
SEVEN

Waiting for the Mouse: Constructed Dialogue in Conversation

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INTRODUCTION: REPORTED SPEECH AND DIALOGUE

For Voloshinov and Bakhtin, dialogue is crucial: not dialogue per se, that is, the exchange of turns that is of central concern to conversation analysts, but the polyphonic nature of all utterance, of every word. This polyphony derives from the multiple resonances of the people, contexts, and genres with which the utterance or word has been associated. As Bakhtin (1986: 91) puts it, "Each utterance is filled with the echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the communality of the sphere of speech communication."

In exploring dialogue in this broad sense, Voloshinov devotes extensive analysis to reported speech. He introduces this focus as follows: "The productive study of dialogue presupposes, however, a more profound investigation of the forms used in reported speech, since these forms reflect basic and constant tendencies in the active reception of other speakers' speech, and it is this reception, after all, that is fundamental also for dialogue" (Voloshinov 1986 [1930]: 117). Voloshinov criticizes "earlier investigators" for "divorcing the reported speech from the reporting context," which "explains why their treatment of these forms is so static and inert. . . . Meanwhile, the true object of inquiry ought to be precisely the dynamic interrelationship of these two factors, the speech being reported (the other person's speech) and the speech doing the reporting (the author's speech). . . . After all, the two actually do exist, function, and take shape only in their interrelation. . . . The reported speech and the reporting context are but the terms of a dynamic interrelationship" (ibid.: 119). Furthermore, Bakhtin observes that "the speech of another, once en-

closed in a context, is—no matter how accurately transmitted—always subject to certain semantic changes. The context embracing another's word is responsible for its dialogizing background, whose influence can be very great. Given the appropriate methods for framing, one may bring about fundamental changes even in another's utterance accurately quoted" (Bakhtin 1981: 340). The essence of this observation is metaphorically expressed in a Wolof proverb which holds, "Everything can be moved from one place to another without being changed, except speech."¹

My interest here incorporates Voloshinov's notion that the reported speech and the reporting context are dynamically interrelated as well as Bakhtin's that the meaning of the reported speech itself can be—indeed, is inevitably—transformed by the reporting context. Further, I wish to focus attention on the dynamic relationship between the reported speech and the *reported* context. I will question whether the "reported speech" exists at all as reported speech (i.e., as another's words), when divorced from its context of utterance. Rather, when an utterance is repeated by a current speaker, it exists only as an element of the reporting context, although its meaning resonates with association with its reported context, in keeping with Bakhtin's sense of polyphony. In the reporting context, the "reported speech" exists only as the creation of the "reporter." Put another way, the words have ceased to be those of the speaker to whom they are attributed; they have been appropriated by the speaker who is reporting them. This claim is proffered not in counterpoint to Bakhtin, whose chief material is the reported speech of novelistic prose, but rather in counterpoint to American folk wisdom applied to the reporting of the speech of others in daily dialogue, the language of everyday conversation: when told that someone else said something, most Americans believe that the "reported" statement must have been said as reported. In short, I wish to question our literal conception of "reported speech."

REPORTED CRITICISM IN CONVERSATION

The folk wisdom I have in mind can be viewed in the common act of reporting criticism. One person tells another that a third has said something negative about the addressee. The folk wisdom of daily interaction divorces reported speech from the reported context: On hearing that another has spoken ill of one, few people ask how that comment grew out of, was situated in, or was triggered by, the context in which it was uttered. One rarely considers the possibility that it might have been provoked by someone present at the time, including the reporter, or constructed in the service of some immediate interactional goal—for example, establishing solidarity with one who is present by comparing her favorably to one who is not

present, or by sympathizing with a complaint that a present party has voiced about an absent one. The reality of the reported speech is not questioned. Quite the opposite, opinions expressed in one's absence seem to have an enhanced reality, the incontestable truth of the overheard.

The anger and hurt felt in response to such reported criticism is, for Americans at least, typically directed toward the quoted source rather than the speaker who conveys the criticism. (In contrast, an Arab proverb has it that "He who repeats an insult is the one who is insulting you.") For example, a man who works in a large office invests a great deal of his own time to make signs identifying the various departments of his firm. A co-worker tells him that the boss does not like the colors he chose for the signs. The man feels hurt and angry at the boss for his ingratitude, but he never has a chance to say anything to the boss, who did not say anything to him, except to thank him and praise him for his efforts—praise which the man assumes to be hypocritical, taking the report of the co-worker as the truer truth.

The constellation of co-workers and boss is parallel to that of siblings and parents, a configuration which yields innumerable examples of reported criticism. A sister is hurt and angry at her mother because of the mother's disapproval of her boyfriend—which she knows about only because she has been told of it by her sister. A woman ends contact with her parents because they have talked about her in a way that she has demanded they cease—an infraction she learned about from her sister, with whom she does not sever contact. Elsewhere (Tannen 1986a) I discuss these and many other such examples. I refer to the phenomenon here only to provide familiar and easily recognizable evidence that most Americans tend to take literally the act of what is accordingly called "reported speech." That is, they assume that when quotations are attributed to others, the words thus reported represent more or less what was said, the speaker in question being a conduit of objectively real information. The conveyor of information is seen as an inert vessel, in Goffman's (1974: 516) terms, a mere animator: a voice giving form to information for which the quoted party is the principal, the one responsible. I want to claim, with Bakhtin, that there is no such thing, in conversation, as a mere animator (in contradistinction, for example, to someone who reads an academic paper which was written by a scholar who could not be present as scheduled at an academic meeting).

Elsewhere Goffman notes, "We must also be careful to keep in mind the truism that persons who are present are treated very differently from persons who are absent. Persons who treat each other with consideration while in each other's immediate presence regularly show not the slightest consideration for each other in situations where acts of deprivation can-

not be immediately and incontestably identified as to source by the person who is deprived by these acts" (Goffman 1953: 41, quoted in Shuman 1986: 23). In this formulation, Goffman suggests that speakers may treat an absent person without consideration because they cannot easily be identified by the aggrieved person. I would suggest, in contrast, that absent persons may be treated without consideration because in that context they are not persons, not perceived as potentially affected by the acts of that context. Rather, absent parties are simply topics of conversation, resources for the important facework required by the immediate context. It is, I think, the view of oneself as not a person but simply the subject of conversation that makes it so discomfiting to learn that one has been talked about. But the utterances which may strike an aggrieved party as "acts of deprivation" may not be that at all, until they are repeated in a context in which that party is present.

The folk wisdom about reported criticism in particular and reported speech in general reflects the pervasive American attitude toward language and communication that Reddy (1979) has identified as the conduit metaphor,² a misconception which assumes that communication is a matter of exchanging information, and that information is immutable, true or false, apart from its context. In direct contrast with this view, I will claim that when a speaker represents an utterance as the words of another, what results is by no means describable as "reported speech." Rather it is constructed dialogue. And the construction of the dialogue represents an active, creative, transforming move which expresses not the relationship between the quoted party and the topic of talk but rather the quoting party and the audience to whom the quotation is delivered.

It should be noted however that to say the quoted speech may not have been uttered, or may not have had the meaning it seems to have on report, is not to say that it was necessarily not uttered by the speaker to whom it is attributed. Indeed, my claim would not be undermined even by a tape recording "proving" that the words were spoken as reported. It is not that the reporter is lying nor even intentionally misrepresenting what was said but that the spirit of the utterance is fundamentally transformed when the object of the criticism is present rather than absent. This is a particular instance of the general phenomenon that changing the context of an utterance changes its meaning. Barbara Herrnstein Smith (1978: 65) observes that a quotation is a "fictive utterance" because, in quoting another, one presents a "facsimile" of the other's words. Therefore, "The factuality of the subject does not compromise the fictiveness of the tale for it is not the events told that are fictive but the *telling* of them" (ibid.: 128).

I am suggesting, then, that what is called "reported speech," "direct speech," "direct discourse," or "direct quotation" (that is, a speaker casting

an account of another's words as dialogue) should be understood not as report at all, but as constructed dialogue. It is constructed just as surely as is the dialogue in drama or fiction. This view does not diminish our image of the individual speaking; rather it enhances it. Bakhtin (1981: 338) observes that "Every conversation is full of transmissions and interpretations of other people's words," and that "of all words uttered in everyday life, no less than half belong to someone else" (ibid.: 339). The act of transforming others' words into one's own discourse is a creative and enlivening one. Following Friedrich (1986), it is a poetic act of the individual imagination. Moreover, and perhaps paradoxically, and this I think is Bakhtin's chief argument, it is a supremely social act: by appropriating each other's utterances, speakers are bound together in a community of words.

In the discussion that follows I first present examples of constructed dialogue from a collection of tape-recorded, transcribed conversational narratives in order to demonstrate that what appears to be reported speech may never have been spoken by anyone. If dialogue does not report speech, what then does it do? To answer this question, I present an entire conversational narrative to illustrate how constructed dialogue creates involvement by making a story into drama.

REPORTED SPEECH IS CONSTRUCTED DIALOGUE

Following are brief examples taken from narratives recorded by participants in casual conversation with their families and friends. Each example is accompanied by correspondingly brief discussion demonstrating that the dialogue animated in the narrative was not actually spoken by the person to whom it is attributed. In other words, it is not reported speech but constructed dialogue.

Dialogue Representing What Wasn't Said

Example 1 comes from a conversation in which a young woman tells her friend that when she was a little girl, her father frequently embarrassed her by berating her in front of her peers for not having responded to his orders quickly and efficiently. She represents, in the form of dialogue, what she did *not* say to her father:³

- (1) You can't say, "Well Daddy I didn't HEAR you."

This is a clear example of dialogue constructed rather than reported as the speaker states explicitly that the line of dialogue was not spoken.

Dialogue as Instantiation

Specific dialogue is often constructed to illustrate an utterance type that occurs repeatedly. Several examples follow.

Example 2 is from a conversation that took place among several women who work together, while they were having lunch in a restaurant. In this excerpt, Daisy animates a line of dialogue in order to illustrate a general phenomenon:

- (2) Daisy: The minute the kids get old enough
to do these things themselves,
 [that's when
Mary: [“You do it yourself.”
Daisy: Yeah that's when I start to say ...
 → “Well ... I don't think I'll go in the water this time.
 → Why don't you kids go on the ferris wheel.
 → I'll wave to you.”

It is clear from the general time frame established, “The minute the kids get old enough” (“the minute” is, of course, meant figuratively, not literally), that the line of dialogue (indicated in the example by quotation marks and an arrow at the left) is offered as an instantiation of a general phenomenon. This becomes even clearer when the context suggested by the dialogue changes before our eyes from “go in the water” to “go on the ferris wheel.” Although rhythmically one blends into the other in a single coherent flow of discourse, the scene changes as the general point of the story is instantiated in two different scenarios: from swimming to going on a ferris wheel.

Example 3 is taken from a young man's account of having been punished as a boy. He recalls his mother saying,

- (3) whenever something happened,
 → then “Oh wait until your father comes.”

Although this is certainly the gist of what the mother said, there is no reason to believe that these are precisely the words she always spoke.

Finally, a teacher recounts what he says to a new class when he appears as a substitute:

- (4) I have very strict rules,
 and ... one of the first things I tell them
 after I tell them my name, is ...
 → “When you follow my rules, you'll be happy,
 → when you do not follow my rules,
 → you will be-
 → Pain and consequences.
 → You will be very UNhappy.”

Once more, it is highly unlikely that these precise words were uttered each time the teacher entered a new class—especially considering the abrupt

cutting off of breath following "be" and preceding the highly stylized interjected phrase, "pain and consequences." But the sense of what he presents himself as saying to each class is better captured by a particular instance than it would be by a general summary representing the gist of what he always says.

Summarizing Dialogue

Example 5 shows a line of dialogue which is identified as representing the gist of what was said in a single discourse. The speaker says she was part of a group having dinner at a Philippine restaurant when one of the members of her dinner party spoke against the restaurant within earshot of the restaurant staff:

- (5) and this man is essentially saying
 → "We shouldn't be here
 → because Imelda Marcos owns this restaurant."

By using the present tense as well as "we," "here," and "this," the speaker casts her summary of the man's argument in dialogue. But she describes it as a summary, what he "essentially" said rather than what he specifically said.

Choral Dialogue

The next example comes from a narrative that was told by a woman (who happened to be me) about an experience in the Athens airport: A Greek woman tried to break into a line in which Americans (including the speaker) had queued up. The Americans objected to her behavior and resisted her justifications for breaking into the line until she said that she had small children with her.

- (6) And then all the Americans said
 → "Oh in that case, go ahead."

In this example, the dialogue is attributed to more than one speaker: "all the Americans." This is impossible, unless one imagines the line of Americans speaking in unison like a Greek chorus, which is unlikely (despite the Hellenic setting of the story), and, as I can attest, not the case. Rather, the line of dialogue is offered as an instantiation of what many people said.

Similar examples are frequent in the narratives collected. Just one more will be given. In example 7 a woman is telling about having seen two mothers on the train with their children:

- (7) and the mothers were telling the kids,
 → "Hold on to that, you know, to that post there."

Since they are not likely to have spoken in unison, the wording supplied instantiates rather than represents what the *two* mothers said.

Dialogue as Inner Speech

People often report their own thoughts as dialogue. Example 8 is taken from a narrative about riding the New York subway. The speaker describes a strange man who entered the car and:

- (8) started mumbling about ... perverts,
 → ... and I thought "Oh God,
 → if I am going to get
 → someone's slightly psychotic attitude
 → on perverts,
 → I really don't feel like riding this train."

While it is possible that these words actually represent the words the speaker spoke to himself at the time, it is unlikely, especially since the phrase "slightly psychotic attitude" seems stylized for performance effect.

The Inner Speech of Others

If it is questionable that dialogue in a narrative accurately reproduces what a speaker thought at a time past, it is unquestionable that when a speaker reports what someone else thought, the words thus animated in dialogue do not correspond to the words actually thought by the other person. The animation as dialogue of the thoughts of a character other than the speaker was particularly frequent in a group of narratives told in conversation by Greek women which I have analyzed elsewhere (Tannen 1983). The following example from that study comes from a story a Greek woman told about being accosted by a man late at night in Venice. She says that she drew a rock from her pocket and took a step toward the man while brandishing the rock. The man turned tail and left. She explains his motivation in the words of his (projected) thoughts:⁴

- (9) Sou leei, "Afti den echei kalo skopo."
 [Literally, He says to himself, "She doesn't have a good
 purpose"; idiomatically, "She's up to no good."]

Presenting the thoughts of a character other than oneself is a clear example of dialogue which must be seen as constructed, not reported.

Taken from the corpus of narratives under analysis here, example 10 presents the thoughts of another person as dialogue, but introduces them not so much as what he thought but as what he must have been thinking, judging from his behavior and facial expression. It comes from a story about a baseball game, told by the person who was then the pitcher, describing the batter:

- (10) And he-you could just see him just draw back like
 → “Man, I’m going to knock this thing to Kingdom Come.”

The word *like* is frequently used to introduce dialogue which, in a sense, is just what it says: not so much what the person said, as “like” what the person said, or as representing what the person felt like. Thus, in example 11, a woman tells of an incident in which her fifteen-year-old sister was riding a bicycle with a basketball under her shirt, giving the appearance of being pregnant. She fell off the bike when she was almost hit by a bus. The narrator says,

- (11) And the bus driver was like “Oh my go::d!”

She is not suggesting that the bus driver literally said “Oh my god,” but that his reaction was such that he might have been thinking something like that.

Example 12 is taken from a story about the experience of a tourist in Japan:

- (12) and um they didn’t tell us, first of all,
 that we were going into the bath,
 so we were standing in the room,
 → and they said “Okay, take your clothes off.”
 → We’re like “What?!”
 and um they gave us these kimono
 and we put the kimono on,
 they brought us to this other room,
 → and they said, “Okay, take the kimono off,”
 → and we’re like “What are you talking about!”

The lines attributed to the speaker(s) who gave orders to disrobe seem to have been uttered, but not in precisely the words represented. (They could not have been precisely those words because two variants are offered: “take your clothes off” and “take the kimono off”; the second is not a repair but simply a marker of return to the story following the backtrack to explain that they were wearing kimono.) There is no suggestion, however, that the speaker and his friends actually said, “What?” and “What are you talking about!” but simply that they felt in a way that would be reflected in such an utterance.

Dialogue Constructed by a Listener

In the conversational narratives I have examined, a listener often supplies a line of dialogue animated in the role of a character in someone else’s story. The listener in example 2, Mary, constructed an utterance in the role of Daisy (or any parent) addressing her children:

- Daisy: The minute the kids get old enough
to do these things themselves,
□ that's when
→ Mary: □ "You do it yourself."

The "you" in this utterance refers not to the conversationalists present but to the children in Daisy's discourse who want to do something adventuresome. In this active form of listenership, the listener's construction of dialogue appropriate to someone else's narrative demonstrates how thoroughly the listener appreciates the perspective of the speaker. When a listener utters a line of dialogue for a story she isn't telling, that dialogue certainly cannot be considered "reported."

Even more extreme is example 13, in which a listener supplies a line of dialogue which is intentionally absurd. This excerpt follows an amusing story told by Lois about how her brother cast a fishing rod and accidentally sunk a lure in their father's face. Lois describes her father arriving at the hospital holding the lure in his face. Joe, a listener, offers a line of dialogue spoken by a hypothetical nurse which satirizes the absurdity of the situation:

- (13) Lois: So he had the thing.
So he's walkin' around ...
→ Joe: "Excuse me, Sir,
→ you've got a lure on your face."

Encouraged by general laughter, Joe goes on to construct an equally absurd response by Lois's father:

- Joe: "Ah ... lure again? [laughter]
→ Boy ... gets stuck there every week." [laughter]

In using Lois's story as material for his performance, Joe is constructing, not reporting, dialogue.

Fadeout, Fadein

In example 14, an excerpt from a narrative told by a woman about her experience with a dentist, an indirect quotation fades into a direct one:

- (14) It was like he was telling everybody
→ to "have your wisdom teeth taken out"
and I didn't see any point
as long as they weren't bothering me.

"Telling everybody to" is the grammatical means of introducing an indirect quotation, but it is followed instead by a direct quotation: "have your wisdom teeth taken out." The speaker might recall what the dentist

said to her, but she can't know the precise words in which he spoke to "everybody." Finally, she concludes as if the reported line had been spoken to her ("I didn't see any point as long as they weren't bothering me").

Example 15 is taken from the same story as example 7, about the mothers in the subway car:

- (15) And uh finally the mother opened up the stroller
 → you know and uh told the kid to "SIT THERE."

As in the preceding example, the mother's speech is introduced with the word "to," suggesting that indirect discourse is to follow. But by assuming the voice quality of a mother giving instructions to her child, the speaker shifts to constructed dialogue.

Vague Referents

In the next example, which comes from the same discourse as example 1 (in which a young woman tells how her father embarrassed her by ordering her around in front of her peers), the use of vague referents makes it clear that the dialogue was never actually spoken as reported:

- (16) He was sending me out to get tools or whatever
 → [imitating father] "Go get this
 → and it looks like this and the other"

If her father had uttered precisely these words, not even he could have expected her to locate what he wanted.

Nonhuman Speaker

The preceding examples come from conversational narratives. However, discourse need not be narrative to exploit the expressive potential of constructed dialogue. The final example comes from conversation taped at a dinner party. A guest notices the hosts' cat sitting on the window sill and addresses a question to the cat: "What do you see out there, kitty?" One of the hosts answers for the cat:

- (17) She says,
 → "I see a beautiful world just waiting for me."

He animates the cat's response in a high-pitched, childlike voice. By animating dialogue, the two speakers create a spontaneous minidrama with the cat as central character. The constructed dialogue becomes a resource for a fleeting but finely coordinated verbal pas de deux.

CONSTRUCTED DIALOGUE
IN A CONVERSATIONAL NARRATIVE

Having demonstrated that dialogue animated in conversational discourse is constructed dialogue, I now present a complete narrative in order to show how such pseudoquotations work in conversational narrative. The lines of dialogue in the following story were not spoken by the characters to whom they are attributed for the reasons shown in the preceding section. What, then, are they doing in the story? The speaker uses the animation of voices to make his story into drama.

The narrative was told by a young man who came home from his work as a resident in the emergency ward of a hospital, to find a group of his friends gathered in his home, hosted by his wife. Asked whether anything interesting had happened at the emergency room, he responded by telling this story.

- 1) We had three guys come in,
- 2) one guy had a cut right here.
- 3) On his arm? [Listener: uhuh]
- 4) Bled all over the place, right? [Listener: Yeah]
- 5) These three guys were hysterical.
- 6) They come bustin' through the door.
- 7) Yknow you're not supposed to come in to the emergency room.
- 8) You're supposed to go to the registration desk, yknow?
- 9) and fill out all the forms before you get called back.
- 10) They come bustin' through the door,
- 11) blood is everywhere.
- 12) It's on the walls, on the floor, everywhere.
- 13) [sobbing] "It's okay Billy, we're gonna make it /?/."
- 14) [normal voice] "What the hell's wrong with you."
- 15) W-we-we look at him.
- 16) He's covered with blood yknow?
- 17) All they had to do was take a washcloth at home
- 18) and go like this ...
- 19) and there'd be no blood.
- 20) There'd be no blood.
- 21) [listener: You put pressure on it.]
- 22) Three drunk guys come bustin' in,
- 23) all the other patients are like, "Ugh. Ugh."
- 24) They're bleedin' everywhere yknow.
- 25) People are passin' out just lookin' at this guy's blood here.
- 26) [Listener: Like "We're okay."]

- 27) "Get the hell outta here!"
 28) [Listener: Yknow he's got stories like this to tell every night, don't you?]
 29) Yeah [Listener: Mhm]
 30) "Get the hell outta here!" yknow?
 31) These three guys-
 32) "What the hell's wrong with you guys.
 33) You don't know anything about first aid?
 34) Hold onto his arm."
 35) ["innocent" voice] "We raised it above his head."
 36) "Oh yeah." shh shh
 37) [Listener: So it bled up.]
 38) Yknow they're whimmin' his arm around
 39) ["upset" voice] "Come here Billy!
 40) No, come here Billy!"
 41) Two guys yankin' him from both sides.
 42) [sobbing] "Am I gonna die?
 43) [loud, sobbing ingress] Am I gonna die?"
 44) He's passed out on the cot.
 45) Anyway so ... [sobbing] "Am I gonna die?"
 46) "How old are you."
 47) "Nineteen."
 48) "Shit. Can't call his parents."
 49) [hysterically pleading voice] "Don't tell my parents.
 50) Please don't tell my parents.
 51) You're not gonna tell my parents, are you?"
 52) [Listener: /?/ "We're going to wrap you in bandages."]
 53) What happened.
 54) Then the cops were there too, the cops.
 55) ["bored" voice] "WHO stabbed dja."
 56) "I didn't get stabbed.
 57) I fell on a bottle." ...
 58) "Come on, looks like a stab wound to ME."
 59) [Listener: Well this is Alexandria, what do you think?]
 60) [Listener: Really no shit.]

There are at least five different voices animated in this narrative, and each of these voices is realized in a paralinguistically distinct acoustic representation: literally, a different voice. These are the voices of Billy, his friends, the speaker and other hospital staff, the other patients, and the policeman.

- (34) Hold a
onto his rm.”
- (36) “O ye
h ah.”
- (46) “How
old are you.”
- (48) “Sh Can’t
it. pa
call his rents.”
- (52) [Listener: /?/ “We’re going to wrap you in bandages.”]

Note that in line (52) a line of dialogue is animated by a listener, who assumes a voice quality similar to that adopted by the speaker when he is animating his own voice and that of the staff.

Billy’s Voice

Billy himself is animated in the most paralinguistically marked role-play. The voice representing him is sobbing, gasping, desperate, out of control:

- (42) I gonna die?
[sobbing] “Am
- (43) I gonna die?”
[loud, sobbing ingress] Am
- (45) I gonna die?”
Anyway so ... [sobbing] “Am
- (47) “Nineteen.”
- (49) [hysterically pleading voice] “Don’t
tell my parents.
- (50) Please
don’t tell my parents.
- (51) You’re par you?”
not gonna tell my ents, are
did
- (56) “I n’t get stabbed.
- (57) I fell on a bot
tle.” ...

of the autobiographical mode of discourse. As evidence, he cites Hymes's vivid description of a visit to Mrs. Tohet, an American Indian woman, and her account of a traditional Indian story. Hymes emphasizes the animation of dialogue in the woman's performance: "All this in detail, with voices for different actors, gestures for the actions, and, always, animation. For that, as people will be glad to tell you, is what makes a good narrator: the ability to make the story come alive, to involve you as in a play" (Hymes 1973: 14-15). In this account, it is the animation of voices that makes the story come alive, that involves the audience as in a play.

Rosen (1988: 82) takes another piece of evidence not from an exotic language and culture but from a very familiar one: academic discourse. He cites Gilbert and Mulkay's juxtaposition of the way a scientist told about a scientific idea in an interview and the way he wrote about the same idea in a scholarly article. This is how the scientist spoke about his reaction when a colleague first suggested the innovative idea: "It took him about 30 seconds to sell it to me. It was really like a bolt. I felt, 'Oh my God, this must be right! Look at all the things it explains'" (Gilbert and Mulkay 1984). In contrast, "In the formal paper we are told that the experimental results suggested a model which seemed an improvement on previous assumptions and which was, accordingly, put to the test." The drama of the revelation, its emotional nature, is submerged in the scholarly prose. The scientist communicated the emotion in his conversation by casting his reaction to his colleague's innovative idea in dialogue representing his thoughts.

The involving effect of animated dialogue is at the heart of Eudora Welty's location of her beginnings as a writer in the conversational stories she heard as a child in Mississippi. Welty writes that she was first exposed to vivid storytelling in the magic of dialogue when her family acquired a car and took a gossip neighbor along on excursions:⁵

My mother sat in the back with her friend, and I'm told that as a small child I would ask to sit in the middle, and say as we started off, "Now *talk*." There was dialogue throughout the lady's accounts to my mother. "I said ..." "He said ..." "And I'm told she very plainly said" ... "It was midnight before they finally heard, and what do you think it *was*?" ... I might not catch on to what the root of the trouble was in all that happened, but my ear told me it was dramatic. (Welty 1984: 12-13)

In addition, Welty points out the active nature of listenership: "Long before I wrote stories, I listened for stories. Listening *for* them is something more acute than listening *to* them." I suppose it's an early form of participation in what goes on. Listening children know stories are *there*. When their elders sit and begin, children are just waiting and hoping for one to come out, like a mouse from its hole" (ibid.: 14). That listening is a form

of active participation is also emphasized by Bakhtin (1986: 68): "The fact is that when the listener perceives and understands the meaning . . . of speech, he simultaneously takes an active, responsive attitude toward it." This is why storytelling is a key element in the establishment of interpersonal involvement in conversation. As Welty points out, the construction of dialogue contributes powerfully to this participation.

One reason for the involving effect of dialogue, especially dialogue animated with the voices of characters, is its particularity. Thus Voloshinov (1986 [1930]: 131) describes the power of what he calls "texture-analyzing" indirect discourse in the novel as a style which "incorporates into indirect discourse words and locutions that characterize the subjective and stylistic physiognomy of the message viewed as expression. These words and locutions are incorporated in such a way that their specificity, their subjectivity, their typicality are distinctly felt." The specificity and subjectivity of a reported utterance are created, even more strongly, in animated dialogue.

Becker (1984, 1988) emphasizes the importance of the particular in discourse as in linguistic analysis.⁶ In narration and conversation, the particular enables listeners (or readers) to provide a subjectively real understanding by drawing on their own history of associations. Moreover, this participation in sense-making contributes to the creation of involvement that provides the emotional foundation of understanding in discourse.

NOTES

Fewer than half of the brief examples discussed in this essay are also presented in Tannen (1986b). The complete narrative analyzed here is also presented in Tannen (1987, 1988). Material in this chapter is incorporated in *Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue, and Imagery in Conversational Discourse*, Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics, no. 6, © 1989 by Cambridge University Press, and is reprinted by permission of Cambridge University Press. I have benefited from discussions of Bakhtin with Ray McDermott, Michael Macovski, and Mirna Velcic. The narratives from which examples are drawn were recorded by students in my Discourse Analysis classes in 1983 and 1987. I am grateful to all of them for recording and transcribing these stories and letting me use them. The narratives from which lines are excerpted here were recorded and transcribed by Gayle Berens, Diane Bickers, Susan Huss, Deborah Lange, L. H. Malsawma, Karen Marcum, Kimberly Murphy, Mary Ann Pohl, Faith Powell, David Robinson, Jane White, Nancy Zelasko, and Wendy Zweben. Names in all stories are pseudonymous.

1. The proverb is "Lu nekk manees na ko toxal, mu mel na mu meloon ba mu des wax." I am grateful to Carrie Kinney for bringing this proverb to my attention and to Hayib Sosseh for translating it.

2. Thanks to Catherine Davies for this observation.

3. Examples are presented in line structure, representing intonation units, to

capture in print the natural chunking achieved in speaking by intonation and prosody. In transcription, punctuation represents intonation, not grammatical conventions. Thus:

- . indicates sentence-final falling intonation
- , indicates clause-final intonation ("more to come")
- ?! indicates exclamatory intonation
- ... Three dots indicate pause of one-half second or more
- CAPS indicate emphatic stress
- [Brackets indicate simultaneous speech:
 - Two voices going at once
- : Colon following vowel indicates elongated vowel sound
- :: Extra colon indicates longer elongation
- Hyphen indicates glottal stop: sound abruptly cut off
- " " Quotation marks are added to highlight dialogue
- Left arrows highlight lines key to discussion
- /?/ Question mark in slashes indicates inaudible utterance

When the intonation patterns of individual sentences are discussed, an attempt is made to represent intonational contours using the system developed by Dwight Bolinger: higher pitch and amplitude are represented by array on a higher line.

4. Transliteration of Greek follows conventions established by the Modern Greek Studies Association.

5. In this excerpt, three contiguous dots (. . .) indicate a pause, as in the original. Three spaced dots (. . .) indicate ellipsis: a section is omitted from the excerpt.

6. Alberoni (1983) suggests that falling in love is always a matter of particularity: of acute perception and appreciation of the beloved's specificity, of associations with particular places and times that "produces a sacred geography of the world" (ibid.: 38). I believe that this parallel is not by chance, but rather that the particular is central to the emotional, which is the key to inspiration of all types: cognitive, intellectual, and creative as well as romantic. This idea is also echoed in Mary Catherine Bateson's (1984) recollection that Margaret Mead likened successful academic conferences to falling in love.

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