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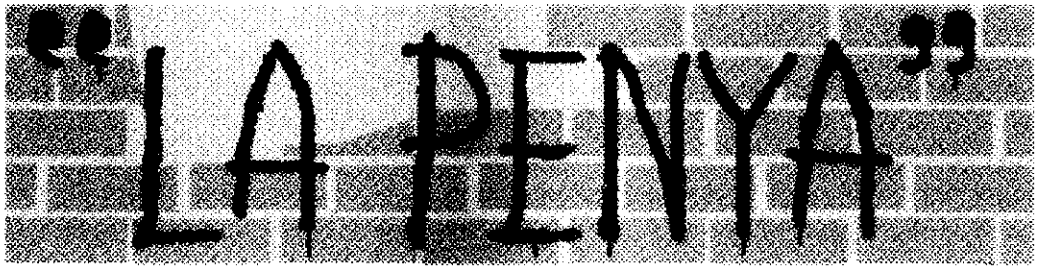

VOICES AND STRUGGLES OF YOUNG WORKING-CLASS PEOPLE IN BARCELONA

By

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Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics

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ABSTRACT

The identities of " la penya":
voices and struggles of young working-class people in Barcelona

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D. in Linguistics: April 1995

My study is based on an ethnography of two groups of young people from working-class neighbourhoods in Barcelona. I was interested in researching the impact of Catalan language policies on the identities of young people of Spanish-speaking immigrant families. I sought to go beyond the constraints of traditional structuralist approaches in Sociolinguistics in order to make my analysis relevant to people working for gender equality, the promotion of the Catalan language, or other social causes. I combine ideas from Bakhtin, Bourdieu, Fairclough, Foucault and Goffman to build a dialectical, historical, process-centred perspective that conceptualises practices in terms of social and political struggles.

I analyse young people's peer-group activities in terms of their significance for the construction of gender identities. I propose a variety of forms of masculinity and femininity according to the various ways in which members organised their gender displays in face-to-face interaction.

I also show how their use of argot and dialectal Spanish was part of the processes whereby members defined their relationships, constructed particular subject positions in interaction and struggled to legitimate their own values.

I explore the meanings constructed through Catalan and Spanish by looking into the code-switching practices of my participants. I analysed their talk in terms of narratives that present particular sequential dramatisations of events for conversational audiences. These narratives follow the expressive intention of the author, and are populated with multiple voices of animated characters. I argue that, in the groups I studied, Catalan was generally not used to animate the voices that were central to the identities of the peer-group, and particularly to masculine identities.

In order to contextualise these practices within the wider society, I also look into the processes of language choice in face-to-face encounters. I argue that existing conventions made it difficult for people to find opportunities to speak Catalan. I also pointed to the difficulties that my participants had to find employment, which were particularly acute amongst the more politically aware individuals. I conclude that these young working-class people had little possibilities of investing in more egalitarian forms of identity given their lack of resources and opportunities to develop their identities in other social spaces, such as the workplace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A Ph.D. thesis is normally presented as an individual endeavour, signed by a single author. However, my research would not have been possible without the assistance of many people who have helped me in many different ways.

First of all, my supervisor, Marilyn Martin-Jones, has played a much more important role than is made explicit throughout my thesis. I come from an educational background where students are seldom given the right to speak, and least of all at the university level. Although the Linguistics Department at Lancaster University gives plenty of opportunities for students to develop their thinking, I needed more than this to convince myself that I could have my own ideas. Her supervision, and the opportunity to participate in the Bilingualism Research Group which she organised, have contributed to legitimate my own concerns and ideas. If my thesis becomes in any way useful or relevant to anybody, it will be mainly thanks to her.

I also have a deep debt of gratitude towards Joan A. Argente from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, who has given me encouragement and support for many years. He has ensured in particular that I had enough financial and technical resources to carry out my work, and this has spared me very serious problems in all respects.

My study is based on fieldwork carried out amongst two groups of young working-class people from Barcelona. I did not know these people beforehand. They agreed to integrate me in their groups and their lives, to help me with my research, and they only expected my friendship in return. I am not sure that they understood how important it was what they did for me, and how grateful I feel about it. I would also like to extend my gratitude to all those who helped me in my fieldwork, and whose names I do not mention in order to ensure the confidentiality of the participants in my study. These were youth workers at various civic centres and "casals", and the staff of the training school where the members of one of the groups were working.

I would like to thank Roger Hewitt for his useful suggestions at an early stage of my analysis. I am greatly indebted to Ben Rampton for his helpful comments on a paper I presented at a BAAL annual meeting, where he encouraged me to dig deeper into Bakhtin and warned me not to read Goffman in a superficial way. In this sense, Péter Bodor helped me considerably to understand phenomenological sociology. I am obliged to Ruth Wodak for her comments on my research project, and to Johanna Lalouschek for her help during my stay at Vienna University. I am also grateful to Lilie Chouliaraky and Sally Johnson for their comments on drafts of my thesis.

Most of the ideas that appear in my thesis can be traced back to scholarly books or articles. Nevertheless, the process of arriving at these ideas is much more complex than the presentation of the product suggests. In this sense, I have the impression that Simon Pardoe -through countless discussions over a (herbal) tea or a beer- has contributed a lot to my understanding of the realism-versus-relativism question, which haunts the sleepless nights of many students. A comment made by Sarah Kiaer at the Language, Ideology and Power Research Group helped me to see how Bakhtin's works could be operationalised in my analysis (though she may not know about it). My attitude towards writing and analysing has been very much influenced by the ideas of Roz Ivanic, whose courses and seminars I always found inspiring to say the least.

My family has been very supportive, even when they were not sure about how 'good' the whole thing was for me. Dankmute Pohl has not only read and discussed drafts with me, but also reminded me regularly that I was still a human being during the toughest stages of writing. My friends Joan Bassets and Judith Bosch offered me to stay in their flat in Barcelona during my fieldwork. Without their generosity, my life would have been much more complicated. I am grateful to Jordi Portabella, Natàlia Ramon and Xeixi Planagumà for their hospitality. The assistance of Tena Busquets at the early stages of fieldwork was essential. I am indebted to Amparo Tusón for her encouragement and advice at this stage. I also want to thank Alfons López, Ramon Barnils and Josep Maria Terricabras from helping me to trace the destinies of some Catalan oppositional voices.

I am grateful to the Fundació Jaume Bofill for the encouragement that they gave me, and particularly to Raimon Bonal for his assistance. I also want to thank the Institut de Sociolingüística Catalana for their financial assistance and encouragement in a previous research project which served as a pilot study for the present one.

My research would not have been possible without the financial assistance of the Comissió Interdepartamental de Recerca i Innovació Tecnològica (CIRIT, the Catalan Research Commission), and of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans (the Catalan Academy). I am also grateful for the assistance I received from the Institut d'Estudis Catalans in recording equipment, which has spared me many problems.

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NOTE TO THE READER

The organisation of this thesis.

Because the chapters of this thesis are very long, I usually give the numbers of sections and subsections when I cross-refer between different parts of the text. In order to make this cross-referencing easier, I have had the section number printed at the foot of each page. As a result of this, footnotes appear at the end of each particular section as well, and not at the end of each chapter.

Transcription conventions.

This thesis contains a significant number of extracts from natural conversations, interviews, group discussions and fieldnotes. Because these are essential to understand my argument, I have sought to adopt transcription conventions that make reading as fast and as clear as possible.

Because many episodes contain people speaking in either Catalan or Spanish, these languages are represented consistently throughout the thesis.

Speaker: catalan is always represented in normal bold characters
The English translation of a Catalan utterance is always in normal characters.

Speaker: spanish is always represented in bold italics
The English translation of a Spanish utterance is always in italics.

Notice that I never use capital letters or punctuation for the text in the original language. Additionally, I never use italics for words belonging to any other language. These will appear between inverted commas. In the transcripts, speakers will appear in normal characters or in italics according to whether they were seen as speakers of one language or the other by their peers. Because translation always involves interpretation, I do include punctuation in the English version to make reading easier. In many cases, I considered that the original version was not strictly necessary and I provided the English translation only. The original versions of these extracts can be found in appendix 1.

In addition to these conventions, I use the following signs in the transcriptions:

· · · · Dots indicate pauses
-One dot indicates any short pause which is of significance for the understanding of a particular utterance.
-The second dot and the following ones indicate the approximate duration of a pause in seconds.

(xxx) Brackets indicate stretches that are inaudible or difficult to interpret.

[xxx] I use Square brackets to give contextual information, including interrogative intonation in question tags, such as "**no[?]**". In the English translation, I also include in square brackets fragments of text that do not appear in the original but which may help to understand what is being said or meant.

> This sign indicates the beginning of an overlap within the turn of the current speaker.

< This sign marks the beginning of the utterance that overlaps with the previous one.

= This sign at the end of an utterance indicates that the next speaker has begun speaking immediately after the previous one and without allowing any perceptible pause between turns. It is used to indicate that an interruption may have occurred. The utterance of the next speaker begins with a "=" as well.

"xxx xxxx" In the English translation, I have used quotation marks to indicate changes of voices in the dialogues that people animated in their talk.

Underlined text indicates the particular elements of the text that are relevant to the discussion. They can be examples of argot, code-switching, opinions, etc. Both the original version and the English translation are underlined.

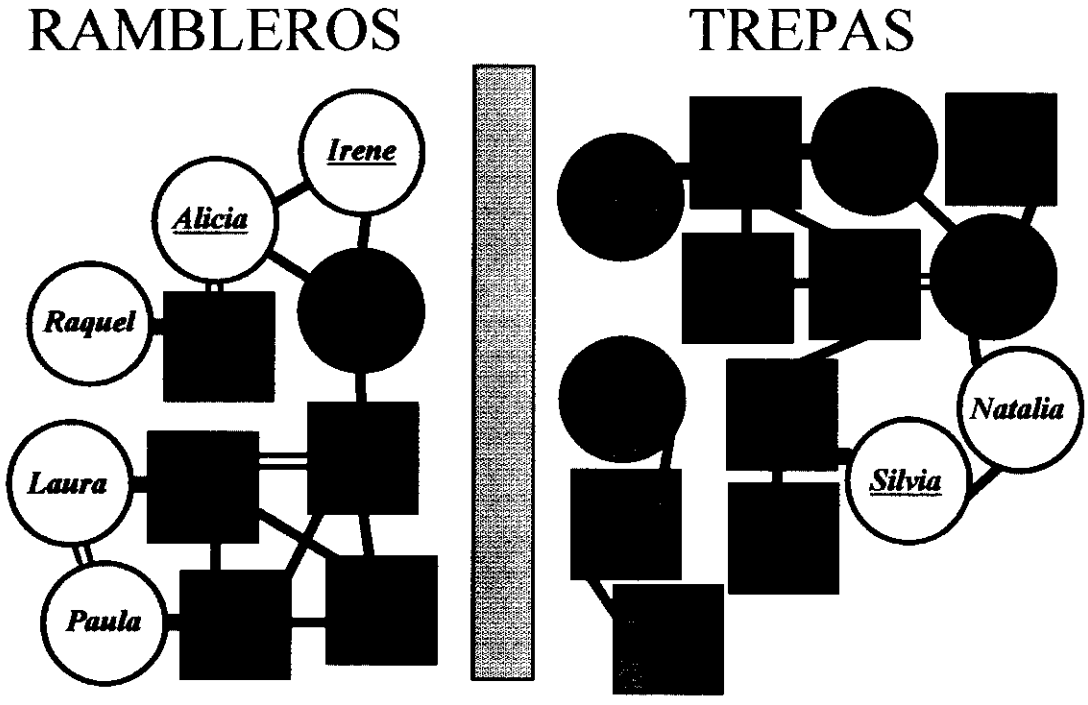
[FB07: 34-8] These tags indicate the location of the extracts within the data files, which are available in the Linguistics Department at Lancaster University. The first letter indicates whether the extract originated in [**F**] fieldnotes, [**G**] group discussions, [**I**] interviews or [**N**] natural conversations; and the second whether the data belongs to [**A**] the Trepas group or [**B**] the Rambleros group.

In many of the episodes I transcribed, speakers use dirty language and unconventional expressions that have no clear equivalent in Standard English. I have sought to translate these stretches by drawing upon the most common forms of English slang. However, this has often not been possible. In these cases, I have provided the equivalents in Standard English only and I have indicated which expressions were unconventional in the original when this was of importance to the discussion. Two particular points are of importance with regard to this: a) the Catalan or Spanish equivalents of "guy", "bloke" or "man" have masculine and feminine forms (**tiu**, **tia**, ***tío***, ***tía***), and therefore I have often preferred to translate them as "boy" or "girl"; b) in Catalonia, slang and unconventional language is not as alien or distressing to educated audiences as it appears to be in the Anglo-American world; therefore the original versions often sound less strong than what the English translations might suggest.

Confidentiality

I have changed the names of my research subjects in order to ensure their confidentiality. I have done so in a way that preserves the characteristics of their original names, i.e. their gender and their linguistic ascription (i.e. whether their names were in Catalan or Spanish). I have also changed occasional details about their lives for the same purpose. The names of the groups are invented.

The design below is meant to give the reader a sense of the characteristics of the two groups at a glance. Because it contains details of people's relationships that are very personal, it should not be reproduced without the express permission of the author.



Key:

Linguistic background:

Catalan speakers are in bold

Spanish speakers are in bold italics

People from bilingual families are underlined

Relationships

- **Couples**
- **Close friends**
- **Siblings**

Sex

- **Women**
- **Men**

Forms of gender identity

- **'Simplified' masculinity**
- **Mainstream femininity**
- **Forms of 'crossing'**
- **Transgressive masculinity**
- **Politicised identities**

Note: Here "bilingual family" refers to those who had one Catalan-speaking and one non-Catalan-speaking parent. Some of these people were treated by their friends as Catalan speakers and some as Spanish speakers.

"La penya"

Although this word traditionally referred to the groups of (usually male) friends that gathered in bars and clubs, its meaning has recently been extended in Barcelona slang to designate the young fun-making population in general. Therefore, the people I studied saw themselves as members of "**la penya**". It is for this reason that I felt it appropriate to use this expression in the title. In subsection 5.12/b I analyse the multiple meanings that this expression acquired in the talk of the people I studied.

1. INTRODUCTION

Oh Benvinguts! Passeu, passeu.
De les tristors, en farem fum.
Que a casa meva és casa vostra,
si és que hi ha cases d'algú.

Oh, welcome! Come in, come in.
With the sadnesses, we'll make smoke.
Because my home is your home,
if homes really belong to somebody.

From Jaume Sisa's song "**Qualsevol nit pot sortir el sol**" (Any night the sun may rise)

As I was considering the various ways in which I could present my work, I kept struggling with the fact that no way of describing it seemed satisfactory. There was one main reason for this. I have sought to write and present this thesis primarily as a dialogue and as a fragment of a dialogue at the same time. If I look into the words I am using, probably none of them are my own in a strict sense. Most of them come from somebody else, and often other people take the stage and speak directly to the reader. As a result of this, this thesis does not embody a single unitary truth. There are the voices and truths of all those who have participated in this dialogue. Therefore, if I describe my thesis, if I try to speak for all of them in a single voice, I will be misrepresenting my work and betraying the very purpose and the motives that pushed me to do it in the first place.

This is not to say that I do not acknowledge my status as author and that I wish to waive responsibility for what I have written. After all, the voices that appear here (including my own) have been animated by me and they have followed a script which responded strictly to my own agenda. My work in this thesis has been to seek to put each of these voices and truths in its own place, to situate them with respect to the purpose at hand. My responsibility and my truth lie, therefore, in the way I have sought to put all these truths into a particular perspective.

In carrying out this research, my ambition was not simply that of making my own statement so that all the other truths remain in place, locked in their own incommensurable worlds. Indeed, my ambition was always to connect the various truths and the various positions in a way that created the conditions for new dialogues. Hence the need to make people speak, which I have sought to do in all parts of my work and at various levels.

Therefore, the best way of describing my thesis in a succinct manner is to give a sense of the various dialogues that take place within it and which are often intricately interwoven. I will seek to present this in the form of a story which will gradually lead to the questions I have addressed in my study.

When I came to Lancaster, I started my postgraduate studies with the intention of addressing the concerns of many Catalans who believe that the future of our language and culture is at risk. As a proof of this, they point to evidence that suggests that the use of the Catalan language is dwindling in the daily routines of many Catalan citizens. For my MA dissertation, I decided to investigate how a group of students in Barcelona chose to speak one language and the other in their daily conversations. I also interviewed them to hear what they had to say about their everyday uses of Catalan and Spanish. I had been expecting to find, at least, some locally relevant truth that could give me some insights on the wider issues. However, I was surprised when I found that there was an impressive diversity in the practices I observed and in the stories I heard. The 'scientific' drive to produce a general universal truth was clearly at odds with an object of study that appeared to operate on the very basis of a plurality of local truths.

At the same time as I was doing this, I was reading Foucault. The point I took from Foucault was that the issue is not to establish what is true, but to find out how the truth is established. Therefore, when I started my thesis, I had already resolved not to be caught unawares again.

The starting point was my own truth, that is, the questions posed by many Catalans, language activists and policy makers with regard to the use of the language. But this time my aim was to go beyond it and to explore other truths. I had heard already too often that 'immigration' was the cause of most of the difficulties that the 'Catalan culture' was facing. I had also noticed that such statements were made only in situations where they could not be responded to, argued about or challenged, i.e. when the 'other' was not present. I had the impression that many important decisions were taken at higher public levels on the basis of this particular truth. I was worried that such statements could serve to avoid addressing one's own responsibilities by laying the blame on others, with the sometimes tragic consequences that such an attitude can bring about.

This is why I decided to start this dialogue. I wanted to explore the truths of people who were living in Catalonia and who might have their own things to say about the 'Catalan culture'. With this in mind, I joined two groups of young people who were predominantly speakers of Spanish and who lived in working class neighbourhoods in Barcelona. I did not know them beforehand. I joined them in their leisure activities, which was also the most accessible part of their lives. I tried to get to know them and understand them as much as possible. My dialogue with the two groups, the Trepas and the Rambleros, is the central one in this thesis.

Nevertheless, this is a piece of research, not a chat between friends. My exchanges with the Trepas and the Rambleros is therefore informed by the questions, the concerns, the ways of thinking and speaking of researchers, language activists and policy makers who have been struggling with questions of language and identity. I started with two basic questions:

1. What are the worlds and the truths of the people I studied?
2. What is the position of the Catalan language and culture within them?

In chapter 2, I introduce the main characters of this story and the background information that is needed to follow it throughout subsequent chapters. It begins with a short introduction to Catalonia's history and to its present political situation with regard to issues of language and identity. Through this introduction, the reader will probably be able to understand more fully the reasons why I carried out this research project. In the second section of the chapter, I explain why I chose to study two groups of young people in Barcelona and my experiences of fieldwork with them. Finally, I seek to show the connections between my particular interests and the particular approach I have taken with regard to methodological and theoretical issues. Here I explain the practical procedures of data processing and data analysis and I link these with considerations about validity and the role of research in society.

The fourth section of chapter 2 leads to the theoretical discussion in chapter 3. Here is when the research proper begins. I enter into dialogue with a good number of researchers who have sought ways of describing and understanding culture and society. I discuss different research perspectives, theories, methods and the people who have sought to produce ways of understanding human action, ideology, language, social domination. I had to dig long and deep until I could develop a frame of understanding that was useful for my purposes. As I explored different approaches to research in linguistics, sociology and anthropology through various subdisciplines, I was often dissatisfied but I did not know why. Fortunately (as I see it), I had come with the critical background provided by the work of Catalan sociolinguists such as Aracil, Ninyoles and Vallverdú. Once at Lancaster, I participated in the activities of the Bilingualism Research Group, which is committed to developing critical approaches to bilingualism. In this context, I took on board Fairclough's proposals for a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which sought to explore the political dimension of everyday language use. I explored some of the leads he gave to the works of Foucault and Bakhtin. Bakhtin's dialogical notion of language, language as inherently responsive to others' words and voices, was the lead that allowed me to understand what I did not like in some traditional approaches within the social sciences. Basically, my problems stemmed from notions such as 'system' or 'structure', and also with the empiricist belief that truth originates from the application of some pre-established method. In chapter 3, I argue that these notions lead to see meaning as universal and independent from actors, thus precluding any possibility of a dialogue. After voicing these criticisms, I seek to define the principles that inform my approach and the concepts that I use in my analysis. Basically, I argue that Bakhtin's dialogical conception of language allows for a socially and historically situated notion of meaning, which is strengthened if we adopt Goffman's ritual approach to the study social interaction.

As the analysis and the theoretical reflections went hand in hand, I was able to narrow down the scope of my interests to a few aspects that appeared to be more relevant to my purposes. I soon realised that gender was very important to understand the everyday practices of young people in their peer-group activities. The literature on gender had warned me against dangerous generalisations about masculinity and femininity. I decided to concentrate on the logic of the events that men and women organised in face-to-face interaction. In chapter 4, then, I address the following questions:

3. What forms of gender display were manifested in the groups?
4. How did gender identities contribute to the constitution of the cultural forms (i.e. the activities, values and ideologies) obtaining in that particular social space?

At this point, I was ready to begin addressing questions about the use of linguistic varieties and styles. I was working on the basis of Bakhtin's idea that different ways of speaking convey different views of the world. The questions were:

5. What views of the world were conveyed through the speech styles (accents, slang, argot) that members of the groups used?
6. What views and ideas were Catalan and Spanish used to convey?

In order to address the first question, I devote the first section of chapter 5 to describing how speech styles were constitutive of particular 'regimes of truth', a term coined after Foucault, who saw truth as the product of the practices established in particular social institutions. I explore the ways in which a 'regime of truth' was instituted by the groups I studied to legitimise their particular forms of display. After this, I explore the ideologies and identities constructed through Catalan and Spanish by analysing the code-switching practices of the groups, i.e. the different 'voices' that the two languages were used to animate. In this way, I seek to establish the first visible relationships between both languages and the values constructed by people in their peer group activities.

However, in order to discuss these issues, I also needed to know the functioning of both languages at another level, i.e. at the level of the conventional practices that helped to define when and where each language was used: the question of language choice. In chapter 6, I seek to answer the following questions:

7. What patterns of language choice existed within the groups?
8. What connections can be established between the patterns of language choice and the identities and practices described in previous chapters?

On the basis of these considerations, I engage in the final discussion of this thesis in chapter 7. This chapter is a reflection on what constitutes social domination. I try to consider the extent to which the people I studied were constrained in the way they constructed their identities by the wider social context. I seek to identify the social conditions that had a bearing on these processes. To do so, I begin by discussing some of Bourdieu's proposals on how social domination works. I basically argue that there are some points in his framework that are unsatisfactory, namely his insistence that dominated people are 'in the dark' and do not understand their own condition, and also his way of describing how social structures reproduce themselves in a way that obscures the role of some social agents in these processes, particularly those in powerful positions. In the end, I seek to build on this discussion in order to answer the question that people concerned with various forms of social domination (gender, ethnic, linguistic, social) usually pose:

9. What can we do about it?

And this is the conclusion of my study, the end of my particular intervention in the various dialogues that are taking place in various places and at various levels (theoretical, political, personal). I hope that my endeavour to speak at so many levels does not prove to be too ambitious. In order to keep up the pace of each dialogue, I have had to search across several disciplines and subdisciplines, establish the connections and get round the discontinuities. As it is not possible to claim expertise across so many areas of knowledge, I just hope that the reader will not approach this work with the expectations normally accorded to those who cultivate a particular area in more depth. Interdisciplinary work can only be undertaken, I believe, if we are prepared to live with its limitations.

2. SOCIAL CONTEXT AND RESEARCH STRATEGIES

I have included in this chapter a range of materials aimed at providing some of the practical information needed to understand and follow the arguments of subsequent chapters. These include details of where, when, how and why I carried out this study.

I will begin with an account of the wider historical and political context in order to give an understanding of Catalonia's cultural diversity, its political aspects and my own position with respect to these issues. On the basis of these considerations, I will move on to explaining the reasons why I chose to study two groups of working class young people in Barcelona and I will describe how the fieldwork was conducted. I will also seek to describe the groups in general terms and to situate them socially by drawing upon existing statistical data on young people in Catalonia. Finally, I will describe how I carried out the analysis of the data by pointing to some basic methodological principles. In doing so, I will be providing the general backdrop to my theoretical perspective which will be further developed in the next chapter.

2.1 Catalan society: its history and politics

The Catalan language is often characterised as a 'minority' language. However, the term 'minority' can be misleading given the number of its speakers and the socio-political situation in Catalonia. Catalan speakers do not constitute a marginalised community that has been pushed away from urban centres and economic development. This image of the Catalan language is surely a consequence of the gross simplifications that history manuals make, which lead them to overlook the role that Catalonia has played in European history. I cannot really make up for these shortcomings in this section, but I will seek to provide a few clues so that the reader understands the overall political atmosphere and the issues that are discussed in my study[1].

Catalan was in fact the official language of the various Iberian kingdoms that retained their sovereignty under the Spanish empire until the Spanish War of Succession. In 1714, a joint French-Spanish army occupied Catalonia and abolished its parliament and government. It is often said that Catalonia remains a 'separatist' region (see, for instance, entry in the Macmillan Encyclopedia, 1988). Nevertheless, this is again an exceedingly simplistic way of describing the political and economic conflicts resulting from its uneasy position within the Spanish state. In the 19th Century, Catalan nationalism developed out of a romantic cultural movement combined with demands for political decentralisation and a bitter dispute about economic policies. Catalonia's economic development has been largely independent from that of Spain. It underwent industrialisation much earlier and to a far greater extent while Spanish society remained largely rural (Villar, 1981). In this context, Catalan industrialists demanded protectionist policies which would give them the upper hand in the Spanish markets. It is true that political parties generally subscribe to self-determination in their political programmes. In spite of that, they have always concentrated on struggling for a model of a state which allows for a degree of self-government: federalism or autonomism. Never was that more obvious than in Catalonia's role in the Civil War as a bastion of the Spanish Republic (1936-9).

In cultural terms, the Spanish government has been trying to impose a mono-cultural and mono-lingual nation-state, to the moment, unsuccessfully. Since 1714, there has been implicit and explicit legislation seeking to displace the use of Catalan from the administration, business, schools, publishing and media. However, the imposition of these policies were not generally accompanied by a sense of cultural inferiority amongst the population, which probably accounts for their failure. On the contrary, Catalonia has traditionally assimilated migrant Spanish speaking workers, even in times of political repression (Woolard, 1989). Catalans are generally proud to be Catalan, and this pride is often tinged with a slight sense of superiority in relation to the 'poorer', 'less developed', 'less entrepreneurial' Spaniards. Some sectors of Spanish society, in turn, have developed a strong sense of resentment against this Catalan loftiness, which manifests itself in various forms, such as harassment (especially in the military service), insults and jokes against Catalans. This state of affairs has had and is still having serious consequences when it is manipulated politically. 'Anti-Catalanism' was one of the constitutive features of the Francoist state (1939-1975), and still impregnates the practices of the Spanish administration, the army, the police and some political parties.

After the demise of the Spanish Republic in 1939, the new fascist government abolished Catalan autonomy and took a particularly virulent line against any manifestation of 'Catalan culture' including the language. As it is reported in Institut Català d'Estudis Polítics i Socials (1973) and in Woolard (1989), all public uses of Catalan were prohibited and a continuous campaign was waged to reduce the language to dialect status in the consciousness of its speakers. The prohibition went far and wide: all publications,

broadcasting, theatre, governmental departments, schools, universities, posters, street signs, shop signs, advertising, private correspondence, telephone calls, names of ships, first names of people in the registry, etc... The penalties imposed for the use of Catalan included fines and loss of jobs for individuals, and the closing of schools and institutions.

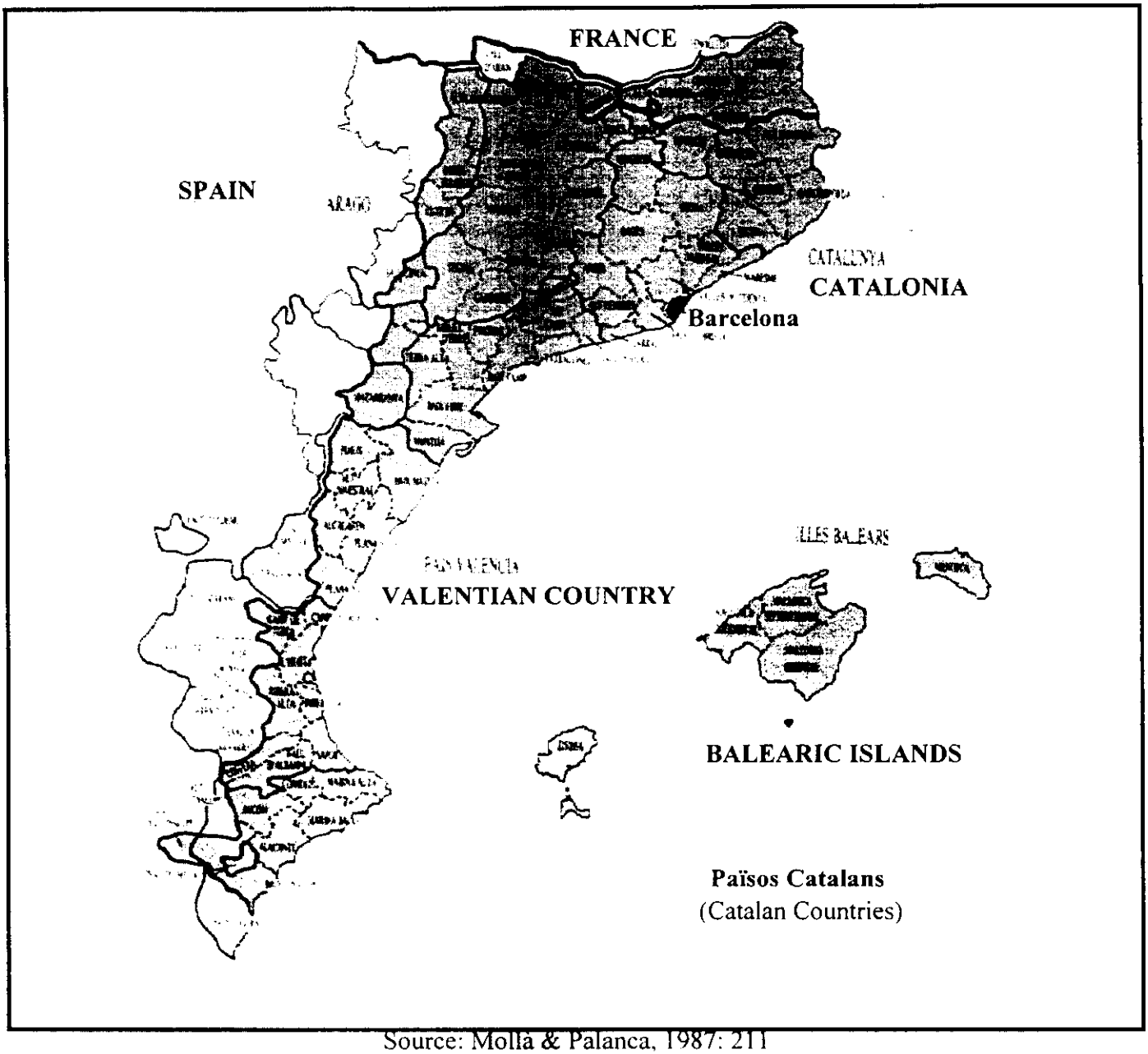
It is also important to understand that, in the Catalan context, 'nationalism' does not normally evoke the gloomy meanings and practices that the word is made to convey in some journalistic and academic discourses elsewhere. In relation to this, I must say that I certainly do not go along with some of the typical tenets of nationalism. Nevertheless, I must also make it clear that I do not share the often uncritical and superficial judgements on the matter that have become almost fashionable in some quarters. I certainly would like to distance myself from the shallow universalism defended by commentators whose communities are supported by enormous arsenals and military apparatuses, and whose languages and cultures are imposed on a multitude of countries and peoples (see Phillipson, 1992). With regard to Catalonia, practically everything that is widely known about it, such as its painters and architects, its much admired monuments, writers and historical events, everything appeared or developed when Catalonia was a state or grew out of the cultural movements and institutions created by Catalan nationalists. Having said that, my study certainly contains elements of a critique of Catalan nationalism, particularly with regard to common attitudes towards immigration and cultural diversity.

I will use the terms 'Catalanism' and 'Catalanist' (from "**catalanisme**" and "**catalanista**") to refer to the various ideologies, practices and actors involved in the promotion of the language and of political autonomy in Catalonia. I will use them in a general way, as encompassing the activities and views of institutions or individuals in relation to this matter. I believe that the use of these terms will help to give a sense of the specific ways in which nationalism is constructed in the Catalan context without bringing in the problematic overtones that the word 'nationalism' suggests.

a) Language and population

Although the use of Catalan goes often unnoticed by the happy tourists that fill the sunny Catalan beaches, most native Catalans make regular use of their language in their daily life. Visitors who only speak Spanish are soon aware that the Spanish language keeps them somewhat out of the main action, nevertheless most Catalans are usually very concerned about giving a good impression and will politely seek to make use of any language commonly available in one-to-one conversation. Catalan is spoken by approximately 7 million people in the regions of Catalonia, Valencia, the Balearic Islands, the territory of Roussillon (**Rosselló**) which is now in France, a strip of land across the Catalan-Aragonese border, and in the tiny enclave of Alghero (**L'Alguer**) in Sardinia, the remains of a colonial past. The total population of the so-called Catalan Countries (**Països Catalans**) is about 10 million. Except for a few Sardinian, Italian and French speakers, those in these regions who do not speak Catalan are normally speakers of Spanish (Mollà & Palanca, 1987).

Figure 1



Source: Mollà & Palanca, 1987: 211

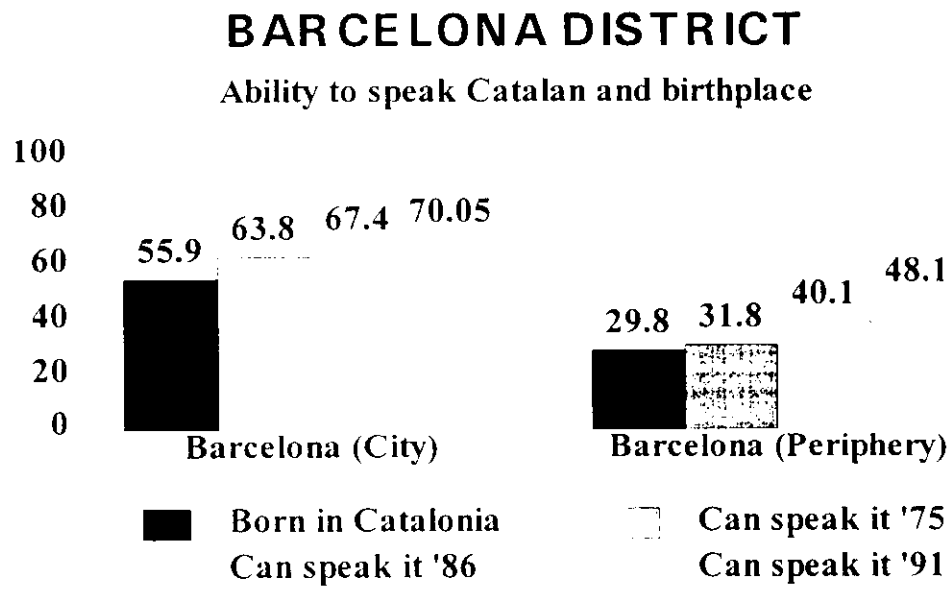
Most of these Spanish speakers are generally people who moved or whose families moved into Catalonia recently in search of work. These are commonly called 'immigrants' or 'second-generation immigrants' (**immigrats de segona generació**) by native Catalans. These terms are used both in popular and academic discourses. Immigrants are largely concentrated in Catalonia's industrial areas, especially the capital: Barcelona. The term 'immigrant' may nevertheless be a bit misleading. In Catalonia, all Spanish residents are officially Catalan. To be an 'immigrant' is of no consequence in administrative terms. It is a folk category which, as Woolard (1989) and Rodríguez-Gómez (1993) have shown, reflects the symbolic structure of Catalan society. On the one hand, it is only applied to working-class migrants, thus contributing to create and reinforce class differences ideologically (ibid.). On the other hand, it has the effect of implicitly delegitimising them as Catalan, and of delegitimising their political and cultural views about what Catalonia is or should be[2].

Although there have been important migration movements over the last 150 years (Miró et al, 1974), the most significant took place in the fifties and sixties. These migrations have typically involved an unskilled labour force made up of people coming from agrarian and economically depressed areas of Spain, especially the south. There have been significant numbers of Galician speakers, but the vast majority of people have been Spanish or Castilian speakers. It is commonly believed that pre-war

migrants generally assimilated into Catalan society and that their descendants speak Catalan now. Nevertheless, the impact of the post-war migrations has been more far-reaching. An estimated 1.4 million people settled in Catalonia between 1950 and 1975 (Woolard, 1989: 30). Most of them settled in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, in newly developed neighbourhoods with poor living conditions and a lack of basic social services (Miró et al, 1974: 101-4).

We can get an idea of the demographic impact of the latest migration movements in the Barcelona District (**el Barcelonès**) from Figure 2. The two columns on the far left of the two histograms show the proportion of people older than 25 who had been born in Catalonia by 1975. The Barcelona district (**Comarca del Barcelonès**), together with the surrounding municipalities of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, includes nowadays approximately half of Catalonia's 6 m. total population.

Figure 2



Sources: Strubell, 1981: 132; Reixach, 1990: 34, 46, and Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya, 1993, all based on official censuses[3].

Figure 2 also illustrates the fact that the Spanish-speaking population generally lives either in peripheral neighbourhoods or towns. This is so within the boundaries of Barcelona as well (see Bonal and Costa, 1978). My own research focused on people living in peripheral, recently developed areas within the boundaries of the city.

One social effect of the postwar migration and the booming sixties was that the economic situation of native Catalans improved in a very significant way. As the migrants occupied the unskilled levels in the job market, the autochtonous population was pushed up to skilled and managerial posts in industries and services. This had a considerable impact on the social values associated with Catalan and Spanish. Spanish was associated with the administration and the state apparatus (which was at that time not a very friendly one), but also with the lower ranks of the social ladder. Catalan, on the other hand, came to be generally associated with middle class values: a better standard of living, residence in the centre of towns, and the like. Catalan speakers predominated in private schools and higher education, or among shopkeepers, tourists of ski resorts and so on (see also Woolard, 1989; Arnau, 1980). However, because Catalan was banned from public use up to 1975, the immigrants who established themselves in new working-class neighbourhoods and ghettos had very little contact with the language if they had any at all. In this context, native Catalan speakers had no choice but to be bilingual and they would normally address Spanish speakers in Spanish.

This was the state of things when democracy was restored and an autonomous Catalan government was re-established with powers in education, health, employment, culture, environmental policy and some economic areas. The Statute of Autonomy granted Catalan the status of official language together with Spanish or Castilian. In 1983, the Catalan parliament passed a new language law which had unanimous support. This set the basic principles of a policy which was to bring Catalan back to public life as the 'normal' language of use in all social arenas. The policy of 'normalisation' (**normalització**) of the Catalan language is seen as a key element of the Catalan autonomy.

Nevertheless, these developments have taken place in the context of considerable cultural diversity and political sensitivity. Catalan Autonomy has been established in a context of resentment on the part of native Catalans for the brutality with which they were treated during the dictatorship. On the other hand, there have been misgivings on the part of many Spanish-speaking people who, from the outset, felt threatened by the prospect of a Catalan administration which would give more power to the already economically powerful (see Woolard, 1989). Issues of identity and language policy are of central concern here. Knowledge of the Catalan language has become an implicit or explicit requirement for access to most jobs except some manual ones. During the eighties, Catalan has gradually become the main language of education at all levels, and an extensive immersion programme has been organised for all Spanish-speaking children in the public school system (see Vila, 1993: 17 and 24). It is also predominant in the administration, although some services run by the central state (such as telephones, mail and railways) still use mainly Spanish. There are two television channels, several newspapers, magazines and radio stations in Catalan which get a good share of the audience although Spanish still predominates in the media. Spanish is still the language most widely used in business (see Carulla, 1990; Departament de Cultura, 1991, but also Pujolar 1991c).

Notes to section 2.1

[1] For a brief but illuminating historical introduction to Catalonia's history in English, see Woolard (1989). For a report on language policies during the eighties, see Fishman (1991).

[2] I have seen a similar phenomenon in other European countries, where the term 'immigrant' is never applied to skilled people or to citizens of equally or more developed countries.

[3] In Figure 1, the 3rd and 4th columns are not strictly speaking comparable with the 1st and 2nd columns, as the former include all citizens older than 2 years, whereas the latter include only people older than 25. Following the same criteria, the second columns should be respectively 60.9 and 31.7 (Reixach, 1990). In Barcelona City, 47 % of over-25s reportedly spoke Catalan with their families in 1975. In 1986, in a metropolitan survey, only 42.2 % considered that Catalan was their first language in Barcelona City (Subirats & del Río, 1991), whereas the number of "users" of Catalan increased. These figures suggest a decrease in the percentage of Catalan speakers from 1975 to 1986, which is usually associated with the higher fertility rate of the Spanish speaking population (see Pinilla de las Heras, 1979). The results of the metropolitan survey nevertheless suggest very convincingly that this trend is not going to continue in the future (Subirats & del Río, 1992). In trying to offer statistical data of various aspects I have been forced to draw upon many types of sources. I want to apologise to the reader, though, if these data are presented in a way which is a bit confusing, as official figures come from different institutions which often disagree as to what territorial units or other criteria should be used. Studies from different institutions and different periods of time are not comparable most of the time. Old censuses co-ordinated by the Spanish government usually used the provinces and municipalities as relevant territorial units. The newly established Catalan government has a preference for districts (**comarques**) and the Barcelona Metropolitan Corporation, during its existence, undertook studies of its own area which included a number of municipalities surrounding and including Barcelona which did not coincide with the Spanish provinces or with Catalan districts either. In trying to handle data on different areas or neighbourhoods in the Barcelona municipality, official figures are not very useful. The city districts have changed a number of times during the last forty years. And the latest division, containing 9 large administrative units, is of no sociological relevance, as each unit contains areas which are substantially different. So in characterising the neighbourhoods I have been studying, I am drawing mainly from Bonal & Costa (1978), a very thorough study which proposes a division of Barcelona into neighbourhoods on the basis of the types of housing and infrastructural and sociological criteria.

2.2 Young people and a fieldworker

The complexity of the Catalan situation raises numerous questions when it comes to deciding how linguistic policies are defined and implemented. If the rights of Catalan speakers to use their language are to be made effective, it is necessary for Spanish speakers to become bilingual in the same way that Catalan speakers are. Because the Catalan language actually holds the key to access to most valued jobs, most speakers of Spanish are generally willing to learn it. During the 1980s, the government often received pressure from Spanish-speaking parents to hasten the pace of the Catalanisation of their schools. However, it is difficult to judge the appropriate speed and depth with which language policies can be implemented, as there is always the danger of stressing social inequalities or of simply making people feel that the Catalan authorities are pushing towards the goal of a monocultural Catalan society. At the same time, Catalan sociolinguists and political activists are sceptical about the possibilities of Catalan becoming a normally established language, particularly because Spanish is seen as gaining ground in face-to-face encounters in the main industrial centres (see Fishman, 1991; and also chapter 6). In this context, it is common to hear Catalan nationalists or 'Catalanists' saying that the language is in danger because "immigrants don't want to speak it". Although such opinions are usually not articulated in public, political debates and conflicts are often implicitly centred on these common views on the matter.

These were, in general terms, the questions I wanted to investigate when I started my research. I felt, in the first place, that it would be good to gain a deeper knowledge of the social processes taking place amongst working-class people of predominantly Spanish-speaking origin. I hoped that this would contribute to dispelling simplistic assumptions about people's attitudes towards Catalan and Spanish, and that it would open new avenues of understanding about how the process of linguistic normalisation works and where the responsibilities lie. Additionally, I thought that it was only fair to let the voices of young Spanish-speaking people be heard, as they are often silenced by the logic of the wider political arguments taking place in the media and in party politics. I also wanted to explore what impact recent language policies had had on the social identities of young people of their cultural background.

a) The sampling choices

The sampling procedure that I used draws on the principles of Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987). Grounded theory is based on the assumption that research is primarily aimed at enhancing our understanding of the social world, that is, at the development of theory. Therefore, the sampling procedures in qualitative methodology are not aimed at claiming statistical representativeness, or at replicating research results across cases as in Yin (1989: 59). Rather, they constitute a form of 'theoretical sampling' based on a strictly analytical rationale:

> "Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his [sic] data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges." (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 45)

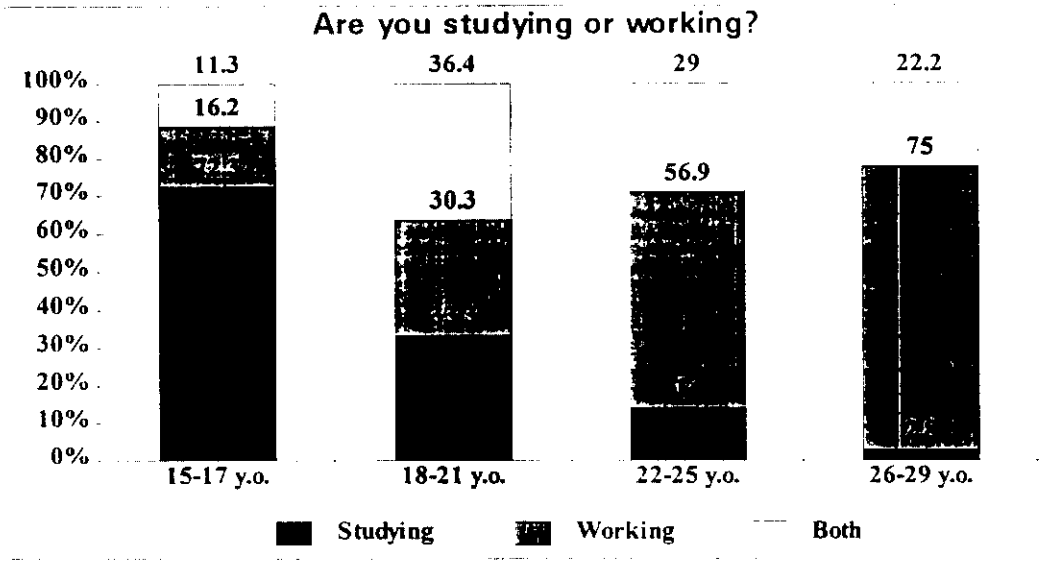
It is also worth pointing out that the notion of sampling can be applied to many types of data, such as "groups, subgroups of populations, events, activities, strategies..." (Strauss, 1987: 9). Comparison is the essential goal of this sampling procedure:

> "Such a range, necessary for the categories' fullest possible development, is achieved by comparing *any* groups, irrespective of differences or similarities, as long as the data apply to a similar category or property." (Ibid.: 51, emphasis in original).

So in choosing my two groups, I took special care to ensure that they differed in many ways while still falling within the particular type of population that my study was targeting. I did so because differences would allow me a) to make conceptual comparisons and b) to try to establish relationships between concepts or categories. Choosing very similar groups would have provided me with little or no interesting additional insights.

I decided to do an ethnographic study of two groups of people who lived in predominantly working-class areas. I wanted to base my study on an analysis of the activities of young people in their peer-groups. This was because I took it that peer-group activities are central to the identities of young people, as it is the space where they have some choice about what to do and how to do it. Nevertheless, I chose a sample of 18 to 23 year-olds because, at this age, expectations about work, economic independence and stability of couples start gaining significance. As Figure 3 shows, this age range covers the transition from school to work:

Figure 3



Source: Gabinet d'Estudis Socials, 1991: 34.[1]

I took it that, in such a transitional period, people would be most likely to feel conflicting pressures on their identities because of the requirements of the peer-group and of the job-market, and that this would give interesting insights into the wider issues of social relations that I was interested in.

In the summer of 1992, I started making contacts in youth clubs and social services in Barcelona. I met the people working in these services, explained to them the aims of my research and asked for help to get in contact with groups of young people. I also worked for a while for a voluntary association that organised cultural activities in one of the neighbourhoods. I was simply looking for two groups of the age range required, groups which incorporated both men and women. I use the notion of 'group' in a loose sense here, meaning the social space of leisure created by people who meet with some regularity, people who would call each other "friends". I was not interested in particularly rough gangs who were involved in petty criminal activities, as I wanted to focus on people who felt somehow integrated into society. I also wanted to find, if possible, a group with Spanish speakers only and a mixed group with some Catalan speakers to be able to draw comparisons. I wanted gender-mixed groups in order to be able to explore gender relations within them[2]. As a starting point, I decided not to concentrate on the issue of Catalan only, but on any aspect of identity (in the family, at school, in the workplace) so that I could get a comprehensive view of the social conditions in which my subjects lived. I was eventually introduced to members of two groups, whom I will call henceforth the "Rambleros" group and the "Trepas" group.

b) The Rambleros

The Rambleros group was a group of 11 people who all lived very close to each other and had known each other for years going back sometimes to their early days of schooling. The group had many characteristics of a "close-knit network" (Milroy, 1980) in that it was held together by strong ties of kinship, friendship and couple relationships. They lived in a typical, peripheral, working-class neighbourhood, away from the city centre, with restricted public transport and disastrous city planning, as the streets are unbelievably narrow and can hardly cope with Barcelona's parking deficit. Although other people eventually joined it, the group had a clear and demarcated membership and entity: members would very often refer to it as "*the group*". In the summer of 1992, almost everybody was either employed or (in the case of some of the women) studying. Nevertheless, in 1993 many lost their jobs and remained unemployed or doing occasional badly-paid work for many months. They all spoke Spanish amongst themselves, although some members were known to be using Catalan at work or were known to have one Catalan-speaking parent. Economically, they appeared reasonably well-off, with neat clothes, and some had their own cars.

c) The Trepas

I met the Trepas group in a training school for unemployed people. This was part of a network organised by the Spanish government where trainees got a combination of teaching and work in modules organised by the school itself. Most members of the group came from the Trepas neighbourhood, which is also in one of Barcelona's peripheral districts but is somewhat different from the other. It is a bit more spacious, populated with huge apartment blocks built in the high-tide of the migration movements, and slightly better connected transport-wise. Some of the members of the group came from other neighbourhoods, though. The group was much looser in its organisation, particularly at the time when I met them. It had been formed almost spontaneously at the training school and most members had other relationships outside of it. Some of its members, in addition to their work, were still studying or had gone back to study at secondary school level in evening classes. It was made up of roughly 14 people, with some visible subgroups of older friendships. When I met them, they had just started to meet with some regularity, but not everybody turned up all the time. I was closer to a core-group of 6 or 7 people who were very politicised and whom I knew much better than the rest. The group had a few native speakers of Catalan and some of the Spanish-speaking members used Catalan with them.

There was a significant difference between some of the Trepas and the Rambleros in terms of their family backgrounds. The Rambleros had considerably stable families, and some of them had even second homes in the countryside. Amongst the Trepas, there was a significant number of people who belonged to very large families with 7 or 8 brothers and sisters. These had frequent experiences of tensions within the family, and there were also cases of families with financial difficulties.

The neighbourhoods where the Rambleros and the Trepas were based had a particular bad reputation in Barcelona because they are associated with marginal criminal gangs who engage in drug dealing, heavy drug consumption, car and house breaking and so on. Indeed, I had witnessed this myself in the Rambleros' neighbourhood where I had lived for one year as I was studying in Barcelona in the mid eighties. By the time I started my fieldwork, the atmosphere had improved quite remarkably for a number of reasons. New public services, better lighting and other urban facilities had been installed or built in these areas. Community initiatives against drug dealing had also been relatively effective. One youth worker told me that all heroin takers were "either dead or in prison". I rarely had a sense of danger while I was doing my fieldwork, except perhaps in late hours in the Trepas neighbourhood, where some of the women still reported cases of harassment and rape.

d) Fieldwork relations and data collection

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1983: 7-8), ethnographers must acquaint themselves with the culture of the researched much in the same way that people actually learn to live, relate and communicate within different social groups in society. And this can only be done by achieving a certain degree of integration within the group being researched.

I was first introduced to one member of each group. I indicated to them that I intended to do research on young people's identities. I said that I needed to be like a member of the group. I also said that we had to get to know each other quite well, as I had to join them in their activities as a group. I reassured them that I would not engage in any research activity without permission. I also suggested the possibility of focusing my research on a particular topic of their interest, but they did not take up the offer. The two women I first talked to found my request acceptable and agreed to introduce me to the rest of the groups.

So I started going out with both groups in July 1992 in their week-end get-togethers. On these occasions, they typically went to pubs, bars, concerts or disco-pubs. They chatted, drank, smoked, sometimes took cannabis derivatives, played (with each other, and with table-football, videogames) and laughed a lot. Of course, at first, it was a bit awkward and embarrassing, as we did not know how to treat each other. Fortunately, various members of both groups made efforts to bail me out of the situation by showing interest in what I was doing or finding something to chat about. With the Rambleros, there was at first the problem that I had not access to them during the week, and I had to find ways of getting invited without being too threatening. I eventually started meeting them in a cafe where they met every afternoon. As the relationship developed, they started to count on me for trips, football matches and holidays. With the Trepas, my access to the group's activities was much easier because they met daily outside of the training school, but it was a bit more difficult to make myself a space in the group. This was because the Rambleros tended to organise activities which involved the whole group, whereas the Trepas usually divided themselves in smaller groups based on personal affinities.

In the first three months of the fieldwork, until September 1992, I kept a written record of everything that was going on. I did not write notes while I was with the people because I did not want them to be constantly aware of being observed and I wanted to get involved in their activities myself. I noted down extensively, everything I could remember, when I was back home. In September, I also started to record samples of spontaneous speech. I now have about 25 hours recorded. I did this with an inconspicuous Sony Walkman and a microphone which I was carrying inside a small handbag. They knew I was doing it, although they were not aware of it all the time. Sometimes I also had to stop recording because some people did not like it. In Christmas 1992 I went back to Barcelona with a first draft of my analysis where I shared with them my general impression about the groups in relatively positive terms and accessible language. I gave them a single-space ten-page bilingual account of my impressions. It was read, and apparently enjoyed, by most of the people in the groups. They seemed quite thrilled about the whole thing and began to understand better what I was doing. I then organised a group discussion for each group. the discussion went on for about 4 hours and touched on all sorts of issues related to family, work, gender, friendships and political consciousness. Partly because of the wording of the questions, the debate brought issues of gender constantly to the fore. After the group discussions, I arranged a set of interviews with 20 people (two of these were done jointly by couples. In the interviews, which lasted an average of 45 minutes, I enquired in great detail about all sorts of issues related to their everyday lives in order to get enough biographical information (family situation, employment, qualifications, projects, economic situation, daily routines, tastes, hobbies), and I also explored with them some issues regarding the use of linguistic varieties and styles (swearing, slang, dialects, use of Catalan, Spanish and English). After this, I continued my observations, though in a more unsystematic manner. In Easter 1993, I went on a holiday trip with the Rambleros and there I stopped taking fieldnotes altogether. I have visited them regularly ever since on my regular trips to Catalonia, twice or three times a year. I have used as data some of the episodes I could recall or information from this later period, particularly in relation to their personal

trajectories in employment. Nevertheless, my analysis is substantially based on data collected from July 1992 to January 1993.

Notes to section 2.2

[1] These are the figures for young people in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area. "Working status" includes house workers, unemployed and military conscripts. The chart shows how young people gradually drop or finish their studies and start working or looking for jobs, although many try to combine both. "Both" status includes students who work or claim that are looking for work as well. The important thing here is that they effectively enter the job market and the new experiences that work (or job hunting) brings.

[2] It would have been equally interesting to compare single-sex groups as well to investigate issues of gender identity in more depth. My sampling choices were also driven by the practical limitations of a single fieldworker with a limited amount of time available. In this sense, I hope that my study allows for comparisons and further elaborations to be made in future research.

2.3 Some data on young people in Catalonia

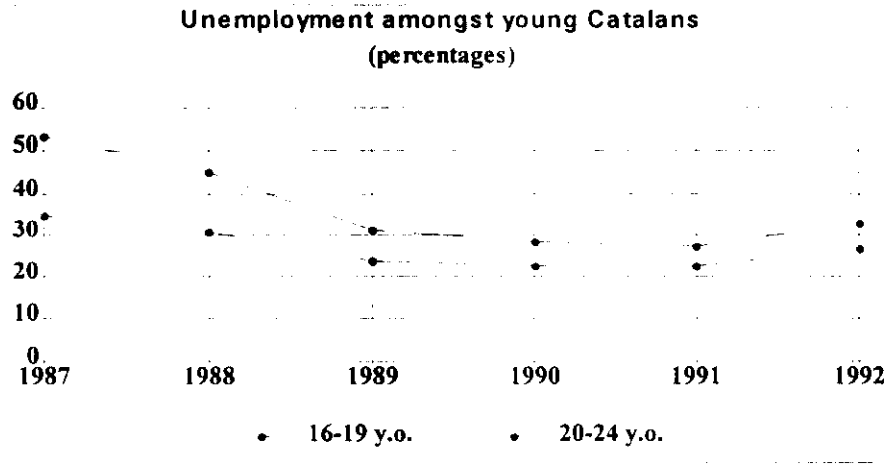
I will address here the question of how typical the groups I studied can be taken to be with respect to the young (working class) people of Barcelona. However, it is worth pointing out that I am not arguing that my sample is representative, or that the features I have identified in my groups can be generalised to the whole population of young people in Catalonia. This is not the goal of my study, as I argued above in section 2.2/a. In the present section, I intend to show that the social conditions in which my groups lived were common, and therefore that the issues I discuss are likely to be relevant to many people of their social background[1].

At least in their activities, the two groups I studied seemed to be quite typical of young Catalans as a whole. The Gabinet d'Estudis Socials' (1991: 219) survey showed that 72.2 % of young people (15-29 year-olds) said they went to bars during weekends, whereas on weekdays it was as high as 47.2 %. Watching television (week-ends: 73.4 %; week-days: 74.5 %) and chatting with friends (week-ends: 84,6%; week-days 72%) were the two other most frequent pastime activities. Most of the people I studied spent some time with their friends on a daily basis as well, and during the peak in unemployment in 1993 the amount of time spent with friends seemed to increase considerably.

Most of the participants in my study were still living with their families or with older brothers or sisters. Some amongst the Trepas were sharing flats with friends but generally with some sort of support from the family. Economic independence was very difficult. Statistics show that, in Catalonia, 90% of 18-21 year-olds and 64.2% of 22-25 year-olds still live with their families (Gabinet d'Estudis Socials, 1991: 24). None of the participants of my study were living with partners. Although partnership or marriage was a possibility for these young people, it is clear that they did not contemplate it in the short term. In the survey of the Gabinet d'Estudis Socials (1991: 24), only 2.6% of 18-21 year-olds said that they were living with partners, and only 21.9% of people aged 22 to 25, and 47% of people aged 26 to 29. As usual in most industrialised societies, people tended to engage in stable partnerships late. No members of any group had children of their own.

Unemployment or unstable employment and low wages seem to have become the rule amongst many groups of young people in Barcelona (see Bosch et al, 1991). And this surely makes it difficult for them to achieve independence and invest in stable relationships. Amongst the Rambleros, 5 people (out of 11) had stable employment and 2 more managed to remain employed most of the time from 1992 to 1994, while 3 young women were still studying. This is surely not untypical, as it coincides roughly with Catalonia's rate of unemployment:

Figure 4

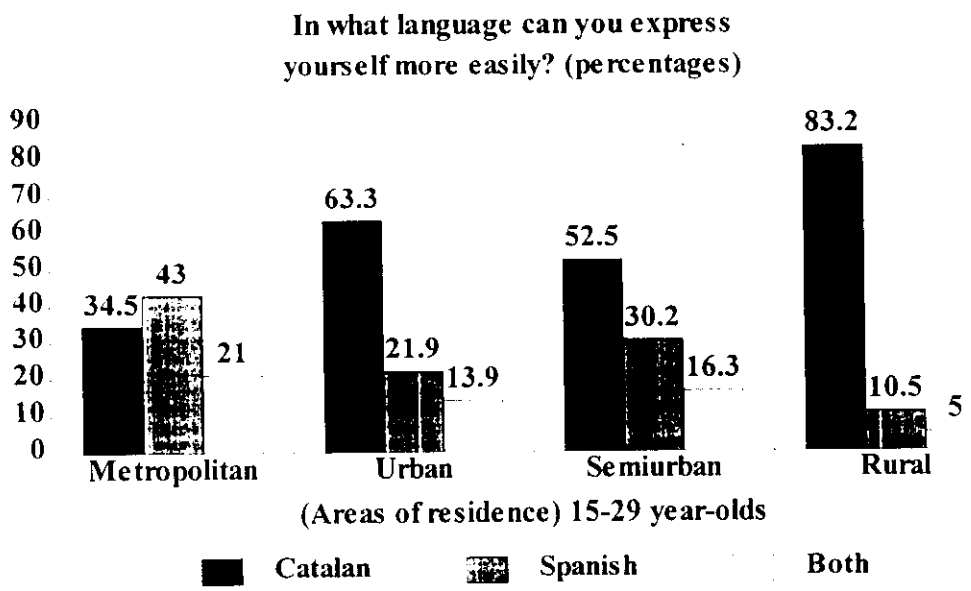


SOURCE: Departament de Treball, 1992: 331, 341; and 1993: 327, 336.[2]

In terms of employment, 1992 was a particularly good year due to the activity brought about by the Olympics, which delayed the effects of the economic recession. However, the Trepas had already come to the training school as unemployed, and when the school closed down at the end of 1992, many of them remained unemployed for more than one year. Some studied while depending on their parents, most did very occasional and badly paid jobs, and very few, just three in all, found a part-time or full-time job. In 1994, the employment patterns of both groups remained considerably different, with most Rambleros employed and most Trepas unemployed in spite of the training received in 1992. It is also worth pointing out that, amongst 16 to 24 year-olds in 1992, unemployment was up to 24% for men and 33.5% for women, which is a significant difference. In my groups, the 3 people who had stable jobs from 1992 to 1994 were all men. In chapter 7, I discuss some of the specific problems that young women encountered in their access to employment.

Because of my particular choice of working-class people from migrant families, the amount of Catalan spoken was less than might be expected in Barcelona as a whole. According to the Gabinet d'Estudis Socials' (1991) survey, the proportion of speakers of both languages is the following:

Figure 5



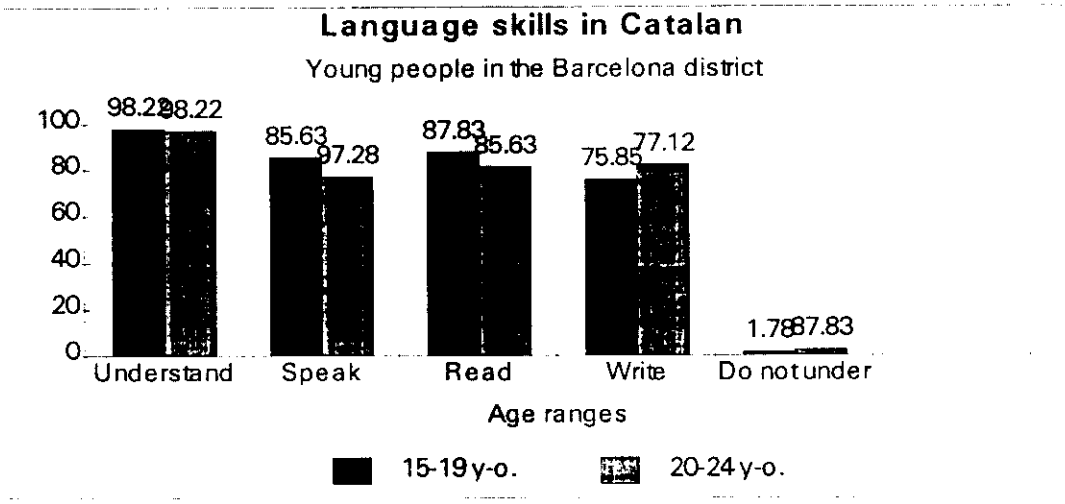
Source: Gabinet d'Estudis Socials, 1991: 106

The Rambleros never used Catalan in the peer group activities. Amongst the Trepas, half of the members (7 out of 14) were speakers of Catalan. 3 of them, though, did not come very often, and Spanish usually predominated in mixed conversations, as I will show. In a survey conducted by teachers in secondary schools in Barcelona, 28.9 % of respondents declared that they used mainly Catalan with their friends, 51,6% mainly Spanish and 18,9% both (Huguet & Serra, 1993). In my groups, I do not think that anybody would fall into the 'mainly-Catalan' category, as all the Trepas who were speakers of Catalan made extensive use of Spanish in the peer-group. Additionally, the proportion of 'mainly Spanish' speakers was higher than in the Huguet & Serra survey.

Some people have told me that the Rambleros group is a very typical kind of neighbourhood-based group in Barcelona (**grup de barri**). Nevertheless, one of its members said in a group discussion that the group was "***raro***" (rare, special) [GB06: 917-35] as compared with others, although it is not clear what he really meant by that. In my own experience in Barcelona, the types of grouping are very diverse in numbers and gender composition. Women-only groups are maybe not as usual as men-only. What is particularly interesting about the groups I worked with is the contrast in their composition and organisation: the

Rambleros were much more tightly organised, intimately tied and culturally uniform, the Trepas were much more loosely organised, with less closeness between many of their members and culturally more diverse, in addition to the fact that they seemed to have more contacts outside the group itself.

Figure 6



Source: Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya, 1993: 48; from the official 1991 census.

Finally, Figure 6 above gives an indication of the level of language skills amongst young Barcelonians. It is important to bear in mind that, although some people did not feel confident enough to speak Catalan, it was always assumed that everybody could understand it. In this way, both Spanish and Catalan speakers normally participated in conversations where both languages were used.

Notes to section 2.3

[1] For a discussion about representativeness and theoretical relevance in case study research, see also Mitchell (1984).

[2] I devised this chart on the basis of data on a) active population according to age and b) estimated unemployment according to age. "Active population" refers to those effectively on the job market, either working or willing to work according to the census. Estimated unemployment is based on the Survey of Active Population (**Enquesta de la Població Activa**) and it includes people whose availability is verified 15 days after the questionnaire is answered, and who look for a job for at least four weeks (in our case, during the last quarter of the year) (Direcció General de Joventut, 1991: 35)

2.4 Methodological principles and analysis

The type of questions that I wanted to address have very much determined the methodology of my study. Focusing on people's construction of their own identities already presupposes a conception of society in which people's views play a significant role. This is a commonplace of qualitative research as opposed to positivistic approaches which seek to find universal principles or causal laws that determine individual behaviour (Cohen & Manion, 1989: 5). Qualitative research is based on the assumption that social life and human behaviour differ in an essential way from natural phenomena. The basic difference lies on the fact that people interpret their experience and act on the basis of their interpretations[1]:

> "The purpose of social science is to understand social reality as different people see it and to demonstrate how their views shape the action which they take within that reality." (Beck, 1979 quoted in Cohen & Manion, 1989: 27)

Ethnography is one of the most common methods in qualitative methodology. Hammersley & Atkinson (1983:23) ascribe a central role to participant observation in ethnographic research, as it gives access to people's situated practices and helps to appreciate to what extent attitudes and beliefs have a bearing on the research subjects' lives. Nevertheless, access to people's practices and understandings is a much more complex matter than simply looking at them and writing them down. We may have different possibilities of access to aspects of people's lives, and limited time and resources. This is why it is usually desirable to use various sources of data and combine different methods (ibid.).

The need to use various research strategies is commonly accepted amongst ethnographers and qualitative researchers in general (ibid.: 24; Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 65). Fielding and Fielding (1986: 23-31), though, warn against a common belief that this should be used to 'check' the validity of the findings. They argue that the function of 'triangulation' is to add depth to the analysis, because "life is multifaceted and is best approached by the use of techniques that have a specialised relevance". (ibid.: 34). For them, the real issue concerning triangulation is whether or not a real integration or articulation is achieved between all approaches in the analysis (ibid.: 26).

In my project, I collected various forms of data: fieldnotes from participant observation, recordings of spontaneous conversations, group discussions and interviews. The two groups studied were my central source of data, and they constituted the point of departure for my analytical work. I tried to sample as wide a range of discursive practices as possible from them in order to create a comprehensive corpus. Subsequently, the analysis of this corpus consisted of identifying particular discourse types and further selecting parts from it for more detailed analysis. But the two groups were not the one and only source of evidence, as is usual in many ethnographic and anthropological studies (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 185; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983: 43-44). Data from other groups and from other fields of experience such as previous research and my personal experiences of various kinds were also used in the comparative endeavours of my analysis (see references to Grounded Theory in 2.2 above). Strauss (1987) points out with particular insistence the value of personal experience in research:

> " ...experiential data should not be ignored because of the usual canons governing research (which regard personal experience and data as likely to bias the research), for those canons lead to the squashing of valuable experiential data. We say, rather "mine your experience, there is potential gold there!"" (Ibid.: 11).

But, probably, the most central issue about ethnography is not strictly speaking the question of access to practices and data. As Cameron et al (1992) point out, it involves basically the establishment of a relationship with the people studied. This raises further issues about the validity as well as the ethical

implications of social research. The 'data' is very much a product of this relationship. The researcher becomes, in a way, "the research instrument by excellence", with her or his own experience being a fundamental source of data and theory (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983: 15). And the people studied, rather than simple 'objects' of observation, are actually participants in this process, actively producing a (re)presentation of themselves and their world for the researcher much in the same way as they do it for other people. It follows that the common notion of a neutral observer is no longer valid, as the researcher is likely to have some sort of an impact on the people studied, an eventuality which has to be taken into account in the analysis. The whole research, then, including fieldwork and analysis, is a reflexive process which is essentially similar to the methods people routinely use in understanding their own social context. What actually makes research different from common social practices is (1) the fact that the researcher has to make an effort to make explicit the assumptions taken for granted in that particular culture (1983: 7-8), (2) that the researcher's activity is aimed at the ongoing development and testing of theory(ies) (ibid.: 19), and (3) that the researcher must be as systematic, critical and rigorous as possible in their work (ibid.: 15).

a) Issues of validity

There is a tradition in ethnography that research must be essentially descriptive, and that it must provide accounts of people or events as they 'really' were or happened without mediating interpretative work on the part of the researcher. From this 'realist' standpoint, it is often argued that 'description' and 'explanation' (or 'interpretation') are two different things. This is based on the assumption that researchers can have a direct access to reality if they observe it through the 'right' methods. Conversely, there is the 'relativistic' position which takes the view that, in the same way as people's experiences are the product of their particular interpretations, the scientist's work must be seen as a construction as well. While the first view is easily discreditable (see Hammersley, 1992: 22-27 and 43-54), the second poses the problem that scientific findings cannot claim the universal validity that science seeks.

This problem is quite relevant to the type of discourse analysis I have set out to do, namely critical discourse analysis. It is based on the principle that discourse constitutes the social world and social identities as we see them (Fairclough, 1992a). It can be argued that my analysis sets up a particular form of discourse which is just as valid as any other to understand the issues I have investigated. My answer to this is "yes, in principle" but "no, in practice". The 'realism' versus 'constructivism' debate has been a drawn out one, and there does not seem to be a consensual solution available. As far as my research is concerned, I have taken the view that the validity of scientific work cannot really be found within the boundaries of a universal theory of knowledge which claims autonomy vis-à-vis society. This is certainly not the way in which the natural sciences have earned their social claims to validity. This comes from the social position of the scientist in society, which opens the possibility for her theories to be used to make decisions in particular social spaces and by various types of actors. What I have set out to do is, therefore, to develop a perspective on the social issues dealt with in my study in the hope that it will be relevant to those concerned with these issues, i.e. I have sought to reconstitute our understanding of the question of language and identity bearing in mind the concerns of a variety of social groups on the matter. In order to do so, I have sought to make as clear as possible how I have developed my framework and how it can be connected to the issues dealt with by other researchers, language activists, policy makers or people in general.

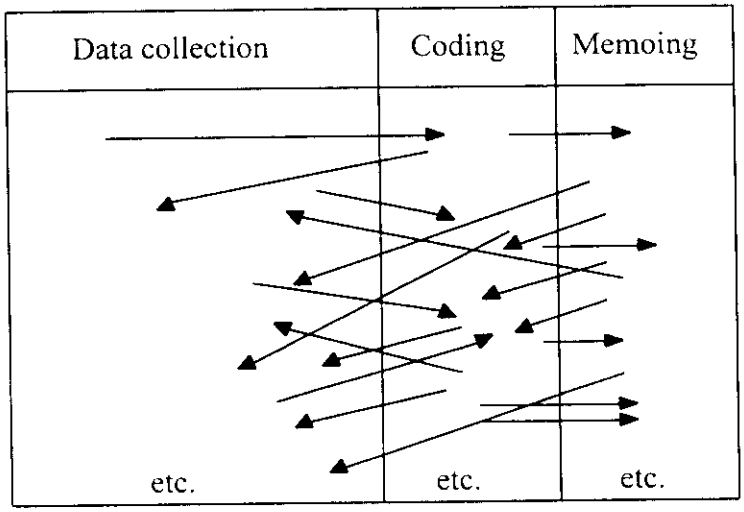
To take this position has some fundamental consequences with regard to how the research is carried out. There seems to be an increasing consensus about seeing qualitative research more as a process than as a result, and therefore, it is necessary for the process of analysis to be extensively documented (ibid.; Miles & Huberman, 1984: 23; Corsaro, 1985; Potter & Wetherell, 1987: 172; see also Labov & Fanshell, 1977 for a good example of this). I have tried to illustrate my own thinking process and the analytical processes as clearly as possible in this final written product. Below, I will give a few indications about how this has been done.

b) The research process and the research narrative

It has become widely accepted in qualitative research that one should not conceive of data collection and analysis as two sequentially separate stages. Glaser and Strauss warn against strict research designs that may thwart the need to follow interesting exploratory leads (1967: 48). Strauss (1987) conceives analysis as a continuous process involving deductive, inductive and verificatory work. This means that new answers and new questions are continuously generated as we code and draft or re-draft sections of our analysis ("memos", in their jargon), and thus the need to go back to the data.

Figure 7

Phases of Research



Coding paradigm (Strauss, 1987: 19)

In gathering the data I did the following: I transcribed the fieldnotes and the group discussions in entirety. I also transcribed all the interviews, except for a few stretches which at the time I thought irrelevant but which I have sometimes used in later stages of analysis. I also scanned all the natural conversations by jotting down a quick summary of what was going on and keeping track of the position of every instance within the tapes so that I could go back to it if I needed to transcribe it. It is quite an extensive body of data. The numbered texts occupy 2 Mb of hard disk memory for 76 text files. I used the application "Ethnograph 3.0" to handle it by introducing thematical codes on stretches of text that can later be recovered in a reasonably convenient way.

In my analysis I have used all these types of data in different ways. To analyse face-to-face encounters, for instance, I used fieldnotes, my own memories, recordings and participants' reports if they appeared to be reasonably reliable in the context. I have used interviews and group discussions in various ways: (1) The experience of the participant observer can be as fragmented as anyone's normal everyday experience. We only know particular aspects of the lives of the people we meet: they do different things when we do not see them and we may know more or less about their past. Although it is obvious that people's reports should not be taken at face value (and have to be critically scrutinised just as any type of data), interviews can -and in this case did- help to provide a fuller picture of people's lives. (2) The participants also helped to interpret practices whose origin and meaning were not clear to me as a newcomer. (3) Interviews and group discussions were also used as a means of gaining insights into ways in which these young people construed their ideas about the world and as a way of approaching the diversity of meanings articulated within the groups. Potter and Wetherell (1987: 164) point out that the main purpose of the interview is to get the fullest possible "range of accounting resources people use when constructing the social world". (4) The participants and I jointly engaged in explicit reflection on aspects of the research I am undertaking. Since research is, to a great extent, a process of making things

explicit, it seemed appropriate to give the researched the opportunity of helping me out in my interpretative endeavours. (5) I was also interested in analysing mismatches between their actual behaviour and the behaviour they reported to me. Many researchers just consider mismatches to be a threat to the validity of interviewee's reports. In my view, investigating the origin of mismatches can be an essential means of reaching an understanding of the phenomena studied.

This does not mean that I accepted people's accounts at face value. I also did not use them as a 'validity test', as it is often recommended (Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Fairclough, 1992a; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Labov & Fanshell, 1977). As Hammersley argues:

> "...to treat respondent validation as a criterion is to ignore the distinction between criteria (on the one hand) and the strategies we use to gather information about the adequacy of the research (on the other)." (Hammersley, 1992: 65).

I sought to scrutinise people's accounts in a critical way, particularly bearing in mind what seemed to be the situated intention of the account as well as its literal meaning. For instance, an issue may acquire a different light if it has been brought in by the respondent or if it has appeared as a response to the interviewer. And here the procedures of interpretation are not substantially different from those obtaining in 'natural' situations. We always have to bear in mind <u>why</u> somebody is saying something as much as what the person is saying:

> "The artificial setting is still a part of society and is subject to the processes of 'symbolic interpretation and social interaction' with which naturalists are so much concerned." (Fielding & Fielding, 1986: 38).

It is worth pointing out that my relationship with the participants in my study was already well established when I organised the group discussions and interviews, and therefore the ways of talking and the perspective of the peer-group were remarkably present in them. In general, they constituted very relaxed situations and they yielded invaluable data on the use of slang and code-switching.

And, of course, my own understanding of the cultural context was very important to do this. Often, the analysis required a 'reconstruction' of the members' interpretive resources which made utterances understandable and actions meaningful. This activity can be seen as inventive to a certain point. People handle considerable amounts of implicit information which is usually not put in words. For example, if I wanted to describe the meaning of a gesture or an intonation contour, my description was bound to transform in some way its potential meaning, which was often much more ambivalent and diffuse. Such descriptions or interpretations should therefore be taken as just a way of indicating how that feature worked in the particular context under analysis.

This is why I have illustrated my arguments with plenty of extracts from my data. This should not be understood as a way of bringing the analysis closer to 'reality', but as a way of clarifying how the analysis ties in with situated practices. It is a logical consequence of a form of research which seeks to bring in the 'voices' of those researched, thus giving rise to a 'polyphonic narrative' (Chouliaraki, 1994). The practical consequence of this is that the written product becomes, as the reader will appreciate, rather long.

<u>c) Goodbye to neutrality: the ethical side of research</u>

I argued above that scientific research cannot claim universal validity in its own right, but in as much as it plays a particular role within existing social practices. Therefore, the scientist is a socially positioned subject as much as the subjects under study are, and she is also driven by her particular interests and relevances. Because different social groups have different interests and positions, we cannot assume that the scientist's ones are valid for everyone. There is therefore the need to have a <u>critical</u> look at the

scientist's agenda. In social research, it is often acknowledged that the scientist's views always 'influence' her analysis (Hammersley, 1992; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992):

> "I think it is important to acknowledge these influences rather than affecting a spurious neutrality about social issues, but also to be open with one's readers about where one stands." (Fairclough, 1989: 5).

Nevertheless, the notion of 'influence' implies that the interests of the researcher are seen as a kind of inevitable 'distortion' in the research process. I would argue that, in spite of this recognition, most social scientists are still working on the assumption that science itself is neutral. One of the main arguments in my thesis, as far as theory and methodology is concerned, is that we should see the researcher's interests not as something outside research proper, but as constitutive of it as a social activity[2]. I will try to show this through my critique of empiricist and structuralist approaches in chapter 3. I will argue that empiricism constructs research as if it was just a question of method, as if 'facts' could speak by themselves; and that this serves to present the scientist as an uncommitted observer. It is probable that this explains the success of structuralism in the social sciences in that it allows to construct social structures and social action in terms of formal universal systems that operate independently from situated contexts and political processes. I will maintain that such a view simply obscures its own political underpinnings and consequences, and also that it can hardly be relevant to researchers seeking to connect their work with the concerns of people dealing with issues of social struggle and domination.

Once we acknowledge that research is always potentially political, I believe we are under an ethical obligation to be open about the interests that inform our approach. In my research, I have tried to be clear about this all the time. Nevertheless, this does not mean that I have taken a given political 'side' amongst the ones currently available (leftist, conservative, nationalist, etc..). My study is an endeavour to construct a common ground amongst various parties, and not to defend a position which was given beforehand.

Firstly, I wanted my study to eventually throw light on social issues and historical trends which are relevant to the researched, the academic community and to many people in Catalonia and elsewhere who may be especially interested in working-class cultural values, migration, ethnicity and language development and shift. And secondly, I expected the research to help the two groups of young people to reflect critically about these issues. I felt this would be to their advantage. Equally, I hoped that the publication of the research results would help many Catalans to see more positive ways of developing social and political relationships in Catalonia.

These interests have guided my choice of some of the categories in my analysis. For instance, previous studies propose a definition of 'Catalan' which is based on an ethnic or ethnolinguistic categorisation (Woolard, 1989; Pujolar, 1991b, 1993). Nevertheless, I have found that the term 'ethnic', as is used today in the media, is almost invariably related to conflict and might be subject to dubious and divisive political manipulations. Therefore I have not used the word 'Catalan' in this sense. This has been possible because working-class Spanish-speaking people generally see themselves as 'Catalan' as well. Another delicate matter was whether I had to use the word 'Spanish' or 'Castilian' to name the language. Many colleagues of various origins have commented to me that it is odd that I use the term 'Spanish', as this is not the way it is referred to colloquially in Catalonia. It is often argued that the term 'Castilian' is more egalitarian, as it constructs the various languages spoken in Spain as being on an equal footing. I have finally opted for the word 'Spanish' for various reasons. Firstly, 'Spanish' is practically the only term used within Anglo-American academia at all levels. I did not see that there was a point in trying to change this unless it was as part of a collective initiative. Secondly, the words 'Catalan' and 'Castilian' are perceptually so similar that people often confuse them when speaking and reading. I was concerned that this might make reading confusing and strenuous. And thirdly, I have come to entertain the feeling that these folk categories are politically manipulated to obscure the very obvious fact that both languages are not on equal footing within Spain. As the authors of the Iruña declaration pointed out, the writers of the Spanish constitution

did not consider any language other than Castilian as worth mentioning (Mollà & Palanca, 1987: 44), and this has been reflected in the state's policies within and without Spain throughout the eighties and nineties.

A final point regarding the ethical dimension of research has to do with the kind of relationship that is established with the research subjects or participants. It is usual for researchers to consider the ethical dimension of social research in terms of traditional issues of professional ethics such as privacy, informed consent, overtness or covertness and the effects on subjects (see Homan, 1991). Mehan (1979), for instance, considers that allowing the researched to participate in the research will ensure that they benefit from it, but his views are not integrated within a critical view of knowledge. Researchers working for disadvantaged groups often call for research to be a stake in the path to 'emancipation' (Janks & Ivanic, 1992). Fairclough worries about the possibility that research results may be used by dominant groups to the disadvantage of dominated groups (1992b). Fowler et al (1979) also point out that critical researchers should try to make their techniques accessible so that practitioners could make use of them to their advantage.

Maybe the most elaborate statement on ethics in critical research is the one made in Cameron et al (1992). They argue that research should be 'empowering', basically by raising the participants' awareness of relations of dominance, but they insist that this concept should inform our whole research approach and our relationship with the researched. Their particular proposals are based on the principle of allowing the researched a participative role in the research process and allowing them the opportunity to develop their own perspective within it.

Of course this negotiation can be of different kinds depending on the circumstances of each case. The notion of 'empowerment' in research may not be relevant to all social groups (for instance, those which are already quite powerful). It can also sound paternalistic if we assume that the researcher's point of view is necessarily a 'better' one, or 'the truth'. Bearing in mind the purposes of my research, I take it that it seeks to empower not only the researched, but also the researcher and all those who have an interest in the matters discussed here. Additionally, the issue of the participation of the research subjects is a central one when one seeks to produce a form of knowledge which is relevant to their daily experience.

In my study, I did not manage to get my participants as involved as in some of the examples given by Cameron et al (1992). I certainly sought to make myself very approachable in all aspects. I designed some activities, such as interviews and group discussions as a way of facilitating participants' contribution to the process of analysis. I also granted them the opportunity to discuss drafts of findings or early analyses. The group discussions themselves were devised in response to encouragement from the participants themselves and designed so that they would discuss topics of their interest. For one of the groups, the group discussion was certainly useful as it made possible for them to discuss some of the conflicts between women and men that were taking place. The analytical process was designed so that it would help them to build an understanding of many issues which were of direct relevance to them as well as providing insights which would be relevant to my research purposes. Nevertheless, I feel that it is difficult to know to what extent this has been empowering or whether it may be so in the future.

Notes to section 2.4

[1] The traditional distinction between "qualitative" and "quantitative" research has been criticised by Hammersley (1992) on the grounds that it is not really based on different philosophical and political assumptions and their methodological implications. Indeed, many studies on qualitative methodology support (and give examples of) the use of quantitative methods in qualitative research (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 62; Strauss, 1987: 2-3; Fielding and Fielding, 33, 69-70), the latter saying that quantitative data are often analysed "qualitatively" (Ibid.: 12). I have also used quantitative and census data in some cases, particularly to describe relevant features of the Catalan social context as I did in the previous section.

[2] This means that the 'truth' of research, its 'validity', is historically situated. It is subject to the social processes whereby the interests and relationships between the social groups involved are negotiated.

3. THEORISING AND ANALYSING...

In this chapter, I am presenting the theoretical framework I have used to analyse my data. I have divided it into three sections. In the first, I will review a number of approaches to the study of language in society and I will discuss the extent to which they were relevant to my study. After this, I will argue for the need for a 'dialogical' conception of language (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986) as a way of locating the utterance socially and historically, and I will explain the key linguistic concepts that are used in the analysis.

There is a leading thread throughout this chapter which corresponds to the basic principle that has guided my analysis. And this has to do with what is commonly understood by meaning and what is taken to be the origin of meaning. Bakhtin's dialogical conception of language has allowed me to bypass the traditional structuralist notion that language is a 'system' and that meaning originates in this system or in the formal 'structure' of the language. This fundamental tenet of structuralist thinking was adopted in many social science disciplines after the influential work of linguists such as Saussure (1916) (see Hymes, 1964b):

> "The linguistic model was transposed with such ease into the domain of anthropology and sociology because one accepted the core intention of linguistics, namely, the *intellectualist philosophy* which treats language as an object of contemplation rather than as an instrument of action and power. (Bourdieu, 1991a: 37, his emphasis)

Much work within linguistics, sociology, anthropology and sociolinguistics has focused predominantly on studying language, society or human action as presenting systematic features that can be conceptualised in terms of structures. Social and linguistic analyses have characteristically focused on describing synchronic regularities, rules and norms that helped to construct the idea of a system, a linguistic system, a social system or a symbolic system always described in a-historical terms.

The corresponding paradigm predominant in sociology is Parsonian structural functionalism (Parsons, 1949). According to Williams (1992: 43-51), in this framework, there is a focus on the "structure of action", and the understanding of individual acts on the basis of common norms and values which are contained in the "cultural system". Williams claims that such a view has a deterministic reading because the driving force of people's actions is situated outside the individual in a kind of cultural-ideational realm (ibid.: 47-8). A focus on de-humanised structures and rules makes issues of identity superfluous, as the person -the so-called 'subject'- is devoid of any protagonism and responsibility. Her or his action is the product of the rational application of cultural norms stemming from the values of the cultural system. This is particularly noticeable in sociolinguistic research, including some ethnographic studies, where

identity simply becomes a type of social meaning that can be expressed, or signalled, through the use of linguistic forms or varieties (ibid.: 63).

In the second section of this chapter, I will present the approach I have taken to the analysis of social action. In order to do this, I will begin by deconstructing the notion of 'context' as it has been used in pragmatics, conversational analysis and the ethnography of communication. I will argue that 'context' is an ill-defined and theoretically unsound device which is often used to make up for the limitations of empiricist and structuralist approaches to meaning. On the basis of these criticisms, I will argue that the works of Goffman (1967, 1974, 1983) provide useful analytical tools to analyse social action, particularly the type of face-to-face encounters which are central to my analysis. His theatrical metaphor helps to understand the processes whereby social situations are created and sustained. In my work, it will be of particular relevance to look into the 'ritual' dimension of social interaction, as an essential feature of social activities is that they constitute a co-ordinated 'display' of social identities. Additionally, I will try to show that there are significant connections between the concepts and theories of Bakhtin and Goffman, and that a dialogic conception of language provides a good basis for understanding the creation and negotiation of meaning in social interaction. In this sense, I find the two frameworks compatible and, to an extent complementary, since a theory of action must always draw upon a theory of meaning and vice-versa.

In the third and final section, I discuss ways of theorising the link between identities or social action and social structures, that is, I will seek to reflect on the significance of situated practices vis-à-vis social processes on a wider scale. In the traditional structuralist approaches that have predominated in sociolinguistics, social change is seen in terms of evolutionist thinking, with societies simply tending to greater perfection, complexity and diversification. One of the driving forces of this social change is, within this theory, people's desire for upward social mobility. It has however been claimed that the Parsonian framework represented society as a kind of utopia because it portrayed every individual in society as sharing a common system of values and norms which, in turn, made deviance, conflict and change very difficult to conceptualise (Williams, 1992: 63).

It is therefore not surprising that such a paradigm has not helped to answer many of the questions posed by people who struggle to understand and solve particular social problems, usually questions of political or cultural domination. Cameron (1992), from a feminist standpoint, Martin-Jones (1989) and Williams (1992) from a minority languages viewpoint, and Bourdieu (1991a) and Fairclough (1992a) principally from the perspective of class domination, have all noted that these approaches have not provided useful ways of answering (or posing) the questions they are concerned with.

As I have indicated, my research also seeks to engage with issues which have to do with power relations in ways which are relevant to people engaged in struggles. On a theoretical level, and mainly by focusing on issues of gender and ethnic inequality, I will seek to conceptualise social domination in a more context-sensitive and dynamic way. Here I will seek to clarify the important role that the work of Fairclough (1989, 1992a) has played in guiding my theoretical and methodological enquiry. Fairclough (1992a) has sought to conceptualise processes of social change as they are manifested in texts, language use or social interaction. He proposes that intertextual organisation of texts should be seen in terms of historical processes where relationships and boundaries between discourses and orders of discourse are negotiated. In so far as discourses reflect and constitute social relationships and identities, critical discourse analysis invites us to theorise the historical location of texts within global (macro-) social political processes of struggle. I will argue that Fairclough's Bakhtinian and Foucauldian approach to discourse and social practice provides an invaluable way of conceptualising social struggles and the socially negotiated character of meaning. However, my focus is not, strictly speaking, on the study of the linguistic aspects of social processes. I have therefore had to adapt Fairclough's conceptual framework to an analysis which is centred on 'situated practices' and 'social interaction'. To do this, I have adopted Bourdieu's notions of 'habitus' and 'field', although there are some problems in Bourdieu's theoretical model which I will discuss later in chapter 7.

3.1... language in society

A fundamental tenet of structuralist thinking has been the separation of form and meaning, or correspondingly, of structure and function. A consequence of this has been the establishment of linguistics and sociology as totally separate disciplines basically concerned with the study of linguistic form (Hymes, 1964b) or social structure (Williams, 1992). Fairclough (1992a: 1-2) maintains that linguistics has been isolated and dominated by formalistic and cognitive paradigms, whereas social sciences have tended to see language as transparently conveying meaning.

The emphasis on form has usually been combined with an empiricist or realist-based approach to methodology and theory building, where structures had to account for observable surface features. The consequence of this is a so-called result- or product-oriented analytical focus. The communicative and social processes that actually produce the observed results get theoretically and methodologically ignored. This issue was already addressed by Hymes (1964b), who presented Chomsky's (1965) programme for a generative and transformational grammar as a major theoretical step in the right direction because it shifted the focus towards the underlying rules that generated the observable phenomena. In practice, though, Chomsky's 'revolution' did not involve a substantial change in the dominant scientific paradigm as it preserved its synchronic character and the independence of form with respect to function.

This was possible because social and linguistic phenomena were treated in an a-temporal or a-historical way. Because of this form-centered, product-oriented and a-historical approach, no space was left to theorise about the processes whereby particular forms became associated with particular meanings. And, from the social point of view, it was not possible to theorise about the processes whereby particular social arrangements come into being, are maintained, break down or disappear. Additionally, no connection was conceivable between social and linguistic phenomena as they constituted parallel theories or fields of inquiry. Between these paradigms, only relationships of correspondence, similarity or correlation could be sought (Williams, 1992).

In this section, I will first try to briefly review a variety of perspectives dealing with the use of language in society, and I will try to show how structuralist thinking has largely determined the way in which these perspectives have developed. I will seek to highlight the problems and limitations stemming from these approaches as I argue for the need for a social theory of language. By a social theory of language, I mean one which focuses on the social processes of human communication as they are located in situated practices, and linked to the ways people construct their identities. An a-historical conception of language involving a total separation between form and function is, in my view, no longer valid. My proposal here will be to draw upon the works of Foucault (1972) and Bakhtin (1981, 1986). In the second subsection, I will provide a working definition of the main concepts from these authors which I use in my analysis.

3.11 Structuralism and empiricism in sociolinguistics and discourse analysis

In the early structuralist approach, linguists used Saussure's (1916) distinction between 'langue' (the language system) and 'parole' (actual language use) to delimit their field of inquiry to the study of the systematic features of language and, therefore, to exclude from linguistics the social aspects of language, which were seen as having a random character (see Kremnitz, 1993)[1]. In later developments, such as Chomsky's (1965) generative grammar, the notion of "linguistic competence" refers to the language ability of an ideal speaker: the ability to produce correct sentences independently of the social or material conditions of language use. Kremnitz (1993: 16) claims that this formal orientation has dominated even when researchers and theorists have proposed to widen the focus of study, such as in pragmatics, which

originally involved just a widening of the studied phenomena but not a substantial change in its methodological and theoretical assumptions.

A similar criticism has also been voiced by Haberland & Mey (1977), Leech (1983) and Thomas (1986) in their bid for a pragmatic project which defines its object and methods as independent from traditional syntax and semantics. Thomas (ibid.: 7) criticises what she calls "closet semantics", meaning those pragmatists "seeking explanations and generalisations from within the linguistic system alone." This early structuralist linguistic tendency was also visible in the methodological custom of using invented sentences or utterances and relying on the researcher's introspection in order to produce general principles of how people understand language. Later on, as Thomas reports, pragmatists have generally accepted that "explanations of pragmatic phenomena are to be found within a more general theory of human behaviour" (ibid.: 8).

This could have led to a fundamental redefinition of the relationship between language and society. Nevertheless, it did not. According to Leech (1983: 2), pragmatics gathered strength when it was clearly seen that the study of meaning could not be separated from the study of language use, which led to the demise of generative semantics. He then argues that linguistics and pragmatics are complementary domains, pragmatics seeking to uncover the "principles of language use" (ibid.). I disagree with Leech in that I do not see this step as a significant change in the scientific paradigm, not at least from the perspective of the wider structuralist order. First of all, despite the fact that pragmatics constitutes a very diverse field, it is common place for those working within it to subscribe to the model of rational goal-oriented action central to structural-functionalism[2]. This rationality is based on the accomplishment of a set of principles which are defined in accordance with each pragmatist's theoretical viewpoint. Examples of these principles are Grice's (1975, 1981) maxims, based on the "cooperative principle", and the principle of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987), inspired by Goffman's (1967,1971) works. These principles are used to account for people's communicative strategies in a similar way as Parson's 'values' contained in the 'cultural system' are used to account for people's actions and motivations. Clearly, pragmatics constitutes (or seeks to constitute) its object as an autonomous system as well.

Within this rather narrow frame, pragmatics has nevertheless made us aware of a vast array of phenomena obtaining in everyday human communication. It has clearly problematised the most naive views on the relationship between form and meaning by showing how understanding is contextually bound. But, by maintaining the basic tenets of structuralism, it contains some limitations. These limitations were also detected by Thomas (1986: 254-6) after she sought to use the tools of semantics in a more dynamic way, i.e. to show how people effectively manipulated pragmatic principles in order to negotiate social relationships in unequal encounters. She concludes by warning against 'overformalising' and by acknowledging that the linguistic approach is too limited to handle issues of reproduction of inequalities, and that there is a need for a wider theory of social interaction. This is precisely what I seek to do in my study, and I address this issue in subsection 3.21 below, where I criticise the traditional notion of 'activity type', or the social situation in the light of the yet unsolved problem of 'context' in pragmatics. Context is usually seen as a kind of 'container' of the analysed utterances which, in turn, holds a potentially infinite number of keys to their interpretation. But, in addition to a theory of action, there is also the need of a theory of 'meaning' which highlights its socially constructed character beyond the limitations of the linguistic system.

a) Variationist sociolinguistics

The conceptual divide between language and society has very much shaped the way in which researchers have approached interdisciplinary work. For instance, the field of sociolinguistics, which came into being in the late fifties, has been largely dominated (until recently) by research on variation and language change, particularly on phonological change across time (Labov, 1972a, 1972b; Trudgill, 1972, 1974). Such studies have simply sought to find correspondences between social and linguistic categories -usually

in the form of statistical correlations- from which causal interpretations are usually inferred (Dittmar, 1976). So Labov (1972b: 126) observed that the lower middle classes in New York statistically "go beyond the highest status group in their tendency to use the forms considered correct and appropriate for formal styles". Therefore he suggested that this 'hypercorrection', motivated by the wish for upward mobility, constituted a driving force in the mechanism of linguistic change towards the common linguistic norm (ibid.: 179-80) (I have underlined the common motifs of structural functionalism as indicated above).

A similar pattern of 'hypercorrection' was found to occur by Trudgill (1972, 1974) in Norwich amongst women. He suggested that this might be due to the fact that women were more "status-conscious" than men. Other researchers within the variationist framework, who adopted social categories different to those of standard stratification, have qualified these claims. Milroy (1980) and Milroy & Milroy (1978, 1992) have sought to identify different types of social networks and have shown that 'vernacular' forms of language tend to be maintained in close-knit local networks rather than in more loosely integrated communities. Trudgill's (1972, 1974) claims that women use more standard forms of language because they are more status-conscious have also been qualified by researchers who have done more detailed ethnographic studies of different communities. Cheshire (1982), who conducted an ethnographic study amongst teenagers in Reading, has shown that patterns of language use amongst adolescents are closely linked to their association with 'vernacular culture' -a finding also supported by Labov's (1972a) ethnographic study of inner-city gangs. Cheshire (1982) has shown that the number of vernacular forms occurring in women's speech depends on their participation in this vernacular culture, where men are more likely to participate. Nichols (1983) studied a predominantly rural black community in the US, and she has shown that women's speech depends very much on their mobility and possibilities in the job market, which varies across generations. Thomas (1988) describes the variations in the speech patterns of a Welsh community as significantly dependent on their parish membership and their modes of involvement in local religious activities. These studies suggest that the patterns of language use in women have more to do with women's position in society (their forms of participation in the job market, the family, local networks) rather than with any inherently feminine drive towards upward mobility.

The variationist approach has been very much enriched by the contributions of feminist linguists interested in the issue of gender differences in language. They have drawn attention to the fact that the methods usually involved a gender bias, as women were commonly classified according to the social status of their husbands. And they have also indicated that the explanations proposed contained a male-centered view of society because it was the way of speaking of women which was usually taken as deviant (Cameron, 1988; Cameron & Coates, 1988). The literature in this field is extensive (see Klann-Delius, 1987). One of the general weaknesses, though, is that researchers usually seek to compare patterns of language use between men and women, thus reproducing the idea that social and linguistic categories can be treated in isolation. An example of this is given in the next section, where I comment on West and Zimmerman's (1983) use of a conversational analytic approach to the study of cross-gender talk. Nevertheless, researchers on language and gender have used a wider variety of methods and approaches. Cameron (1992) provides an excellent analysis of these approaches and identifies some of their problems. She also argues very successfully that the problems of these approaches derive from the narrow structuralist notion of language that underlies them, and proposes to adopt Harris' (1980, 1981) theory of meaning as deriving from social situations. I will deal in more detail with issues of language and gender in section 4.1 below.

Variationist studies have highlighted the complexity of the phenomena related to linguistic variation, which do not seem to yield themselves up to broad generalisations. Variation cuts across gender, social, regional and professional groups, ages, ethnic groups, youth cliques and so on, with each variable interacting with the rest in complex ways, and with linguistic data presenting contradictory tendencies. Labov (1990) has recently proposed that we should consider various types of sound change and perform multivariate analysis to integrate more variables. However, his proposals seem to be driven more by the

need to find some sort of explanation than by any clear pattern suggested by the evidence. If anything, the variationist approach has played a very important historical role in proving with quantitative analysis -in line with the dominant positivistic paradigm- that language variation presented some measurable regularities at a time when it was generally believed that Saussure's 'parole' was simply messy and not amenable to scientific scrutiny (Labov, 1972b). In this context, Labov's (1972a) studies played a very important role in the struggles against prejudiced attitudes towards vernacular forms of language particularly in the schools. He showed that these varieties were not simply 'corruptions' of the standard language, and that they presented systematic features as well (see Cameron et al., 1992). In the case of language and gender studies, it has raised awareness of the fact that language seems to play a key role in the construction of gender identities. In variationist research, identity usually appears just as a variable, a classificatory criterion, or as something which speakers express through language use -that is, a meaning transparently conveyed through linguistic form. Here I will seek to show how, as Gal (1992a: 154) puts it, language "creates identity" as well.

b) The sociology of language

Another subdiscipline concerned with the study of language in society is the so-called sociology of language. It has been mainly concerned with the study of societal multilingualism, in particular with predicting and/or explaining language choice in multilingual communities and with theorising about processes of language maintenance and language shift (Fishman, 1964). It is especially within this field that the elements (and the limitations) of structural-functional sociology are most visible. Fishman (1967) developed the concept of "diglossia" (see Ferguson, 1959) in order to apply it to the study of multilingual, usually bilingual, contexts. Its main features were:

- · the existence of a compartmentalisation of social functions between the languages concerned, where speakers used the languages across the different domains of social life (church, school, work, media domains, or in-group/out-group domains) following community-wide norms (Fishman, 1972a, 1972b);

- · the existence of a H(igh) prestigious variety, appropriate for public and formal purposes, and a L(ow) variety for informal ones.

As Martin-Jones (1991) has shown, researchers within this perspective have sought to describe the patterns of language choice for the members of whole communities and, therefore, have also favoured quantitative methods based on survey data. Again, empirical research within this perspective has contributed a great deal to the raising of awareness of the complexity of the phenomenon of societal multilingualism, as well as to the need to make the model more sophisticated. Fasold (1984) proposed a widening of the scope of the concept of diglossia to accommodate cases of: a) 'double-overlapping diglossia', as in Tanzania, where Swahili as the national language can be seen as a 'high' variety with respect to 'vernacular' languages and as a 'low' variety with respect to English, the language effectively used in most of the administration (Abdulaziz Mkilifi, 1978), b) double-nested diglossia, where the high and low varieties have their corresponding formal and less formal sub-varieties, as in the case of Hindi and Khalapur in India (Gumperz, 1964), and c) linear polyglossia, where, as amongst Chinese speakers in Malaysia, the official Malaysian language (and its more colloquial style), the local variety of English language (also divided in two formal and colloquial styles), the commonly written Chinese Mandarin variety and the other native Chinese languages form a complex array of varieties which can be fitted into a formality scale (Platt, 1977).

Martin-Jones (1989) has pointed out the main problems with the diglossia model, which originate in its structural-functional base: a) it offers a rather deterministic and consensual view of society, with people using their linguistic repertoires according to 'common' norms and values; b) it aims at generalisations based on an exceedingly simplistic notion of domain (see also Dittmar, 1976: 175), and therefore

overlooks the diversity of practices found in multilingual contexts; and it grossly simplifies, as a result, the complex communicative strategies that bilingual people use in their everyday lives (see also Gumperz, 1982: 29); and c), with such a consensual, synchronic and uniform view of society, there is no space to conceptualise historical processes or political struggles affecting language. Nobody has put this last criticism more strongly (and nobody appears to have been more ignored, at least in the English-speaking area), than the researchers working on European minority languages (Aracil, 1982, Vallverdú, 1980; Ninyoles, 1972; Gardy & Lafont, 1981; Kremnitz, 1980, 1990; and Williams, 1992). Vallverdú (1979: 6-7) reproduces the following telling fragment of a letter he got from Aracil in 1971 (emphasis in Vallverdú, 1979):

> "Fishman and Ferguson's remarks are excellent, but they do not satisfy me. They both agree, and I agree with them, that diglossia does not only consist of a functional distribution or specialisation, but also -and primarily- of a hierarchical super- and subordination... Strangely enough, though, neither Ferguson or Fishman have ventured to go in this direction."

Aracil (1965, 1979) proposed a new model where societal multilingualism was conceptualised in historical terms, and where the norms of language choice were constantly negotiated in a context of political struggle. Ninyoles (1972), through the notion of 'self-hate', asserted the relevance of issues of ideology and identity in the mechanisms of language shift. Vallverdú (1979, 1980), after trying to apply the concept of diglossia to the description of the Catalan context, concluded that it was not useful at all:

> "...the discussion on the existence or non existence of diglossia in the Catalan Countries should not divert us from the core of the problem, which is the presence of a process of linguistic substitution in favour of Castilian, a process that is certainly being counteracted upon by another in the opposite direction of linguistic normalisation in favour of Catalan..." (Vallverdú, 1983: 23, emphasis in original).

Note how the Catalan academic discourse implicitly legitimises the efforts to promote Catalan as "normal". Williams (1992) has shown quite convincingly how the structural-functional paradigm, with its implicit evolutionary ideology, justifies quite the reverse, that is, the extinction of minority languages in the inevitable progress towards modernisation: a token example of the unavoidably political character of social research. In the present context, where issues of ideology and power are at the centre of the agenda in the social sciences, there is the need to assess the works of the so-called 'conflict sociolinguists' in order to see whether their ideas can help to build a more process-centred and politically committed approach to the study of societal bilingualism.

c) The ethnography of communication

Another interesting theoretical and methodological development was the one brought about by Hymes (1964a, 1972a), Gumperz (1972) and Gumperz & Hymes (1964) in their proposal for an ethnography of communication. It originated from anthropologists' increasing awareness of the role that the use of different language varieties and styles played in various societies. They were interested in describing how people conveyed social meanings and allegiances to particular social groups through their ways of speaking, and their choices of speech styles, dialects or languages in social interaction. Its methodological focus on interaction imposed the need to expand the scope of Chomsky's (1965) linguistic competence to that of a communicative competence (Gumperz & Hymes, 1972: vii). This communicative competence accounts for the speakers' ability to draw upon their linguistic repertoire and sets of rules for the appropriate use of linguistic varieties in particular social interactions (Gumperz, 1972).

Hymes (1972a: 56) defined the 'speech act' and the 'speech event' as the basic units of analysis within this framework, thus borrowing some of the terminology of pragmatics (Searle, 1969). The structuralist

underpinnings of this perspective are, therefore, more than obvious. Nevertheless, the traditionally eclectic character of ethnographic studies has allowed for this perspective to develop in many different ways. Pragmatic, interactionist, ethnomethodological and sociological approaches have often been adopted and combined. For one thing, close analysis of natural conversations and smaller samples of populations has raised awareness of the considerable complexity of human communication and the intrinsically diverse character of society. In its later developments, researchers within this perspective have sought to build a process-centred approach to the study of language use, and to investigate "the role that communicative phenomena play in the exercise of power and control and in the production and reproduction of social identity" (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982: 1).

A landmark study within this perspective is the one carried out by Blom and Gumperz (1972). They undertook an ethnographic study of a Norwegian village, where they claimed that people of local origin used their dialect as a 'sign' of their 'local identity' (ibid.: 411) and the standard "in situations where it conveys meanings of officiality, expertise, and politeness towards strangers" (ibid.: 433-4). They showed that different people used the two varieties differently according to their identification with community values. They also noticed that people switched from one variety to the other to indicate changes in the character of the situation (situational code-switching), but they pointed out as well that people also code-switched within the same situation to create particular semantic effects (metaphorical code-switching). Speakers used their linguistic repertoire, and the social meanings associated with varieties, to accomplish their communicative ends in interaction.

In another study, Gal (1979) combined ethnographic observation with a social network analysis to describe a process of language shift in a Hungarian-speaking community in Austria. She described very convincingly how Hungarian became stigmatised because of its association with 'peasant' networks and how the community was gradually giving up their language in order to gain access to middle class employment where the use of German was required. She also claimed that the use of German and Hungarian was associated with people's identities and their attachment to urban or rural values respectively. Le Page & Tabouret-Keller (1985), on the basis of their work carried out in the Caribbean and in immigrant communities in Britain, pointed out that there is a stereotypical view that links languages with ethnic consciousness (ibid.: 243; see also Sebba, 1993). They argued that individuals' communicative practices constitute a means of performing "acts of identity" and making claims to social roles through their language choices (ibid.14).

Within this framework, we get close to a post-structuralist notion of language use as constructing identity. Nevertheless, within the ethnography of communication, identity was initially treated as a simple matter of group membership[3]. In this sense, language use 'expressed', 'indicated' or 'signalled' social identity very much in terms of the structuralist dichotomy form-(social)meaning. Additionally, Martin-Jones (1989) and Williams (1992) have also pointed out that this perspective has often over-emphasised the freedom and creativity of individuals in making their choices, and that it has overlooked issues of domination and inequality between social groups. Williams (1992: 190-121) criticises Gal's study by indicating that her proposed explanation -regarding the pressures of economic progress and industrialisation- is influenced by structural-functional evolutionism and it drives attention away from the prejudices of the German-speaking community and their abuse of the economic and political power they held. Again, the structuralist base of this perspective, which tends to stress commonality of values and consensus, drives analysts to overlook the political side of language use. The notion of 'communicative competence' itself seems to invite the researcher to analyse social interactions as an expression of some form of knowledge of a cognitive kind possessed by the participants, rather than as the sites where power relations and identities are negotiated.

If anything, this tendency to objectivistic apoliticism intensified during the eighties as researchers became more and more interested in investigating the phenomenon of "code-switching". Gumperz (1982) defined code-switching in the following way:

"Conversational code-switching can be defined as the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems." (Ibid: 59).

Although it should not have been necessarily like this, the study of code-switching allowed the basic givens and modes of expression of structuralist linguistics to come to the fore. This was naturally so in studies seeking to produce a 'grammar' of code-switching or to identify grammatical constraints on it (Poplack, 1980, 1988; Di Sciullo, Muysken & Singh, 1986); but it was also noticeable in more 'social' approaches. Li (1992), for example, undertook a detailed analysis of code-switching data based on conversational analysis, and found noticeable inter-generational differences in the types of code-switching used:

> "These inter-generational differences in code-switching practices might be described as interactional reflexes of the network and generation specific language choice preferences in the Tyneside Chinese community." (Ibid.: 49, my emphasis)

Also, in this study, identity (ethnic, generational) is conceptualised in terms of indexes associated with types of networks which are later used to look for correspondences with conversational features. There is no analysis of the ways in which particular patterns of communication contribute to the construction of these identities, no inquiry into why children distance themselves from Chinese: only the superficial effects of these processes are discussed.

The use of the conversational analytic framework for the study of code-switching was proposed by Gumperz (1982) and Auer (1984, 1988). Here the focus is on the role of (now 'conversational') code-switching as a "contextualisation cue", that is, as "one of a vast array of devices...which are used in the situated production and interpretation of language." (Auer, 1991: 333). This view stems from the idea of conversational analysis that context is continually constructed by the participants in the sequential organisation of social interaction, and therefore, that switches of style, prosody, gesture, voice and language provide cues to interpret the intent of an utterance and the character of the interaction.

Gumperz (1982) abandons here the distinction between situational and metaphorical code-switching as the notion of 'contextualisation cue' or 'contextualisation convention' integrates both concepts. He proceeds then to list the various conversational functions that code-switching may accomplish: quotations, addressee specification, interjections, reiteration, message qualification, personalisation versus objectivisation, marking boundaries between speech genres, signalling distance or solidarity (we-they code), etc... (ibid.: 75-84). Auer (1984, 1991) points out quite rightly that this is not very helpful if one is trying to conceptualise the communicative competence of speakers, as speakers do not interpret utterances on the basis of a list of functions, but on the basis of their significance in the sequential development of contextually situated discourse.

Auer's (ibid.) proposals constitute a significant break with some structuralist givens. As it draws upon the ethnomethodological tradition, conversational analysis allows us to address the way meanings are indexically constructed in interaction. In this, his work represented a departure from structural-functional beliefs in a cultural system which provided universal meanings that transcended local contexts (Garfinkel, 1967, 1972; Heritage, 1984). The adoption of conversational analysis stems from the desire to build a more process-orientated view of language use. In their introduction to Language and Social Identity, Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz (1982) propose to adopt some of the ideas of CA to analyse how identities are constituted in talk and how different types of inter-ethnic encounters (for instance, job interviews) provide evidence of power relations. Nevertheless, there are serious problems with this model, some of which I discuss in subsection 3.21. Now it will suffice to say that the scope of conversational analysis has proved, up to now, to be very limited and technically oriented, sometimes merely aiming to uncover

structuring (formal) features of everyday conversation, such as turns at talk and adjacency pairs (see Atkinson, 1988). With respect to code-switching, Auer (1984, 1991) has proposed that we should consider different types of "linguistic alternation" to account for participant's situated interpretations in a very general way: whether a speaker is indicating personal linguistic preference or some momentary or extended change in the character of the speech situation. How these concepts can be connected to a notion of identity is unclear.

Of particular interest is Scotton's (1988) proposal to see code-switching as indexical of social negotiations. On the basis of Grice's (1975) concept of implicature, she shows how in some East African contexts some "conventionalised exchanges" are associated with the use of particular languages, and therefore, that code-switching is often used to negotiate what the situation is about and the corresponding rights and obligations of the participants. Scotton's (1988) proposals are suggestive, as they connect language choice with the negotiation of social relationships. A link with the construction of identities is suggested, and the Bakhtinian idea that different voices evoke different social worlds and relations. Nevertheless, within these perspectives -and particularly in conversational analysis- a minimally elaborated conceptualisation of identity is nowhere to be seen. And it seems difficult to establish links between everyday interaction, in the way it is analysed, and wider political processes.

It is significant that Catalan ethnographers (Bierbach, 1983; Calsamiglia and Tusón, 1984; Turell, 1984; Tusón, 1985a; Boix, 1993; Nussbaum, 1990a and Pujolar, 1991b, 1993), because of their orientation to the historical and political aspects of language use, have traditionally combined the ethnography of speaking's approach with concepts stemming from the conflict perspective. They have paid particularly close attention to the historical change in norms of language use (norms, that is, in an Aracilian sense), which has also led them to preserve the distinction between situational and metaphorical code-switching even after Gumperz (1982) and others abandoned it. The reason for this is that Catalan sociolinguists perceived quite clearly that the notion of situational code-switching was helpful when trying to detect (diachronically) shifting patterns of language use. The need to address code-switching from a perspective that stresses its link with wider political and historical processes has been manifested by many researchers (Heller, 1988a, 1992; Martin-Jones, 1989, 1990; Gal, 1988, 1992b; Woolard, 1988). Heller (1982, 1988b, 1989, 1992, 1994) has drawn upon ideas from Barth (1969) and Bourdieu (1991a) in her studies of the political and economic underpinnings of the use of French and English in Canada, particularly in Quebec and Ontario. She has shown how language choice is strategically used as a means of political struggle, and also how educational practices in an Ontarian French-medium school, and the situated interactions of students in the classroom, are connected with the wider struggles for access to economic and cultural resources. Martin-Jones (1994) has explored the ways in which the situated practices of teachers and bilingual assistants in British classrooms are very much determined by general educational policies. Woolard (1989) has revealed how language use in Barcelona played a key role in the constitution of ethnic identities and in the definitions of political relationships at the micro- and macro-social levels. My own research seeks to contribute to such developments, particularly with regard to the close analysis of linguistic practices provided in chapter 5.

d) Discourse analysis

A further area of inquiry which has developed ways of analysing the social aspects of language use is discourse analysis. Discourse analysis (DA) is nowadays a very broad term to designate a very diversified range of theories, methods, trends and academic traditions. I am just going to briefly comment on a few approaches which have some relevance to my interest of analysing naturally occurring conversations and processes of construction of meaning. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) proposed an expansion of the object of analysis beyond the sentence and sought to conceptualise typical formal interactive structures obtaining in particular social situations, in this case, in particular types of classrooms. They compared the functional units of the communication moves in a classroom (initiation-response-feedback) represented in levels with the different syntactical levels with which we usually analyse sentences in Grammar. This extremely

formalistic, product oriented, approach has been severely criticised by Fairclough (1989, 1992a) and Drew and Heritage (1992) on the grounds that it is based on a gross oversimplification of what constitutes classroom interaction, which in turn obscures the social relations that are constructed through the type of exchange proposed.

There are also Labov and Fanshel's (1977) study of therapeutic discourse and Potter and Wetherell's (1987) proposals for a method for social psychologists. These constitute interesting explorations of features or aspects of talk which seek to build conceptual frameworks that allow the application of the study of language in other disciplines. Labov and Fanshel's (1977) insights clearly point to the phenomenon of multi-voicedness by attempting to build a frame analysis of talk, and they also explore the ideological aspects of this multi-voicedness by noting that some 'voices' convey particular views of the world, for instance, in relation to the relationship between patient and therapist. They nevertheless run into some methodological problems which are, in my view, a product of empiricist expectations about the ways concepts are defined and categories are established, expectations which are typical of structuralism. For instance, their difficulties in measuring and interpreting paralinguistic cues seems to come from the assumption that (framed) voices should be clearly defined in their boundaries and even physical properties, or that such cues should point to some clear unambiguous meaning. Otherwise, the framework is suggestive and it is a pity that it has not led to further elaboration. Fairclough (1992a) points out that the ideas of ideology and subjectivity could have been developed within their framework. Drew and Heritage (1992) say that they did not take into account the way meaning is sequentially constructed rather than just originating in the sentence (10-13).

Potter and Wetherell (1987), in turn, seek to propose a method of analysis of the content of texts in terms of people's attitudes towards social groups, a typical social psychological concern. They take language as constructive of social reality, including the shaping of the self, which can hold contradictory positions. A social constructivist approach of this kind is promising. Fairclough (1992a) argues, though, that their view of the self is insufficiently developed because it does not account for the social conditions which constrain or condition the development of particular identities (ibid.: 25). He also criticises their focus on the content of linguistic texts "which leaves untouched other ... dimensions of meaning and associated aspects of form" (ibid.). In sum, Potter and Whetherell (1987) see meaning as transparently and a-contextually emerging from linguistic form, rather than being constructed by the participants in situated social action.

e) Critical linguistics

There are a number of approaches to the analysis of speech which come a bit closer to the theoretical position I am defending here. They are what Fairclough (1992a) calls "social theories of discourse". One is critical linguistics (Fowler *et al*, 1979; Hodge & Kress, 1979), an approach largely based on Halliday's (1978, 1985) 'systemic linguistics'. In their endeavours to study ideological and political processes through the use of language, they explicitly reject a conception of language as a system independent of its use: the content/form dualism. So texts are to be analysed "in the light of their interactional and wider social contexts" (Fowler *et al*, 1979: 195-6). They have tended to concentrate on showing how particular aspects of grammar and vocabulary reflect or help to construct a) a particular representation of reality (i.e. transitivity), and b) the relationship between speaker and addressee (modality). Research within this perspective has been good in highlighting, for instance, the ways in which the press constructs particular events (and takes implicit ideological positions) through processes of nominalisation, passivisation, choice of process type (verb), lexicalisation and so on. Fairclough (1992a) again argues that a few aspects of this framework are unsatisfactory, such as when addressees are portrayed as passive interpreters.

This is a criticism Fairclough directs at the Pêcheux' school of discourse analysis as well. This school (Pêcheux, 1982) has developed a method of discourse analysis based on Marxist theory of ideology (Althusser, 1971). On the whole, Fairclough (1992a) points out, both approaches focus on analysing the content of texts, thus building a product-oriented approach. And the resulting implication is that readers,

hearers or addressees accept the proposed meanings of the texts. Therefore, they tend to over-emphasise the power of language in the reproduction of social relationships and in the maintenance of oppression, even when they acknowledge the existence of opposition and contestation. This is unsatisfactory for a social theory which views social relationships as dialectical:

> "What is at issue more generally is the exclusively top-down view of power and ideology in critical linguistics, which accords with an emphasis one finds also in the Althusserian approach of the Pêcheux group... on social stasis rather than change, social structures rather than social action, and social reproduction rather than social transformation. There is a need for a social theory of discourse based upon a revaluation of these dualisms as poles in relationships of tension, rather than opting for one member of each pair and rejecting the other as if they were mutually exclusive." (Ibid.: 29).

Fairclough (ibid.) points out quite rightly that this problem originates in concentrating the analysis merely on texts instead of the social processes of production and interpretation of which they are but the result. Indeed, we are faced here with the traditional structuralist view of communication as a simple process of encoding and decoding between a sender and an addressee, a scheme which Bakhtin (1986) also criticised (see below). Additionally, such deterministic approaches do not leave much room for a conception of identity as actively constructed by actors. The encode-decode model has also been criticised in other areas of the social sciences, such as communications research (Wolf, 1985), where it was felt that it lead to a very passive, naive view of the audience.

3.12 Discourse and dialogism

Foucault's works constitute a very significant departure from the givens and modes of enunciation of structuralism (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). According to Foucault, one particular discourse (such as the discourse of medicine, of law and so on) is the result of its rules of formation. These consist of various discursive and non-discursive elements obtaining in particular social spaces (in this case, in particular institutions). Foucault's 'rules' do not speak any more about the surface features of discourse, but about the social conditions or processes in which discourses are generated:

> "The unity of an object is based not so much on the permanence and uniqueness of an object as on the space in which various objects emerge and are continuously transformed" (1972: 32)

He draws attention to the constitutive character of discourse, that is, that discourse constitutes the objects of knowledge, the social identities and relationships, and the conceptual frameworks which are used in social practice. Within this view, therefore, linguistic and social practices can hardly be seen as separate entities or objects of study. Discourses are the result of social practices whose terms have been constituted by the rules of formation of such discourses. The linguistic and the social seem to speak just of different analytical emphases in the study of social life, but this allows to pose (and maybe answer) many questions as to how society works and what role language has in its workings.

Fairclough also draws attention to Foucault's emphasis on the "interdependency of the discourse practices of a society or institution: texts always draw upon and transform other texts" (Fairclough, 1992a: 39). Such an idea encourages us to seek relationships between different discourses and, moreover, emphasises the historical dimension of discourse. This historicity is ever-present in Foucault's (1972, 1981) works (see the titles themselves: Archaeology of Knowledge, History of Sexuality), where he is usually concerned with the historical processes that accompanied the emergence of particular discourses. Such an idea is a key element in Fairclough's (1989, 1992a: 84-86, 97-98, 124-125) proposals to conceptualise social change as shifting configurations in orders of discourse which appear in the form of heterogeneity

and hybridisation in texts. Fairclough adopts Kristeva's (1986a) idea of 'intertextuality' which is in turn an elaboration of Bakhtin's idea of 'multi-voicedness' (1981).

Fairclough (1992a) is nevertheless dissatisfied with Foucault's (1979, 1981) proposals about how power in society should be conceptualised He argues that Foucault exaggerates the extent to which people are subjected by power and discourse (Fairclough, 1992a: 56-61). He also points out that "Foucault's insistence upon the subject as an effect of discursive formations has a heavily structuralist flavour which excludes active social agency in any meaningful sense" (ibid. 45). Fairclough's remarks are nevertheless interesting: he claims that such an (almost deterministic) impression is given rather by the focus Foucault takes in his analyses and his descriptive emphasis on 'structures' (meaning resources for practice) than by his actual theoretical perspective, which allows us to conceptualise social change, the polyvalence of discourse practices, the relevance of the context, the dispersion of the subject. It looks as if Foucault has freed himself from the theoretical pitfalls of structuralism but is still stuck to many features of its discourse, its modes of description. Fairclough (ibid.: 60-61) concludes that a textually centred discourse analysis, which forces us to take on board an adequate theory of practice, makes it possible to build a more dialectical understanding of subjectivity and the processes of social reproduction and transformation.

However, in the next section, I will also argue that Fairclough's (1992a) theory of practice is not yet entirely satisfactory, as it side-tracks the role of the organisation of social situations because of his emphasis on the analysis of texts.

a) The voices and words of Bakhtin

Here I am going to make the case for my decision to adopt elements of Bakhtin's linguistic theory for the close analysis of talk and communication. The importance of Bakhtin's ideas for a text oriented analysis has already been stressed by Fairclough (ibid.). My own contribution is maybe a heavier analytical emphasis on Bakhtin's concepts, particularly as I take the principle of dialogism as fundamental to the development of a conception of meaning as constructed in situated practices.

Bakhtin (1981, 1984b, 1986) developed his theory of language and culture for his studies in literary criticism[4]. His basic concepts of dialogism and polyphony appeared in his study of Dostoevsky (Bakhtin, 1984a) written in the twenties[5]. According to Bakhtin (1984a), the genius of Dostoevsky's works is in his ability to build a plurality of voices, representing a variety of views of the world, which engage in a dynamic dialogic interaction. Bakhtin's framework somehow rotates around this basic concept of dialogism, which connects his particular conception of language, human consciousness, social interaction and culture. It is not possible to summarise here the multiple aspects and ramifications of Bakhtin's work, which challenges fundamental givens of traditional Western thought, such as the 'monologic truth' (Morson & Emerson, 1990: 60). So I will very strictly restrict myself to the framework and concepts which will be relevant to my analysis.

b) Dialogism

According to Bakhtin, every utterance is by definition dialogical (ibid.: 131):

> "any utterance, in addition to its own theme, always responds ... in one form or another to others' utterances that precede it... The utterance is addressed not only to its own object, but also to others' speech about it... But the utterance is related not only to preceding, but also to subsequent links in the chain of speech communion... [T]he utterance is constructed by taking into account possible responsive reactions, for whose sake, in essence, it is actually created." (Bakhtin, 1986: 94)

A dialogical conception of language is, therefore, one that accepts the possibility of language only in as much as it enters a dialogue. Language only exists in social interaction (in a broad sense), and any utterance can only be understood on the basis of its dialogical 'context', i.e. as a response to previous utterances which, at the same time, anticipate posterior responses (Morson & Emerson, 1990: 131 call this the 'addressivity' of language, as it only makes sense in as much as one person addresses another). And it is therefore an inherently historical conception of communication as well. In his sometimes poetical style, Bakhtin affirms that the "utterance is a link in the chain of speech communion" (1986: 94)[6]. The idea of action as orientated both to past and present is also present in Schutz' social phenomenological thinking, but has not been much developed in the ethnomethodological traditions (Atkinson, 1988).

c) Polyphony and multi-voicedness

It is because of this essential dialogic nature that any utterance can be seen as containing multiple voices:

> "Each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the communality of the sphere of speech communication... Each utterance refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies on the others, presupposes them to be known..." (Bakhtin, 1986: 91)

This leads us to Bakhtin's key linguistic concept of 'multi-voicedness', which seems to be equivalent to the term polyphony. Because of this dialogical orientation, the utterance is filled with "'others' words, varying degrees of other-ness and varying degrees of 'our-own-ness'" (ibid.: 89). Here it is also suggested that voices can give an indication about identity as to what voices seem to have something to do with one's self or are seen as alien. In section 3.3 I take up Gardiner's (1992) argument that the writings of the Bakhtin circle point towards a view of language as constitutive of ideology and subjectivity in social practice very much in tune with post-structuralist views on these issues.

d) The construction and re-accentuation of meaning

A development of the idea of dialogism involves a different conception about how meaning is constructed than in structuralist thinking. For instance, Bakhtin claims that "form and content in discourse are one, once we understand that verbal discourse is a social phenomenon" (1981: 259)[7]. This holds for any linguistic element from the word to the genre. Besides, it is also important to bear in mind that dialogism implies that each utterance, in addition to being part of a dialogue and having a degree of commonality and repetition, it is also in a way unique, unrepeatable: context, purpose, participants, reactions are never the same (Morson & Emerson, 1990: 126-127). "The living utterance... [takes] meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment" (Bakhtin, 1981: 276). This is consistent with Bakhtin's view of the person as free and creative (not subjectable to external laws), and of culture as open and unfinalisable (Morson & Emerson, 1990: 38).

Such a free, responsible and responsive actor is probably indispensable for a linguistic theory where the meaning of words, voices and linguistic varieties stem from their use in the social arena, from the intentions entertained in the specific situations where they are drawn upon. In Bakhtin's perspective, it is not possible to dispose of the participants of the speech situation as happens in many linguistic analyses. It is in such processes that the words and voices we take and use acquire particular semantic qualities. In adopting them for our purposes, in drawing them from and entering them in a "dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgements and accents" (Bakhtin, 1981: 276), in bringing in the contexts in which they have lived (ibid.: 293), in manipulating them in our orientation toward a specific response, "toward a specific conceptual horizon, toward the specific world of the listener" (ibid.: 282), we assimilate, rework and re-accentuate these words and voices which we take from others, from the environmental dialogue (Bakhtin, 1986: 89).

Such a view portrays meaning as something that is continually constructed through re-accentuation. Speaking involves continuous semantic work. The structuralist fixed meaning is here but a product of these processes and a product which is still subject to on-going historical transformation. A word's meaning is constantly loaded with associations from the situations and genres where it appears. This might suggest a model of over-stressed freedom where meaning is open to take infinite directions. It is not actually so. In the next section, and particularly in the discussion on ideology in section 3.3, I will show how meaning is constrained by the social conditions in which communication is organised.

e) Utterances and genres

These two concepts are presented by Bakhtin (1986) as the basic units of linguistic analysis in opposition to the structuralist grammatically-centred 'sentence'. Their definitions provide a sense of linguistic analysis as being inextricably embedded in the social and the historical. The definition of the utterance is maybe the least problematic, because it is apparently much clearer: "...the change of speaking subjects...is the first constitutive feature of the utterance as a unit of speech communication" (ibid.: 76). For Bakhtin, the sentence is the unit of language seen as a system, whereas the utterance is the unit of speech communication. An utterance can vary in length: from a single interjection to a whole book. And it is inherently responsive (to previous utterances) and oriented to producing an active responsive attitude in the addressee, which implies that it is seen as part of an on-going dialogue. In his discussion on the utterance, Bakhtin is quite successful in pointing out the inadequacy of the Saussurean-Jakobsonean model of speaker-message-hearer, which conceptualises the addressee as a passive decoder.

Additionally, for Bakhtin:

> The speaker's speech will is manifested primarily in the *choice of a particular speech genre*. This choice is predetermined by the specific nature of the given sphere of speech communication, semantic (thematic) considerations, the concrete situation of the speech communication, the personal composition of its participants, and so on." (Ibid.: 78, emphasis in original)

So utterances enter social interaction in the form of particular genres. According to Bakhtin (ibid.), we master a very large array of speech genres such as greetings, farewells, congratulations, informative genres and so on. Genres are "relatively stable types" (ibid. 60) of utterance that can be described in terms of both content (a particular range of topics, a particular ideological perspective) and form (length, intonation, compositional structure). As implied by the quotation above, genres are defined in terms of the social situations where they appear or that they contribute to create. It is through the concept of genre that contextual considerations can be brought into the analysis, and that re-accentuation of words, expressions, voices and even of genres themselves is possible. Such a view stresses again the social dimension of language, when its units are inextricably embedded in particular social situations, and therefore, in the general processes of (micro- and macro-) social organisation. It is this perspective which I believe allows me to establish connections with Goffman's efforts to conceptualise social interaction, and which I present in the next section.

f) Heteroglossia

For Bakhtin, what we usually call 'a language' corresponds with a particular sanctioned and unified code. The unified language is part of a historical development of the political and cultural constitution of the nation state. It is a particular image we have built which obscures many features of the social workings of language. Society, in fact, is always linguistically diverse, stratified or 'heteroglossic' corresponding with the diversity of social groups (classes, generations, professions, groups of friends, etc.) and the activities they typically engage in or are associated with. The languages, dialects, styles and accents are a product of the dialogical processes outlined above, and their meanings and associated values are also in constant

dialogical transformation as they are also adopted as voices subject to on-going re-accentuation. In this sense, these languages have both a formal aspect (phonetic, morphologic, lexic, syntactic, intonational) and a content (ideology) and they are open to be used, quoted and re-accentuated into hybrid constructions in people's utterances:

> "What constitutes these different languages is something that is itself extralinguistic: a specific way of conceptualising, understanding, and evaluating the world. A complex of experiences, shared (more or less) evaluations, ideas, and attitudes 'knit together' to produce a way of speaking." (Morson & Emerson, 1990: 141)

In my analysis in chapter 5, I will also show how language styles can be largely defined through the speech genres in which they take shape, as their formal and ideological dimensions are inextricably linked.

g) Meaning potentials, double-voicing and hybridisation

Bakhtin's notions were mainly applied to his works on literary criticism. Their use in discourse analysis can hardly be regarded as unproblematic at least in the light of some methodological givens of DA's disciplinary tradition. Within linguistics there is an expectation that units of analysis will be defined with a degree of accuracy, usually by adopting a few clear formal criteria of categorisation. Such a view comes from a vision which sees systems as formed by clearly separable elements accomplishing clearly separable functions, and from empiricist presuppositions that 'reality' will somehow 'deliver' its categories if we just apply the right method. Bakhtin is quite successful in showing that such an approach could limit analytical depth. I will try to show this by discussing three concepts which apply to the ways in which we can go about categorising and interpreting linguistic materials.

1. Meaning potentials. I have already suggested that dialogism implies a different model of communication to that of mainstream linguistics. The listener does not simply decode a message, but also builds an understanding of the utterance's bearing on the speech situation or on any on-going dialogue. Moreover, the speaker will typically construct her or his utterance anticipating the addressee's process of understanding, s/he will somehow build it within the addressee's perspective and this will shape the choice of words, syntax, content, intonation and so on. For Bakhtin, the reader or listener 'shapes' the utterance as well. As a result, as Morson & Emerson (1990: 127-8) point out, the meaning of the utterance becomes, in a way, a joint property. The implication is that the meaning of an utterance cannot be just read out of its words, not even its momentary context, but that we have to wait and see the responses it triggers. From an analytical or methodological perspective, this means that we can analyse an isolated utterance only in terms of its meaning potentials, and because the response of the addressee cannot be actually determined, it should be seen as a choice amongst various possibilities. There is no actual fixed unequivocal meaning in social communication.[8]

2. Double-voicing. This is a concept that is essential to our understanding of Bakhtin's theory of language. Double voicing refers to the author's "use of someone else's discourse for his [sic] own purposes by inserting a new semantic intention into a discourse which already has, and which retains, an intention of its own". Double-voiced discourses are opposed to monologised discourses, which are intended to be seen as direct, unmediated or exclusive, i.e. a discourse that "recognises only itself and its object" (1984a: 186-189). This concept develops the idea of re-accentuation in various directions, but double-voiced discourse refers particularly to utterances where two voices perceptibly engage in a dialogical relationship within the utterance. In Bakhtin's writings, many linguistic elements are available for double-voicing: words, genres, styles, languages. These concepts themselves seem to be in certain contexts interchangeable (also, a term such as "voice" can be used as a generalising substitute for any of them, and sometimes "word" as well). Such openness can be seen as threatening the expected rigour in a scientific piece of research, and

can lead to confusions in the use of terminology such as the one referred to by Morson & Emerson (1990: 294) about the term 'secondary genres', which is often used as synonimous to 'literary' genres.

Genres, as they are defined above in the first place, cannot be identified on the basis of any particular formal or systematic criterion, but on the basis of the speakers' use of them in meaningful speech acts, their uttering and responding to them, and the possibility of combining or re-accentuating them. With respect to primary and secondary genres, Bakhtin (1986: 61-62) claims that the (more complex) latter ones are formed by transformed versions of the (simpler) former ones. Again, the notions of 'complexity' and 'simplicity' are entirely relative; and this means that the definition speaks more about the relationship between two particular genres (integrator and integrated) rather than of any standard feature of them which can be used to locate them in one of the categories.

This issue can be best illustrated by Bakhtin's definition of a particular type of double voicing, that is hybridisation (1981):

> "It frequently happens that even one and the same word will belong simultaneously to two languages, two belief systems that intersect in a hybrid construction -and consequently, the word has two contradictory meanings, two accents...:
>
> 'But Mr. Tite Barnacle was a buttoned-up man, and *consequently* a weighty one.'[9]
>
> The above sentence is an example of *pseudo-objective motivation*, one of the forms for concealing another's speech...If judged by the formal markers above, the logic motivating the sentence seems to belong to the author, i.e., he is formally at one with it; but in actual fact, the motivation lies within the subjective belief system of his characters, or of general opinion." (Bakhtin, 1981: 304-5)

Bakhtin is very successful in showing that his perspective is largely incompatible with structuralist views of language. The consequences of that are, nevertheless, much more than simply theoretical. They affect our methodological approach to linguistic analysis entirely. As I said, it requires a different approach to categorisation which may easily be seen as less rigorous or even as less 'scientific'. Of course, I would distance myself from such a 'voice' by saying that we are confronted with an entirely different paradigm which defines rigour in different terms. We are facing a new landscape of abundant meaning potentials, possibilities of responses, continuous re-accentuations, requirements of definitions (of styles, languages, genres, etc...), changes of footing between self and other and so on. Any categorical option must obviously be selective, an option among others which sometimes may not be perceptually very clear.

This means that I fully acknowledge that, in constructing my categories, I was guided by the particular aims of my study and the relevances with respect to my research questions. The limitations were set by each concept's analytical productivity. The validity of the analysis hangs on whether the perspective I build constitutes a useful way of looking into the phenomena studied. But also, this perspective helps me to be very circumspect about imposing my own meanings upon the materials under scrutiny, which is the usual shortcoming of qualitative analyses. It is common that, in face-to-face interaction, people seek to exploit ambivalence rather than express unequivocal meanings. And I will also show in section 3.3 below and in chapter 7 that this is a key factor in wider processes of social and political struggle. For one thing, it makes struggles over meaning conceptually possible.

Notes to section 3.1

[1] Later studies on Saussure's works indicate that his ideas did not quite imply what has been made of them, and that they were substantially reinterpreted within the contemporary dominant structuralist-behaviourist paradigm (Kremnitz, 1993: 16). Labov (1972b: 185-6) expresses a similar view.

[2] It is also interesting to point out that Hymes (1964b) defended the primacy of function with regard to structure, whereas

Leech (1983: 4) still affirms "the centrality of formal linguistics in the sense of Chomsky's 'competence', but [recognises] that this must be fitted into, and made answerable to, a more comprehensive framework which combines functional with formal explanations."

[3] It is worth qualifying this general statement, as some ethnographers, such as Gumperz (1982) and Auer (1988) have also adopted some of Goffman's insights on issues of self-presentation and display. Nevertheless, their ideas about how identity should be conceptualised are not made very clear. Gumperz and Auer have also integrated some of the concepts of Conversational Analysis in their work. In subsection 3.21 below, I argue that conversational analysis has developed into a predominantly structuralist and empiricist method which leaves little or no room to conceptualise identity.

[4] There is an ongoing debate for the question of authorship of studies attributed to Bakhtin. Gardiner (1992: 196-197) speaks about the "Bakhtin circle" to refer to ideas and views which are somehow common or interconnected within the works of Bakhtin, Voloshinov and Medvedev. In my study, though, the fundamental ideas I draw upon come from works which seem to be unanimously attributed to Bakhtin himself.

[5] Again, according to Gardiner (1992), already in these years, the 'Bakhtin circle' was engaged in a theoretical confrontation with structuralist views of language and formalist approaches to literary criticism: "He [Medvedev] suggests that the concept of 'poetic language' is a neo-Platonic abstraction which (like Saussure's *langue*) manifestly fails to grasp the connection between language and the 'unity of social life'" (Gardiner, 1992: 20).

[6] I believe that the use of a metaphor of ritual is significant. Bakhtin and Goffman's works contain very striking coincidences of perspective which are sometimes hidden by their different vocabularies (see subsection 3.22 below).

[7] I interpret that such statements are not really intended to deny the possibility of a conceptual distinction between form and meaning. Such a distinction is implicitly kept in Bakhtin's analyses as well as in Systemic Linguistics. My feeling is that they address the particular conception of the sign which exists in mainstream linguistics, particularly of a direct relationship between 'signifiant' and 'signifié' which contributes to overlook its social dimension. Bakhtin (1981: 276) says: "But no living word relates to its object in a *singular* way: between the word and its object, between the word and the speaking subject, there exists an elastic environment of other, alien words about the same object, the same theme, and this is an environment that it is often difficult to penetrate. It is precisely in the process of living interaction with this specific environment that the word may be individualised and given stylistic shape."

[8] Bakhtin discusses such an idea in relation with the problems of interpretation of literary works. He claims that literary texts have no fixed meaning. They have meaning potentials which readers can take up even many years after the work has been written. He also claims that good authors typically seek to enhance the potentiality of the texts, and that they have an intuitive notion of what interpretive avenues a text can offer to future generations. (Morson and Emerson, 1990: 284-290). Additionally, the idea of meaning potentials can also be linked to Halliday's (1985a) view of the utterance as multifunctional.

[9] Quoted from Charles Dickens Little Dorrit, Book 2, Ch. 12. It is a part of one of his typical ironical character portraits, where he combines a descriptive mode with the public view of a character.

3.2... social action and face-to-face encounters

> "...how life, from being made up of little separate incidents which one lived one by one, became curled and whole like a wave which bore one up with it and threw one down with it, there, with a dash on the beach." from Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse (1927: 76)

As I have already indicated on several occasions above, I take social interaction as the central analytical unit of my analysis. This is because I believe that any claim about how society works should be based, either implicitly or explicitly, on an understanding of the processes whereby people define and perform particular social activities. Most of my analysis will be focused on face-to-face encounters, which is the most usual sense in which the expression 'social interaction' is used. Nevertheless, as Goffman points out (1967, 1981), a social interaction does not necessarily require co-presence or the participation of more than one person in the physical sense. The model of social action I will put forward in this section, which is based on a combination of ideas from Goffman (1967, 1974, 1983) and Bakhtin as described above, is a model that stresses agency and creativity. I think that this is necessary at a first level of analysis. Later in section 3.3 and in chapter 7, I discuss how social constraints can be brought into this model which is based on the assumption that the notions of (macro-) 'social structure' or 'social space' must be accountable to what happens in (micro-) situated contexts.

Before I engage in a discussion of Goffman's conception of social interaction, I will discuss some of the various ways in which this level of analysis has been dealt with in several disciplines. I will do so by seeking to deconstruct the notion of 'context' and other common concepts such as 'activity type' and 'speech event'. I will seek to show that this notion has been used in a quite uncritical and unsystematic way to make up for the problems and shortcomings of structuralist and empiricist modes of analysis.

3.21 The 'context' in context

The notion of context has been extensively used in much social and linguistic research. Duranti and Goodwin (1992) provide a very insightful historical assessment of the way context has been dealt with in various disciplines. On the base of ideas suggested by Hanks (1992), they basically argue that the traditional approach to context has been one of conceptualising an opposition between 'figure' and 'ground' where the figure constitutes the 'focal' event or object to be accurately delimited and the ground the environment or stage surrounding it, and which simply provides some resources for its appropriate interpretation:

> "The effect of this is that the focal event, with its far more clearly articulated structure, receives the lion's share of analytic attention while methods for analyzing, or even describing, the more amorphous background of context are not given anywhere near the same amount of emphasis," (Duranti & Goodwin, 1992: 10).

This criticism can be connected with my comments above on some social approaches to language. In Variationism, the way context is defined, whether it refers to the speech situation (formal/informal) or the class, generic, generational or ethnic allocation of the speakers is largely untheorised (Williams, 1992). In traditional linguistic approaches, context has usually been ignored by limiting the scope of analysis to phenomena that could be treated in isolation from language use. It is in pragmatics where this notion plays a key role, as pragmatists seek to theorise on aspects of meaning which cannot be accounted for through the linguistic system alone (Leech, 1983). Nevertheless, they have been unable to present a systematic, properly theorised, view of context (Levinson, 1983: 23; Bar-Hillel, 1970: 80). The problem has always been that, even when restricting contextual considerations to what influences interpretation,

the analyst still faces a limitless number of possible features to take into account (see Thomas, 1986: 12-13). Thomas agrees with Haberland & Mey (1977: 10) that the notion of context is dependent on the "doing" context, as language is a form of action. The ball is then thrown to another court, as the question that arises is what theory of action is one working with.

Hymes (1972a: 56) defined the "speech situation" and the "speech event" as the main units of analysis - together with the "speech act"- in the Ethnography of Communication. The former were non-linguistically defined "activities which are in some recognizable way bounded or integral" and which may enter "as contexts into the statement of rules of speaking as aspects of setting (or genre)". And the latter were activities, or aspects of them, "that are directly governed by rules or norms for the use of speech". Hymes (ibid.) also provided us with the famous acronym SPEAKING to indicate how contextual information should be described or defined. Nevertheless, within this view, social situations are seen from a rather static point of view, often described in merely taxonomic terms. The similar pragmatic notion of 'activity type' (Levinson, 1979) is rather static as well, as is shown by the way it is used and by its definition:

> "...goal defined, socially constituted, bounded events with constraints on participants, setting, and... above all, on the kind of allowable contributions." (Ibid.: 368).

The reasons for these static views of context, I would argue, can be found in the goals of these disciplines, which seek to find structural regularities, principles or rules in the expression or interpretation of meaning in language use. Kendon (1988: 18-20) shows how Goffman distanced himself from previous studies of interaction because they failed to provide a proper conceptualisation of it, and quotes:

> "interaction practices have been used to illuminate other things, but themselves are treated as though they did not need to be defined or were not worth defining" (Goffman, 1971: ix)

It is therefore not surprising that the model of action adopted by such approaches is simply borrowed from structural-functionalism, as I argued in section 3.1. The functional-structural underpinning of the interaction model found in the Ethnography of Communication is well argued by Williams (1992):

> "The conception of interaction involves the existence of rational actors operating within a goal-orientated framework... language, as a symbolic form, is employed to convey social position and identity. Interaction proceeds through the interactors exchanging signals which contain both culture and society and involve such features as values in a symbolic form. What must be involved here is a conception of meaning... embedded in the idea of a restricted form of competence, restricted through what it conveys -culture." (Ibid.: 183)

So in spite of a description mode which presupposes somewhat boundless speaker freedom (see Martin-Jones, 1989), the meanings conveyed by the speaker are predetermined by the existing system of culture. A static conception of the speech event is consistent with a framework where actors have no possibility of redefining or negotiating the meanings of the symbolic resources they are using.

This is what Drew & Heritage (1992: 19) call the 'bucket' theory of context, that is, where "some preestablished social framework is viewed as 'containing' the participants' actions.", even if some actions can be seen as open-ended (see Levinson, 1979). Later on, and following the development of ethnomethodology and conversational analysis (henceforth CA) in particular, both pragmatics and the ethnography of communication have integrated a more dynamic and active view of context. Through the notion of "contextualisation cue", Gumperz (1982) proposes a framework where speakers continuously produce and interpret signals that indicate contextual shifts in conversation.

Ethnomethodology was proposed by Garfinkel (1967) after his dissatisfaction with the Parsonian model of action. Its philosophical roots lie in Husserlian phenomenology as interpreted by Schutz (1972). Phenomenology denies direct contact with reality and posits that our knowledge of the world originates in each person's locally constituted experience. Although it recognises the existence of shared meanings, it rejects the idea that these originate in some symbolic cultural realm, but that they are arrived at through the processes of social interaction. The idea of the actor as performing rational choices is reframed in terms of the actor making decisions through the practical reasoning based on her or his partial or imperfect available knowledge. The main focus of ethnomethodological research is therefore on the processes whereby these shared meanings are constructed. Communication is possible because people assume that there is, in practical terms, a reciprocity of perspectives, i.e. that the interactants will base their actions on constructing an idea about themselves and the others which is locally or practically adequate (although sometimes, as Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz (1982) have shown, communication may well break down if there are mismatches in these presuppositions).

It was within this frame that Sacks (see Heritage, 1984) proposed the project of conversational analysis. Garfinkel (1967) had already pointed out the indexical character of meaning, as people make sense of utterances in the particular contexts where they appear. Because language use is the main element through which the processes of shared understandings are built, Sacks (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984) claimed that the study of conversation would provide invaluable insights about the "interactional accomplishment of particular social activities" (Drew & Heritage, 1992: 17). Probably the basic idea that Sacks brought to the study of interaction is the notion of sequentiality:

> "Its analyses rapidly led to the conclusion that the sense of an utterance as an action is an interactive product of what was projected by a previous turn or turns at talk and what the speaker actually does." (Drew & Heritage, 1992: 18-19)

The resulting conception of context is here in constant transformation by the participants in interaction, as each utterance is 'context shaped', but also 'context renewing', both "the project and the product of the participants' own actions" (ibid.). Such a development is clearly promising as it provides a processual view of social interaction where the participants actually constitute, create and co-ordinate the activity at hand. It is also compatible with Bakhtin's (1986) and Goffman's (1981: 52) view of the utterance or move as inherently responsive and oriented to further responses. Additionally, conversational analysis has contributed to the spread of particular techniques of recording and transcription for the analysis of conversation in the greatest detail possible. According to Sacks (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984), any generalisation about how interaction works had to be accountable to evidence found in naturally-occurring data. Since then, many anthropologists and pragmatists have adopted this technique together with much of the jargon produced by conversational analysts, such as 'turns at talk', 'speaker selection', 'simultaneous speech', 'repair' (Sacks *et al*, 1974), 'adjacency pair' (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), 'closings' and 'openings' (Schegloff, 1972).

In spite of its inspiring and challenging principles, I believe that the conversational analytic approach is severely limited with regard to the purposes of my study. First of all, it has become a primarily formalistic endeavour as it has so far concentrated on identifying (or trying to identify) common structural features of conversation (see also Corsaro, 1985). This has been combined with a remarkably empiricist mode of theory building. Here Schegloff (1992) is first stating what aspects of the context can be seen as relevant within the CA framework:

> "If there are indefinitely many potentially relevant aspects of context and of personal or categorical identity which could have a bearing on some facet of, or occurrence in, interaction, and if the analyst must be concerned with what is relevant to the parties at the moment at which what is being analyzed occurred, and it is procedurally consequential for what is being analyzed, then the search for context properly begins

with the talk or other conduct being analyzed. That talk or conduct, or what immediately surrounds it, may be understood as displaying which out of that potential infinity of contexts and identities should be treated as relevant and consequential (both by co-participants and by professional analysts). (Ibid.: 197)

The claim seems to be that any aspect of speaker's intention, identity, orientation must be directly accountable to particular features 'found' in the data. While this might seem a generally acceptable principle for analytical work, conversational analysts understand it in a particularly restrictive way. For instance, in a collective endeavour to study talk in institutional settings (Drew & Heritage (eds.), 1992), the existence of 'institutional events' is grounded on the fact that particular formal features (for example, jargon, turn allocation, topic) can be singled out as evidence that an event is of a particularly institutional nature. Again, on what basis can it be said that a particular linguistic form is characteristic of a particular type of event? So conversational analysts reproduce here the old form-function dichotomy and, moreover, adopt a radical empiricist view of theory as if it could 'emerge' from the data just by itself:

> "Perhaps one product of sustained study of the organisation of interaction will be analytic resources for new ways of warranting the analytic incorporation of aspects of setting or identity which we may feel to be relevant to interaction, but at present have no way of showing in an analytically warrantable way." (Schegloff, 1992: 197-8).

This is a very substantial departure from phenomenological ideas about what scientific knowledge is about. So not only does Schegloff acknowledge that CA cannot provide an acceptable conceptualisation of identity, but he also suggests that if it eventually does, it will be as a result of some features of conversational structure somehow calling for it. At the end of the day, the argument is reducible to absurdity if it has been accepted that almost anything can be proven to have a bearing on the interaction (see again Thomas, 1986). At the heart of the matter here there is again the question of whether the role of the scientist is either a (non-responsible) 'discoverer' or a 'creator' of truth, to which I come back later.

A good example of the problems which this model creates is the widely known argument on interruptions and male domination (see Talbot, 1991). West & Zimmerman (1983) showed that in the gender-mixed conversations they studied, men interrupted women more than vice-versa. They took this as evidence of male oppression of women in everyday conversation (which, to an extent, it probably was). This reasoning was based on Sacks et al's (1974) view that normal talk consists of one single speaker talking at a time, and therefore simultaneous speech in conversation was evidence of error, malfunction, or breach of speaker's rights. Nevertheless, Coates (1988: 107-8), in her analysis of 'gossip' events amongst women found that "most of the time... more than one speaker speaks at a time" and that:

> "The examples of simultaneous speech given here illustrate the way in which women speakers work together to produce shared meanings." (Ibid.: 113)

Now I suppose a conversational analyst might claim that it is possible to find features in each speech event that could account for the different ways in which simultaneous speech was experienced. My view, though, is that much more is to be gained if we start from experience rather than structure, that is, if we start from a conception of interaction as a co-ordinated activity where participants construct an idea of what they are about to do, and why they do it, and what bearing each contribution has to the on-going project. Only from this standpoint is it possible to solve the problem of defining what constitutes an interruption (see again Talbot, 1991). And even if such theory must have an accountability with regard to evidence, its principles and concepts need not depend on simple correspondences or correlates with structures or formal units in the 'real world'.

Finally, I believe that many of the criticisms recently voiced against conversational analysis are related to what I have just argued. For instance, Atkinson (1988) claims that in fact CA has lost sight of the original

motivation of ethnomethodology, and that, in its emphasis on crude sequentiality, it has ignored that the central issue was the construction of meaning in everyday life. He also denounces the raw empiricist orientation of many ethnomethodological works (ibid.). The purely descriptivist vocation of conversational analysis has also been criticised by Thomas (1986: 189), who states that it lacks explanatory power.

Additionally, Williams (1992) also points out that ethnomethodology, because of its emphasis on the achievement of shared understanding, constitutes an essentially consensual approach, which is a recasting of its Parsonian origins. The consensual nature of CA is also criticised by Fairclough (1992a), who claims that from this perspective it is not possible to conceptualise relationships of power or inequality and the processes of negotiation of participant's rights in a particular encounter. This is, of course, because any sense of identity or relationship must forcibly come from outside the model, if we go along with Schegloff's ideas, and these must be associated with unequivocal structuring or formal features. In the next subsection, I will show how I have sought to overcome the limitations of this approach.

3.22 Rituals, displays and frames

Goffman does not provide a ready-made framework that can be expediently fitted into my research. Here I will seek to show how Goffman's theories might fit with the framework I am developing and with my particular analytical interests. For instance, his essay on strategic interaction (1970), in spite of visible connections with Frame Analysis (1974), is based on game theory and, as such, it stands out in contrast with more ritual-orientated studies. There is no comprehensive critical study of Goffman's contribution to the understanding of social interaction, although many researchers have used his analytical proposals in various ways. Often, his concepts have been borrowed without consideration for the overall framework to which his ideas belong[1].

I am aware that attempting to combine a clearly phenomenological framework with a post-structurally based approach is bound to produce some problems at the philosophical level. I will therefore limit my task to pointing out how I have interpreted Goffman's ideas and how I believe they can fit into my analysis. There are three main points:

1. Goffman (1974) sees human experience as being constituted by consciousness, as opposed to direct access to reality.

2. He conceptualises social interaction as ongoing action performed by the participants, that is, as a process (1983).

3. His perspective is primarily based on the relevance of the presentation of self or the display of identity for the understanding of these processes, and therefore, it allows for the conceptualisation of subjectivity in face-to-face encounters.

His practice of theory building is also consistent with constructivist approaches to a certain extent. Williams (1988: 84) has said that the epistemological basis of Goffman's works are not entirely coherent, but he shows quite clearly that Goffman conceived of theory building as something constructive, that his writing "serves to remind the reader that there is a specific author at work rather than the working out of some preformulated algorithm."

Collins (1988), in his exploration of the theoretical continuities in Goffman's work, argues that, although he accepted the existence of "multiple realities", he brought "situational process and reality construction within as much constraint as possible" and that he made his model as deterministic as possible in order to escape from some of the pitfalls of constructivism (1988: 42-4). He probably refers to statements such as the following:

> "Presumably, a 'definition of the situation' is almost always to be found, but those who are in the situation ordinarily do not create this definition, even though their society often can be said to do so; ordinarily, all they do is to assess correctly what the situation ought to be for them and then act accordingly. True, we personally negotiate aspects of all the arrangements under which we live, but once these are negotiated, we continue on mechanically as though the matter had always been settled." (Goffman, 1974: 1-2)

Here Goffman seems to be referring to our practical understanding of many situations in everyday life. But even his point that there are things we clearly take as 'real' as opposed to others does not dispel the fact that Goffman sees experience as constituted in the interpretive work of human beings (Collins, 1988 actually agrees with this: 61-2). Therefore, my argument is that the phenomenological enterprise of theorising on the procedures through which people build an understanding of their everyday actions must inevitably provide insights into the processes whereby the world and the subject is constituted in discursive practice. Foucault's (1972) notion of discourse is, after all, not restricted to linguistic phenomena but encompasses all types of social practice (Williams, 1992: 50, Fairclough, 1992a). As Goffman defines it, a situational perspective is very generally concerned with conceptualising what "one individual can be alive to at a particular moment" (1974: 8).

The idea of adapting Foucault's ideas to the study of situated social activities comes from Fairclough's (1989, 1992a) bid for a Foucauldian text oriented discourse analysis. Fairclough (1989) affirms that interaction is the place where the processes of production and interpretation of texts take place. However, in his later work (1992a), the notion of interaction is displaced by the distinction between (language based) 'discursive practice' and (socially based) 'social practice'. The latter points to the connection between discursive practices and social structures. The conceptualisation of interaction is left to the researcher's intuitive formulation of the 'social context' of discursive practice, where the processes of text production and interpretation occur. The methodological handling of this 'social context' is therefore left in a space of indeterminacy similar to the other approaches I have criticised above[2]. This is probably due to the fact that Fairclough tries to maintain a separation between discursive (meaning 'language-based') concepts and social concepts. In this way, he leaves his framework open so that researchers working within a variety of sociological perspectives can establish links between CDA and their own concerns. Additionally, much discourse analysis focuses on written texts, particularly on their content, and the analysis of written texts as a particular form of social interaction is rarely considered, in spite of the fact that texts are inevitably produced and consumed in social situations[3]. My contention here is that, if the processes of text production and interpretation occur in socially situated events, it is necessary to base our analysis on a theoretically informed understanding of how these work.

There is, I believe, an important question of precedence here: speech constitutes an essential element in the management of impressions and the organisation of social activities, and not the other way round. I mean, it is true that people's performance, gestures and visual signs may help to understand an utterance as much as other features of the situation, some of which may well be beyond the control of the actor. Nevertheless, methodologically, texts should be treated from the perspective of what they bring to the social situation, and not what the situation brings to the text, as actors interpret any utterance according to the way it contributes to the pursuit of a given course of action.

a) A dialectical approach to social interaction

My next step is to show how a Goffman-style interactional analysis ties in with an essential feature of the CDA framework: the dialectical relationship between structure and action. Fairclough (ibid.: 55-61) criticises later works of Foucault (1979, 1982a) as presenting an excessively deterministic view of the role of discourse in social and power relations. He acknowledges that this is not done intentionally, but out of

an inadequate theory of practice which presents the subjects as unavoidably positioned by discourses. He concludes the following:

> "...the process of constituting subjects always takes place within particular forms of interaction between preconstituted subjects, where the forms of interaction influence the constitutive process... constituted social subjects are not merely passively positioned but are capable of acting as agents, and amongst other things of negotiating their relationship with the multifarious types of discourse they are drawn into. (Fairclough, 1992a: 61)

My argument here is therefore that Goffman's conceptualisation of interaction is capable of producing interesting accounts of this process. The contrary has often been claimed, that is, that Goffman's model is weighted towards the achievement of interactional consensus and does not allow for the consideration of struggles and conflicting interests. I do not believe that this is an accurate reading of his work. In the introduction to Frame Analysis, he says:

> "When participant roles in an activity are differentiated -a common circumstance- the view that one person has of what is going on is likely to be quite different from that of another...Different interests will -in Schutz's phrasing- generate different motivational relevancies...Of course, in many cases some of those who are committed to differing points of view and focus may still be willing to acknowledge that theirs is not the official or 'real' one. (Goffman, 1974: 8)

And:

> "Together the participants contribute to a single over-all definition of the situation which involves not so much a real agreement as to what exists but rather a real agreement as to whose claims concerning what issues will be temporarily honoured. Real agreement will also exist concerning the desirability of avoiding an open conflict of definitions of the situation. I will refer to this level of agreement as a 'working consensus' (Goffman, 1959: 21)

Goffman's work is, nevertheless, not geared towards describing structural or formal features of consensual situations, but towards considering the various ways in which an interactional consensus is achieved, sustained or, conversely, breaks down with a resulting hostility or the fact of feeling "ill at ease, nonplussed, out of countenance, embarrassed..." (ibid.: 24). I believe that it is precisely these processes of definition of a situation, with their conflictual and consensual side of the coin, with their vulnerabilities, which should concern students of power relations; as it is through these processes (which draw -yes- on other discourses or practices) that people struggle to define and redefine their positions, roles or identities[4].

b) Face, self, identity

I have already shown how linguistic disciplines have generally under-theorised or ignored the question of identity. Now I will seek to show how Goffman's conception of social interaction as ritual allows for a situational analysis of identity. It is commonly said that Goffman's notion of identity derives from the work of George Herbert Mead's (1934) idea of the 'self' as a product of interaction and not as the simple actor. Collins (1988) argues that their common ground starts and stops here, because Goffman's notion of the 'self' developed after adopting and adapting Durkheim's (1912) notion of 'ritual'. Goffman (1971: 62-5; see also Williams, 1988) claims that any social encounter can be seen in terms of a statement about the relationship between the participants and also about the moral character, the worth, regard and value that the interactants accord each other. The ritual metaphor here refers to the fact that participants in social

encounters are reciprocally paying and receiving 'homage' as if the self involved a set of sacred attributes and territories, the violation of which amounted to a kind of sacrilege (see Kendon, 1988: 34-5, and Collins, 1988). The ritualistic character of interaction also accounts for the question of 'involvement', that is, that interactants must usually pay respect to and show involvement in the focus of an activity (ibid.: see also Goffman, 1957).

In any encounter, the person tends to take a line, "a pattern of verbal and non-verbal acts by which he [sic] expresses his view of the situation" and his evaluation of the participants including himself (1967: 5). The person is currently aware that the other participants are also evaluating him and that the current performance normally has a bearing on their expectations for future encounters. Therefore a person's performance amounts to a display of attributes and character which implies a claim to legitimate membership and participation in society. In a word, the individual seeks to preserve face, which is defined as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (ibid: 5). Additionally, any performance requires a level of involvement that results in some degree of emotional attachment to the different lines one takes:

> "In general, a person's attachment to a particular face, coupled with the ease with which disconfirming information can be conveyed by himself and others, provides one reason why he [sic] finds that participation in any contact with others is a commitment." (Ibid.: 6)

The possibility that the line one takes or the face one puts on might be discredited raises the issue of 'face-work', i.e. the complex array of resources, supportive actions and avoidance strategies that people adopt in interaction to protect their own and others' self-presentations. Goffman is concerned, therefore, about the processes whereby identities are produced, sustained or discredited in the organisation of social activities.

From this point of view, 'face' can be associated with the Foucauldian 'subject positions' constituted in discursive practice and also adopted by Fairclough for a Text Oriented discourse analysis (Fairclough 1992a; Foucault, 1972). I take it that the 'face' one 'puts on' has very much to do with the positions that the individual is expected to take in the social activities where s/he participates. These positions are then 'determined' by discourse in the sense that they are the product of the processes of social interaction where the relationships between different perspectives and interests are ordinarily (re-)arranged and have a conditioning effect on subsequent events.

In my analysis, I deal with 'faces', 'self presentations' or subject positions in terms of displays of attributes and the adoption of modes of participation (roles, types of actor and audience alignments). These positions may well be practically 'pre-determined' to a great extent by the circumstances and by the other participants' expectations. Additionally, people may find that different situations place contradictory demands on them, particularly with regard to the kinds of displays required in different social spaces such as the peer-group and the workplace. These issues will be of relevance to my analysis, particularly with regard to conceptualising the social constraints that operate on people's lives.

c) Linking Goffman and Bakhtin

Although Goffman's conceptualisation of interaction is based on the awareness that the subjects' actions have a past and an orientation to the future (this is why 'face' is so important), he never focused on this particular dimension as such by trying to locate trans-situational lines. He was more interested, as he said in the moments rather than the persons (see Goffman, 1967: 3). I believe that Bakhtin's ideas can contribute to focus on this dimension of social interaction, and therefore, to conceptualise the processes of construction of subjectivity. Goffman (1983) usually makes the general statement that interactants bring to each encounter their personal histories and knowledge of the world based on previous experience. Additionally, both Bakhtin and Goffman coincide in seeing utterances as inherently responsive, the latter

making the specific point that they do not always have to be viewed as responding to another utterance, but to a particular feature of a situation the speaker has constructed and decided to respond to (1981) (although I would say that intertextual relationships can surely be traced in any case). The voices and words of previous utterances can be seen as being involved in this responsive process, and therefore Bakhtin's insights can help to enrich any analysis of interaction considerably by providing other ways in which its historical dimension can be explored (see subsection 4.21a and section 4.4). But also, according to Bakhtin, any stretch of talk gets its meaning out of its dialogical and interactional context. Therefore any utterance comes in the shape of a particular speech genre, whose form is inextricably associated with its situated use. There is no language, no possible meaning, outside social interaction.

In a way, it seems as if both frameworks interweave at various levels: the understanding of social interaction points to the intertextual level whereas the 'intertext' is effectively a product of situated practice. It is also worth noticing that the concept of 'voice' is already more than just linguistic, as it conveys metaphorically an animator as well as an utterance, while 'genres' evoke particular forms of action. Therefore, in my analysis, I have assumed that 'multi-voicedness' applies not only to utterances but to social activities, forms of display, and any elements of symbolic significance, that is, discourse in the Foucauldian sense of the word.

Gardiner (1992) has shown the possible connections between dialogism and a post-structuralist conception of subjectivity. He does this by integrating the ideas of Bakhtin, Voloshinov and Medvedev (whom, as a group, he calls the Bakhtin Circle). He argues that dialogism implies that each utterance effectively builds a relationship between the 'self' and the 'other', the internal and the external world. The subject is constituted by the active, dynamic, changing, construction of these relationships (Gardiner, 1992: 72-73):

> "The content of the 'individual' psyche is by its very nature just as social as is ideology, and the very degree of consciousness of one's individuality and its inner rights and privileges is ideological, historical, and wholly conditioned by sociological factors" (Voloshinov, 1973: 34).

In chapter 5, I will analyse various types of voices that appeared in my participants' talk in the forms of different accents and language. I discuss the significance of these voices in terms of their proximity ('self' or 'other') with the forms of identity developed within the peer group. In order to do this, I have also found that it was particularly useful to adopt Goffman's (1974) notion of 'frame', particularly what he calls the 'frame analysis of talk'.

d) The theatrical metaphor and the frame analysis of talk

One of the most important features of Goffman's works which I have taken up (to an extent) is his phraseology, that is, his way of describing or presenting the data, his language. Lyman (1973: 361, quoted in Williams, 1988: 65) calls it his "mode of exposition", which "attains results that are intrinsic to it". This is because I feel that his mode of description actually transmits a sense of a world working according to the principles I have mentioned, contrarily to Foucault's (1979, 1982a) mode, for example, which is criticised by Fairclough (1992a) as having an incongruently determinist and structuralist flavour. My own adoption (and re-accentuation) of Goffman's style of writing is based essentially on the appropriation of the theatrical metaphor, where actors are presented as actively producing the features of their conduct however unthinkingly or unwillingly. Because of this, it is also possible that my analysis distorts the quality of the participants' actions in that they may appear as if they were the product of careful and conscious reflection. In this study, I have not dealt with the question of the participants' awareness of their practices and intentions. I have considered that the practices studied are significant in that they are a cultural creation which can, in some circumstances, be consciously manipulated.

The notion of "frame" is equally congruent with this, as it presents actors as actively building a definition of a situation and of their involvement in it out of their own interpretive resources (Goffman, 1974). Some of Goffman's frame typologies and types of frame transformation are of particular relevance. The first is the basic distinction between two classes of primary frames: natural and social. The first correspond to "occurrences seen as undirected, unoriented, unanimated, unguided, 'purely physical'", whereas the second involve "will, aim, and controlling effort of an intelligence, a live agency, the chief one being the human being" (ibid.: 22). The distinction between natural uncontrollable events and social intentional ones is important in as much as they have an impact on the question of responsibility and, therefore, on the ways people account for their conduct to others or are judged by them. The second distinction is between primary and keyed frames, the latter being a systematic transformation of the former on the basis of which it can be understood (ibid.: 45). The most typical example of a keyed activity is play, where a primary activity is somehow reproduced but only 'playfully', 'as a joke', and so on. The theatrical frame, in so far as it involves the organisation of a fictional scene, can be considered to be a kind of keying (ibid.: 138). I will show in chapter 4 how keying is a fundamental feature in the organisation of masculinity displays. A second type of frame transformation is fabrication, which is the result of inducing persons to have a false belief about what is currently going on (ibid.: 83). The concept of 'out-of-frame' activity is also relevant here. It refers to lines of activity or courses of action which are somehow simultaneous and segregated from what can be seen as the main 'official' line (ibid.: 201). These can be, for instance, potentially distracting and threatening elements of the context, which may be treated by participants through a form of 'active disattention' so that the main line of activity can continue, and also signals and actions which serve to regulate or co-ordinate the activity that enjoys 'official' status.

One of Goffman's areas of interest which is of particular relevance here is that of talk, i.e. the frame analysis of talk (1974). His argument starts by dismissing traditional approaches that see the actor, or the speaker, as simply conveying information (truthful or not). The basic idea is that talk can contain within it the various types of frames described above. In order to illustrate how this works, Goffman proposes to see talk as a dramatic narrative, where the speaker effectively replays a given scene through constant realignments, switchings of roles and voices, alternative impersonations:

> "In an important sense, even if his [sic] purpose is to present the cold facts as he sees them, the means he employs may be intrinsically theatrical, not because he necessarily exaggerates or follows a script, but because he may have to engage in something that is a dramatisation -the use of such arts as he possesses to reproduce a scene, to replay it." (Goffman, 1974: 502; emphasis in original)

The idea of seeing linguistic performances as animations of scenes ties in with the works of Bakhtin (1981, 1986), and also of Voloshinov (1971), whom Goffman actually quotes. They see speech as intrinsically multi-voiced and 'populated' with the words of characters other than the speaker. The term "dialogism" itself constitutes a suggestive metaphor whereby we are invited to see statements as containing an interactional side.

Two main principles follow from conceptualising narrative as dramatisation. The first is that its elements, which develop a kind of story-line, have not been put there innocently as if the speaker was merely conveying bare facts transferred from somewhere else. The speaker has made a selection, built a particular sequential arrangement of elements, organised special effects, with greater or lesser skill, in order to achieve the desired purpose or effect. This ties in very well with Bakhtin's notion of 'voice re-accentuation', as implied by the following text:

> "The following must be kept in mind: that the speech of another, once enclosed 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).

On the other hand, narratives get populated by characters who produce their own talk embedded in the speaker's talk. And the "I" of the speaker can be, in turn, one of the characters animated in the narrative. The status of the speaker in this dramatic world becomes much more problematic, or at least complex, than that of the traditional speaker, which Goffman calls the "black box" model (Goffman, 1974: 511-15). The "black box" speaker is the one who we take to speak "his [sic] 'own' character", who conveys information "stored and hidden in his [sic] head", and where only issues of sincerity about this "hidden" information arise (ibid.)[5]. For Goffman, this overlooks the fact that speakers usually split themselves up into different 'parts', usually in dialogue with each other, and with different degrees of responsibility or seriousness attached to them. So actors or speakers can act as 'animators' of characters, which Goffman calls figures (ibid: 516-23). These can be (1) natural figures, (2) staged figures (as being natural or unnatural), (3) printed figures (animated through the written word), (4) cited figures (in which case, embeddings occur), and finally (5) "mockeries and say-fors", which is the type most typically found, together with cited figures, in everyday talk. These last figures are the ones typically created through manipulation of the physical voice and other indicative gestures, but where no serious impersonation is involved. That is, there is a projection of "an image of someone not oneself while preventing viewers from forgetting even for a moment that an alien animator is at work" (ibid.: 534). The point of these impersonations seems to be precisely that they do not involve a significant departure from the speaker's own self, that they function as a dramatisation inserted within a larger conversational interaction, and they take the shape of:

> "...voices (or 'registers'), these being stereotyped accents employed by individuals during informal talk to say something that can be attributed to a figure other than the speaker, the figure being categorically, not biographically, defined. Baby talk, ethnic and racial accents, national accents, and gender role expressions are examples." (Ibid.: 536)

In my analysis, I have used the idea of 'animation' throughout as a way of locating intertextual references in people's talk. Additionally, I have used the 'frame analysis of talk' for the analysis of code-switching in section 5.2, where I provide some further methodological details about how I have done it. These analyses have been inspired by the work of Goodwin (1990), Rampton (1991), Sebba (1993) and Hill & Hill (1986). My own contribution here will be to show the way in which frame analysis can help to locate particular voices as evidence of particular processes in the construction of ideology and subjectivity. I have also borrowed other concepts from Goffman that are used at different points in my analysis (for instance, 'self remarks' in section 4.21/b). However, in terms of the overall organisation of the thesis, it has seemed to me more practical to provide definitions and justifications 'on the spot', where particular points are necessary.

e) Concluding remarks to this section

In order to sum up my argument in the present section, I will come back to the question of context which I opened earlier. When referring to the empiricist assumption behind the 'bucket' conceptions of context, I already implied that no model can simply provide a priori cues as to which features can be seen as relevant. Nevertheless, I have argued that the course of action actors are involved in should be the central analytical concern, taking into account its organisational and ritualistic features. The shift in emphasis is important: text production and interpretation happens within these processes. The concept of 'frame' can be quite helpful in conceptualising some aspects of people's (shifting) modes of involvement in on-going events, including elements that can be felt to be outside the main focus of attention (out-of-frame). But even bearing this in mind, there is no way out for the researcher actively defining a particular analytic

agenda which must guide the selection of evidence (also constrained, in my case, by practical conditions, as audio-recording reduces the types of evidence that can be used). As Goffman himself puts it:

> "In any case, again I will initially assume the right to pick my point of view, my motivational relevancies, only limiting this choice of perspective to one that participants would easily recognize to be valid. (Ibid.: 9)

In my study, I am afraid I cannot remain even within the fuzzy boundaries that Goffman was defining. My participants would probably have difficulties recognising their actions analysed on an almost microscopic scale. The validity of my analysis hangs from a clear exposition of the evidence, and from the relevance of my argument for an understanding of social struggles and social domination.

Notes to section 3.2

[1] Brown and Levinson (1987) draw on the notion of "face" (Goffman, 1967) to build a systematic model to account for the strategies of politeness in interaction. Thomas (1986) and Fairclough (1992a) adopt his proposed classification of types of speaker from Forms of Talk (1981). Gumperz (1982) suggests that his "contextualisation cue" model is partly inspired in Goffman's frame analysis (1974), and he also borrows his 'replies' and 'responses' as interaction genres (Goffman, 1981). Gumperz (1982) and Auer (1988) note that code-switching is often used to effect changes of 'footing' (Goffman, 1981).

[2] Fairclough (1992a) seems to be handling more than one notion of context. Here I am referring to what he defines as 'context of situation' and the 'textual context' (which can be taken as part of the former). In his methodological tips, nevertheless, he refers as well to the Foucauldian notion of context, which consists of the relationships of the text with existing orders of discourse (Ibid.: 48). I consider this matter in the following section 3.3.

[3] Goffman (1976) actually develops his framework to analyse pictures in his inspiring study of gender displays in advertisements.

[4] The co-operative principle should not be understood as a simple imposed feature of interaction, but as a way of conceptualising how social situations are organised. Thomas (1986) has shown how the principles of co-operativeness, adapted to a pragmatic analysis, can help to conceptualise confrontational talk. Brown & Levinson (1987) have also shown the various functions that face-threatening acts can accomplish in interaction. Schiffrin (1984, 1990) has used frame analysis for the study of conversational arguments.

[5] It seems to me that Goffman here has also provided a powerful critique of the model of the rational actor, similar to Bakhtin's (1981) comments on the 'monological consciousness'. The potential interpretation of this position in terms of a de-centered subject is shown by Collins:

> "[the subject] is a thread through all the various selves which are enacted, which can be enacted or threatened...But the content of this self probably cannot be discovered...is simply the awareness of residing in one's physical body, as one tries to deal with the other physical bodies around one...The underlying, motivating 'self' has no enduring description, but is simply the human capacity for negotiating all these performances and transformations." (Ibid.: 57-8)

3.3... social struggles and change

In this section, I intend to tackle issues concerned with a level of analysis which is one step removed from the analysis of face-to-face interaction as I have defined it in the two sections above. The need to include this level of analysis in my study has been driven by the types of questions I was addressing. As I have indicated in Chapters 1 and 2, I wished to find ways of linking people's practices with issues of social and cultural domination, as I wanted to address the concerns and interests that various people bring to these matters. Firstly, there is the question of establishing the significance of particular social interactions: how can we decide that a particular form of communication or interaction is, for instance, sexist? Or, in what conditions is it possible to argue that the fact of speaking Spanish contributes to the political and cultural subordination of Catalonia? This is central to the question of personal responsibility and commitment to fairer forms of social relations: what can I do or what should I do in particular contexts to contribute to improve social relationships? And secondly, there are the questions posed by researchers, political activists or policy makers with regard to what collective or organised courses of action may help to bring about cultural change in the desired direction.

In order to do this, I needed to provide an account of the social conditions in which the social interactions of my groups were organised, thus giving rise to particular cultural forms (including their own forms of display, ideologies, views of the world). The principles of the Bakhtinian and Goffmanian perspectives I have outlined above (if taken superficially) may give the impression that cultural forms originate in the free will of individuals who just sign up for one type of identity instead of another. Nevertheless, as I was analysing social practices on the basis of these frameworks, I found that it was actually difficult to overlook the multiple constraints operating on agents. I also felt that these constraints could be conceptualised out of the basic principles of these frameworks, i.e. the dialogism of language and the ritual and physical conditionings of social interaction. Firstly, subjects were to an extent pre-constituted by the discourses available in their social contexts and to which they had to respond, so that they weere limited in the choices they could make and meanings they could construct. Additionally, the possibility of developing particular meanings and forms of display was clearly conditioned by the fact the these had to be jointly constructed with others in situated practices which had their own local or circumstantial limitations (including the ability or willingness of others to participate in them).

But, as I indicated before, this is a level of analysis which is removed from situated practice, as the search for a trans-situational logic implies. A definition of a new set of concepts is needed. I have tried to situate the cultures or practices investigated within their wider cultural context, and to consider the relationships between the social spaces where these practices were created with other social spaces of Catalan society. From this perspective, I have attempted to consider the extent to which the people I studied had a choice when they resolved to participate in particular social spaces, and to what extent they had the possibility and the ability to develop alternative cultural patterns within the complex network of social spaces in which they participated.

In order to do this, I have had to confront an (already old) sociological problem, which is how to conceptualise the relationships between situated social action and social structure(s), or, as it is often described as well, between the micro-level of social interactions and the macro-level of social institutions. This divide has also been often described in terms of constructivism versus structuralism, because ethnographers and anthropologists have commonly been associated with the former, while macro-sociologists, political scientists and statistically-oriented sociologists have traditionally been linked to structural-functional frameworks. Nevertheless, as Hammersley (1992) notes, there has also been a strong realist strand in anthropology, and it is common that ethnographers seek to connect their work with wider social or political issues.

In the last few years, there have been significant efforts to find ways of linking both levels of analysis or, rather, of collapsing them into a single framework (Giddens, 1976; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Nevertheless, I have not found any framework completely satisfactory in relation to my analytical needs, namely those of establishing connections between situated practices and wider social processes in ways that are relevant to the practical concerns of people dealing with issues of social and political domination. Here I will being with a brief assessment of Giddens' theory of structuration in order to give the reader a sense of what my own position is. On this basis, I will move on to defining the concepts I have used in my analysis, which combine some ideas of Foucault, Bourdieu and Fairclough.

a) Structuration theory

Giddens (1976) proposes that we should see the relationship between social action and social structure as a dialectical one:

> "...social structures are both constituted by human agency, and yet at the same time are the very medium of this constitution." (Giddens, 1976: 121)

While many social scientists agree with this, the problems start when trying to establish how this principle should be translated into the practices, theories and methods of social research. Thompson (1984) provides a critique of Giddens' conceptualisation of structure as "systems of generative rules and resources" (Giddens, 1976: 127). He argues that this conception does not allow us to establish connections with the traditional concerns in the analysis of social structure, and he also argues that the notion of 'rules' is too vague for that matter (Thompson, 1984: 170-1).

Although Thompson seems to be convinced by Giddens' conception of social action, I find many problems in it. Giddens acknowledges that agency exists only "in the practice and interactions carried out by social actors" (Cohen, 1989: 94). He also acknowledges that action is not necessarily or fully rational and motivation not necessarily conscious (Thompson, 1984: 152). Nevertheless, Giddens sees action as the actors' situated application of the rules and resources provided within particular social structures (Cohen, 1989: 30):

> "Structural sets of rules and resources play an essential part in 'binding' the interactions through which the institutional articulation of system occurs." (Ibid.: 93)

Because of his primary interest in social reproduction, Giddens also seems to lay considerable analytical emphasis in the 'routinisation' of people's practices (ibid.: 39), as it allows us to conceptualise systems as "interconnected or articulated series of institutionalised modes of interaction" (ibid.: 87). In this context, although he says that actors always have the choice of defying the routines imposed by institutions (Cohen, 1989: 45), I see no clear indication of where the actor's creative capabilities come from and how they are put to work. The fact that Giddens compares the relationship between structure and action to the one obtaining between language (as system) and speech (Giddens, 1976: 127) shows that his framework is amenable to a functional-structuralist reading, where there is no room for the negotiation of meaning, as this is contained in a kind of symbolic system that exists outside situated practices.

I acknowledge that Giddens' theory of structuration is much more complex than this. His principle that social structures exist only in the form of situated social interactions allows for alternative readings and different methodological implications. He has also insisted that his 'systems' or 'structures' are always temporally and historically constituted (Cohen, 1988). Nevertheless, what I find most lacking in Giddens' framework is an idea which is given by Fairclough (1992a) and which I believe is essential to an opening up of the possibility of struggles in society: the "tactical polyvalence of discourse." Fairclough's Foucauldian and Bakhtinian bases allow him to take a view of meaning which is no longer the product of

structures, schemata or symbolic systems, but of the situated processes of text production and interpretation, where the subject positions, relationships and goals are open to contestation, negotiation and struggle. The meaning of practices, therefore, cannot be established a priori: they are always polyvalent. They become established as a result of historically situated negotiations and struggles over meaning.

This means that the focus of analysis is on the processes whereby particular practices and meanings are established as the legitimate ones. In this context, the 'orders of discourse' created around particular social spaces or social institutions are always potentially vulnerable to these ongoing struggles over meaning. And secondly, this has implications with regard to what categories of analysis we build and what types of claims it is possible to make out of the findings of social research:

> "One aspect of the openness of orders of discourse to struggle is that elements of an order of discourse do not have ideological values or modes of ideological investment of a fixed sort." (Fairclough, 1992a: 98, my emphasis).

Meanings and practices are therefore ambivalent. This could be connected to Giddens' idea that actions have unintended consequences not directly accessible to actors (Thompson, 1984), so that practices could also acquire unintended meanings. But this idea seems to invite the sociologist to establish his or her own view on the significance of particular practices, and it does not encourage us to see actions and meanings as subject to re-interpretation and struggle by the research subjects themselves. In contrast, for Fairclough (1992a: 69), the result of ambivalence is that whatever we want to call an 'order of discourse' is vulnerable to the multiple meaning potentials of its constitutive elements (which are the genres, discourse types and subject positions associated with particular social settings or, as I prefer to call them, social spaces). Therefore, the sociologist must be very cautious in his or her interpretative endeavours, as the significance of particular events or actions is open to be re-interpreted in different ways by different actors, and is also sensitive to changes in the political balances and relationships that sustain a given social arrangement. It is in these balances and relationships, as I argue below, where we are likely to find the source of social constraints.

b) Regimes of truth

In my analysis, I have adopted Foucault's (1980) notion of regime of truth rather than Fairclough's 'orders of discourse'. What I will analyse here will be equivalent to what Fairclough (1992a: 68-9) calls 'local' orders of discourse, which is formed by the types of discursive events obtaining in a given social setting or institution in general, and which determine the subject positions and enunciative modalities produced within it. I have opted for 'regime of truth' because I am going to focus on particular aspects of the functioning of orders of discourse rather than on listing their constitutive elements and defining or problematising their boundaries. Foucault (1980) defines regime of truth in the following way:

> "Each society has its régime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true."

What I will do is to describe the regimes of truth of the groups I studied. In relation to identity as I have defined it, a regime of truth will contain all the existing procedures for legitimising particular forms of display, and therefore the actions made by participants to control the meaning potentials and vulnerabilities of social interactions. This concept will be a way into describing what we might call the 'ethos' of the groups, that is, what gave the participants a sense of which activities, meanings and ways of speaking were appropriate in that particular social space. Nevertheless, I will not focus on these matters

from a 'normative' outlook, but I will seek to trace the ways in which the particular political arrangements within the groups were established, protected or challenged. A 'regime of truth' therefore speaks about the particular political relationships established in a given social space in a way in which transcends any particular social situation on the basis of the intertextual and inter-situational aspect of meaning.

In dealing with regimes of truth (section 5.1), I will also be highlighting their connections with particular speech styles or ways of speaking. Here I will be drawing on Bakhtin's views on heteroglossia (see subsection 3.12), where voices, styles and languages carry with them the intentions and evaluative overtones of the situations in which they are generated and used. I will try to show how speech styles are constitutive of particular regimes of truth, and how they appear in people's talk in the form of speech genres that evoke particular types of people and views of the world.

At this level of analysis, I will already seek to show how constraints operated on the range of possibilities that, in principle, could be open to people. Firstly, in section 4.4 I will show how, in establishing their relationships in the peer group, people had already made choices as to what forms of identity they would invest in. Therefore, their actions and interests would be interpreted in the light of what precedents they had established. Secondly, in section 5.1, I will show that there were genuine struggles as to what forms of display were legitimate in peer group activities, thus limiting the forms of participation and display people could develop in them.

Consequently, after having stressed the creativity of actors and the openness or polyvalence of meaning, I will use the concept of 'regime of truth' in order to describe the processes whereby people are constrained in the meanings they can construct and in the types of activities they can organise.

c) Fields and habitus

I will use the notion of field in order to situate the regimes of truth of the groups I studied within the general social and historical conditions of Barcelona in the early nineties. In establishing their relationships and the particular regimes of truth within the peer group, the young people were constructing what I will call a 'social space'. Therefore, this further level of analysis can be described in terms of the relationships between various social spaces, the various forms of participation required in them, and the corresponding pressures and contradictions that they pose on people's identities. I take it that the interactions between social spaces are to be experienced in the terms in which Fairclough (1992a: 68-9) describes the possible relationships between orders of discourse, i.e. as possible sources of conflicts about their boundaries and of perceived contradictions between the diverse subject positions individuals take across different settings and activities. I will use the terms 'social spaces' and 'fields' in a related way to the sociological term 'domain' (the school, the family, the neighbourhood). Nevertheless, my use of these concepts is closer to Bourdieu's notion of 'field':

> "a relational configuration endowed with a specific gravity which it imposes on all the objects and agents which enter in it." (Wacquant, 1992: 17)

What I find interesting in Bourdieu's 'fields' is that they are described in terms of 'relationships' rather than 'rules'. Indeed, this is my conception of the regimes of truth. What I will call sometimes 'rule' will correspond to a way of describing people's practical knowledge of the logic of a field, such as "as a rule, the Rambleros did not talk about politics." These fields will therefore be socially constituted by the relationships established by the participants in their situated social interactions.

Bourdieu's (ibid.) notion of 'field' goes hand in hand with his notion of 'habitus'. The 'habitus' is the product of the relationship between the subject and a particular field. This dual scheme of field and habitus has two main strengths with regard to my analytical purposes. The first is that it is based on a phenomenological conception of experience. According to Wacquant (1992: 20-2), it draws upon the

works of Merleau-Ponty (1945, 1949), who argues that milieu and action should not be seen as separate entities but as a dialectic where the dispositions of the individual are articulated as a response to the conditions of the field but are also constitutive of the field itself at one and the same time. Consciousness is therefore constituted by this dialectic, which is the origin of the "practical sense" that guides people's actions and shapes the habitus. The habitus is, therefore a "structuring mechanism",

> "...a system of lasting and transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions... (Bourdieu, 1977: 95, quoted in Wacquant, 1992: 18)

This amounts to collapsing the action-structure, micro-macro opposition, an idea also defended by Giddens (1976), which is logical if one agrees that the focus should be on the relations between one and the other rather than on keeping them epistemologically apart. And the second important principle with regard to Bourdieu's 'habitus' is the idea that it is "embodied" or imprinted in people's bodies, in a word, "somatised". This amounts to saying that the dispositions of the habitus should not be seen as residing uniquely in people's minds, but in their whole bodies. The relevance of the body to study issues of identity has also been stressed by Giddens (1991).

What I find relevant with regard to issues of 'embodiment' is the idea that different aspects of identity cannot be analysed as if they operated in a separate way (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 149). This has an important bearing on the way we are supposed to conceptualise things like "ways of speaking", "ways of thinking", "gestures" and so on. In the first section of chapter 5, where I seek to describe the regimes of truth of both groups, I have made a point of trying to present all these aspects as inextricably linked. This also problematises the traditional disciplinary divides in the social sciences, particularly the trends of research which seek to establish correlations and causal relations between different features of people's performances (see Wacquant, 1992: 26-35). Additionally, the notion of 'embodiment' reminds us that identities are the product of people's investment in particular sets of social practices. Consequently, identity is not something that can be improvised or changed overnight. These considerations will play a key role in chapters 7 and 8, where I discuss the prospects that the participants of my study had for developing alternative forms of identity.

On the basis of the notions of habitus and field, I will seek to consider the ways in which different social spaces interact. I will do so by exploring the ways in which the social spaces outside the peer group (in particular, the work domain and the school) imposed pressures or forces on, and in a way contributed to constitute, the identities (now the habituses) of the people I studied. Additionally, the relationships between social spaces also poses the question of access to particular cultural forms, their corresponding practices and their associated resources. The assumption here is that because access to cultural forms is not equally distributed, people are effectively constrained in the forms of discourse that they can draw on to develop their identities.

My adoption of Bourdieu's basic concepts of habitus and field does not mean that I go along with other aspects of his theories and claims. In my analysis, I will stick close to the principle that the relationships between social spaces take form in situated practices which contain ambivalences and struggles. In chapter 7, while discussing the issues involved in the relationships between different fields, I will argue that some aspects of Bourdieu's framework are not so satisfactory.

d) Ideology and hegemony

Some of the problems of Bourdieu's works lie, in my view, in the way he handles the question of the origins of people's beliefs:

> "There exists a correspondence between social structures and mental structures, between the objective divisions of the social world -particularly into dominant and dominated in the various fields- and the principles of vision and division that agents apply to it." (1989: 7, quoted in Wacquant, 1992: 12)

Hence he establishes some general principles in the functioning of fields that already eliminate the possibility of ambivalence and struggle. Fields are described as spaces "of conflict and competition... in which participants vie to establish monopoly over the species of capital effective in it" (Wacquant, 1992: 17). My view is that it is not really useful to analyse social interactions after having already decided what they are about. I see 'conflict' as the opposite of 'consensus', and social relations are often, in my view, constituted by fine balances between one and the other.

I believe that Bourdieu's over-emphasis on conflict and competition is a product of his particular view of social domination, which is based on the assumption that social actors are generally unaware of its workings. As I will argue more in detail in chapter 7, Bourdieu uses the principle of correspondence between beliefs and structures to justify his sociological project: firstly to give the work of the sociologist the status of 'objective' truth; and secondly -and correspondingly- to legitimise his own argument that the views of the dominated are a product of their domination and that the sociologist's 'mission' consists of uncovering the mechanisms of subjection that reproduce social inequalities.

This has a familiar ring: the Marxist notion of 'ideology', as it has been defined by many sociologists. It involves the assumption that sociologists have a privileged access to truth by virtue of their status as scientists (Hammersley, 1992). Pennycook (1994) has also pointed out that this assumption is implicit (and often explicit) amongst many critical discourse analysts, including Fairclough (1989). Nevertheless, Fairclough (1992a) later reworked this conception of ideology:

> "I shall understand ideologies to be significations/constructions of reality (the physical world, social relations, social identities) which are built into various dimensions of the forms/meanings of discursive practices, and which contribute to the production, reproduction and transformation of relations of domination" (Ibid.: 87)

Fairclough locates ideology at all levels of discursive practice (structures and events). This definition could have a deterministic reading as if ideology could impose its significations from outside practice. Nevertheless, in Fairclough's model, ideology is subject to the polyvalence of meaning and is used, therefore, as a way of analysing processes of struggle over meaning rather than as a way of imposing the sociologist's gaze in a superficial or uncritical way[1].

The conception of ideology I am using is closer to Fairclough's. I see ideology as a product of social interaction and, as such, of the regimes of truth obtaining in social spaces, which are further influenced by the ways in which different social spaces interact. In this way, my focus is on describing 1) the processes whereby people generate their views of the world in their everyday lives, sometimes through explicit statements, sometimes through the assumptions that we need to make to understand what they say or do (Fairclough, 1992a: 86-91), but also 2) the processes whereby these views are influenced by their position vis-a-vis the various social spaces in which they participate.

Gardiner (1992: 61) points out that the concept of ideology among the members of Bakhtin's circle has little to do with Marx and Engels' (1970) view of it, despite the circle's strong Marxist connection. Marx and Engels saw ideology as a kind of a cognitive distortion or illusory representation of reality effected by social and economic conditions. According to Gardiner (1992), the circle's view is quite compatible with later Marxist ideas on the centrality of cultural processes as constitutive of social action and relatively autonomous from (or non-determined by) economic infrastructures (ibid.: 65-66). Ideology does not exist outside human practice but is "embodied in some signifying practice or semiotic material (words,

gestures, etc.)". Language use therefore contributes to the shaping of our views of the social world: "It is true that no distinct or clear consciousness of the world is possible outside the word" (Medvedev, 1985: 133). But these views do not develop in absolute freedom. They are a product of the processes obtaining in dialogical social interaction, where generic conventions regulate to an extent what can and cannot be said, and what views of the world, voices and meanings are drawn upon and how this is done. Ideology is therefore shaped by people's participation in social situations where their interests, purposes and social positions are brought to bear (Gardiner, 1992).

This view also echoes a Gramscian conception of ideological processes as embedded in struggles for cultural and political hegemony (Gramsci, 1971). Within this framework, 'hegemony' would be like a societal 'regime of truth', and it would involve the processes whereby different social groups establish alliances or struggle to legitimate particular discourse, ideologies or cultural forms within the wider society (Fairclough, 1992a).

e) Conclusion

I would like to make a final comment in relation to my criticisms of the works of Giddens and Bourdieu. Their theoretical frameworks are very sophisticated and have been created, after all, to make up for the deficiencies of earlier structuralist and functionalist approaches. I have often found that they could be made to be relevant to my analytical interests. My differences with these authors stem from the way I felt I had to deal with my data, that is, in a way that would enable the reader to establish clear connections between my argument and situated practice. However, they have developed their own frameworks in order to explore general features of social structures which are not directly relevant to my interests here.

I also believe that many of the theoretical issues I have discussed and which they have already discussed cannot be solved strictly at the conceptual level. In the literature on social reproduction, there are often long arguments about the meaning of terms and words: take, for example, Thompson's (1984) discussion about the meaning of 'rules' in Giddens' works. Thompson appears to be assuming that theories and terminologies can be developed and fixed independently from the relevances of particular research projects, an assumption with which I disagree. This is clearly at odds with a conception of meaning as a product of practice, in this case the practice of social research and discourse analysis. I go along completely with Bourdieu's strong reactions against 'methodologism' and 'theoreticism', which he defines as the "inclination to separate reflection on methods from their actual use in scientific work and to cultivate methods for its own sake." (Wacquant, 1992: 26-35). This is why I have decided to produce some further reflections on Bourdieu's works later in chapter 7 so that my criticisms of his framework can be done in the light of my analytical practice. Nevertheless, these criticisms should not be understood as disqualifiers, but as a modest contribution to a sociological project with which I fully identify.

Notes to section 3.3

[1] Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1992: 250-1) himself warns against an uncritical use of the assumption that the sociologist can illuminate hidden truths, and proposes to subject the sociologist's views themselves to critical scrutiny.

4. THE ORGANISATION OF GENDER IDENTITIES

In this chapter, I will analyse the activities of the people I studied from a gender perspective. My aim will be to show how these people constructed their gender identities. I have deliberately used the term 'organisation' rather than the usual one 'construction' in the title. This is because I wanted to stress my view of identity as located, created, shaped (constructed) in social interactions that require a minimum of active complicity, mutual involvement and co-ordination (organisation). What we usually call identity (in terms of roles, relationships, attributes), I see as the product of the processes whereby social encounters (in a broad sense) lead people to take positions, perform particular actions, acquire skills and appearances, and develop an understanding about the world. Additionally, the term 'organisation' reminds us that social arrangements are vulnerable, that is, dependent on particular conditions that make them possible. For one thing, any encounter depends on the participants being willing and able to carry it through.

As I have said in sections 3.2 and 3.3, acknowledging a degree of social determination and social constraint does not rule out the possibility that what gets described as the 'social order' stands on the workings of these interactional processes. My perspective is, therefore, dialectical. Participation in social encounters forces individuals to organise involvement in courses of action with others. In order for these encounters to work, they must have the necessary skills and must establish relationships with other participants. As participants are aware that their actions and character will be mutually scrutinised, social interaction becomes a scene for displays of character. The way people display themselves to others is very much determined by the requirements for participation in the events of their culture. But they can also choose to participate in some events rather than others, and they can seek to redefine situations to develop particular aspects of their identity or to obtain benefits of any kind.

In this chapter, I emphasise this latter aspect: the free and creative side of people's actions. I will describe their practices as if identity was a matter of open choice. Nevertheless, the ways in which limitations operate and preclude alternatives will begin to be seen, and the issue of determination and constraint will be taken up later in the following chapters.

By focusing on the construction of gender, I will actually do two things at the same time. In addition to theorising on different aspects of gender, I will indirectly provide an account of how the Rambleros and the Trepas organised their peer-group activities. This is not a chance by-product of the description, neither is it the result of any stylistic or rhetorical achievement. The reason why I chose to focus on gender, and why it appears in the first chapter of analysis is that peer-group activities were fundamentally divided along gender lines. Even though my fieldwork focused on informal peer-group activities such as hanging around, drinking, smoking, dancing and chatting, gender identities seemed to have had a huge bearing on people's preferences and ways of participating in the groups' events.

Before engaging in the analysis of these practices, nevertheless, I will first try to situate my work in the light of recent debates on gender (section 4.1). The literature is extensive, and I will restrict myself to the discussion on how masculinity and femininity should be described, as it is claimed that some research contributes to either reinforcing gender stereotypes or to obscuring male domination of women. I will argue that the contradictions of these approaches can be avoided through a process-centred, dynamic conception of culture.

After this, I will proceed to classify the various types of masculinity and femininity I found in the data. In section 4.2 I will deal with the Rambleros group, who I will claim presented the more classical patterns of gender construction, and in section 4.3, I will deal with the more 'aware' or politicised forms of gender construction among the Trepas group. This does not mean that the gender identities of the groups were different in a clear cut manner. The Trepas in particular were very diverse. I have ordered the things in this way because I believe it will make reading easier and it will help to give a sense of the different ambiences I found in each group. At some points, though, I will draw on information from both groups if this contributes to illustrate an argument more clearly. This chapter will not deal with all the gender issues that are relevant to my analysis: in section 5.1 later, I will analyse the 'regimes of truth' established in each group, and I will try to show that gender identity lay at the basis of important ideological struggles. Incidentally, the way I have labelled each form of gender will be better understood on the basis of the argument put forward in section 5.1. Therefore the reader will not find explicit definitions or justifications for the labelling provided in the present chapter.

Because I insist that gender is constructed in social activities, in my analysis I may give the impression that the men and women I observed lead utterly separated, independent lives. In section 4.4 I will seek to dispel this implication. I will try to show that the categories and the genres I have proposed, rather than existing in a pure form, exist in their constant transformations and re-accentuations exerted within the complex flow of activities and conversations. I hope that this shows a) how the analysis of gender identities can help to understand people's differing agendas, b) how to some extent gender determines the way people's contributions to conversation are understood, and c) how gender separation works even when people are 'together'.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTER 4

Section 1: The recent debates on Gender.

Section 2: The Rambleros.
- **1. Simplified masculinity.**
- **2. Feminine agendas.**
- **3. Gender Crossing.**

Section 3: The Trepas.
- **1. Transgression and insubmission.**
- **2. Politicised identities.**

Section 4: The polyvalence of talk.

4.1 The recent debates on gender

In this section, I will try to situate my approach in the light of current discussions on gender. It is not meant to be an extensive literature review. I have concentrated on issues that I felt could be relevant to my analysis. This is why most of the references will actually refer to ethnographic studies, or to studies which discuss problems and implications in the description and categorisation of ethnographic and conversational data. I will begin by considering various studies which have sought to characterise forms of masculinity and femininity. Then I will move on to the debates regarding the political implications of these studies. And I will finally advocate a more process oriented, dynamic and historical conception of culture which helps us to overcome the limitations of earlier approaches.

The current literature suggests that there are some very general features of male and female events which seem to be common to Western society. Research on gender has shown how boys and girls form separate groups from early childhood, they engage in largely different types of activities, and their activities display distinctively different characteristics (Maltz & Borker, 1982; Goodwin, 1990; Thorne, 1993). They also engage in activities together, and these seem to have a character of their own. In her impressive analysis of children's games, Goodwin (ibid.) proposes the following generalisations:

> "The games and contexts that boys engage in provide objective criteria for making evaluations among group members; by comparing their skill in a range of competitive endeavors, boys can establish a rank ordering, albeit one that changes from activity to activity." (Goodwin, 1990: 135-6)
>
> "On the other hand, girls engaging in a task with other girls organize their actions in ways that display equality rather than differentiation, and emphasize cooperation during task activities." (Ibid.: 64)

Oppositions such as hierarchical-egalitarian and competition-cooperation are common themes in the literature. Generalisations concerning the character of children's play in the Anglo-American context (ibid.; Thorne, 1993), France (Piaget, 1932) or Norway (Berentzen, 1984 as quoted by Goodwin, 1990: 135) coincide with my own experience in Catalonia. As I was writing my analysis, I visited a Catalan primary school where I observed the children's playground activities and talked with the school's staff. I was surprised by the extent to which what I saw actually matched what I had read regardless of the fact that it was a different cultural context. My childhood's recollections also bring in boys playing competitive games such as sports (soccer, basketball), marbles or racing. Other games such as **pedralta** (a game of ability with small stones), hide-and-seek or album-collecting were framed in competitive terms. Girls' games such as jump-rope or **nonet** seemed to consist more of ability routines which provided no clear winners. In my fieldwork, the men of the Rambleros group would still organise 5-a-side football matches with men of other groups, occasions which provided conspicuous separation between the sexes, with the women performing rituals of cheering and dramatisations that brought in features of the media soccer world.

a) Masculinity

Typical features of teenagers' masculinity are described in Willis' (1977) study on the counter school culture of working-class young males. Willis argues that "The most basic, obvious and explicit dimension of counter-school culture is entrenched general and personalised opposition to authority" (ibid.: 11-12). In this light, Willis' 'lads' organised their opposition to the usual values held up by authority: diligence, deference, respect (ibid.). Their challenge to authority took shape in a variety of cultural manifestations:

display of aggressiveness towards each other and especially towards the school conformists; emphasised use of dialect, swearing and argot; drug taking, defiance of school regulations and so on. An important objective of the 'lads' was to show their superiority with regard to the school conformists (ibid.), thus framing the issue in competitive and confrontative terms.

This theme of distantiation from socially 'correct' behaviour is also suggested by Hewitt's (1986) study of inter-racial friendship amongst London adolescents in that relationships with girlfriends threatened their dedication to the boys' usual drinking, fighting and having fun:

> "For such boys the idea of 'settling down' is in strong contrast to the forms of masculinity elaborated within the peer group" (Ibid.: 24)

Hewitt discusses also issues of territoriality which framed the quest for girlfriends as a competition usually encoded in terms of race (ibid.: 25).

Another theme usually linked with masculinity is aggressiveness or violence. This theme has been very much experimentally researched by psychologists, and theorised about from a socio-biological perspective. These approaches tend to give academic pedigree to common sense beliefs that aggressiveness is rooted in man's nature (see Brittan, 1989: 89; Connell, 1987: 57-58). Remy (1990) theorises and provides evidence of the aggressive character of many "Männerbunde", a concept developed in the German social sciences to designate the different modes of non-patriarchal male association in our civilisation: brotherhoods, gangs, the Baltic 'werwolves'. Particularly interesting are Willis' (1977: 33-35) insights into the role of violence in counter school culture: its value as an anti-social practice, as a way of asserting one's superiority vis-à-vis the school conformists (as a counterbalance to their inferiority in the classroom), and as a way of establishing an individual's status in the peer group. Other researchers, such as Jackson (1990: 188), corroborate his views. Phillips (1993: 224-227) also documents the important role of bullying in boys' relationships in the Anglo-American context. Some of her data give evidence of the resentment directed against 'clever boys' in the school, who are potential victims of bullying.

The existence of aggressiveness seems to be congruent with the competitive spirit of male's relationships, as competition involves the need to continuously challenge others' positions and to defend one's own either physically or symbolically. And physical aggression, because it is discouraged by authority, can also be seen as a form of transgression, and therefore acquire a multiplicity of meaning potentials in many contexts (such as, for instance, in sports).

b) Femininity

It has for some time been argued by feminist researchers that women's organised activities were aimed at displaying equality and cooperation rather than hierarchy and competition. Goodwin also states that, in their talk, "Girls compare each other with respect to physical appearance and friendship alliances" (1990: 46). In her discussion on the subcultural approach to children's play, Thorne (1993: 95) generalises that "girls emphasize the construction of intimacy and connection".

According to the literature, girls organise themselves predominantly in small groups from an early age (see also Maltz & Borker, 1982). Their social organisation is typically centred on dyads where they develop their friendship relationships. Because these relationships require considerable exclusivity (each girl having her own 'best friend'), they are often described in terms of 'alliances'. These alliances are supposedly made to display intimacy: share secrets and weaknesses, monitor emotions and states of mind, support each other's appearances (see Thorne, 1993: 94; Goodwin, 1990: 46-48). As a result, girls seem to invest a great deal of their leisure time talking to their friends, which seems to be the reason why they are seen playing less often and having less varied games than boys (see Lever, 1974: 171; Goodwin, 1990: 37). This is consistent with Goodwin's (ibid.: 190-3) typification of the He-Said-She-Said genre appearing

in girls' confrontations, as offences are typically committed through 'saying' (disclosing secrets to others, criticising) rather than 'doing'. The processes of alliance formation seem to play a central role in girls' relationships, and they have a considerable bearing on how they organise their games. For instance, in Goodwin's analysis of girls' pretend play, she noticed that girls can "display alliances" by excluding others from desirable roles (ibid.: 133).

In her analysis of conceptions of morality and self amongst women, Gilligan (1982) concludes:

> "...in the different voice of women lies the truth of an ethic of care, the tie between relationship and responsibility, and the origins of aggression in the failure of connection. The failure to see the different reality of women's lives and to hear the differences in their voices stems in part from the assumption that there is a single mode of social experience and interpretation." (Ibid: 173)

Gilligan (ibid.) suggests that women build and sustain a distinctively different frame of mind from that of men, where moral dilemmas are conceived in terms of communication and relationships as opposed to that of impersonal logic and law more typical of men (ibid.: 29), and that this has a very significant bearing on women's particular decisions and general orientation to life. Women's stress on relationship building seems to be congruent with typical portrayals of adolescent girls' 'romantic' approach to heterosexual relationships (Willis, 1977). Also, it is said that developing or discussing relationships is a central concern of many women's 'gossip' genres (Jones, 1980; Coates, 1988).

c) Beyond the difference-dominance dichotomy

Researchers have also warned against over-generalisations about gender character. Brittan (1989) criticises sociobiological approaches which seek to prove that male aggressivity is a natural feature of our species. He argues that these perspectives help little in our attempts to understand the complex social aspects of the phenomenon, the differences between peoples, classes and individuals, the different ways in which masculinity is organised in different contexts (ibid.: 6-10). Connell (1987: 167-190) criticises research in the experimental psychological traditions but also in some anthropological studies. He criticises the tendency to take masculinity and femininity as uniform entities and argues that there should be room to conceptualise struggles between different conceptions of masculinity and femininity.

These views come from a concern that academics may contribute to maintaining the present gendered status quo. Phillips (1993), for instance, says that teachers may help to reinforce male stereotypes in the school. This is because they frequently generalise on the boys' character on the basis of their perceptions of the ones that are bullies and 'naughty boys':

> "...Teachers who assume that all boys are naturally aggressive and all girls are naturally passive are providing aggressive boys with the label of normality and marginalising the boys who don't conform." (Ibid.: 219).

Thorne (1993) voices a similar criticism about some academic disciplines which uncritically adopt folk categories to typify social 'deviance' such as "the sissy-boy syndrome" or "tomboyism". She claims that such categories may function, as they do amongst boys and girls, to enforce hegemonic conceptions of gender (ibid.: 117). It seems to be a general trend of the social sciences that researchers focus on describing those traits that differentiate social groups as opposed to traits which are similar to all (Overing, 1986; Goodwin, 1990: 287).

Goodwin (1990) and Thorne (1993) also take issue with researchers on children's play who have suggested that girls' games have a simple rule structure which discourage competitiveness and large team work, which allegedly hamper women's suitability in some areas of the job market. Their concern is that

these theories both problematise feminine practices and can be taken to justify the fact that women have a restricted access to the most prestigious jobs. From another perspective, Gilligan's (1982) proposals have been strongly criticised by Kerber et al (1986). They argue that she presents men and women as if they simply belonged to different cultures, which obscures the fact that these differences are a historical product of the experience of domination.

Following this concern, Goodwin's (1990) ethnographic study of children in a predominantly black neighbourhood concentrated on locating similarities or common features between boys' and girls' modes of participation. She found that some girls also created hierarchical relationships through the use of directives in some of their games. Nevertheless, she argues that girls' use of directives and hierarchical momentary alignments is very much embedded within the particular processes obtaining in girls' activities, namely the formulation and display of alliances and relationships with other girls (ibid.: 136-137). Hughes (1988) has also shown that girls' orientation to cooperativeness is not incompatible with competition. She found that in the foursquare game "girls 'competed in a cooperative mode' using a language of 'being friends' and 'being nice' while aggressively getting others out so their friends could enter the game".

Thorne (1993) criticises what she calls the "subcultural approach" because it depicts boys and girls, or men and women, as if they belonged to different worlds. She observes that the patterns commonly put forward by the literature effectively leave many cases or exceptions unexplained or unclassifiable:

> "because it is based on dichotomies, the different-cultures approach exaggerates gender difference and neglects within gender variation, including cross-cutting sources of division and commonality like social class and ethnicity. These facts... raise the challenge of how to grasp complex patterns of difference, and commonality, without perpetuating stereotypes." (1993: 96)

Research in schools has shown that, even in mixed schools, girls and boys predominantly play in groups and establish friendship ties with children of their sex. Nevertheless, Goodwin (1990) and Thorne (1993: 44-47) have also shown that there are also many activities where boys and girls play together, although some of them such as girls-chase-the-boys (or vice versa) "dramatizes gender boundaries and maintains a sense of separation between the girls and the boys as distinctive groups" (ibid.: 46).

Another much neglected aspect is the phenomenon of gender crossing. Crossing refers to the common phenomenon of people engaging in activities, and developing identities, usually ascribed to the other sex. It seems that the most conspicuous forms of crossing are generally stigmatised in our society, as illustrated by the derogatory terms "sissy" and "tomboy" -which also have equivalents in Catalan and Spanish: **marieta/*marica*** and **marimatxo/*marimacho***. Thorne (1993) has also shown how complex this phenomenon can be, with different persons *crossing* the gender divide to different degrees and in different ways. In her examples, it is quite clear that children develop strategies for crossing while avoiding stigmatisation. She gives the illuminating example of a boys' leader who engaged in girls' and little kids' games very often because he could afford it, as he was "tall, blonde, athletically and verbally skilled, widely respected, leader of the largest clique in the classroom" and the other boys could not cast doubts on his masculinity (ibid.: 122-123). She portrays the strategies of crossing as a forming a continuum of different practices rather than an identity switch or a form of deviance.

A major contribution to this debate has come from feminist linguists (Cameron, 1992; Uchida, 1992). It has come to be called the 'difference versus dominance' dichotomy. The dominance approach is usually associated with the works of Lakoff (1975) and Fishman (1983) amongst others. Roughly, in these studies, evidence is provided of women being in a inferior position in cross-gender talk, either because sometimes they use more 'tentative' or 'unassertive' ways of speaking (Lakoff, 1975), or because they intervene mostly in a peripheral way, only providing conversational support to the men's lines -what

Fishman (1983) calls the 'shitwork' of interaction. The difference or 'cultural' approach is associated with the work of Tannen (1984) and Coates (1988) inter alia, and it tends to portray women's forms of talk as simply different, but equally valid, to that of men. The criticism of the dominance approach is that it problematises women's identities, and it amounts to an implicit acceptance of men's ways as the norm. The criticism to the difference approach is that it obscures the social domination and deprivation imposed on women, which is often at the root of gender differences.

Now Uchida (1992) has argued quite convincingly that this dichotomy is misleading, firstly because domination cannot unproblematically be inferred from particular instances of social interaction, and secondly because difference does not exclude taking on board issues of domination. Cameron (1992) has carried out a remarkably thorough analysis of the theoretical assumptions of various feminist trends in linguistics. She argues convincingly that the root of the problem lies in structuralist assumptions that take language as a system whose meanings are independent from their use in society. In this way, one ends up with deterministic readings of theories such as the Sapir/Whorf hypothesis or the Lacanian psychoanalytic approach; or conversely, with the naive idea that gender discrimination may be solved just by purifying language from sexist modes of expression, or even by making women speak in an assertive style (see Cameron, 1994). On the other hand, the alternative is to assume that language use reflects social structure and, therefore, that "everything about women's behaviour can be traced simply to their subordination" (ibid.: 73). Cameron concludes the following:

> "The social practice of language-using is not defined simply by the act of speaking (or writing or signing). Nor is it completely defined by the structures of the language itself, though these do bear on it. What most crucially defines this social practice, I would argue, is the act of addressing someone, in some context, for some purpose." (Ibid.: 186).

Cameron's position is the one I have taken up in this study, as I mentioned in subsection 3.1/a. I have also taken on board her bid for a creative and contextual conception of language. Nevertheless, the problem does not end here, but it actually begins. The problems encountered by researchers on gender reflect the theoretical quandaries created by a linguistically-based structuralist conception of culture. It is true that people who seek to understand masculinity and femininity tend to concentrate on predominant or hegemonic aspects of gender, and they usually leave out the diversity of ways in which gender identities are constructed. Often, this is because they seek to understand how the sexual division of labour in our society works on a global level. And this also leads to culture being conceptualised in a rather static way, thus overlooking the processes of social struggle involved in legitimising particular cultural forms. Features of masculinity and femininity get therefore described as simply 'being there', with no mention of the social processes where particular forms of masculinity and femininity are created.

Interesting pieces of research such as those by Lever (1974, 1976) and Gilligan (1982) attract severe criticism for these reasons, even when they appear to be made from a feminist standpoint. I believe, though, that it is worth trying to re-contextualise such works -rather than reject them- within a more dynamic, process-centred, dialogical, historical and dialectical conceptualisation of culture.

For instance, Goodwin (1990) argues very successfully that girls cannot be seen as having a kind of "restricted code" in relation to the communicative practices of the boys, and that features traditionally ascribed to male talk (such as directives: "do this!") can also be found in female events. Interestingly enough, some of these features appear in situations where children engage in pretend play (such as mums and children in "house" games), or where outsiders' voices or stage characters are impersonated. In Goffman's (1974) terms, therefore, these features appear in 'keyed' frames where the actor can be accorded diminished responsibility for her actions. There are examples of directives in negotiations of roles in play, which could actually be made possible because the "mums" may feel that they carry some features of their staged characters even when they step out of the game momentarily. Goodwin's (1990) findings suggest

that the same formal features seem to occupy a different position with respect to the self, directives being used when expressing role-distance. So it seems as if boys' and girls' activities can be seen as presenting similar features, but that each feature takes on a different significance within the general picture of male and female subcultures. In other words: even if boys and girls do the same thing, it does not mean the same to them. Sheldon (1992) has proposed that Bakhtin's notion of 'multivoicedness' can help to conceptualise these distinctions: the same voices may be appropriated in different ways by boys and girls.

As I indicated in section 3.2, I have also adopted Goffman's ritualistic approach for a process oriented analysis of social interaction. He has also developed this approach in his own work on gender (1976, 1977). The study of such micro-interactional practices often raises criticisms because it is said that emphasis on the freedom and creativity of actors obscures the constraints exerted by social structures and social institutions (Smith, 1988: 38; Thorne, 1993). From a more macro-social perspective, Connell (1987) argues that various forms of gender must be conceptualised in terms of the processes leading to the establishment of hegemonic masculinity. In section 3.3, I have already argued the point that the micro- and the macro- can only be seen as separate if we operate, again, from a structural-functional perspective. Later on, in chapter 5, and through the concept of 'regime of truth', I will present what I believe are basic regulative principles generated by the groups and the existing struggles over these principles. This concept corresponds to an analytical level linked to, but not reducible to, the processes obtaining in social interaction. As Uchida (1992) and Cameron (1992) argue, we have to look for the origins of domination in social organisation, not as a direct inference from particular features of people's interactions. The question of social constraints will be taken up in chapter 7, where I will analyse the relationships between the social space(s) developed in the peer group and other social spaces, such as the school and the workplace.

4.2 The Rambleros

In this section, I will seek to describe the patterns of social organisation of the Rambleros group by focusing on the gendered aspects of their activities and identities. I will begin by describing speech events and ways of talking associated with what I call 'simplified masculinity', a form of masculinity based on displays of transgression, aggressiveness, naturality and unsophistication. After this, I will describe the predominant form of femininity found in the group. A discussion on 'crossing' will follow, that is, I will focus on the people who sought to participate in practices associated with the other sex. Particularly in this last subsection on crossing, but also in the previous ones, I will make occasional references to people or activities from the Trepas group because the forms of gender found in each group cannot be neatly separated. As mentioned above, a discussion of the interactions, conflicts and struggles between different forms of identity within the Rambleros is introduced in the next chapter, subsection 5.11.

4.21 Simplified masculinity

Before I engage in a close analysis of particular events, I would like to make one general point on masculinity which will help to understand and contextualise some of the situations and speech genres I discuss. As I mentioned in the previous section, it is commonly accepted in the literature that girls' events are generally organised to display mutual interest, intimacy and sympathy, hence the (sometimes equivocal) impression that girls (or women) are more supportive and caring. What many studies fail to appreciate is that the conceptual opposite of this is not necessarily "aggressivity" or "hierarchy". In contrast with many all-women's activities which provide opportunities for the participants to show clear interest in each other, men's activities are commonly organised to display interest in a focus of activity which can be treated as external to the participants. At least in my data, and in much of my experience, this basic organisational principle constituted a common thread across remarkably different modes of display of masculinity. Strength, competitiveness and self-sufficiency were but one of the available options among a wider range of forms of display. This is why we can find events where men can get round to display intimacy through banter (Easthope, 1986) or girls can be competitive by appearing caring (Hughes, 1988). Many men, therefore, can show interest in each other through co-ordinated engagement in what they treat as something else[1]. This dichotomy, and the implications of it, plays a key role in the way people tacitly understand other people's actions and expect theirs to be understood. So, in my data, it would have been a bit misleading to seek correlations between gender and, say, music tastes, level of drug taking (alcohol, hashish), participation in playful fighting or verbal aggression. Although many of these elements could overlap, they played significantly different roles in the construction of masculine and feminine identities. When I was trying to integrate in the Rambleros group, for instance, I found that the Rambleros women had no trouble in approaching me, asking me questions and chatting about anything. I soon learned about most of their lives and they learnt about mine. With the men, although they were kind and considerate, I did not manage to communicate with them until after a while, when I had found out what they did and how they talked and I had managed to find opportunities to participate in their games. Because men's events were ritually arranged around these external objects of common interest, their activities were necessarily orientated to produce, assert, enhance and recognise this interest. This is why it was probably more difficult for them to find a masculine way of accommodating a male stranger.

Bearing this in mind, I will now proceed to analyse one of the Rambleros men's favourite genres: verbal aggression. Let us first consider the following encounter:

Extract 1

[Saturday night, around 2 o'clock; we have just parked the cars and are walking towards a kind of disco-pub along a silent street]

Andrés: **[cridant]** ***eh vamos al bocatta aquel [?]***
[Loud] *Hey, let's go to that sandwich place [?]*

Luis: mira ·· si quiereh comer · te puedes amorrar entre mis patas sabes [?]
Look ··· if you wanna eat · you stick your snout between my legs, you know[?]

Ricardo: o entre lah mías
Or between my ones.

Joan: [riure]
[Laughter]

Pablo: >(xx lah mías) · · · <tienes pa elegir
(xx my ones) · · · you've got quite a choice

Andrés: <la verdá eh que tengo mucha hambre>
The truth is I'm very hungry.

Ricardo: (pues) amórrate >entre lah tres
Then go for the three of them.

Andrés: pues chico <con esto no me llega pa nada
Well kid, with this I would not have enough really.

Joan: ***pues tienes muchas opciones***
You've got many options anyway.

Pablo: (gili) pollas
Cock (sucker).

Luis: calla · que si te la pongo en la boca parece el anuncio de (el tiempo) tiene razón (xxx)
You shut up. If I stick it into your mouth, it'll be like this advert about "(Time) is right (xxx)."

Andrés: pero eso no me llena · la verdá · · · necesito por lo meno un beicon
But this won't fill me up, honest. I need at least some bacon.

Unknown: (eh[?])

Luis: (xx) aquí
(xx) here.

Ricardo: mira · te pongo yo la polla en la boca es que no te cabe colega
Look. I stick my cock into your mouth, and there won't be room enough for it, mate.
[NB03: 202-5]

Andrés initial proposal was taken as meaning that he wished to eat something. To this, Luis reacted by suggesting -through an indirect metonymic description- that he could eat his genitalia instead. Everybody would recognise this as a joke: in Goffman's (1974) terms, a *keyed* action where the speaker puts on a character which is not to be taken as 'real' or 'serious', thus implying that s/he is engaged in a kind of play. The first potential meaning of this utterance is, therefore, that Luis did not want to go to the sandwich bar and was rejecting Andres' suggestion. Additionally, the theme of eating the genitalia referred back to a recurrent expression of the Rambleros men: "***cómeme la polla***" (eat my cock). They commonly used it as a playful but provocative sexual advance to women that implied a request for oral sex. In this sense, Luis was hinting at the possibility of Andrés being a homosexual, a stigmatised identity, thus casting doubts on his masculinity (and, therefore, on the features of character which are the very condition for participation in this kind of talk).

Andrés, later on, responded to both potential meanings of Luis' utterance. After the other members of the group had insisted by offering their corresponding genitalia to 'placate' Andrés' hunger, he affirmed that these were inadequate. In doing so, he firstly defended his proposal to go to eat, which was left open again. And, additionally, he indirectly cast doubts on the masculinity of his friends in return by suggesting that their genitalia were of inadequate size.

Ricardo's final intervention in the extract was a response to Andrés' suggestion. To understand his contribution, I must raise attention to some relevant prosodic features of his utterance, which are lost in the transcription: first the rising articulatory tension up to "***boca***" conveying a sense of threat; then the release of this tension suggesting that the concluding remark was so obvious that it was beyond discussion; and finally the term "***colega***" conveyed a sense of forgiving friendliness. Although the threatening tone was diminished by his nearly bursting into laughter, Ricardo was playing the character of the street fighter defending his face while offering a way out of the conflict. He was calling upon an image similar to the deeply rooted Spanish "***chulo***" (literally: a pimp), who treats the streets as if they were a bull-fighting ring.

In uncovering the different layers of meaning of this interaction, I hope I have shown with clarity how meaning is constructed in very complex ways that go beyond the word and the sentence, and also beyond the immediate context or course of action as taken in conversational analytic frameworks. As Bakhtin argues, "each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the communality of the sphere of speech communication" (Bakhtin, 1986: 91). Indeed, understanding this interaction requires some familiarity with a complex array of cultural references which can be described in terms of themes (sizes of genitalia, stigmatised homosexuality), genres (face negotiations in fights) or voices (from imaginary pimps or real past utterances).

a) Creative swearing

Bakhtin also helps us to appreciate the extent to which these themes or cultural references were used to construct a space of creativity within this particular group. It is usually said in the literature that swearing simply has the function of 'signalling' group membership (see De Klerk, 1992; and also Jackson, 1990). While this is a generally acceptable claim, as I argued in section 3.1/c, it is based on a too simplistic conceptualisation of identity, which is not very useful to understand what is going on when people swear. According to Bakhtin (1986), each new utterance constitutes, at one and the same time, a link in an ongoing dialogue (of which these cultural traditions of taboo are a part), and a unique contribution to it. This is why the extract I have analysed, as an instance of a verbal aggression genre, has to be seen as a new creation which contributed to maintain a tradition by transforming it. The themes of sex and threat were embedded, after all, in an organisational discussion about where to go and what to do. Across different occasions, the same themes were adopted and always adapted to produce new effects. After the discovery or invention of a new word or a new phrase, people start experimenting, looking for occasions

and events where it can be used and purposes it can serve. This also helps to understand why some expressions could become old or worn out.

Therefore, what I call swearing consisted of the active creation and exploitation of taboo themes drawing on sexual, scatological (farting, burping) and religious themes. It was this creative commitment which set apart the ways of speaking of most men and women of this group, rather than simple quantitative differences on who swears more or less. The use of swearing amongst men was one of the possible elements that could be used to produce a ritual display of transgression. The transgressive character of these displays derived from the fact that these themes were known to be not appropriate for mention in 'proper' social intercourse. The common format of insults or face threatening moves can also be taken as an ingredient of this flouting of social standards of demeanour. They had a ritual character because these events were jointly organised to produce transgressive displays to which participants showed mutual appreciation and recognition. Appreciation was commonly expressed through laughter, where it was implicitly acknowledged that a breakdown of social propriety had occurred. This is best illustrated in the following example from the group discussions:

Extract 2

Joan: *And the other [topic]: the speech*
Pablo: What speech!?
Woman1: What speech? [various voices are heard]
Woman2: (the way) of speaking
Pablo: [loud] *What speech!?*
Andrés: "(drop dead) you dirty swine, bitch", and things like that [laughters and voices].
Ricardo: he he he he he!
Mateo: "Eat my cock", ha ha ha >ha ha!.
Ricardo: ho ho ho ho [very loud laughters from others as well].
[GB01: 116-25]

The group discussion constituted for the Rambleros a situation of a special kind. They were very aware that they were producing a display of the group within a vaguely defined public sphere embodied by the tape recorder and my identity as a researcher. And it was precisely the formality of the public sphere, and its symbolic relation to authority which created particular opportunities for transgression. In this situation, just the words by themselves triggered the laughter as if they carried a special kind of magic with them, but the magic was given by a) the features of the situation, and b) its transgressive character in terms of common standards of proper speaking.

Other examples can be given to illustrate how the Rambleros men exploited swearing and tabooed themes. For instance, I was once explaining to Raquel (a woman in my sample) the plot of a film, "Gorillas in the Mist" where a woman biologist manages to keep illegal hunting at bay in an African natural reserve. Pablo, who was overhearing, intervened to retell the plot of the film transformed into a pornographic movie [NB03: 18-20]. There was also a game consisting of smacking people's foreheads when someone produced a loud burp. The smack could only be avoided by placing one's thumb on one's forehead [NB02: 92-3].

It is because displays of transgression are used to constitute masculine identities that these ways of talking or playing make sense. Swearing was a constitutive feature of these particular social activities and their corresponding speech genres. It is therefore logical that the use of such speech styles be a requirement for participation in these activities.

This transgressive principle is, I believe, useful to understand the meanings associated with many language varieties and styles. Their character does not come simply from their being ascribed to a

particular social stratum, and their use does not necessarily seek to redefine social standards of language use and etiquette. Their meanings and practices depend very much on the terms in which authority is defined at particular historical moments because, in a way, they are a negative reflection of it. This is probably why religious swearing is seemingly disappearing now that the church has acquired a much lower profile in public life.

Nevertheless, the exploitation of transgression can also be reinterpreted in terms of political struggle. In subsection 4.31, which is devoted to the Trepas, I develop this theme further. Now, in order to show the contrast between different ways of constructing the meanings of swearing, I will show how the Rambleros women used swearing words.

b) Women's appropriation of swearing

Common sense and much sociolinguistic research has traditionally associated women with more 'correct' ways of speaking: the use of phonological forms closer to the standard (Trudgill, 1972, 1974) and lesser use of vernacular styles such as slang and argot. Other researchers have challenged or qualified these findings (Cheshire, 1982; see again De Klerk, 1992). Most of these studies have relied basically on quantification, and rarely on close analysis of conversations that could detect important qualitative differences between the way women and men swear. Let us look, then, into the following example from the group discussion, where Raquel was arguing why she did not want to wear high heels:

Extract 3

Raquel: ...If we have to stay all day standing, all night, for instance, if we go to dance or so · >with heels, short skirt ·
Luis: <You wanna wear a short skirt just to sit down?
Raquel: mmmm · Well, but, [Luis laughs] *>fuck!*
Paula: <No >(xx) now and then.
Raquel: <it's that · you haven't- you've never been >with- · with- with heels...
[GB06: 177-84]

Here Raquel's second intervention was, in the original Spanish: "***Hombre, pero, joer!***". "***Joer*** "comes from "***joder***", a very worn out expression which means "fuck", but with a much more diminished character than the English equivalent. Both "***Hombre***" and "***Joer***" were what Goffman (1981: 79) calls exclamations, which is a type of self-remark or self-talk. Exclamations usually express a spontaneous reaction of the speaker towards a particular element of the situation. As such, they are not addressed to the audience strictly speaking, although they may be used to convey to the audience a particular alignment of the speaker towards this element. The main characteristic of self-addressed remarks is that they are not meant to be responded to: "Hombre!" (Spanish for "man"), in this example, did not address any of the men in the room, and it could well have been uttered in a women-only conversation. Use of swearing in exclamations of this kind was very usual among the women in both groups, and because they were not addressed to the audience, they could not be taken as part of any game of verbal aggression. This 'self-remark' genre was not meant to display creativeness in the same way as men's swearing did. The Rambleros women were not involved in developing and renewing the usual themes of sex, religion and scatology. They normally drew upon very worn out expressions: ***hostia*** (the communion wafer), ***joder, mierda*** (shit); and often upon their euphemised forms: "***hosti***", "***jolín***"; or other expressions which would be considered as non-dirty exclamations.

Another form of women's swearing appeared inserted in narratives:

Extract 4

Paula: ...what- what I am not going to do, what I am not going to do, I am not the one who enters the group [woman laughs] · · *it- it's her, therefore · I'm not gonna go and lick her ass so that she stays*
Pablo: Uoow! how rough!
[GB06: 793-99]

Here Paula was expressing her line of reasoning with respect to a particular situation. She did it by animating a dialogue through which we could appreciate why she had made a particular decision in the past. The expression served to convey that, had she insisted on expressing interest in a woman's friendship when she was not reciprocated, that she would have put herself in a demeaning situation. The expression referred was again a very common one, not an elaborated stylistical creation, although it had a lively effect on the audience in this situation because of the emphasis she put on it, and because the audience was paying attention very silently.

This allowed Pablo to highlight the fact that bad language had been used. Pablo's comment here should not be taken at face value though. He was a very insistent swearer. In my data, I have many instances of women chiding men for the use of bad language, for 'mispronouncing' words, for not being dressed properly, for picking their noses, farting or burping. In this sense, the situations where men did so constituted a humorous recasting of the women's voices, which served both to expose them in an embarrassing position, and to justify oneself by showing that women were not an example of proper manners.

In some occasions, a woman would utter an exclamation about the dirty exclamation she had just uttered, and typically bring her hands to her mouth thus implying that the word had been uttered unintentionally. This occurred, of course, in situations where I was present, and where my presence was possibly one of the reasons for the embarrassment.

These examples suggests that the Rambleros women were especially sensitive as to the conditions in which they could safely swear without being seen in a negative light. They would tend to swear at particular junctures of a conversation or a situation where a sense of surprise or anger was conveyed. In such occasions, the subject had the potential claim of diminished responsibility (for having got carried away) or at least of exceptionality. Such uses of swearing suggest that women swore in a kind of guarded way, as they tried to prevent loss of reputation. Very rarely did they swear in the form of insults, except when they were teased or harassed by the men. Their swearing was like a voice they kept at a safe distance, not as a true aspect of themselves. Patricia, from the Trepas, illustrated this distinction when she described how she used to swear in the past, before she got accustomed to do it much more often as a result of her feminism:

Extract 5.

Patricia: I don't know. I- some things · · for me the so- when I used to say "son of a bitch" it was when I hit myself with a nai- when I was hitting a nail and I hit myself with the hammer. And I used to said "son of a bitch", or when something fell to the floor, like that, · but I didn't say "son of a bitch" like this [now], *come on*: "son of a bitch", or say "*it makes my [genitals] sweat*" I never used to say that either. [IA04: 680-6]

I do not mean by this that women were more sensitive than men to the way they displayed themselves to others, nor that men and women had different standards of hygiene and demeanour. It was rather that men

and women manipulated the ideas of hygiene and demeanour in a different way according to the rituals they engaged in and the identities they sought to display. Masculine swearing had to go further if men were to produce interest and excitement in and around the particular games that they organised. Most women, as I will show in the next subsection (4.22), had different agendas.

c) The exploitation of risk: risk to face

The exploitation of different types of risk, risk to body or risk to face, was another key aspect of the Rambleros men's form of masculinity. In the following section (4.3), I will show that it was this aspect that set the strongest contrast between their form of masculinity and that of the Trepas people. The organisation of and participation in risky events of various kinds allowed for the display of wit, physical strength and aggressiveness usually associated with the imagery of masculinity. Additionally, it created an interactional focus of interest that could be treated as relevant (fun, exciting, interesting) in its own right, and which was external in the sense in which I have defined this above.

Although a risk to face can also be produced through the symbolic implications of physical acts, I will deal here only with threats to face produced through language. I call these 'verbal aggressions', and extract 1 above can be taken as a good example of this type. The game works as participants produced statements that discredited others and responded to others' statements. Threats to face stood on the assumption that men should be heterosexual and should have remarkable sexual prowess. Shorter genres such as insults, 'telling-offs', also usual amongst the Rambleros, can be included in this class as well.

A further qualification needs to be made in order to give an accurate account of how these events were experienced by the Rambleros men. Verbal aggression was constructed as a game. In Goffman's terms, again, it constituted a "keyed" frame, as it was patterned after another activity but it was not meant to be taken as a 'real' instance of its model (Goffman, 1974: 43). Luis said in his interview:

Extract 6

Luis: We are more · cut from another pattern, we are more brutish, right? More- · We like to hit and hassle each other, when we don't know what to talk about: to insult each other to provoke and all that. · · Well, yes, we are more- [He laughs] · *Well you've already seen it that-. Hanging around, isn't it? You don't know what to do: "'Ricky', you gonna eat my cock!", and the other one gets cross, (he gives-), "I'm gonna hit you", "punch". · · Of course never- · but it is only, only between us, I mean we never hassle [other] people or, · · to have a good time, to- to- we always have something to laugh about right? Well, · when we don't know what to laugh about, well, we insult each other* [He laughs] · · *without doing it- I mean with no bad- intent, never, right? You've already seen it, haven't you?* [IB04: 611-32]

In the interviews, three out of the four Rambleros men dramatised verbal aggressions and said that they were not meant to cause real offence. Although verbal aggression games such as those I have described did not have a name, as in Labov's (1972a) study of inner city gangs, the rules were quite well established. They consisted of presenting someone in a demeaning way (for instance, by animating him or her in talk as being involved in a demeaning course of action). On the other hand, face-threatening actions, and the use of dirty language, offered opportunities of transgression from commonly accepted norms of respect to others and of linguistic propriety.

The keyed character of verbal aggressions allowed them to be embedded in other situations without endangering a particular course of action (which would happen if somebody's dignity was 'seriously' put in doubt). For example, when negotiating what movie to see in the cinema, strong insults and rejections could be distributed without endangering the line of discussion.

Nevertheless, some conditions had to be met so that this type of frame could be sustained. Mateo, in his interview, mentioned that they could do this because they knew each other from a long time ago [IB05: 467-78]. In a situation where one is very vociferously insulted, it is not that easy to ignore the potentially demeaning signification.[2] The Rambleros men could accept a verbal aggression because they knew that their reputation or their status as participants in the various activities of the group was not really threatened. Such a state of affairs must have been made possible thanks to the group's history, where the members had shown that they counted upon and cared about each other. For instance, their strong rejection of Andrés' proposal that they should go and eat a sandwich was acceptable as long as there was the expectation that Andrés' needs would be somehow taken into consideration. In this sense, I felt that the people of this group -including the men- were quite considerate and responsible towards each other. This is evidence of how the meaning potential of utterances could be open to negotiation and was dependent on the relationships established within the group.

This frame started to crack, nevertheless, in situations where a member's interventions were repeatedly transformed into ridicule without consideration for the person's actual intentions. In both groups, there were some temporary lines of mocking a particular person quite insistently, this person becoming for a while a kind of buffoon. In such cases, the person's possibilities for participation in discussions and games could become quite restricted because his or her interventions were never taken in their intended meaning. It was quite obvious sometimes that these individuals ended up not getting any fun at all out of the game, and they could get really worked up or depressed.

Favoured victims of verbal aggression were the women of the group. The "eat my cock" phrase, mentioned in relation to extract 1, was one of the games directed at them. I saw once Ricardo saying it to Irene, one of the women. She responded with a very strong disparagement of Ricardo's suitability as a sexual partner. This response, though, was not meant to be taken as an engagement in a verbal aggression game, but as a rejection of it. Precisely because Irene's intervention might have been taken as an excuse to keep playing, she took care of going away immediately thus implying that the interaction was over. Similar instances of women 'telling off' men were common, not only as a reaction to verbal aggressions, but also to swearing or dirty narratives. Women found such games demeaning sometimes even when they did not participate actively in them and were only expected to listen or show minimal appreciation. Men seemed to enjoy provoking these reactions as a game in itself.

Sometimes, women did participate as spectators of men's verbal aggression games, swearing or dirty jokes. It was perfectly possible for the women to laugh, show appreciation or even, exceptionally, contribute in particular situations. This was often done in a way that implied that this participation was involuntary: for instance, to laugh as if one could not have avoided it, sometimes adding dismissive comments on the man who had produced the dirty language. The following anecdote illustrates this possibility:

Extract 7

> We went on a holiday trip to a tourist resort in southern Spain. One day, as we were walking from the camping to the town, Pablo started a narrative describing, in a very scatological way, the supposed masturbative practices of one of the women present. At first he was told off by the other women but encouraged by the appreciation of the men. As he developed the narrative, he came up with such imaginative elements that the whole audience, men and women, broke into seemingly uncontrollable laughter. [My own recollection]

d) Diminished risk: teasing

Teasing is a genre common to any social group in society, although clearly not appropriate for any social situation. It seems to have much in common with verbal aggression in that it consists of performing acts or producing utterances which in some way threaten the honourability of a person, but normally in an easily repairable way. Amongst the Rambleros, women teased a lot, much of their teasing being directed at the men, one could say, as sweet revenge for being hassled verbally. In the following episode, Ricardo was teased because he had had his hair cut:

Extract 8

Noia1: vaya pelada eh[?]
Woman1: What a 'shearing', yeah?

Noia2: es verdá
Woman2: That's right!

Noia3: eh verdá riquini te hah pelao
Woman3: That's right! Riquini, you've been sheared!

Paula: (eh que) quiere ligar eh[?]
(It's because) he wants to pick up [girls], yeah?

Pablo: **[cridant]** ***riquini***
[shouting] *Riquini!* [NB01: 37-8]

In this situation, the women's ironic intention came across basically through their tone, which was probably accompanied by caresses on Ricardo's (nicknamed "Riquini") hair, which he had had cut recently. Paula's suggestion that the haircut had been done to "*pick up girls*" referred to a typical masculine theme, and it contained a suggestion that Ricardo was not completely successful in these matters. In another occasion, as the men were playing 5-a-side football, Paula (who was watching the match together with the rest of the women) kept shouting deriding suggestions, such as that Mateo's sportswear looked like a pyjamas, and that he looked as if he was wearing a skirt [NB02: 1-3, 35-49].

Cross-gender teasing is considered by Thorne (1993: 78-9) as "borderwork": a way of playfully acting out gender conflict in the form of fighting, teasing, bothering and hassling. The distinction I make between teasing and verbal aggression is to highlight the fact that, in teasing, one needn't manipulate elements of tabooed lines of verbal aggression. Here we are talking about features of people's actions, minor accidents with no serious consequences, temporary losses of self control due to alcohol or distraction, failures to appreciate the nature of a state of affairs and giving wrong reactions, or inadequate features of one's body such as posture, quality of dress, hair-style, sizes of bodily organs and so on. These elements were perfectly legitimate in women's talk, as long as teasing was conducted with appropriate tact. Paula also reported highly organised teasing on a night out the women took by themselves:

Extract 9

Paula: ...look, we [women] went out · by ourselves, and we got into mimicking each other · on the way we dance. · Aand we picked · we picked on each other's defects... [GB05: 230-7]

It is significant that teasing can usually be done between friends. The moderate transgression of one's face-saving duties is meant to be understood in the context of a long sustained relationship where the

participants are effectively giving each other a lot. Conversely, it can be used to signal willingness to treat or to be treated in friendly terms even when the background relationship is not there. An important difference between teasing and verbal aggression can be shown through the way I was treated. I could very easily be the object of teasing, but not so easily of verbal aggression. One day, as we played table-football in couples (another male competitive game), team mates regularly took to insulting and criticising each other when things went wrong. Nevertheless, my team-mate did not feel he could do this with me and all the time we kept blaming ourselves for failures and 'cock-ups'.

Paula's report in extract 9 about the women's teasing is, in the context of this group, very significant. She talked about highly organised teasing during a significantly long period of time on a special occasion, that is, one night the women chose to go out by themselves. The implication seems to be that such activities could not be organised when men were around. Indeed, in the group discussion, the women said that they often resented the teasing from men. One of the delicate topics was dress, hair-style, physical appearance in general. Goodwin (1990: 46) also notes that "Girls compare each other with respect to physical appearance and friendship alliances" and presents an example where dressing plays a very important role in a conflict between girls (ibid.: 221-223). In my fieldwork, I did not hear women talking about dressing and hair-style extensively as it is sometimes stereotypically reported. But it was clear that they were aware of these issues, as they usually made supportive comments to each other about looks. In the following extract, Irene argued why she wore skirts and shorts when she went on holiday but did not dare to do it in the group:

Extract 10

Irene: But here I don't come down, yeah? Because I know that if I come down: "Hey lass, and so on and so forth". If you [don't] scoff about my ass, you will scoff me about my legs.
Luis: And you would take it badly. Why? [*Irene: yeah*!] *Because you think that we would not like to see you with a skirt?*
Joan: No maybe because you wanna dress as you like and you don't like people commenting on it, throwing it at you
Irene: Of course
Raquel: Because it is all afternoon scoffing Irene about her
Laura: And at the end, you get worn out, and you don't put it on.
[GB05: 647-660]

The men's teasing was therefore perceived as too strong or too insistent sometimes. So my impression is that women's teasing involved an implicit agreement not to carry the lines beyond the limits of their own game, and especially not to make the jokes available to the men, who could make less tactful uses of them. This does not amount to saying that women were more sensitive to teasing than men. As Irene implied in the following extract, men must also have had their weak points:

Extract 11

Irene: if we scoff at you you take it · you take it really bad.· But then, to us- No, you scoff at us and we cannot take it bad because "come on!" [GB05: 19-24]

e) Physical risk and aggressiveness

If I compare my impressions about Catalonia and Britain, I perceive significant differences with regard to fighting culture. Generally speaking, I would say that, in Catalonia, bullying and fighting does not have such a constitutive role in men's relationships as seems to be implied by the English literature. The works

of Willis (1977), Hewitt, (1986), Jackson (1990: 188) and Phillips (1993: 225) suggest that real fighting has a very central role amongst the gangs of young men. It remains to be seen whether there is a class bias in the impression fostered by this research, and also on the media coverage in Britain, which commonly portrays young people as violent.

In my childhood, there were fights and confrontations, but fighting ability did not seem to play a significant role in establishing group membership or popularity ranking. I do remember recurrent stories of big fights and long-lasting feuds amongst groups from different towns. But those seemingly disappeared in the early 70s, which may be a sign of some silent social change.

In Barcelona, only a few skin-head groups, extreme right activists and inner city gangs are known to be violent. Football fans are generally seen as very peaceful. I am not aware of inner-city riots having ever occurred either. Nevertheless, there is a kind of fighting culture in Spain, in a way embodied by the stereotypical "***chulo***", as commented with regard to extract 1. In my native town, it is common amongst Catalan speakers to dramatise voices from fighting rituals with a switch to Spanish, which may reflect the fact that many aggressive gangs in my childhood were usually of working-class Spanish-speaking origin. Native Catalans do participate in these things as well, though. I remember, during my fieldwork in Barcelona, a Catalan speaker narrating in great detail how he had smashed a car. The narrative contained a great deal of code-switching, which suggests that the fighting ethos may be constructed as a Spanish thing. Vandalism is, though, very common: litter bins and the toilets in pubs must be repaired regularly.

I never saw the Rambleros men getting involved in street fights. Nevertheless, Luis reported having done so in the military service. He was telling me here that he occasionally joins a gang of people he met there:

Extract 12

Luis: *It's that it's another kind of ball-game. They are more "tacataca", right? more the "lolailo" type* [people associated with some forms of Spanish folk music, typically lower class, also Romanies], *smoking lots of joints and creating the- · trouble in the streets, pushing people around, well, · · Hanging around and singing in the streets, and if somebody jumps up, then you go for trouble, right? Aand · · create trouble, right? er- · "Eeeh! what's up", · Well the typical thing in the [military] service, right? that- · We did it in Segovia and: "we are the fourth of 90!", "eeh!". And when somebody from another turn came, · we always went foor er trouble. · Or · "we are Parashooters", "Well, we are from the Armoured Brigade". And there was a history of- of- · of fights for many years, right?. · "Where are the Armoured Brigade guys?", "They've gone to such and such pub". So there we go. Ugh, and we had real brawls there.* [IB04: 463-480]

Clearly Luis was happy to display readiness to fight; but engaging in actual fighting depends very much on the possibility of associating with people who are willing to organise fights and to respond to provocation. In this sense, the military service seemed to provide a sort of backstage for behaviour which needed not be brought home. The military service has many such traditions, such as bullying new recruits or Catalans, which are passed through generations of conscripts.

As Luis' quote in extract 6 implies, verbal aggression had a kind of continuity with fighting. So men would organise keyed, playful fights within the group. The Rambleros men reported that they had fought playfully in the beach [GB05: 223-225], a situation which I also witnessed with some of the Trepas men. Playful pushes and casual blows were also very usual, and here it was also possible for women to participate. They usually hit the men, which was again a form of cross-gender "borderwork", as defined by Thorne (1993). I did not witness any such play between women, although it is obviously possible. In the group discussions, the topic came up as if they did it very often [GB04: 418-441], although I had not

witnessed much of it in my fieldwork. Both Paula and Andrés complained that the blows (from men and women respectively) were sometimes too strong [GB04: 418-428, 432-442].

The problem of games of threat is precisely that players cannot disclose how far they are prepared to go because this would discredit any sense of threat, and an acceptable balance in the game requires an acceptable level of potential damage. But then, women are known not to be prepared to go really far. Thorne (ibid.) mentions that girls' unserious fighting and chasing never gets really rough, whereas that of the boys usually does. This may be because boys are oriented to showing superiority (even if playfully) whereas women are not. These niceties of frame negotiation had a significant bearing how men and women approached teasing and fighting. In the following extract, there is an interesting discussion where Raquel and Paula were arguing why women got the worst of teasing and fighting:

Extract 13

Luis: Well then just show me what the difference is between you- ·
Raquel: It's cause you > (xx be right)
Luis: <You can take the piss off me and if the moment comes I get worked up, I say "look, you shut up or I'm gonna break your head."
Raquel: But I am not capable of saying such thing
Paula: Why, why
Raquel: Because I am >of a different character
Paula: <Luis · >(xx) I'm telling you something else
Luis: <Okay · Fine! · I'am saying something else > · not the strength alright.
Paula: <I'm · I'm telling yo- · >I'm telling yoou
Raquel: <(because if I) tell >you "I'm gonna break your head"
Paula: <that I'm gonna brak your head >and you'll burst out laughing!
Luis: <Okay. Not strength, not strength. She takes the piss off me and I tell her: > Okay, okay?
Raquel: <And on top of all he breaks mine, · you know? [she laughs]
[GB05: 328-45]

Women could not go as far as men in games of threat. One of the reasons may be that they were sensitive to the implications of presenting themselves as too rough. Raquel's statement that she was not capable of "saying such thing" did not mean, of course, that she was not capable literally, but that she felt not prepared to take on the implications of doing such thing. As an illustration of this, I can mention the fact that one of the women was very seriously singled out for criticism -by a man and a woman- for hitting too strongly, whereas no man was singled out in this discussion [GB04: 438-440] (see also section 4.23 on crossing). Women's inroads into displays of aggressivity were, therefore, of a limited scope. It was, in a way, the men's 'symbolic territory'.

It is also important to consider to whom these displays were actually addressed:

Extract 14

Luis: ... when we don't know what to laugh about, well, we insult each other [He laughs] · · *without doing it- I mean with no bad- intent, never, right? You've already seen it, haven't you? Even- · even people who are not with us and are (not) paying attention can have a good time, they can laugh. When we take the tube and we hassle each other, · and people are around, they listen and la- laugh and all that.* [IB04: 625-32]

So bystanders could be treated potentially as audience as well. I have also had this impression with many Spanish and southern European groups, which is congruent with the common stereotype that people from

these cultures speak louder. Equally, I perceived that the point of fighting, verbal aggression or teasing was not what happened between speaker (or doer) and addressee, but what a wider audience assessed as happening between them. The point was not in what was being said but in the scene being created. A consequence of this should be that people would not do it when only two people were present. This hypothesis would be difficult to check, as an observer automatically constitutes an audience, and two isolated participants could always have a reason to consider themselves as audience. But it remains a fact that these events were possible because the group usually organised itself in a collective format, i.e. as having a common line rather than multiple groups having multiple lines. And in this context, the displays analysed always received reactions and appreciation from others.

In some of the things they said, the Rambleros men displayed their readiness to fight. In spite of this, I never saw that they sought to get involved in fights when we went out. Occasionally, a low key form of violence could appear when playing football. Nevertheless, they would present themselves as not starting it. One day when we played five-a-side football, the other team had an exceedingly tough defender (I can corroborate it, my leg felt it). He reportedly cooled down after a couple of 'special interventions' made by members of my team. These occurred nevertheless within the frame of the game, not as a direct aggression: just a foot going further than it should, as is customary in football.

In some hard-rock music concerts there is a game of strong pushes combined with dancing where individuals can be propelled across long distances sometimes landing on distracted bystanders. It is probably a derivation of the Punk Slam Dance as described by Roman (1988). Luis suggested that wrangling was one of the attractions of Heavy Metal concerts [GB06: 264-271]. Indeed, the literature corroborates the stereotypical aggressiveness of Heavy Metal music, which is shown not only in its sound, but also in the artists' stage performances and the iconography (Straw, 1990; Breen, 1991).

> "The clothes, the music narcissism and the male bravado (with its attenuated 'female' vocals) allows the music and its performance to find a location within an oppositional rock-music tradition" (Ibid.: 194)

Luis himself pointed out that he was the first in liking Heavy Metal amongst his siblings by saying "*At the beginning, I was the violent Heavy Metal [of the group]*" [IB04: 1166-1168]. Except one, all Rambleros men were confessed "heavies", and would get together to read specialised magazines, attend concerts and go to heavies' pubs. They were highly knowledgeable on all the issues linked to Heavy Metal music and rock music in general: once I was asked to buy a particular CD which they knew had been only issued in Britain.

The taste for Heavy Metal can be an example of another way of constructing an aggressive ethos: participating in aggressive shows as a spectator. The Rambleros men liked to get near to the scenes of street fights, even if they did not get involved in them. Sometimes, they even participated in the typical face-saving negotiations even though they might not be acquainted with any of the offended parts. Women would keep away at a longer distance, and later they would fish for an account of the story from the men, who would be able to build exciting narratives and to give a certain impression of superiority with regard to people who fight for petty reasons.

4.22 Feminine agendas

Up to now, I have focused on themes that were central to the construction of masculine identities. The activities and displays described so far probably match our general ideas about what young people do in their leisure activities: swearing, playful or serious fighting, drinking, drug taking, listening to music (some of these aspects are further explored in subsection 4.31). This may well be because our ideas about what young people do may be based on what young men do. Indeed, the activities of young men are usually (they certainly were in this case) the most visible and vociferous in these contexts. Thorne (1993)

points out, for example, that in a school playground, the boys tend to occupy most of the space available. In the events described, women seemed to participate in a peripheral way; or alternatively, they engaged in similar activities but in diminished or euphemised forms. They seemed to struggle between two agendas: that of gaining status as full participants in the general merriment (in order to enjoy themselves, to have friends, to learn things) and that of maintaining and developing the qualities, relationships and identities desired by and expected of young women in their social context.

On the basis of these considerations, we might be led to conclude that the Rambleros were essentially a male-dominated group. While in subsection 5.11 I will argue that this is generally true, such a partial account would not do justice to the Rambleros women. I have offered a very fragmented view of women, always considering their ways of participation in activities associated with the men. As a result, I have stressed the features of femininity that appeared to limit their suitability as participants in these events. The view I have been giving of women is probably congruent with many male-centred discourses which present femininity in terms of women's inadequacies. Coates (1988: 121) has pointed out that research on women's language, in focusing in cross-gender interaction, has traditionally described it in a "negative tone" by seeing it as "weak and tentative". Cameron (1994) has also denounced popular and academic discourses on gender that are based on the assumption that masculine ways are the norm and feminine features are deviant and problematic. In this section, therefore, I will reverse my focus and try to conceptualise what women were seeking and what they brought into the social spaces I investigated. The question is, therefore: what agendas women had? What qualities, relationships and identities were they trying to develop?

a) Displays of intimacy

In section 4.1 I have mentioned that much research on gender, particularly amongst children, has established that girls are generally interested in developing friendships or relationships. It is therefore typical that they organise their interactions in dyads, i.e. groups of two persons devoted to talk and to develop their relationships. In these events, participants are expected or are given opportunities to display intimacy, i.e. to express or imply interest in each other's lives, emotions, experiences, secrets, fears and happinesses.

I will call these types of events "intimations", by which I seek to stress that they constitute active processes where intimacy is produced (even if this is not the common meaning of the word in English). In my data, intimation did not necessarily consist of sharing very sensitive secrets. Most of the conversations I had access to involved no serious dangers of exposure. One of their most common features was 'to catch up' on news, where the participants simply updated each other on any new development in their respective lives: most of the 'news items' were quite harmless to anybody[3]:

Extract 15

Silvia: No, for instance · last night Natalia was telling me that she felt very depressed, right? because she could see that she did not have any qualifications and that · well that she did not have any qualifications, that's what she thought, right? And, I mean she felt very bad, when she found herself with no job, her studies halfway through, that · she had to start working but she had not found a job and that, she has not actually started looking for one, right? And all- it's a bit of everything, we were talking like that, rather, because I saw she was a bit depressed I asked what was wrong. And I asked her that what was wrong, (yeah?) · And I asked her, well· · what what was wrong, no and · · · And that's why, right?. Th- They [the men] were smoking a joint so "what are we gonna do?" So we started talking right? Also, I had not seen her since before Christmas and all that right? [I didn't know] whether she

had had a good time in the village and all that, I asked her right? If she had been to the village. And she did, well, [she asked] me just the same. [IA03: 1254-77]

In their joint interview, Silvia and Jaume (from the Trepas) had been discussing an event which had taken place the day before. Jaume was complaining that he and Chimo had felt left out because Silvia and Natalia had withdrawn to talk by themselves. Interestingly enough, Jaume said that he had also asked Natalia what was wrong with her. Nevertheless, Natalia had avoided the question and only engaged in conversation about it later with Silvia. Natalia, undoubtedly, had seen the issue as not appropriate to talk about with Jaume. Natalia's intimations with Silvia were embedded in a developing relationship where such events were a constitutive routine feature, whereas this was not the case with Jaume. Clara generalised this type of situation to all the women of the Trepas, saying that they paid continuous attention to what each other felt on a day to day, sometimes on an hour to hour, basis [IA10: 383-401].

Later on, Silvia also implied that it was necessary that these events included a reduced number of participants:

Extract 16

Silvia: but it may well happen that we arrange, and Natalia and I have have arranged to meet. "Ah!" then says Clara, "Then I will come as well", I don't know, or Patricia, right?: "Ah! Then I am coming as well". Then if we meet four or five then it's a big fuss. If we st- start to talk again about sorrows · with lots of people around, then, · it- it is not possible either, right?. Therefore, well, of course we just seized the opportunity at that moment right? and said: "Now we are gonna talk, yeah?" [IA03: 1355-66]

Silvia must have known, as I did, that Natalia and Clara were also quite intimate. In this sense, Clara could have participated just as well. Silvia was merely implying that two or three participants was all right, but that four or five was already too much. This is probably because too many participants would have made displays of interest and intimacy practically more difficult. Interest is expressed through involvement, reciprocity and sympathy. If the number of participants grows, it is likely that the interaction will not supply opportunities to develop as far as intended: topics may not be explored fully enough, all the participants' interests must be accommodated.

I believe that the women's capacity to organise displays of intimacy and personal interest had a great bearing upon my own experience of socialisation into the groups. In both groups, my entry and integration was facilitated by women, and it was with them that I had to talk and sort out the issues arising from my 'intrusion'. It was with them that I first engaged in sessions of exchange of news, negotiations and organisation. Almost as a natural result, this created a situation where 'catching up' and later 'confiding' became a normal state of affairs. I also made an effort to extend this practice to as many women as I could, because I was interested in getting to know everyone. This was also made possible because, from the start, most women showed interest as well. Most of the times, they did this by coming straight to me and encouraging conversation, something that men rarely did. The first day I went out with the Rambleros, each woman came to me one by one and asked me who I was, what I was doing, whether I was having a good time and whether I would come back [FB05: 251-270; also FA04: 205-18]. For subsequent occasions, I could take these approaches as a signal that they would welcome any approach in the future.

Nevertheless, as a man, I must say that I did not find participation in these events easy. In the first stages of the fieldwork, I usually felt awkward and I was not sure of the point of some conversations. My interpretation is that my masculine assumptions led me to look for meaning in the topic of discussion rather than in the display of interest itself. I also felt there was awkwardness on their part, as if they were

also sensing this mismatch. Sometimes I felt at such a loss that, when I decided to ring them, I would write down a list of conversation topics to allow myself to relax and keep the conversation going smoothly.

But, on the other side, I also found positive sides to this experience: I felt I could actually talk about any topic, anything, whereas with the men I felt constrained to adapt to their usual lines such as stories of outrageous intoxications, of funny incidents, sexual themes, music and so on; with the men, I felt I had to restrict myself to making good jokes or to telling particularly interesting or extraordinary things related to their usual topics; with the women, I felt that legitimate topics included those that affected somebody personally in any way, and jokes were also acceptable; with the women, issues could be explored in more depth. In my own experience, I have also felt that in comparable situations women generally retell events and experiences with much more detail (for instance, explaining to a friend the vicissitudes of a trip or a holiday). I think that this was important in making my integration to the groups possible. For instance, I have plenty of conversations recorded where I talk with the Rambleros women about all kinds of details related to my research, particularly about the practical problems of recording talk [NB01: 17-19, 67-72, 124-8, 196-206]. I am convinced that, with regard to my integration in the groups, the women played a key role, as those who knew more about me must have helped others to understand what the situation was and what I was doing.

I also felt that the women were generally much better informed about what was going on in the group. This impression must have been fostered by the fact that exchange of information was a legitimate activity amongst them. With the men, it was more difficult to find the right moment to ask a question. For instance, at the beginning, I could not understand jokes and stories because of my lack of background information. In order to understand what was going on, I had to ask questions about the assumptions behind what was said. I increasingly felt that many men did not like this, because it somehow made them step out of the game and was a bit disruptive; whereas the women did not seem bothered at all by these interruptions and seemed to understand better why I put the questions.

b) Chatting

I use the common term 'chatting' or 'chat' to refer to a particular type of conversational activity organised by women. The difference between 'chats' and the one-to-one displays of intimacy mentioned above cannot always be very clear. As Silvia suggested in extract 16, when too many participants were involved, some types of 'intimation' were not possible. I will call 'chats' those situations where the conversation ceased to have a private, intimate character. They were typically situations with more than two participants, but this criterion cannot be strictly applied. This category would include the all-women groups that Coates (1988) portrays as engaging in 'gossip'. When speaking about women's talk in the literature, researchers do not usually make this distinction: they usually refer to both -'intimation' or 'chatting'- as 'gossip' (Gluckman, 1963; Jones, 1980).

The continuities between 'intimation' and 'chatting' could be detected in the atmosphere usually created in these situations. Coates (ibid.) points out that they involve a common exploration of issues and a certain ethos of equality and consideration for each person's contributions. On the basis of a convincing conversational analysis, she provides evidence of how the women she studied constructed their conversational lines in a very collaborative way.

If we accept that building relationships and ties is on top of women's agendas (Gilligan, 1982; Goodwin, 1990; Thorne, 1993), it is congruent to expect that women will also seek opportunities to display personal interest, sympathy and care in these 'chatting' events. Amongst the women I studied, attention to each other's faces seemed to be a priority. Teasing was certainly done with much more circumspection than amongst males or in cross-gender talk. Also, it was common for them to make supportive comments about their appearance, particularly when somebody turned up with a new dress or hairstyle. In subsection

4.32/c (page 187) I also show an example of how a politicised woman of the Trepas group went through the 'dress-appreciation-ritual' by displaying role-distance. These events must have surely made women feel that they had to be mindful of their appearance. Even those who tried to redefine their femininity by adopting a typical masculine I-don't-care-what-I-wear style, would show some concern about their appearance.

Other manifestations of this 'building relationships' agenda could be found in the topics chosen and in the way people chose to present themselves in narratives:

> Extract 17
>
> I once overheard a conversation between Silvia and Lola of the Trepas group. Silvia was talking about her relationship with Jaume, her boyfriend. I did notice how much she used the pronoun "we" thus representing herself within the perspective of her membership of the couple. At one moment she made the following statement:
>
> ***"Se me ha comprado unos pantalones violetas"***
> [He] himself me has bought some trousers violet
>
> This reflexive construction, which does not exist in English, can convey through the dative form "me" a sense of possession such as in "***se me rompió el vaso***=I broke my glass or my glass got broken. Salva, a man who overheard the conversation, teased Silvia for implying that her relationship with Jaume was too steady or too formal. [FA04: 269-273]

Here Silvia was portraying herself as a member of the Silvia-Jaume relationship. And even as she described Jaume's activities, she would linguistically represent herself in the text as a participant, thus implying that whatever Jaume did affected her as well. Salva's reaction is consistent with Gilligan's (1982) claims that men prefer to construct themselves as free individuals.

It is usually said that women talk about boyfriends, clothing, appearances and feelings. In my case, I can only say that I felt that the range of topics for conversation was much more restricted amongst men than amongst women. While in women's conversations I was expected to talk about anything that affected me, in men's events I had to engage in the already established themes and games which meant that the personal had to be pushed aside. Additionally, women seemed more prepared to discuss issues together with greater depth and length, even when those issues had little to do with what we usually consider to be 'fun'. I have a recording of the Rambleros women talking about a tax-rise which affected the business of one of the woman's parents [NB11: 67-154]. One day Lola (of the Trepas) recounted that she had nearly been hit by a young teenager wildly riding a motorbike. Some two yards away from her, the teenager collided head-on with a traffic fence without any helmet on and probably died. Lola was saying that she could not feel sorry for him because he knew he was acting dangerously and he could have killed her as well. Clara disagreed with her on the basis that this was too insensitive a view of the matter. They went on trying to find some common ground. I also remember getting involved with three or four Trepas women in a discussion about the Goliards, a religious order stemming from the Catar movement, which was crushed by a French-led invasion of Provence in the 13th century.

It can be said that some topics of conversations were associated with women and others with men. For instance, it was common for women to talk about boyfriends, relationships, appearances or other people's problems and anecdotes. The Rambleros men very usually talked about football, music and the military service. However, what made their talk quite different was the fact that the women seemed more prepared to engage in a focused conversation where each participant's points would be taken up seriously. This is the reason why, at the early stages of fieldwork, I got the impression that many conversations were

dominated by the women. In mixed-gender talk, women did not necessarily hand conversational control to men, but kept developing their topics. In these situations, it was common for men to participate from the sidelines, teasing and making jokes about what was being said. Extract 17 above is an example of this, and also the event mentioned above, where I was talking about cinema with Raquel, and Pablo kept chipping in making dirty comments [NB03: 18-20]:

Extract 18

[This is with the Rambleros group. At this point, they had asked me why I had not done the military service. I had answered that it was because in my year there was a population surplus. Paula, interestingly enough, had asked me whether I would have gone for conscientious objection, a possibility that the men of the group had not apparently considered themselves. Ricardo had commented on how lucky I was. Paula had then pointed out that the schools had had lower intakes of children that year]

Ricardo: oye pueh que · no me ehtraña cada ve hay meno niña
Listen, well... I am not surprised, if there are less and less girls...

· · [Pausa]
· · [Pause]

Joan: ***en en donde en donde once mil men- niños menos en***
Wh- Where eleven thousand le- kids less? Where...

Ricardo: en la ehcuelah
In the schools.

Paula: en las escuelas
In the schools.

Joan: ***de toda España?***
In the whole of Spain?

Ricardo: sí bueno en lo lo- en loh primario · · o sea en >(xxxx)
Yes. Well, in the- in the primary levels. · · That is >(xxxx)

Pablo: <>(xxxxx)

Joan: ***<pues son pocos entonces***
It's not a lot then.

Ricardo: no aquí en cataluña eh?
No. Here in Catalonia, right?

Paula: en cataluña.
In Catalonia.

Joan: ***cataluña cataluña sí***
Catalonia, Catalonia, yes.

(···)

Pablo: ***cada veh meno ··· pueh meno decrecido***
[If there are] fewer and fewer... Then [we get] less 'dwarves'.

Paula: **[veu alta]** ***idiota que eres cuando tengas tú un niño a ver si lo llamas tú***
[Loud voice] *What an idiot you are. When you have a child, are you going to call it*

también decrecido idiota
a dwarf as well? You idiot!

Pablo: **no pero lo llamaré cabezón.**
No, but I will call it big head.

Ricardo: **cabezón no pero pequeño saldrá.**
Not big head. But small it is bound to be. [NB01: 44-54]

Here Paula and I had been developing a topic of conversation to which Pablo and Ricardo had been adding things now and then, particularly because the military service was a topic that men liked. The underlined stretches signal departures from the topic. In the first, Ricardo's tone indicated that he was trying to make a joke -probably with a sexual innuendo- that was not very successful. In the end, Pablo's intervention was meant to provoke Paula and to discredit the seriousness of the topic by calling children "*dwarfs*". Ricardo's final intervention was a tease directed at Paula because of her short stature. The conversation went on to a verbal tit-for-tat.

It was probably because of this tendency of the men to turn any situation into a joke (most usually the Rambleros men) that the women often preferred to organise their own private chats[4]. And the women of both groups sometimes decided to go out on their own. The following extract illustrates many of the points that I have been trying to make on women's talk:

Extract 19

[The Rambleros were sitting around a table at a Cafe, and Paula decided to move to the next table, where some women acquaintances of hers were chatting.]

Paula: ei estoy (al lado) hablando un momento **[anant a la taula de les germanes de Ricardo]**
Hey, I'll be (there) talking for a minute [moving to the table where her acquaintances were sitting].

Pablo: llegar yyy
You get there aaand...

Ricardo: qué raro paula · · · >es raro
How strange, Paula · · · >That's strange.

Laura: <es raro que tu hables paula
<It is strange for you to talk, Paula.

Marta: ya que no viene la laura
'cause Laura is not coming...

Laura:* [cridant] *cachuperru ven tuu
[shouting a playful insult, literally "piece of dog" with phonological markers of a Spanish dialect or a catalanised phonology featuring an ignorant person]
"Cachuperru!". Why don't you come!

Marina:* [cridant] *renegada
[shouting] *Renegade!*

[Laura throws something at her]

Pablo: >*hala*
Gee!

***Laura:* <[rialla]**
[laughter].

Irene?: nena
Girl!

Pablo: qué guarra >la tía
How nasty, >that woman.

Ricardo: >si le (ha dao) en la cabesa se ha roto hombre
> She's really (hit her) on the head it's broken, man.

Laura: no le he dao verdá[?]
I didn't really hit her, did I?
[NA15: 270-85] [Cas 3 side b: 695-710]

Paula announced that she was joining the other group and that this 'disconnection' was going to be short ("***un momento***"). Nevertheless, because short withdrawals did not need to be normally justified, people understood that she was actually announcing a longer disconnection and that she had the intention of spending a while with her acquaintances. Hence the teasing from Ricardo: "*how strange*", and Laura: "*...of you to talk*". Ricardo and Laura pretended to be surprised. They used a serious tone in order to deceive Paula, so that she thought that they were saying something serious. Their remark was understood as ironical because Paula was already known publicly to be a big talker. Paula was being criticised.

In the situation created, Marta responded to various explicit and implicit meanings. She was one of the women who had arranged for Paula to talk with them. So she justified why Paula had been selected: because Laura was not prepared to come. The implications were that a) they acknowledged responsibility for Paula's withdrawal, and b) their decision was justified because they could not get Laura to do it instead. The implication was that Laura *should* actually have come as well, and therefore, that she was unfriendly to her friends. Marta's voice indicated that she was pretending, and the audience knew that such statements, when serious, were not normally aired publicly. Therefore Laura was being teased as being at fault vis-à-vis her friends. Consequently, Laura reacted by playfully insulting Marta ("***cachuperru***"), and Marta retorted with an insult that insisted on Laura's doubtful faithfulness ("*renegade!*"). To continue the tit-for-tat, Laura threw an object at Marta to be understood as a playful physical threat. After that, the keyed frame broke down because some members of the audience considered that things had gone too far.

Notice the type of insults, which, as I was discussed above, did not contain any element of the typical masculine swearing. Additionally, if we uncover the presuppositions behind the second example of

teasing, we find quite a different theme from that of masculine verbal aggressions. These presuppositions spoke about a world of reciprocal duties of displaying friendship through participation in talk. And the first teasing rested on the assumption that Paula talked too much, which is indicative of the status of women's talk amongst the Rambleros. I discuss this last issue in more depth below.

c) Men's intimation: the backstage of backstages

The stereotypic theme that women were 'too talkative' was common, especially amongst the Rambleros men. Ricardo told me once, as I was chatting with Paula, that I would get a headache by talking too often with the women. And when talking about the interviews, both Ricardo and Laura pointed out that interviewing women would give me a headache [NB01: 193-200]. Jaume, of the Trepas, said once that he found many women's conversations boring [GA02: 81-137], and he complained bitterly about women who withdrew their attention from the group and engaged in private talk:

Extract 20

Jaume: What happens is that the women, they do it · at moments where we may be all together · A- at least that's what happened yesterday right? We are all together and suddenly, well, you see them, and we [are left] there, right? Amazed, right? And I may be willing to talk with Chimo, I may be keeping it to myself for two days, not speaking because there are other people around. And I don't do it to have (xxx), I don't do it so as not to spoil the fun for other people right? Or else I say "Hey Chimo, wh- · what are you doing in the morning?" · "So and so", "okay so come down 'cause I want to talk to you", right? And that's it, right? · it's not- · it's not to hide it so to speak, right? · but it is not to spoil the fun of the people... [IA03: 1328-41]

Jaume clearly found that women's intimations did not constitute a legitimate activity in group gatherings. For him, they were diversions, peripheral activity, not an essential part of what a person seeks in the peer group, not part of the fun. They were, in Goffman's (1957) terms, an illegitimate "alienation from the interaction" which fails to honour the main line of activity, which in this case was defined by men. The Rambleros men's view of women as exceedingly talkative, as giving headaches (an equivalent of boring), was also based on the assumption that talk was not a fun-making activity. This evidence gives an indication of how the women's agendas were delegitimised in the groups. Assumptions about what fun was gave legitimacy to men's continuous humorous departures from the topic, as shown in extract 18.

In order to understand better the position of women's talk in the groups, it is interesting to consider the situations in which men engaged in displays of intimacy. In extract 20, Jaume implied that men also talked in an intimate way about their problems and things, but that this was a private matter not appropriate for when they were having fun. Amongst the Rambleros, I got indirect evidence that men shared their worries. In the group discussions, Luis and Pablo indicated with a certain clarity the ways they did it:

Extract 21

Luis: he and I, for instance, and er- in order to- · When some t- · Well we have gone out together the two of us alone · with nobody else · · And it's been in order to talk about- · I mean · · say · to let off steam, to tell things · (x) to tell things maybe because I needed to tell them to someone... [GB06: 426-33]

Pablo indicated the actual persons with whom he actually shared intimacies. They also commented that men were generally prepared to talk about their problems with women, but not the other way round, which raises the question of whether men expected reciprocity in the same way as women. Two members

of the group were also censored for allegedly being too reserved [GB06: 426-600]. Ricardo also acknowledged that he talked with his friends when he broke up with his girlfriend [IB08: 1183-1204].

From their comments, it seemed that men's displays of intimacy occurred behind the scenes of common and public masculine performances, backstage as it were. And also, that they were conducted as an extra-ordinary, exceptional, activity: the concept of "***desahogarse***" conveys an accumulation of tension which eventually must be liberated (it also works in my translation: 'letting off steam'). So feelings must be let out when they are perceived to be suffocating, but not on an everyday basis[5].

Thorne (1993: 94) claims that reciprocal self- disclosure is a constitutive feature of girls' friendships, whereas between boys self-disclosure is "far more likely to be exposed to others through joking and a kind of collective shaming". Jackson (1990), in his critical autobiography, also explains how he learnt how to hide his feelings from his mates not to make himself vulnerable. The fear of exposure can explain partly why some men chose to confess things with trusted friends and in isolation, in a bid to control the potential implications and uses of what it is done and said[6]. But I do not feel that this explanation helps to understand why men find it natural to organise things in this way. A key feature of masculine events, as I have shown in the previous subsection, is the display of involvement in objects (events, themes, games) external to the self. Concentration on somebody's personal circumstances is, in a men's gathering, in direct contradiction with whatever they seek to do there. It is from this perspective that we can understand the men's rejection of women's displays of intimacy as if women were uncollaborative: it means the imposition of the masculine logic as to what constitutes 'fun'[7], a logic which they impose first of all upon themselves.

4.23 Gender Crossing

It is to be expected that not all individuals will be happy with the possibilities open (and closed) to the members of their sex. Thorne (1993) speaks of gender crossing when individuals seek to participate in some of the events usually associated with the other sex. She argues that crossing practices constitute a "continuum" rather than a categorical gender switch, as people 'cross' gender boundaries in different degrees and in different ways. The literature also suggests that gender crossing decreases as children grow older, especially in adolescence. Thorne (1993: 132-133) says that crossing becomes very difficult amongst teenagers, as sexuality increases its bearing on the practices of the young. Jackson (1990: 125) gives an account of how his inroads into activities which people associates with women were hampered both by his teachers and by the pressure of the male peer-group. He also comments on how the practices and discourses of homophobia were used to enforce hegemonic views of masculinity.

This may well be the explanation why, in my research amongst 18 to 23 year-olds, crossing was not very visible. I did not even perceive it as a relevant issue during my fieldwork. It was much later, when I approached the data with the background of the literature, that I began finding connections between events and phenomena that I had considered as anecdotal. In the groups, I never saw anybody being called the Catalan or Spanish equivalents of "sissy" or "tomboy". There was, however, one man in the Trepas group who was with the women all the time. This was a different question altogether, as will be shown in subsection 4.32/b in the part devoted to "gender switching".

In my analysis, I have identified as 'crossers' (i.e. people who engaged in gender crossing) those who presented a cluster of features (appearance, tastes, interactive style, participation preferences) which, according to what I have said so far, were typical of members of the other sex[8]. I have also considered as 'crossers' people whose gender choices had nothing to do with a commitment to feminist mobilisation, although in actual social practice both types of trajectory had interesting connections: amongst the Trepas, the politicised environment made it possible for features of crossing to be displayed more freely.

The features which can be taken as evidence of gender crossing varied from individual to individual. In the case of women, in my data, gender crossing seemed to be invariably associated with adopting features of masculine speech: unmitigated swearing was common; amongst the Trepas women, extensive use of the inner-city argot repertoire; amongst the Rambleros women, aspiration of implosive /s/ or its deletion, and other features which distinguished men's and women's speech as described in subsection 5.11. In the interviews and group discussions, people made interesting comments about women who liked to participate in verbal aggression games or playful physical aggression beyond the level expected of other women, or women who drank a lot, were fond of men's styles of music and dressing, or liked the establishments (pubs, bars) preferred by men. Sometimes these women were mentioned as just exceptions to the rule, but sometimes they were also referred to in a humorous or even censoring tone. Interestingly enough, in all cases of women's crossing, I also detected a particular attraction for sport. This was manifested in various ways: similar alignments to football teams as men, or even willingness to play soccer or other sports either in the present or in childhood. In relation to dressing though, I did not see that women 'crossers' went as far as men in trying to display careless appearances. There was always the necessary tidiness through make-up, properly arranged hair and attention to detail.

In the case of men, crossing could be associated with displaying special concern for dress and appearance; conversely, with showing disinterest in masculine styles of music, in verbal aggression and heavy drinking. Speech patterns could get closer to the standard. There could be more readiness to show involvement in dancing (where men usually adopted very 'loose' types of movements), or to participate in activities which the other men avoided, such as singing romantic songs in a karaoke with the women. There could also be a fondness for forms of teenage or children's culture, from which other men distanced themselves.

I have no evidence that gender crossing hampered the individuals' possibilities of participating in events and activities with members of their own sex. Actually, in the case of men, there was little of joining women in their talk and more of playing with the effect of challenging existing patterns of appearance (by turning up, for instance, with a very flashy piece of clothing): it was a very assertive type of identity construction. But it is also true that not sharing some of the other men's tastes created some isolation with respect to the group of men. I saw no evidence of women 'crossers' giving up participation in feminine events. Also, amongst the Trepas, 'crossers' were half camouflaged amongst the (male and female) feminists. But among the Rambleros, because teasing was particularly usual and intense, gender crossers would give material for other members to work with, and such identities would be more problematised on a day-to-day basis. One of the women in particular seemed to have lost the right to expect the other women to attend to her face needs (in the sense that women would normally avoid teasing each other and would defend each other against teasing from the men).

The problem was that many events were organised in order to display a character and characteristics which we 'naturally' associate with a particular sex. And genders are very often defined in terms of oppositions. Therefore, in a context where teasing is a regular activity, men and women crossers will necessarily provide materials, because the displays they will seek to produce in one type of events may well discredit the displays sought in the other type of events. So a male 'crosser' will earn the qualification of "special" or "queer", and the female "crosser" that of "rough", as clearly happened among the young people I studied.

This stretch below from a group discussion among the Rambleros illustrates this phenomenon:

Extract 22

Paula: about his nose I have never teased him.
Irene: quite right.

Andrés: about my nose, about my way of dancing, · about my teeth, about my teeth, about my way of dancing about my way of dressing, about the way I am, well, anything! [GB05: 505-14]

And from an interview:

Extract 23

Luis: ...just like when Tere used to say ***"el curro"****, right?* ***"me voy al curro"*** [slang: *I'm going to work*] *"eeeh, what a laugh!",* ***"el curro"*** *damn, as if she waas · a kind of a miner right?* [He laughs]. [IB04: 671-4]

Rampton (1991) also uses the term "crossing", in this case to refer to the adoption of voices from other ethnic groups in the activities of working-class adolescents. He points out that, given the multiple meaning potentials of these practices, crossing does not necessarily involve the emergence of new paradigms of ethnic relations. My data on gender crossing seems to point to a similar conclusion. Gender crossing does not involve the creation of new forms of gender display, but a kind of combination between available options which is bound to be problematic if it is not accompanied by skilful tact. 'Crossers' did not constitute, strictly speaking, a class of their own with reasonably predictable patterns of participation and display. They all presented different ways of handling a delicate balance between the requirements and implications of participation in markedly gendered events of both sides. And it was this necessary ambiguity which made crossing practices sometimes overlap with feminist forms of gender.

Notes to section 4.2

[1] This may help us to understand, for instance, Johnson's perception of 'male gossip':

> "when I one introduced two male friends, I was intrigued by their ability to talk for over half an hour, revealing, in the process, relatively little about themselves beyond this shared interest in sport." (Johnson, 1994: 146)

[2] In Labov's (1972a) study, the games of verbal aggression seemed to have more of a competitive ethos, as it was being used to assert group hierarchy, and therefore people might have had less concern for the demeaning effects of the talk. Amongst the Rambleros, I generally perceived the goal to be that of producing simple merriment.

[3] My definition of intimation is similar to what Jones (1980: 197) calls "chatting" as a particular form of gossip characterised by intimacy and mutual self-disclosure.

[4] The group discussion with the Rambleros was particularly anarchic due to the men's tendency to joke about the situation rather than getting involved in it.

[5] In an interesting study on gender differences in graffiti, Bruner and Kelso (1980) found that male graffiti are generally "individualistic and deal with sex acts and organs" whereas women's graffiti tended to be "more conversational and deal with relationships" (Ibid.: 243). When asked to explain why they wrote such graffiti, males are quoted saying "everybody needs exploding space" or "you have to let it out, right?" whereas women come up with other types of justifications (Ibid. 246).

[6] And, incidentally, this also can help to understand why some forms of women's talk, like 'gossip', are perceived as threatening by many men. It may well be that criticisms to 'gossip' are based on men's assumptions about how people use information about others.

[7] I would like to raise attention here to the way intimation was framed by Luis: the notion of 'letting off steam' conveys a sense of distance between the person and the object. It suggests that the person is dealing with matters that are beyond his voluntary control: the object of disclosure is constructed as external to the self. A comparative study of the organisation of intimacy displays between women and men would probably yield fundamental differences as to how such situations are handled.

[8] This issue could be particularly sensitive for some of the people of my research. This is why I have adopted a mode of writing which tends to avoid reference to specific incidents and individuals. The most interesting cases can be found in my

data in the following locations: FB06: 230-4; FB10:14-15; FB11: 54-6; GA03: 209-39; GB01: 608-11; GB02: 40-4; GB03: 224-31, 237-44, 309-18, 397-403, 486-92, 1855-7; GB05: 143-179, 501-19, 538-61, 639-46, GB06: 81-95, 452-78, 508-25, IA05: 361-84, 524-67, 806-15, 1111-19, 1223-51, 1306-15; IA07: 485-98, 566-70, 842-55, 1264-81; IB01: 834-41, 1170-96; IB02: 94-6; IB04: 671-4; IB05: 895-907; IB06: 1055-116; IB07: 135-44; NA04: 209-33; NA15: 418-26; NB02: 74-6, 127-9, 164-5; NB03: 65-6, 100, 295-6.

4.3 The Trepas

In this section, I will seek to describe the gender identities constructed by some members of the Trepas group. The forms of identity described in the previous section, particularly the mainstream femininity of most Rambleros women and crossing, corresponded to some of the women of this group as well. Consequently, here I will only refer to a relatively distinct form of masculinity as compared to that of the Rambleros (4.31), and to the forms of gender that were a direct result of politicisation, particularly of identification with feminist ideas (4.32). The politicised members of the Trepas had been actively involved in leftist revolutionary parties, particularly in the sections reserved for young people, in feminist groups, and also in anti-military groups (i.e. for conscientious objection to conscription). Apart from the work involved in such organisations, they also sought to transform their practices within the peer group to make them consistent with the goals of equality and social justice. Later in subsection 5.12 I will also show that the existence of these politicised people created amongst the Trepas a distinctly different atmosphere as compared with that of the Rambleros.

4.31 Transgression and insubmission

Although I once saw members of the Trepas men engaged in a playful fight on the beach together with other students of their training-school, I can safely say that they were not really as interested in the exploitation of risk and the display of aggressivity as the Rambleros men were. Verbal aggression was totally non-existent, and their swearing was not as creative (except, occasionally, for some feminist women). The most significant references to aggression I have are Pepe's portraying of himself as a victim of it. He pointed out to me once that he had decided not to attend a concert he wished to go for fear of violence [FA15: 165-170]. And once he was beaten up by a group of American soldiers because he defiantly sang the international communist anthem as a provocation [FA07: 352-355]. Pepe and Salva usually presented themselves as victims of institutional violence, such as from the police. One of the songs written for their own music band was about this topic [NA12: 9-13]. Pepe also told me that his brother was arrested when the police clamped down on illegal vendors and beggars in the period previous to the Olympics.

Nevertheless, due to the multiple potential meanings of our actions, we could interpret the Trepas' commitment to politics as a way of developing a confrontational ethos as well. And their preferred music style, hard-core, in addition to its politically oppositional attitude, was imbued with a quite aggressive vocal performance (see below). It may well be that, in a particular situation, a Trepas man might want to display aggressiveness, but this was certainly not what was looked for and expected of their everyday interactions.

What I argue in this subsection is that the Trepas men preferred to exploit the effects of transgression of dominant standards of demeanour and appearance in constructing their particular form of masculinity. I have already mentioned the issue of transgression with regard to the Rambleros. Many of the points I will make here apply to them as well, particularly with regard to drug taking. As discussed in section 4.1, this is consistent with the features that the literature usually identifies with masculinity. Nevertheless, in the case of the Trepas, their forms of transgression were invested with their political outlook. And this made their practices ambivalent in the sense that they could also be seen as 'insubmissiveness'. Of course, this ambivalence allowed them to keep close to the forms of masculinity based on showing that one is good enough, or clever enough, to be able to break the rules and be one's own master. But the fact remained that they experienced their transgressions as a much more serious issue than the playful Rambleros men. Additionally, the fundamental feature of masculine interaction, that it relies on a common and impersonal object of interest, was largely maintained. As a result, the development of ties between men was clearly

dependent on the possibility of organising drug-taking, activities related to their music tastes, and talk centred on these same issues (including here political issues for those who shared this interest).

Insubmissiveness was visibly manifested in their appearance. They wore much more rough clothing than the reasonably tidy Rambleros. In their way of dressing, body positions and gestures, the Trepas presented themselves as very 'laid back', as if they were always tired, as if they had put on the first T-shirt they had found, with or without holes. This did not seem to be inconsistent, though, with wearing a nice and clean Rastafari hairstyle or a black leather jacket with carefully placed anarchist motifs. At weekends, men would not change much, and women would come with clothes that were just a bit more tidy but also very austere. One woman, who used to dress quite smartly before she joined the group, had played down her appearance.

a) Drug-taking

Consumption of legal (alcohol, tobacco) and illegal (cannabis derivatives, cocaine, stimulating pills) drugs is quite widespread amongst young Barcelonians. As for its potential transgressive value, it is worth bearing in mind that official discourses frame drug-taking in terms of its hazards to health and public safety. The law establishes some practices related to drugs as criminal, and drugs are totally forbidden at school (although restricted consumption of alcohol and tobacco is sometimes permitted).

In this context, drug consumption seemed to be almost obligatory amongst men, particularly when people went out at week-ends. To drink a lot was valued and recognised as something worth commenting and laughed about. Therefore, many men seemed to push themselves to drink more and more:

Extract 24

> "Yesterday [Mateo] did not go out because he did not have any money and he did not let his brother lend him any because he already owed too much money to too many people. He swallows the 'Cuba libres' like water. Like Luis, who says that once he took 27 'Cuba libres' as counted by his brother. And he says that they do not make him drunk. " [FB-FB11: 41-47]

One 'Cuba libre' is generally a combination between a soft drink and a strong liquor such as gin, rum, vodka or whisky. The dose of liquor is between three or four times bigger to what one gets in British pubs, say, for a gin-&-tonic. Although nights-out in Barcelona can easily span to 7 hours, I myself cannot drink more than five without losing, as Goffman puts it, "guiding control" of myself.

Apart from this kind of drinking competition, points were scored by going to bed as late as possible, ingesting a variety of other drugs in significant doses, ending up absolutely "pissed" and having extraordinary or funny things to tell as a consequence of this, such as uncommon sensorial effects (for instance, cocaine eliminates the feeling of tiredness and sometimes of drunkenness) or some misfortune or accident that can be transformed in a funny incident. All this would provide later for things to tell and would contribute to an assertion of the value of these activities within the group:

Extract 25

[Here I was sitting with some Trepas men at a cafe terrace in the afternoon]

Salva: el costa que se ha quedao too tonto tío
You know Costa, he's gone quite nuts, man.

Pepe: sí[?]
Has he?

Salva: porque el costa se ha pasao el verano de ajo · y se le va la olla ahora
Because Costa has spent the summer tripping [taking LSD] · . *And now his head drifts away*

que te pasas
quite bad.

Pepe: todo el verano · comiendo ajos y ahora[?]
All summer tripping, and now...?

Salva: se han pasado el* Juli *y el* Quim *todo el verano de ajos · y se ve que
Juli *and* Quim *have spent all summer tripping. And it seems that now you*

ahora pues que igual · te lo encuentras · normal no[?] pero al cabo
may well meet him: [everything] normal, right? But after a

de dos horas de estar hablando con él · el pavo empieza a decir · bue
couple of hours you've been talking to him, the guy starts saying "bue

bub bue bub yueb* [riure] *como sí s- se le acabaran lah pilah
bub bue bub yueb" [laugh] *as if h- his batteries were running*

***no[?]* [rialla].**
out, right? [laughter].

***Joan:* [rialla]**
[Laughter]

Salva: y el pavo no sabe lo que dice
And the guy doesn't know what he's saying.

Pepe: hub bub bub
[NA13: 157-197]

In his interview, Salva said once "*yesterday...I was with* Juli, *smoking and drinking a bit...*". Men almost identified getting together with drug-taking, particularly amongst the Trepas. When they played truant from the training school, they went to "*drink a few beers*" and "*smoke a few joints*" [IA02: 550-8, 76-81, 88-9]. One of the Rambleros men could not drink because of a permanent medical condition. This did not diminish his status in the group. Nevertheless, I found it interesting that he often wore a T-shirt featuring the logo of a popular whisky brand. The centrality of drug-taking for the construction of masculinity amongst the men of both groups can hardly be overstressed. Drinking especially took precedence over other things such as buying records, clothing, food or transport (some of them regularly did fare dodging). This was particularly so amongst some Trepas men who were unemployed or very low paid. If somebody was short of money, he would be invited by his companions and helped to stay in the fun. And therefore unemployment helped to increase the daily intake dramatically. Once an experienced youth worker told me that he had totally forbidden people to take "litrones" into his youth club. "Litrones" are cheap one-litre beer bottles many young people use to organise get-togethers in the streets (sometimes accompanied by ghetto-blasters). Nevertheless, he said he turned a blind eye on small bottles [FB04: 329-339]. He

perceived the importance of alcohol amongst young people, and was seeking to find the right balance. In an inspiring study of youth criminality and drug abuse in a neighbouring town, Funes (1982) recalls the time when young people abandoned the wine of the bars and started gathering basically to take drugs. He points out that drug taking became so important that people started experimenting with all types of things. Sometimes they would even take pills stolen from pharmacies that had no sensorial effect whatsoever and whose effects were totally unknown to the users. This is an example of how the ritual function of drug taking can override any actual physiological aspect of it.

The ritual of smoking a joint could probably be used as an archetypal example of a mutual display of transgression and male bonding, symbolised by the joint travelling from hand to hand. People rarely smoked joints on their own. With ten pounds, it was possible to provide for the whole group for a night. Sometimes they made collections to buy it, but once acquired, I never saw anybody claiming the expenses. Even if the one who shared his was bought a drink afterwards, it was never made explicit whether it was to be interpreted as a compensation. Whenever I asked, I was told there was no need to pay. I have seen this in many other groups. Somehow, people avoided focusing on the economic aspect of the activity, probably because it was felt it would contaminate its ritual value. Hence the significance of some common gestures, such as "passing it" to someone first, or giving it to someone to light it, as a sign of friendliness and as a welcoming gesture.

Drug-taking caused a kind of inversion in the way people normally judged behaviour. Because a high degree of intoxication and loss of control was a merit, breakdowns, accidents and awkwardnesses reinforced the status of participants rather than undermining it. In this context, women were prepared to enjoy incidents and produce relevant narratives as well, but not to participate very actively and centrally in the game[1]. My guess is that drunkenness, for women probably entailed a risk to elements of self image which were central to femininity, such as orderly management and arrangement of bodies. The picture of a woman vomiting on a street corner, for example, does not have quite the same impact as for a man. In addition, the danger of suffering sexual harassment probably increases. About four years ago, I went with a girlfriend to a disco in Barcelona where we did not know anybody. After she started dancing in quite a conspicuous style, she got approached by at least four men in about ten minutes. This may explain why women only got intoxicated on special occasions in the groups I studied. For instance, on a trip organised by the training school outside of Barcelona, there was a party where everybody was a known member of the group and could be more or less trusted. There I saw a few Trepas women 'letting themselves go'[2]. In addition to this, we have to bear in mind that drug taking was not strictly necessary within the forms of interaction organised by women. True enough, smoking cigarettes was common amongst women, but the role of smoking in the management of appearances seems to be generally quite different to that of alcohol and others (except, maybe, for the surreptitious smoking by teenagers).

More often than not, the women spoke about drug abuse in a disparaging manner, although usually very indirectly. Silvia, for instance, pressed her boyfriend not to drink and smoke joints on the same night, because he got too out of control and he would not be good for anything [FA05: 100-104]. She said it, though, in a jokingly good-humoured tone, so that it did not sound like downright moralising. In the first months of my fieldwork, I did not drink alcohol, because I suffered from a stomach condition. Once I felt better, I switched to beer or Cuba libres. Paula, from the Rambleros, teased me that "I had fallen into vice" [GB09: 191]. Clara, from the Trepas, said I was "making her suffer" with a twitch of real concern [FA09: 189-195]. One of the women confessed to feeling that she drank too much, and that she was worried about that. She was trying to reduce the number of beers but she said that she felt "as if she could not be with the people without drinking" [FA04: 136-144]. I never heard of guilty feelings of this sort from men. Irene, from the Rambleros, said the following:

Extract 26

Irene: Well, I drink as well, right? now and then. · But, boy! I · once felt sick, · and no more! I have already decided it: never again. And, on top of all with tequila [...] *May times I have spoken with [the men], yeah? · With Ricardo for example I have spoken, but: "Why do you drink and this and that", "I don't know, and what can you do otherwise?". · And "What can you do? Well, have a good time; listen, you don't have a good time if you drink; I have a hard time". Because if I drink, then I'm down on the ground. · [If I'm gonna] be down on the ground, then I don't drink, right? · You have a hard time drinking. They are having a good time, · and they look as if they were not there, listen, but when they drink, they look as if they are not there. Th- they get stupidised.* [IB06: 1055-116]

The reader again might get an impression that the men were absolutely wild and out of bounds. I must balance this view by saying that the Rambleros, for instance, took illegal drugs only very exceptionally, even though they are widely available. They claimed that they used to smoke more in the time they went out without the women. In a group that was very much oriented to doing things together, smoking might have become problematic because it was potentially segregative (see below). Additionally, in the short occasions when they met and talked in the middle of the week, drinking was very moderate. Amongst the Trepas, joints were almost always present when the whole group gathered. I also saw, or heard about, cocaine, LSD and stimulative pills on a few rare occasions. I never saw or heard about murderous stuff such as heroine or crack. The following extract from Jaume's interview will help to understand their drug-taking practices 'in the context':

Extract 27

Jaume: I've always been on the streets since I was a kid, right? I've always (been) with the people in the streets, right? Until a period came when · because I saw that · that the people in the streets · were · · coming up with nasty stuff, with drugs and so on, right? nasty. So · then I left the people of the streets and went · to the **esplai** [A typical Catalan organisation where young people organise the leisure of children for pedagogic purposes] [...] The people I could see that, · they did it to- · · to appear bigger [or "more grown up"], right? And to me this was rubbish because I didn't- · I didn't understand why the people wanted to feel superior to others right? · No, because (xxx) For example, if I smoke joints, I do not see myself as bigger than the others, I do not see myself as superior to her [his girlfriend, who was present], who doesn't smoke, right? I mean, I smoke because I like it and that's it, right? · · And the people started to do things like that, to feel superior to people, yeah?, sometimes. · And they chan- the people changed the way they were as well. And then it was when I left them, right? I mean, I didn't like the way they were and · I left these people · · who were · more or less like me some of them, right? At the end it all came to a bad end, [for] the ones who stayed in the group. [IA03: 914-20, 997-1014]

My interpretation is that Jaume rejected the meanings associated with the drug-taking practices of the inner-city group he used to belong to. This group exploited the potential (and usually very real) risks entailed by hard drug taking, a common theme in the construction of masculinity amongst lower class gangs. Jaume clearly repudiated a form of masculinity expressed in terms of superiority. Ricardo, of the Rambleros, told me a story of a young conscript who smoked so much that he was not good for anything anymore and made a fool of himself. He used this story to make the point that one had to be careful [IB08: 659-669]. Ricardo did not engage in a critique of the ideas behind drug taking in the way that Jaume did. He did complain, though, that going out and doing the same things was getting too monotonous and that he liked to go out, just to chat and relax, even if he did not drink [IB08: 378-381]. It

is also interesting that Jaume decided to join the 'esplai' as he left his previous gang. The 'esplai' clearly provided him with an alternative space where he could develop other aspects of his identity. In another interview, Guille, from the Trepas, complained that in Barcelona there was little else to do other than getting a "big piss" [GA-05: 1488-1495]. Truly enough, the infrastructures of Barcelona, with a few youth clubs that open at odd hours, do not provide for many alternatives to going to a pub and consuming. I will come back to this issue later.

Smoking joints also created problems amongst the Trepas. Because smoking is not usually allowed in pubs and bars, the men used to stay outdoors for long periods thus leaving the women on their own. The women felt increasingly annoyed about this, and the group discussion was used to air heated arguments. The arguments were actual evidence of another clash between men's and women's different agendas. As Natalia put it: "*well have I gone feasting just with Silvia or have I gone feasting with everybody? I mean because I go feasting with everyone*" [GA02: 53-69]. Pepe, in his interview, which was done later, said that men had grown more circumspect about the issue and that they would try to reduce the time they spent outside, or that they would seek to explicitly invite women to join them [GA06: 846-872].

b) The politics of rock music

The political ideas of some of the Trepas men had a considerable bearing on the way they constructed the world of popular music, particularly with regard to their favourite style: hard-core. Having said that, I must make some qualifications. What I will discuss below is based on the views expressed by the politicised male members of the group. Some non-politicised men shared their musical tastes but were not so actively involved in politics. It could be argued that these non-politicised members, one of whom was a member of the group's own rock band, may have experienced the meanings constructed by hard-core groups in different ways. Nevertheless, the socially oppositional meanings of hard-core were often quite transparent, as I show below. In subsection 5.12, I also give additional evidence that non-politicised members shared a form of political 'common sense' which coincidenced in a number of ways with the ideas of the politicised ones. It is from this perspective that I claim that the meanings they associated with hard-core were equivalent.

The role of popular music in the construction of identities amongst present-day young people can hardly be overstressed. It is by far the most widespread form of art young people seem to associate with (see Jones, 1990). Frith (1987) considers the construction of identity as popular music's first function:

> "The first reason, then, we enjoy popular music is because of its use in answering questions of identity: we use pop songs to create for ourselves a particular sort of self-definition, a particular place in society. The pleasure that pop music produces is a pleasure of identification -with the music we like, with the performers of that music, with the other people who like it. And it is important to note that the production of identity is also a production of non-identity- it is a process of inclusion and exclusion." (Ibid.: 140)

The connection between the Trepas men politicisation and their musical allegiances was relatively clear: Basque revolutionary rock was fine [FA05: 79-86], and Punk, Hard-core, Ska and Trash as well. Heavy Metal, for them, was something else. According to Pepe and Salva, Heavy Metal presents itself as a challenge to the "system", but this is more of a staged challenge rather than a real one: a pose. Heavy Metal was rhythmically more monotonous, and "they [the artists] dress to give an aggressive impression but they are little turtledoves" [FA16: 9-15, see also IA09: 972-982]. The rejection of the form of masculinity constructed through heavy metal is interestingly congruent with the Trepas' rejection of simplified masculinity (this rejection is further discussed in subsection 5.12; see also the introductory paragraph of the present section). Punk and hard-core, on the contrary, allowed much more creativity in ways of dressing and rhythmic patterns, and presented a more authentic challenge[3]. The musical expertise

of the men of both groups surpassed mine by far, and it also surpassed the available literature on popular music within the academic field of cultural studies, which is quite reduced and fragmented. Nevertheless, I found a corroboration of Pepe and Salva's view on the significance of Heavy Metal:

> "Any 'rebel' or non-conformist imagery in heavy metal may be seen as a function of its masculine, 'hard' stances, rather than as a conscious participation in rock's growing self-reflexivity" (Straw, 1990.: 103).

Breen (1991) basically characterises the heavy metal of the nineties as a product of marketing and big commercial initiatives which revived an early seventies' trend that seemed to have died out. In my fieldwork, I had the impression that the Trepas men were sensitive to these meanings, even those who were not ostensibly politicised. The Heavy Metal world comes across with the support of powerful media, specialised magazines and satellite television channels. Once, Pepe and I were watching a show in the summer of 1992, and I remember translating interviews for him: a row of flashy heavy metals were insisting now and again that they were doing music just for fun, and that they did not feel they had to support any political idea or environmental cause.

On the contrary, participation in the Punk and Hard-core worlds required a much more active involvement in building one's own information channels, getting to know which establishments would usually organise concerts, which shops specialised in the style, which events were on, which new groups were coming out, and so on. Roman (1988: 152), in her ethnographic study of women's position vis-à-vis the Punk slam dance in an English town, reports that hard-core people saw other rock audiences as "passive consumers rather than active producers of music" and that this came across in the relationship established between public and performers. She also says that some working class women saw the Punk Slam dance as a trendy form of colonisation by middle class Punks who tried to associate with the aesthetics and experience of the working class: "they refer to the middle class youths who now slam dance as 'those rich' or 'spoiled kids', who have not yet been introduced to 'the real world'" (ibid.: 166-167).

The literature stresses the predominantly masculine character of the rock music world (Shepherd, 1987), and especially of Heavy Metal, Punk and Hard-core (Roman, 1988; Straw, 1990; Breen, 1991). Nevertheless, such generalisations can distort the picture a bit and obscure the modes of participation that women organise around popular culture. Frith & McRobbie (1978/9, quoted in Frith, 1987: 146) for instance propose the "distinction between 'cock' rock and teenybop narratives, each working to define masculinity and femininity but for different audiences along different contours of feeling". Pablo of the Rambleros said that women liked more "*immature*", "*simplistic*" or "*fifteen-year-old*" types of music. The Rambleros women did not even want to go to Heavy Metal pubs [IB05: 895-907]. In a Hard-core concert I went to with the Trepas, the women distanced themselves from the concert and just chatted as they were waiting for it to finish [FA05: 190-195]. This conflict of preferences caused organisational problems which came out in the group discussions [GA02: 332-400]. Women involved in mainstream feminine identities avoided the 'hardest' genres and tended to enjoy slower rhythms and 'romantic' lyrics more than men did.

This suggests that people went for music styles that had a kind of continuity with the identities they were constructing in the peer-group (rough masculinities=heavy metal, political contestation=hard-core, mainstream femininity=romantic themes that stress relationships and connection). There may be significant divisions along gender lines in the musical preferences of the public in general. But these generalisations obscure the fact that women liked a wide variety of styles. In both groups there seemed to be a space of coincidence with regard to the Spanish rock, which is actually very diverse, and that, for instance, allowed the Rambleros to find some pubs they all were happy with. Amongst the Trepas, women generally saw Hard-core as too extremely hard, but they generally agreed on other genres such as Ska, Punk, Reggae, some types of Flamenco Rock and Spanish rock. Roman (1988) actually shows how women actively seek to define their participation in Punk culture. In both groups there seemed to be a

veto on Catalan Rock and on pure Techno or Disco music, usually called "***Música Máquina***" (Machine Music), except for some Rambleros women who actually liked these styles. I could not exactly make out what the problem with Catalan rock was: my own intuition is that it was seen as commercial and too associated with early teenagers. Together with Disco music, Catalan rock seems to be seen as lacking authenticity. The Trepas men generally disliked Salsa, which the women liked.

It is also necessary to take into account the multiplicity of meaning potentials of musical genres and their possibilities of hybridisation. Heavy Metal, for instance, has got the ballads as an established subgenre with slower rhythm and display of 'soft feeling', which some Rambleros women said to like. I once asked Ayats (from the Trepas) how one could ascribe a particular group to a genre, and he said that it was far from straightforward. It was a matter of finding out what they were about, especially how they behaved in live concerts[4]. It is also my impression that Spanish rock is much more hybridised than mainstream Anglo-American rock:

Extract 28

Pepe: For example, from · listeniing · · to what is Punky, · if you listen to · Punky, then · · you get to "Potato", right? "Potato" play Reggae, Vitorian Reggae[5]. And if you listen to "Potato" as well, because you listen to · "Kortatu" they make a version from the "Specials" and you start listening to Ska. And because you listen to Skaa, well, you end up · listening to Soul and, and to Mod music as well. And because you listen to Punky you end up listening to Hard-core. And if you listen to rough Hard-core, you end up listening to · · Greencore and you end up listening to Trash Metal. And if you listen to · Hard-core, you also end up listening to more melodious Hard-core, · of course · · · ·

Joan: it is like a family with Punk, to >put it like that

Pepe: <No · no no no · Ska came before · Punky, · and Heavy came before that. · Hard-core did come later but, it is not a matter of family but that · that, of course the- · they combine, right?

Joan: they · · interweave (xx) · · ·.[flamenco guitar chords are heard]

Pepe: ah and the story of Celtic music Celtic music, of course, we like it a hell of a lot all of us, all of us. [IA06: 946-68]

Within this frame, there was quite a wide scope for young people to negotiate their tastes in many different ways. What really distinguished men and women's approach to music, and which singled out Heavy Metal and Hard-core genres, was the role of these genres in the establishment of masculine relationships. Most men in both groups regularly organised events especially dedicated to music (going to concerts, reading magazines together, exchanging records, shopping expeditions, etc...). The masculine need to create external foci of interest, which I argued at the beginning of section 4.2, meant that music was one of the key elements in the construction of masculine identities, as it provided opportunities for men to develop their ties. The rock band, which some of the Trepas men participated in, did not include any woman, and it required considerable involvement[6]. However, Clara, who declared that she liked a few Hard-core groups [IA10: 932-51], did not participate in the frequent conversations, exchanges of records, shopping expeditions that men organised around music.

The Trepas' men allegiance to Hard-core was linked to their sense of belonging to and constructing a cultural space which was opposed to dominant culture. Hard-core music fostered aesthetic values usually opposed to what we might call 'right-on' aesthetics: harsh and very loud sound with high speed rhythm,

and aggressive drum work, lyrics and voice. The voice sounds, at a first impression, as if shouting was the main point of it. The mainstreamish line that this music is only noise was even taken on in the lyrics of a song of their band: "*if you do not want noise, you are going to have it*" [NA11: 7-13]. I interpreted the shouting, the incredible loudness and the thickness of the sound as a symbolic challenge to a society that silences the views and the experiences of working class young people. The lyrics of one of the groups went "Don't say what you think, think what they say" (original in English) portraying a conformist person [FA07: 344-350]. Once that I ventured that a Catalan group might have sung in English because it made more sense commercially, Pepe denied that a Hard-core group could be driven by such an interest, and said that it probably was because the style had not yet been adapted to Spanish [FA08: 97-117]. Finally, I reproduce below the translation of one of the lyrics of their own band, where the oppositional meanings were expressed through a rejection of the harassment suffered from the police:

Extract 29

In the streets and in the bars,
harassing non-stop.
We must finish with this war,
(struggle) till the end.

As we go out of the door
on the way back: how are you?
I do not know (xxx)
to apply the martial law

We are all suspects!
We are all dangerous!

They are entering the premises,
accusing us of dealing.
And if they have not found "it",
then they cannot charge us.

You see how you have to live,
If you do not want to die.
Have you thought (xxx)
(xxx) to resist.

We are all suspects!
We are all dangerous!

Fight, fight, fight, fight, fight, fight, fight, fight, fight, fight, fight,
[NA12: 9-13]

4.32 Politicised identities

Because of the way in which I have carried out my description, I may have fostered the impression that the forms of gender presented by the groups I studied were very traditional, particularly in relation to the Rambleros. In this respect, it is worth pointing out that the idea of gender equality was universally espoused in both groups. In the group discussion, the Rambleros had a debate on household duties that provides clear evidence of this. Nevertheless, this same discussion showed that subscribing to a general and superficial idea of equality does not change the world. There was an argument because the women claimed that the men showed little readiness to do household chores, and the men were at pains to

maintain that this was not a gender issue but a matter of personal preferences [GB02: 211-550]. In the Rambleros group, the women always played a key role in decisions about what to do and where to go. The men had actually given up many of the activities they liked to do when they used to go out by themselves in earlier years. Nevertheless, as I suggested in subsection 4.22 and as I will show in subsection 5.11, there is a case for arguing that male domination was manifested in more subtle ways.

Amongst the Trepas, there was a core group of five members who, following their political agendas, were seeking to change the traditional terms of gender relations. Their commitment to leftist revolutionary ideas led to significant efforts to organise a change in practices and discourses that challenged hegemonic views of masculinity and femininity. Two women were actively involved in a feminist group. They had experience in organising talks and discussions in schools. Their awareness about issues on women's rights was very elaborate, and many of the insights I may offer is owed to them. The three politicised men of the group also had access to feminist discourses, probably from their organisations and from the two women themselves. And there is evidence that they endeavoured to redefine their masculinity as well.

Again, because traditional gender identities are typically defined in oppositional terms, the first way of challenging them seemed to be for individuals to adopt features associated with the other sex. I will begin with men's endeavours to redefine their masculinities. After this, and I will deal with the issues involved in redefining femininity.

a) Redefining masculinity

I have already said that some of the forms of masculine displays found amongst the Rambleros, such as keyed verbal and physical aggression, were not practised by the Trepas men. This alone gave the group a distinctly different atmosphere, even when politicised members were not around. It is also worth pointing out that all the men who were not politicised were speakers of Catalan. In my data, there are various indications that speakers of Catalan seemed less ready to subscribe to the most simplified, risk-oriented, forms of masculinity. An experienced youth worker pointed to me that Catalan-speaking working class young people were less prone to taking heavy drugs. Jaume's position expressed in extract 27 may be an indication of why this happened. On one occasion when the Spanish speakers of the group had all gone, I was struck by the way the tone of the conversation changed. They suddenly began to make moves so that I could participate in the talk and they showed friendliness in various other ways [NA13: 61-153]. To make generalisations on the character of Catalan or Spanish speakers out of this flimsy evidence would not be appropriate. I have also known some Catalan-speaking groups from outside Barcelona who presented forms of masculinity similar to the Rambleros. I have also mentioned the case of a Catalan speaker who told me in great detail how he had wilfully smashed a car. Nevertheless, the particularity of his case was that he constructed his narrative mostly in Spanish. The findings provided in 5.22 suggest that young people in Barcelona produced a symbolic division of labour between Catalan and Spanish which had a significant gender component. To what extent this has a connection with the forms of masculinity constructed in Catalan-speaking and Spanish-speaking quarters would be worth investigating in the future, but no plausible hypotheses can be made in this direction now. The point I am trying to make here is that the contrast between politicised and non-politicised forms of masculinity amongst the Trepas men was not very conspicuous (except for one case which I comment below).

One of the inroads that the politicised men seemed to explore into forms of femininity was through 'intimations' (see 4.22). When I negotiated with a Trepas woman my integration into the group, she assured me that the men were used to making conscious efforts to help new members to settle in. I very clearly perceived that one of the men did so. He used to come to my flat, where we talked at length about ourselves: tastes, projects, political allegiances and so on. He also helped by inviting me when members of the group met and by encouraging me to talk in some situations. He once did it by simply inviting me to talk about England and my experience at Lancaster University. He said that I surely had interesting things to tell. I must say that I found the situation a bit embarrassing. Women were generally better at

making me talk. I think that the problem here was that I was a man as well as he was, and therefore we felt we had to display mutual interest in a more indirect way [FA04: 163-75]. In her interview, Clara also claimed that the politicised men sought to monitor people's emotions and states of feeling in the same way as women did:

Extract 30

Clara: It's that · the guys from there, the ones I know are: Salva, · and Salva does that, and e-· I mean in a different way but he does, Salva shows a lot of concern, right? · A lot, a lot, he's very much of a sissy in this respect. · And then Pepe, and Pepe s-shows a lot of concern... [IA10: 416-22]

Additionally, because this group was less integrated than the Rambleros, it was common for it to be divided into small and separate groups attending to different focuses of activity. In this context, it was very common for men to develop one-to-one conversations. The group of seven men could actually be divided into three 'couples' who had strong ties based on long-lasting friendships. Some of these conversations, as far as I could make out, worked in some ways like women's events: catching up on news, commenting on problems and worries, sometimes developing very focused topics of conversation. I would not claim that these men 'intimated' in the way women did, but I do think that these events provided the interactional infrastructure that made possible for identities to be negotiated, a point I will come back to in subsection 5.12/c.

There were other subtle elements that pointed towards a transformed masculinity. The Rambleros men always struggled to save face in their interactions. This is not surprising if we think that a genre like verbal aggression requires that the participants mobilise themselves to assert their position (see extract 1). In contrast, amongst the politicised Trepas, self-mocking, or laughing at oneself, was common. I once heard Salva saying half-jokingly that his jokes were very bad. In one of the rehearsals of the rock band, he proposed trying a song again, and he added: "*after the cockup done by the one who made the song*", meaning himself[7] [NA-11: 34-43]. Later in chapter 6, I argue that the possibility to accept and exploit self-exposure may have played an important role in allowing men to explore new identities.

b) Gender switching

The most spectacular case of transformation of gender identity was that of Aleix from the Trepas group. It could almost be said that he had performed a gender 'switch' rather than a redefinition of masculinity. For most practical purposes, Aleix was a woman (not in terms of sexual relationships, as far as I know). Most of the time he participated in women's conversations and his stronger ties were with women. Unfortunately, my recording equipment developed a fault during his interview, so I cannot quote him directly. The most important point was that he claimed to have wilfully and consciously worked out this 'switch' a couple of years before. He remembered making conscious efforts to talk like a woman and that his political commitments played a very important role in motivating him to do so. At the time of the interview, he only remembered that he had done it but he could not quite explain how. This probably means that he learned how to do it by doing it rather than by seeking to explicitly establish what women's relationships were about.

This process of transformation must have gone really deep in creating in women the expectation that he could be counted upon in many women's activities. Clara's anecdote can illustrate how far this went. In an excursion, as the women proceeded to occupy one of the bedrooms for themselves, the one who distributed the beds took for granted that Aleix was going to sleep with them:

Extract 31

Clara: and · Natalia said: "Well, we are so, and so, and so, and so, and so and Aleix". And I [go]: · "Natalia, Aleix is a guy". She says "Yeah, but · he is different" · · · and this Natalia García "(x) is different. No, I wouldn't m- · No, I wouldn't mind if-". · And you know how Natalia is, well, nobody is gonna have a glimpse of even · even · even· even her ankle, right? [IA10: 843-50]

Aleix' switching seemed to be the ultimate subversion of hegemonic masculinity. He did not seem to be much interested in men's conversations and tastes. I remember I once patted his back in a typical male friendly gesture, and I got a feeling that I had not quite done the right thing. Although I never heard in the group any explicit comment on Aleix' special inclinations, he found himself in some situations that he experienced as an embarrassment. Once he came out of a bar and found that the women and the men had spontaneously formed two separate groups outside. Because the choice was too visible, he could not decide what to do, and finally chose to get back inside and join a woman who had stayed behind. [IA10: 793-850].

c) Redefining femininity

One of the ways in which the politicised Trepas women sought to challenge mainstream femininity was by adopting features of masculine performance and appearances. Their ways of dressing and their gestural patterns (take for instance, their way of sitting: laid back, relaxed) was practically the same as that of the men. The language they used was also very similar to that of the men: use of argot and strong swearing. Sometimes their swearing was actually stronger than the men's, and they occasionally practised verbal aggression. Salva said that he was circumspect with the language he used with the women, although sometimes the women might use very strong language [IA02: 139-64]. One of their lines, for instance, was "*eat my cunt*", the female equivalent to the Rambleros men's phrase. Nevertheless, its function was not the same as with the Rambleros: it was used precisely as a way of making simplified masculinity face itself. Because verbal aggression was not a legitimate activity in the group, its use could only be exceptional. It could only be understood not as playing the game but as playing with the game. Nevertheless, this did not rule out the possibility of using it to tell somebody off (especially, a man), and of showing that one may not be prepared to do the face-work that is usually expected of women. After all, it is a strong expression. Aleix, who had been doing a great deal of effort to avoid sexist swearing, was dismayed to see his feminist friends not setting the right example [IA04: 709-720].

If identities are constructed in social situations, that is, in our interactions with others and in our position within organised activities, we need to coordinate whatever transformations we want to make with the other participants. Friendship relationships are one of the spaces where there is a possibility of doing this coordination. This necessarily involves bidding to control which potential meanings are taken up and which are not. I will take the development of swearing amongst women as an example:

Extract 32

[Clara, Natalia and Silvia were sitting in the terrace of a cafe at midday]

Clara: yo soy muy malparlada eh?
I am a very foul mouthed person, yeah?

Natalia: (x) porque no me has oído hablar · (xxx eja)
(x) because you haven't heard me speaking (xxxxx)

Silvia: [riu] ·· ***y (esta) hablaba por teléfono y empieza · "(en mi mesita no) las pendonas estas que están aquí no sé qué" y yo "hala Natalia por favor qué se van a pensar?"***
[riures]
[laughs] ·· *And (she) was talking on the phone and starts: "(not in my desk) these bitches down there and so on". And I go: "Gee Natalia, please, what are they going to think?"* [laughters]
[Tape 1 side b: approx. 10 min.]

Natalia and Silvia were non-politicised women. Clara started by producing a kind of self-confession, in a serious voice. Nevertheless, her switch to Catalan to say "foul mouthed" suggests that she was introducing the voice of some external authority with which she might not identify at all, i.e. she might be implicitly rejecting what she appeared to say. Whether Natalia and Silvia interpreted this voice in this way, it is not clear. But, knowing Clara, it was clear that she was not trying to self-inflict any punishment. The point of her utterance did not depend on solving the ambivalence (of whether she was confessing her 'bad behaviour' or she was rejecting those who would consider it to be so), but on the ambivalence in itself. On one hand, she acknowledged that she was flouting established standards of 'good language'. On the other, she was not giving any sign of being willing to do anything about it. The second participant, Natalia, came to the rescue by declaring: we are both swearers, we are on an equal footing.

Natalia had created a relationship of collusion. In the following turn, Silvia produced a narrative which sought to illustrate Natalia's point. She gave an example of Natalia using bad language in the wrong situation. Natalia was talking on the phone in her capacity as secretary of the training school and made, as in a passing comment, a disparaging observation about her workmates. Silvia later portrayed herself within the story as reminding Natalia that such actions could damage the reputation of the training school because they were being heard by an outsider (the person on the phone).

Now the point I want to argue is that this extract provides evidence of women negotiating the meaning of swearing from a women's standpoint. They did not seem to adopt this language simply by participating in masculine events. A similar case is the one reported by Patricia, for instance, who said that she had got accustomed to using argot because she and Clara had "stuck it to each other" [IA04: 726-733].

In order to argue this point, I will compare this event with a hypothetical one conducted by men. First of all, in a masculine arena, the ambivalence expressed towards swearing would not really exist. Men's established orientation towards displaying transgression would leave no doubts about what was being claimed. In the interviews, men sometimes used the same expressions (**malparlat**, ***malhablado***) but accompanied by laughter and conveying a kind of complicity with the male interviewer. The women, on the contrary, conveyed ambivalence[8]. In the extract, Natalia's response and Silvia's illustrative narrative built on this ambivalence of swearing as both fun and demeaning[9].

Silvia's story presented Natalia in a situation where her status as a worthy person was accidentally threatened due to the use of improper language at the wrong time. The humorous potential came from Natalia's momentary loss of reputation (the loss being, of course, repairable). Amongst men, the fun of the story would have come from the undermining of the training school's reputation. Even if participants might have made judgements implicitly about the worthiness of the main character, they would have focused on acknowledging his ability to perform a transgression.

The meaning of swearing negotiated within women's events was therefore not the same as in men's talk, because women were more sensitive to its demeaning character. They had to organise a collusive relationship where the connotations of swearing were temporarily suspended. In this way, they preserved within the space of the relationship the mutual recognition of worthiness[10]. In contrast, I once saw how Clara refused to go along with the swearing of an older relative of hers [NA01: 274-276]. Apart from the fact that people naturally contradict themselves at times, the only explanation I can think of is that Clara's

relative was an outsider to the group. As such, she had not participated in defining what swearing meant to them, and therefore it was potentially demeaning.

I believe that the ambivalences felt by these women with respect to identity reflected the necessary paradoxes and contradictions of feminism, some of which are reflected in the difference versus dominance debate. On one hand, feminism prompts women to participate in social spaces previously (and largely still) controlled by men. In doing so, the defining features of femininity become problematic. But then, problematising femininity amounts to accepting masculinity as the universal norm. At some points, I felt that Clara felt ambivalent about engaging in some types of 'small talk' which are usually associated with women. Her tone in some instances of 'gossip' sometimes seemed to me theatrical[11]. I remember once when she turned up with a new smart dress. Because she usually dressed very plainly, it was clear that there were going to be comments about it. So she displayed it to her friends by dramatising some fashion-show steps with clear exaggeration, thus distancing herself from the feminine-dress-appreciation ritual. Nevertheless, the occasion allowed her friends to show consideration for her dress.

If anything, the balance seemed to be tilting towards rediscovering femininity and developing it from within, rather than judging it against masculine standards. In the group discussion, Clara had made her position very clear. The group had been discussing on the problems that women encountered in traditional male manual jobs (such as builder, garbage collector): the working conditions were not adapted to the needs of women, and the male workers harassed them with verbal aggression or treated them as 'weaklings'. On the basis of these considerations, Clara argued that men were hardly an example, that after all women "*don't rape*", and that therefore men had to "*contemplate*" (meaning 'judge') women as women "*contemplate*" men [GA02: 704-904; GA03: 64-311].

The empowering role that politics played for politicised women can hardly be overstressed. At least the ability with which they (and the politicised men as well) handled some subtle conceptual issues was not matched by any other person within the groups. And my university credentials did not entail that I always understood the full implications of what they were saying. In the group discussion, their experience of speaking up in such situations was very visible. They held long turns and developed complex arguments. The group as a whole produced a remarkably orderly debate: the participants' right to speak was normally respected and everybody's views were taken up and shown consideration. The Rambleros' group discussion, on the contrary, was more constructed as fun, and it developed many playful confrontations where the more committed members dominated and the others -mostly women- remained on the sidelines.

Politics also constituted a legitimate topic of conversation in the Trepas group, particularly amongst those who were active, and it contributed to create cross-gender friendships. It seemed to me that its most serious impact on the organisation of the group was to actually reinforce the separation between the genders despite many members' reported efforts to overcome it [GA01]. The politicised women had contributed to legitimising the feminine agendas in the peer group. With time, women only meetings became a routine, almost as usual as the mixed ones. I attended some. The women were just chatting in the way they liked to do it. Once they experimented on me, to see how I reacted to jokes that ridiculed men. It could be said that such events were no different to the chatting found amongst non-politicised women. Probably, the starkest difference was not in the forms of display pursued in the talk itself, but on the bearing that the issues discussed had outside of it. In the group discussion, the women brought in the complaint that men spent most of the time outdoors smoking their joints and left them alone. On that occasion, and in some others, the men were clearly forced to consider the implications of what they did from the women's point of view. The women's agenda had began to play a part in building an understanding of the activities of the peer-group.

d) The open couple

Another aspect of gender relations that the politicised Trepas were involved in transforming was the concept of the 'couple'. They subscribed to the idea of the 'open couple', which seemed to consist of seeing couple relationships as open to negotiation. The politicised members of the group, either male or female, would for instance defend the non-exclusivity of the couple with respect to sexual relationships, and this would come across implicitly in narratives and in people's reactions to events. In the group discussions, they seemed to imply that a couple relationship was to be seen as an extension of a friendship [GA01: 212-230]. This is consistent with many things I saw happening. For instance, a couple moved together to a flat at the same time that they decided to terminate their relationship as a couple, and kept the friendship (They had been a couple for 3 years). This also created a situation where people could develop cross-gender friendships much more easily than in the Rambleros group, where a heterosexual pair might be subject to insistent teasing if they were seen as being too close. Termination of couple relationships amongst members of the group did not seem to create much tension as far as I could see, whereas amongst the Rambleros it put those involved in a delicate position. The Rambleros would often joke about extra-partner relationships, whereas some of the Trepas actually practised them. Nevertheless, due to the forced circumspection in which I had to conduct my inquiries, I cannot be too specific about how exactly people managed these situations. What was clear is that members treated them as normal, as if they were not even worth commenting on.

e) Politicised identities: what difference do they make?

By way of a conclusion to this section, I will now come back to the discussion I started with regard to crossing in subsection 4.23. I suggested that crossing did not imply a challenge to the existing forms of gender identity, but a particular way of exploiting the existing ones. Nevertheless, in a context of subtle political struggles such as those in the Trepas, I believe that crossing was of important tactical significance. The politicised women and women 'crossers' may have used swearing or argot for different reasons, but the fact remains that this happy coincidence enhanced the possibilities of exploiting alternative forms of identity.

It could be argued that the difference between the two was, in many situations, of no practical relevance. Women 'crossers' and 'feminists' were very similar, for instance, not only in their language, but also in their commitment to the 'open couple'. Moreover, women belonging to any of the categories I have proposed could be prepared to defend a feminist point of view in a particular situation.

But, in my view, the fact remains that the politicised people did not simply seek to develop their identities in 'original' ways. They also sought to legitimate these efforts. They endeavoured to establish and sustain activities and relationships based on their new principles. And, in doing so, they created new spaces where the traditional identities were not necessarily the reference point. It is logical to think that their endeavours had created the conditions that allowed other people (such as 'crossers') to develop new identities more freely, and this would not have been done by people who were only involved in crossing.

Yet, on the basis of my evidence, it is not yet possible to affirm that they contributed more to the cause for women's equality than the Rambleros did. Such statements are beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, in the following chapters, I will also show how politicisation had a very important bearing on people's patterns of language use with respect to Catalan and Spanish. Considering these two aspects, gender and language, I will point to issues with wider political relevance.

Notes to section 4.3

[1] We all know that alcohol and some other drugs are associated with a certain right to claim diminished responsibility for our actions, and also that some euphoric states can be produced which may help to warm up a conversation and to produce excitement. Nevertheless, it may be worth pointing out that I am not writing about the 'effects' of alcohol here, but about the

way in which drug abuse and the effects of intoxication are constructed and used socially.

[2] One option I have seen in some women and men who prefer not to smoke cannabis is to actually roll the joints. By participating in the organisation of the activity, they can safely avoid getting centrally involved in it because the complicity has already been shown.

[3] Notice the summary dismissal of typical masculine values, which is consistent with their not participating in the aggressive Slam dance and with Pepe's stance of avoiding potentially violent concerts. The question of authenticity is also an interesting point. In his interview, Luis from the Rambleros contrasted Heavy Metal with less authentic 'packaged' forms of music.

[4] It is likely that this difficulty came from the fact that many groups sang in English, even Catalan ones. Consequently, people found it more difficult to assess what they meant, although understanding the language was by no means essential.

[5] Vitoria (also known as Gasteiz) is one of the main cities of the Basque Country.

[6] Although I did not find any data about the amount of more or less stable rock bands existing in Barcelona, I have reasons to believe that it is very high and that the Trepas' initiative is by no means extraordinary. In my home town, there is a weekly concert all year round of local groups of all styles. Most of the groups come from the surrounding district, which has only some 40.000 inhabitants, and not all the existing groups participate. Jones (1990) also suggests that organising bands is a very widespread phenomenon among young English people. It is also significant that, in the 2-year period in which I kept gathering information about groups for my research, the band performed in public only twice [check], which shows to what extent its function was more to organise involvement than to eventually build a musical career.

[7] What happened in this rehearsal is also interesting: the two Trepas treated each other and the others quite politely (see also section 5.12 and extract 50); the other two members, in contrast, expressed their views and addressed the others in very strong and aggressive language. Later I found out that relationships within the band were problematic. In the following formation, the two non Trepas had been substituted. I am not suggesting here that relationships deteriorated simply because the different modes of expression led to a kind of cross-cultural miscommunication. The different 'identity agendas' might have been at the root of the problem or of some of the problems, but I do not possess enough background knowledge to venture any interpretation of this kind.

[8] Silvia claimed to be a user of bad language in her interview, and said that she tried to avoid it but could not [IA03: 939-59]; Patricia said the same with respect to sexist language [IA04: 670-746]. Trudgill (1974) tried to measure the degree of stigmatisation of vernacular forms by quantifying the subjects which made disparaging statements about the vernacular language. He compared men and women's attitudes on this basis. Nevertheless, we do not get much information about the way in which these statements were made or about their tone. It may be that men and women meant quite different things when they uttered their comments.

[9] Besides, the insult "***pendona***" (bitch) would have a much more diminished effect amongst males, not being felt to be strong at all.

[10] I think that this is an important point, because our friends are to an extent an extension of our image, and we may implicitly seek guarantees that they will behave themselves in other situations, for instance, in the presence of outsiders.

[11] Again, my presence as a keen observer might have triggered this, but nonetheless it is significant.

4.4 The polyvalence of talk

By describing the activities and speech genres of the Rambleros and the Trepas in terms of gender, I may have fostered a distorted impression of how the groups worked. The sense of separation between the genders may have been overstressed. In this section, I will seek to balance this view by concentrating on the mixed character of many events. Indeed, there were many situations in which men and women were together and, one would say, engaged in the same activities, mostly talk.

Of course, a rigorous ethnographer might rightly point out that even in these situations women and men participated in different ways. The literature on women's talk or men's talk has provided ample evidence of this. In section 4.2 of this chapter I have also shown how women participated in some masculine events and vice-versa. Each gender seemed to be on the sidelines with regard to the forms of talk constructed by the other. Dancing can be another example of this. Both women and men engaged in dancing. Nevertheless, it was easy to find differences between the way men and women danced, though it is not so easy to describe these differences. It seemed as if women displayed more involvement by producing more varied gesture sequences and more marked movements, whereas men would produce more sober movements or else engage in pretend play (a male crosser who had stepped out of line in this respect was subject to teasing). In hard-core, for instance, which is highly male dominated, men who did not do the violent slam dance would simply shake their head and sometimes the shoulders [FA05: 180-9]. It seems that elaborate dancing is at odds with the masculine tendency to claim spontaneity or naturalness. Amongst the Trepas, men would only reluctantly attend Salsa parties. Salsa is a music-style which is very particularly centred on very elaborate and expressive dancing patterns[1].

But, in the argument I want to make here, I would like to go beyond observable surface features of people's performance in particular situations. The framework and the categories I have proposed would be of little interest if they could be applied only to events where such features appeared in a pure and unequivocal form. In order to do this, I would have to ignore many situations where this did not happen, and I would implicitly foster the fallacy that men and women form independent, self-contained subcultures (see the discussion in section 4.1).

I want to finish this chapter by providing some insights on how both differences and similarities, both separateness and togetherness, lived in the social situations of the groups I have been seeking to describe. I will base my argument on the fundamental principle that utterances have a multiplicity of meaning potentials (a principle which can be extended to any action, either linguistic or non-linguistic) and actively construct the meaning of the utterances they respond to (see chapter 3). On this basis, many speech situations can be seen as polyvalent in terms of the identities they contribute to construct. And this is also why identities may in turn be developed through the exploitation of ambivalence as people's actions may point towards different, sometimes contradictory directions.

I will begin by summarising the general features of the groups' organisation with respect to the separation of the genders. And then I will move on to describe how this polyvalence was put to work in particular social situations.

a) The organisation of the groups

The Rambleros formed a group that was very much oriented to doing everything together. If they sat in a bar, for instance, they would see to it that everybody was at a reasonable range so that everyone was integrated in the talk. It was possible there to be various lines of conversation at a time, but not extended disconnections from the group. When walking in the street, small groupings could be formed but they were not taken as excluding others, and people joined, shouted from a distance and interrupted

conversations as a matter of course. Even if some people separated, say, to go to dance, there always remained a kind of a symbolic space where the group was and where people returned to. The activities of the Rambleros seemed to be always publicly available and I never felt I disrupted any established arrangement by joining a gathering. This means that, within the Rambleros, men and women were together for a very significant amount of time.

The Trepas group functioned quite differently. It was held together (if it was really so) by a core group formed basically by the politicised members. The other members usually had some ties with one or two members of the core, but a relatively superficial relationship with the others. This was probably because the group had originated in the training school, where people were acquainted with everybody but not necessarily close. The relationships that articulated the group functioned sometimes autonomously. Smaller subgroups could meet in a variety of situations on their own: go to the movies, meet at somebody's place, go shopping for records, go for some drinks, etc... Even when the whole group was together, it reflected this underlying looseness. As a rule, it took the shape of many stable smaller groupings. One of the usual forms of 'subgrouping' was the separation between the genders, with the women organising their chatting and men their smoking. But it was also common for mixed-gender subgroups to be formed, and for these subgroups to be engaged in different projects.

The problem that the Trepas experienced of the separation between the genders was largely a product of this looseness in its organisation. Nevertheless, the fact that it was seen as a problem is itself an indication that gender separation was resented when it became too visible or too apparent. This only happened when they went out at night. Most of my recordings were made in the cafe where they met every day after they finished their work at the training school, and their conversations were largely mixed like most conversations amongst the Rambleros. These conversations consisted primarily of narratives of events which had taken place in working hours. In the training school, genders were considerably separated (most men doing building work, most women management and design). Nevertheless, many of the narratives could catch the interests of everybody, as they usually contained humorous elements related to people they all knew or issues they shared as trainees.

b) Gender-mixed events

There were events in the two groups which presupposed the participation of people belonging to two genders: the so-called 'cross-gender' talk, or the situations which contributed to the establishment of a 'couple', whether they had a sexual component or not. But the point of these events is not that they superseded gender boundaries and differences, but that they allowed for gender to be manipulated and exploited in particular ways (see Thorne, 1993 regarding cross-gender talk).

If we leave aside those events which seem to be particularly geared towards performing particular types of gender displays, it is easy to see that people often got involved in interactional projects where gender was of little or no relevance. For instance, when people discussed issues of coordination (where to meet, where to go, what to do, where has so and so gone) or circumstances that had to do with it (weather, the atmosphere of a pub), I did not perceive any significant contrast in the modes of participation of men and women. There was a tacit understanding that everybody's preferences were, in principle, equally valid. In these situations, people could bring in elements related to their gender identities, such as their tastes or ways of talking. But a discussion about what film to see was not in itself organised to produce any particular gender display: the preferences shown might have been. These types of events would belong to what Goffman (1974) calls 'out-of-frame' activity, as they were oriented to preparing and sustaining the line of activity they intended to engage in, but were not the 'thing' itself. They were the 'rim' of the frame. It would not be acceptable to discuss about what to do all the time, and end up not doing anything but that.

Having said that, social situations do not normally allow for such an easy demarcation. In my recordings, I have samples of these negotiations which are full of dirty jokes and teasing inserted by participants that seemed to indulge in stepping out of the main line, sometimes causing long diversions from it. The group discussions provided plenty of equivalent examples of this. In the same way, an informal chat could become temporarily focused on the problems of organising some future activity. If it was an excursion, everybody could have something to say. If it was a five-a-side football match, the men could hold the upper hand. If the women came to watch it, then it affected everybody again, although the women did not have to worry about getting the necessary equipment. In some situations, there was no reason to keep frame and rim separate. After all, it is good that a discussion can sometimes be given some entertainment value, and a momentary interruption of the fun can be acceptable in certain conditions. In the group discussions, contrariwise, there were numerous calls to order, as some people considered that it was important to stick to the point. The opposite example of this can be found in Extract 1 in 4.21, where the verbal aggression game and the negotiation about where to go were inextricably welded together.

This kind of 'hybrid' event, as I showed, relied on the multiple meaning potentials of utterances. And these various meaning potentials created ambivalences that could 'travel' across the subsequent utterances (see the analysis of extract 1 in pages 124-7). It is therefore worth considering what these ambivalences mean for the analysis of social interaction and the conceptualisation of identity.

c) Ambivalence and hybridity

If we explore the implications of Bakhtin's principle of dialogism, it is clear that speakers always draw upon speech genres available in their culture. In this sense, any situation refers back to previous situations at multiple levels, and no instance of speech can be seen as simply drawing upon itself, cannot be looked at as if it was a separate, independent incident[2]. Narratives, for instance, will call upon past events or imaginary worlds where the characters, as Goffman (1974) points out, are usually some version of ourselves. The participants' understanding of where the utterance points to will have an important bearing on what they take from what the speaker says. The audience will bear in mind what the speaker says against the background of all the experiences that constitute their relationship with this speaker, who in turn will also bear in mind that the others are reading more than what she or he is strictly saying.

Now it is not difficult to understand how men and women are often interpreted in divergent ways even when they do what appear to be very similar things. And men and women enter social situations usually bearing this in mind. Nobody can start the world afresh. I have proposed a few categories and a framework to understand how this happens. The genres I have singled out can well be found, exceptionally, in a more or less pure form. But they are relevant to my analysis in as much as I can show that they are present outside these archetypal situations, embodied in particular words, in particular tones of voice, in the choices of topic, in the displays of features of character, and in the responses that these performances trigger.

In the following extract, some of these background references can be traced:

Extract 33

[The Trepas group was sitting around two tables, on the terrace of a cafe in the early afternoon. Pepe touched a bottle of beer that was standing on the table. It was not the type of beer they usually drank]

Pepe: cogí una cogorza con esa mierda el otro día tío
Got drunk like hell with this shit the other day, mate.

Mauro: ah es cerveza no[?].
Ah. It's beer, isn't it?

Ayats: [Veu] Ah · sí sí · et fots un parell i a (x).
[Voice] Ah! Yes Yes. Drink a couple and (x).

***Pepe:* [Veu] sí nen · posa molt**
[Voice] Yes boy. It really gets you. [NA03: 84-9]

Pepe started by announcing that he had got drunk with the beer he was pointing at. Why did he say so? First of all, the audience contained some of his friends. They usually drank together and liked to play with the effects of heavy drinking. As such, he expected that his friends would be interested. The choice of strong language and the term of address "***tío***" (mate) was a clear indication that he was speaking in his capacity as the person with whom they engaged in such activities. Now the audience also perceived that Pepe's story was that he had been taken by surprise by that particular beer, as they knew it was rare to get heavily intoxicated with beer. In the third turn, Ayats engaged in a dramatisation. He reproduced a character speaking Catalan and expressing his surprise. In the fourth turn, Pepe dramatised, in the same way, another imaginary character responding to the first. This Catalan voices conveyed, through a higher pitch, some kind of ingenuous characters which were non-experienced drinkers taken aback by the alcoholic level of the beer. The idea of some right-on people discrediting themselves by unintended intoxication was humorous within their world of experienced drinkers (see subsection 5.22 for a detailed discussion on the connotations of Catalan).

It is clear that this narration and the dramatisation was drawing upon the displays of masculinity I have typified. But I will also show how Silvia, a woman who was not particularly interested in drug taking, managed to participate in this conversation. This was because she found the opportunity to exploit a particular ambivalent situation where she did not need to show active involvement in this type of masculine display. Pepe had continued his story by describing the circumstances where he had got drunk. He had found a brewery where they had dozens of types of beers in stock, with bottles of all possible shapes. Here Silvia pointed out that she had been in a similar establishment, where beers of all kinds were offered:

Extract 34

Pepe: es que había una carta
And there was a "menu".

Silvia: (xx) a la frambuesa aquello es · un menú ( ) de · a
(xx) with raspberry. That was a menu ( ) with

la sabor bueno a frambuesa a la fresa · >alemanas
flavour, well, with raspberry, strawberry · >German

(min) holandesas no se qué · belgas
(xxx), Dutch, whatever, Belgian...

Pepe: <sí · · o sea de cada
<Yes... That is, each...

sí sí porque es que increible >porque
Yes yes, 'cause it's incredible >because...

Silvia: <negra marron amarilla
<black, brown, yellow [Interrupting with very loud shrill voice]

hay unas que son · · (xxx) que pone afrodisíaca =o
There are some that are · · (xxx) it says "aphrodisiac"

algo así también
or something like that too

Pepe: =sí · esta también estaba en la carta · en este bar ·
=Yes. This one too. It was in the menu. In this bar.

***había una (xx)* afrodisíac *no sé qué* (xx)**
There was a (xx) [Cat.] "aphrodisiac" *so and so (xx).* [NA03: 84-9]

Because the narrative focused on the exotic value of the brewery -the properties of form, taste, colour of the beers- rather than on the level of alcohol, Silvia felt that she could make a valuable contribution that could be of interest to the men that were talking. It is significant that the reference to aphrodisiac beer did not trigger any special comment. The Rambleros men, with their ongoing sex-lines, would not have missed the opportunity. The conversation started with a typical male theme, getting drunk, but Silvia carved out a space for herself by exploiting the existing ambivalences.

By the time Silvia and Pepe had got really involved, though, the other men appeared to have moved their attention away from them. This illustrates how the choice of identity opened and closed at the same time the possibilities of participation in particular social activities. In this case, Silvia's intervention was interpreted in a different quality to that of the men. And, in spite of the fact that at least Pepe accepted her contribution, it did not change substantially her position in the group. Later, Pepe started a conversation about a concert, where the men got involved again, but where Silvia apparently did not find a way of participating actively. An example of a man finding himself in an equivalent situation is shown in the following extract from the Rambleros:

Extract 35

[Irene turned up with a letter from a male friend she had met during her summer holiday. Ricardo was curious and wanted to examine the style of handwriting. Irene was suspicious that he was just planning to tease her. In this transcript, I have eliminated fragments of overlapping conversations]

Ricardo: (no te) quiereh ponerte a mi lao eh?
(You don't) want to sit by my side, do you?

Paula: eh[?]
Eh?

Irene: es un amigo
It's a friend. [Probably meaning: "not a boyfriend"]

Alguna: es una amigo que (xxx x xx joder)
Woman: It is a friend who (xxx, xxx, damn!)

Paula: el josé?
[Is it] José?

Irene: no el josé no.
No, not José.

Pablo: el josé no el (julio) ·· [rep gest de confirmació] Ah!
Not José but (Julio) ·· [he receives a confirmation gesture] *Ah!*

Ricardo: yo no te- yo no te- yo no te (ehplico) [·····] ***a ver a ver · solo la- ·***
I'm not gonna- I'm not gonna- I'm not gonna (tell) [·····] Let me see, let me *see. Just the- ·*

solo la (letra) · · a ver tía · que te la leo todavía como te pongas así ···
just the (handwriting) ·· Let me see, girl. [Or else] I can still read it [aloud] if you take it like this ···

joder · qué desconfiada ·
Damn. How distrustful!

Paula: te ha mandao una foto[!?]
He's sent you a photograph [!?]

Ricardo: no confías en mi[?]
Don't you trust me?

Paula: a verlaa
Can I have a look?

Ricardo: es una foto[?] ·· Irene[?] · es una foto[?]
Is that a photograph? ·· Irene? Is that a photograph?

[Ricardo proceeded to read aloud the address, pretending that he intended to read the letter aloud, but moved on to comment on the handwriting] [NB01: 63-80]

What is significant in this episode is how differently Irene reacted to Ricardo in comparison with Paula. Even though much visual information is lacking, it is clear that Irene perceived that Paula was looking at the letter in the same way as she was. She answered Paula's questions in a straight way with calm voice (*No, not José*) and probably handed her the photograph straight away. On the contrary, she resisted Ricardo's requests, as she took it that he was going to play 'another game'. Indeed, the tone in which Pablo and Ricardo were speaking in this event, and in previous moments of the conversation, seemed to anticipate some teasing, so that Irene was seeking to keep the letter within the reach of women only. After this, and at Ricardo's initiative, both men and women made some comments about the handwriting (a topic which was probably not quite central to the interests of the women with respect to the letter). Clearly, the approach of each participant to this event had been judged by others on the basis of the forms of participation and display they routinely constructed within the group, which precluded in principle the possibility that the men had approached the letter in the same way as women had.

This episode illustrates the extent to which the choice of a particular form of identity was an important decision. It can also help to understand why 'crossers' and people who redefined their gender identities for political reasons were treading very delicate ground. Hence the ambivalences that were exploited in extract 32 when one of the women 'confessed' that she was "*foul mouthed*". Because gender identities were often defined in terms of oppositions, actors were continually issuing signals as to the forms of participation in which they could be counted upon. One of the common ways of handling the need for interactional diplomacy was through keyings. In subsection 4.32/c I reported on one of the women

showing her dress as if she was in a fashion show. The following episode contains a much more sophisticated pretend game:

Extract 36

Pepe: oye q- q- qué ha pasado en el labavo
Listen w- w- what happened in the toilets?

Silvia: e yo te lo cuento
Er, I'm telling you.

Someone: (qué ha pasado allá)
(What happened there).

Silvia: yo te lo cuento **[Veu]**
I'm telling you [Mimicking voice].

Pepe: tú me lo cuentas [Silvia riu]
You're telling me [Silvia laughs].

Silvia: eee=
eeer=

Clara: =pues resulta **[Veu molt alta exagerada, riures]**
=Well, it so happened [Exaggerated mimicking voice, very loud, with laughters]

Silvia: estaba la María
There was María.

Clara: y entonces [Ella riu]
And then [Laughing, loud]

Silvia: pintando un caballito que ha hecho de barro no?
She was painting this horse she had made with clay right?

Clara: pero que aún no >(xxxxxx)
But which she hadn't yet>(xxxxxx)

Pepe: <déjala >el micro **[Ell riu]**
<give her >the mike [He laughs]

Silvia: <y tal no? , y entonces, de vez en cuanto, eee, se iba al (xxx) a quitar la pintura, y estaba en delineación y con un pincel ha empezado "que te tiro"...
<And all that right? And then, now and then, eeer, she went to the (xxx) to clean out the paint. And she was in the design section and with that brush she started "I'm gonna sprinkle you!"... [Cas 1, side A: beginning]

There could be various reasons why the narrated story was delivered in this form of pretend game. It may have been because it was the first day I recorded them and they were making jokes about the microphone. Hence the apparently unnecessary metalanguage, or references to what is going on which are normally not voiced (*I'm telling you, you're telling me*). This event was very similar to the pretend games amongst

children, who usually make explicit a great deal of what is going on so that the participants can appreciate how the activity is developing. Clara and Silvia were also drawing upon elements of the 'women gossiping' genre: Clara's stylised "***resulta***" and "***y entonces***" were stereotyped features of women's talk catching up on news about neighbours or acquaintances, a form of talk which is common target for mockery. On the basis of this multiple embedding of voices, they were effectively distancing themselves from some features of the performance. For instance, on the basis of this event, we could not have concluded that the participants were 'gossipers' because they were just pretending. Nevertheless, the narrative itself was supposed to be a true story and delivered Pepe what he had asked for at the beginning. Pepe himself participated actively in the pretend game in a way which was not threatening to his identity as it could have been otherwise. Of course, Silvia might have told the story in a more serious way. After all, there were plenty of situations within the group that could have been described as 'real' gossip. This is why I believe that this particular episode was organised in this way as a response to the microphone, which allowed them to play with the enjoyable possibilities of fostering distorted impressions about themselves to the researcher.

d) Conclusion

In this chapter, I have sought to describe the different forms of identity constructed by people in their peer groups. I have done so by analysing some episodes of their daily interactions in terms of the displays of self that were produced in them. In this way, I have been able to avoid simplifying generalisations about the character of men and women. Firstly, because there were multiple forms of participation in different events. Secondly, because participants could choose to develop their identities in creative ways. And thirdly, because the meaning of particular actions and events was always open to question so that people could exploit their ambivalences.

Most Rambleros men were involved in organising and exploiting risk (physical or symbolic) in interaction, while the display of transgression was a common potential meaning exploited by most men in both groups. Most Rambleros women were more interested in displaying interest in others and mutually reinforcing their sense of worthiness is explicit ways. Nevertheless, some men and some women were also interested in the games and forms of display organised by the other sex, sometimes for political reasons sometimes not.

Nevertheless, as I have began to suggest in this last section, to choose one particular form of display or another already imposed some form of constraint on individuals as to the types of events in which they could participate in. Still, this is not the only way in which the identities of the participants were constrained. In the following chapters, I intend to explore other aspects in which the participants' choices were limited, some of which were beyond the groups' control.

Notes to section 4.4

[1] Theeman (1974, quoted in Henley, 1977: 145) points out that men in the dance professions are typically disdained as feminine. Amongst my acquaintances of people who work in artistic dance, it is commonplace that it is hard to find boys/men who want to learn and take it seriously.

[2] Bakhtin (1981) also refers to the 'monologic' type of discourse as a voice which only recognises itself. At the end of the day, it is not difficult to see such discourses as integrating their dialogical context in negative ways, usually by denying it through particular modes of expression. An inspiring example of a deconstruction of a text which claims a false autonomy is given by Bourdieu (1991c) in his analysis of the discourse of Heidegger.