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of the Hindu community. That they do fleece clients at times does not, unfortunately, classify them as criminals.

The language of the *dalals*, silk middlemen, is not as complex as that of the *Pandas*, perhaps because the critical 'secret' terms tend to be numerical. However, the manners by which these middlemen convey their messages make for fascinating reading. Clearly the *dalals* are experts in concealed messages and Mehrotra's discussion of their activities deserves to be read by all working with similar situations. The primary flaw in this chapter relates to a point made earlier: the language of comparison is again Standard Hindi and not the language of the area. Even the infinitive forms of Bhojpuri are not those of Standard Hindi, rendering all comparisons to the 'local' language meaningless. Although Mehrotra may be correct in identifying the peculiarities of the *dalal* language, without reference to the 'ordinary' language of the area, we cannot justly evaluate his analysis.

The final chapter on secret and secondary number-names is concerned with differences between number in ordinary and secret languages. The author compares the secret numbers of a variety of occupational groups (silk merchants, diamond merchants, fruit vendors, pandits, thugs). He contends that in esoteric number language, the abstract proceeds the concrete, a reversal of the number concept in ordinary languages. He does satisfactorily prove that secret number names are (a) long lasting and (b) part of the society and situation of the group using them.

Thoughtful analyses of secret languages (a term I much prefer to Mehrotra's criminally associated argot) are rare. This monograph is a valuable contribution. It is a fine first endeavor and I hope that Mehrotra will proceed with other analyses with greater depth.

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BARBARA KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT, *Speech play: research and resources for studying linguistic creativity*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976. pp. 307.

Speech play is an everyday phenomenon. We all engage in it, some more than others, some more often than others, and in some contexts more generally than others. If we don't perceive it, it is because we take it for granted, not because it isn't ubiquitous.

Speech play was the smash hit of the entertainment at a recent church fund-

raising dinner. Some one read a 'disguised' version of Cinderella in which the initial consonants of juxtaposed words were metathesized. The unexpected forms of the words were hilarious. And it helped to have the story told in a jazzy, irreverent 'teen register of contemporary English. The few children and young people were laughing, but the adults were howling.

Speech play, however, is not easy to define. It sometimes is related to the esthetic experience, sublime or sordid, somber or senseless. But ordinary language where play is not a salient feature, is used with this function. Besides, people do 'playful' things with language without any consciousness of expressing or arousing an esthetic state. Speech play is, I believe, as universal as language itself, but it is problematic – something to be discovered and characterized. This book will focus attention on the problem, but I'm afraid that it doesn't lead clearly toward its solution.

The authors in this book don't grapple with the problem. The contributions are primarily treatments of specific manifestations of speech play. This is defined as 'any local manipulation of elements and relations of language, creative of a specialized genre, code-variety, and/or style. A key word . . . is 'manipulation'. It implies a degree of selection and consciousness beyond that of ordinary language use' (1); it is also 'voluntary, rule-governed, and "carried on for its own sake"' (5). What is played with, moreover, is not only the stuff and structures of language but also the sociolinguistic rules that govern language use (7).

Of the eight different studies that compose one-half of the book only the following topics are considered: disguised speech, mnemonics of numbers, rhymes of children, riddles, sayings, and verbal dueling. Four of the papers are the result of anthropological field work, but only two are anthropological in the sense that verbal behavior is situated culturally; one paper deals entirely with gnomic sentences (sayings) in a contemporary novel. For the most part the authors confine themselves to describing data. In going beyond the data they make the following generalizations: the manipulation of linguistic elements can reveal something about the 'psychological reality' of linguistic structure; the differences between the speech play of adults and children is determined primarily by differences in the language structures upon which they are based; types of riddles used by children correlate with age.

It is not surprising that phonology figures most prominently in speech play. Its resources, as disguised languages clearly demonstrate, are most accessible, isolable, and manipulable. If we accept as true, *a priori*, that speech play involves 'a focus, foregrounding, and/or manipulation of any aspect of language (phonetics, lexicon, syntax, etc.) for its own sake' (19), we must also recognize as true that the different parts of language function differently and to different degrees in speech play. A worthy exercise would be to establish a typology that starts with linguistic structures rather than with speech genres, as in this book. And such a typology would have to differentiate, at the least, between behavior

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that was extemporaneous as opposed to that which was learned; one can think of several other parameters to experiment with.

Play with phonology already provides enough data for us to begin a more sophisticated analysis of the manifest processes. It will certainly be a formal analysis, but it will, I should imagine, also be psycho-acoustical in nature. What is the explanation, for example, of my four-year-old neighbor's pet name, adopted by the family, for his two-year-old sister – Cindy-bindy? Why is 'b' chosen from among all the consonants of English? Why are 'p', 'f', and 'k' used in certain disguised languages (19ff.)? The selection is unlikely a random one. Randomness is what one expects in glossolalia, where a pseudolanguage is invented on the spot, but even there, as I believe I demonstrated in *Tongues of men and angels*, choice has three determinants: psycho-acoustic factors related to language acquisition (the 'regressive' aspect of glossolalia), phonological salience in the native language of the speaker (e.g., alveolar consonants being most prominent in English and English-based glossolalia), and cultural factors ('soft' sounds being preferred over 'harsh' ones).

While some devote themselves to the description and explanation of the linguistic aspects of speech play, others will have to concern themselves with the ethnographic aspects. This volume, unfortunately, and contrary to the editor's claim (3), does little to mark the trail we must take in that regard.

The 'research' of the subtitle comprehends the eight chapters, all of which, with exception of one study on Japanese, deal with societies in the Western Hemisphere: Amerindian, Afro-American, and Anglo-American. The 'resources' are presented in a bibliographic survey that is linked to the bibliography, which also provides the references for the contributed chapters.

It is unfortunate that in a research guide such as this there are bibliographic errors. Some edited volumes are not indicated as such, and there are several works, like one of my own, whose date of publication in the bibliography differs from that given in the text.

In a project to which ten different individuals contributed there would inevitably be differences of style and even inequalities of performance. I found some repetitiousness, some lack of rigor, and some superficial or ill-founded generalizations. But what annoyed me most is something I consider the bane of much contemporary anthropological and linguistic writing: gratuitous referencing and dangling footnotes.¹ About one of two kinds of French disguised language, for example, we are told, in a footnote, that 'This play language is derived from an extremely colloquial variety of French' (25). Again and again authors direct the reader to 'see', e.g., Aarne, Abou-Allam, or Abrahams, with very little clue as to what he will find in these works. Scholarship is probably advanced by citing complementary, supplementary, and even contradictory

[1] Following his own principle, the reviewer has dispensed with references.

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studies, but scholarship will certainly be enhanced by the exercise of discretion. Disciplined writing eliminates repetitiousness. It surely is redundant for an author to cite all five of his works, in different places, one of them twice, one three times, and one five times! I am not complaining about egotism. I am lamenting the bad habits we have fallen into. The same information could have been conveyed more economically.

If this book does not meet some of my standards and fails in some respects, I nevertheless welcome it. I appreciate every serious attempt to enlarge the scope of linguistic inquiry. It has been to the detriment of both linguistics and anthropology that only certain kinds of phenomena have been attractive. At the very same meeting of the American Anthropological Association where this book in a sense began (1971), I addressed a symposium 'On the relation of anthropology to linguistics' (the proceedings of which have just been published as a Festschrift in honor of C. F. Voegelin, edited by D. Kinkade, *et al.*):

For methodological or theoretical reasons there always are . . . intractable or irrelevant data. We look at them and can't make them fit; or we don't look at them at all, hoping or simply assuming that others will look at them . . . in the disciplining of both linguistics and anthropology insufficient attention has been paid to anomalous language phenomena . . . the cost of this failure is not seeing certain continuities in man's use of language, which is to fall short of identifying 'order' in the universe of man.

Earlier, in 1968, when Dell Hymes and I were corresponding about the publication of a journal devoted to the study of language in society, I called this kind of study 'marginal linguistics.' *Speech play* makes clear what I felt then: there are many phenomena that are 'marginal' to the interests of linguists and anthropologists. Speech play is not marginal in children's behavior. Nor have pidgins, ideophones, and glossolalia been 'marginal' in many societies (as I tried to show in the paper just mentioned, 'Theory of order with disorderly data'). It just seems to take a long time to legitimize certain kinds of scientific research. Let *Speech play* perform this function.

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