, isn't that what the girl is?” (Bickerton 1973a:648)

Roberts (1991:291) compares such copying to SE left dislocation, remarking that the sentence “can be treated as a left dislocation in that it has a repeated element within the clause but the repeated element is not a proform as it is in left dislocations in English. In addition, the sentence has the copula element that characterizes it-cleft sentences, but it is not an it-cleft sentence, not only because it does not have an it equivalent but also because the syntax of the sentence will not allow it. This method of focussing on the verb - by putting it to the front and repeating it - is regarded as a typical Caribbean creole structure not only because it occurs in a number of creoles but also because it differs from European language structure.” Like other cases of front focussing with a, predicate copying of this kind involves contrastive focus. Thus in the examples given above it is, in the first case (86), asserted that the foot was broken through a particular kind of action (perpetrated by an intentional agent - also brought into focus - i.e. this was not a accident). In the second case (89) the device signals a contrastive focus on de, a region somewhere within the interactants range of perceptual access (cf. chapter 5), as opposed to some place beyond the immediately perceivable. The point here is that the participants to the interaction should watch what they say as the subject of the locative expression is close by.
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