

# The Eighth Annual American University Conference on Lavender Language and Linguistics

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## ABSTRACTS of Conference Presentations

[091800]

### **Armbrecht, Thomas J.D. (William and Mary)**

Saturday Night Semiotics: Hanky Codes and Non-verbal Communication Among Gay Men

My presentation is about the use of fetishism as a kind of non-verbal communication in contemporary gay-male culture. I begin tracing the development of the definition of fetish through its Freudian origins to its present, queer manifestation. I use the writings of Lacan, Irigaray and Silverman to support my readings. I then provide a list of 'hanky-codes' as evidence of the fetish used in non-verbal, gay language. ('Hankies' are the colored bandannas worn by gay men in their back pockets that signify their particular sexual proclivities. Their meanings are detailed in lists that are available in S&M-oriented magazines, bars, and shops.) Through my conclusions, I demonstrate the reliance on the fetish and on the binary to facilitate non-verbal communication among gay males. I also relate this type of interaction to other issues of communication within the queer community as a whole.

### **Baker, Paul (University of Lancaster)**

Constructing Polari-speaking Gay Identities: The Triangulation Approach

Polari is a language variety of diverse origins that was mainly used by gay men in the early mid-20th century in the UK. Because of its secret status it was rarely written down and there exist no transcriptions of spontaneously occurring conversations in Polari. Furthermore, since the 1970's it has been rarely used by gay communities in the UK. This paper analyzes three approaches used in constructing Polari-speaking gay identities, which attempt to circumvent the lack of naturally occurring data. First, scripted data from the comedy radio program 'Round The Horne;' second, interviews with Polari speakers; third, a componential analysis of a 400 item Polari lexicon. Polari (in its various forms) is seen to contribute to shifting, multiple identities, and is dependent on context, audience and closet-status.

### **Beemyn, Brett (University of Rochester)**

It Was Like the Sun Rose:  
The Coffeehouse and the Development of a Black LGB Community in Washington, DC

A small performance space in an alley of a crime-ridden Washington, DC neighborhood seems an unlikely site for the genesis of a Black lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) cultural renaissance, but such was the case with the establishment of the Coffeehouse in northeast Washington in 1982. Begun by the past president of the DC Coalition of Black Gays as an alternative to 'alcohol-and smoke-filled bars,' it quickly became the focal point of Washington's Black LGB community, providing a home to both the Coalition and the city's Black lesbian group and serving as one of the only venues where Black lesbian and gay artists could rehearse and present their work locally. It soon also had a tremendous national impact, as a number of poets and performers who honed their talents at the Coffeehouse achieved widespread acclaim, including Essex Hemphill, Larry Ducketts, Wayson Johnson, and Michelle Parkerson. Many of these artists later helped inspire and produce some of the groundbreaking works on the experiences of Black gay men: Joseph Beams's anthology *In the Life: Hemphill's* subsequent volume, *Brother to Brother*; and Marlon Riggs' video 'Tongues Untied.' Through interviews with many of the people who performed or attended performances there, my work traces the history of the Coffeehouse, considering the conditions that led to its creation, its significance for performers and audience members, and its

role in the development of both the city's Black LGB community and a national Black LGB cultural movement. Although it existed less than three years, the Coffeehouse helped begin a process of Black LGB community formation and awareness that continues today. In Hemphill's words, 'The space held importance not only for Black gays, but it allowed us to nurture and grow against the background of D.C. racism.'

**Busbee, Elizabeth (Yale)**

Unequal Footing: Goffman's Models for Deference, Demeanor and Face  
in Dominant/Submissive Communication

In this paper I examine the writing of Erving Goffman and apply his ideas about language to models for communication in dominant and submissive lifestyle relationships. I begin with a brief introduction to the terminology of certain alternate lifestyle choices and practices. Following this, I analyze three examples of Goffman's writing as they may be used to work through ideas about dominant and submissive conversational interaction styles. The three essays are 'On Face Work' and 'The Nature of Deference and Demeanor' from his text *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face to Face Behavior*, and 'Footing', published in the journal *Semiotica*.

**Chakravorty, Bonnie (Tufts)**

Yours or Mine: Variations in Gay Men's Use and Perceptions of the Term 'FAG-HAG'

As over time and in response to a range of social and cultural factors the gay sub-culture has evolved, so too have gay men's perceptions of those straight (usually) women who choose to affiliate with them. How do contemporary gay men understand the term 'fag-hag'? Are 'fag-hags' in general reprehensible but one's own 'fag-hag' the best friend a boy ever had? Through in-depth interviews with gay young adults (18-35) and a survey of references to 'fag-hags' on gay men's web-sites, I examine the ways in which gays understand the term 'fag-hag' and how these understandings reflect upon their understandings of themselves and their sub-culture.

**Cox, Barth (U New Orleans)**

Asking to See the Soul

In conducting oral histories of self-identifying bears, ethnographer Cox has sought to capture the very essence of the existence of his interviewees. With a respectful nod to Walt Whitman, himself an American original bear precursor, the title of his presentation comes from a quote taken from 'Starting at Paumanok' (Section 13), "Was someone asking to see the soul?/ See your own shape and countenance, persons, substances, beast, the trees, the running rivers, the rocks and sands"

**Gosse, Doug and Brigitte Roberge, Marcel Grimard, & Normand Labrie (U of Toronto)**

Violence in Discourse of Gay & Lesbian Francophones'

Over recent years, Canada has adopted laws recognizing same sex couples' rights. For example, in 1997 a law was passed including sexual orientation in hate crime legislation. Nevertheless, violence against gays and lesbians persists, at least as a constituent of the identity construction of gays and lesbians. Identity discourses of French-speaking gays and lesbians elaborated during the semi-structured interviews on what it means to be a linguistic minority, often include non-solicited narratives about physical, spiritual, and psychological violence.

Facing violence and oppression, individuals construct discourse to make sense of traumatic events, past and present. This can prove to be liberating and a site for resistance, or perhaps a site of further alienation and submission. Several questions arise: How does violence contribute to being in or out of the closet? What role does shame, a consequence of violence, play in the construction of self-identity and social practices? How does conjugal violence affect a Gay or Lesbian person?

In this paper, we will examine the discourse structure about various types of violence, in order to ascertain what ends these narratives fulfill in the presentation of self. Analyzing these narratives from the point of view of the discourse producer will set the stage for developing a personal location of resistance or oppression.

**Grimard, Marcel and Brigitte Roberge, Normand Labrie, & Doug Gosse (U of Toronto)**

Sexual Narratives in the Discourse of French-Canadian Gay Men Living in Toronto

When French-Canadian gay men in Toronto describe their personal journeys, backgrounds, joys, and difficulties, their remarks often include unsolicited sex narratives such as their first sexual experience as a child or adult. From these sex narratives, illustrating sexual acts, sexual performances and sexual fantasies, desire may be interpreted on various levels. These gay men are marginalized in both sexual and linguistic communities. For example, they are regulated by the heteronormative Francophone community, and marginalized in the predominantly Anglophone gay community because of their language.

Their sex narratives vary greatly from one individual to another. Some stories are very detailed while others provide but a glimpse into the person's life narrative. How are these disparities in the discursive narrative linked to the social location of the participant? Why do some participants have the need to express such stories and with what purposes? Could such factors as the historicity of the story and/or the social location be at work?

Masculinity is an identity in a constant flux that males strive to maintain. Could some sex narratives serve to reinforce a certain concept of masculinity? Which participants need to claim, prove, and perform a masculinity representation inside both gay and Francophone communities and why? Finally, in the process of building sex narratives and representation of masculinities, these French-Canadian gay men often create an otherization discourse, where the other is feminized. What is the purpose of this discourse? Why do some French-Canadian gay men endorse a feminine identity, and others not? Could this be a means of accessing privilege and social mobility?

**Hawkins, Joseph (U Akron)**

Japanese Gei Language: A Modern Polyglot Argot Mapped through Community Publications

Since World War II and the hypocritical efforts of the American occupation forces to control 'the morals' of the Japanese, there have been major changes in the language of gay-identified people there. This essay will mark some of these changes in the texts of publications focused at postwar Japanese gei (the Japanese transliteration of the American term) communities. Special attention will be paid to those gei magazines published from the Occupation Period 1945-1952 and throughout the 'Olympic Years' (ca 1960-1970). By mapping diachronic drifts in the perception of selves, practices and places, as revealed in conversations, the confines of identity can be fleshed out and made real. Focus is on the 'Forum' sections of the magazines, where readers were invited to be candid about being gei, their changing social positions, and their desires.

**Ison, John (University of California, Riverside)**

Will's Body: Camp, Sexuality and Materialism in 'Will and Grace'

This paper explores the proscribed limits of homosexual representation in American mainstream television network situation comedy. I posit that Will Truman's (homo) sexuality, forbidden a material representation in a 'family' medium, is cathected onto a verbal comedy centered around camp spectatorship, urban consumerism and

gym connoisseurship. Although camp, as Jack Babuscio, Daniel Harris and Richard Dyer have pointed out, can be an aspect of 'gay sensibility,' it may conflict with or substitute for the physical expression of homosexual desire. Unlike HBO cable television's 'OZ,' a prison drama that depicts sexual acts between men, NBC-TV's W&G is confined to a form of verbal euphemism to express homosexuality. As a result, an ironic conflation of 'materiality' (of the body, as Judith Butler defines the term) and 'materialism' (as Daniel Harris defined the term) occurs. Gay identity, as W&G suggests, is less about sex and more about shopping.

**Jackson, Peter A. (Australian National University, Canberra)**

Adapt, Resist, Ignore: Thai Sexual Minorities and the Episodic Allure of Queer English

Thailand is the only Southeast Asian country never to have been colonized by a Western power, remaining politically independent throughout the colonial period. Nevertheless, since the 1850's successive generations of Thai elites have actively appropriated Western models of education, public administration, and government in locally controlled efforts at modernization, which have dramatically transformed the Buddhist kingdom's physical and cultural landscapes. One consequence of Thailand's century-and-a-half of modernization has been the emergence of Bangkok as the 'gay capitol' of Southeast Asia. Now home to one sixth of the Thai population, Bangkok is also the site of the largest and most publicly visible transgender and male and female homosexual cultures in the region. The size, visibility and vibrant cultural and economic impact of Thailand's multiple homosexual/transgender cultures, together with the country's history of political independence and self-guided modernization, make this society an important case in understanding the global proliferation of forms of gendered and sexual diversity in the twentieth century.

In this paper, I trace the distinctive histories of contemporary Thai terminologies for male homoerotic, female homoerotic and transgender/transsexual identities, respectively, in order to question some of the universalistic assumptions, which have dominated discussion of 'global queering.' I look at the disparate relationships of Thailand's different sexual minorities to queer English. The labeling of male homosexual identities as gay has involved a high degree of appropriation from English. However, Thai homosexual women have a much more ambiguous relationship to queer English categories, actively resisting the label 'lesbian' while adapting other English terms in coining the paired expression tom-dee (from 'tom boy' and the second syllable of 'lady'). In contrast to both of these cases, terms for male-to-female transgenders and transsexuals largely ignore English and continue to reflect long-established Thai terminologies for same-sex eroticism, such as kathoey and phu-ying praphet song ('second type of woman').

I also outline the continuing dominance of gender in the imagining and constitution of all Thai erotic categories, and argue that new identities such as gay, tom, and dee have emerged since World War II without the concomitant borrowing of western discourses of sexuality. Different historical relationships of each of Thailand's gender/sex minorities to queer English, plus the absence of a Foucauldian discourse on sexuality, together provide evidence against Dennis Altman's 'global queering' argument. He suggests that as one aspect of globalization we are witnessing a trend towards planetary gender/sex uniformity across cultures. In contrast, I argue that if we look at the full range of Thailand's sexual and gender minorities, the extent of 'borrowing' from or 'imposition' by western sexual cultures is revealed as being highly uneven and episodic. Indeed, Altman's model of 'global queering' reflects a distinctively gay male view of the world, which tends to overlook the histories and experiences of homosexual women and transgender peoples in non-western countries.

**Johnson, Ole (U Bergen)**

He's my sister! Gender Inversion in Gay Men's Speech

In many parts of the world, gay men refer to themselves and to each other with words that are reserved for reference to women in standard speech. Applying elements of the theory known as Argumentation dans la langue (ADL), developed by Oswald Ducrot and others, a theory that aims to integrate semantics, pragmatics, and rhetoric, in the analysis of speech data from San Francisco, Paris, and Oslo, I am trying to find out what gender inversion really means: Why do we speak like that? What are we saying about gender and sexuality when we use gender inversion, and what can the patterns of gender inversion tell us about the discursive constructions of gender and sexuality in general?

### **Kanner, Melinda (Antioch)**

Queering the Gay Text: Karen as the Queer Center of 'Will and Grace'

The character of Karen in 'Will and Grace,' is examined as a site of queerness inside a gay text. As one of the two heterosexual female characters, Karen stands apart from gay male characters and themes. Karen functions as a fulcrum around which both gay and straight sex, sexualities, and sensibilities are organized and explored. Distinct from Grace, who consistently expresses active desire for an engaging heterosexual liaison, Karen's creation of a queer pace inside an expressly gay terrain is achieved through two ongoing narrative strategies: 1) Karen regularly interrogates and problematizes the normality and desirability of heterosexuality. Although her obligations to her wealthy husband occasionally entail sex, much of the plot and Karen's dialogue are devoted to rejection of heterosexual sex and romance. Nonetheless, Karen remains perhaps the most sexualized of the four major characters. When Karen does behave overtly sexually, she typically selects non-normative potential partners and circumstances. 2.) Karen functions as tour guide and narrator through both gay and straight relationships, sexual styles, and cultural responsibilities. She is positioned in a narrative space in which she is neither gay nor straight. Much like minstrelsy affords white performers in blackface the guarantee that they are understood as white rather than black by audiences, Karen's performance of heterosexuality assures that she is understood expressly as not completely straight. These narrative strategies will be explored through an examination of episodes from the first two seasons of 'Will and Grace.'

### **Keesling, Ryan (Northwestern)**

'I could identify my name': How Pop artist God-des relates to queer youth

Young people in whom the messages of the dominant culture resonate positively can turn many places for role models. A queer youth, of course, also looks to the world for behavioral models, but may find messages that express hatred toward or simply ignore their nascent ideas and feelings. God-des, a lesbian rap artist grounded in hip-hop culture, delivers messages to young listeners encouraging self-exploration, cultivation, and pride. Together we will look at God-des' lyrics, hear her rhymes, and discuss them in relation to a young queer audience.

### **Leap, Bill (American)**

Rethinking the language of gay city

At the 3rd Lavender Languages Conference (1995), I made some preliminary comments about the ways in which gay-identified residents of Washington, DC talk about gay places and spaces in this city, e.g. what I termed language of gay city. Studying this language and the understandings of urban gay geography, which it conveys, has been the central concern in my gay English research since that time. This paper reviews high points of this research, to date, and comments on discursive themes (and their syntactic and lexical representations) which are regularly attested in gay city-related ways of speaking. This paper also asks: who is speaking in these instances, and explores how the language of gay city diversifies in response to race, ethnic and class backgrounds.

### **Levon, Erez (NYU)**

## Variable Performance: The Effect of Discourse Environment on the Overt Indexation of a Gay Male Identity

Abercrombie (1967) identifies intonation as a linguistic feature used by speakers to affiliate themselves with a particular group. McConell-Ginet (1983), Gaudio (1994), and Moonwomon (1985), among others, have explored the notion that different socially marginalized groups manipulate their pitch properties to index specific group memberships and combat normalizing social pressures. Stereotypically constituent aspects of the speech of these groups can then be analyzed as a reaction to pre-existing social division, rather than its cause and explanation. For example, recent research has identified a wider average PITCH RANGE in the speech of American gay men, as compared to American heterosexual men. Rather than ascribing this characteristic to an inherent difference between the two social groups, a framework must be adopted that allows for individual choice and manifestation of certain linguistic features to overtly index group membership differentially in various social contexts. In this way, empirically identified characteristics are no longer isolated linguistic phenomena, but rather constitute a part of a fluid, yet coherent, socially specific identity construction.

The research presented here investigates whether the gay men in an experimental methodology would in fact manifest a wider pitch range than heterosexual men; examines observed variation across the three experimental sample groups (heterosexual women, gay men, and heterosexual men); and finally analyzes these observations within a model of INDEXATION of group identity through structured variation in language use, grounded in the 'communities of practice' model and a socially differentiated model of the IMPLEMENTATION of in-group linguistic features.

### **Livia, Anna (UC Berkeley)**

#### Truck Drivers and Dandies: Gender, Sexuality and Class

One of the most important contributions of queer theory has been the understanding that gender is performative, actualized by speakers at each utterance. They do not do this with complete freedom, however. In order to be understood, they must follow the rules of the system and its pre-existing conventions. If we in turn want to understand and correctly interpret their representations of themselves, then we need to know what codes and conventions are cited. For Judith Butler, it is the loss of gender norms, the lynchpins of 'the naturalizing narratives of compulsory sexuality' which will allow speakers to occupy a multitude of different points along a gender continuum. However, I argue that gender norms are not the only lynchpins holding the gender system in place. Other demographic axes including class, age and race are also involved. Representations of appropriate behavior for men or women are rarely unaccompanied by notions of age, race or class appropriateness.

In this talk, I will look specifically at the terms used by French lesbians to position themselves and others as feminine (preferred) or masculine (dispreferred). In the personal ads published in *Lesbia Magazine*, writers show a marked preference for feminine lesbians. Masculine lesbians are frequently asked to refrain from replying to the ad. One reading of these exclusions is that the ad writers are merely reinforcing the gender norms they have inherited, preferring partners who can pass for straight. However, not all masculine lesbians are despised. 'Camionneuses' (women truck drivers) and 'catcheuses' (women wrestlers) are systematically excluded, but the 'butch dandy' is prized. The explanation for this distinction lies in the fact that the former are perceived as working class, while the latter is upper class. As one of my informants put it, the woman wrestler is 'too muscular, an ugly mannish woman, but without any nobility, because wrestling is brawling. The woman wrestler is violent. It's a working class sport.'

### **Livingston, McKenzie A. (New York City)**

#### Gay space and urban politics

This paper examines gays' and lesbians' motivations for creating self-identified space, how sexuality is represented in space, the differences between gay and lesbian community formation, and the political activities of homosexuals. Through a general overview of these four areas, the advantages and disadvantages to homosexual communities and politics are revealed. And a theory for a more inclusive and successful political

movement for sexual minorities is suggested.

### **Minning, Heidi (Syracuse)**

#### Communities of Practice and Sexual Identities in the Narratives of 20 Former East Germans

Commenting on the value of the construct 'community of practice' in sociolinguistic analysis, Penny Eckert points out that it allows one to 'locate the speaking subject within a social unit in which meaning is being actively constructed, and to investigate the relation between the construction of meaning in that unit and the larger social structure with which it engages.' In using this construct to show how linguistic style emerges in the preadolescent heterosexual marketplace, Eckert has provided a model for observing and analyzing structures of heterosexual domination as they are being enacted. As Eckert points out, this is a level of social practice at which gender is co-constructed with other aspects of identity, for example as her research also demonstrates, with sexual orientation.

A cohort of 10 lesbians from the former German Democratic Republic contrast their experiences within the heterosexual marketplace (which remained largely unchallenged in the East until the fall of the wall in 1989), with experiences within feminist and lesbian communities of practice after the reunification. These narratives point to conditions which fostered the development of lesbian identities, and offer some insight as to the role of interaction in shaping emerging selves. Ten gay men from the G.D.R., on the other hand, report that they had frequent contact with gay communities of practice in East Berlin, and describe strong commitments to gay identities before the fall of the wall. These differences highlight the divergent paths taken by these people during the construction of gendered sexualities: men positioning themselves as subjects, women as objects. This pattern could be disturbed in the West, where a thriving culture of feminism and lesbianism was able to proliferate; in the East it was forcibly contained by the male-dominated political machine of the government, as well as that of the budding male gay rights movement.

### **Moonwomon, Birch. (Sonoma State)**

#### Queermo Meets Queerling: Queerling Meets Queermo: Can the Academic Discourses of Queer Language Study Make Peace and Progress?

I begin with a historical view of the field although whether or not there is an emerging field of queer language study is itself a question--, acknowledging the contributing disciplines and their discourses. On the one hand, sociolinguists, especially within but not limited to social science-oriented, feminist, gender and language study, has provided a body of work. I regard this side of the field as 'queerling.' On the other hand, scholarship within rhetoric, communication studies, and humanities-oriented cultural studies has contributed work. I am calling this 'queermo,' in recognition of its tie to post-modernism. The discourses of these two sides of the field are different, involving different aesthetics, ideas of evidence, and sense of argument. Besides different discipline paradigms, different generations of practitioners and political orientations are involved, altogether making different sets of alignments of disciplinary discourse, life stage, and sexuality politics to queerling than to queermo. Queermo and queerling are in contention for legitimacy and therefore power within queer language study. Queermo is ascendant, or perhaps now established in-power, queerling of declining influence, its identity-oriented and empirical work out of favor.

Building upon overviews presented by others, (Don Kulick, Bill Leap, Anna Livia and Kira Hall) I give an account of the present field, reporting who is presenting and publishing work and where, and who is hearing and reading the work. I find, for instance, that there are fewer than a dozen individuals really multiply publishing in queer language study. I explore what academic ends the presents and published papers seem to be meeting and how they contribute to academic and political discourses. That there are some but few writings concerning lesbian/dyke language use, for instance, indicates that little attention is being paid to queer women's language use.

In presenting both the historical and synchronic views, I consider the reading practices of the field's practitioners by examining references cited. Are we hearing and reading each other? Whom are we relying on outside the field? I find that there is less reading across the queerling-queermo boundary than seems desirable, although more use of queermo sources by queerling practitioners than the other way around.

I urge the fostering of an awareness of the history and academic discourses backgrounding queer language study, in part by its inclusion in the syllabi of gender and language or sexuality and language courses. I urge that, in the light of such awareness, a deliberate dialog begin among queer language scholars that explores differenced related (at least) discipline, politics, generation, and genders shares approaches. I urge the use of mixed methodologies, the study of many kinds of texts, and the continued encouragement of trans-national as well as trans-discipline connections. I proselytize for empiricism, acknowledgment of ongoing social identities, and validation of elegant patterning along with complexity and irregularity.

**Moran, John (Tulane)**

'Now yer talkin' Bear': Orthography and Identity in BEAR Magazine

Each new month seems to herald the publication of a new bear-themed magazine, establishment of a new bear club, or dozens of new bear-related Internet sites. This study contributes to the creation of one version of bear identity, through an editorial voice which represents major elements of an emerging yet still amorphous definition of bearishness. A strategic use of nonstandard spelling reflects an orthographic embodiment of central components of the bear identity, in particular the rejection of the stereotype of the (overtly) refined homosexual man. The linguistic patterns highlight the bear's connection' real or imagined' to masculine, blue-collar men.

**Morris, Bonnie (George Washington University)**

A Lexicon of Festivalese: The Slang of Lesbian Music Festivals

This presentation offers a look behind the scenes of a vibrant American subculture: the women's music festival. For a quarter century, lesbians have flocked to the 'woman-only space' of week-long events such as the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, the National Women's Music Festival, Campfest, NEWMR, and so on; these dyke institutions have a coded 'insider' language well-known to repeat workers and returning audiences. [75] This first-ever catalogue of Festivalese terms and their often hilarious meanings is featured in my Lambda Literary Award-nominated book, *Eden Built by Eves*.

**Nakamura, Karen (Yale) and Hisako Matsuo**

What's Queer About Takarazuka

Takarazuka, an all-female theatre and dance troupe in Japan, has been seen as a site of aberrant female sexuality. However, up to now the analytical perspective of the troupe and its fans has been limited by the lens of American gay and lesbian studies. Labeling the attraction that fans feel towards the actors playing male roles (otoko-yaku) as either heterosexuality or homosexuality obliterates the complex relationship between the two. By re-focusing through the eyes and experiences of the fans, themselves mostly middle-aged married housewives, we can move away from a simplistic view of sexuality and desire. There's something queer about Takarazuka, but it's ore about the liberation of gender than alternative genderings and sexualities.

**Morrish, Liz (Nottingham on Trent)**

Community of Practice

The notion of Communities of Practice has recently 'shouldered its way into the sociolinguistic lexicon' (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999:173). It blends the idea of a speech community more fully with social identity theory. See also Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (1992) who define a Community of Practice (CofP) as 'an aggregate of people who

come together around a mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations'in short practices'emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor.'

It revolves around the notion that in any group (professional, family, neighborhood, professional, etc.) there are particular expectations of linguistic practice and styles which group members adopt, recognize as appropriate and are inducted into. We might even recognize Labovian categories such as core members, peripherals and lames within the CofP. The emphasis for speakers is on constructing identity and reinforcing the sense of community. In this way, the CofP is simultaneously defined by both its membership and the practices in which they engage. The model also recognizes that an individual may well accommodate a number of different memberships. Typically members interact with each other regularly in a joint enterprise which is mutually negotiated and mediated by a 'shared repertoire of joint resources for negotiating meaning' (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999: 176). Eckert, in other work, also talks about accumulating 'symbolic capital.'

The model is influential at the moment particularly in the field of language and gender. Cof P allows a new relativism about notions such as politeness. For example, what may be considered polite in one CofP, may not be in another. As Eckert and McConnell-Giner point out, the model does not abstract out one social identity from amongst an individual's other integrated identities, and so avoids a 'universalizing' of femaleness or maleness. The model does not seem to have been used to evaluate gay and lesbian language use but may be a better-defined successor to the linguistics of contact model suggested by Queen (1997) and Barrett (1997).

### **Peterson, David J. (Peru)**

Havelock Ellis' [and John Addington Symonds'] Sexual Inversion: A case study in reading 19th century sexological texts

In *History of Sexuality*, Foucault urges us to see the discourses deployed to construct sex and sexuality as representing a 'series of discontinuous segments whose function is neither uniform nor stable' and which 'come into play in various strategies' (100). Thus, he claims, 'we must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance, and a starting point for an opposing strategy.' (101).

This paper considers the pioneering work on homosexuality in English, *Sexual Inversion*, in this light, arguing that their work embodies 'an opposing strategy:' to the coming to be dominant discourses on homosexuality (such as the religious and psychoanalytic.) Such opposition is achieved by taking a predominantly descriptivist approach to examining 'sexual inversion.' Doing so frustrates any attempt to reduce the experiences of others, and their understandings of those experiences, to a theoretical construct that would allow a medico-moral professional (or any one else for that matter) to assume a position of definitional power over the identities of others. In essence, Ellis and Symonds' work destabilized the category of sexual inversion itself, thereby allowing multiple understandings of the 'species' to be maintained, indeed, to flourish.

### **Provencher, Denis M. (U Wisconsin- La Crosse)**

A Kiss is Not Just a Kiss: Heteronormative Narrative Strategies in *Will and Grace*

NBC's sitcom *Will & Grace* is the most recent primetime effort since *Ellen* to deal with lavender issues in a significant way. The show incorporates many elements of gay experience as depicted through the characters' use of Gay English, including such linguistic operations as comic relief, (self) parody, verbal dueling, mutual teasing, exaggeration, gay-oriented metaphor and sexual innuendo. In this way, *W&G* subverts many norms related to gender and sexuality.

Nonetheless, in its attempt to mainstream gay life on U.S. television, *W&G* often falls short in its representations. Visually, this sitcom resembles most other primetime shows with its use of male-female character couplings (*Will and Grace*; *Jack and Karen/Rosario*). In this paper, I examine the use of the kiss in several episodes of *W&G*.

The kiss regularly pairs off the show's characters into seemingly straight couples and reinforces a heteronormative narrative in which same-sex affection and significant others remain strikingly absent. It is no wonder that W&G has received such overwhelming support from 'Middle America' since it represents a fresh attempt to reinforce conventional narrative strategies where only the male-female couple ultimately matters.

### **Ritchie, Jason (Duke)**

#### Ideology and M4M Chat

This paper aims to implicate queer people in their subordination to mainstream heterosexuals, and thus to counter the notion that the enemy- that is, the (re) producer of existing power relations- is some remote, evil not-queer (read, straight white male). As a recipient, generator, and protector of mainstream heterosexist, homophobic ideologies, the queer is his own enemy.

The internet- and particularly American Online M4M (men for men) chat- is one of few sites in American culture where discourse can freely and safely occur among queer men. The medium offers an opportunity to imagine a vastly different world, with greater possibilities for- and fewer restrictions and regulations of- self. But this liberatory potential of M4M discourse is, as yet, only a dream. The reality of it is a stifling, pervasive combination of ideologies which reflect (perhaps because they are not distinct from) dominant ideologies in 'straight' culture. On the whole, M4M users accept without question these ideologies, and so continually cement the marginalized, subordinated roles given them.

An experimental ethnography of North Carolina M4M, this paper explicated and interrogates dominant M4M ideologies and suggest, 1) that we acknowledge the contradictions and irony in our 'subject positions' as both marginals and the sources of ideologies which define and demand our marginality and 2) that we take full advantage of the 'liberatory potential' of M4M chat.

### **Rogers, Henry and Ron Smyth ( University of Toronto)**

#### Will and Jack: Gay but Different

Previous work has shown that listeners use certain phonetic phenomena to characterize male voices as gay- or straight sounding. In 'Will and Grace', the two main male characters, Will and Jack, are both gay; however, a common perception is that Jack's behavior is more 'gay' than Will's. Based on this, we predicted certain phonetic differences in Will's and Jack's speech. Acoustic analysis of their speech supports all hypotheses: Jack has longer sibilants (ca 50 ms longer for /s/, 40 ms /z/), a higher spectral peak frequency (ca 200Hz for /s/, 300 for /z/, and a higher F2 for /l/ (ca 100 Hz; clearer sounding, less velarized).

Obviously, we are dealing with acting, not real life. Nevertheless, these results show that the actors and director of the show have been successful in presenting the characters in a way consistent with how listeners expect gay and straight characters to sound.

### **Solomon, Harris (Emory)**

#### White Lies: Hiding and Misrepresentation in Hebrew HIV/AIDS Educational Materials

As Israel continues to expand its medical resources for treating those citizens affected by HIV/AIDS, little has been done in the arena of AIDS education. Existing socio-religious taboos and a lack of public health educational funding have left individuals with questions about AIDS little choice of informative materials. As a result, an incomplete and misleading message is presented in materials targeting a gay male audience in contrast to a more comprehensive message presented to a female audience. For example, in materials for gay men, the 'cocktail' combination antiviral treatment touted as a miracle drug and its existence alone is conveyed as a reason to release any anxiety about being HIV positive. In texts geared towards a female general audience, however, the woman's

specific emotional concerns are addressed and medical information is presented in a cogent and factually accurate manner. This analysis shows that in these selected materials, the message geared towards gay men is far more corporeal in nature, while the message for women places emphasis on psychological as well as physical health. I will also contrast these materials to similar pamphlets in English and discuss different methods of discursively engineering an HIV/AIDS educational message.

### **Streitmatter, Roger (American)**

The White House Ten

Numerous historical sources have made passing reference to the April 17, 1965 protest at the White House in which seven men and three women marched on behalf of gay and lesbian rights. Thirty-five years later, it is no easy task either to identify or track down those ten courageous individuals. The task is made more difficult by the fact that no images of that first demonstration have been preserved, although there are both still photos and film of other protests that took place at the same location later in the same year.

### **Suresha, Ron (Gay Lesbian Review)**

Grammbear and Ursomascularity: Neologisms and Linguistic Innovations in Bear-Specific Discourse

From the ambiguous anthropomorphisms 'bear,' 'otter' and 'cub,' to the creative combinations of those and related words into such subculture-specific terms as 'husbear,' 'bearfriend,' 'anybear,' 'cybearspace,' and the like, the warp and 'woof' of Bear lingo creates and reinforces linguistic ties within the community. Indeed, many men closely identified with the Bear subculture adapt some form of nickname incorporating one of these terms. This presentation will provide an overview and analysis of terms coined within the Bear community/subculture, the role of such neologisms in forming community identity, and their functions in Bear environments.

### **Taub, Sarah (Gallaudet) and Loraine Hutchins (Washington, DC)**

Sex and Spirit in the Western Cognitive Unconscious

Though Western mainstream religions regard the concept of 'sacred sex' skeptically, English speakers' conceptual metaphors tell a different story. In a conceptual metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson 1980), one conceptual domain represents another. Conventionally, sexual desire is hunger, physical forces, insanity, etc.; the divine is father, shepherd, breath, and so on. Sex and spirit metaphors overlap in two areas: ecstasy and love. Two conceptual domains, loss of self ('lost in bliss') and upward movement ('exalted'), apply equally to sexual and spiritual ecstasy. Love for a sexual partner is love for the divine ('she's my goddess') and vice versa ('bride of Christ'). Modern sacred sex practices find fertile conceptual grounding in this sex/spirit nexus, present in the cognitive unconscious of skeptics as well as believers.

### **Thompson, Damien (American)**

Negotiating Gay Presence in an African American Community Undergoing Gentrification

This paper examines the intersections of race, class and sexuality as they relate to the politics of place in a Southeast Washington DC community. By identifying the ways in which the resident population is 'erased' from the local landscape by print media, we see how non-resident groups are able to re-present that landscape in ways which meet their own needs. Conversely, this 'erasure' impacts the ways in which the local population can resist the gentrifying forces at work in their neighborhood.

### **Tougaw, Jason (American)**

## Exposing the Invert: Oscar Wilde, Teleny, and the Sexologists

The Picture of Dorian Gray, Teleny (a homoerotic novel often attributed to Wilde), and the medical case histories published by sexologists like Hirschfeld and Ellis all publicize the private sexual and emotional lives of sexual 'inverts.' Literary and medical narratives relied on invasions of privacy to elicit sympathy and identification from readers, initiating a widespread cultural tendency to treat homosexuality as an open secret, both stigmatized and sanctioned, refused and desired.

## **Willhite, Erika (UCLA)**

### Differences Between Heterosexual and Homosexual Representations in Advertising

The research question I had in mind when starting the project was to investigate how gender roles are constructed in advertisements. More specifically, I wondered how the proscription of gender roles for heterosexuals differed from homosexuals portrayed in advertisements. My research indicates that the schedule of heterosexual representations between men and women teaches unequal gender roles, whereas, in general, the male is dominant and the female subordinate. The schedule of representations among same-gendered, homosexual individuals teaches gender roles that are more egalitarian, whereas the distribution of power among actors is equally distributed. The research indicates that homosexual representations challenge the traditional, dichotomous, hierarchical, hegemonic gender roles proscribed by heterosexism in such a way to restructure the social order in a more multidimensional, egalitarian manner.

## **Wright, Les (Mount Ida College/ Bear History Project)**

From Anthropology to the Stars: The Transformation of the Quasi-Official  
'Bear Codes' into a Moral Measure of Bearishness

As noted in The Bear Book, 'The Natural Bears Classification System' was invented by a pair of astronomers intent on having some fun'an early bear camp 'take'-on gay male culture's obsession with bodily beauty and perfection. Ironically, the system became a serious, standardized shorthand for bear self-descriptors almost immediately. The facily embraced and morally loaded classification system poses several problems. This study considers the underlying material and moral historical contexts which gave rise to the 'Bear Codes,' including the pseudo-science of anthropometry, the classification fetish of Krafft-Ebing, Kinsey's scale of human sexual behavior, and our social obsession with quantifying ineffable qualities.