Performing the Community, Telling the Self: Storytelling by Members of a Group Home for Men With Mental Retardation.

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PERFORMING THE COMMUNITY, TELLING THE SELF:
STORYTELLING BY MEMBERS OF A GROUP HOME
FOR MEN WITH MENTAL RETARDATION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
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requirements for the degree of
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in

The Department of Speech Communication

by

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B.A., North Texas State University, 1987
M.A., University of North Texas, 1989
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DEDICATION

To Dorothy Jean Brown
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I would like to thank those individuals whose cooperation and guidance made the successful completion of this project possible. First, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Mary Frances HopKins, for her wisdom, attention, faith, and energy. Next, I would like to thank Dr. Michael Bowman and Dr. Ruth Laurion Bowman who offered invaluable suggestions and comments at every stage of this project. I would also like to thank the other members of my committee. Dr. Ken Zagacki, Dr. Robin Roberts, and Dr. David Spruill for their assistance and insight.

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ABSTRACT

This study uses an ethnographic approach to examine the stories told by members of a group home for men with mental retardation. The author contends that the culture of the group home works to constrain how group home members interact within this community. The author argues, however, that despite the cultural constraints, the men use storytelling to establish their individuality, even though the stories themselves, in their content and in the performance of their telling, often reify cultural constraints and their cultural constructions.

The author recounts how she, as ethnographer, interacted within this community.

After identifying, describing, and analyzing eight communication situations and reviewing the existing literature on Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Mental Retardation, the author identifies the two cultural codes that influence communication within this community: compliance and self-reliance. Compliance functions as the dominant code; self-reliance, an ancillary code.

Next, the author examines the imperializing function of member storytelling. Imperialized tellings generate and reproduce the group home’s culture, patterns of speaking, and status differentials. The author identifies a number of status-related subject positions created through
storytelling: privileged teller, simultaneous teller, enforced teller, preferred listener, and enforced listener.

Direct Care Workers assume subject positions of privileged teller and preferred listener, markers of status within this community. Group home members assume subject positions of enforced teller, enforced listener, and simultaneous teller, marking their status as occupants of the lowest social position within this community.

The author examines the localizing function of member storytelling. Localized tellings are those tellings where a resident remembers or imagines identities, communities, cultures and patterns of interaction outside the space of the group home. The residents used localized tellings as a way to reclaim their individuality.

Group home members are capable of performing a number of roles: cultural constructions (group home member, one who complies, one who acts in a self-reliant manner), narrative constructions (self-reliant narrators, compliant narrators, enforced tellers, enforced listeners, and simultaneous tellers), and localized constructions (personas of their own making). The group home members, although they share common identities and living spaces, maintain their senses of individuality.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

In a graduate seminar in ethnography at Louisiana State University, my professor encouraged my classmates and me to make brief forays into "the field." As an undergraduate, I had worked as a bus driver for children with mental, physical, or emotional disabilities. Over the years, I have thought a lot about the children on my bus, trying to imagine what has become of their lives. So, when my professor told us to venture into "the field," I knew what field I would be exploring. If I could not find out how those specific children were living their lives, I could find out how others with similar disabilities were living theirs.

When I first began this study, I believed that individuals with mental retardation were the passive receptors of cultural assumptions about mental retardation. I viewed them as social constructions, not as individuals who participate in cultural systems. I have, as a result of my field work and analysis, reoriented my perspective.

This ethnography, however, is not about my personal motivations or my changing perspectives. They exerted their influence on my choice of field and focus, but this ethnography reflects motivations, interests, and knowledge that I did not possess before I began this study.
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In this study, I contend that in a specific group home for men with mental retardation, Esplanade, the culture, as interactionally generated and reproduced, works to constrain how group home members interact within this community. Specifically, I argue that despite the cultural constraints, the men use storytelling to establish their individuality, even though the stories themselves, in their content and in the performance of their telling, often reify cultural constraints and their cultural constructions.

In this study, I set out to investigate how storytelling by group home members generates and reproduces the culture of the group home and to examine how each man maintains and demonstrates his sense of individuality in a community that constructs him as a member of a collective. I also investigate how I, as ethnographer, interact within this community, specifically how I influence the residents' discourse.

CONTRIBUTORY STUDIES

This study borrows heavily from, bridges, and supplements several areas of scholarly investigation (mental retardation as a socio-cultural phenomenon; communication and mental retardation; ethnography of communication; cultural communication; social structure and social interaction; power and social orders; the
relationship between narrative performance, culture, and social identity).

REDEFINING MENTAL RETARDATION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

At present, the American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR) defines mental retardation as

substantial limitations in present functioning. It is characterized by significantly subaverage intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with related limitations in two or more of the following applicable adaptive skill areas: communication, self-care, home living, social skills, community use, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, leisure, and work. Mental retardation manifests before age 18 (American Association on Mental Retardation 1992, 1).

The AAMR views mental retardation as a particular functional state, one in which an individual's intellectual and adaptive skills fail to meet environmental demands. This definition differs significantly from previous definitions, reflecting an evolution in perceptions about the nature of mental retardation.

Until the turn of the century, most diagnoses of mental retardation were based on physical appearance, obvious intellectual limitations, and social inadequacy (Scheerenberger 1983, 138). Criteria for diagnosis changed, however, with the advent of intelligence tests. Between 1908 and 1959, those in the field of mental retardation relied almost exclusively on clinical and psychometric measures for diagnosis, the standards being the Stanford-Binet Test of Intelligence and the Wechsler scales (Scheerenberger 1983, 181). Such measures were
extremely popular in the United States, serving in some states as the sole measure of intellectual functioning (Scheerenberger 1983, 216).

Although widely used, such measures were designed only as indicators of intelligence, not exact measures. Lewis Anthony Terman, co-designer of the Stanford-Binet, instructed diagnosticians to expect a ten to twenty point variation in IQ score with repeated measures (Terman 1919). Some critics questioned the instrument's validity, arguing that it failed to control for a number of factors that could affect test results (Dearborn and Rothney 1941; Honzik et al 1948). Others questioned the benefit of such measures. Yepsen (1941), for example, considered intelligence-based categorization detrimental to society and the individual. He stated, "If the consequences [of such testing] were not so serious it would be ludicrous, as in the case of two individuals whose quotients are but one point apart and are, therefore, mentally deficient and normal" (Yepsen 1941, 202). Although vociferous and recurring, these debates did not inhibit the nation's use of the Stanford-Binet nor did they initiate a reconceptualization of mental retardation.

Most researchers did not begin to question long held assumptions about the nature of mental retardation until the late 1950s and early 1960s. Advances in genetic research in the 1950s enabled researchers to determine the
etiology of a number of syndromes associated with mental retardation. By 1959, researchers understood the language of genetics well enough to state that the majority of persons with mental retardation showed no evident organic etiology or demonstrable brain pathology (Tarjan 1959). By the early 1960s, researchers revealed that heredity and serious physical injury accounted for only 10 to 15% of the cases of mental retardation (Scheerenberger 1983, 247). When researchers learned this information, some turned from the hard sciences to other theoretical avenues, specifically sociology and anthropology, to further their understanding of mental retardation.

MENTAL RETARDATION AS A SOCIO-CULTURAL PHENOMENON

In 1951, Talcott Parsons published The Social System, an explanatory model of social organization. Parsons posited that societies function as systems. The component parts of any society, he theorized, assume a form that resists change, sustains internal equilibrium, and maintains the boundaries of the society (Erikson 1962, 309). In order to maintain this balance, societies limit the range of human behavior to only those actions which support the social system. Deviancy, according to Parsons, names those behaviors that threaten the organizational structure of a society.

Parsons' theory emerged alongside and complemented a resurgence in interest in the sociological study of
deviance (Becker 1964, 1). Describing the change, Howard Becker wrote:

The new approach sees [deviance] as always and everywhere a process of interaction between at least two kinds of people: those who commit (or are said to have committed) a deviant act and the rest of society, perhaps divided into several groups itself. The two groups are seen in complementary relationship. One cannot exist without the other (Becker 1964, 1).

Human interaction, some argued, served as the key to understanding the sociology of deviance.

Having read Parsons, Lewis A. Dexter, a sociologist, published the first of a number of articles that addressed the concept of mental retardation from a sociological perspective (Dexter 1956, 1958, 1960). To produce these articles, Dexter wed Talcott Parsons' social systems theory with the current literature on the sociology of deviance. In each article, Dexter argued that social systems theory more aptly explained the experience of mental retardation than did existing perspectives. The problems associated with mental retardation arise, he wrote, not as a consequence of the "biological or physical characteristics of mentally defectives but of their socially prescribed or acquired roles" (Dexter 1958, 920, 921). Moreover, for Dexter, the label "mentally retarded" named not only a role but also a certain status within a social system. Although sociologists applauded Dexter's work, researchers in the field of mental retardation found his arguments interesting
but not compelling (Scheerenberger 1987, 17). They still had hope for the potentials of medical science.

A decade later a number of researchers in mental retardation rediscovered Dexter. Echoes of Dexter's scholarship appeared in a number of publications, including the social systems work of Jane Mercer. Like Dexter, Mercer adopted Parsons' social systems theory to describe the function of mental retardation in society. She wrote:

mental retardation is not a characteristic of the individual, but rather, a description of an individual's location in a social system, the role he is expected to play in the system, and the expectations which others in the system will have for his behavior. Mental retardation is an achieved status. It is a position in the group that is contingent upon the performance or, in this case, the lack of performance, of the individual. Thus, mental retardation is specific to a particular social system (Mercer 1968, 383, 384).

Mercer also reemphasized that mental retardation named a role, a lived experience. The tools of clinical science, she felt, were inadequate to explore this dimension of mental retardation. The field would find new insights, she argued, in studies of mental retardation as it functioned within particular social systems.

Robert B. Edgerton, an anthropologist, provided one of the first comprehensive studies of how persons with mental retardation functioned within a specific culture. In 1967, Edgerton published The Cloak of Competence, an extensive examination of the lives of 48 former residents of an institution for the mentally retarded. In this work he
described the specific strategies these individuals employed to cope with the demands of everyday living. Based on this study, Edgerton concluded that in most cases society makes determinations about who is to be considered "retarded" based on socio-cultural factors.

Other researchers supported Edgerton's claim, identifying a number of socio-cultural factors linked with a diagnosis of mental retardation. Researchers reported that certain groups were disproportionately represented among those labelled as mentally retarded: ethnic minorities (Mercer 1968; Ramey et al. 1978), members of lower socio-economic classes (Hurley 1969), and new immigrants (Kamin 1974). Additionally, the President's Committee on Mental Retardation (1970) felt that too often inner-city school children were identified as mentally retarded "without regard to [their] adaptive behavior, which may be exceptionally adaptive to the situation and community in which [they live]" (President's Committee on Mental Retardation 1970, frontpiece). Furthermore, Mehan et al. (1981) and Mehan (1983, 1984) revealed that certain school districts label children as retarded in order to fill quotas and guarantee governmental funding for special classes. Excluding severe mental retardation, a growing number of scholars concluded that mental retardation is "as much or more a social and cultural phenomenon as it is a
medical-genetic or cognitive-psychological one" (Langness and Levine 1986, 191).

In *Culture and Retardation*, Langness and Levine stated that investigators learned a number of important lessons about mental retardation as socio-cultural phenomenon. Primarily, they came to understand that mental retardation as enacted varies historically, culturally, and contextually. Langness and Levine wrote, "[R]etarded behavior is not a unitary phenomenon nor do retarded persons constitute a homogeneous population" (Langness and Levine 1986, 192). Case studies and observational records reveal the wide diversity of life options exercised by those with mental retardation. In short, persons with mental retardation share little more than a label, and, in many instances, the label disguises huge differences in abilities, attitudes, personalities, and lifestyles. Persons with mental retardation share as much in common with one another as those without mental retardation share with one another.

**DISCOURSE AND MENTAL RETARDATION**

Although many scholars have explored the socio-cultural aspects of mental retardation, only a few have paid close attention to the role that communication plays in this dynamic. Blount (1968), Yoder and Miller (1972), and Croner (1974) authored some of earliest studies of mental retardation and communication. Each asserted that a
failure to master certain linguistic competencies marked retarded communication. Bates (1976) and Rees (1978) agreed with Blount, Yoder and Miller, and Croner that individuals with mental retardation experiences linguistic difficulties but disagreed with their conclusion that linguistic difficulties function as the sole markers of retarded communication. Bates and Rees argued that these studies ignored the structural difficulties interlocutors with mental retardation experience with all levels of discourse. Linguistic incompetence, Bates and Rees contended, accounted for only a small portion of the difficulties that interlocutors with mental retardation experienced when communicating.

This debate piqued the interest of Kernan and Sabsay (1982). In their study, Kernan and Sabsay examined every level of linguistic organization in the personal narratives of persons with mental retardation: the semantics of the sentence, the semantic cohesion between sentences, and the semantic structure of the narrative as a whole. In their discussion, they wrote, "[T]he most salient characteristic of mild retardation is some sort of difficulty with verbal interaction" (Kernan and Sabsay 1982, 169). In their study, Kernan and Sabsay found that "[g]rammatically ill-formed sentences, semantic blends, incorrect lexical selection, saying one while intending another" were all common occurrences in the discourse of those they studied.
They found, however, no difference between narrators with and without mental retardation in the kinds of structural problems that occurred during a telling. Both experience the same types of structural problems when telling a story. Kernan and Sabsay found, instead, that narrators with mental retardation experience these kinds of difficulties more often than narrators without mental retardation.

In their next study Sabsay and Kernan (1983) found that interlocutors with mental retardation did not always experience structural problems when speaking and could, when prompted, produce error-free discourse. Moreover, Sabsay and Kernan were unable to discern a clear pattern of error. They wrote, "It is not the case, for example, that particular types of referents are identified correctly and others not. Speech situation and setting is not predictive of adequate or inadequate design" (Sabsay and Kernan 1983, 292). Citing Brown (1974) and Wertsch (1979), Sabsay and Kernan suggested that persons with mental retardation might suffer from a "mediation deficiency."

Sabsay and Kernan suggested that individuals with mental retardation were less likely than individuals without mental retardation to take into consideration their audiences' informational needs when structuring an utterance. They wrote:

[I]t seems to reflect what has been identified as a reliance on other-regulation rather than self-
regulation. That is, rather than being concerned with adequate communicative design, mildly retarded speakers apparently rely on their interlocutors to seek information they need to understand or disambiguate the speaker's message, and to provide the overall structure for such things as narratives (Sabsay and Kernan 1983, 293).

Sabsay and Kernan hypothesized that this reliance on other-regulation by those with mental retardation may have developed through a lifetime of interactions, a communication pattern learned as children and repeated thereafter.

Other researchers provided support for Sabsay and Kernan's hypothesis. Marshall, Hegrenes, and Goldstein (1973) and Buium, Rydners, and Turnure (1974) found that parents of mentally retarded children regulated the structure and content of conversations more than did parents of non-retarded children. Others found that this pattern of regulation exists in conversations between adults as well. Sabsay (1979) found that in conversations between adults with mental retardation and adults without mental retardation, the interlocutor without mental retardation controls the form and content of conversations with the several mentally retarded. Furthermore, Linder (1978) reported that interlocutors without mental retardation will at times take over the telling of a narrative initiated by a interlocutor with mental retardation at the first sign of trouble. At other times, the interlocutor without mental retardation may remain
silent rather than point out inappropriate behavior on the part of the interlocutor with mental retardation. He also noted that interlocutors without mental retardation tended to ask interlocutors with mental retardation only about simple topics.

Sabsay and Platt (1985) elaborated on Linder's work. They found that the role often influences how the interlocutor without mental retardation will respond to the speech errors. Guardians (parents, social workers, counselors) were more likely than those not in support roles to take over a floundering conversation. Those not in support roles were more likely than guardians to ignore errors. Sabsay and Platt suggested the following rationale for the difference in response:

"[Guardians] see the inappropriate behavior for the retarded interlocutors as a reflection of themselves and therefore as potentially face-threatening for them as well as their charges. . . . In other situations, where nonretarded speakers do not see themselves in this role, inappropriate behavior is seen in a different light. It is viewed as potentially damaging only to the retarded person's self-presentation. At such times, interlocutors . . . [help] retarded individuals to present themselves as competent by attempting to smooth over or minimize rather than correct inappropriate behavior" (Sabsay and Platt 1985, 109).

Sabsay and Platt also found that interlocutors without mental retardation adjust their discourse to what they perceive to be their conversational partner's level of understanding. Generally, interlocutors without mental retardation steer the conversation away from topics they
think might pose difficulties for their conversational partners. They did so, Sabsay and Platt suggested, as attempt to help their partner "save face."

In their study, Turner, Kernan, and Gelphman (1984) identified a number of face-saving strategies used by persons with mental retardation when interacting with one another. In one environment, Turner, Kernan, and Gelphman noticed that group members routinely avoided commentary on the speech disfluencies of others. Moreover, when certain individuals engaged in self-aggrandizement or normalcy fabrication, others remained silent. They also noticed that members never spoke of mental retardation itself. According to Turner, Kernan, and Gelphman, this group operated under a code of politeness. Members of this group valued self-harmony and self-esteem over "truth."

Not all persons with mental retardation adhere to a "code of politeness." In his study, Graffam (1985) noticed that some members of the group he was observing participated in competency claims, but, unlike the group observed by Turner, Kernan, and Gelphman, Graffam found that tolerance for such exaggerations varied from meeting to meeting, from person to person. In a study by Platt (1985), she described the members of the group as

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1 First identified by Edgerton (1967), normalcy fabrications are claims made by an interlocutor to an experience she or he has not had. These claims are often of experiences judged by the interlocutor to be indicators of a "normal" life.
competitors, not allies. Group members often pointed out one another's incompetencies, particularly if doing so provided them with an opportunity to display their own competence. When not asserting their competence through the use of insults, group members attempted to minimize the potency of other members' efforts. Often, Platt noted, members responded to such displays with the phrase, "I know." This response positions both interlocutors as co-owners of the information, thereby qualifying the significance of the revelation. Group members associated knowledge with normalcy; therefore, members looked for opportunities to display their knowledge, even if it was at another's expense.

Each of these studies illuminates different aspects of the communicative life of those with mental retardation. No one study fully describes how mental retardation affects the form or function of communication or how communication affects the form or function of mental retardation. Instead, each study describes how mental retardation and communication interact within a specified group (randomly selected or intact). As cultural beings, individuals with mental retardation are shaped by and shape cultural notions about communication and mental retardation. As such, any exploration of mental retardation and communication is at some level a study of culture.
ETHNOGRAPHY

Many of the researchers interested in the lives of those with mental retardation use ethnographic tools. "Ethnography," wrote Saville-Troike, "is a field of study which is concerned primarily with the description and analysis of culture" (Saville-Troike 1989, 1). Ethnographers immerse themselves in a culture and collect data about the lived experience of its members. In their analyses, ethnographers examine beliefs and practices that influence ways of living.

Generally, ethnographers use the following methods to collect data: residence in situ, participant observation, unstructured interviews and the use of key informants. Ethnographic methods of collection and analysis, however, vary from study to study. An ethnographer’s method reflects her or his understanding of the culture of study, her or his interests, the influence of other ethnographic works, and a knowledge of the work’s future audience. The interaction of these variables produces greatly different approaches.

ETHNOGRAPHY OF COMMUNICATION

One subfield of ethnography is the ethnography of speaking, also called the ethnography of communication. In Speaking Culturally, Gerry Philipsen described the intent and focus of ethnography of speaking:

The ethnography of speaking . . . consists of hearing and representing distinctive ways of speaking in
particular speech communities. An ethnography of speaking is a report of a culture, as that culture thematizes communication and of the ways that culture is expressed in some historical situation (Philipsen 1992, 9).

Although their methods often vary, ethnographers of speaking share an interest in language use and communication patterns within specific communities.

Dell Hymes was one of the first champions of the ethnography of speaking as a method for studying language usage. In The Ethnography of Speaking and subsequent publications, Hymes proposed a taxonomy for classifying and analyzing speech events (Hymes 1962, 1967, 1974, 1986). Hymes' taxonomy garnered an academic following and facilitated the emergence of sociolinguistics, a field of study that explores the relationship between culture and language use.

Perhaps because of the method's flexibility and the continued interest of Hymes and other sociolinguists (Richard Bauman, Ben Blount, Susan Ervin-Tripp, Harold Garfinkel, John J. Gumperz, Shirley Brice Heath, William Labov, Susan Philips, Harvey Sacks, Emanuel A. Schegloff, and Joel Sherzer), scholarly attention to the interaction between communication and culture has not abated. Since the 1960s, over two hundred studies of speaking have been conducted (Carbaugh 1990, xvi).
CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Those working in the area of cultural communication share many of the same assumptions and methods held by sociolinguistics. They tend, however, to devote their attention to cultural codes of communication. A cultural code of communication, according to Philipsen, "consists of a socially constructed and historically transmitted system of symbols and meanings pertaining to communication" (Philipsen 1992, 8). "The significance of speaking," stated Philipsen, "is contingent upon the speech code used by interlocutors to constitute meanings of communicative acts" (Philipsen 1992, 128). He added:

These codes, historically transmitted, socially constructed systems of symbols and meanings, premises, and rules, about communicative conduct, are at once codes about the nature of persons, about the ways persons can and should be linked together in social relations, and about the role of symbolic action in forging, sustaining, and altering such interpersonal linkages (Philipsen 1992, 127).

Communicators use codes of communication to make sense of their experience (Philipsen 1992, 16). According to Philipsen, communication codes are "distinctive thematizations of the ends and means of social action. Each implicates a distinctive conception of what goods humans should aim to secure, how to secure those goods, and how to judge efforts to attain them" (Philipsen 1992, 127). Codes of communication provide communicators with a framework of meaning. The analysis of such codes, Philipsen contended, offers researchers an insight into
both the universalities and particularities of communication and culture.

**SOCIAL INTERACTION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE**

Conversation analysts are also interested in language use and, over the past twenty years, have studied the formal structures of talk. In his review of conversation analysis, Hugh Mehan (1991) noted that conversation analysts have successfully identified the general principles that organize discourse. Conversation analysts have recorded how syntactic operations such as turn-taking, topic-initiation, interruption, laughter, and hesitation operate in conversation.

Although he appreciated the value of this work, Mehan contended that some conversation analysts over-emphasize the role that sequential organization of conversation plays in social interaction. Citing Schegloff (1987), Mehan wrote:

> I am left with the impression . . . [that] these researchers believe that turns and vying for the floor is all that occurs in [socially stratified] interaction. . . . There are more things happening in social interaction than are captured by analyzing the syntactic structure of conversation. . . . And, some of these have the potential for stratifying people (Mehan 1991, 78, 79).

Mehan feared that conversation analysts, fascinated by syntactic structure, were overlooking the political and practical functions of conversation.
Mehan also critiqued conversation analysts for what he called their "claims of invariance" (Mehan 1991, 71). Many, he claimed, ignore contextual variations that alter communication patterns, by assuming

[that] the features of conversation . . . operate independently of such contextual variations as the identities of speakers, the topic of conversation, where it takes place, the number of participants in the conversation, the size or length of turns (Mehan 1991, 77).

According to Mehan, conversation analysts, in their search to identify the organizing principles of language usage, left unexamined the role that talk-in-interaction plays in accomplishing social structure.

Grounded in the theories and methodologies of conversation analysis, researchers in social interaction and social structure (SI/SS) examine the structure of conversation, but they do so because they assume that talk-in-interaction "provides the fundamental framework of social interaction and social institutions" (Zimmerman and Boden 1991, 3). They perceive their work as bridging conversation analysis and sociology.

Although researchers in SI/SS share a common goal (to better understand the relationship between social identity, conversational structure, and social structure), they differ in their methodological approaches. West and Zimmerman (1977), for instance, used quantitative methods to identify patterns of gender-based communication.
on the other hand, examined the interactional exchanges used by a group of educators when sorting students into categories (i.e., learning disabled). Regardless of method, researchers in SI/SS investigate how interactants "do" social structure (Zimmerman and Boden 1991, 4).

POWER AND SOCIAL ORDERS

Many researchers in SI/SS examine how interactants reinscribe power and/or status differentials through talk. Although not specifically interested in talk-in-interaction, Fiske (1993) explored the permeation of power through social orders. In *Power Plays, Power Works*, Fiske, influenced by Foucault (1978, 1980), rejected theories that suggest that power is the property of groups. He argued instead that power operates through technologies and is diffused throughout society. Fiske defined power as the "systematic set of operations upon people which works to ensure the maintenance of the social order" (Fiske 1993, 11).

In his introductory chapter, Fiske defined a set of terms that he used throughout his book. He divided social orders into two groupings: the power-bloc and the people. The power-bloc are those who maintain the social

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Fiske did not originate these terms. He did, however, originate "imperializing," "localizing," "locale," and "station."
order; the people are those "who benefit least and are disciplined most" by the system (Fiske 1993, 11). He used the phrase "imperializing power" to identify the power used by the power-bloc to maintain the social order and control the people and the term "localizing power" to identify the power employed by the people. The terms and theories explicated by Fiske provide a framework for analyses of the politics of culture.

**STORYTELLING AS A SITE OF INVESTIGATION**

Narrative structure gives meaning to experience (Bruner 1986; Fisher 1987; Johnstone 1990). It reveals the narrator's sense of self, place, and community (Johnstone 1990, 5). Through storytelling, narrators translate experiences and sensations into performances. As such, storytelling reveals not only what people consider tellable experiences, but also how they transform these tellable experiences into discursive events.

Storytelling also structures social interactions. In *Narrative as Performance*, Marie Maclean argued that a narrative operates as a social contract, binding the narrator to the narratee in a special dyadic relationship. The narrative frame, she wrote, "promises a performance and

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'A tellable experience is one that narrator considers to be worth telling (Shuman 1986, 2).
constitutes the listeners as audience" (Maclean 1988, 25). It also endows the narrator with the responsibility of telling. The narrative frame, however, does not preclude, but rather depends on, audience participation. According to Goodwin (1986) narrator and audience operate as co-producers of the telling. In "Audience Diversity, Participation and Interpretation," he argued that a story's structure reflects the interaction between the narrator and her or his audience during the telling. Goodwin described tellings as interpersonal negotiations.

Goodwin's arguments complement the work of Langellier and Peterson (1993). They too described storytellings as interpersonal negotiations but emphasize the roles that power and privilege play in these negotiations. Factors such as narrative authority, storytelling rights, excluded audiences, and enforced listeners influence what and how stories are told. Langellier and Peterson characterized, for example, family storytelling as a strategic practice that participates in the social control of the family. Stories and storytelling, they maintained, are not free from the constraints of power.

**DEFINITION OF STORY**

In this study, I identify a story as discourse where a narrator links a series of events and shares this linkage with a narratee. Labov and Waletzky (1967) defined a
narrative as a method of recapitulating past experience. My definition recognizes recollections as well as projections as stories. For instance, I consider a report of a plan of future action a story. Additionally, I recognize as stories abbreviated tellings. The residents of Esplanade experience semantic and structural difficulties when telling and have few opportunities for extended discourse; consequently, the stories told by group home members are often short. When categorizing discourse, I did not use length of utterance as a determining factor.

In "Narrative Analysis," Labov and Waletzky noted that narratives consist of elements that are not common to all texts. These elements are the abstract (clause(s) at the beginning of a story that summarize the narrative's outcome), orientation (clause(s) the provide the narratee with needed background information), complicating action (series of clause(s) that recapitulate a sequence of events), evaluation (clause(s) that reinforce the point of the story), resolution (clause(s) that indicate the termination of the sequence of events), and coda (clause(s) that bring the narratee back to the present time). Labov and Waltezky noted that these six elements need not be and are not present in all stories. The only element that
needs to be present to distinguish a story from other forms of discourse is the complicating action.

A story comprised of only the complicating action may appear pointless or confusing to a narratee, but it is a story nonetheless. Because many individuals with mental retardation experience difficulty structuring narratives (Kernan and Sabsay 1982), to eliminate from my study those stories that some might consider ill-formed would be to eliminate the bulk of stories told by the residents of Esplanade. In my analysis, I labelled a section of discourse a story if I recognized a narrative impulse (i.e., an effort to tell and the selection of a narratee) and a complicating action.

**METHOD OF ANALYSIS**

Hymes defined a speech community as "a community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety" (Hymes 1972, 54). I consider the group home a speech community with its own culture and its own speech codes. I approach storytelling as a culturally distinctive way of speaking, an interactive phenomenon that shapes and is shaped by codes of speaking. In this study, I describe and analyze recurring communication situations within Esplanade, searching for speech codes that provide group home members with a framework of meaning within this
community. Next, using a vocabulary borrowed from Mehan (1991), Fiske (1993), and Langellier and Peterson (1993), I analyze specific stories, examining how the telling of each is accomplished. Specifically, I examine the interaction between narrator and audience during a telling, concentrating on the narrator's efforts to create and maintain his audience and his audience's responses to those efforts. I interpret the interactional dynamics of each telling in light of the complex set of power relations occasioned by the telling itself and the social status of the participants within the larger power structure. Finally, I investigate how storytelling functions within this community.

SCOPE AND LIMITS OF THE STUDY

My study focuses on patterns of storytelling within a speech community. Although widely held assumptions about mental retardation, social service providers, and discourse influence these patterns of telling, Esplanade, like all communities, possesses a culture of its own and a pattern of communicating that reflects and perpetuates that culture. Esplanade is not representative of all group homes; its members are not representative of all persons with developmental disabilities. The men who reside at
Esplanade live in a social system unlike any other. Consequently, the culture of and patterns of communication in this speech community are not identical to the culture and patterns of communication in others.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In the final chapter of Culture and Retardation, Langness and Levine applauded the recent ethnographic accounts of persons with mental retardation. Studies of individuals with mental retardation, they contended, need to be grounded in the everyday experiences of those studied. Langness and Levine wrote, "It is only through [the voices of those with mental retardation], and the careful examination of what they say and do in everyday life that we can fully interpret their behavior independently of the label retardation" (Langness and Levine 1986, 191). In this dissertation I am not trying to determine whether certain behaviors are the products of innate, biological conditions or cultural forces. Instead, I am interested in how these stories function within their community.

Methodologically, I could have accomplished my task without the inclusion of my transcripts. I have included my transcripts for three reasons. First, I use them as evidence for my claims. Second and perhaps the most important reason for their inclusion, I find these stories
interesting. The residents of Esplanade shared with me experiences, sensations, and knowledge previously unknown to me and some of my readers. Third, there are only a handful of documents that record the life experiences of individuals with mental retardation as told by those individuals (Hunt 1967; Seagoe 1964). Generally, those documents that recount such stories are collaborations or second-hand accounts, stories told by someone with mental retardation to another party (an ethnographer, a family member, a journalist) and then retold by the second party (Kennann 1984; McCune 1973). I view this study as a way to create a space within the academic community for the stories of the residents of Esplanade as told by the residents.

As a study of mental retardation, this investigation illuminates how communication within a group home creates and maintains certain power-based subject positions. This study also investigates the effects of such social and cultural practices on individual difference and initiative. As an analysis of communication, it provides a detailed example of the influence of cultural codes on ways of speaking. As a cultural study, it illuminates the relationship between culture and community. As a study of performance, it examines how performances emerge through interaction. Ultimately, this investigation contributes to the on-going dialogues about the nature of mental
retardation, the practice of speaking, the influence of culture, and the process of performing.
CHAPTER TWO

FIELDWORK METHODS AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In this chapter, I detail how I selected this community, how I obtained permission to study it and its members, and how I collected my data. I also include the key to my transcription method and an explanation of how I derived that method. Next I discuss a community of women who helped influence my focus and explain why I have chosen not to include them in this study.

I also provide background information about the community, beginning with a brief outline of the philosophical tenets that justify group homes as an appropriate and popular form of treatment and care for individuals with mental retardation. I then describe the financial and legal factors that influence how administrators structure group homes. Next, I explain how someone becomes a resident of one of VOA-BR's group homes. I detail how VOA-BR structures the daily lives of its residents and describe the lay-out of the group home. I then provide brief sketch of each of the residents. I follow this discussion with a brief description of the employees that work in the home. I conclude the second section of this chapter by delineating the power positions within this community.
FIELDWORK METHODS

In this section, I describe my fieldwork methods to provide my readers a basic understanding of my work as an ethnographer.

SELECTION PROCESS

I picked two social service organizations from the list of almost one hundred in the Baton Rouge telephone book: Community Network and Volunteers of America (VOA). Having no previous experience, I chose these two organization to contact because, unlike the other service organizations, they specifically listed services for those with mental retardation.

Only the director of Volunteers of America in Baton Rouge (VOA-BR) sounded genuinely interested. After asking me a few questions about my background and my intentions, she made an appointment to meet the following day.

After providing me with a general description of their services, VOA-BR’s director of client services gave me the numbers of three other contacts within the organization. To my benefit, each was familiar with ethnography as a research method. After discussing my interests, each woman suggested that I might do best to focus on group home members. If I studied a group home, they posited, I would not only have access to several people with developmental

‘To guarantee my informants’ anonymity, I have used pseudonyms and renamed locales and organizations other than VOA.
disabilities, but also develop a feel for how the clients lived their lives. I agreed.

Although my selection process unfolded in a somewhat happenstance manner, I am not displeased with that particular chain of events. I learned a great deal about VOA, social service providers, mental retardation, and client-staff relations that I might not have learned otherwise. I am also pleased that VOA-BR’s administrative staff encouraged me to study life in a group home. At the time, I viewed the group home as no more than a cluster of people who shared the same living space. It did not take me long, once I was in a group home, to realize that these women had directed me to what Hymes calls a "speech community" (Hymes 1972, 54).

OBTAINING PERMISSION

I had to submit my research proposal for VOA-BR to approve and use VOA’s standard release form for its clients. Because VOA receives most of its requests for information about its clients from those in the medical, psychiatric, or social work professions, its release form reflects the needs of these professions. After some consideration, I decided that it would be easier for me to create my own release form, which the director of client services told me would be no problem. She would submit it for approval.
I tried to keep the form as simple and straightforward as possible. I knew from my conversations with staff members that not all the group home members could read; some group home members would need someone to read my release form to them.

After VOA-BR approved both my project proposal and my release form, I still had to get written permission from the group home members. The director of client service put me in contact with a counselor who was willing to introduce me to the residents of any or all of VOA-BR's group homes. We set up an appointment to meet the following Monday at VOA-BR's group home on Esplanade Drive.*

On my first visit to Esplanade, the counselor introduced me to each of the group home members. She told them that I was a student at Louisiana State University and that I wanted to write a long paper about their lives. I then explained to the men that I wanted to learn about how they lived their lives. I wanted to know what they did for a living, whom they hung out with, whom they talked to, what they liked to do for fun, and other such information. I told them that I would be asking them a lot of questions and listening in on their conversations. I also told them

*For a sample release form, see Appendix A.

*Staff of VOA and group home members refer to the different group homes by the street on which they are located. They call the group home where the bulk of my research took place "Esplanade;" the others, "Magnolia," "East Lessey," and "State."
that I would talk to them about whatever was of interest to them. Each of the men seemed amenable to my proposal.

After my speech, the counselor reminded the group home members that they did not have to take part in my study. She explained that they had the right to refuse. I could find other people to write about and would not be mad at them if they decided that they did not want to participate. As part of my paper, she told them, I would be taking notes about what they did and audio-recording their conversations. If they did not want me to do this, they should tell me that they did not want to participate. She asked them if they understood. They said they did.

After she finished speaking, some of the men asked me questions about my project. Would I be hiding my tape recorder? Would they be on TV? Could they listen to the tapes? I answered "no" to first two questions and "yes" to the third. I told them that they did not need to tell me right away whether or not they wanted to participate. I left my release forms for the residents to consider and said my goodbyes.

On the first visit, I noticed the close bond between the group home members and the direct care workers (DCWs), the staff charged with supervising activities.

"Direct care worker" is the official job title VOA gives to a person who supervises the activities in a group home. For brevity's sake, I refer to such individuals as "DCWs". Generally, VOA refers to these people as "staff".
within the group home. Realizing that I needed to inform the DCWs about my research goal, I talked to the DCWs on duty before I left for the evening. I explained my project to them and answered the few questions they had. They voiced concern that I would be disrupting their routines. I promised them that I would not interfere with their work and would call before each visit. The DCWs agreed to these terms.

When I returned two days later to pick up my release forms, I discovered that two group home members had declined to participate. Another group home member, although agreeing to take part in the study, refused to have his voice recorded. Three signed the forms.

The two group home members who declined my request moved out of Esplanade about month after my initial visit; one to go to a supervised apartment, the other to enter a psychiatric facility. Within three days of each of these departures, VOA-BR found a new resident to take each of their places. Both new residents agreed to participate in my study. Additionally, the resident who refused to have his voice recorded changed his mind and signed a new release form. By early December, all six of the residents of Esplanade had agreed to participate.

Esplanade's population remained stable for about another year. In the spring of 1994, another group home member left Esplanade to move into a supervised apartment.
Once again, VOA-BR found another person to resident to take his place. This new resident also agreed to participate in my study.

Of the nine men who have lived in Esplanade during the course of my fieldwork, seven have agreed to participate in my study. At no time during my fieldwork did I witness a group home member sign one of my release forms. These transactions always took place while I was outside the home. Some time after my departure, a VOA-BR staff member re-explained my project to the group home members and found out who wanted to participate. The staff member then read my release form to the interested parties and gathered signatures.

Every six months, I would have the men sign another release form to find out if any of them had lost interest in participating. None of the group home members ever had a change of heart.

Two of the men in my study are interdicted, a type of wardship which denies them the right to enter a legal agreement without the permission of their guardians. In both cases, I obtained not only the men’s signatures but also the signatures of their legal guardians.

I also obtained release forms from specific members of VOA-BR’s staff. I did not obtain these release forms, however, until after I had transcribed portions of my tapes. In the early stages of my field work I intended to
exclude from my analysis the DCWs' discourse. I realized the significance of the DCWs' contributions to the group home members' narrative performances after I had reviewed my transcriptions. Only then did I seek permission from the DCWs to use their discourse in my dissertation.

I requested release forms from only those staff members whose voices I had captured on tape: four DCWs, the group home supervisor, and the group counselor. I submitted my transcripts to those staff members, seeking their belated permission. After they read over the transcripts, all but one, a DCW, agreed to participate. The person who refused to participate felt that my transcripts did not represent her contribution to the home accurately. I respected her judgment and agreed not to use any interactions in my dissertation that included her.

DATA COLLECTION

During my fieldwork, I used several different methods to collect my data. I solicited narratives, conducted several rounds of interviews, joined conversations, sat in on house meetings, group sessions, and training exercises, or sat quietly, taking notes. When possible, I tape-recorded conversations, often using two tape recorders (General Electric hand-held tape recorders with internal microphones). To date, I have tape-recorded over sixty-five hours of conversation.
During my first two weeks in the group home, I positioned myself as an observer, recording in my notebook information about the group home members, DCWs, structural layout of the home, and group activities. I supplemented my field notes with sketches of the house and yard, diagrams that showed people's positions during certain events, calendars, schedules, meal plans, and notes to myself about possible lines of questioning. Sometimes I would transcribe a conversation while it occurred, scribbling in my journal as fast as I could. I would later use these notes to double-check my recordings.

The next two weeks I interviewed the group home members, one at a time. Before beginning the interview, the group home member and I would locate a quiet place in the home. Often, we conducted these interviews in the group home member's bedroom, the staff's office, or at the picnic table on the patio. Once situated, I would place the tape recorder directly in front of the interviewee. I asked each group home member questions about his background, family life, education, vocation, and interests.

During the next stage of my field work, I concentrated on identifying recurring communicative situations at Esplanade. During this period, I also began my field work at Magnolia, a group home for women with mental retardation, repeating the process of observation.
followed by one-on-one interviews as I had done earlier at Esplanade.

While striving to get a sense of the two group homes, I tried several different data-gathering methods. My time on the van provided me with a wealth of information. For three and a half weeks, I rode on the afternoon shuttle with the residents of Esplanade. I suspected, and I was proved right, that the men passed their time in transit by talking.

Each afternoon that I rode the van, I would park my car at Esplanade and catch a ride on the van to Magnolia with one of the DCWs. On my ride to Magnolia, I would converse with the DCW. However, once at Magnolia, I would sit in the van and wait for the residents of Esplanade to take their seats. I asked the resident who sat in the front passenger seat to hold one tape recorder and one of the residents sitting in the back row to hold the other. Even with two tape recorders, the sounds of traffic and the van’s engine drowned out the voices of the residents at times.

At no point during my interactions with any of the group home members or staff did I try to minimize the presence of the tape recorder. Instead, I tried to make its presence as obvious as possible. I announced when I was turning the recorder on and off. On many occasions, I asked one of the group home members to hold the tape
recorder for me. I had several reasons for maximizing the presence of the tape recorder. First, I wanted to get clear sound. When held three inches away from a speaker’s mouth, my tape recorder captured almost every noise the speaker emitted.

Second, I wanted the group home members to know that they had some control in this study. When I made my announcement or handed a group home member a tape recorder to hold, I was in some sense indicating that until I said otherwise any discourse that followed might have an audience outside those in this room. By maximizing the presence of the tape recorder, I hoped to remind group home members and DCWs of two things: my function within the group and their right not to participate.

I used the tape recorder as a signifier, as a physical marker of my ethnographic role, my interests, and my expectations. The following excerpt from my transcripts is typical of how I used the tape recorder to announce my intentions. The excerpt begins with my knocking on Kyle’s door. Kyle is a resident at Esplanade.

101793; based on tape 60.1; Esplanade; interview with Kyle in his bedroom
KL, Kyle; SH, Sharon*

((Sounds of knocking on the door))
KL: Come in.
SH: Kyle?
   What are you doin?
   It’s me. =

*For a key to my abbreviations, see Appendix C.
=Sharon.

KL: Oh boy.

((Sound of door closing))

KL: I see you girls some more.

SH: Yeah.

Um, do you want to talk to me this afternoon?

I have my tape recorder.

KL: Mbabè recorder.

SH: Yeah.

KL: I love that.

SH: So do you want to talk to me this afternoon? I can talk to you before you go to work. For like about an hour?

KL: Yeah.

=I do uh do it.

In this instance, I used the phrase, "I have a tape recorder," to signal my purpose, to indicate that I was not on a social call but instead functioning in my ethnographic capacity. I might also have said, "I'm here to collect more data for my study. Are you able to produce?" or "I want you to perform now. Are you willing?" Instead, I used the phrase "I have my tape recorder" to convey that information.

I was not the only one to use the tape recorder symbolically. In the following excerpt, Lee Underwood, a resident of Esplanade, taps on the tape recorder to emphasize his point. Earlier in the conversation, I had asked Lee why he was living in a group home.

071894; based on tape 62.1; Esplanade; interview with Lee Underwood in his bedroom

LU, Lee Underwood; SH, Sharon

LU: She nes put me in a group home to punish me.

SH: What had you done wrong?

LU: Ask me?

I don't know,
what I done wrong.
She nes put me in a group home
to punish me.

SH: Where else
could she have put you?
LU: Maybe a private school
without any retarded people.

((Tapping tape recorder))
I wanted that on tape.

In this instance, Lee not only tapped on the tape recorder but also commented about this action. He used the tape recorder self-reflexively. In this moment, he marked himself as a performer, as one who is aware that he is performing and that he has an audience.

The tape recorder became an important part of my visits. On several occasions, I saw a group home member moving closer to the recorder if he wanted a particular piece of discourse recorded. One of the group home members liked to hold the recorder near his mouth so he could speak directly into the internal microphone. Another held the tape recorder in front of the faces of those he wanted to speak. I also witnessed the opposite: group home members moving away from the tape recorder when they did not want to be recorded. One group home member reached over and shut the tape recorder off when he was finished speaking. Additionally, group home members have asked me to erase sections of my tapes. In each instance, I complied. Such requests indicate the group home members' knowledge of my project and provide a clear index of how much control they felt they had as participants.
As I did with my tape recorders, I also used my field journal as an ethnographic signifier. Generally, I did not make my journal entries until after I had left the group home. Sometimes, however, I would sit on the group home members' living room sofa and make my notes. I found that if I wrote in my field book for any extended period, chances were good that one of the group home members would ask me to tell him what I was writing. I would then read from my journal. Sometimes the group home members would appear disappointed with the banality of my notes and would offer me suggestions about how to make my notes more interesting. They would make their suggestions and watch to see if I recorded them.

In the following excerpt from my field notes, Lee not only told me what to write in my field journal but also commented on my note-taking style.

Kyle & Lee hold tape recorders

Lee tries to get Harry to respond to tape recorder

Lee wanted to change tape - he did so - and he wants me to write "and didn't need no help"

Lee tells me about his adventures on Bourbon street - visiting a well-known strip tease bar - wants me to write it down - but guesses that I will make it cleaner (he's right but for brevity's sake)

On occasions, the group home members would dictate to me. I complied each time, taking on the role of the happy secretary. Unfortunately, I never wrote fast enough for
them. Before long, they would grow bored with me and my
notebook.

At first, I thought of these interactions as amusing
games we played with one another. Later, I came to think
of these interactions as an alternative to traditional
methods of gathering data. On some days, I would make two
sets of notes: one on the group home member’s living room
sofa, one in the car.

The final stage of my fieldwork occurred after I had
reread my transcripts and field notes and had identified
what I believed to be a cultural pattern of speaking in the
group home. After compiling a list of questions and
prompts, I returned to Esplanade for one final round of
interviews. In this round of interviews, I interviewed the
residents about their talk in the home. I began with
questions about their life in the group home then moved to
specifics concerning their patterns of talk. These
interviews helped me understand the interactional dynamic
in the home and, to a large extent, helped me narrow my
focus.

METHOD OF TRANSCRIPTION

After I had conducted my first round of interviews, I
tried to transcribe my recordings. I began with one method
of transcription, only to grow dissatisfied and discard it
for another. I had trouble deciding on a transcription
method because I was still unclear of my overall direction.
Transcription methods reflect the needs of the researcher. Transcription emphasizes in a written form the elements of a once oral text that the researcher wants to discuss. For example, if one is interested in conversational interruptions, one picks a transcription method that notes where in the discourse the interruptions occur. Not knowing what I wanted, I tried several methods. I retranscribed certain portions of my tapes multiple times, searching for a suitable method.

In retrospect, I see the value in my extended search for a transcription method. While searching, I learned several methods of transcriptions, fine-tuned my ability to discern minute linguistic changes, and made judgments about the utility of certain transcription notations. I also developed a sense of what I wanted in a method. After a period, motivated by frustration and experience, I quit searching and developed my own transcription method.

My method of transcription combines elements of other methods, notably those of Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974), Chafe (1982) and Scott Carlin (1992). I kept the aspects of their transcription methods that I needed and discarded those that I did not. For example, I found Scott Carlin’s transcription method easy to read. I did not get lost in her notations. I also liked her inclusion of nonverbal and nonvocal information. From Chafe, I borrowed his method of notating intonation units. Each line of text
represents a complete phrase, the visual structure of the transcription reflecting the flow of the discourse. My system for notating interruptions I copied from Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson. Although I have created a unique notation system for this system, I borrowed heavily from others to do so.

I decided early in my efforts not to attempt a phonetic transcription of my tapes. Most of the group home members have speech impediments. By using a phonetic method of transcription, I would be able to replicate the sounds produced by each speaker. I feared, however, that if I were to use such a method, I would sacrifice the readability of my transcriptions.

I chose instead to recreate the feel of sound. For example, when speaking, I often drop the ending "g" sound. When I transcribe such an occurrence, I omit the absent sound. Take, for example, the following utterance: "Cause he's just goin by the rules?" I omitted in my transcription the sounds I omitted while speaking. I used this method of notating sounds throughout my transcription.

I provide the following as a guide.

Line endings correspond to intonational units of discourse

***GAP*** part of the interaction is omitted
++ intonational unit incomplete; continues on next line
[[ ]] information about the audiotape
(() )) information about the interaction
unclear utterance or identification of speaker

a point at which a speaker begins talking during someone else's turn

a point in the discourse where there is no space between the end of one turn and the beginning of the next

a sudden cut-off of the current sound

the sound immediately preceding the colons has been noticeably elongated

a louder tone of voice

shouting

a falling pitch

a rising pitch

a falling-rising pitch

THE RESIDENTS OF MAGNOLIA

Although not included in this study, the six residents at Magnolia, all women, also granted me permission to study their lives. VOA operates gender-segregated group homes. In the early stages of my fieldwork, I considered doing a gender-based comparative analysis of the two group homes, considering especially how gender influenced each home's dynamic. For a brief period, I spent an equal number of hours at each home, exploring this issue.

I decided to focus my attention on Esplanade for several reasons. First, I had spent more time at Esplanade and had at least twice as many pages on the residents of Esplanade as I did on the residents of Magnolia. Second, the acoustics at Magnolia were not conducive to the kind of
audio-recording that I needed to do. Of the all the VOA-BR-sponsored group homes, Magnolia is the most impressive. Magnolia’s high ceilings, hard wood floors, ceiling fans, window units, and spacious rooms, however, provide a special challenge to those interested in capturing conversation with inexpensive recording devices.

Magnolia has two other disadvantages. Magnolia, in addition to housing six women with mental retardation, also served as VOA-BR’s administrative office.* The women lived on the first floor; VOA-BR’s administrative staff worked on the second. The only stairs were located in the middle of the first floor. The wave of VOA-BR employees making their way to the second floor began as early as 7 a.m. and sometimes did not end until 10 p.m. Magnolia’s residents lived in a human traffic zone.

Moreover, Magnolia served as transportation depot. Most group home members spend their days at a day school for adults with developmental disabilities or at Setro Enterprises, a local business that specializes in hiring those with disabilities. To reduce the driving time for its staff and clients, VOA-BR established Magnolia as a junction between the group homes and the day school or Setro. Not only did this system reduce the amount to time

*During the last months of my fieldwork, VOA relocated its administrative offices. The women of Magnolia no longer have to share their space with VOA’s administrative staff.
that any one person was in transit, but it also lessened the wear-and-tear on VOA-BR's vans.

The timing of the drop-offs and pick-ups was never exact, however. For one reason or another, some of the vans would arrive earlier or later than others. Since no one could leave until all the vans have arrived, some residents and drivers had to wait at Magnolia. Both drivers and residents used this period to converse with one another. For up to two hours a day, Magnolia functioned as a transportation depot and site of social contact.

The human traffic that flowed through Magnolia differentiated it from any other VOA-BR-sponsored group home. By comparison, Esplanade appeared quiet, tranquil. Esplanade received maybe three visitors a day and, unlike those at Magnolia, the few who visited almost always called before arriving.

Last, my relationship with the residents and staff at Magnolia was not as strong as my relationship with the residents and staff at Esplanade. The residents at Magnolia never felt comfortable talking to me, perhaps because if the residents at Magnolia were in the mood to talk, they had a wide selection of possible conversants. At Esplanade, I was sometimes the only visitor the residents had that day.

My level of comfort in each group home might not have had an effect on my decision to focus solely on one group
home had I not been interested in the group home member's performance of narrative. To collect a narrative, one has to be within earshot of someone narrating. Not only did the residents of Magnolia not tell me stories, but also they did not talk to me unless they had to.

None of these factors (the limited amount of time I had spent in the home, the poor acoustics, the congestion in the home, or my inability to engage the residents in conversation) were insurmountable problems in and of themselves. In combination, however, they reinforced my inclination to focus my attention solely on the interactions at Esplanade.

The residents of Magnolia, although not prominently featured in this study, played an integral role in my fieldwork. They helped me focus my attention. I can also credit some of my newfound self-reflexivity to my failed efforts to initiate conversation with the residents of Magnolia. Ironically, my failures to engage the residents of Magnolia spurred me to become more aware of my role in this study and, in doing so, brought me to a new level of understanding about ethnography. Geoffrey Pearson wrote, "The ethnographer is never a neutral channel of communication, and to pretend to be is a deception" (Pearson 1993, viii). Had I not failed to engage those women, I might not have given my role in these narrative performances the critical attention it deserves. The
residents of Magnolia changed the direction of this study, and, for that, they deserve mention.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In this section, I provide a basic understanding of the general dynamics that influence Esplanade, discussing its history, structure and function, physical lay-out, members, and social organization.

THE POPULARIZATION OF GROUP HOMES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL RETARDATION

Prior to 1960, few group homes existed. Between 1900 and 1960, most individuals with mental retardation in need of care and support lived in large institutional settings. The population of such institutions steadily increased over the years until it finally reached its peak in 1970. Most of these institutions, constrained by limited financial, personnel, and physical resources, were ill-equipped to handle this growth and, as a consequence, the quality of care rapidly deteriorated in many institutions (Scheerenberger 1983, 252).

The 1950s and 1960s also marked the beginning of a series of concentrated reform efforts. Appalled by the conditions within institutions, reformers campaigned for legislative protection for those with mental retardation. They also lobbied for changes in care, treatment, and education. Two philosophical tenets buoyed these reform efforts: normalization and the developmental model of treatment and care.
Articulated as the antithesis of institutionalization, normalization names a principle that valorizes programs of service that provide "normalizing" experiences for those with mental retardation. In 1971, the International League of Societies for the Mentally Handicapped endorsed normalization as a viable and valuable approach to mental retardation programming:

[Normalization is] . . . a sound basis for programming which, by paralleling the normal patterns of the culture and drawing the retarded into the mainstream of society, aims at maximizing his [or her] human qualities, as defined by [her or] his particular culture. Retarded children and adults should, therefore, be helped to live as normal a life as possible. The structuring of routines, the form of life, and the nature of the physical environment should approximate the normal cultural pattern as much as possible (International League of Societies for the Mentally Handicapped 1971, 2).

Reformers used normalization as a rallying cry, demanding for those with mental retardation experiences and opportunities denied them in institutions. According to Scheerenberger, author of A History of Mental Retardation: A Quarter Century of Promise, "No single categorical principle has ever had a greater impact on services for mentally retarded persons than that of normalization" (Scheerenberger 1987, 116). Guided by the principle of normalization, reformers dismantled or reformulated existing programs of care for individuals with mental retardation.

The other principle that guided the reform movement was the developmental model of treatment and care.
According to the International League of Societies for the Mentally Handicapped, the developmental model is based on the following set of assumptions:

. . . retarded children and adults are capable of growth, learning, and development. Each individual has potential for some progress, no matter how severely impaired [she or] he might be. The basic goal of programming for retarded individuals consists of maximizing their human qualities (International League of Societies for the Mentally Handicapped 1971, 2).

The developmental model emphasized the continued growth of the individual. Each person possesses unique abilities, interests, and needs. Reformers insisted that services cater to the individual, not to a specific institution, program, or policy.

During the 1970s, the reform movement received support from the judiciary and legislative branches of the federal government. The federal courts, for example, made several influential rulings about involuntary institutionalization, the rights of the institutionalized, and involuntary servitude within institutions. Federal and state governments adopted for care facilities the treatments standards of the American Association on Mental Deficiency. The greatest boon for advocates and reformers, however, was the passage of the 1971 amendment to Title XIX (Medicaid). Under the amendment, individuals with mental retardation are eligible to receive federal funds. The amendment provided a sorely needed source of revenue to those with mental retardation. For some, these funds represented an
opportunity to live outside of an institution. For others, these funds provided a degree of economic stability in an otherwise tumultuous economy.

**VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA**

Volunteers of America is a non-profit organization, serving the needs of individuals in communities nationwide. In Baton Rouge, VOA operates six group homes: four for adults with mental retardation, one for abused women and children, and another for runaways. In addition to these services, VOA provides eligible community members with needed job training, skill development, counseling, and in-home care. VOA’s staff seeks to provide those in need with the institutional supports those individuals need to thrive.

**VOA-BR-SPONSORED GROUP HOMES FOR ADULTS WITH MENTAL RETARDATION**

As with all of its clients,¹ VOA caters to the individual’s specific needs. Most of VOA’s clients with developmental disabilities receive supplemental care within their own homes. Only a small percentage of those served by VOA move into group homes.

VOA receives funding for its group homes for adults with mental retardation from three sources: federal and

¹VOA’s staff refers to all program participants as "clients." I, on the other hand, use the term "client" only when echoing VOA’s discourse. When referring to someone who resides in a VOA-sponsored group home for adults with mental retardation, I use the terms "group home member" or "resident."
state funds, private donations, and group home member contributions. Federal and state funds, specifically Title XIX monies, provide the bulk of VOA's operating funds. VOA also receives some funds from the United Way and private donations. Additionally, group home members contribute a percentage of their income to their room and board.

To qualify for state and federal funds, VOA-BR group homes adhere to federal, state, and local guidelines. Title XIX details the characteristics needed by a residential facility in order to qualify as an Intermediate Care Facility for Individuals with Mental Retardation (ICF/MR). Title XIX defines an ICF/MR as:

... [an] institution (Or distinct part thereof) primarily for the diagnosis, treatment, or rehabilitation of the mentally retarded or persons with related conditions, which provides in a protected residential setting, individualized ongoing evaluation, planning, 24-hour supervision, coordination, and integration of health or rehabilitative services to help each individual reach his [or her] maximum of functioning capacities" (Scheerenberger 1976, 79).

The survival of VOA-BR's group homes depends on their adherence to these specifications.

To ensure that the ICFs/MR who receive Title XIX funds abide by these guidelines, inspectors visit each of the funded group homes once a year. They evaluate each group home based on a highly specific set of criteria that is

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11Intermediate Care Facility is the legal term used to describe various types of residential facilities. A group home is a type of Intermediate Care Facility.
designed to guarantee the quality of life within each facility. After each evaluation, the inspectors make their recommendations. Facilities that fail to meet the review board's standards lose their access to Title XIX funds. A group home's continued operation depends on its adherence to the board's guidelines.

**REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS**

Prior to admittance into a VOA-BR-sponsored group home, potential program participants undergo a series of tests and interviews. VOA-BR begins the process by identifying the behavioral competencies of potential program participants. VOA administrators use the results of these evaluations to create an Individual Education Plan (IEP), an outline which details the needs of the potential program participants. They then use the IEP to determine if the potential program participant will benefit from VOA-BR's group home residency program. If they make such a determination, VOA administrators place the potential program participant's name on a waiting list. Residency in VOA-BR's group homes is based not only on a compatibility of need and service but also on the availability of space and funding.

Once VOA administrators find the space and funds for a potential program participant, they use her or his IEP to design educational, nutritional, physical, psychological, and social objectives for the resident. VOA presents these
objectives at a meeting to the potential program participant and other interested parties (family members, legal guardians, doctors, social workers, etc.). If the potential program participant and the other interested parties find these objectives amenable, VOA administrators encourage the program participant to visit the group home before she or he enters the program. If, after the visit, the program participant is still interested, VOA formally places her or him in the group home.

Before their admittance into the residency program, VOA explains to potential residents the philosophies and policies that shape life in the group home. Prior to admittance into the program and once a year thereafter, residents sign a release form that commits them to a specific behavioral plan. A 22-item document, the form titled "General Responsibilities of Individuals Residing in VOA" specifies what VOA expects of each resident and what each resident can expect from the staff and other residents.  

FUNCTION OF STRUCTURE WITHIN THE GROUP HOME

Once admitted into the residency program, group home members share a common space, a common identity as members of a group home for men with mental retardation, and a common schedule.

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"See Appendix B."
Time as structured by VOA-BR dominates life in the group home. VOA-BR structures the residents' lives around a rigid and repetitive schedule. A typical weekday for the group home members follows a set order. At 5:30 a.m., the men rise. Between 5:30 and 7:30, they ready themselves for their daily activities. The men prepare breakfast, eat, clear the table, wash the breakfast dishes. Transported by van, the residents arrive at their place of employment or an activity center by 8:00 a.m. At 3:00 p.m., a DCW picks up the group home members. Once home, two of the men begin dinner preparations. The rest clean their lunch boxes and prepare their lunches for the following day. After dinner, the men complete assigned duties and training. The men maintain a daily shower schedule; each man takes a shower before 9:30 p.m. After they complete these tasks and take their showers, the men spend the remainder of their time as they please. Lights go out at 9:30 p.m.

A typical week also follows a set order. VOA-BR assigns each man one day of the week to do his laundry. On Monday nights, the men gather for a weekly house meeting. On Mondays and Thursdays, Don and Ted attend a community-sponsored aerobics class. On Tuesday nights, all the men but Nigel bowl. On Wednesday nights, the men attend a group therapy session and do necessary grocery shopping. On Thursday afternoons, Harry goes horse-back riding with his sister. Two Fridays out of the month, they join
members from other group homes at community-sponsored activities (i.e., BINGO, dances, a Halloween party). On Saturdays, after completing major household chores, the men accompany the DCW on a field trip of some sort (i.e., the mall or the flea market). Don and Ted attend church services on Sunday mornings. Those men who do not attend church accompany the DCW to the grocery store. Free time exists for the residents; but, as with every other aspect of their lives, VOA-BR schedules it for them.

In addition to a posted schedule, a clock and a calendar appear on at least one wall in every room in the house. Staff tapes a roster of the men’s duties on the refrigerator. Six large three-ring binders, one for each resident, list the men’s activities and training by day. Although constraining at times for the residents and staff, the schedule serves useful functions for VOA-BR. First, it organizes the lives of two group of people: the six men living in the group home and the fourteen DCWs responsible for the men’s care. Second, adherence to a schedule reminds the residents that they are not in a place where they can sleep as late as they want, eat when they want, or watch television after midnight. The schedule reminds the residents on a recurring, highly regulated basis of their commitment to the program.
ESPLANADE

Esplanade is a four bedroom, two bath, white-washed brick house located in a quiet suburban neighborhood. It is within walking distance of a large strip mall and supermarket. Set back from the street, the house has a covered garage, an outside office, a covered patio, a storage shed, and large backyard. Decorated in blues, beiges, and creams, Esplanade is pleasant-looking, comfortable, and functional.

Each resident shares a bedroom with another group home member. VOA uses the fourth bedroom as an office.

GROUP HOME MEMBERS

Esplanade houses six men whose ages range from their early twenties to their mid forties. All are Louisiana natives with family members living in the area.

The residents have been diagnosed with mental retardation. Nigel, for instance, functions near the upper limit of the moderate range of mental retardation. Don
Easton has Down's Syndrome. Physicians have diagnosed Lee, Jack, and Ted with mild mental retardation. Although similarly diagnosed, no two exhibit identical strengths or weaknesses. Moreover, some have physical and psychological as well as mental disabilities. Harry is dually diagnosed as autistic and severely mentally retarded. Bob Wilson was born deaf and is within the Borderline range of developmental disability.

All of the residents have at some time worked at Setro Enterprises, a workshop for adults with developmental disabilities. Kyle currently works at Taco Bell; Ted, at a local charity organization sorting donated goods; Lee, at McDonald's.

The newest resident at Esplanade, Bob Wilson, took Ted's place in the group home. Initially, he had trouble adjusting to his new life in the group home, in part because only two DCWs know how to sign and none of the other group home members can. Although he can read lips, his speech is difficult to discern. The language barrier has made his transition a little more difficult than usual.

Before moving into Esplanade, Bob Wilson lived with his parents. He maintains close contact with his mother.

Within Esplanade, group home members and staff refer to certain individuals by their first names alone and others by their first and last names. I maintained this distinction when I created pseudonyms.
Upon her son’s acceptance into the program, Bob Wilson’s mother had a special phone installed in Esplanade so that he could communicate with her and other individuals with similar equipment.

Bob Wilson likes to draw cars, heavy metal logos, planes, and bombs. He also enjoys watching television and listening to his stereo. He has a hearing aid which allows him to pick up some sounds. He loves loud noises. He likes to plays his television and stereo as loud as possible. Bob Wilson also likes to slam doors, crash trash can lids together, and drop heavy objects. Some of the group home members find this preference of his disturbing, but he ignores their protestations. He is also very interested in women and sex.

He works at Setro Enterprises.

Don

Don dresses neatly and often carries a small notebook and pen in his shirt pocket. He is pleasant and amenable. When not occupied, he likes to spend his free time sitting quietly by himself.

Before moving to Esplanade, Don lived with his mother. He stayed with her until she died. He stays in close contact with his sister and brother-in-law, who live in the vicinity. He is interdicted to a brother who lives out of state.14

14Although most individuals with mental retardation possess the legal rights to make their own decisions and are therefore legally responsible for their own actions,
Don likes to keep track of dates and interesting spellings of names, jotting them down in his notebook that he keeps with him. He also likes bowling and attending Sunday morning church services. He is active in VOA's Human Right Committee, a group that works to ensure the protection of group home member's rights.

He is employed at Setro Enterprises.

Harry

Harry has autism. He keeps to himself and values his routine. Changes in his routine bother him. He uses repetitive behaviors to express his irritation.

Although Harry does not initiate conversations with other group home members, he will often respond when they speak to him. The other group home members treat Harry well and try to include him in their group activities by asking him questions or monitoring his behavior.

Every Thursday afternoon, Harry goes horseback riding with his sister. He also enjoys watching television and has specific programs that he particularly enjoys.

Some do not. Some, usually at the request of a family member, undergo interdiction. Interdiction is a legal procedure whereby the interdicted loses his or her right to make or keep any legal or binding agreements. Moreover, the court assigns the interdicted a legal guardian who agrees to act on the interdicted's behalf. The interdicted cannot vote, marry, sign a contract, or possess a credit card. If someone who is interdicted wants to move into an apartment, that person has to get his legal guardian to sign the lease agreement.
Harry is interdicted to his mother.
He works at Setro Enterprises.

Kyle

Kyle often wears a baseball cap, a hip bag, and a set of keys clipped to his belt. One of the oldest members of the group, he sees himself as something of a father figure to the other men. Having mastered most of the skills needed to live comfortably in the home, Kyle sometimes offers his assistance to other group home members.

Kyle lived with his parents as a child and as a young adult. After his father, an electrical engineer, died, Kyle moved into a state-run institution. He stayed there for a number of years before moving into Esplanade.

During my visit, Kyle worked two part-time jobs. He worked at Taco Bell and at Setro Enterprises. He quit his job at Setro Enterprises so that he could work more hours for Taco Bell.

Kyle is fascinated by anything mechanical or electrical. He spends hours drawing complicated diagrams of wiring configurations. He also likes to garden. Year round, he maintains the group home’s foliage, including the border plants and the vegetable garden in the backyard.

Lee Underwood

Of all the group home members, Lee is the least satisfied with life in the group home. Although he likes living in Baton Rouge and likes working at McDonald’s, Lee
dislikes living in a group home. He complains about the other group home members and complains about the tasks assigned to him. He cannot wait until he moves out, preferably on his own.

As a child, Lee lived with his grandmother. At the age of five, he went to stay with his mother. Except for a four-month placement in a state-run institution in his early adolescence, he lived with his mother up until his acceptance into VOA’s residency program.

Lee collects television memorabilia, including fact books, statuettes, and soundtracks. He is especially fond of the situation comedies produced in the 1950s and 1960s. He also likes to read entertainment magazines and publications aimed at teenagers.

Lee likes to talk about himself. He particularly likes to talk about what he would be doing with his life if he were not living in a group home. He has a taste for the refined and expensive.

After I had concluded my fieldwork, Lee lost his job at McDonald’s. Lee’s manager felt that Lee spent too much time on the job socializing with his co-workers. Not long after his dismissal from McDonald’s, Lee asked to leave the group home. He currently lives with his mother.

Nigel Quentin

Nigel Quentin is an active, animated, talkative fellow. He likes to interact with a variety of people. He
has a dominant personality and often influences the moods of those around him. Although generally cheerful, Nigel is easily riled. When group home members tease or goad him, Nigel becomes anxious and excited. At times, he functions for the other group home members as a scape goat.

Nigel likes to keep track of the weather and watch All My Children, an afternoon soap opera. His family is also very important to him. He talks to his mother several times a week on the phone and tries to visit his parents on weekends when possible.

Nigel lived with his parents before moving into Esplanade. He expects to live in a group home for much of his adult life.

He works at Setro Enterprises.

Ted

Ted is a quiet, shy, pleasant man who keeps to himself. He prefers to spend his free time watching televised sporting events. He is an avid fan of the LSU Tigers and the New Orleans Saints. When appropriate, he shows his support for the local teams by wearing t-shirts that bear their logos. Ted also enjoys bowling, dancing, and attending Sunday morning church services.

Before moving to Esplanade, Ted lived with his parents. After graduating from a Baton Rouge high school, Ted moved into Esplanade. Ted is very close to his family. He talks to them on the phone at least twice a week and
visits them on weekends. He also has a girlfriend whom he visits with after work and on weekends when they can coordinate their schedules.

Ted moved into a supervised apartment in June 1994. Bob Wilson took his place at Esplanade. Ted continues to work at the local charity organization. He maintains contact with the staff and residents of Esplanade, visiting them at least once a week.

THE HOME SUPERVISOR AND THE DIRECT CARE WORKERS

VOA hires and trains all the staff that work in its group homes. Before being employed by VOA, potential employees must submit to background checks. Once hired, DCWs undergo extensive training, which continues throughout their employment with VOA.

VOA assigns a group home supervisor to each group home. A former DCW, the group home supervisor is responsible for maintaining the standard of living within the group home and submitting the paperwork needed to keep the home running smoothly. The group home supervisor also serves as a mediator between group home members, DCWs, family members, and VOA administrators. The group home supervisor has the final say about decisions that concern the operation of the group home. He or she reports to the VOA’s director of client services.

VOA requirements specify that a certain number of staff members be in the group home at all times. This
number ranges from one to three. Work shifts range from four to eight hours in length. If a DCW cannot work his or her assigned shift, VOA contacts someone from its pool of qualified temporary replacements. Often, these replacements are part-time employees for another group home sponsor in town.

To hold down costs, VOA maintains a large pool of part-time employees. Most of these part-time employees are students in nearby colleges or have second jobs. All are from the area.

**HIERARCHY WITHIN VOA-BR’S GROUP HOMES**

Prior to admittance, VOA informs prospective group home members that as residents they are to abide by the home's rules and regulations. Before potential group home members enter the program, staff members will review VOA's grievance policy with them. In this review, staff outline a chain-of-command within each group home and ask that group home members comply with system.

The chain-of-command outlined by VOA's staff is based on a simple, hierarchical model. If a group home member has a problem with another group member, he and the other group home member should try to resolve the problem on their own. If, after trying, the two cannot resolve their differences, they may at that point involve a DCW. If the DCW cannot remedy the situation, she or he will contact the group home supervisor. If the group home supervisor cannot
remedy the situation, he or she will contact the program coordinator. The program coordinator, after a lengthy consultation with the group home members and relevant staff, will make a decision. If the group home members are still dissatisfied, the program coordinator will recommend that the two group home members consult an outside agency for remediation. The Human Rights Committee, a board comprised of representatives from the various group homes, DCWs, and members from VOA’s administrative staff, is one such agency. The only disputes VOA authorizes group home members to mediate are their own. VOA-BR’s staff contends that the smooth operation of the group home depends on the adherence to its schedules, rules, and chain-of-command.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I described my ethnographic methods and provide general background material about the group home, its structure, function, support staff, and members. I provide this information as a way to introduce my readers to some of the particularities of my method and to some of the defining features of this community.
CHAPTER THREE
COMMUNITIES, SITUATIONS, AND CULTURAL CODES

In this chapter I discuss some of the constraints that influence talk within Esplanade. I begin with a brief review of the theoretical underpinnings of such work. I then discuss the relationship between culture and community. Next I describe and analyze the recurring communication situations encountered by the residents of Esplanade, detailing how each works to encourage or prohibit storytelling by group home members. After describing and analyzing the eight recurring communication situations, I identify the cultural codes (self-reliance and compliance) that shape discourse within Esplanade. I discuss the interaction between these codes, how that interaction shapes discourse, and how discourse, especially storytelling, reinforces these codes.

THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF SPEAKING

In 1962, Dell Hymes published "The Ethnography of Speaking." In this and subsequent publications (Hymes 1962, 1967, 1972), Hymes argued the need for sociolinguistics, the study of the interaction between language and social life. The goal of sociolinguistics, he wrote, "is to explain the meaning of language in human life, and not in the abstract, . . . but in the concrete, in actual human lives" (Hymes 1972, 41). Neither social science nor linguistics, Hymes noted, examined language-in-
use in social contexts, and without such examinations, both fields of study suffered.

Hymes attributed the paucity of research about language-in-use to disciplinary biases. Excluding a handful of linguistic anthropologists, most social scientists did not possess the formal linguistic training necessary to examine language as a sociological category. Linguists, Hymes characterized as over-focused. "Linguistics," he claimed, "... has been occupied almost wholly with developing analysis of the structure of language as a referential code, neglecting social meaning, diversity, and use" (Hymes 1972, 40). Sociolinguists, he asserted, has emerged "to redress the situation" (Hymes 1972, 40).

Hymes described sociolinguistics as a mode of research "that partly links, but partly cuts across, partly builds between the ordinary practices of the disciplines" (Hymes 1972, 41). It mediates linguistics and social science while fostering fresh avenues of research.

After establishing the theoretical need for sociolinguistics, Hymes presented what he called a "theory of language use" (Hymes 1972, 52). Based on his analysis of existing studies, Hymes offered three assumptions about the interaction between communication and culture. First, speaking varies cross-culturally. Supporting his claim with evidence from ethnographic studies, Hymes wrote,
"[C]ommunities differ significantly in ways of speaking, patterns of repertoire and switching, in the roles and meanings of speech" (Hymes 1972, 42). Hymes linked the variation in speech patterns to cultural difference. Speaking reflects the beliefs, values, reference groups, and norms of the community. Because systems of meaning differ from community to community, patterns of speaking vary from community to community.

Second, speaking is systematically patterned. Each community creates a knowable system of language use. This system emerges through the interaction between the grammatical structure of a specific language, the limitations of the physical body, and community-specific systems of meaning. Speech rules stabilize the system by defining what is appropriate, inappropriate, competent, and incompetent speech in a community.

These rules of speaking are flexible, however. In Speaking Culturally (1992), Gerry Philipsen wrote:

To say that speaking is structured is not to say it is absolutely determined. It is patterned, but in ways that its creators can circumvent, challenge, and revise. Its rules are violated, new rules and meanings are created, and therein play is brought into structure just as structure is brought into play (Philipsen 1992, 10).

Patterns of speaking reinforce and are reinforced by the needs, preferences, and inclinations of the community.

Third, speaking is culturally and socially structured practice. Like other social expressions, speaking reflects
the culture of a people. Hymes sees speaking as a "key to, or a metaphor of, social life" (Hymes 1962, 20). The study of speaking serves dual functions. It illuminates the intricacies of spoken life within a community and the uniqueness of a culture as expressed through its speech.

These three assumptions about speaking shaped the direction and focus of sociolinguistics. They also shaped Hymes' proposed method of study. Hymes advocated the creation of a descriptive taxonomy of speaking. He wrote, "An adequate descriptive theory would provide for the analysis of individual communities by specifying technical concepts required for such analysis, and by characterizing the forms the analysis should take" (Hymes 1972, 53). He added that a taxonomy is a necessary step toward model-development, theory-building, and cross-cultural comparison (Hymes 1972, 43). In what he called "an initial heuristic schema," Hymes laid out the basic units of analysis: speech community, speech situation, speech event, speech act, and components of speech events (Hymes 1972, 52, 53).

The first term Hymes defined was "speech community." In linguistics, the researcher's primary object of study is the linguistic form. In sociolinguistics, the researcher's primary object of study is the speech community. Hymes wrote, "One starts with a social group and considers the linguistic varieties present in it" (Hymes 1972, 54). After positioning the speech community as the cornerstone
of sociolinguistic research, Hymes acknowledged the slipperiness of the term. He cited the varied scholarly definitions. Certain definitions of "speech community," he noted, reflect theoretical interests outside the sociolinguistic domain.

He reviewed the existing scholarly definitions, seeking those with sociolinguistic resonance. For example, he rejected definitions of "speech community" that describe it exclusively in terms of language, common grammatical structure, frequency of interaction, or shared speech rules. He accepted, however, those definitions that describe speech community in terms of social situation and norms of language use.

Hymes offered what he called a tentative definition of speech community. He stated that a speech community "is defined as a community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety" (Hymes 1972, 54). Later, citing Gumperz (1962), Hymes expanded the definition: "Probably, it will prove most useful to reserve the notion of speech community for the local unit most specifically characterized for a person by a common locality and primary interaction" (Hymes 1972, 55). Both definitions describe "speech community" as a social unit. Both offer researchers a degree of definitional flexibility. The former uses language to mark a
community's boundaries; the latter, physical locale. For Hymes, as long as the researcher focuses on the interaction of speech and culture, either definition suffices.

Hymes followed his discussion of speech community with brief definitions of "speech situation," "speech event," and "speech act." According to Hymes, a speech situation is an activity "associated with (or marked by the absence of) speech" (Hymes 1972, 56). As examples, he listed ceremonies, fights, hunts, meals, lovemaking. These activities, he wrote, "are in some recognizable way bounded or integral" (Hymes 1972, 56.)

Hymes contrasted the speech situation with the speech event: "The term speech event will be restricted to activities, or aspect of activities, that are directly governed by rules or norms for the use of speech" (Hymes 1972, 56). He noted that a speech situation may consist of a single speech event. He provided the example of a rite (speech situation) consisting of a single prayer (speech event). Hymes stated, however, that most speech situations contain several speech events and multiple speech acts.

A speech act, Hymes explained, "is the minimal term of the set" (Hymes 1972, 56). In The Ethnography of Communication, Muriel Saville-Troike elaborated on Hymes' definition, describing it as "coterminal with a single interactional function, such as a referential statement, a request, or a command" (Saville-Troike 1989, 28). Hymes
identified jokes, commands, and greetings as examples of speech acts.

In some theories of discourse, the speech act is the basic unit of analysis (Saville-Troike 1989, 28). In sociolinguistics, however, the basic unit of analysis is the speech event. Like the speech act, the speech event is rule-governed; and, like the speech situation, the speech event maintains consistency of elements and tone. As such, the speech event marks a recognizable set of culturally guided, rule-bound communicative behaviors, providing fertile ground for analysis.

After marking the delineations between speech situation, speech event, and speech act, Hymes outlined a schemata for describing speech events. Hymes argued that the fruitfulness of sociolinguistic endeavors depends not only on thorough description but also on the development of a useable taxonomy (Hymes 1972, 71). Hymes offered such a taxonomy, listing the potentially salient components of a speech event: message form, message content, setting, scene, speaker or sender, addressee, addressor, hearer or receiver or audience, purposes-outcomes, purposes-goals, key, channels, forms of speech, norms of interaction, norms of interpretation, and genres (Hymes 1972, 59-65). These components, when analyzed, offer researchers a way into the spoken life of a community.
Saville-Troike described the benefit of such analyses. The knowledge derived from such analyses includes:

... not only rules for communication (both linguistic and sociolinguistic) and shared rules for interaction, but also cultural rules and knowledge that are the basis for the context and content of communicative events and interaction processes (Saville-Troike 1989, 2, 3).

Analysis of the speech event helps the researcher develop a better understanding of the rules, codes, norms, and expectations that guide communicative activity within the community.

Over the years, researchers have reformulated Hymes' taxonomy to serve the field's changing needs. Saville-Troike offered her version of Hymes' schemata.

1 The *genre*, or type of event (e.g., joke, story, lecture, greeting, conversation).
2 The *topic*, or referential focus.
3 The *purpose* or function, both of the event in general and in terms of the interaction goals of individual participants.
4 The *setting*, including location, time of day, season of year, and physical aspects of the situation (e.g., size of room, arrangement of furniture).
5 The *key,*' or emotional tone of the event (e.g., serious, sarcastic, jocular).
6 The *participants*, including their age, sex, ethnicity, social status, or other relevant categories, and their relationship to one another.
7 The *message form*, including both vocal and nonvocal channels, and the nature of the code which is used (e.g., which language, and which variety)

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"To avoid confusion between the different scholarly uses of "key," I use the phrase "emotional tone" in my description and analysis of the eight communication situations that recur in Esplanade."
The *message content*, or surface level denotative references; what is being communicated about. The *act sequence*, or ordering of communicative/speech acts, including turn taking and overlap phenomena. The *rule of interaction*, or what properties should be observed. The *norms of interpretation*, including the common knowledge, the relevant cultural presuppositions, or shared understandings, which allow particular inferences to be drawn about what is to be taken literally, what is discounted, etc. (Saville-Troike 1989, 138, 139).

Saville-Troike credited the taxonomy for providing researchers with a way to describe and discover meaningful cultural and communicative differences (Saville-Troike 1989, 157).

**COMMUNITIES AND CULTURES**

 Like "speech community," the word "culture" resists pat definition. The meaning of the word varies across fields, assuming the nuance of the specific discipline, the specific communicators, and the specific context. According to Raymond Williams, culture is "one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (Williams 1976, 76). In this study, I adopt as my own Stuart Hall's definition of culture: "the actual, grounded terrain of practices, representations, languages, and customs of any specific historical society" (Hall 1986, 26). So, for the purposes of this study, "speech community" refers to a group of people united by and defined in part by their use of language, and "culture" refers to a "way of life" (Thompson, Willis, and Wildavsky
1990, 1). The first term refers to units of people; the other refers to "designs for living" (Langness and Levine 1986, 192).

Like any unit of measure, community functions as both set and subset. In her discussion about community, Saville-Troike stated, "[V]irtually any community in a complex society might be considered part of a larger one, or subdivided into small groups" (Saville-Troike 1989, 18). Micro-communities exist within larger macro-communities. For example, Esplanade is a micro-community. It is also part of a larger community of VOA-sponsored group homes, of Medicaid-funded group homes, of care and treatment facilities for individuals with mental retardation, of service providers. Each community’s identity, system of meaning, history, practices, and culture interacts with other communities’ identities, systems of meaning, histories, practices, and cultures. The nature of those interactions, however, varies.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

In their discussion of mental retardation, culture, and community, Langness and Levine defined culture in terms of community. They wrote:

Culture is most commonly conceived of as a property of groups—those extra-genetically transmitted meanings and ways of understanding that are part of a tradition of learned and shared, if largely subconscious, designs of living (Langness and Levine 1986, 192).
Langness and Levine considered culture more than some commonly held characteristic of a group of people. Culture acts as a communal blueprint, providing community members with sense of themselves, their history, their expectations, and their purpose. According to Langness and Levine, culture and community are interdependent. To participate in a community is to participate in a culture. Culture functions to bind community members in a web of shared experiences, values, attitudes, and beliefs.

Raymond Williams also defined culture in terms of social units, but his understanding of the two concepts and their relationship to one another differed from Langness and Levine's view. Williams defined culture as "the signifying system through which necessarily . . . a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored" (Williams 1981, 13). Both definitions describe culture as an expression of a social system. Williams' definition, however, acknowledges possible variations in the alignment between a culture and a social order. Langness and Levine described culture as the nearly perfect mirror image of a social order. Williams, in his definition, allowed for minor incongruencies between the two, sites of dynamic friction.

When read against Williams' definition of culture, Saville-Troike's comment about micro- and macro-communities raises interesting issues concerning the relationship
between communities and cultures. If there are macrocommunities, are there macro-cultures? If so, what then are the relationships between macro-cultures and microcommunities? Additionally, what then are the relationships between a macro-culture and the cultures of microcommunities? Is culture always the property of a group, as Langness and Levine suggest, or are do some communities develop in response to a macro-culture?

MACRO-CULTURE OF RETARDATION

Langness and Levine described what I consider a macroculture: the culture of retardation. Langness and Levine's concept of the culture of mental retardation describes a general pattern of categorization, socialization, and stigmatization. Langness and Levine, supported by years of anthropological investigation, argued that mental retardation names a culture, a culture perpetuated in specific communities and always by those without mental retardation. Langness and Levine suggested that, as well as naming a cognitive condition, mental retardation names a particular practice of categorization and socialization.

The culture of retardation, Langness and Levine argued, is the property of groups that socialize persons with mental retardation differently than those without mental retardation. They wrote:

. . . [T]he culture of retardation . . . can be conceptualized best as a by-product of the widespread denial of information about everyday life to persons perceived as handicapped. This denial, in turn, has
two key components: (1) the processes by which certain individuals come to be uninformed of the practical and conceptual knowledge necessary for competence in everyday affairs (and the nature of just what that knowledge is), and (2) the intra- and inter-personal consequences for retarded persons of this lack of information when confronting the everyday world (Langness 1986 and Levine, 193, 194).

For Langness and Levine, the culture of retardation describes a system that minimizes difference through conformity and repetition of socialization practices; it names the socialization of incompetence.

The macro-culture of retardation, although a widely held set of practices and beliefs, is not a universal set of practices and beliefs. Moreover, its impact on the lives of individuals with mental retardation depends to a great extent not only on one's relationship to the macro-culture of retardation but also on the relationship of one's community to the macro-culture of retardation.

CULTURAL INFLUENCE AND COMMUNITIES

In Culture and Retardation, the contributors demonstrated how mental retardation has shaped the lives of those they studied. They found patterns of similarity, but they also found that no two lives took identical paths. In each life, this pattern of categorization, socialization, and stigmatization manifested itself differently. Each of the contributors addressed the variation, attributing it to relevant personal, social, or economic conditions. None, however, explicitly analyzed the relationship between this pattern and a specific community.
In *From Asylum to Welfare*, Harvey G. Simmons analyzed how cultural patterns altered the structure and function of Orilla, a community established for those with mental retardation. Working from historical and legal documents, Simmons demonstrated how changes in mental retardation policy in Ontario, Canada, between 1831 and 1980 affected this community. In his work, Simmons detailed the four major policy changes during this period of time. Each shift reflected and facilitated a shift in the public’s attitudes about mental retardation. Simmons wrote:

> [S]ince 1831 mental retardation policy in Ontario has tried to achieve four major objectives: to provide asylum for mentally retarded people who could not physically survive in the community without government help; to educate mentally retarded people defined as being educable; to impose some kind of control on mentally retarded people who were defined (or labelled) as delinquent or immoral, and to provide social welfare for mentally retarded people who would have been physically capable of surviving in the community, but who could not do so because of lack of employment, because they had personality or behavioural traits which led the community to reject them, or because of the absence of a social service infrastructure appropriate to their needs (Simmons 1982, xiii).

Simmons also noted that various social structures (custodial institutions, special classes, parole programs, and community care programs) emerged in response to these objectives. Although not explicitly addressing the relationship between culture and community, Simmons offered an example of communities (i.e., custodial institutions) emerging in response to cultural influences (i.e., public policy). He provided an example of a social order through
which the signifying system is communicated, reproduced, experienced, and explored.

Simmons also detailed the gap between public sentiment and public policy. Recounting the political battles in the 1950s, Simmons wrote, "Despite the fact that the government was no longer completely indifferent to the plight of mentally retarded persons, it still took immense pressure before policy changes were made. Even then progress was uneven" (Simmons 1982, 254). Often, he noted, public officials, once involved, attempted to modify, rather than replace, existing institutions.

Orilla, Ontario's oldest custodial institution, assumed a number of roles between 1831 and 1980: asylum, hospital, institution, workshop, and cottage community. Although reconstructed and reorganized to satisfy the ever-changing policy objectives, Orilla always retained features of previous reform efforts. If nothing else, the staff, the residents, or the physical structure of the buildings served as reminders of past cultures, past communities. As a community and as a cultural artifact, Orilla communicated, reproduced, experienced, and explored not one but many signifying systems. Like needleworkers, public officials sutured new systems of meaning on top of old, creating social units not clearly aligned with any culture other than their own.
The examples offered by Simmons in his analysis of the mental retardation policies in Ontario exemplify the complex nature of the relationship between culture and community. Simmons, however, did not address how these changes affected the lives of Orilla's residents. Just as each alteration influenced Orilla as a community and an artifact, each alteration influenced how the residents of Orilla experienced mental retardation. The relationship between the individual, community, and culture is never simple, always complicated, always in flux. The interaction among the three produces a dynamism that allows for stasis and flux.

**ESPLANADE AS COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL ARTIFACT**

Like Orilla, Esplanade functions as both a community and a cultural artifact. Esplanade embodies a specific set of practices and philosophical perspectives. The reform movement of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s successfully redefined mental retardation. It returned to the individual rights, responsibilities, opportunities, and expectations lost in bureaucratic morass of institutionalization. Group homes function as a concentrated expression of the reform movement, reinforcing its philosophical agendas through the lives of group home residents.

The reform movement, in many ways, created new identities for those with mental retardation. The
philosophical agendas of the reform movement provided group home members with a role, a purpose, and a plan of action. These agendas form an interpretive schemata used by residents and staff as a sort of Rosetta Stone. They give meaning to the group home and the activities that take place within that space and, as such, have created speech communities.

**PATTERNS OF COMMUNICATION WITHIN ESPLANADE**

Even though the same set of principles guides the function of all state and federally sanctioned group homes for adults with mental retardation in the United States, no two group homes share identical patterns of communication. Similarities exist, but each group home develops a pattern of communication that expresses its individuality, its history, its constraints.

At Esplanade, the group home's individuality, history, and constraints find expression in the "General Responsibilities of Individuals Residing in VOA," the document signed by group home members prior to admittance and once yearly thereafter. In addition to detailing the rights and responsibilities of each group home member, the document also details the guidelines for interaction within the group home. Although all of the items on the form influence interaction within the home, some address the issue of interaction directly. The following are excerpts from the list:
1. Assist in maintaining active contact and relationships with your family and/or other persons who are important to you. Telephone numbers and addresses of your family and/or other persons who are important to you can be found on the face sheet of your master book in your home. Also, staff will assist you to remember important events like birthdays, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and special holidays, and they will assist you to phone or mail cards and letters to those people who are important to you.

2. Respect the property of others by asking to borrow things before taking them.

4. Respect the privacy of others by knocking on their door before entering their bedroom or their home.

5. Display appropriate social behaviors in shared living spaces. Shared living spaces include the den, living room, kitchen, hallway, front porch, back porch, yard, and laundry room. So if you become so angry or mad that you disturb the activities of other people whom you live with, it is your responsibility to go to your own room until you calm down. If you do not go to your room on your own, a staff person will direct you to go to your room.

6. Get along cooperatively with others. But when you have a problem with someone, you must express dissatisfaction to that person in a manner which does not result in your attempting to hit, harm, injure or excessively scream and curse at that other person.

16. Have visitors, make and receive phone calls at times which do not interfere with your participation in your program, and which does not disturb the privacy or program participation of your housemates.

22. You are requested to maintain quiet in the house beginning at 10:00 p.m. to afford others an opportunity to get rest. On weekends, this hour may be extended until 11:30 p.m. (VOA 1990, 1,2,3).

The injunctions in this document set a framework for interaction in the home. Not only does it specify that
certain actions are sanctioned or prohibited in the home, but it also lays down a tone for interaction in the home. The tone in the document emphasizes mutual respect and continued development.

How group home members and staff interpret these injunctions, however, is a different matter. To explicate how group home members and staff translate those injunctions into talk, I identify and analyze eight recurring communication situations within the lives of group home members.

THE DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATION SITUATIONS

Hymes enjoined sociolinguists to describe and analyze speech events. I, however, have chosen to concentrate on communication situations for a number of reasons. First, like Hymes, I am interested in the form and function of language in use, but, like Carbaugh and Philipsen, I am also interested in the cultural codes that inform speech in the group home. These cultural codes impact all the components of talk in the home: the communication event, the communication situation, and the communication act. The description and analysis of communication events reveal how specific interactional exchanges are performed. The description and analysis of communication situations, on the other hand, reveal the expectations communicators have about their interactions with one another. Although, as Hymes notes, speech situations are not rule-bound
communication activities, they are guided by specific cultural codes. Cultural codes, like rules, sanction certain activities and provide interactants a communication frame.

A violation of either a rule or a cultural code marks one as an incompetent communicator. "Communicative competence," wrote Saville-Troike, "involves knowing not only the language code, but also what to say to whom, and how to say it appropriately in any given situation" (Saville-Troike 1989, 21). She continued, "Communicative competence extends . . . in short, [to] everything involving the use of language and other communicative dimensions in particular settings" (Saville-Troike 1989, 21). To be judged as a competent communicator, one must abide by rules and codes. The description and analysis of communication situations allow the investigator a better understanding of how rules and codes work in speech.

Second, the communication situations I have chosen to analyze are unique to life in this group home. One of the tasks of the cultural communication analyst is to discover and analyze the local forms that communication takes (Carbaugh 1990, xv). Carbaugh writes, "[C]ommunication is everywhere "'contexted,' locally designed, situationally managed, and individually applied" (Carbaugh 1990, xvi). These communication situations reflect the character of the group home, its conflagration of interpersonal relations
and administrative directives. These communication situations represent the interactants' understanding of this community and culture and, as such, are worthy of analysis.

Third, these particular communication situations recur on a regular basis, revealing the interests of the group home members and staff. Through sheer repetition, these situations reinforce specific patterns of communication and role expectations. They also perpetuate the group home's culture, giving daily and weekly expression to a unique way of life.

The eight communication situations that I have identified are "At Magnolia," "On the Van," "Getting Ready for Dinner," "Dinner," "Television Talk," "Training," "Group Counseling Session," and "House Meeting." Although these communication situations differ from one another, they share some commonalities. First, DCWs and group home members participate in each communication situation. Second, the sanctions about talk specified in "General Responsibilities of Individuals Residing in VOA" govern interaction in each of these eight situations. Third, each of these situations, with few exceptions, takes place at a specific time and in a specific place. What differentiates these communication situations from one another are the expectations about motivations for these communication situations and the kinds of talk that occur within each.
In my taxonomy of these eight communication situations, I omitted "message content" from my schemata. In every case, it varies from topic to topic. I also made another modification to Hymes' taxonomy. I added an ethnographic perspective section, providing information about my methods of data-gathering, my interactions in these communication situations, and illustrative examples.

In this section, I provide brief summations of my taxonomic description and analysis of these eight communication situations. I also explain how these communications situations work to encourage or prohibit story-telling by group home members.

At Magnolia

At the end of each afternoon, DCWs drive to Setro Enterprises and the adult day program to pick up the residents of VOA-BR's four group homes. The DCWs then transport the residents to Magnolia, VOA-BR's transportation depot. Those who arrive early at Magnolia have to wait for the rest to arrive before being transported to their respective group homes. While waiting, the group home members and DCWs pass the time by talking to one another.

"For my extended description and analysis, see Appendix H."
This communication situation provides group home members and DCWs with an opportunity to interact with residents and staff from the other group homes. It is for some interactants their first chance to engage in a non-task-related activity, a moment of free time in their schedules. Depending on the length of their wait, interactants may have a number of opportunities to share stories, tell jokes, flirt, or gossip with one another. The talk that occurs in this situation is generally light-hearted in tone. Their talk usually centers on the interactants’ personal lives or events at work.

During this situation, group home members usually interact with staff members or residents from other group homes. Group home members prefer to share their stories with staff members. If unoccupied, staff members function as supportive narratees for the residents’ stories. The DCWs will ask the residents leading questions, provide supportive feedback, and listen attentively. DCWs, however, discourage group home members from joining their conversations with other DCWs. If in conversation with one another, DCWs will ignore attempts by residents to join their conversations. If the staff members are occupied, some residents will interact with each other. Others, however, will then wait in their van. In this situation, storytelling by group home members depends to some extent on the staff’s willingness to listen to their stories.
Ethnographic perspective

To gather this information, I rode on the van each afternoon for about three weeks. With few exceptions, I sat in the same seat, directly behind the driver, each time. Although the DCWs invited me to step outside the van and join them in conversation, I politely declined. I told them that I wanted to use the time to make notes in my field journal.

Although I did use the time to make such notes, I had other reasons for declining their offers. First, my relative isolation allowed me to watch and take detailed notes of the interactions between and among DCWs and group home members. Second, I did not want the group home members to identify me as a DCW-equivalent. Group home members interact differently the DCWs than they do with one another, family members, friends, and strangers. I used my relative isolation as a way to mark my difference. Third, I did not want become unduly influenced by the DCWs' perceptions of the group home members. I preferred instead to glean as much information as I could for the group home members themselves. Fourth, it allowed me a moment to interact with the group home members without a DCW listening in on our conversations. It allowed us moments of privacy.

I based my description and analysis of this communication situation on my observations. If I saw what
I believed to be a pattern of interaction, I would jot it down in my field journal. I would then watch to see if the pattern recurred. For instance, one day Nigel told Charles, a group home member of East Lessey, that he was not allowed in Esplanade’s van. Over the next few days, I would watch to see if other group home members abided by and enforced this guideline for interaction. They did; consequently, I included this data in this taxonomy. If an interaction did not recur, I did not include it.

On the Van

After all the residents have arrived at Magnolia and the DCWs have conducted their necessary transactions, the residents and drivers board their respective vans. On their way back to their residences, group home members and drivers pass the time in conversation. This communication situation provides group home members with another opportunity to converse in an atmosphere not devoted to performance of specific work-related tasks. The group home members prefer to talk to the driver and will compete for his or her attention. To share a story with the driver, group home member will interrupt another resident’s telling or try to share a story with the driver while another resident is sharing his story. Responsible for the safety of her or his passengers, the driver encourages and participates in conversations that do not interfere with her or his ability to navigate in traffic. If the driver
finds the group home members' talk distracting (i.e., too loud or too many voices at once), she or he will chastise the group home members.

The driver may also instruct the residents to take turns talking and may designate which person she or he wishes to hear. Additionally, the driver may, if the volume in the van does not interfere with her or his ability to drive, participate in multiple conversations simultaneously or pretend to be listening to multiple conversations. The residents, having been granted the driver's active or passive attention, will ignore their fellow narrators and share their stories with the driver. At times, the competition among group home members increases their desire and efforts to narrate. At other times, the competition overwhelms some group home members who will then spend their time looking out the window or napping. In this situation, the narratee's interests and level of competition among narrators influences storytelling by group home members.

**Ethnographic perspective**

Before pulling away from Magnolia, I would distribute my tape recorders. I always gave one to Nigel Quentin. I had two reasons for making this choice. First, my tape recorders were not very sensitive. They tended only to record clearly those voices that were within a three foot range. The tape recorder that Nigel held captured his
voice, the driver's voice, my voice, and the resident(s) seated next to me. Second, Nigel was undoubtedly the most vocal member of the group. He influenced that shape and direction of many conversations in the van; consequently, I wanted to make sure that I had his voice on tape.

I would hand my other tape recorder to one of the other residents. I rotated the recorder among residents. With the exception of Harry, the residents responded to my request that they hold the tape recorder as a form of authorization. By handing the tape recorder to a resident, I noted my interest in that individual. They assumed that I wanted to hear what they in particular had to say during the van ride. I reinforced this assumption through my nonverbals (body leans, eye contact, etc.) and my line of questioning. I tended to ask the person holding the tape recorder more questions than I did those not in possession of the tape recorder. I also monitored their conversations more closely.

By handing someone a tape recorder, I was in a sense singling him out, intimating that I was, at least for the time it took to get from Magnolia to Esplanade, more interested in what that particular individual had to say than what others had to say. Realizing that possession of the tape recorder functioned as a form of privileging, I made sure to rotate the recorder among the residents. Because, however, I allowed Nigel to hold a tape recorder
every ride, I reinforced his perceived dominance in the group.

None of the residents ever asked to hold the tape recorder. They would, however, ask if I brought my tape recorders. Additionally, none ever refused a request.

On some van rides, I would announce to the residents that I would not be participating in the conversation, that I would instead confine my interaction to note-taking. They never questioned my choice. They would, however, talk to me even though I provided little more than nonverbal feedback. After a period, I dropped this style of data-gathering. I had hoped, by dropping out of the conversation, to minimize my presence. I speculated that if I limited my interactional involvement to nonverbals only that they would engage each other in conversation. My change in behavior did not change their pattern of interaction. Whether I talked or not, they still directed their discourse to me and the driver.

On those days, however, that I announced that I would be limiting my interaction to note-taking, the driver would become more involved in the group conversation. At times, the driver would act as my proxy, asking the residents questions about their lives to which she or he already knew the answers. For example, Lee Boothe, the driver, asked Don about Don’s sister and brother-in-law. Don happily complied. I learned later that in doing so the driver had
knowingly allowed Don to violate one of his behavioral directives. On a later date, Jesse, the group home supervisor, told me that Don tends to "obsess" about his sister and brother-in-law. Don also sometimes suggests that he actually lives with his sister and brother-in-law and is only visiting the group home.

To combat Don's tendency to focus on his sister and brother-in-law, VOA-BR's staff instructed Don not to talk about his sister and brother-in-law more than necessary and made note of their suggestion in his master book. Consequently, if a DCW determines that Don's discussion of his sister and brother-in-law exceeds the bounds of necessity, the DCW has the right to chastise him and document the violation in his master book. Lee Boothe, wanting to help me with my research, allowed Don to violate his behavioral plan. In doing so, Lee marked his authority within this community and my difference. By asking Don to tell me about his sister and brother-in-law, Lee suggested to us that rules can be broken if a DCW authorizes the violation and if it serves a good purpose, "a good purpose" being decided by the DCW.

When I did choose to converse with the residents, the driver spent his or her time talking to Nigel. When I did not actively participate in the conversation, the driver talked to all the residents. The driver and I rarely
talked to each other on the drive to Esplanade. Instead, we devoted our attention to the group home members.

Within the van, the group home members and I granted the driver more conversational leeway than we did each other. We allowed the driver to interrupt us, to change the topic, and to drop out of conversations. We also allowed the driver to control the volume level in the van.

Getting Ready for Dinner

Once the residents and the drive pull into the driveway, the tone of talk in the participants changes. The driver withdraws from her or his conversational involvement. Triggered by the driver's change in behavior, the group home members also reorient their conversational perspectives. Most engage in conversation termination. Once outside the group home, the talk consists mostly of directives issued by the two DCWs on duty and the responses to these directives by group home members. DCWs discourage talk that interferes with the performance of specific tasks. Group home members rarely engage in storytelling during this period. When group home members do engage in storytelling, their tellings are often extensions of stories started but not concluded on the van. Often, DCWs interrupt such tellings to direct the narrator to perform a certain task.
Ethnographic perspective

After the van arrived at Esplanade, we all entered the van. I noticed an abrupt change of interaction. Once in the drive, the driver terminated his or her conversational involvement with me and the group home members. Additionally, the group home members signalled an interactional change. For instance, they would drop out of conversations with me and the DCW to unbuckle their seatbelts and find their lunch boxes. They would also return tape recorders to me, sometimes clicking them off. Nigel, like the other group home members, would unbuckle his seatbelt, find his lunch box, and return the tape recorder to me, but would continue talking although he had lost his audience’s attention. He would talk at the backs of heads as the DCW and the other group home members entered the house. I would continue to listen to him but would follow the others inside.

Once inside the home, the DCWs would issue directives to the group home members. They would interrupt Nigel’s conversation with me to issue him a directive. I learned that "Getting Ready for Dinner" was a time primarily devoted to the completion of tasks after I attempted to solicit a lengthy narrative from Nigel Quentin during this period. Marissa interrupted us mid-conversation to tell Nigel to take his shower. She apologized to me for the interruption but not to Nigel. She presumed, I guess, that
Nigel knew that he had to take a shower and therefore should not have agreed to engage me in conversation. I understood Marissa's interruption and apology as a form of instruction. In that moment, she made explicit for me the expectations of the situation (task-related) and her relationship to Nigel and this community (as enforcer of speech codes).

Once inside, I would place one tape recorder on the kitchen bar, place the other on the coffee table, announce to the group that I was still recording, and find a seat on the sofa. From this position, I could observe the interactions that took place in the kitchen, dining area, patio, living room, and front hallway. This position also allowed me to stay outside of the flow of traffic.

If group home members where not occupied, they would sit next to me, watch television and converse. The DCWs would interrupt my conversations with a group home member if they needed him to engage in task. DCWs would also interrupt my conversations with group home members if our conversations interfered with the DCWs' ability to perform their jobs effectively. Marissa, for instance, who normally allowed group home members more interactional leeway than other DCWs, was more likely to enforce house rules when she was the only DCW on duty. Overwhelmed by her own tasks, Marissa displayed little tolerance for what she called "horseplay," even if that "horseplay" was an
animated conversation between me and a group home member. For the most part, I used this time to watch interactions and take notes in my field journal.

Dinner

This communication situation takes places after the group home members, supervised by a DCW, have prepared dinner and set the table. A DCW calls the residents to the dinner table. Before eating, the men say a short grace. After complimenting the cooks on the meal, the residents spend the rest of the time eating and talking. One DCW, however, does not permit what she calls "talkin at the table."

If permitted by the DCWs, the group home members will engage the DCWs in conversation. In this situation, DCWs often initiate storytelling by group home members by asking a resident about his day at work or plans for the evening. Once a DCW has expressed interest in the activities of one group home member, other residents, although unasked, share their stories too. If interested in one resident's narrative, the DCWs are usually interested in the others' narratives as well. If, however, the DCWs are talking to each other, they will not permit the group home members to join them in conversation. The DCWs expect the group home members to talk amongst themselves or to listen quietly. In this situation, the DCWs control when or if members share stories.
Ethnographic perspective

I observed dinner from three different vantage points: the sofa, the dinner table, and from the kitchen. My position indicated my role in this communication situation. When I sat on the sofa, I acted as participant-observer, watching, taking notes, occasionally talking to the group home members and DCWs. When I sat at the dinner table, I acted as invited guest, abiding by the same interactional guidelines that the group home members were abiding by and concentrating my attention on the group home members.

When I stood in the kitchen, I acted as surrogate staff. I stood next to the DCWs and watched the group home members eat. When in this role, I spent most of my time talking with the DCWs about our personal lives. We did on occasion talk about the group home members, but we did not encourage the group home members to participate in our conversation. We expected them to listen but not participate in our conversations about them. Occasionally, one of the DCWs would solicit information from one of the group home members. The DCW did so in order to facilitate the DCW's conversation with me, not as an attempt to include the group home member in our conversation. Marissa, for instance, would, during such moments, ask a group home member to share a story with me that she thought would be of interest to me (i.e., "Tell Sharon how you celebrated your birthday this weekend").
After the DCWs and I had finished our conversation, they would initiate a conversation with one of the group home members. Only then did the DCWs encourage the group home members to converse with them.

Television Talk

This communication situation takes place after the residents have completed their training and assigned tasks. The participants include at least one group home member and at least one DCW. In this situation, the talk between group home member(s) and the DCW(s) usually concerns the television program that they are watching. If, however, the television program is less than engaging, the interactants will converse with one another. At times, this situation provides group home members with an opportunity to share stories with the DCW(s).

This situation also provides a group home member, if alone with the DCW(s), the rare opportunity to share an extended story with the DCW(s). Alone with the DCW(s), the group home member does not have to compete with the other residents’ for the DCW(s)’s attention. Additionally, a DCW, having completed her or his major tasks for the evening, is in a position to provide the group home member with her or his undivided attention. In this situation, the quality of the television program and the number of residents watching television influences storytelling by group home members.
Ethnographic perspective

In this communication situation, I positioned myself on the sofa with the DCW and the group home member(s). I would place one tape recorder on the coffee table and one tape recorder on the sofa next the group home member(s). After I situated myself, I would make a few brief notes in my field journal then set it aside. Like the DCW and the group home member(s), I would watch whatever was on television. I would listen in on the conversations around me but did not much more than provide appropriate responses to polite inquiries (i.e., "Yeah, this used to be my favorite show as a kid." or "I don’t mind. Whatever you want to watch."). By this time, we were all tired and ready to relax. On occasions, the DCW would prompt the group home member(s) to talk about something that the DCW knew would be of interest to me, but, more often than not, the DCW, the group home member(s), and I would talk about the television show or our thoughts about the next day’s events.

Training

This communication situation occurs either before or after the evening meal. The participants include a DCW and a resident. After examining the schedule, a DCW informs a resident that it is time for training. Together, the two find a quiet place to work. The DCW restricts talk in the situation to task-related topics, and, as such, the talk
consists primarily of DCW-issued directives and the group home member's responses. Group home members rarely share stories in this situation. If group home members do tell stories, they are doing so as a way to demonstrate knowledge. DCWs consider stories not directly related to the task or topic at hand irrelevant and inappropriate.

**Ethnographic perspective**

I based my description and analysis of this communication situation on my reading of the group home member's training manuals, interviews with the group home members, DCWs, and the training coordinator about training, and direct observation. When I observed a training session, I usually sat several feet away from the DCW and group home member and took notes. I would place my tape recorder as close as I could to the group home member without disrupting his workspace. I did not interrupt the training session when in progress, preferring instead to ask questions about the session after its completion. Occasionally, a DCW would explain the objective of the training session to me; most times, however, the DCW and group home member ignored my presence.

**Group Counseling Session**

This communication situation occurs once a week, after the residents have finished their evening meal. The participants include a counselor who functions as a discussion leader, the residents, and staff. In this
session, the group counselor solicits stories from the residents but discourages the sharing of stories not directly related to the session's topic. The group counselor also encourages the men to take turns, a skill that the residents have not perfected. If interested in the topic, the residents will compete with one another for the group counselor's attention, interrupting each other narratives and telling at the same time. If the residents are interested in the topic, the group counselor will remind the group home members time and time again to take turns sharing. If uninterested in the topic, the group home members will sit in near silence. They will respond only if asked a direct question. If bored, group home member will sometimes fall asleep. If the residents are not interested in the topic, the group counselor spends her time trying to keep the residents awake and involved. In this situation, the relevance of the topic to the group home members and group counselor's injunctions about turn-taking influence storytelling by residents.

Ethnographic perspective

When I first expressed interest in attending a group counseling session, the DCWs told me to call the group counselor before attending. I called the group counselor, thinking that I was calling to find out exactly when she would be at the home. After talking to the group counselor, I guessed that the DCWs were hinting that I
might not have the right to attend. I had met the group
counselor only once and had never intimated that I would be
recording her sessions. Before granting me permission to
attend, she called the director of client services.
Together, they decided that it would be permissible for me
to attend one of these meetings if the group home members
verbally consented. After talking to the director of
client services, the group counselor called me, gave me her
tentative approval and the date and time of the next
meeting.

At the beginning of the meeting, the group counselor
reintroduced me to the men. She asked them for their
approval which they readily granted. She seemed a bit
surprised when the men told her that they "had been knowin
[me] for a long time now." I realized at this moment that
although I felt like I had become a regular visitor in this
community, many members of VOA-BR's staff had no idea who I
was or that VOA-BR had an ethnographer in its midst.

After receiving permission from the group home
members, I seated myself amidst the circle of residents and
staff, choosing a seat on the floor next to the coffee
table. I placed both tape recorders on the coffee table,
one close to the group counselor and one close to me.
Eleven people (six group home members, the group counselor,
the group home supervisor, two DCWS, one of whom was acting
as Bob Wilson's signer, and I) participated in the session
that I attended. I found out afterwards from the group counselor that attendance at this meeting was higher than usual. She mentioned several reasons for the increased attendance. First, she was introducing a new lesson on safe sex practices that interested both staff and group home members. Second, VOA-BR had finally rearranged its schedule to allow Lee Boothe, one of the few DCWs at Esplanade who know sign language, to attend this session. Up until this meeting, Bob Wilson had not attended group counseling sessions. The group home supervisor came to see if the use of Lee Boothe as a signer fully accommodated Bob Wilson's needs.

The group counselor led the meeting but allowed the group home supervisor and the DCWs to ask group home members questions. At one point during the meeting the group home supervisor took the role of discussion leader. The group home counselor, without hesitation, allowed him to adopt this role. Once the group home supervisor completed his line of questioning, he allowed the group counselor to resume the role of discussion leader.

Although I actively listened to the lecture and the group's conversations, I spent much of my time taking notes. Throughout the meeting, the group counselor monitored my responses to the discussion and, afterwards, asked me for my reaction. I told her that I found the meeting very informative. I asked her questions about the
kinds of topics she addressed in these meetings, how often she repeated topics, and where she located material for the lectures. She answered my questions but had to break off our discussion to talk to Lee Boothe before he left for the evening.

**House Meeting**

This communication situation occurs once a week after the residents have finished their evening meal. The participants include a DCW who acts as a discussion leader, the residents, and staff. In this situation, the discussion leader solicits information from the residents about their plans (i.e., menu requests, recreational suggestions, home improvements). The discussion leader also reminds the residents to take turns when sharing stories. If the residents express boredom, the discussion leader will make a few concluding remarks (i.e., provide feedback about previous suggestions and relay information from staff and VOA-BR's administrators) and quickly conclude the session. In this situation, the group home members' interest and the discussion leader's injunctions about turn-taking influence storytelling by residents.

**Ethnographic perspective**

To attend this meeting, I did not have to go through the re-authorization process that I had to undergo to attend the group counseling session. I was well-acquainted
with this meeting's discussion leader (a DCW at Esplanade); moreover, he was well-acquainted with me and my study.

Once Fred, the discussion leader, called the residents together, I positioned myself on the floor next to the coffee table. As I had done in the group counseling session, I placed both tape recorders on the coffee table: one close to the discussion leader, one close to myself. I actively listened and took notes.

At one point during the meeting, Marissa called Fred into the office to take a call from the group home supervisor. I conversed with the residents while we waited for Fred to return, assuming his role of preferred listener. Once Fred returned to the meeting, he reestablished his position as discussion leader. The residents still continued to direct some of their comments to me as they had done while Fred was out of the room but not as frequently. For the most part, they solicited and garnered Fred's attention.

THE CODES OF COMPLIANCE AND SELF-RELIANCE

After reviewing the eight recurring communication situations and the existing literature on treatment programs for individuals with mental retardation, I have identified two cultural codes of communication that shape

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'SFor a sample of my transcripts of some of these communications situations ("At Magnolia," "On the Van," "Getting Ready for Dinner", and "House Meeting," See Appendices D and E.
discourse within Esplanade and within all group home for individuals with mental retardation: a code of compliance and a code of self-reliance. Compliance refers to act of yielding to a demand or request. Self-reliance refers to one's ability to make and carry out both short-term and long-term goals without substantial external support. The codes of compliance and self-reliance are expressions of larger social, cultural, and historical forces and, as such, represent a framework of meaning, although variously interpreted, shared by all those who reside within ICFs/MR.

In 1992, the editors of Mental Retardation published a symposium that specifically addressed the issues of over-regulation and compliance. Symposium participants (Gardner 1992; Holburn 1992; Jacobson and Otis 1992; Shea 1992) discussed how mounting state and federal regulations affected the quality of life within Intermediate Care Facilities for individuals with Mental Retardation (ICFs/MR). Acting as a unified front, the symposium participants characterized ICFs/MR as over-regulated and over-structured. Holburn, for example, stated that "overregulated residential environments, particularly those that receive Medicaid funding, are counterproductive for their program participants" (Holburn 1992a, 133). The symposium participants argued that ICFs/MR, although designed to promote self-reliance among program
participants, fail to provide environments conducive to personal growth and development.

According to Holburn, the overregulation of ICFs/MR has produced an inflexible system of care (Holburn 1992b, 138). Inspectors of ICFs/MR view state and federal regulations as mandates, not as guidelines to be followed when applicable. Over-regulation fosters compliance not only of program participants but staff as well. To comply with state and federal regulations, those who staff ICFs/MR force residents to comply with rules and regulations designed to satisfy not the particular needs of residents but a regulatory board's assessment of residential needs in general. The impression left by Holburn and the other symposium participants is that the overregulation has recreated in ICFs/MR the atmosphere of institutionalization that reformers sought to eradicate.

Overregulation had transformed ICFs/MR into environments that foster compliance, not self-reliance. This atmosphere may exacerbate what some consider a common disorder among individuals with mental retardation: an inability to adequately self-regulate one's actions. In his seminal article on mental retardation and self-regulation, Whitman defined self-regulation as:

a complex response system that enables individuals to examine their environments and their repertoire of responses for coping with those environments, to make plans (decisions) about how to act, to act, to evaluate the desirability of the outcomes of their
action, and to revise their plans as necessary (Whitman 1990b, 373).

He noted that literature of mental retardation is replete with examples of inadequate self-regulation on the part of those with mental retardation. To support his claim, Whitman referenced the numerous studies that suggest that, without prompting, many individuals with mental retardation fail to retain recently mastered skills (Baroff 1986; Brown 1974; Sabsay and Kernan 1983; Wertsch 1979; Zigler and Balla 1982).

Whitman credited inadequate self-regulation and fear of failure for many of the social difficulties faced by individuals with mental retardation. In his articles, Whitman even went so far as to suggest that mental retardation might best be perceived as a self-regulatory disorder (Whitman 1990a, 1990b). Although convinced that many of those with mental retardation are unable to self-regulate their behavior effectively, Whitman found no reason to believe that mental retardation and inadequate self-regulation are inextricably linked (Whitman 1990b, 348). Instead, like Langness and Levine (1986) and Shapiro (1981), Whitman conjectured that certain socialization practices ("inappropriate demands by others, overprotective parents, and the absence of experiences that foster decision-making") encourage dependency and other-regulation (a reliance on external support systems) in individuals with mental retardation (Whitman 1990b, 348).
The codes of compliance and self-reliance that shape life within ICFs/MR demonstrate the paradoxical nature of bureaucratized idealism. When balanced, the two codes provide a secure environment for growth and development. When unbalanced and in constant flux, the two codes create a schizophrenic social order, leaving interactants to flounder in the slippery social terrain. In Esplanade, staff demand compliance in most situations from the residents but reward self-reliance in certain situations. In Esplanade, the code of compliance functions as the dominant code; self-reliance, the rhetorically captivating yet clearly ancillary code.

Training sessions provide an excellent example of the interaction between the two codes. Designed to foster self-reliance in residents through skill-development, training also reaffirms compliancy and other-regulation. From design, implementation, scheduling, and evaluation, some member of VOA's staff exerts control over the session and, in doing so, reifies the significance of compliance by group home members.

The same dynamic that shapes training sessions also shapes the weekly house meetings. VOA scheduled house meetings in large part to provide residents with a forum where they could make known their opinions about the home's operation, to provide them with an opportunity to demonstrate their self-reliance. In the meeting, a staff
member encourages residents to make suggestions about menus, recreation, travel, and home repairs. Staff need not abide by any of the resident's suggestions, however. To satisfy Title XIX specifications, staff need only solicit suggestions. VOA's staff tends to adopt most of the suggestions offered by Esplanade's residents. They do so, in part, because residents rarely depart from the established norm. For example, residents know that staff will not seriously consider a suggestion to eat filet minion twice a week or spend Tuesdays in bed. Residents internalize these constraints and routinely repeat the same suggestions week after week. In fact, at Esplanade, the house meeting has become so routine, so predictable that some group home members have trouble staying awake for the duration of the meeting.

At Esplanade, DCWs ignore some types of non-compliant behavior. For example, most DCWs will overlook a resident's tendency to talk out of turn in a house meeting. A DCW might remind the group home member that the other group home members also need a chance to speak but will generally dismiss the act as inconsequential. Most of the DCWs consider talking out of turn in a house meeting a trivial infraction. They consider a resident's failure to restrain himself after being instructed to "calm down," on the other hand, a major infraction.
As specified in "General Responsibilities," VOA-BR expects group home members to express their anger in socially appropriate ways. VOA-BR expects group home members to control themselves, to act as self-reliant monitors of their emotions. If a group home member becomes angry and visibly agitated, a DCW will instruct the group home member to vent his anger in his bedroom or in the back yard. If the group home member does not immediately comply with the DCW's request, the DCW will physically direct the group home member. If the group home member resists relocation, the DCW will ask another DCW to assist in the relocation of the group home member. The DCW will then document the incident in the resident's master book, call the group home supervisor, and make a note to the resident's therapist. Within Esplanade, a failure to restrain oneself after being asked by a DCW to calm down represents both a failure to act in a self-reliant manner (a failure to monitor and control one's emotions) and a failure to comply (a failure to respect the DCW's authority).

**SUMMARY**

Esplanade as a micro-community developed in response to a culturally motivated set of policy agendas and, as such, is the product of a macro-culture. The codes of self-reliance and compliance that shape patterns of interaction within Esplanade are not context-specific.
Rather, these codes shape patterns of communication within all Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Mental Retardation in the United States. These codes reflect two different impulses: the desire to segregate individuals with mental retardation from those without mental retardation and the desire to treat individuals with mental retardation as individuals with rights as well as responsibilities, with strengths as well as weaknesses. These two impulses represent conflicts within the macro-culture, unresolved disputes about social obligations and the nature of mental retardation.

Although Esplanade shares this macro-cultural heritage with other ICFs/MR, it possesses its own micro-culture and its own patterns of communicating. The codes of self-reliance and compliance that shape discourse within Esplanade are reinterpretations of the larger macro-cultural impulses. These macro-cultural impulses undergo reinterpretation with each interaction and, therefore, are constantly being renegotiated. The codes of compliance and self-reliance within Esplanade represent these macro-cultural codes as negotiated by a specific group of people in a specific setting in a specific historical moment. In short, the codes of self-reliance and compliance as enacted by the group home members and DCWs at Esplanade, although echoes of macro-cultural impulses, are unique and unstable.
The group home's structure and ideology work to maintain stasis in the community but cannot completely obliterate change. They can, however, minimize instability by reinforcing certain practices and beliefs that promote stasis. The eight communication situations that recur at Esplanade function as micro-cultural interpretations of the macro-cultural codes. They serve specific practical functions within this community (i.e., getting residents ready for meals), but they also serve to maintain stasis. They provide an order to the lives of staff members and residents and guidelines for interactions (i.e., patterns of talk and role-appropriate behavior).

Each communication situation acts as a behavioral script, assigning specific behaviors to specific roles. As such, these communication situations reinforce identity through action. Depending on one's culturally assigned identity, one adopts specific behaviors in specific communication situations. For example, the DCW who encourages storytelling by group home members on the van discourages such discourse during "Getting Ready for Dinner." An appropriate form of discourse in one situation is not an appropriate form of discourse in another.

Additionally, the kinds of storytelling by residents permitted in one situation are not necessarily permitted in another. For instance, the residents are less likely to be chastised by a staff member for violating turn-taking norms
when sharing stories on the van than when violating turn-taking norms in "Group Counseling Session" or "House Meeting." The emotional tone (light-hearted v. serious) differs from one situation to another and, consequently, so do the expectations about storytelling by residents.

These communications situations are not fixed performances but must, instead, be reperformed, reproduced by staff and residents on a daily or weekly basis. As interactional creations, these communications situations reflect the needs, desires, and expectations of those who participate in their creation. They function as flexible frames, encouraging stasis while accommodating flux.

My interactions within these communications situations serves as an example of their flexibility and resilience. The DCWs and group home members incorporated me into these everyday performances, making accommodations where appropriate while maintaining the integrity of these situational scripts.

Within Esplanade, I functioned as a cultural disruption. I was not easily categorizeable (not staff, not group home member, not family, not long-time friend). I represented a previously unknown category: ethnographer. Because the community could not place me in an existing category, they could not assign to me role-appropriate behaviors. My ambiguity within Esplanade allowed me a
vantage point not readily accessed by members of this community. I moved in the space between existing roles.

Additionally, because I entered the group home as ethnographer, I could not assume the role of DCW, group home member, family member, or long-term friend and was thus denied the right to behave as if I were a member of one of these groups. It would have been communicatively incompetent of me to adopt, for instance, the behaviors and communication patterns of a DCW. So, one of the ways that I identified what was an appropriate behavior for a DCW in a particular communication situation was by identifying what the DCWs felt was appropriate behavior on my part.

DCWs and group home members allowed me, as the ambiguous figure in this community, a great deal of interactional flexibility. I was able to do and say things that would have been inappropriate if performed by a DCW or group home members. My ambiguity also forced the DCWs and group home members to make explicit the rules by which they operated. My difference, then, sensitized me to the particular codes that shape discourse within Esplanade.
CHAPTER FOUR

STORIES OF AND AS SELF-RELIANCE OR COMPLIANCE

In this chapter, I examine how the codes of self-reliance and compliance manifest themselves in the group home members' narrative performances. Specifically, I isolate stories about self-reliance or compliance (supportive examples) and tellings that violate one of these two codes (contrastive examples).

DEMONSTRATING RELEVANCE

When conducting ethnographic research, one must not only describe and analyze a culture, one must also demonstrate relevance; one must show that community members share one's understanding of their community (Schegloff 1991; Mehan 1991). To demonstrate relevance, the ethnographer presents illustrations that reveal community members' awareness of the significance of the codes, aspects, or features identified by the ethnographer. One's choice of method and data depends on the nature of the study. For this study, I have isolated a number of relevant narrative performances: stories about compliance or self-reliance (supportive examples) and stories where the narrator violated one of the codes in his telling (contrastive examples).

SUPPORTIVE EXAMPLES

I drew my supportive examples from a round of interviews with individual group home members. In these
interviews, I asked group home members to tell me about their self-perceptions and the patterns of talk within Esplanade. In earlier interviews sessions, I asked the men questions about their daily routines, their life stories, and their interests. I did not use any sort of interview guide. Instead, I asked whatever questions came to mind at the time.

In this final round of interviews, however, I used a list of questions and prompts to guide the session.\textsuperscript{18} Although I referred to the list throughout each interview, I did not move through the list item by item. If I felt the interviewee had addressed the topic earlier, I would ask about a previously undiscussed issue. If the interviewee brought up something in one of his answers that I had not anticipated, I would probe that area. I did not insist that each group home member answer each question on the list; therefore, no two group home members answered the same set of questions. As long as the group home members talked about the group home, mental retardation, or communication, I let the group home members direct the conversation. However, if they strayed from my area of interest or stopped talking altogether, I used the list to redirect the conversation.

I chose a somewhat flexible interview style for three reasons. First, my list of questions and prompts was too

\textsuperscript{18}See Appendix F.
long for a comfortable interview. Even with omissions, most sessions lasted about forty-five minutes. By the end of each session, the interviewee and I were both physically and mentally tired.

Second, the group home members and I had developed a pattern of speaking. On most other occasions, the group home members picked the topic to be discussed. In this session, I reversed the pattern. I told them what I wanted them to discuss. This interview represented one of the few times where I dictated the topic. I adopted a more flexible style of interviewing to accommodate the difference in communication style.

Third, I believed that if the codes I had identified were relevant, they would become a topic at some point during each interview. If the codes failed to come up during the interview, I would interpret their absence as a notable disconfirmation. As I had expected, each group home member, at some point during the interview, talked at length about issues related to self-reliance and compliance. The group home members' stories about self-reliance or compliance provided me with tangible support for my interpretation.¹⁰

¹⁰To read my transcriptions of my interview with Don, see Appendix G.
CONTRASTIVE EXAMPLES

I drew my contrastive examples from *in situ* conversations. In the interviews, I took an active role in each conversation; however, in the *in situ* conversations, I adopted the role of participant-observer. I watched, listened, took notes, audio-taped conversations, and spoke infrequently. I suspect that after a while group home members and DCWs grew accustomed to my presence and became less guarded about what they said and did in front of me. Regardless, group home members and DCWs talked about a wide variety of topics in my presence, including issues related to self-reliance and compliance.

When searching for contrastive examples, I looked through my transcripts for instances when, during a telling, one of the group home members, as narrator, failed to behave in an expected manner (i.e., failed to comply or failed to act in a self-reliant manner). I then looked to see if anyone in the group considered the behavior inappropriate. More than the violation itself, others' reactions to the violation demonstrate the presence of a code and its relevance to that community. Moreover, their reaction demonstrates not only the relevance of the code in that community but also the relevance of the code in that particular situation. Through the use of contrastive examples, I can demonstrate both a community-wide and a situation-specific sensitivity to the codes.
In this chapter, I provide examples of self-reliance or compliance as they manifest themselves in group home members' stories. I provide supportive examples to demonstrate the codes' relevance to group home members. I use contrastive examples not only to show how group home members respond to code violations but also to show how such violations affect group home members' narrative performances.

**Supportive Examples of Self-Reliance**

Except for Lee, the group home members viewed the group home as a place to develop their sense of self-reliance or, to use VOA's parlance, to develop their independent living skills. Group home members described Esplanade as a place to learn and grow as individuals.

When discussing issues related to self-reliance, Don, Kyle, and Nigel mentioned Ted. During my last round of interviews, Ted moved out of Esplanade into a supervised apartment. Although many of the group home members were sad to see Ted leave the group home, they were glad that he had the opportunity. They complimented Ted on his hard work and remarked on his competence and initiative. They also compared themselves to him, evaluating their skills in relation to his. Don, Lee, and Kyle hoped that someday they too would move into a supervised apartment. Don and Kyle enjoyed life in a group home, but they still talked about how much nicer life would be once they were out on
their own. Nigel also talked about how nice it would be to be able to manage his own affairs, but, unlike Don, Kyle, and Lee, Nigel believed that he would spend the rest of his life in a group home. He did not believe that he would ever attain that level of self-reliance needed to live without constant support.

Although VOA’s mission is to foster a sense of self-reliance in its program participants, no two group home members conceptualized self-reliance in the same way. Moreover, each group home member’s conceptualization seemed less grounded in the program’s rhetoric than in their own personal history. Don Easton, for instance, presents himself as a thoughtful, careful, and even-tempered individual. He values order and regularity. His love of chronologies reflects, to some degree, his appreciation of the methodical. Of all the group home members’ conceptualizations of self-reliance, however, Don Easton’s conceptualization most closely matched the one espoused by VOA. Don described self-reliance as a series of skills to be learned.

072494; based on tape 66.1; Esplanade; interview with Don Easton in the office
SH, Sharon; DE, Don Easton

SH: How is living in a group home different than living in a supervised apartment?

DE: Supervised apartment?
((SH nods))
DE: Uh
I think
I think
I better
I better
look at the future.
And den uh
and den
live in the group home for awhile.
And den
and den after dat
do some trainin an chores.
An den after dat and den
I be
m-- get a job,
go to the library
more often.

SH: Mhm.

DE: Ge-- get my allowance check.
Balance,
and den
draw your out your money out your account.
And den
and and

((DE yawns))
and
and budgeting.

In this narrative, Don described self-reliance in a
recipe-like fashion. He listed the steps needed to achieve
self-reliance and the order in which those steps were to be
taken. Self-reliance, according to Don, consisted of a
series of practical activities. "Go[ing] to the library
often" was the only purely recreational activity he
mentioned in his narrative. For Don, self-reliance was
closely related to pragmatism.

By telling this story Don performs the role of
knowledgeable pragmatist. Through this performance, Don
presents himself as one who knows what it takes to be, but
is not yet, self-reliant. As evidenced in this telling, Don
yearns to perform another role, that of the
knowledgeable, self-reliant pragmatist.
If Don viewed self-reliance as an act of personal pragmatism, Lee viewed self-reliance as an opportunity for pleasure. In this narrative, Lee described how he would live his life if he were on his own.

SH, Sharon; LU, Lee Underwood

SH: How is living in a group home different than living by yourself?
LU: I like to live by myself. I get alone uh by myself.
SH: What would you do if you lived by yourself?
LU: Party all the time. And have fun and be merry and bright.
SH: What would you not do if you lived by yourself?
LU: No housework. But I do have to go to work. To pay for apartment, to go out to eat, to pay for whatever I pay because nothin’s free in the world, honey.

Lee considered Esplanade a prison. According to Lee, if he had had any say in the matter, he would have moved into an apartment. When asked why he lived in a group home, Lee stated that his mother placed him in a group home to punish him. I interpreted his desire to share such stories with me and others as a way to solicit others’ sympathies and support. I believed that he wanted us to validate his self-image, as a man unjustly confined and unjustly labelled.
In our conversations, he would search for parallels between my life and his. We discovered that we shared a circle of acquaintances. I knew his brother and one of his brother’s former girlfriends. He liked to talk about the time that I ran into him and his brother at a local bar. He used such stories as way to build identification between us. He would also use phrases such as "party all the time" to signify his participation in "young adult" activities, activities that he, having seen me drinking at a local bar, knew that I participated in. By telling such stories, using these sorts of phrases, and drawing specific parallels between our lives, he was, in effect, asking me, "How would you as a self-reliant, young adult like myself enjoy being labelled ‘retarded?’ Moreover, how would you like being forced to live in a group home?” I believe that he wanted me to share his sense of injustice.

Lee disliked the other group home members, hated being supervised, and loathed housework. Until his acceptance into the program, no one had ever asked Lee to clean or cook. The men in his family did not participate in such activities. They relegated such activities to Lee’s mother and the domestic workers. Consequently, Lee considered such tasks "maid’s work" and far beneath him. If his father and brothers do not have to cook or clean, Lee reasoned, why should he?
When Lee envisioned life on his own, he described a world of unrestricted pleasure. He felt stifled in the group home, fettered by its boring routines. Perhaps more than being stifled, Lee hated being bored. Lee found chores and training boring. If allowed to live his life as he pleased, he would interact with a different group of people (teenagers without mental retardation) and involve himself in a different set of activities (drinking, dancing, staying out late, etc.). If allowed to live his life as he pleased, Lee would cease doing housework, but he would continue to work at McDonald’s.

Lee liked to work. There were several aspects of his job that pleased him. First, he considered himself a competent and qualified employee. He liked being part of the McDonald’s team. Second, Lee also liked interacting with his coworkers. His job provided him with a rare opportunity to interact with a group of people not associated with VOA. He felt isolated in the group home. McDonald’s served as a social outlet for him. Third, McDonald’s paid slightly better than Setro Enterprises, the firm that employed most of VOA’s program participants, and was thus considered a prize job among group home members. Lee’s job at McDonald’s earned him a bigger paycheck than most program participants and an increase in his social status. Every week, he looked forward to payday and talked with great animation about what he would do with his money.
Lee liked his job; he loved getting paid; he hated being told by VOA’s staff how to spend his money. Every week, VOA billed Lee for a portion of his room and board. They also insisted that Lee put part of his check into a savings account. They allowed him to spend the rest of his check as he pleased. This policy irritated Lee. He felt that he was paying for his own imprisonment. He did not like living in the group home and really did not like paying to live in the group home. Staff’s justifications of the policy only rankled Lee further. He had earned his paycheck; he wanted to choose how he spent his money.

Lee never considered the group home a path to self-reliance. He considered a nicely furnished apartment, a good job, and an active social life a path to self-reliance. Esplanade, he viewed as a social obstacle. For Lee, self-reliance meant the freedom to make one’s own choices, even if others consider those choices irresponsible.

Nigel was the only resident I interviewed who did not expect to move out of the group home. He said that he did not and probably would not possess the skills necessary to live on his own.

071894; based on tape 60.1; Esplanade; interview with Nigel Quentin in his bedroom
NQ, Nigel Quentin; SH, Sharon

NQ: See movin in’s easy.
Movin out’s hard.
So I’m wai-- I’m not watchin myself.
I got a long way to go before I move out.
SH: Mhm.
NQ: Long way to go cause they don’t know where++ to put me yet.
They got to find me an apartment.
Which I don’t think I’m ready.
SH: Mhm.
NQ: All this.
I got to learn my medication better.
Let’s get back to uh let’s have that one++ of medication classes I got.
I had some uh problems.
OK?

Like Don, Nigel equated self-reliance with a set of specific skills, a set of skills that he did not currently possess. Unlike Don and Lee, Nigel made no mention in this narrative of the benefits of life on one’s own. Nigel presents himself as a man who tries but does not always understand the world around him. He tells stories about things that puzzle, worry, confuse and subsequently upset him. I believe that he uses storytelling as a way to work through life’s complications.

Nigel also expects those listening to his narratives to help him better understand why things happen as they do. Although he does not present himself as self-reliant, he does present himself as resourceful. Nigel may not be able to accomplish a task by himself, but he knows that if mentions his dilemma to someone else, they might be able to him. He uses stories as a way to solicit assistance from others. For instance, Nigel tells me that he needs "to learn [his] medication better." He then suggests that we have another medication class. Nigel is using his story to
get me to help him. He assumes that I, functioning in a support role of sorts, am in a position to grant him his request. Nigel uses storytelling not as a way to demonstrate his own self-reliance but as a way to solicit support from others.

Nigel liked living in the group home. It provided him with the assistance he needed and a group of people with whom to interact. Self-reliance did not hold the same allure for Nigel as it did for Lee or even Don. Nigel preferred his life of comfortable dependence to an unknown life of independence.

**STORYTELLING AS AN ACT OF SELF-RELIANCE**

Storytelling is an act of interpersonal negotiation. One member of a group agrees to tell a story; the other members agree to listen. Scholars have noted that interactants provide each other with verbal and nonverbal cues both before and during a telling about the style, structure, slant, and audience for the telling (Goodwin 1986; Harness Goodwin 1990; Jefferson 1978; Labov 1972; Labov and Waletzky 1967; Sacks 1978). In short, narrators shape stories not only for but with their narratees.

Storytelling is a type of performance and the narrator a kind of performer. Although the narrator and narratee are, as Marie Maclean argued, bound together in a special two-way relationship (Maclean 1988, 25), the narrator as the show-cased performer assumes responsibility for the
telling (Fine and Speer 1992, 2). Contexted, and framed, narrative is also an act of self-reliance. As a narrator, one monitors the conversation, identifies an opportunity in the conversation to tell a story, assesses one’s ability to tell at this juncture, evaluates the desirability of telling, decides to tell, tells, and revises the story as necessary during the telling. To narrate is to carry out a plan.

Although VOA generally associates self-reliance with practical skills, it also recognizes the importance of planning. Without planning, without the ability to make a plan of action, practical skills are of little practical use. VOA tries to provide group home members with opportunities to plan. The weekly house meeting is an outgrowth of the effort. The regimentation of life in the group home often hampers VOA’s efforts. Little occurs in the group home that is not planned in advance by VOA’s staff. Talk, although constrained, is one of the few activities in the home that is not pre-planned. Narration provides group home members with the rare opportunity not only to make but also to carry out a plan of action.

**CONTRASTIVE EXAMPLES OF SELF-RELIANCE**

In the following excerpt, Nigel initiated a telling, only to abdicate to Marissa. In doing so, he violated the code of self-reliance. Marissa noticed the code violation,
tried to coerce Nigel into telling, failed, and ultimately assumed responsibility for the telling.

071894; based on tape 57.1; Esplanade; dinner
SH, Sharon; NQ, Nigel Quentin; MS, Marissa; KL, Kyle

((To SH))
NQ: It's like a blood test.
   Oh and they had me, boo,
   they had me on all kinds of medication at++
the hospital.
   Even Marissa showed up over there.
   A couple times.
   Didn't you?
MS: Mhm.

Earlier in the conversation, Nigel recounted the events of his recent stay in a hospital. This story is an extension of his earlier tale. Nigel started the telling but not long after stopped the telling to solicit information from Marissa. With a simple vocalization, Marissa provided Nigel with the requested information.

NQ: Tell her tell her what happened to you.
   What happened to me.
   When I was
   being a human zombie.
   In the hospital.

At this point, Nigel, rather than continue his telling, asked Marissa to tell his story for him. In his request, he misspoke and asked her to tell her story. With his next utterance, however, he repaired his misstatement by asking her to tell his story.

MS: Why?
  Cause you was,
you was another person?

Marissa responded to his question with a question of her own. She asked him why she should tell his story. She
reasoned that since the incident happened to him, he, better than anyone else, knows what happened and should tell the story. Sarcastically, she asked, "Cause you was, you was another person?"

((NQ laughs))

NQ: Now now they want me to shave again Marissa. Nigel laughed and reassumed control of the telling. When he resumed his telling, I was no longer his designated narratee; Marissa was. Nigel delivered his utterance to her. Moreover, he signaled with his pause that he expected her to respond to his statement. Once again, Nigel tried to hand control of the conversation to Marissa.

MS: Look, look. I have nothing to do with it cause I know what happened last time.

In a rather direct manner, Marissa resisted Nigel's efforts to position her as narrator.

SH: [UC] shaving? MS: You want to tell her or you want me to tell her?

At this juncture, I tried to solicit information. Both ignored my request. When Nigel failed to resume his narration, Marissa prompted Nigel to speak by asking him a question. In addition to functioning as a prompt, her question also revealed a change in her attitude about telling. She already knew that Nigel wanted her to tell his story. He had tried twice at this point to induce her to tell. In previous exchanges, Marissa expressed no
interest in telling Nigel’s story. Although designed to solicit information, Marissa’s utterance signaled her sudden willingness to tell. With this utterance, Marissa allowed Nigel to continue the telling if he wished while making her interest in the narrator’s role known as well.

NQ: You go ahead and tell her.
((NQ chuckles))
MS: No you tell her.
NQ: No you tell her.
((NQ laughs))
MS: You tell her.
((NQ and MS laugh))
KL: Don’t laugh.
Ya food in you mouth.
((MS laughs))
MS: You tell her.
I want to see if you know how to tell the++ truth.

Not surprisingly, Nigel told Marissa that he wanted her to tell his story. He laughed, and they made a game out of their negotiations. Kyle interrupted their banter to chastise Nigel for talking with food in his food. Nigel and Marissa ignored Kyle. After regaining her composure, Marissa tried once again to persuade Nigel to tell the story. This time, however, she tried a new approach. She challenged him to tell.

NQ: You tell her.
MS: You tell //her.
NQ: //You tell her.
MS: You tell her.
NQ: You tell her.
MS: OK.

Nigel refused her challenge and reinitiated the banter. After several exchanges, Marissa stopped the banter and accepted the role as narrator.
Nigel readily relinquished his role as narrator to Marissa. Although, in doing so, he lost the right to tell his story, he still maintained the group's focus.

If Nigel had as a goal the solicitation of his audience's attention, his relinquishing of the role of narrator to Marissa might still function as an act of self-reliance. He decided on a course of action (the telling of a story about himself), identified that available resources (those in the group who could tell the story), put his plan into action (initiated a telling), and saw it through to its completion (solicited Marissa to assume the narrative role). The group would still hear a story about him, but he would not have the responsibility of telling. Furthermore, Nigel created an opportunity to dialogue with Marissa. If only for a moment, Nigel had Marissa's undivided attention, a rare commodity in Esplanade.

If, however, Nigel had as a goal the telling of a story about himself, his relinquishing of the role of the narrator to Marissa functions as a violation of the code of self-reliance. Marissa interpreted Nigel's actions as a violation of the code; Nigel may not have.

Regardless, Nigel obtained Marissa's attention at the expense of his reputation, and he did so without hesitation. If Nigel had told his story, he might have been able to paint himself in a better light than Marissa later did. He might have shared with the group a story
about his blood work. Marissa shared with the group a story about his failure to follow the doctor’s orders. Furthermore, he validated Marissa’s version of events by laughing and agreeing with her characterizations of him. When Nigel was telling the story, he performed the role of confused patient. As the part of the audience for Marissa’s telling, however, Nigel performed the role of jovial fool.

When he relinquished the telling to Marissa, Nigel may have, in his mind, acted in a self-reliant manner. By shifting the narrative role to Marissa, however, he exchanged an opportunity to control his image and to present himself as a self-reliant narrator for a moment of Marissa’s attention.

SUPPORTIVE EXAMPLES OF COMPLIANCE

When speaking of self-reliance, group home members often bring up issues related to compliance. Among group home members, compliance is a delicate and complicated issue. As occupants of the weakest power position in the VOA system, group home members understand status and control. They know what is expected of them and by whom. They understand the hierarchy and, when possible, try to make it work for rather than against them. Group home members, like everyone else in the VOA system, create for themselves a sense of control by using the hierarchy to their advantage. Group home members threaten to report one
another to staff. They try to befriend the home supervisor. They try to enforce rules of their own making on other group home members, and they compete for attention. Group home members learn two skills not listed in their training manuals while in residence: how to command and how to comply. Although they practice the latter on a regular basis, on occasion they practice the former on each other.

In the following narrative, Don Easton discusses his feelings about compliance.

072494; based on tape 66.1; Esplanade; interview with Don Easton in the office
SH, Sharon; DE, Don Easton

SH: Do you ever get angry at the staff?
DE: I never have.
SH: Do other people get angry at the staff?
DE: Uh.
Yeah.
Some.
At me, yeah.
I did
I did uh also.
I get a l-- li-- little bit.
But
disturbs me like
when uh
like staff tells me not to do,
I can do it.
He wants me
wants me get out
by them
people's
conversations,
I say excuse me.

Among the many things DCWs monitored, they also monitored communication styles deemed to be inappropriate.

Like most of Esplanade’s group home members, Don frequently
interrupted others. As part of his training, Don practiced waiting to speak until the person speaking had stopped. In this narrative, Don explained how it bothered him to be chastised for interrupting. Don expressed his irritation, but he also recounted his subsequent compliance. Although displeased, Don complied with the DCW’s command and proffered an apology to the interrupted speaker.

Don likes to present himself as polite and knowledgeable. Although embarrassed and irritated with himself and the DCW, Don apologized and, in doing so, reestablished his chosen persona. Whatever irritation Don might have felt toward the DCW who corrected him passed quickly. Don appreciates the work they do and believes that the DCWs have his best interests at heart. He interprets such corrections not as insults but as forms of feedback. The DCW, by admonishing Don about his interruption, called attention to Don’s failure to perform in a polite and knowledgeable fashion. Don reveals in this story how important it is to him to maintain his persona. Additionally, Don suggests that if he has to suffer the indignities of occasional public chastisements in order to maintain this persona, he is willing to do so.

In my interview with Kyle, I asked him a similar question: does it make you mad when people tell you what to do? Like Don’s reply, Kyle’s first response was an immediate denial followed by a slightly different second
response. The questions made both men slightly uncomfortable. Although uncomfortable, Don answered the question. Kyle, on the other hand, chose to answer an unasked but clearly related question.

072494; based on tape 65.1; Esplanade; interview with Kyle in the office SH, Sharon; KL, Kyle

SH: Does it make you mad when people tell you++ what to do?
KL: No.
All the time he come in my room all the++
time.
Member I tell you me mad as hell?
No knockin,
my room.
SH: Uh huh.
KL: No knock.
No one’s comin my room,
no knockin.
SH: Uh huh.
KL: I make the rule.
Rules is,
no break it.
Jesse tell me,
Kyle tell you go out,
you go out.
He come and sayin,
You stay in.

With this story, Kyle reorients the power relations assumed in my question. I had framed my question to solicit a narrative about staff’s authority and his compliance. Kyle shared instead a story about his authority and another group home member’s compliance. Kyle recounts an encounter that he had with Bob Wilson. Despite Kyle’s repeated requests, Bob continued to enter Kyle’s room without knocking. Bob’s intrusion bothered Kyle for a number of reasons. First, Kyle interpreted Bob’s continued
intrusion as a clear violation of his right to privacy. Second, Kyle perceived Bob’s actions as incompetent. "Rules is," Kyle says, "no break it." Kyle questioned Bob’s judgment, not the rule’s validity or utility. Kyle understands compliance with rules as a given. To Kyle, Bob’s actions mark Bob’s inadequacies, his failure to comprehend concepts such as rules.

Kyle suspected, however, that Bob’s actions were motivated not out of ignorance but out of disrespect. After explaining the function of a rule to Bob, Kyle informed Bob that he had the authority to make and enforce rules. To validate his claim, Kyle mentioned Jesse, the group home supervisor. According to Kyle, Jesse approved of Kyle’s entrance policy. In his story, Kyle presented Jesse as source of authority. Kyle used Jesse’s authority within the group home to bolster his own authority. By mentioning Jesse, Kyle drew a link between himself and Jesse. Both he and Jesse understand the function of rules; both have the authority to create and enforce rules. In this story, Kyle asserted himself as a powerful figure in the home, a rule-maker and a rule-enforcer. In order to do so, however, Kyle had to invoke Jesse’s name and his authority. Kyle draws power not from his own credibility but from someone else’s.

The ability to make and enforce rules is a marker of status within this community. Consequently, many of the
group home members jockey for position by trying to solicit compliance from each other. More often than not, they rebuff one another's attempts to solicit compliance. They rarely grant one another the personal authority to make and enforce rules, even when the resident seeking compliance states that he is speaking for a staff member. Although rebuffed in their attempts to solicit compliance from one another, group home members continue to try.

Soliciting compliance from another resident, invoking the authority of a staff member, and receiving a rebuttal are just three steps in the four-step process that the residents use when jockeying for position. The final step in this process involves making a staff member aware of the violation. If a resident calls another resident's violation to the attention of a staff member and the staff member enforces the rule, the resident has, at least for the moment, increased his status by lowering his housemate's. It functions as a sort of "I told you so" moment for the resident who tried to enforce a role but was denied by his fellow housemate the ability to do so. If, however, the staff member refuses to enforce the rule, the rule violator's status increases and the rule enforcer's status decreases.

In the following story, Nigel recounts his frustration not only with his roommate but also with the DCWs.
071894; based on tape 60.1; Esplanade; interview with Nigel Quentin in his bedroom
NQ, Nigel Quentin; SH, Sharon

NQ: I mean to talk to somebody about this. I tried talkin to Fred, he doesn’t know anything. I was talk to Jesse but he doesn’t he //doesn’t

SH: //Are you talkin about Bob Wilson?

NQ: Yeah.

SH: What did they tell you?

NQ: Follow the rules. Follow the rules and nothin will go wrong. Break the rules, you’re out. Automatically.

SH: //And you think Bob Wilson is breakin the++ rules?

NQ: ///[UC] Yeah. Cause he has his TV on when I’m tryin to++ sleep in the bed. You should be over here one night and see++ how that happens. I tell im every night when I go to bed, let me get some sleep or that does it. He goes back to his mom.

Like Kyle, Nigel has a problem with Bob Wilson. Nigel has appealed to Jesse and Fred for support, but they have informed him to wait it out. Bob was a new group home member, and they wanted to give Bob time to get adjusted to life in the group home. Nigel perceived their tolerance of Bob’s rule violations as a clear failure to do their job.

Nigel had complied with the system. He tried to resolve his problems with his roommate. When he could not, he approached Fred, a DCW. When Fred failed to alleviate the situation, Nigel approached Jesse, the group home supervisor. Neither adjudicated the situation to Nigel’s
liking. Nigel went through the proper channels and was denied. The system failed him. If the system had worked, Fred or Jesse should have chastised Bob Wilson, thereby lowering Bob's status within the group and elevating Nigel's. Instead, Fred and Jesse granted Bob Wilson privileges that they did not grant other residents. In doing so, they temporarily elevated his status in relation to the other group home members.

Bested by the system, Nigel granted himself the power to alleviate the problem. Bob would comply or Bob would be expelled. Through this narrative, Nigel performs the role denied him by Bob, Fred, Jesse, and the system itself, that of rule-enforcer. The fact, however, that Bob Wilson continued to violate the house rules undercuts the potency of Nigel's narrative vision. As framed, Nigel's declaration of empowerment seems no more than a vengeful imagining. Nigel's telling, when placed against the Bob's continued violation, presents Nigel in a different light: angry but compliant. Others have denied Nigel the right to perform the role of enforcer, but they have reinforced his role as complier. Reluctantly, Nigel accepts this positioning. He complies with the system even when the system seems unknowable to him.

**Storytelling as an Act of Compliance**

Narration, unlike conversation, involves stretches of discourse where one person (the narrator) monopolizes the
interaction. Conversation, on the other hand, involves interactional exchanges. In conversation, one interactant speaks and then another; the conversation advances turn by turn (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974; Schegloff 1991; Mehan 1991). When one invokes the narrative frame, however, one temporarily alters the organization of conversational turn-taking.

In conversation, one invokes the narrative frame by announcing the availability of a story. At this point, the other interactant communicates his or her acceptance or rejection of the offer (Labov 1972; Harness Goodwin 1990). If granted permission to tell, the narrator assumes control over the conversation for the length of the story.

Although the rules that structure conversation are altered during narration, other rules are maintained. The rules that constrain talk during conversation constrain talk during narration. In its group homes, VOA encourages talk that facilitates the smooth operation of the facility. VOA lets DCWs decide what kinds of talk facilitate the smooth operation of the group home and what kinds do not. At Esplanade, DCWs discourage the following kinds of talk in group home members: loud talk, inciting talk, distracting talk, and interruptions.
CONTRASTIVE EXAMPLES OF COMPLIANCE

In this excerpt, Nigel raised his voice during a telling, only to be promptly criticized by other group home members.

111093; based on tapes 52.1 and 52.2; at Magnolia and on the van ride from Magnolia to Esplanade
NQ, Nigel Quentin; DE, Don Easton; TD, Ted; KL, Kyle; MS, Marissa

NQ: But today.
   look at this.
   I went out today.
   afterwards.
   made me a bunch of money.
   The question is,
   when do I get the check?

((NQ laughs))
((Authoritatively))
DE: Nigel.

Near the end of his story, Nigel got excited and raised his voice. Don Easton immediately noticed the violation.

NQ: When do I get //the check?
DE: //Nigel.
   Give me all //your attention.
NQ: //([UC]

Don tried three times to get Nigel's attention. Nigel ignored Don, ignored his interruptions, and continued with his story.

DE: Listen.
   You made me and Deborah===
NQ: =Maria's comin by today.
DE: I know it.
   Would you listen?=

Don persisted. Nigel tried changing the subject by mentioning Maria. Don responded to Nigel's conversational
shift but was not sidetracked. Don tried once again to solicit Nigel’s attention.

NQ: =I am NOT gonna have not mess from NOBODY, I promise //you that.
DE: //Would you just listen?
    Listen.
NQ: I’m not even goin that STAFF meetin [UC]
DE: Would you just listen?
NQ: which I don’t.
    So I ain’t gonna pull up,
    I ain’t //gonna do that.

Rather than let Don have his say, Nigel tried to talk over him. Once again, Nigel raised his volume. Don was not deterred. For several exchanges, both men talked at each other but not with each other.

DE: //Me and--
    Me //and Jesse
TD: //I think I’ll sit in the driver’s seat
DE: and you
TD: [UC]
DE: and Deborah had an agreement.
((Sounds of steps approaching))
NQ: We had an agreement, huh?
DE: That’s right.

Ted entered the van in the middle of the altercation. Ted ignored Don and Nigel. Ted addressed his comment about the driver’s seat to no one in particular. For a brief period of time, all three men were speaking, but none were in a dialogue with one another. Nigel did not respond to Don until Don mentioned Deborah’s name. Although it took him several attempts, Don finally had Nigel’s attention.

DE: We got you got your ol head, aw, you got
    ((To TD))
NQ: Don’t sit in this one.
DE: you got,
    ((To TD))
NQ: You don't sit there.
DE: You got //ye ol hat on your head.

Having won Nigel’s attention, Don spoke but with difficulty. Don experiences temporary syntactical difficulties. While trying to form his sentence, Don lost Nigel’s attention to Ted. When Don finally completed his utterance, Nigel was too engrossed in his interaction with Ted to notice.

Don was not deterred by his syntactical difficulties or Nigel’s inattention. Instead, Don waited for another opportunity to present itself.

DE: Know what Fred said?
About on the van?
((NQ hits his thigh several times with the palm of his hand))
DE: Keep, keep,
keep your voice down on the van.
TD: If trouble starts--
((Irritated)
NQ: This is my //seat.
TD: //he writes--
NQ: You understand that?
Speakin English?

When Nigel raised his voice again, Don was ready. As he did earlier, Don got Nigel’s attention by mentioning a staff person’s name. As before, Don experienced syntactic difficulty but managed to work through them. Ted joined Don, offering his own warning. Their remarks irritated Nigel, but, rather than refute them, Nigel tried once again to change the subject.

Throughout these interactions, Nigel never challenged Don and Ted’s assertion that he raised his voice.
Moreover, Nigel never challenged the validity of the injunction against increased volume. Additionally, Nigel never tried to suggest that the rule only applies in certain situations or in specific locations. Although Nigel violated the injunction against raising one's voice, he, like Don and Ted, takes as a given the injunction’s validity and scope. Nigel failed to comply, and Don caught him. The two actions, when paired, highlight the power of compliance within the group home.

Nigel apparently initiated this conversation in part to solicit sympathy from us. Once again, Nigel presented himself as a man who is trying but does not understand what is going on in his life. He wanted us to act as supportive interpreters. We were to listen to his problems, explain to him why they occurred, and reinforce his self-esteem. Because he found the situation at work particularly worrisome, he raised his voice. In another community, Nigel’s increase in volume might be an appropriate way to express his distress; in this community, however, it was inappropriate and derailed Nigel’s attempt to solicit sympathy from the other group home members.

What Nigel intended to be a support forum became instead a competition where he, Don, and Ted jockeyed for position. Although Ted appeared less interested in the competition than Nigel and Don, he too was drawn into the conflict. None wanted to allow another group home member
the authority to perform the role of rule-violator or rule-enforcer, both positions of status within the group. Nigel attempted to thwart Don’s and Ted’s attempts to assume the roles of rule-enforcer by ignoring or talking over them. Don and Ted successfully thwarted Nigel’s attempt to assume the role of confused victim in their attempts to thwart his assumption of the role of rule-violator. They, in a sense, denied each other any role other than group home member.

The enforcement of compliance by DCWs allows them to control a group of people. The enforcement of compliance by group home members allows them to thwart each other’s attempts to perform difference. It is as if they can tolerate their lives as group home members as long as they all share the same constraints. Such interactions reveal their willingness to trade opportunities to perform their differences for a chances to reestablish their commonalities.

**SUMMARY**

The codes of self-reliance and compliance manifest themselves in group home members’ stories. These stories demonstrate that these codes help shape group home members’ understanding of their role, purpose, and plan of action within this community. With each telling, group home members restate the importance of the codes of self-reliance and compliance within this community. These
stories serve as prompts, reminding group home members of the cultural expectations that shape their daily lives.

The codes of self-reliance and compliance influence not only what group home members tell but also how they tell their stories. Telling is an action, and as an action, conforms to cultural codes of speaking. Within Esplanade, community members respond to certain tellings as acts of self-reliance or acts of compliance. By providing supportive and contrastive examples, I have shown that group home members recognize tellings that reaffirm these codes and tellings that violate these codes.

In some instances, community members respond to a telling as an act of self-reliance and an act of compliance. The tension between the two codes that exists at the macro-cultural level reemerges in the telling and interpretation of telling at the micro-cultural level. Incongruities are not dissolved but rather manifested at the micro-cultural level.
CHAPTER FIVE

IMPERIALIZATION AND STORYTELLING

In this chapter, I identify Esplanade as a "station," a term borrowed from Fiske (1993). Then, after reviewing Langellier and Peterson's (1993) work on family stories and family storytelling, I explain how member storytelling generates and reproduces the culture of the group home. I also identify specific styles of member telling and subject positions created through telling that recur at Esplanade.

FISKE AND POWER

In Power Plays, Power Works, John Fiske discussed culture, political struggles, and the frameworks used to comprehend both. Drawing from the works of Foucault (1978, 1980), Gramsci (1992), Bakhtin (1968), and de Certeau (1984), Fiske began his discussion by stating that all social beings are subjugated. He noted, however, that how individuals experience their subjection often depends to a large extent on their social identity. "[S]ubjection is not equal," wrote Fiske. "[S]ome] gain more and give up less because of their easier access to power" (Fiske 1993, 10, 11). Furthermore, Fiske contended, power operates to ensure the maintenance of the social order and, in doing so, perpetuates inequality.

Those who benefit the most from the social order, Fiske identified as the "power-bloc"; those who benefit the least, the "people" (Fiske 1993, 11). He described "power-
bloc" as those with easy access to the system of power, who benefit economically and politically from its operations, and who work the hardest to ensure its continued existence. The power-bloc have this privileged access to power, Fiske stated, because the power system and the social order developed alongside one another (Fiske 1993, 78). The two exist symbiotically.

Fiske labelled the efforts employed by the power-bloc to maintain the existing social order as "imperializing power." "The aim of imperializing power is to extend its reach as far as possible--over physical reality, over human societies, over history, over consciousness" (Fiske 1993, 11). Influenced by Foucault, Fiske contended that imperializing power is "ever extending its terrain outwards and deepening its reach into the minutia of what it already holds. Its imperialism is both macro and micro in scale. . . ." (Fiske 1993, 78).

According to Fiske, stations both generate and are generated by imperialism. A station is imperialization physicalized. Churches, corporations, places of higher learning, hospitals, court rooms, and other institutional sites are examples of stations. Stations serve the power-bloc, the social order, and the systems of power by organizing, controlling, and monitoring the activities, ideologies, and bodies contained within them.
Like Foucault, Fiske cited Jeremy Bentham’s "Panopticon" as emblematic of a station’s form and function. Hired to design a prison in the 1780s, Bentham modeled his structure after the wheel. He located the prisoners’ cells along the structure’s circumference and the supervisor’s tower in the structure’s hub. Moreover, Bentham designed the cells so that the prisoners could not see one another but could instead be seen at all times by the supervisor. Bentham’s design not only reduced the number of employees needed to guard the prisoners, it also radically changed the locus of control. Fiske wrote:

Because the prisoners could not see the supervisor and could not know when they were being watched or not they would have to behave as though they were being watched all the time and thus would monitor themselves (Fiske 1993, 73).

Bentham’s panopticon shifted the locus from external to internal control of the prison population. The building’s structure encouraged prisoners to assume responsibility for their actions and the consequences of those actions; it encouraged prisoners to internalize the ideology of their captors.

Bentham’s panopticon represents a hyper-station, the station in its most concentrated form. Not all stations, however, assume the panopticon’s wheel-based structure or adopt its method of surveillance. What they do share with the panopticon is function. Fiske wrote, "Each station is
designed to encourage desired behavior and discourage what
is prohibited by making it visible" (Fiske 1993, 73).

Although not cited by Fiske as an example,
Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Mental
Retardation (ICFs/MR) are another type of station. ICFs/MR
represent the ideologies and actions of a power-bloc, those
without mental retardation. Designed by the power-bloc for
the power-bloc, ICFs/MR contain, control, and shape the
lives, ideologies, and bodies of a portion of the
population denied easy access to systems of power, those
with mental retardation. As argued by Wolfensberger (1972)
and Simmons (1982), historically, the systematic efforts to
care and treat those with mentally retardation only
peripherally reflect their needs. Instead, such efforts
reflect the philosophies, ideologies, biases, and
limitations of those in decision-making positions: the
power-bloc.

In this chapter I demonstrate how stories and
storytelling within the group home generate and reproduce
power relations that privilege certain groups over others
(DCWs over group home members; ethnographers over group
home members; those without mental retardation over those
with mental retardation). Before I do so, I review
Langellier and Peterson's discussion of storytelling as a
strategy of social control.
STORYTELLING AS AN IMPERIALIZING FORCE

In "Family Storytelling as a Strategy of Social Control," Langellier and Peterson examined the politics of family storytelling. "[F]amily stories are not simple representations of preexisting family stories," they wrote, "nor is family storytelling mere aesthetic performance or socio-emotional release by family members" (Langellier and Peterson 1993, 50). Instead, family stories and family storytelling produce, maintain, and transform the family as a social unit. The "family," they noted, is not a naturally occurring, biological phenomenon but is instead a type of small group culture. Family storytelling is a "discursive practice that produces familial culture" by giving license to certain systems of meaning and by privileging certain power dynamics (Langellier and Peterson 1993, 50). Family stories, they argued, privilege "parents over children, males over females, and the white, middle-class family over alternative family structures" (Langellier and Peterson 1993, 50).

Although equally interested in story-texts, Langellier and Peterson contended that claims about familial culture depend on the analysis of narrative performances. "[T]he politics of family storytelling cannot be determined on the basis of story-texts alone because all stories are performed" (Langellier and Peterson 1993, 61). How a story-text is performed, to whom, and in what context
substantially affects its interpretation and its conversational function. To illustrate this point, Langellier and Peterson offered the following example: "A story about a forgotten daughter may be oppressive or it may be resisting depending on who tells it to whom and under what conditions" (Langellier and Peterson 1993, 61). Storytelling is a political act, an interpersonal transaction firmly embedded within the group's power structures.

Analysts, if interested in the relationship between social control and narrative performance, wrote Langellier and Peterson, should focus their attention on the methods used by narrators to create and maintain an audience. Langellier and Peterson also suggested that analysts examine audiences' contributions to these tellings. They wrote:

Analytic attention must focus both on the labor performed in the speaker's communicative display and the audience's participation, for example, the refusal to listen, challenges to the speaker, supportive responses, or deferential listening (Langellier and Peterson 1993, 62).

Furthermore, Langellier and Peterson urged analysts to consider how issues related to authority and power, specifically narrative authority, storytelling rights, excluded audiences, and enforced listeners, affect the interactional dynamics of storytelling. Citing Labov (1972), Langellier and Peterson noted that although all narrators must solicit and maintain the attention of their
audience, some need not work as hard as others. When members of a privileged social group narrate, Langellier and Peterson posited, they wield two kinds of authority: narrative and actual. They assume the narrative authority that comes with performance and actual authority within the social group. Their audience, if members of a less privileged social group, may not be in a position to demand or even expect narrative accommodation. As Langellier and Peterson stated, such audiences, regardless of their interests, desires, or needs, "have to go on listening" (Langellier and Peterson 1993, 62). Such audiences represent what Langellier and Peterson call the "enforced listeners" and the narrator represents what I call the "privileged teller".

In this chapter, I borrow extensively from Langellier and Peterson. I find strong parallels between their work with family stories and family storytelling and my interest in group home members’ narrative performances. The group home, like the family, is a type of small-group culture. Group home stories and member storytelling function in group homes much like family stories and family storytelling functions within a family: they serve to generate and reproduce the social unit. Additionally, group home stories and member storytelling, like family stories and family storytelling, serve to legitimate certain systems of meaning and to privilege certain power
dynamics. However, because the family and the group home represent two distinct cultures, the systems of meaning and power dynamics these two types of narrative performances legitimate and privilege are vastly different.

In previous chapters, I explicated the codes (self-reliance and compliance) that organize systems of meaning within the group home. In this chapter, I examine how these codes influence storytelling within Esplanade. Although interested in group home members' stories about life at Esplanade, I do not limit my analysis to such stories. I contend that the codes of self-reliance and compliance influence all tellings within Esplanade, not simply tellings about the group home or mental retardation. Cultural codes of communication provide communicators with an interactional framework.

Generally, communicators pay less attention to the framework once they have grown accustomed to it. Although ever-present, the framework, in the minds of the interactants, disappears. Certain events, however, may trigger a renewed awareness of the frame. For example, the dominant feature of family stories and family storytelling is the family as narrated, as performed, as framed, as culturally-coded. In these narrative performances, family members tell stories about themselves as family members. They are sharing stories about themselves as constructed. Moreover, family members may enact their construction in
their telling. Such tellings seem to call for moments of self-reflexivity.

A call, however, is not a mandate. Although featured prominently in the narrative, the cultural code may still remain invisible. Furthermore, the code's potency is in no way diminished when ignored. Rather, the invisibility of a code marks its strength. Within the community, it functions as a given, a taken-for-granted, a fact of life. Whether prominently featured or not, the code organizes social life, its products and processes, within the community.

SUBJECT POSITIONS

In this chapter, I examine how group home members, DCWs, and I myself use storytelling to reaffirm existing power relations within the group home. Specifically, I detail how we use tellings to position certain individuals in the home as simultaneous tellers, preferred listeners, privileged tellers, enforced tellers, and enforced listeners.

I use these terms primarily as points of reference, not operationalized definitions; consequently, I define the terms loosely. I use these terms to describe one's subject position in a specific interaction. These terms do not name states of being or psychological traits. Rather, these terms name transaction-specific roles. Over the course of a conversation, interactants move from one role
to another as the topic shifts or the context changes. Teller becomes listener; listener becomes teller. Additionally, the subject position an interactant occupies varies from transaction to transaction.

I identify a privileged teller as a doubly-authorized narrator: one who is not only imbued with the authority that come with telling but who is also an authority figure in the group. An enforced teller I identify as one who is not in a position to politely or easily refuse a request to narrate. Simultaneous tellers represent those interactants who turn narration into a contest, often interrupting another’s telling to tell their own story or telling a story while another person tells his or her story. They use their narrative performances to bolster or maintain their status within the group. I identify a preferred listener as the audience with whom the teller most wants to share his or her story. The narrator perceives the preferred listener as someone who can validate, authorize, or affirm her or him. The enforced listener, like the enforced teller, is someone who is not in a position politely or easily to refuse a request. In this instance, however, it is a request to listen to a telling.

I do not present these categories as an exhaustive list of the different possible configurations of subject positions. They represent, instead, recurring interactional patterns within Esplanade. As language
users, the residents at Esplanade have at their disposal a wide range of discursive formulae; however, as social beings, the residents of Esplanade tend to employ tried-and-true methods of communication. I argue that these subject positions recur because they serve to reify Esplanade’s culture and identities within this culture.

SIMULTANEOUS TELLERS

One of the first things I noticed when I started analyzing the telling strategies of group home members was their disinclination to share stories with one another. I searched through hours of tape, only to find a few, isolated examples. In every case, the story being shared was a response to a direct question. For example, one group home member might ask another about his day, his weekend, or his family’s health. Generally, the response to the question was pleasant but terse: his day went well; it was OK; they were doing just fine. On rare occasions, a group home member might elaborate and share a brief story. The story, however, was rarely more than a sketch. Additionally, the group home member who had inquired never asked for additional information or clarifications. He never shared a similar story. Group home members treated such inquiries as phatic moments, a social ritual they used to keep the lines of communication open between them.

At first, I was bothered by the group home members’ lack of story sharing. I felt that perhaps I was simply
missing these shared stories. I altered my visitation schedule, hoping that I would stumble across what I believed had to be there. I pinpointed three moments in their day that were ripe for story-telling: after work, at dinner, and before bedtime. I choose these moments for two reasons. First, most of the group home members shared these moments together. Second, in these moments, group home members were not engaged in task-related activities. These moments seemed to me to be suitable for storytelling.

I found that group home members did use these moments to tell stories but not to one another. Instead, they shared their stories with staff, family members, or friends. They shared these stories in the presence of other group home members, but they were not one another’s target audience. Finally convinced that I was not missing the moment of sharing, I tried to hypothesize why a group home member would rather talk to a DCW than to another group home member.

Of the many functions that storytelling serves, one of those is the exchange of information. Group home members share the majority of their time with one another; consequently, they share a great deal of experiences. If one’s primary goal as a storyteller is to share an experience with someone unacquainted with the occurrence, one typically rules out those who are already familiar with the events. If this is the case for group home members,
they would be more likely to talk about their days with a DCW who has not spent nearly every minute of the day with them than with another group home member who has.

My hypothesis assumes, however, that the information exchange is the primary reason for narrating. Additionally, my hypothesis assumes that someone who is unfamiliar with an occurrence is a more receptive audience than someone who possesses extensive, perhaps even first-hand, knowledge of those same events. Neither assumption seemed to ring true.

People share stories with one another for any number of reasons: relational, aesthetic, cultural, pragmatic, etc. Moreover, a story serves multiple functions simultaneously. Obviously, a group home member need not recount the day’s events with someone who shared that day with him, if the group home member’s objective is to dispense information. The group home member’s objective, however, might be relational. He might want to reminisce with the other person, to solidify the bond they share. He might want to provide his interpretation of the events to see if the other person shares his perspective. Sometimes, the most appropriate person for a narrator to share a story with are those individuals who know most about the events. Among the residents of Esplanade, this occurrence rarely happens.
Rather than share stories with each other, group home members share their stories with DCWs, family members, and friends. Moreover, group home members are more likely to share their stories with DCWs than with family members or friends. If for no other reason, group home members tell more stories to DCWs because the residents see them on a daily basis. Some group home members see their family members once a week at most. Except on rare occasions, group home members visit with their friends on holidays and birthdays. If group home members are not sharing stories with one another and they do not see their friends and family members more than once a week, DCWs become the only available audience for the residents' tellings.

Although hired to manage group home members' practical affairs, DCWs also provide emotional support to the residents. The residents of Esplanade look forward to interacting with the DCWs and, on most days, the DCWs look forward to interacting with the residents. DCWs, however, are careful not to let this interaction interfere with their work load. Caring for others is a huge responsibility; caring for others while local, state, and federal regulatory agencies, not to mention family members and friends, monitor is unusually giving. DCWs have to perform a great number of tasks in a short period of time, perform those tasks in a specific manner, and act as emotional support systems.
The DCWs at Esplanade made time each day to interact with the residents, but the moments were brief. Often, DCWs carried on conversations with group home members while engaged in another task. For instance, Marissa might talk to Nigel about his day while supervising Ted in the kitchen. The DCWs at Esplanade found time to interact with the group home members, but their attention was rarely undivided.

Group home members waited for opportunities to interact with the DCWs and when an opportunity presented itself, the residents tried to make the most of it. Group home members recognized when a DCW had time to talk. However, rather than take turns speaking with the DCW, group home members competed for the DCW's attention.

By competition, I do not mean "topping," a strategy where one storyteller tries to outdo, outtell, outmaneuver another storyteller. Carol Mitchell, for example, notes that men are more likely than women to engage in competitive joke-telling sessions, interactions where participants compete with one another to tell the funniest joke (Mitchell 1985, 167). The sessions identified by Carol Mitchell often assume a somewhat ritualistic structure. One participant tells a joke. After the joke-teller delivers the punch line, the group laughs. The first participant's joke reminds someone in the group of another joke. The process repeats itself, with brief
interruptions where participants comment on each other’s joke-telling ability. Typically, the session ends when someone tells a joke deemed by the group too funny to top. Although competing with one another for the title of funniest joke-teller in the group, participants generally adhere to one basic premise: one teller at a time. Participants might interrupt one another in their attempts to gain the floor, but once someone has established himself or herself as teller, the others assume their roles as audience.

The structure of the group home members’ telling competition assumed a very different form from the joke-telling competition described by Mitchell. To maximize their interaction time with the DCW, group home members interrupted one another, talked over on another, and redirected the topic to suit themselves. This competition produced a unique performance arena. Individual tellings, individual plots became lost in the multi-vocal web. As an audience member, one found oneself trying to follow multiple stories simultaneously.

During simultaneous tellings, the group home members try their best to ignore one another and concentrate on their own performances. Simultaneous tellings occur for two reasons. First, the group home members want to share their stories with preferred listeners who often have little time to listen. Second and perhaps most important,
simultaneous tellings occur because the group home members want to tell. Although chaotic, simultaneous tellings provide group home members with a chance to tell their stories, to share their experiences, to express their individual interests.

Furthermore, the multi-vocal web created by the residents acts as a buffer. Because their individual voices are sometimes indistinguishable, the men can say what they want without fear of chastisement. They can raise their voices, curse, name-call, repeat themselves endlessly. Their audience, unable to concentrate on a single performance, may ignore all of them, ask them all to be quiet, or try to order the telling of stories. In short, their audience must treat them as a group. For a moment, all tellers are equally privileged.

After the group home members grew accustomed to me, I found myself assuming a narrative role, not unlike that assumed by the DCWs. I found myself cast in the role of preferred listener, a boon for most ethnographers but not without its challenges. In the following excerpt, I try to solicit a narrative from Don about his holiday plans, only to become the audience for a simultaneous telling. Nigel, although he hears me ask Don a direct question, makes several attempts to divert my attention away from Don.
SH, Sharon; NQ, Nigel Quentin; DE, Don Easton; TD, Ted

((To DE))

SH: Did y'all do anything for Halloween at ++

Mary’s?

NQ: Sharon?

DE: Uh, Halloween day?

SH: Uh huh.

After I asked Don about his activities, Nigel called my name. Rather than acknowledge Nigel, I ignored him and tried to keep my attention focused on Don. Don ignored Nigel as well. Don asked me for a clarification which I provide.

This transaction reveals Don’s and my assumptions about Nigel’s interruption. We did not know in advance why Nigel called my name. We both assumed that he was trying to divert my attention from Don and not some other possibility, such as announcing a forthcoming disaster.

Additionally, although I heard Nigel call my name, I only provided verbal feedback to Don, the person I asked to speak. By ignoring Nigel and encouraging Don, I was trying to control the direction of the interaction.

DE: Oh yeah.

I been [UC] pretty good.
And then uh

NQ: Sharon.

DE: Mm--

NQ: I’m not gonna be home //tonight.

DE: //Wen, went to++

Wal-Mart and den

NQ: I’m not //gonna be there.

DE: //Popeye’s.

Stay in the house.

NQ: I’m not gonna be there.

DE: Keep, keep mi, keep me m, //mighty warm.
NQ: //I'm not gonna++ be there.

After receiving my clarification, Don launched into his story about his weekend. Nigel, undeterred, tried once again to solicit my attention. Once again, I ignored him, but his interruption temporally threw Don off-stride. While Don struggled to regain his train of thought, Nigel launched into his own narrative. For a series of exchanges, Don and Nigel talked on top of each other, both directing their narratives to me.

DE: Last evening?
SH: Uh huh.
DE: W, watched the New Orleans Saints.
SH: Yeah, you watched //that game?

((To DE))
NQ: //They lost another one,++ boy.

Before continuing with his story, Don checked to see if I was still following him. Once again, I provided Don with a verbal acknowledgment of my continued interest and he proceeded. After I restated my interest in Don's narrative by asking him for a clarification, Nigel stopped telling his story and joins our conversation. He enters the conversation by announcing the game's outcome.

SH, Sharon; NQ, Nigel Quentin; DE, Don Easton; TD, Ted

DE: Oh yeah.
TD: No, they won it.
DE: They sure did.
TD: Twenty to seventeen.
    They say Mora's gonna get fired.
DE: Who?
TD: Jim //Mora?
NQ: //Mora.
SH: Wow.
TD: They //might fired im.
NQ:  //][UC]
SH: Already?
NQ: [UC]
SH: Today?
TD: They might fire him at the end of the++
//regular season though.

Don readily agreed with Nigel. At this point, Nigel
had positioned himself as a co-contributor to the
conversation, not a competitor for my attention. Their
discussion of the Saints’ game drew Ted into the
conversation. Ted immediately refuted Nigel’s statement
about the game’s outcome. For several exchanges, the four
of us discussed the game’s outcome and future of the
Saints’ head coach. Although a participant in the
conversation, Nigel was not controlling the direction of
the conversation.

NQ:
//I want to be callin Jesse yet?

Unsatisfied, Nigel tried once again to solicit my
attention. Without waiting for Ted to finish speaking,
Nigel asked me a direct question about his life, and, in
doing so, returned to simultaneous telling.

PREFERRED LISTENERS

In the previous interaction, I am clearly positioned
as Don’s, Nigel’s, and Ted’s preferred listener. The
residents seem more interested in obtaining my attention
than they do in maintaining conversational coherence or in
demonstrating their respect for one another as
storytellers. In my final round of interviews, I asked the
men about their audience preferences. As I had suspected each resident told me that for one reason or another he preferred to talk to VOA's staff, family members, and friends. Some of the group home members specifically mentioned that they enjoyed talking to me. I sensed that I occupied a place in their minds somewhere between staff member and friend.

When I asked Nigel who he liked to talk to, he replied, "Staff." When I asked why, he said, "I get to, get to know em better. They get to know me better." When I pressed, he said that group home members just "won't understand what I'm goin through." I brought the issue up again later in the interview. He made two points. First, Nigel only likes talking to people who could help him. Second, he does not talk to the other group home members "cause they don't get paid to listen to my questions and answers."

When I asked Lee who he talked to on a regular basis, he mentioned his coworkers at McDonald's, VOA staff, the group home supervisor, his family members, and his friend, Tommy. He mentioned several times in our interview that he did not like communicating with "retarded people." He did not like to talk to them, tell them jokes, or tell them his life story. When I asked why, he said, "retarded people don't understand jokes. They don't understand anything." Not only does Lee not like to talk to his fellow group home
members, he does not like to spend time with them. He told me that it really irritates him when they show up at his place of employment, McDonald’s. He says that it "ruins" his business.

The other group home members I interviewed expressed less antipathy toward the other group home members; nonetheless, they still preferred to communicate with VOA staff and family members. Don Easton and Ted mentioned conversations that they had had with other group home members. These conversations usually entail a discussion of the day’s events or an inquiry into the health of family members. They also usually involved light teasing or joking. Don Easton and Ted like to tease Kyle about his cola consumption. They also like to call him "Grandma," though they are careful to do so outside the earshot of staff. They have been chastised for calling Kyle "Grandma," even though it does not seem to bother Kyle.

None of the group home members liked to share their personal problems with one another. Don Easton expressed the general feeling of most group home members when he said, "Cause it it more easier so more easier so like you talk to staff, you talk to someone." The group home members find it easier to talk to staff than to one another, and that preference is evident in their choice of narratee.
Group home members choose to share their stories with preferred listeners for a number of reasons. First, they enjoy receiving the attention of someone they like and/or admire. Second, they perceive preferred listeners as credible and competent. Group home members use a preferred listeners' credibility to boost their own credibility. Third, in many situations, the preferred listener is the only one willing and available to listen.

Fourth, group home members have little or no practice sharing stories with one another. Although they have developed and practiced the skills required to function as a narrator, group home members may not have developed and practiced the skills required to function as a narratee. Scholars (Langness and Levine 1986; Linder 1978; Sabsay 1979; Sabsay and Platt 1985; Whitman 1990a, 1990b) have suggested that individuals without mental retardation alter their patterns of communication when conversing with an individual with mental retardation. I have noticed a tendency among those in support roles to speak at or for individuals with mental retardation. I have noticed, for instance, that the DCWs do not share personal narratives with the group home members. Their tendency to avoid sharing their personal lives with the residents may be an effort to separate their personal lives from their professional lives.
This disinclination to share stories with individuals with mental retardation may also, on the other hand, be a pattern of communication employed by many in support roles. For one reason or another, those in support roles may not find it comfortable, appropriate, or convenient to share their personal narratives with individuals with mental retardation. If so, persons with mental retardation would have few opportunities to perform the role of narratee. Without such opportunities, they would have few chances to develop and practice the facilitative listening skills required of a narratee. If my speculations are correct, then another reason that the residents of Esplanade prefer to share their stories with staff, family members, and friends is that they themselves lack the skills required to function in the role of preferred listener.

In the following excerpt, Don discusses his skills with Marissa and me.

110893; based on tape 04.1; on the van DE, Don Easton; MS, Marissa

((To SH))
DE: That’s right.
I do trainin very well.
I do chores very well.
Huh, Marissa?
Is that right?

In this exchange, Don bragged on himself, expressing unmitigated pride in his skill level. He undercut his credibility, however, when he turned to Marissa for support.
MS: Yep.
DE: That's right.
MS: Keep on doin it, boy.
    I tell you=
DE: =I'll be out of here in no time, huh?
MS: I can see you with an apartment next door+
to Carol and Karl.
DE: Huh?
MS: I can see you next door=
DE: =Next door?
MS: With a apartment by your sister.
DE: By my sister.

Marissa never asked Don why he was soliciting her opinion. Without hesitation and without question, Marissa provided Don with the affirmation he desires. In doing so, Marissa demonstrated one of the reasons that Don enjoys talking to her: she validates him. She also demonstrated her position in relation to Don: he was in need of validation and she was capable of providing it. Within the group home, the preferred listener is a powerful position. In conversation, preferred listeners exert as much control over the direction of the narration as the narrators.

I have labelled the subject position "preferred listener" because, for the most part, the residents of Esplanade enjoy conversing with these individuals. Generally, individuals occupying this position provide group home members with a supportive, although not always attentive, audience. Although generally supportive, preferred listeners sometimes use their influence to stifle or redirect a narrative. In the following excerpt, Marissa derails Nigel's telling.
NQ, Nigel Quentin; MS, Marissa; DE, Don Easton

NQ: Sharon?
Marissa and I were talkin last night. [UC], weren't we talkin last night outside?
MS: It depends on what you think we was talkin about.
NQ: Gettin along with the staff and the clients? Helpin em out?
MS: That wasn't last night. That was another night.
DE: That was on Tuesday //night.
NQ: //[UC]
MS: Last night was Thursday. That was a Tuesday night.

After soliciting my attention, Nigel began to tell me a story about a talk he had with Marissa. Before launching into his telling, Nigel stopped to ask Marissa for a clarification. Not clear about which discussion Nigel was referencing, Marissa provided a vague answer. He clarified and she contradicted. Nigel suddenly appeared more interested in resolving his dispute over the date of the occurrence than sharing the story with me.

NQ: We do that on Wednesday night, huh? You want me to go ahead with this or not?
MS: It's up to you.
NQ: Say yeah or say no, what do you want? You want to say yes, want to say no?
((NQ laughs))
MS: It's up to you, Nigel.

Nigel turned their dispute over the date of the occurrence into a tellability issue. He interpreted Marissa's refusal to confirm his version of events as subtle disapproval. He refused to share the story with me.
until he received Marissa’s approval and refused to accept her response that it was his decision to tell.

NQ: I wasn’t plannin to do this.

When Nigel failed to receive Marissa’s complete endorsement, he changed his mind about telling me the story. He suggested instead that he was somehow coerced into telling.

NQ: And y’all can, and y’all can-- go and do as you’re doin, and no one has to worry about me. See?
MS: I’m not gonna worry about you anyway.

Having solicited and gained our attention, Nigel tried to redirect our attention elsewhere. After his attempt to redirect, he once again solicited Marissa’s approval. Marissa’s response to his solicitation was somewhat dismissive.

NQ: What the hell am I doin?
MS: I have no idea.
I said you need to talk to Jesse. Let’s talk about something else you need to talk about.
NQ: I want to stay up tonight.
I definitely want to stay up tonight.

Frustrated by his inability to navigate his way through the conversation, Nigel, in desperation, asked Marissa for assistance. She tried once again to be vague, but ultimately gave in to Nigel’s repeated requests for approval. As Nigel suspected, Marissa did not believe that he should be sharing this story with me. Nigel readily
took her advice, abandoned the story he started to tell me, and initiated another.

Nigel's response to Marissa's initial hesitation revealed his sensitivity to her and the topic. He and Marissa had already discussed the event. He had already asked for her advice, and she had already dispensed it. She told him to wait and talk to Jesse. To share the story with me, Nigel would have to disregard Marissa's advice. Nigel found himself having to abandon a story or jeopardize his relationship with Marissa.

In this interaction, Nigel initially adopted the role of self-reliant narrator, a role unfamiliar to him. He positioned me in the role of narratee, a role that I, as ethnographer, am comfortable performing. He tried to position Marissa in a narrative support role, a role that she, as a DCW, has performed from him and the other residents numerous times. This time, however, she was not inclined to perform this role for Nigel. At the time of this telling, Marissa was functioning as driver and, as driver, had to concentrate on the traffic. In order to participate in Nigel's telling, she would have to provide narrative support and drive.

Marissa participates in Nigel's telling, but she does not provide narrative support. She chooses, instead, another role, that of fact-checker. Nigel asks for specific information; she provides specific information but
not without forcing Nigel to be more specific himself. Nigel, at this moment, might have continued with his telling, but he does not. He once again assumes the role of someone who is trying to but does not understand what is happening around him. He drops an unfamiliar role, that of self-reliant narrator, to assume a more familiar role. At this point, I still expect to perform the role of narratee. I do not learn until later that my role as narratee depended on Marissa’s willingness to provide narrative support. By not accepting the role assigned to her by Nigel, Marissa effectively derails the telling.

Marissa’s ability to derail Nigel’s story reveals the difference between her position in the group and my position in the group. Every time a group home member stops a telling to seek a staff member’s validation, he grants that person temporary control over his telling. These interruptions in the narrative flow mark moments of ritualized homage. Group home members do not stop their tellings to seek my validation, confirmation, or authorization because I do not occupy a position of power within the group. Like saluting superior officers when they enter the room, these interruptions reveal the group home members’ internalization of Esplanade’s hierarchy and their place in that hierarchy.

In the following excerpt, Kyle, like Nigel, interrupts a telling to solicit a staff person’s confirmation.
101793; based on tape 26.2; Esplanade; talking to Kyle in his bedroom
KL, Kyle; SH, Sharon; JS, Jesse

((To SH))
KL: I remove my teeth and put em in my pocket.

((SH laughs))
KL: I uh did.
I did.
I did.
Look here.

((KL pops his dentures out of his mouth and shows them to SH))
((SH laughs))
SH: That's funny.
((SH laughs))
KL: Go on head.
I tell him come over.
[UC]
((KL exits bedroom))
KL: Hey Jesse!

Earlier in the conversation, Kyle expressed a desire to solicit Jesse's confirmation of the event, but I told him to continue with his story. Although I was clearly interested in his telling, Kyle felt a need to stop the telling and find Jesse.

((Voices heard but out of range of the tape recorder))
KL: [UC]
JS: What?
KL: Remember rides?
Texas?
Remove my teeth out of my mouth?
Texas?
JS: Mhm.
KL: I did.
You saw it.
JS: When you sneeze?
KL: Uh uh.
JS: What?
Yeah.
Uh huh.
KL: The ride!
The ride.
Texas.
The [UC] ride.
Fast
ride.
Go sshh.
JS: Yeah.
Oh!
The ride!
Yeah the ride.

Kyle managed to locate Jesse, but, in order to solicit Jesse’s approval, Kyle had to trigger Jesse’s memory. After several exchange, Kyle succeeded.

JS: Now put your teeth back in your mouth. You don’t have to take your teeth out to++ show me anything.
((KL clucks))
JS: Go rinse them off.
Go brush them off
((KL whoops as he leaves the room))
JS: real good.
Now they need brushing.

Jesse provided Kyle with the confirmation he desired but, in doing so, completely derailed Kyle’s telling. Kyle received Jesse’s confirmation but at the sacrifice of his own narrative authority. I, the preferred listener, was left to listen to Jesse tell Kyle’s story while Kyle rinsed his dentures out in the sink.

PRIVILEGED TELLERS

Not only are VOA’s staff frequently positioned as preferred listeners, they also frequently assume the role of privileged teller. Other group members endow privileged tellers with greater credibility and greater narrative authority than other tellers in the group. Privileged tellers act as the voice of authority within the group and, as the voice of authority, they often assume the responsibility of retaining and retelling the group’s
story. This assumption of responsibility manifests itself in a variety of forms at Esplanade.

Having worked with individuals with speech disfluencies before my research at Esplanade, I was already sensitized to one variety of privileged telling. When I was a bus driver, I noticed that mothers frequently spoke for their children, spoke of their children as if their children were not present, or translated their children’s discourse for me. Although they had many reasons for doing so, the primary one was apparently for the sake of convenience. In many cases, they apparently just found it easier to speak for their children.

Familiar with this tendency, I tried not to trigger this response from VOA’s staff. If I did not understand what a group home member was saying, I asked him to repeat himself. If I still did not understand, I tried to discern his meaning from the context of the conversation. Additionally, I tried not to ask the DCWs about the group home members. I would talk to the DCWs about their lives and their jobs, but I tried to gather all of my information about the residents from the residents themselves.

In retrospect, I recognize my efforts as a type of research bias. Although interested in cultural patterns of communication, I tried to ignore this particular pattern because it made me uncomfortable. The group home members
and DCWs, however, did not share my discomfort. VOA's staff frequently speaks for the group home members.

Like the mothers on my bus route, DCWs speak for group home members, speak of group home members as if the residents were not present, and translate group home members' discourse for the uninitiated, and like the mothers on my bus route, they seem to feel they have reasons to do so. Some of the speech and vocal patterns of group home members are difficult to discern. Don, for example, sometimes experiences extreme difficulty in sentence construction. Kyle often drops consonants or entire syllables in words. He also has trouble with referents. At times, Ted's voice drops to a barely audible whisper at the end of an utterance. Admittedly, such speech disfluencies sometimes confuse listeners, but they are not insurmountable obstacles to listening. If they were, VOA's staff would experience just as much difficulty understanding group home members' speech as anyone else does.

VOA's staff understands what the residents are saying not because they have taken special courses in speech disfluencies. They understand what the residents are saying because they have grown accustomed to each resident's pattern of speaking. Through continued exposure, VOA's staff has learned how to interpret group home members' discourse. When DCWs speak for group home
members, they are making at least two assumptions about the interaction. First, the group home member will not be comprehensible to the interested party. Second, the DCW will be. By speaking for group home members, DCWs mark themselves as bi-dialectical; they can communicate with both groups. In doing so, DCWs reinforce the perceived gap between the group home member and the other party.

Speech fluency, however, is not the only factor that determines one's subject position in an interaction. Credibility also plays an important role. At Esplanade, VOA's staff grants group home members only a minimal amount of credibility. For instance, when Nigel comes home and announces that he has the next day off from work, one of the DCWs on duty calls his boss to double-check. More often than not, the DCW finds, after checking with Nigel's employer, that Nigel is correct. However, Nigel sometimes experiences difficulty understanding time. On a few occasions, the DCW learns that Nigel does have a day off in the future but not on the day he specified. Regardless, the DCW, by double-checking Nigel's schedule, is assuming responsibility for Nigel. Managing one's schedule is one way to demonstrate self-reliance. By calling Nigel's employer, the DCW is protecting Nigel from possible job loss, but the DCW is also denying Nigel a degree of control over his future.
Additionally, DCWs check with one another about group home members' assertions. DCWs rarely dismiss a resident's assertions outright; instead, they treat these assertions as possible truths in need of substantiation. Kyle, for example, came into the kitchen and announced that he had finished cleaning the bathroom. Before granting him permission to go outside, Marissa double-checked his work. Although Kyle is not known to slight his housework and lie about it, he might. In Marissa's mind, Kyle is operating under a presumption of incompetence. Every time Marissa double-checks Kyle's work, she reinforces his status as potentially unreliable.

Privileged tellers not only assume the right to speak for and judge the speech of others, they also exert a great deal of control over the conversations in which they participate. As I have noted previously, DCWs will routinely interrupt group home members but respond in a less than positive manner when interrupted by a group home member. Typically, DCWs ignore group home members' interruptions; they continue their conversations as if the interruption had not occurred.

In the following excerpt, Nigel interrupts a conversation between Marissa (as privileged teller) and me (as preferred listener).
((To SH))
MS: My brother was in the hospital before the fourth
fourth for sugar.
//He he can’t [UC]

((To MS))
NQ: //-I was in the hospital too.
DE: We already know //that.

((To MS))
SH: //([UC]
MS: Oh: oh.=
=He was real little.
He oh big as Lee Underwood but he had a++ sugar problem.
But he eat too much sweets,
too much grease.

((To FR))
NQ: I was in the hospital.
Fred?
For awhile.
This
this month.
Wasn’t //I?

((Singing))
DE: Hey bu bu bu bo rain.=

((To SH))
MS: =And he had a little thing where you take++ your sugar count?
He had to do it three times a day.
SH: Did he actually have to draw blood?
MS: Mhm.
Well,
the little-
it’s not like a real needle.
It’s just a little- I don’t know what you++ call it but it’s a little needle.
It’s about- not even quite as big as a++ thumb tack.

Nigel tried to enter the conversation and Don burst into song. Regardless, Marissa, Fred, and I ignored them both. We exerted control over the conversation by not acknowledging what we temporarily considered irrelevant contributions.
In this telling, Marissa assumed the role of privileged teller and assigned the role of preferred listener to me. Functioning within these roles, we assumed the rights that come with them: the right to concentrate on each other and the right to ignore those around us. Nigel tried unsuccessfully, to reorient our focus. He did so by assuming the role of narrator, but, unable to successfully position Marissa, Fred, or me in the role of narratee, he abandoned his efforts.

**ENFORCED TELLERS AND LISTENERS**

As privileged teller, one makes demands of others. For example, one can demand that others in the group pay attention when one is speaking, accept one's interpretations of events, and act in a way that reproduces specific patterns of interaction. As privileged teller, one can also demand that another temporarily assume a role of enforced teller.

In the following excerpt, Jesse asks Nigel to tell me about Nigel’s most recent experience with alcohol consumption.

101793; based on tape 26.2; Esplanade; in living room
NQ, Nigel Quentin; JS, Jesse; SH, Sharon; LB, Lee Boothe; MS, Marissa; FR, Fred

((To NQ))
JS: Let’s start over again.

Nigel’s earlier attempt to tell the story displeased Jesse. He stopped Nigel mid-telling and had him start over again.
NQ: I went out
with the cafe
went out to dinner and I got stoned,
totally stoned.
SH: What do you mean //by stoned?
LB: //He didn’t get stoned.

Although I asked Nigel for a clarification, Lee
Boothe, a DCW, answered for him.

NQ: Drunk.
((SH laughs))
NQ: [UC] drunk.
Drunk as a ox.
SH: What were you drinking?
NQ: A margarita.
LB: What’s the //name called?
JS: //No.
LB: No.
It’s not a margarita.
JS: An attit::ude=
NQ: =adjustment.

Lee Boothe found Nigel’s mistake important enough to
interrupt his telling. Jesse agreed. Before letting Nigel
proceed, both men prompted him for the correct name of the
drink.

MS: Mmm.
Those are [UC]
SH: M::an.
NQ: Man.=
=You should have seen me the next day.
((To SH))
LB: We had a bad day //[UC]
((Chuckling))
((To NQ))
JS: //She is seeing you the++
next day.
((SH laughs))
((Chuckling))
MS: It is the next day.
LB: He got s::o drunk.
[UC]
NQ: I went home and slept it off.
Nigel managed to recount the story for me but not to Jesse’s satisfaction. In the next excerpt, Jesse resumed his role as privileged teller. In doing so, he positioned Nigel as enforced listener. Jesse told the story that Nigel failed to tell. With good humor, Nigel listened to Jesse tell me a story about Nigel’s inability to hold down his liquor.

((To JS))
FR: How many did he have?
One?
JS: ONE!
LB: He had that one but he had a few others too.
JS: No.=
=He was sippin on my banana.
He liked it.
He he he drinks this much of the attitude,
SH: Uh huh.
JS: He’s got a medium,
and there’s about this much left,
and he drinks it
and I mean he,
Nigel, he just drinks fast.
SH: Right.
JS: And he’s like
m::an.
((SH laughs))
LB: [UC]
JS: And he said
and I said well,
you want to taste mine?
Mine’s a little bit
you know
not as strong.
And he says,
here.
He says,
you have this one.
See what it does to you.
((NQ laughs))
JS: And so I let him taste my banana and he says,

oh I like this.
You know cause he likes bananas.
And uh then I mean
he just
I mean he was just so snookered. And then and he would say, well. = I think I'd better go to the bathroom because I think I'm gonna puke. 

((SH laughs))

JS: //And he //and he went to the bathroom and++

he got sick.

FR: //[/UC]

LB: //He did it.

SH: O::oh!

JS: He came back and then he laid down on the++ floor,

and went back to the bathroom and got even++

more sick.

((NQ laughs))

JS: And then he finally--

but he was--

they all were.

They were all drunk.

As privileged teller, Jesse exerted one of his rights: the right to ask someone else to narrate. Jesse asked Nigel assume the role of self-reliant narrator. Jesse then positioned me as the narratee and the staff in narrative support roles. Nigel readily took on the role but did not perform it to Jesse's satisfaction.

Jesse made the determination that Nigel was performing his story incompetently and, rather than listen to a story that Jesse perceived to be factually incorrect, he reassumed control of the telling and, once again, assigned roles. He positioned Nigel and me as narratees and the rest of the staff as narrative support, roles with which we are all comfortable and familiar.

By taking control of the telling, Jesse was, in a sense, demonstrating to Nigel how the story should be told. Jesse was demonstrating his performance competence.
Perhaps coincidentally, the story that Jesse told is about performance incompetence. We laughed at Nigel’s inability to hold down his alcohol. Jesse made Nigel’s performance incompetence laughable and, in doing so, made Nigel an object for our mutual amusement.

**SUMMARY**

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how telling generates and reproduces Esplanade’s culture. I have also identified recurring subject positions (privileged teller, enforced teller, simultaneous tellers, preferred listener, enforced listener) within this community. As I stated earlier, one’s subject position is not a trait or an aspect of one’s personality. It is a position negotiated in interaction, a role that one assumes. When, however, one regularly assumes that position in interaction, one becomes identified by the position.

At Esplanade, DCWs often assume the subject positions of privileged tellers and preferred listener, a privileged position within this community. Group home members often assume the subject positions of enforced tellers and enforced listeners, subordinate positions within the group home. Group home members, having been presented few opportunities to develop self-reliant narrative or facilitative listening skills, when positioned as narratees or self-reliant narrators, fail to perform these roles in manner deemed competent by the staff. This pattern of
positioning, compounded by telling styles that foster competition among group home members, reinscribes the status differentials on a micro-cultural level (between DCWs and group home members) and on a macro-cultural level (between persons without mental retardation and persons with mental retardation).
CHAPTER SIX

LOCALIZED TELLINGS

In this chapter, I review Fiske's (1993) discussion of localizing power. I then examine a style of telling used by group home members to create "locales," temporary sites of personal comfort and pleasure within the constraints of the group home.

FISKE AND LOCALIZED POWER

In Power Plays, Power Works, Fiske differentiated "imperializing" from "localizing" power. The power-bloc, those who readily benefit from the social order, exert imperializing power; the people, on the other hand, localizing power. According to Fiske, localizing power is not employed to "dominate other social formations, not concerned with constantly expanding its terrain but interested in strengthening its control over the immediate conditions of everyday life" (Fiske 1993, 12). Unable to enact any substantive changes in the social order, the people use their localized power in their attempts to create and maintain tolerable spheres of existence. Fiske called these spheres "locales."

A locale differs from a station. "Constructing a locale involves confronting, resisting or evading imperialization" (Fiske 1993, 12). A gaggle of teenagers in a back pew of a Methodist church, snickering, flirting, and passing notes, is an example of a locale. Although
within a station (the church), the teenagers have created through their actions a space of their own, albeit temporary. Stations, however, are remarkably resilient. The shush and meaningful glare of unsympathetic parishioners is imperialization reasserting its control not only over the space but also over its occupants' consciousness.

Fiske derived his definitions of station, locale, imperializing power, and localized power from Foucault, Bakhtin, and de Certeau. After reviewing each scholar's conceptualization of power and subjection, Fiske articulated his position in relation to theirs. Although each has greatly influenced Fiske's understanding, he relied heavily on Foucault's work.

According to Foucault, power and resistance occupy the same sphere. Summarizing Foucault, Fiske wrote:

For [Foucault], resistance operates in the same sphere as power, and, indeed, is not just a reaction to power but is a necessary condition for it: without resistance there could be no power, for there would be nothing for it to push against. Resistance is itself a form of power; what distinguishes one form from the other is not an essential difference between them, but a difference in their relationship to the social order" (Fiske 1993, 77, 78).

For Fiske, localized power refers to any act by the people motivated by their "desire to control their immediate conditions" (Fiske 1993, 78). He explained, "Resisting power . . . is defensive and localist. Its terrain is no more extensive than that which it deems necessary for a
relatively secure, satisfying and pleasurable existence" (Fiske 1993, 78). The people exert localized power not only to attack the power-bloc or to appropriate covertly the powerbloc’s resources for their own use but also to use whatever means and materials that are available to them to create within the powerbloc’s territory spheres of relative comfort, safety, and pleasure.

**MOVEMENT AS AN ACT OF LOCALIZED POWER**

As described by Fiske, one’s position in the social order determines what resources one can readily access. Social order and social positioning, however, are culture-specific. One’s social position in one community need not necessarily correspond with one’s social position in another community. Moreover, the resources easily accessed in one community might be inaccessible in another. Movement away from or outside of systems where one is categorized as one of the people functions as an act of localized power, although movement itself is not.

To be classified as an act of localized power, the movement needs to have been initiated and carried out by the beneficiaries and needs to be viewed by the recipients as beneficial. Those who moved to North America to escape religious persecution engaged in acts of localized power. They employed the resources available to them to create what they hoped would be a better life. Those who moved to North America in slave ships, however, were victims of
those who engaged in acts of imperialized power. Additionally, those same slave traders might not always have been members of the power-bloc. Communities change; individual positionings within communities change; people change communities. Localized power names an act within a system. It marks a social, cultural, historical, material moment, not a fixed attribute of a particular person, a particular group, or a particular act.

THE IMPERIALISM OF CONSTRAINT

Movement as an act of localized power is a resource not always available to all who might employ it. The power-bloc, in order to maintain and perpetuate its power base and social order, uses imperialism to try to control how individuals move physically and hierarchically within its domain of control. Power-blocs have the greatest control over individuals movement within stations, but they still have a wide sphere of influence outside such stations.

Power-blocs use a number of different methods to limit individual mobility: confinement, social taboos, economic impoverishment, tradition. Another method they use is to semiotically link one’s identity with a station. For example, the nun’s habit signifies not only her vocation but also her place of employment. Her uniform serves as a signifier of the Catholic Church. When in uniform, she represents the Church, its ideology, its social order, its
power base. To those who understand the significance of the nun's habit, the nun represents the Church even when she's physically outside its walls. Semiotically, as she moves, the Church moves. Through the use of costuming, the nun conflates her identity and her movements with that of the Church and its reach.

Because the nun is in some sense an embodiment of the Church, the Church controls how she acts. Through the use of tradition, indoctrination, and socialization, the Church compels her to move in certain ways (norms of behavior, established meal, bed, prayer, confessional, mass times, etc.). It encourages her to occupy certain spaces (churches, missions, hospitals, etc.) and to avoid others (brothels, casinos). Moreover, others, both members of the Catholic Church and those not associated with it, through their interactions with her, reinforce these patterns of movement. Because of her relationship to the Church, others constrain the nun's movement not only within the church (the station) but also outside it. As a nun, she is unable to join certain communities, even if interested in joining. In certain communities, her identity as nun would preclude her membership. Her relationship to the Church limits her ability to access other communities, other power systems, other social orders, other social ranks, and other identities. Her identity as nun constrains her.
Like the nun in my illustration, the identities of those with mental retardation have been similarly linked throughout history to stations. There are, however, several important differences between my nun and many individuals with mental retardation. First, people with mental retardation do not voluntarily wear uniforms to mark their social identity. When in an institution, they wear what is available for them to wear. In some institutions, they wore uniforms; in others, they wore their own clothes. There exists, however, no single item of clothing, like the habit for the nun, that identifies an individual as someone with mental retardation. Others sometimes use physical characteristics such as the classic physical features of Down’s Syndrome to identify individuals, but less than 15% of the population identified as individuals with mental retardation possess such physical features (Scheerenberger 1987, 222). Instead, Sabsay and Kernan (1983) suggest that people base their assessments of intellectual functioning on interactional cues.

The other major difference between the nun and individuals with mental retardation is the difference between their alignment with a station. Although history contains numerous stories of women involuntary consigned to nunneries, the Church prefers to speak of callings, voluntary decisions by spiritual, giving women to spend their lives doing the Church’s work. As officially
storied, nuns voluntarily give themselves to the Church. People with mental retardation, on the other hand, who lived in North America and Europe in the 18th, 19th, and much of the 20th centuries had little say in their institutionalization. They are involuntarily aligned with such stations.

As Scheerenberger and others have documented, many during this period of time felt that individuals with mental retardation needed to be segregated, constrained, and confined, if not for their own good, then for the good of the community (Scheerenberger 1982; Scheerenberger 1987; Simmons 1982). Scheerenberger also documents how caretakers often housed and treated those with mental retardation no differently than they treated those with mental illness, persons with serious physical disabilities, the impoverished, and people with criminal records. During certain periods, communities viewed such groups as communal excess to be contained and controlled outside the community’s borders. Stories of the village idiot, tolerated and cared for by the community, omit details about the scores of other such "idiots" trundled off by family or community members to woodsheds, institutions, or hospitals outside the community’s purview.

Nearly two and a half centuries of containment has semiotically linked the identities of those with mental retardation to stations of confinement. The
particularities of these stations have changed over the past two and a half centuries, but the semiotic link between mental retardation and confinement remained secure until the early 1980s. Since the 1950s, reformers and scholars in North America and Europe have questioned the need to incarcerate individuals with mental retardation, but they were arguing against the practice of centuries. Throughout the years of unquestioned incarceration and the early years of the reformist debate, those with mental retardation functioned as icons: to be spoken for, theorized about, and debated over but never allowed an active role in their own construction.

ICFs/MR contain historical residues of these philosophies of confinement. Although not as constraining as institutions, ICFs/MR serve a similar function: they house those deemed by their communities unable to house themselves. Additionally, DCWs at ICFs/MR engage in activities not unlike their counterparts at institutions: they document, monitor, and control the residents' lives. Generally, however, group home sponsors allow group home members greater freedom of mobility than institutional overseers allowed their residents both within the space and outside the group home.

Most group home members spend their days in locations other than the group home. For instance, they may spend their days at work or at school. Additionally, group home
sponsors encourage group home members to maintain their contacts with family members and friends. They permit group home members to leave the home for visits. Group home sponsors also plan activities outside the home: trips to local shopping centers, restaurants, and recreational sites.

Group home sponsors encourage these activities because they want to help group home members develop and maintain ties outside the group home. Although designed to facilitate group home members' mobility within the larger community, these activities are almost always carefully planned, orchestrated, and supervised. Enjoined by local, state, and federal regulations, group home sponsors are legally responsible for the safety and well-being of their program participants.

At Esplanade, the two interdicted group home members cannot leave the premises without their legal guardian's permission. As a matter of convenience, their legal guardians have granted VOA's staff the right to approve off-site outings. To protect itself from potential lawsuits, VOA requires that anyone other than one of its staff who wishes to take one of the two interdicted group home members on an off-site outing sign a release form, stating that he or she promises to adequately supervise the group home member. Furthermore, the signatory promises to assume full responsibility for the well-being of the
interdicted group home member while in her or his presence. Consequently, these two group home members are almost always in the presence of another individual.

In the following excerpt, Kyle shares with me his best day at the group home, the day he and his mother went to court to remove his interdictment.

072494; based on tape 65.1; Esplanade; in the main office

SH, Sharon; KL, Kyle

SH: Tell me about your best day.
    In the group home?
KL: My mom remove me off
    the dictment off.
SH: What?
KL: The dictment.
    Dictment.
    Me on it.
    [UC] six weeks
    on.
    The state Louisiana
    put me on.
    I’m out
    fifty dollars off of me.
    Terry?
    Visit Terry.
SH: Yeah.
KL: Tole muh
    my momma.
    Want it off him?
    Go a lawyer.
    In the courts.
    Off.
    ((SH suddenly understands what KL’s been talking about))
SH: O:oh!
    Yes!
    OK.
    I understand now.
KL: But me
    my momma
    did.
SH: Well that’s great.
KL: Off.
SH: And why
    why was that a good thing?
KL: Me go anywhere
To this day, Kyle considers the change in his status (the removal of his interdictment) one of the best things to happen to him in his adult life.

Kyle and many of the other group home members find the confinement often associated with their identity constraining. Kyle greatly appreciated the increased self-control and mobility that accompanied his change in legal status. Additionally, the legal alteration of his status brought not only increased self-control and mobility but also an elevation in status within the group home. For group home members at Esplanade, freedom and ease of mobility function as status-markers: the more readily one can move about within and outside the group home without supervision, the more status within the group. Within the group home’s culture, DCWs, because of their unrestricted mobility, rank higher than non-interdicted group home members. Non-interdictment group home members, however, occupy a higher social position in this mobility hierarchy than interdicted group home members who have little freedom of movement without supervision.
Freedom and ease of movement are pertinent issues to group home members. For group home members, the ability to choose when and how to move is one of the primary appeals for moving out of the group home and into a supervised apartment. The phrase "supervised apartment" is somewhat of a misnomer. Those individuals placed in a supervised apartment are responsible for their own well-being. Residents in supervised apartments receive support as needed from VOA's staff, but support often takes the form of daily or weekly evaluations. A member of VOA's staff will visit the supervised apartment dweller to make determinations about health, financial security, job status, and general satisfaction. If the staff person finds that the supervised apartment dweller needs supplement help, various community social service programs will provide aid. VOA provides support for these apartment dwellers, not supervision. Furthermore, once VOA-BR has placed someone in a supervised apartment, that individual is free to reject VOA's support, with no obligation to interact with VOA. For some, the supervised apartment is the first place they have lived where their movements have not been closely monitored and regulated.

Moving out of the group home and into a supervised apartment is a movement through VOA's program. As structured, VOA places in supervised apartments only those group home members who have mastered the skills that VOA
deems vital to survival in the larger community. Consequently, supervised apartment dwellers bear the mark of VOA’s training. They have internalized VOA’s methods for living. They know how and are able to prepare meals, clean clothes, balance their checkbooks, and make doctor’s appointments in the manner suggested by VOA. Supervised apartment dwellers may soon eliminate these behaviors from their repertoire once they are on their own, but, for some period of their life, they can behave in a VOA-scripted manner. Some group home members, despite years of training, will never master the skills necessary to move into a supervised apartment; consequently, they will spend the bulk of their remaining years monitored and supervised by VOA’s staff.

Expulsion from the group home, transfer to another care provider, and resident-initiated withdrawal, on the other hand, are three ways of moving out of the VOA system. Although VOA reserves the right to expel a participant from its residency program at any time, VOA-BR has never expelled any one from its group homes. Nonetheless, the specter of expulsion looms large in the minds of many group home members. Nigel, for instance, often expresses fears that if he does not improve his behaviors, VOA-BR will ship him out. Additionally, Kyle felt that Bob Wilson with his constant door-slamming and annoying television use deserved
to be expelled. DCWs are careful not to validate these fears, but the fears remain nonetheless.

Rather than expel a participant from its residency program, VOA transfers the participant to another care provider, usually outside the VOA system. For instance, VOA transferred a resident of Esplanade to a nearby psychiatric facility because the resident, despite constant supervision and on-going therapy, continued to threaten his own safety and that of other group home members. Other transfers include transfers to nursing homes, hospitals, and out-of-state ICFs/MR.

The most common movement out of the VOA system is the resident-initiated withdrawal. Jesse, Esplanade’s home supervisor, told me a story about a former resident who, after three weeks, packed his belongings and left. When asked by staff why he was leaving, Jesse told me, the individual replied that the place was too "white." Jesse said that to this day he still does not know if the individual was referring to the predominant color of the walls or the predominant color of the residents and staff.

Jesse’s story and others like it serve an interesting function in the group home. VOA’s staff regularly remind program participants that their stay in the group homes is voluntary. For instance, Fred, the DCW who leads the weekly house meetings, repeats this injunction at the beginning of every house meeting. While I was visiting
Esplanade, the counselor addressed this issue in several group counseling sessions. She addressed this issue as part of her response to Lee's complaints about his treatment in the group home. Lee must have taken their words to heart. After months of complaining about life in the group home, Lee left to live with his mother.

Because Lee still had ties to another community (his family), he was able to leave the group home. For Lee, withdrawing from the program and returning home served as an act of localized power. By relocating, Lee was able to make his lot in a life a little more comfortable. Other group home members did not have that option, however. For some, life in the group home is the best possible living arrangement. Some group home members, whose options are limited, rely entirely on state and federal funds. They might find the group home constraining, but they find it considerably less constraining than other living arrangements, such as state-funded schools, nursing homes, psychiatric wards, or hospitals.

In an interview with Kyle, I asked him why he lived in a group home. He gave a two-part response. He generally liked living in the group home and he found the Hammond State School where he used to live too constraining.

072494; based on tape 64.1; Esplanade; in the main office KL, Kyle; Sh, Sharon

KL: Oh yeah.
I know about group homes.
I love it here.
I do.
I like it here best.
I didn’t become out.
Don’t send his
don’t
bring em
Hamp Tay School.
Look like a
you know a prison is?

SH: Yeah.
KL: Single rooms,
your rooms,
different areas.

SH: Uh huh.
KL: Hamp Tate School.
Like a hospital there.

SH: It was like a prison?
KL: No.
Guards there.
Front the gate.
The guard there.
Me tole im,
look like
a prison.
Tell the main office.
I did tell.
Say,
why the guards there?
You know I mean?
The guard there?

SH: Yeah.
KL: Don’t sneak off.

SH: They were afraid you would escape?

KL: Sneak off, yeah.

SH: Mhm.
KL: I did.
Six times.
Me come back a same way.
No found out.

((SH chuckles))

KL: How me do it?
Go in the woods.
I wait a train pass.

Kyle continued this narrative, explaining how he hopped aboard a slow moving train and made his way into town.

In this telling, Kyle presented himself as a knowledgeable, resourceful individual, capable of
manipulating whatever situation he found himself in to his own benefit. Kyle told me that although he was not entirely unhappy at the institution, he did not have much to occupy his attention. Later in this conversation, Kyle recounted how he volunteered to sit with the "sick babies." They needed attention, he explained, and he wanted something to do.

CREATING SPHERES OF COMFORT AND PRIVACY WITHIN ESPLANADE

Whether or not group home members are content with their living arrangements, they have to find ways to make the confinement tolerable. Because many of the group home members are economically and socially tied to VOA, any act of aggressive resistance on their part directed towards VOA or its staff would severely jeopardize their own well-being. Although many of the group home members are physically and mentally capable of creating such a disruption, I have never heard of such an instance. Instead, group home members act not to disrupt the system but rather to create spheres where they can be themselves by themselves. They seek comfort and privacy. The act of creating such a space in Esplanade is an act of localized power.

In order to engage in such acts, the men must consider how these acts will be interpreted by the DCWs. In addition to their other tasks, DCWs function within the group homes as VOA's representatives and, as such, act on
its behalf. VOA places DCWs in the homes not only to care for the residents but also to implement policy. Occasionally, these two objectives conflict. The DCW must then prioritize the two objectives. Within this system, any choice other than policy implementation is an act of resistance and could lead to job termination. As such, DCWs have a tangible, economic reason to support the system.

The residents of Esplanade understand that VOA pays its DCWs to enforce its policies. Group home members also understand that DCWs are more likely to tolerate a resident-initiated act of localized power if it does not jeopardize the DCW's job security. Group home members cannot, however, expect tolerance and must assume that, unless informed otherwise, DCWs will work to contain and control their acts of localized power.

Nor can a group home member expect tolerance from other residents. The bond between group home members is fragile. They did not chose one another as housemates nor do they prefer one another's company. As stated earlier, group home members tend not to get involved in one another's lives. If they are going to interact with someone, it will be a DCW, a family member, or a friend. Generally, most resident-initiated acts of localized power are ways to escape both the constraints of the home and the influence of their ever-present housemates.
Furthermore, communal acts are riskier than individual acts. For example, Ted and Don sometimes like to play practical jokes on one another and Kyle. When the DCWs are not paying attention, they like to flick the target’s bedroom lights on and off while he is trying to sleep. If, however, their joke offends the target, he is likely to report them to a DCW who will chastise them. These factors significantly affect how group home members create locales within Esplanade. Occasionally, someone will collude with a group home member in the creation of a locale, but, for the most part, the creation of locales by group home members are private acts.

Despite these constraints, however, the residents of Esplanade have many different ways to create locales. One of the most common methods that group home members use is to spend time outside the building and, consequently, outside of staff’s peripheral range. Kyle will get on his bike and ride over to the nearby strip mall. Ted will take his time walking home from work. Until the porch swing broke, Don spent much of his free time sitting by himself, swinging back and forth and recounting, aloud but softly, the day’s events. Nigel likes to take the trash to the curb and pick up the mail. Every Thursday, Harry’s sister comes by the house so the two of them can go horseback riding. When Lee’s shift at McDonald’s is over, he waits for Esplanade’s van outside rather than inside the
restaurant. If he waited inside, he would have more time to interact with his co-workers. Instead, he sits on a curb stop in an empty parking space and spends his time pouring over his television trivia book. As soon as he sees the van pull into the drive, he tucks his book into his hip bag so he will have it after his next shift. Each of the group home members finds some way to get outside Esplanade by themselves and do something that gives them pleasure.

The men are also able to create space of privacy and comfort within Esplanade's walls. The men adhere to a strict "Knock First" policy. Nigel's and Kyle's irritation with Bob Wilson stem from his inability to abide by this rule. Also, unless instructed to by a DCW, group home members rarely spend time in their bedrooms with their roommate. They prefer to take turns using the room. If, upon entering his bedroom, a group home member found that his roommate was already in the room, he would get what he needed and leave.

Once again, these habits may be related to their general lack of involvement with one another. When seen in this context, however, the residents' lack of involvement with one another may be related to their over-riding desire for privacy. For the residents, not interacting with one another might be an act of mutual consideration.
While in these locales, all find ways to entertain themselves. Kyle, for instance, draws amazingly intricate drawings of Exxon refineries, soda machines, or other types of machinery. He uses as his canvas brown papers that he tapes together. When he runs out of room, he simply adds another paper bag to his existing canvas and continues. Some of his drawings, when he unrolls them, cover the entire length and width of his twin bed. When not working on his illustration, Kyle cultivates a flower and vegetable garden in the back yard. He is as proud of his garden as he is of his drawings. Kyle is also fascinated by the crawfish tunnels that dot his vegetable patch. On a tour of vegetable patch Kyle informed me that he tries to plant around these tunnels. He respects the little creatures and likes to trace their paths as they tunnel across the yard.

Detailing the intricacies of the Exxon refinery on paper and pruning his tomato plants are two of Kyle's favorite activities. For Kyle, these activities serve two purposes. They provide him with a source of creative pleasure while in the group home, and they connect him to his life outside the group home. As a child and young adult, Kyle spent his time on his parent's farm or following his father, an electrical engineer, on his many outings. When Kyle talks about himself, he ties himself to these two areas of interest: the electronic and the horticultural.
The other group home members also engage in acts that connect them with their past and their future. Ted keeps up with the local sports teams. He is a huge fan of the LSU Tigers, their good and bad seasons. Lee collects television memorabilia, including television sound tracks. Don keeps logs of facts he finds interesting: birthdays, anniversaries, addresses, phone numbers, or unusual spellings of last names. Every afternoon, Nigel watches his favorite soap and the daily weather report. Although Harry does not engage in obvious, visible creative acts, he greatly values the regularity of his life. He becomes quite agitated when someone breaks his routine.

The DCWs at Esplanade are not unaware of the men’s activities. For example, once, when I asked Marissa where Don was, without even lifting her eyes from her paperwork, she pointed over her shoulder and responded, "On the porch swing." Although she had pointed to the office wall behind her, she knew, without looking, that Don spent his free time on the porch swing. She was also the person who told me about Lee’s waiting ritual. The DCWs at Esplanade are not unaware of the men’s activities. Although they have never told me so directly, the DCWs seem sympathetic to the residents’ desire to escape. I once heard Marissa tell Nigel to go spend some time outside rather than sit just on the couch. By telling Nigel to step outside, she might have been trying to make her job easier. Regardless, by
telling Nigel to spend some time outside, she is encouraging him to create a space for himself outside this particular station's walls.

Before engaging in an act of localized power, a resident must not only consider how his act will be interpreted by the DCWs and his fellow residents but must also find unscheduled moments to perform these acts. To perform such an act, they have to work around VOA's daily and weekly schedule. Nigel, for instance, hates those days that he is assigned to kitchen duty because he cannot easily watch his television programs. If Nigel has not irritated Marissa that day, I have noticed, she will accommodate him by allowing him to turn up the volume on the television so that he can hear it in the kitchen. However, if he has irritated Marissa by talking too much, Nigel has to forego his shows that day.

VOA's schedule determines when the group home member engage in these acts. VOA's adherence to the concept of normalization affects how they engage in these acts. As discussed previously, normalization is a concept of care that suggests that care facilities be designed and structured so that their residents live as "normal" a life as possible. The concept of "normality" is subject to interpretation. Within Esplanade, only VOA staff members or representatives of the relevant regulatory board are qualified to interpret what is and is not normal. For
example, Kyle stores his drawing under his bed and his stash of brown paper bags on his closet floor. Kyle has had confrontations with one of Esplanade's DCWs because she does not see the necessity for him to save either. When she threatens to throw them out, Kyle appeals to Jesse, the group home supervisor. Jesse offers a compromise. He allows Kyle to keep his illustrations but instructs Kyle to throw away his stash of paper bags. You'll get new paper bags, Jesse tells him. Jesse's answer satisfies neither party, but it maintains the power structure in the home. Jesse reasserts his authority over both, validates the DCW's right to interpret the codes of normality, and accommodates Kyle's desires as resident.

Other group home members are also affected by these codes of normality. For example, they may keep collections in the room, but they must arrange the collections in a neat and orderly fashion. Once again, DCWs are the only ones authorized within VOA's structure to determine what is and is not neat and orderly. Additionally, those group home members who watch television for enjoyment must keep the volume at a level determined by staff as suitable.

**STORYTELLING AS AN ACT OF LOCALIZED POWER**

With the exception of Harry, the group home members use storytelling as an act of localized power, as a way to transport themselves to another sphere, a realm outside the group home. The focus, locus, temporality, and focus of
these stories distinguish them from the other stories that
the group home members tell. In each of these tellings,
the group home member tells a story about himself. What
differentiates these stories from other personal narratives
are the absences: they lack reference to anyone associated
with VOA other than the narrator; they lack reference to
the group home itself; they lack reference to present
events.

For instance, Ted’s stories about his adventures at an
LSU-Alabama game are instances of localized tellings. Ted
attends these games with his family, not with group home
members. Moreover, Ted’s telling of the tale sometimes
seems conversationally incongruent. He tells the tale when
he wants to tell it. He does not necessarily wait for a
conversation about sports or for an inquiry about his
weekend activities. Ted might, for example, launch into
the story while Nigel is talking about his soap opera.
Localized tellings mark the tellers as individuals with
lives and interests not necessarily related to the
particular conversation, situation, or living arrangement.

The men do not share these acts of localized telling
with great frequency. By its very nature, storytelling is
a collaborative act. To tell such a story one has to find
a narratee who is willing to listen to a story that does
not involve the narratee. As with many of their tellings,
group home members direct these stories to preferred listeners.

If they are in the right frame of mind, preferred listeners tolerate, encourage, and often enjoy these tellings. In fact, I first learned about some of these stories from DCWs. Jesse, once he discovered my interest in storytelling, told me to ask Kyle about frogs in the bathtub. The narratee’s pleasure, however, is not what motivates these tellings. The narrator of a localized telling is not sharing the story with the narratee because she or he thinks the narratee is necessarily interested in the story. The narrator of the localized telling tells the story because the narrator wants to hear himself or herself tell it. They derive personal pleasure from such tellings. The authorization for such tellings comes not from the narratee, situation, or topic but from the narrator himself. In this interaction, the narratee’s presence is almost, but not completely, superfluous. The presence of the narratee as audience heightens the narrator’s awareness.

Although I do not include Kyle’s story in the main body of this study, I feel it deserves a footnote. One evening Kyle and his cousin caught nets and nets full of frogs. They were so pleased with their catch that they brought them home and dumped them in the bathtub. Kyle said they stayed in the bathroom for a couple of days, just croaking, jumping, and trying to find their way back to the bayou. It took her a couple of days, but his mother finally got sick of them taking up space in her bathroom. She ordered the boys to haul them out of her house. They happily complied. When I asked Kyle’s mother about the story. She said, "Oh yeah. And not only were they loud. They were kinda mean."
of her or his role and her or his obligations as teller. Together, they create a performance frame. In extreme cases, the only two differences between a localized telling and an intrapersonal monologue are the physical presence of the narratee and the interactional movement into a performance frame.

To tell such a story is an act of egocentrism on narrator’s part. However, for group home members, egocentrism is an act of localized power. The culture of the group home fosters group identity. Group home members live together, eat together, and often work together. For the most part, the rules that apply to one, apply to all. To call attention to one’s individuality within this culture is an act of localized power. For the residents of Esplanade, localized storytelling may function as escapism or entertainment. It also functions to reify themselves as someone who is more than just a group home member.

In the next excerpt, Don, exasperated by Nigel, turns to me and tells me about his plans for the future. He tells me of his escape from the home, from Nigel, and all the noise. In this story, he takes us to an event that has not yet happened.

111093; based on tape 01.1; Magnolia; on the van DE, Don Easton; SH, Sharon; TD, Ted

DE: I wish I wish that,
awright let’s start tomorrow,
I’m gonna sta I gonna start packin++
tomorrow anyway.
I’m leavin,
I'm leavin from all.
From all the noise.

SH: Tomorrow?
DE: Not in the mornin,
at noon,
tomorrow night.

((SH raises pitch))
SH: O::oh.
For Illinois?
DE: No.
//Georgia.
SH: //For Georgia.

((DE mouths the word "Georgia"))
SH: How long are you gonna be gone?
Just the weekend?
DE: Oh yeah.
Friday, Saturday, Sunday,
Monday.
I'm gonna be longer,
Tuesday,
come back Wednesday.
SH: That's great.

((NQ speaks from outside the van))
SH: You're gonna go stay with you brother,
is that right?
DE: Oh yeah.
My brother's and my sister-in-law's house.

((TD speaks from outside the van))
TD: I be quiet [UC]
DE: They live in they live in at Old Towne Way.

Don continued this telling, chronicling the events in which he hoped to participate and the people with whom he hoped to meet.

When I searched through the tapes for moments of localized tellings, I found that I was more likely to find a few examples of localized tellings if I scanned those sections of tape where a group home member and I were physically outside the group home. Although I was able to find examples of localized tellings that had occurred within the group home or embedded in group conversations, I found that they occurred with less frequency, were often
abbreviated tellings, and were often motivated by boredom or irritation. For instance, Don told me his story about his plans to visit his family in part because he was tired of listening to Nigel. Don used the telling as a form of escapism.

The localized tellings that occurred outside the home or away from other group home members, however, tended to be longer and more detailed. In these situations, group home members enjoyed telling these stories. Also, because the group home members did not have to compete for my attention, they could lose themselves in the details of the story.

My relationship with each group home member affected these tellings. Ted, for example, felt slightly uncomfortable around me. We did not share much in common. He wanted to talk sports with me, but, since I possess only a limited knowledge about sporting events, our conversation dwindled after a period. I tried to pay closer attention to the outcomes of various local games, but I never proved to be a compatible conversation partner. On the other hand, my lack of knowledge about electronics never seemed to bother Kyle. As a matter of fact, he took it upon himself to explain to me how the neighborhood was wired. Their expectations for me affected our interactions. Ted wanted to share football stories with me; Kyle wanted to tell me about electronics and gardening. These differences
influenced the length and depth of the stories shared with me.

I cannot, however, credit all difference in storytelling style to relational differences. Regardless of my relationship with the teller, each man possessed his own style of telling. Ted liked to share stories. Kyle enjoyed spinning out long, involved tales. Lee preferred to be interviewed. Nigel wanted someone with whom to commiserate. Regardless of the subject matter, Don liked to chart the chronology of events. Bob Wilson liked to turn his stories into questions. For instance, he would tell a story about himself, only to turn and ask me if I had had a similar experience. These differences in styles reflected each group home member's unique personality and insights. Because of these differences, I found my conversations with the group home members exciting and sometimes challenging.

**KYLE**

Kyle is an engaging story teller, but, because of certain speech disfluencies that he exhibits, I had to concentrate on what he was saying at all times. I asked few questions, preferring not to stop the telling. Instead, I would try to discern what I had missed from the conversational context. This pattern of listening meant that at times I did not understand what he was talking
about. Only when I transcribed my tapes did I fully appreciate his skill as a storyteller.

In the following excerpt, Kyle depicts himself as a bee charmer. Earlier in the conversation, I had asked him about his job at Taco Bell. Through a series of narrative maneuvers, Kyle led me from the present to the past. He shared with me his trick for charming bees out of their hives: coat your body in honey.

101793; based on tape 60.1; Esplanade; in Kyle’s bedroom
KL, Kyle; SH, Sharon

KL: It in you.
The people tell me,
my mama tell me,
it in you.
SH: It’s just in you.
KL: It shows.
SH: Mhm.
KL: Bee don’t know it.
I could go to my cousins house now,
i walk to m o tree house,
no sting me.
You know the honey sticks out?
SH: Uh huh.
KL: Just put it down into the,
box,
bees,
clover,
SH: Uh huh.
KL: Shake em off.
I smoke em.
Yeah.
Pull up,
over sh,
bee come out of the nest.
No sting me.
Pour honey,
all my arm.
Me do,
me pull my arm,
them my watch off,
in my pocket.
SH: Uh huh.
KL: Put honey on my arm,
the bee crawl around that hive. All ober it. Ober my whole body. Me did, me rob the hive, me do, honey myself. You know what I mean? Dere’s honey, ober me. We [UC] it, ober my belly. The bee see it, stuck. Ober me. Ober melly.

((KL clears his throat))

SH: And that didn’t scare you?
KL: No. You rob a nest, me rob em, move box up.

SH: Mhm.
KL: No sting me. They all me. The queen bee in her nest,

SH: Uh huh.
KL: Down below, her knows, no hurt her, no sting me. I walk a whole line of [UC] bees surround me. School around my head. Fly around me. I stay at home toward to nights, outside. You know why? Lay honey on me. Me lay down on the flat of grom, grass, floor, easy. My back on the box. Me stay all night. The, more and more, nhoney on me.

SH: Mhm.
KL: [UC] the hive. More and more me and me hungrier than the++

devil.
After recounting his experience as a bee charmer, Kyle also told me about his ability to protect children, to heal birds, and to stop industrial boilers from over-heating.
Kyle likes to tell epic tales of his and his father’s adventures. As a child, he accompanied his father on several job-related outings. When telling, Kyle sometimes conflates his role in the story event with his father’s. For example, the central character at the beginning of telling might be his father, but as Kyle tells the story, he switches pronouns. He, not his father, becomes the central character, the active hero.

At first, when listening to these stories, I assumed that Kyle was, in his telling, performing his father as the main character in the story. I thought that my problem with the pronoun switching was my problem understanding when Kyle switched from narrator speaking as narrator to Kyle as narrator speaking as main character. I thought that he was still talking about his father. I attributed my confusion as listener to one of two possibilities. I believed that either Kyle had failed to provide a narrative transition or that I had just missed it.

When I transcribed the tapes, however, I came to realize that I had not missed the narrative transition. Instead, Kyle changes such stories mid-telling. In these tellings, Kyle becomes his father. Kyle appropriates his father’s stories as his own.

To this day, I do not know how many of Kyle’s stories are based in fact and how many are imaginative creations. I had come to assume that Kyle’s stories were all
imaginative creations. I did not think less of Kyle for spinning such tales. Instead, I appreciated his creative talents. Had I not met Kyle's mother, I might have continued to believe that Kyle had not actually participated in any of these story events. I did meet Kyle's mother though, and she collaborated many of Kyle's tales, including the bee-charming story. At this point, I gave up trying to determine which stories were based in fact and which were imaginative creations.

Kyle is a controlling storyteller. He enjoys the act of telling and will continue as long as he has an audience. To prolong his pleasure in telling, Kyle leads his audience from one event to another. He provides few narrative transitions. Sometimes, he will jump in the middle of an utterance from one story to another. As a narratee, I assume that he is talking about one event, only to realize a few moments later that he has moved onto another subject.

Kyle is also not interested in swapping stories. He also assumes that he has the narratee's full attention. For instance, I cannot remember a time when Kyle asked me if I wanted to hear a particular story. I guess he just assumed that since I had said that I was interested in his life that I was interested in all his stories. Kyle, of course, was right, but he never double-checked his assumption.
Kyle as narrator not only assumes that his narratee is willing to follow his narrative but is also willing to follow him as he relocates. For example, most of Kyle’s tellings began in his bedroom and ended on the front porch. Just as I cannot remember a time when Kyle asked me if I wanted him to share a particular story, I can remember only one time when Kyle asked me if I wanted to relocate. Most times, Kyle would simply, in the middle of telling, start moving. If we were in his bedroom, he would, while still talking, head for the bedroom door. I would hurriedly gather my tape recorder and follow. He would lead me out the front door, around the side of the house, and into the back yard. Once outside, I would hand him the tape recorder and follow him wherever he led me.

Kyle would lead me through his garden and through the business complex next door. He would talk and we would walk until I told him that it was time for me to go. At this point, Kyle would, still talking, lead me back to the front door. Once we had reached the front door, he would ask me when I planned to return, say his goodbyes, and disappear into his room.

Sometimes after he disappeared into his bedroom, I would feel momentarily adrift, as though I were unsure how I had arrived at this point and what I was supposed to do now. It felt to me as though Kyle had literally taken me on a journey.
Together, Kyle and I created locales. Kyle, literally and imaginatively, took me outside the group home. As narrator, Kyle told me about events that were important to him and, while telling, physically took me to places that were important to him. I, as narratee, followed him, accommodating my strategies of listening and gathering data to suit his needs. I provided Kyle with a narratee for his localized telling; he provided me with a tour of his life that exceeded the boundaries of the group home and sometimes of rationality.

LEE UNDERWOOD

After I had known Lee for a while, I overheard him mention a woman’s name. I assumed that she was his family member or a friend. I realized, however, that this woman was one of a group, a group of imaginary friends. After a little probing, I discovered that Lee’s imaginary friends, Stella, Mona, and Norma, had much in common with Lee with one exception: they lived the life he wished that he lived.

In the following excerpt, I probe Lee about these women: their likes, dislikes, and interesting deaths.

SH, Sharon; LU, Lee Underwood

SH: I'm interested-- you know what I'm++ interested in?
LU: No. =
   =//What?
SH: //Let me see.
   Your imaginary friend.
You were telling me about that the other day.

LU: I have more than one.
SH: You have more than one?
LU: Yeah.
SH: Let me see if I can-- what was her name?
LU: Mona Felton.
SH: That's right.
LU: Mona.
SH: But she died.
LU: //And she //turned into a skeleton.
SH: //Cause you killed her.

((SH chuckles))
SH: Cause you killed //her.
LU: //N--

Mhm.
She fell off a Batman ride.
SH: Uh huh.
LU: Oh that Batman ride was some good.
    I want to go back on it.
SH: You went to the one in Houston, right?

***GAP***

LU: My more imaginary friends are
    let's see
    uh
    Stella.
SH: Stella.
    What does Stella look like?
LU: She's on the go.

((SH chuckles))
    No tellin what she might do.
    She's dressed to kill.
SH: Uh huh.
    You like stylish people, don't you?
LU: She's rich.
    She loves all um all the rich things.
    All the rich things in life.
SH: Uh huh.
    She's a jet-setter then.

***GAP***

SH: What is
    what is
    uh what is something that Stella would++
    usually do?
LU: She likes breakfast in bed.
SH: Uh huh.
LU: She likes to wake up at eleven o'clock in++
    the morning.

((SH chuckles))
SH: Yeah.
LU: A quiche
You know what a quiche is?

SH: Uh uh.
LU: It's like a egg pie.
SH: Oh.=
   =Right.=
   =Right.
   With cheese.
LU: Mhm.
SH: Right.
LU: Quiche Lorraine.
LU: Yeah.
That's the only thing she will eat for++
breakfast.

SH: Uh huh.
LU: OK.
   She eats breakfast at eleven.
   Put it down.
SH: Oh OK.
   You want me to take notes?
LU: Yeah.
SH: OK.
LU: Eats breakfast at eleven.
SH: OK.
LU: She likes Quiche Lorraine,
SH: Mhm.
LU: Swiss mocha coffee,
SH: Yeah.
LU: and orange juice.
SH: Who serves her this?
   Does she have a boyfriend
   or does she have a maid
   that serves her //breakfast in bed.
LU: //She has a maid.
SH: That's right.
LU: And a gardener.
   Her maid is black.
SH: Mhm.
   //What's her maid's name?
LU: //Her--
SH: Do you know?
LU: No.
   She didn't tole me.
SH: OK.

***GAP***

LU: She hates the color white.
   It's n-- it's not a color, she said.
   She thinks uh gray makes her old.
   She don't like the color gray.
   She don't like uh let me think.
SH: I bet she looks good in red.
   Does she?
LU: She likes black.
***GAP***

SH: What else do you know about her?
LU: She was Mona’s friend.
She knows all about Mona.
[UC]
And you better write it on the next page.

((SH flips page in field book))

SH: This is about Mona, right?
LU: Yeah.=
=Mona.
Mhm.
Uh.
Um.
Mona hates Halloween.
And Saint Pattie’s day because you have to++

***GAP***

LU: And she loves um gourmet too.
SH: Has she ever been to Neiman Marcus?
LU: No I don’t think so.
Buy uh you know that one you nes put down?
SH: Stella?
LU: Stella.
She’s been to.
SH: Mhm.
LU: You want to know how old Stella is or?
SH: Mhm.
LU: Thirty-two.
Thirty-two.
SH: How old’s Mona?
Or how old was she when she died.
LU: Well see.
She was two different ages, you see because she died
SH: Uh huh.
LU: Thirty.
And thirty-one.
Now
thirty-two.
SH: She’s died each year?
LU: No, she can’t die--
See.
She can r::ise up
through the dead.
So she’s thirty-two.
SH: So she died
when did she die?
This year?
LU: Yeah.
SH: And then she rose from the dead.
LU: Yeah.
SH: Now did she die the year before that and rise from the dead?
LU: Mhm.
SH: And the year before that?
LU: Yeah.
SH: But she'd never died before she turned thirty?
LU: That's right.
SH: OK.
LU: And Stella never die—never dies.
SH: How did Mona die the first time?
LU: OK.
Um she died with pneumonia. But her pneumonia cured so She was alive and kickin.
SH: OK.
At thirty-one?
LU: No.
=At thirty, honey.
SH: At—yeah.
At thirty she died of pneumonia. What did she die of at thirty-one?
LU: Let me see now. A car hit her in the uh ass.
((SH laughs))
LU: Boom!
And you know what she um and you know what she died of at thirty-two? On the Batman Ride. When they were rode upside down. Now she's really thirty-three now. Who is the youngest?
SH: Stella.
LU: Stella?
Mhm.
SH: Not by much though. A year.
LU: I tell you, huh. My little life's excitin.
((SH laughs))
SH: Well dyin every year's one way to do it,++
LU: Yeah.
After talking about his imaginary friends, Lee and I talked about his interests, which were remarkable similar to his imaginary friends' interests.

Later in our interview, I asked Lee why he did not have any male imaginary friends. If he knew the answer to my question, he did not share it with me. Furthermore, my question did not seem to interest him. He was more interested in my comment about the parallels between their lives and his. He told me that was why he liked them. The similarities between Lee and his imaginary friends were so numerous that sometimes, when listening, I forgot whether we were talking about him or his friends. My final comment in this excerpt is an example of this conflation. He had been talking about Mona's multiple deaths. I, however, slipped referents and started talking about him, not her. Lee did not mind. It was more important for him to take me on a tour of this imaginary space that it was for him to correct my conflations.

When Kyle engaged in localized telling, he liked to talk about his past. When Lee engaged in localized telling, he like to talk about his imaginary present, and he liked a particular structure of talk. Lee liked to be interviewed. I never asked why he liked that particular style. I assumed it was because he enjoyed reading and watching celebrity interviews. Regardless, Lee liked it when I asked him questions about his life.
As narrator, Lee did not like to tell long, extended stories. He preferred the interview format and would often begin a conversation with me by asking me what subjects I wanted him to address. When I first started spending time with Lee, I did not feel comfortable choosing a topic. I would turn the question back on him and ask him what subjects he wanted to address. Often, he would reply, "I don’t know. Whatever you want to talk about." Finally, I would come up with a topic. He would agree but then ask me what I wanted to know about the subject. He was, in a sense, forcing me to ask him a specific question. After a series of similar encounters, I learned to pick a topic before meeting with him. I also learned to present it in the form of a question or a probe. By doing this, I eliminated the negotiation stage in our conversations.

Sometimes, however, he would not like my choice of topic and would suggest, instead, that I ask him about another topic. Once again, he would not start telling stories without my prompt. Lee also encouraged me to continue asking him questions throughout our conversation. For instance, if I became caught up in his narrative, he would stop and ask me if I wanted to hear the rest. When I first encountered this habit of his, I thought that I had somehow mistakenly communicated through my nonverbals a lack of interest. I later came to believe that I was, in fact, communicating interest nonverbally. What he wanted,
I came to believe, was for me to communicate my interest verbally and in the form of a question.

After I had come to this realization, I started asking questions where I would normally have provided facilitative feedback. When I talked to Kyle, I was afraid that my interruptions would disrupt his telling. With Lee, on the other hand, I came to believe that my questions fed his telling. I would ask for confirmation about names, dates, facts, attributes, motives, or whatever I could think of that was related to his topic and that I could phrase in the form of a question or a probe.

Although, as Goodwin (1986) noted, all narratees function as co-creators of tellings, I, through my repeated questioning, assumed more narrative responsibility as Lee’s narratee than I did for any other group home member. I shaped the direction of Lee’s tellings. If I laughed at one of his jokes, he would tell another. If one of his comments shocked me, he would try to see if he could shock me again. He would monitor my responses and adjust his performance to see how I would respond.

Not only did Lee monitor my responses, he also seemed to hold me accountable for my questions and probes. If I asked him a question that he was not interested in discussing, he would tell me. He might say, for instance, "Oh, I don’t want to answer that question. Why don’t you ask me about something else?" Having been granted the
authority as a narratee to direct the conversation, I did not always abide by Lee's request to change the subject. Sometimes I pursued the issue but always in the form of a question. "So why don't you want to talk about that?" I might ask. He might, at this point, start telling me why he did not want to talk the subject. He might also just tell me that he did not know and instruct me to ask him about another subject.

I perceived such interactions as conflicts and, being unsure about how to handle conflicts as an ethnographer, I often conceded and choose another topic. Once or twice though, I continued my line of questioning. I never felt comfortable in this role (as inquisitor), but Lee did not seem to take it personally. I realized after a while that he did not resent my forcefulness. It was if he considered that a part of my role as interviewer was to ask him difficult questions.

I also realized later that these conflicts usually occurred when we were talking about the other group home members. I, for instance, would ask him how he felt about Nigel. He would tell me that he did not want to talk about Nigel. I would then ask him why. He would ask me if I wanted him to say it. Not knowing what he was going to say, I might say, "Sure. Say it." He would then look at me as though I had forced him to say what he was going to say and tell me that he did not like Nigel because Nigel
was "retarded." Lee had been instructed by the DCWs not to use the term "retarded." As he presented it, I was, by continuing this line of questioning, forcing him to say the forbidden word. The implication, then, was that if someone chastised him for uttering the forbidden word that I, as co-creator of this telling, was also guilty.

The localized tellings that Lee and I created involved the forbidden, the inaccessible, and the exotic. I believe that Lee wanted me to work to understand him. Just as he wanted to talk about the forbidden, the inaccessible, and the exotic, I think he also wanted to embody those qualities. As a group home member, Lee functioned as a known quantity. To gain entrance into the home, he had been tested, evaluated, and examined. VOA administrators had, in a sense, documented and regulated his life. As a group home member, he did nearly the same thing every day and every week. Through localized tellings, Lee could present himself as someone other than as an individual whose life was documented in a master book. The interview format that Lee and I adopted facilitated his performance of a man of mystery, of forbidden interests and exotic tastes. The interview format also, in some sense, shielded him from potential repercussion. I, as interviewer, had "forced" him to talk about the forbidden. I had walked down that mysterious, narrative path with him and was, by association, just as liable for his infractions.
DON

If Kyle and Lee liked to visit places that may or may not have been fictive landscapes, Don like to document his lived past. In some ways, Don functioned as the group home's historian. Unlike Nigel who possessed only a vague sense of time, Don possessed an acute sense of history. Some might consider Don a savant. I am not comfortable enough with the term to readily agree, but I will testify to his fine grasp of chronological details.

In the following excerpt, Marissa and Don are discussing upcoming events. In the conversation, I mention the date of my birthday. Don uses this information to launch into a story of his recent history.

110893; based on tape 04.1; Esplanade; on the van MS, Marissa; DE, Don Easton; SH, Sharon

((To DE))

MS: Jesse was sayin that y'all was going to++
New Orleans.

I thought y'all was goin this weekend, Don.

DE: Uh.

((To SH))

MS: But then they got this circus.
I got to look and see what day the circus is.

DE: What day the circus?=

MS: =[UC] the circus is Thursday.

DE: The twelfth.
MS: The twelfth?
SH: Right.
That's my birthday.

MS: Is //it?
DE: //It is?
SH: I’ll be twenty-nine.
MS: A:aww.=
DE: =Praise the Lord.

((MS laughs))

You're gettin up there, huh?

MS: Joy.
DE: You gettin you gettin mighty young, huh?

((SH laughs))

SH: Mighty young.

MS: Well mighty young.

Oh joy.

Let's see uh=

DE: =N next month=

MS: Did y'all say y'all were goin to the circus?

Cause Pam said if //[UC] tickets [UC]

DE: //Next month next month++

next month I'll be forty-four.

SH: //Mighty young.

DE: //De-- on Friday, December the 17th.

MS: Mighty young.

((MS laughs))

DE: Gettin up there, huh?

MS: Well.

DE: See.

I'm gonna celebrate three big ones.

MS: Well when I get that age Don I hope I be++

walkin around and stuff like you do.

DE: I know I know Marissa's she have her++

birthday, huh?

MS: My birthday in May.

DE: In May?

MS: Mhm.

DE: May what?

MS: Third.

DE: May third.

MS: My daughter is in November the third.

DE: She born on May third, nineteen forty-three.

MS: You know I not forty-three.

Listen to me agreein with you Don.

((SH chuckles))

DE: I guess again.

MS: Fifty-nine, Don.

DE: Fifty-nine.

Fifty-nine baby, huh?

My brother-in-law, he's born he was born++

in fifty-seven.

DE: You know that?

MS: Who you talkin about?= =Carl?

DE: Yeah.

MS: So I be older than Carl?

No.

SH: [UC]

DE: And now I got I got I got two other++

brothers too, you know.

MS: Yeah.

DE: One was born in forty-three.=

MS: =[UC]=
DE: =One was born in forty-three.  
He's fifty years old.  
And was born in fifty-four.  
He's thirty-nine.  
And then uh  
Carol is born in fifty-six.  
She's thirty-seven.  
She'll be thirty-eight  
on her birthday.  
You know //that?  
MS: //Is Carol that old?  
DE: Well she not she not that old.  
She still young.=  
MS: She's thirty-eight?  
I didn't think she was that old.=  
=She looked she about thirty-three  
or thirty-four, Don  
She looks good.  
DE: She she is good.  
Gooder than ever.  

((SH chuckles))  
((To SH))  
MS: She dressed so neat.  
She too neat.  
DE: She the last in the family.  
SH: She the baby in the family?  
DE: Yep.  
You said it.  

((To SH))  
MS: Did you meet Don's sister?  
SH: Uh uh.  
MS: If you see her when she be gettin off of++  
work,  
she come by one Wednesday.=  
DE: =She's the one,  
She was the one who knew who knew  
our Momma first one time and then,  
and then and then she got  
she got real sick in New Orleans and then uh  
and then we had,  
we had to take her in the hospital July++  
three-first.  
That was on Tuesday den  
and den  
and den on  
and den on  
and then a while on August twenty t-- tee--  
tween August the nineteenth and August++  
the twentieth we moved her, her  
to Baton Rouge
and den and and live
and live with her then
and den on August twenty-second move her++
to the nursing home.
And it was on South Boulevard.
It it called [UC] Place.
And den uh
and den
and den after that
and den I came along
I went to visit my sister one time
and that was on August twenty-fourth++
nineteen ninety
and den
and den I went to spend some time with her.
About a week.
And den uh,
and den after that uh I
look at the group home,
group home of Louisiana,
now its called QIV,
went to the one on Richard,
went to one on Farling,
went to one on Houston Drive,
went to one of Fitzgerald.
MS: What’s the one on Fitzgerald, Don?
DE: There’s is oh on Fitzgerald workshop.
MS: Oh.
You talkin about Setro Enterprise
DE: Yeah.
MS: [UC] workshop cause I been [UC]
DE: On on Prescott it was empty
one,
it was empty that time and then
and den bout a week later
bout four weeks later uh
I moved here September thirtieth and den++
and den [UC] me.
I was livin with Carol and Karl then.
And then Melissa, Melissa Trusseau
talked me in to stay with me couple two++ months.
So I told her in November.
And den
and den after
after
after
after sayin the last goodbyes
fourteenth December and den
on sixteenth celebrated my birthday party.
And den get up early on Monday on December++
seventeenth
and den we we w-- [UC] in and dat dat dat had Christmas party++

over there one time.
And den
and den my haviors doin well but
but it still it still it still thinkin some
but it still it still it still it still++

not as good.
My haviors alright but
sometimes
every time
I overate sometimes.
[UC] got to slow it got to slow it down.
That the reason why I had to be on a diet.
Huh, Marissa?

Marissa agrees, and we begin, at this point, to talk about the evening’s meal.

Until Don nears his conclusion, he adheres to his chronological style of telling. He tends to avoid description or evaluation. He is primarily interested in the sequence of events. He seems, when chronicling events, to get caught up in his own rhythms, as though these tellings are a sort of catechism for him. These tellings appear to be recitations that have meaning for him.

When listening to Don chronicle his journey from his mother’s home to Esplanade, I dropped out of the conversation. I did so for two reasons. First, Don has trouble constructing his utterances. It appears to me that when he experiences syntactical difficulties, he repeats himself until he can successfully negotiate his way through the rest of his utterance. I have also noticed that Don has trouble completing his utterances when interrupted.
Rather than interrupt Don, I often remain silent until he has completed his train of thought.

Second, I also got caught up in the rhythm of his discourse. When he chronicles his life, I, rather than listen to specific dates and places, start paying attention to the rhythms of his telling. Normally, when people stutter, I become nervous for them. When Don stutters (i.e., "and den/ and den/ and den on/ and den on/ and then a while on August twenty t— tee--"), I listen to the pattern of his repetition. For me, it has an almost musical quality to it. I think another reason that I do not become nervous when he stutters is that he does not become nervous when he stutters. He works through the utterance without any display of anxiety. I also know that he will at some point finish the phrase. I, as narratee, came to respond to these repetitions almost as vocal flourishes. Although I know that Don does not consciously add these repetitions, they still mark his style of telling as unique. Just as Don is the only one in the group home interested in chronological tellings, he is also the only one who exhibits this pattern of speaking.

Although I do not know if Marissa takes pleasure in Don’s style of telling, I have not noticed that she is bothered by it either. In this telling, for instance, she does not try to complete his utterances. Marissa may be
desensitized to his style of telling. She, after all, has spent more time around him than I have.

As I did, Marissa stopped talking and started listening when Don began to recount his personal history. She may have dropped out of the conversation because she knew that this was information that interested me. She may also have been caught up in Don’s telling, but not enough to prevent her from asking Don questions about specific locales. Don answered Marissa’s questions which had to do with the subject of his telling (specific dates, places, and actions) and then continued.

However, once he had moved the story into the space of the group home, he began to evaluate. It is as if the localized power of his telling evaporated in the narrative space of the group home. The imperialized power of the group home’s culture holds weight within his telling. Locales and acts of localized power are temporary, easily dissolved, readily reincorporated into the power structure. Don’s telling serves as an example of this reabsorption.

NIGEL

When scanning my tapes, I had trouble locating moments where Nigel engaged in acts of localized telling. I was not surprised, however, that I had difficulty isolating these moments. I found moments where he talks about the weather and about his soap, but he does not seem to be using these conversations to escape the group home’s
culture. He seems to be using them as conversational filler. He gets pleasure from them, but he gets more pleasure from his stories about his travails at work and in the group home.

Nigel is an anomaly within the group home. Unlike the other group home members who try to find ways to escape the group home’s confinement, Nigel seems to embrace it. He is not a conformist, however. Rather, he seems to exceed, through his talk, the group home’s cultural boundaries. He dominates most conversations. He also repeats himself. If interested in a topic, he will talk about it for hours whether or not he has any audience.

Nigel’s personality is so forceful that he has in some ways forced the group home to accommodate him. For instance, Nigel always sits in the front passenger seat. When I asked Marissa why that particular placement, she told me Nigel talked so much and so loud in the van that it agitated the other residents. When sitting in a rear seat, Nigel, in order to solicit Marissa’s attention, would almost yell. Chastisement and other forms of punishment did not work on him. Finally, the DCWs established a new rule: when in the van, Nigel always sits in the front passenger seat. He still talked incessantly, but he ceased shouting.

The seating arrangement is only one example of group home rules being altered to accommodate Nigel. Group home
members interact with Nigel in ways they never interact with one another. Despite the group home’s injunction against name-calling, group home members feel free to criticize Nigel. Often, the DCWs tolerate this abuse.

For Nigel, then, localized telling need not be about a change of locus, focus, or temporality. For Nigel, localized telling is the act of excess. He uses his style of talking to create a sphere within the group home that is of his own making. The group home, unable to control Nigel’s excess, has incorporated it. Others have left the group home and their absence has not significantly altered the operations within the group home. If Nigel ever leaves, his absence will noticeably and significantly alter the ways members in this community interact.

**SUMMARY**

The function of localized power is to create spaces where people can exist not outside the reach of imperialism but within the reach of imperialism. The people use acts of localized power as they are able to achieve ends they find desirable. The people, unable to step outside the system, use their power of localization to change the system, if only temporarily, from within.

The men use these stories not as a way to subvert the system but as a way to live within the system. In order to engage in these acts of localized tellings, group home members must work within the confines of this system. They
have to take advantage of the few unscheduled moments in their days. They must also consider the risk factors involved in such acts.

Additionally, the residents of Esplanade must find someone who is willing to listen to one of these stories. At Esplanade, I often served as the narratee for localized tellings. To participate in these performances, I altered my style of listening and data-gathering to accommodate each teller. No two men talk about the same subjects or employ the same style of telling. Consequently, I altered my role as narratee to accommodate their acts of localized power. Together, we created locales where they could be what they wanted to be and where I could be what they wanted me to be.

At Esplanade, group home members use stories to maintain and demonstrate their sense of individuality. In these tellings, the men share their visions of themselves, their personas. To create these personas, they create sites of comfort and pleasure within the constraints of the group home. They tell about their lives and identities outside the group home. Some group home members project themselves into an idealized past; others into an idealized future. Regardless, they transport themselves through performance to imaginary spaces where they can be who they want to be. These tellings allow the men to perform their individuality.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

In this study I used an ethnographic approach to examine the stories told by members of a group home for men with mental retardation in order to determine how the culture of the group home worked to constrain the residents' interactions in this community. I argued that despite the cultural constraints, the residents used storytelling to establish their individuality, even though their storytelling often reified cultural constraints and their cultural constructions. To better understand how culture of the group home works to constrain interactions, I identified, described, and analyzed eight communication situations and identified the two cultural codes that influence communication with Esplanade. I then explored the imperializing and localizing functions of member storytelling. I showed how storytelling generates and reproduces the culture of the group home and how group home members use storytelling to reference their lives and identities in other communities. Additionally, I discussed how each resident maintains and demonstrates his sense of individuality in a community that constructs him as a group home member. I also recounted how I, as ethnographer, interacted within this community.

I based this study on my understanding of mental retardation as a functional state, one in which an
individual's intellectual and adaptive skills fail to meet environmental demands. This definition reflects recent theoretical reconceptualizations of mental retardation. Since the 1950s, theorists have come to understand mental retardation as a socio-cultural phenomenon as well as a pathology. Supported by extensive anthropological and sociological data, researchers have found that the markers of mental retardation (i.e., behaviors, patterns of communication, coping strategies, etc.) vary historically, culturally, and contextually. They have noted that cultural assumptions influence how individuals experience mental retardation. Researchers have also noted that mental retardation is a monolithic label that ignores human variation.

Over the past thirty years, researchers have investigated how individuals with mental retardation live their lives, specifically examining their patterns of interaction. They found that those without mental retardation interact differently with those with mental retardation than they do with those without mental retardation. One's role and one's cultural expectations, they contended, influence patterns of interaction.

These studies influenced both my choice of subject and methodology. Interested in mental retardation and talk-in-interaction, I chose to conduct an ethnography of speaking within a group home for men with mental retardation. To
collect my data, I used a variety of different data-collection methods, including participant-observation and interviews (structured and unstructured). I spent over 160 hours with the residents of Esplanade and audio-taped 65 hours of conversation. Borrowing from Chafe (1982), Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974), and Scott Carlin (1992), I developed a transcription method that marked interruptions and intonational units, included nonverbal and nonvocal information, and recreated the feel of utterances.

After developing my method of transcription, I returned to my field notes and identified eight communication situations that recur within the group home ("At Magnolia," "On the Van," "Getting Ready for Dinner," "Dinner," "Television Talk," "Training," "Group Counseling Session," "House Meeting"). I then transcribed an example of each communication situation. To describe and analyze these communication situations, I used Dell Hymes' (1962, 1967, 1972, 1974, 1986) taxonomy of speaking, after making minor modifications. Working from my field notes and sample transcriptions, I described and analyzed the elements (ethnographic perspective, genre, topic, function/purpose, setting, emotional tone, participants, message form, act sequence, guidelines for interaction, and norms of interpretation) of each communication situation.

Based on my description and analysis of these eight communication situations and my interpretation of the
existing literature about Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Mental Retardation, I identified two cultural codes that pattern communication within Esplanade: the code of compliance and the code of self-reliance. As a way to demonstrate the relevancy of these codes within this community, I presented illustrations that revealed the group home members' awareness of the significance of these codes. Specifically, I identified and discussed stories by group home members about compliance or self-reliance (supportive examples) and stories where a group home member as narrator violated one of the codes in his telling (contrastive examples).

After demonstrating the relevancy of these two codes to group home members, I examined the function of member storytelling within Esplanade. I based my analysis on the analytic tools provided by Fiske (1993), Mehan (1991), and Langellier and Peterson (1993). In my analysis, I examined how storytelling by group home members generates and reproduces the culture of the group home. I identified a number of subject positions (privileged teller, simultaneous teller, enforced teller, preferred listener, and enforced listener) that emerge in tellings. I also examined how group home members used storytelling to demonstrate and maintain their senses of individuality in this community. Additionally, I examined my role within these narrative performances.
FINDINGS

Based on my analysis, I have come to the following conclusions. Esplanade is a micro community, a communal interpretation of the macro-culture of retardation. A macro-culture is a widely shared way of living, one that is supported by particular set of beliefs and practices. A macro-culture of retardation, then, names a set of widely shared assumptions about the nature of mental retardation.

Esplanade developed in response to a particular belief system. Two macro-cultural assumptions informed both the function and structure of group homes like Esplanade. They express society’s desire to segregate and control those with mental retardation. They also express society’s desire to help individuals with mental retardation achieve their full potential. These macro-cultural assumptions find expression not only in the function and structure of group homes but also in the patterns on interactions within these communities.

Esplanade is also a speech community that possesses its own culture and its own patterns of communication. Members of this community have interpreted specific macro-cultural impulses and made them their own. They have created their own culture from widely shared cultural materials.

Within Esplanade, the eight communication situations that I identified serve practical functions (accomplishing
specific tasks) and cultural functions (providing individuals with roles and guidelines for role-appropriate behavior). They also reinforce systems of meaning, patterns of interaction, and culturally-constructed identities. I also found that these communication situations influence how or if members tell stories. I found that in certain situations (i.e., "Getting Ready for Dinner") DCWs discourage residents from sharing stories. When getting ready for dinner, DCWs expect group home members to engage themselves in specific tasks, not in the engage of stories. DCWs interpret storytelling in this situation as role-inappropriate behavior. In other situations (i.e., "On the Van," "Group Counseling Session," or "House Meeting''), however, DCWs encourage or at least permit group home members to share stories. Although permitted in these situations, residents' storytelling must conform to the situational expectations. For instance, the group counselor expects the residents to share stories, but only those stories related to her topic. Additionally, the group counselor expects that the residents take turns sharing stories. These situations, although allowing storytelling by residents, constrain the subject and style of member telling.

The code of compliance and the code of self-reliance that operate within Esplanade also work to constrain member storytelling. Although echoes of macro-cultural impulses,
these two codes have been reinterpreted by members of this community. They provide VOA-BR’s staff and the residents of Esplanade with a framework of meaning. Members of this community use these two codes to interpret actions. For instance, members of this community use these two codes to categorize actions (i.e., storytelling as an act of compliance or as an act of self-reliance). Within Esplanade, certain situations call for certain types of actions. "Getting Ready for Dinner," for instance, call for compliant behavior on the part of the residents. "Training," on the other hand, allows residents to develop, practice, and present their skills of self-reliance. In certain interactions, these two codes come into conflict. For instance, a group home member may encounter a situation where he could perform in either a self-reliant or compliant manner. In such interactions, the resident must choose between the two codes. Generally, for group home member, the safe choice is almost always the choice to comply. Within Esplanade, the code of compliance functions for group home members as the dominant code; the code of self-reliance, an important but ancillary code.

As cultural beings, the residents of Esplanade are shaped by and shape cultural forces. For instance, the phrase "group home member" names a role within a community. VOA-BR expects group home members to behave in certain ways, to adopt a role. VOA-BR’s elaborately detailed
schedule and list of rules and responsibilities provide group home members with a behavioral script. To ensure adherence, VOA-BR grants staff members the authority to enforce role-appropriate behavior. Within group homes, program participants learn to perform as group home members. They learn to comply when they need to comply, and they perform self-reliance when able or instructed to do so. The residents' storytelling reflects their understanding of situationally based, role-appropriate behavior.

Within Esplanade, member storytelling serves two major functions: imperializing and localizing. In his discussion of politics of culture, Fiske (1993) suggested that societies can be divided into two groups of people: the power-bloc and the people. The power-bloc are those individuals who benefit most from the social order, and the people are those who benefit the least in this system. Fiske labelled acts used by the power-bloc to sustain the social order as acts of imperialism. He named the acts used by the people to create temporary spheres of comfort within the social order as acts of localized power. Storytelling, in and of itself, is an apolitical activity and can therefore function as either an act of imperializing or localizing power.

As acts of imperializing power within Esplanade, storytelling reinforces the framework of meaning that
shapes life within this community. Imperialized tellings generate and reproduce the group home’s culture, patterns of speaking, and status differentials. Status differentials within Esplanade manifest themselves in the community’s discourse. I, for example, identified a number of status-related subject positions created through storytelling. Inspired by Langellier and Peterson (1993), I identified five recurring subject positions: privileged teller (a narrator who possesses both narrative and actual authority), enforced teller (a narrator who, because of his social position within the group, is not in a position to easily or politely refuse a request to narrate), simultaneous teller (a narrator who interrupts another telling or a narrator who shares a telling while another narrator tells), preferred listener (the narratee with whom the narrator wants to share her or her telling), and the enforced listener (a narratee who, because of his social position within the group, is not in a position to politely or easily refuse a request to listen to a telling). I did not, in my analysis, use these term to describe states of being or personality traits. I used these terms, instead, to identify one’s subject position in a specific interaction.

DCWs at Esplanade assume the subject positions of privileged teller and preferred listener. Within this community, these subject positions are markers of status.
Group home members do not assume these subject positions. I have suggested several reasons why group home members do not assume these positions. First, they do not hold positions of authority within this community. Second, group home members rarely share stories with one another. They do not feel comfortable sharing their lives with one another. They also have had little practice telling and listening to one another’s stories.

At Esplanade, group home members assume the positions of enforced teller, enforced listener, and simultaneous teller. Within this community, group home members often find themselves in positions where they cannot politely or easily refuse requests. Consequently, when asked to tell or listen, residents comply. The roles of enforced teller and enforced listener mark the residents’ status as the occupants of the lowest social position within this community.

As simultaneous tellers, residents compete for opportunities to share their stories with preferred listeners. If, in order to tell share their story with a preferred listener, they have to talk on top of one another, group home members are willing do so. The role of simultaneous teller, unlike the roles of enforced listener and teller, permits a temporary elevation in status. If, as a simultaneous teller, one garners the attention of the preferred listener, one’s status is temporarily elevated.
Even if one does not garner the attention of the preferred listener, the multiplicity of voices in a simultaneous telling acts as a blanket, shielding each teller from potential chastisement. Simultaneous telling lessens the probability that an individual teller will be singled out for chastisement. The preferred listener, often unable to distinguish individual story lines, will generally chastise all or none of the tellers. Chastised as a group, no single teller garners or loses status. Simultaneous telling does not permanently alter the status of those who engage in this style of telling. It does, however, reinforce the elevated status of the preferred listener.

At Esplanade, I often functioned as a preferred listener. I occupied this position in both imperialized and localized tellings. I identified localized telling as those tellings that allowed group home members to remember or to imagine identities, communities, cultures and patterns of interaction outside the space of the group home. The residents of Esplanade used localized tellings as a way to reclaim their individuality. They talked about themselves for themselves. For them, localized telling is a form of self-reclamation. Group home members used localized tellings to reference their lives and identities in other communities. In these imaginative, sometimes
imaginary, worlds, they are who they want to be, not who some else expects them to be.

I found that in these localized tellings, the group home members employed styles of telling that gave them personal pleasure. These styles of telling reflected their individual interests and allowed them to perform less regimented, less-stereotyped roles. Together, group home members and I created performance locales, sites of performance that permitted and encouraged acts of localized tellings. As a participant in these acts of localized power, I altered my style of listening to accommodate the resident’s style of narrating. No two group home members told stories in the same way. I, consequently, assumed a different role with each group home member.

In this study, I found that group home members are capable of performing a number of roles, cultural constructions (group home member, one who complies, one who acts in a self-reliant manner), narrative constructions (self-reliant narrators, compliant narrators, enforced tellers, enforced listeners, and simultaneous tellers), and localized constructions (personas of their own making). The group home members responded to Esplanade’s cultural constraints, but they did so in uniquely individual ways. Within this system, each man maintained and demonstrated his individuality despite his cultural construction. I also sustained my belief that the residents of Esplanade,
although they share a common identity and common living space, are very different men.

**OBSERVATIONS**

Before I began this investigation, I read the work of others interested in the communicative life of those with mental retardation. Although I did not attempt to replicate their studies, I did keep their observations in mind while at Esplanade. Based on my experience in the group home, I can offer tentative support for other researcher's claims. Like Blount (1968), Yoder and Miller (1972), and Croner (1974), I noted that group home members failed to master certain linguistic competencies. I also noticed that they experienced structural difficulties at all levels of discourse (Kernan and Sabsay 1982). I also could not discern a pattern of errors (Sabsay and Kernan 1983). Like Linder (1978), I noted that interlocutors without mental retardation will at times take over the telling of a narrative initiate by a group home member. Like the group studied by Graffam (1985), group home members sometimes acted more like competitors than allies. I also noticed that group home members used conversational turns to display knowledge (Graffam 1985).

Some of my observations, however, differed from earlier findings. For example, I found that the residents of Esplanade were not always able to correct speech disfluencies when prompted (Sabsay and Kernan 1983). Kyle,
for example, corrected one speech disfluency with another speech disfluency. Nigel, on the other hand, sometimes interpreted inquiries about the content of his utterances as rhetorical challenges. In one case, I wanted him to clarify a word that I did not understand. He assumed that I understood what he had said but was challenging his interpretation of events. My further requests of clarifications only fueled Nigel’s anxiety. Finally, I dropped the issue altogether, fearing that continued efforts to decipher his message might damage our relationship. I learned that, in term of my relationship with the residents of Esplanade, it was sometimes best just to act as if I understand what they had said even if I did not.

The patterns of interaction that I charted at Esplanade are unlike the patterns of interaction (specifically, the code of politeness) charted by Turner, Kernan, and Gelphman (1984). The residents of Esplanade did not call attention to one another’s speech disfluencies, but they did call attention to one another’s rule violations. Kyle chastised Nigel for talking back to the workshop supervisor. Nigel, on the other hand, chastised Bob Wilson for watching television after hours. I noticed instead what might be called a code of avoidance. The residents of Esplanade tended to avoid one another when possible. When avoiding one another, they were less likely
to interact with one another and, consequently, less likely to notice one other's rule violations.

Because of the nature of my investigation and the composition of Esplanade, I was unable to confirm or disconfirm other research conclusions. In his study, Linder (1978) found that "guardians" were more likely to take over a telling than someone not in a support role. Having spent most of my time around "guardians," I was unable to make such a determination. Furthermore, I was unable to discern whether interlocutors without mental retardation adjusted their discourse to what they perceived to be their conversational partner's level of understanding (Sabsay and Platt 1985). I do know, however, that I adjusted my discourse to accommodate my partners.

The differences between my observations and other researchers' observations may be attributed to different research interests and methodologies. It can also be attributed to the differences between and among the groups we studied. In fact, I would have been suspicious if my observations had completely supported theirs. I believe, like Langness and Levine (1986), that people with mental retardation share as much in common with one another as people without mental retardation. We studied different individuals, different communities, and different cultures. I therefore expected different patterns of communication.
The similarities, however, I attribute to two factors: similar, although not identical, methodologies and similar communal relationships to the macro-culture of retardation. When creating a methodology, I borrowed from many of these researchers. Most employed ethnographic methodologies; many used some sort of discourse analysis. These researchers influenced how I studied; consequently, they influence what I found.

I cannot, however, attribute all similarities to methodological kinship. With no exceptions, those researchers who studied intact groups conducted their research after the late 1970s. Deinstitutionalization was at its height at this point. Reform had won numerous converts, and in the early 1980s President Ronald Reagan provided the movement an additional incentive for making changes: his administration slashed funding for federally funded institutions. Without capital, large institutions had to down-size. This reduction in funding meant finding alternative living arrangements for many residents. Individuals who could not return to their families or find places in ICFs/MR were left to fend for themselves. In many ways, President Reagan encouraged self-reliance.

Consequently, the number of ICFs/MR rapidly increased in the 1980s. New communities developed; new philosophies of treatment and care for individuals with mental retardation emerged. The macro-culture of retardation that
exists today did not exist twenty-five years ago. Additionally, this composition of populations did not exist twenty-five years ago.

Before deinstitutionalization, any individual with mental retardation who needed more care than they or their family members could provide, regardless of their abilities, lived in state institutions. After deinstitutionalization, only those in need of constant care and supervision remained in state institutions. Administrators relocated those individuals not in dire need. Now, with few exceptions, the populations of most ICFs/MR consist of those with diagnoses of mild or moderate developmental disabilities.\(^1\) Deinstitutionalization has created a division among what was once considered a homogenous population. Consequently, those who have studied intact groups of individuals with mental retardation since the late 1970s have studied groups with similar relationships to the macro-culture and with similar group compositions.

**THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS**

In this study I chose as my definition of mental retardation the one espoused by the American Association on Mental Retardation (1992). I prefer this description of mental retardation because it is competency based, \(^1\) At Esplanade, Harry is the exception to that rule. Physicians have diagnosed Harry with autism and severe mental retardation.
culturally grounded, and supported by extensive anthropological and sociological data. People base their judgements about one's cognitive capacities on a set of culturally valorized, contextually specific criteria. These criteria differ from community to community, from task to task. This definition acknowledges variation and difference.

This definition suggests but does not address mental retardation as a system of meaning. The very labels, "person with mental retardation," "mentally retarded," "developmentally disabled," or others like these, are cultural markers. They trigger a set of meanings about the labelled individual and provide a general sense of cultural identification for those who communicate within them. Labels serve as interactional guides and, although potentially useful, necessarily constrain social interaction.

My understanding of mental retardation informed my method of analysis. Since I believed that mental retardation named a socio-cultural phenomenon as well as a pathology, I chose a research methodology grounded cultural, communication, and performance theories. For example, I found studying the cultural codes that pattern communication a fruitful way to understand a Esplanade and its culture. I worked back and forth between code and community, using my understanding of one to check my
understanding of the other. This method allowed me to see where and how the two worked together and where and how the two worked against each other. It also prevented me from conflating, culture, community, code, and individual, forcing me to recognize their areas of commonality and their areas of difference.

I also found that my knowledge of performance theory influenced my ethnographic stance. Aware that interlocutors create roles through storytelling, I focused my ethnographic attention on the ways the members of this community told stories, how they positioned themselves and others in these performances, and on their sites of performance. Additionally, my experience as a performer influenced how I interacted as ethnographer. I encouraged storytelling, helped members locate potential sites of performance, and became an active participant in their narrative performances. As Geoffrey Pearson stated, "The ethnographer is never a neutral channel of communication" (Pearson 1993, viii). I, as ethnographer, not only observed, described, and analyzed this community and its members, I also assumed roles within this community. I became for a short period of time a member of the community, a member that encouraged and participated in the group home members' tellings about their community and about themselves.
Storytelling allows narrators not only to recreate but to create experience. The residents of Esplanade used storytelling not only to recreate their experiences as group home members but also to create narrative experiences. Through the act of telling, group home members brought new elements, imaginative and interactive, into this community. Through storytelling, group home members provided what the system cannot: life as experienced, as performed. The men provided dynamism, creative energy, individuality, and community to what would otherwise be a quaint but empty, four bedroom, two bath, white brick house.

The performance implications of this study are three-fold. First, performance is not only potentially liberating, but also potentially oppressive. Second, in some performances, audiences function as props. When the residents of Esplanade engage in localized tellings, they are not necessarily concerned with the effect of their story on the narratee's lives. The residents adopt a sort of laissez-faire attitude: let the narratees create their own spaces of pleasure and comfort. Third, language users perform. Reflexivity, creativity, and language use come hand in hand. Language users employ whatever resources are available to them to recreate moments, experiences, sensations. Whether anyone, including the performer,
recognizes these recreations as performances does not diminish their value to those who have create them.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on my study, I have the following two suggestions. First, VOA-BR's staff and program participants would benefit greatly if it could decrease its DCW to group home member ratio. At Esplanade, the code of compliance dominates interactional patterns. If, however, the DCWs had more time to socialize with the group home members, the pattern of interactions within its group homes might be differently configured. VOA-BR assumes responsibility for the well-being of its residents. Responsibility, as legally defined, means constant supervision. As currently staffed, VOA-BR can but treat its program participants as members of a collective.

Second, VOA-BR hires trained speech therapists to help those residents with speech impediments and disfluencies. Although I recognize the importance speech therapy, I believe that the men might also benefit from "narrative" therapy. I have not noticed that the residents' speech impairments or disfluency squelch their desire to tell stories. I have noticed, however, that the men do not have much practice sharing stories with one another. They also seem to lack facilitative listening skills. The development of such skills would certainly increase their
social skills and might also increase their self-esteem and enjoyment of life.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

This study suggests other possible research avenues. Others might investigate how storytelling functions in a group home for women with mental retardation. One might also consider doing a comparative analysis of the function of storytelling in a group home for women with mental retardation and the function of storytelling in a group home for men with mental retardation. West and Zimmerman (1977) and Tannen (1993) have suggested that gender influences discourse. Langellier and Peterson (1992) have also noted that women's stories and ways of telling differ from men's stories and ways of telling.

One might also examine the stories told by direct care workers. How do they use stories on the job? What do they think are tellable work-related experiences? What stories do they share with group homes members? What stories do they share with other direct care workers?

Additionally, one might also consider conducting a longitudinal study. In *Culture and Retardation*, Langness and Levine argue for long-term studies of the lives of individuals with mental retardation. One might investigate how an individual's stories change over time.

One might also examine the function of stories told in public spheres. I concentrate on the telling of stories in
a private sphere. A number of individuals with mental retardation have entered the public forum. How do they talk about their lives? What do they find appropriate for a private audience but not for a public one?

In *The Cloak of Incompetence*, Robert Edgerton kept track of a group of individuals who had been released from a state institution. All, he noted, tried to hide their incarceration from others. He found that these individuals create fictional past lives. Another researcher might find out if former residents of ICFs/MR acknowledged their time in such facilities or created new pasts for themselves. Such work might reveal how residents feel about their participation in such programs.

Those interested in tellings as forms of imperialization and localization might examine other communities, organizations, or social units. Additionally, one might also study the stories told by an individual in different communities. How does community membership affect what is and is not tellable?

Other possibilities include the function of storytelling in organization for children (vacation Bible schools, Girls Scouts, Boy Scouts, day care centers, detention centers, juvenile homes). A focus on children's storytelling might provide clues to identity and social formations.
I offer these suggestions as prompts. I hope they will trigger the interest of other researchers interested in mental retardation, culture, communication, social interaction, and performance.

**FINAL NOTE**

Periodically, I return to Esplanade. Now, however, my visits are purely social affairs. I still ask the residents of Esplanade about their lives, but I leave my tape recorder and field journal at the office.
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APPENDIX A

RELEASE FORM: TAPES AND FIELD NOTES

I, ________________________________, give Sharon Croft permission to take notes about my actions and to record my conversations with her, group home members, and staff of Volunteers of America. I also give Sharon Croft permission to use the information she has gathered about me in her publications and/or presentations. I understand that her tapes and field notes will be used in her research about the culture of the group home and its communication patterns. I also understand that Sharon Croft will ensure my anonymity in all publications and presentations.

__________________________________________
Signature

__________________________________________
Date
APPENDIX B

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF INDIVIDUALS RESIDING IN VOA

POLICY:

Residents, Parents/Legally Responsible Persons, and Staff are informed of the responsibilities of residents upon admission to the program and annually at the person's annual meeting. For those who have difficulty in learning their responsibilities, rights, and grievance procedures, learning objectives may be established by that consumer's Interdisciplinary Team so that he/she may be knowledgeable of their rights, responsibilities, procedures to file grievances, and legally responsible persons to contact.

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO:

1. Assist in maintain active contact and relationships with your family and/or other persons who are important to you. Telephone numbers and addresses of your family and/or other persons who are important to you can be found on the face sheet of your master book in your home. Also, staff will assist you to remember important events like birthdays, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and special holidays, and they will assist you to phone or mail cards and letters to those people who are important to you.

2. Respect the property of others by asking to borrow things before taking them.

3. Respect the property of others by not damaging or breaking things belonging to others. Should you damage/break things belonging to others you may be required to pay for or to replace them.

4. Respect the privacy of others by knocking on their door before entering their bedroom or their home.

5. Display appropriate social behaviors in shared living spaces. Shared living spaces include the den, living room, kitchen, hallway, front porch, back porch, yard, and laundry room. So if you become so angry or mad that you disturb the activities of the other people whom you live with, it is your responsibility to go to your own room until you calm down. If you do not go to your room on your own, a staff person will direct you to go to your room.
6. Get along with others. But when you have a problem with someone, you must express dissatisfaction to that person in a manner which does not result in your attempting to hit, harm, injure or excessively scream and curse at that other person.

7. Attend school each day as required by our state law. However, if you are 18 years or older, you may request to waive your rights for a public education.

8. Attend your work each day and do your very best to receive wages equal to your ability to produce work.

9. Present a neat and well groomed appearance when going out in public or receiving company at home. It’s understandable that if you are not going out anywhere or not expecting company, that you may want to dress casually or not shave.

10. Keep you personal living space clean and neat in a manner which is equal to your abilities to do so. This means you are responsible to make your own bed, change your linens, vacuum your floor, dust your furniture, and clean your bathroom. If you do not know how to perform some of these household chores, we will teach you how to perform them.

11. Do your share to keep shared living areas clean and neat in a manner which is equal to your abilities to do so.

13. Do your very best to learn and to perform the skill objectives designated on your program. If there is a skill objective in your program which you do not like or agree with, it is your responsibility to tell the case manager or QMRP why you do not like or agree with that skill objective, and what skill objective you would prefer to learn.

14. You may only smoke in rooms you and your housemates have agreed on. Also, you must use an ash tray when you do smoke, and be sure that you put out your cigarette when you finish smoking it.

15. Go to bed at a time which is not so late that you have trouble waking up in the morning dressing and performing necessary duties prior to leaving work or school.
16. Have visitors, make and receive phone calls at times which do not interfere with your participation in your program, and which does not disturb the privacy or program participation of your housemates.

17. Determine if you wish to go out on dates, and who you will date. We will work to involve your parents/legally responsible person to assist you in determining the age at which you date, and who you date. We will provide you assistance in making arrangements for dates, and in determining the amount of money needed for your date.

18. To file a grievance if your rights or the rights of others are violated. Therefore, you should be knowledgeable of what your rights are, and the rights of others.

19. Actively participate in planning what kinds of leisure/recreation activities you want to do. You should tell the staff member in your home where you want to go, and request that staff member to assist you.

20. Sign the in/out book when leaving and returning to the facility.

21. You are encouraged to comply with approved menus or diet plans as approved by your ID team.

22. You are requested to maintain quiet in the house beginning at 10:00 p.m. to afford others an opportunity to get rest. On weekends, this hour may be extended until 11:30 p.m.
APPENDIX C

KEY TO THE ABBREVIATIONS OF NAMES

AN = Anne, a direct care worker
BW = Bob Wilson, a resident
DE = Don Easton, a resident
EB = Elizabeth, a direct care worker
FR = Fred, a direct care worker
GR = Gloria Robinson, a VOA group counselor
HR = Harry LeFevre, a resident
IN = A signer for Bob Wilson
JS = Jesse Flagg, the group home supervisor
KL = Kyle, a resident
LB = Lee Boothe, a direct care worker
LU = Lee Underwood, a resident
MS = Marissa, a direct care worker
NQ = Nigel Quentin, a resident
RE = Den Delaware, resident from another VOA-sponsored group home
SH = Sharon Croft, ethnographer
TD = Ted, a resident
APPENDIX D

SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT OF "AT MAGNOLIA," "ON THE VAN," AND "GETTING READY FOR DINNER"

Wednesday, 11/10/93: based on tapes 01.1, 01.2, 02.1, 02.2, 50.1, 50.2, 51.1, 51.2, 52.1, 52.2, 53.1, and 53.2
(In van outside of Dogwood, on route to Esplanade, and inside Esplanade)

((To SH))
MS: You might want to get out cause if we++
got to wait for um--
SH: Eleven ten ninety-three Esplanade.
((Sound of van door sliding open))
MS: Hey Ted.
Here.
((To TD)) SH: Hey.
TD: Hi.
SH: How are you?
TD: Alright.
((NQ speaks from outside van))
((Irritated))
NQ: I have been jumped on.
((Unsympathetic))
TD: Oh //Quentin.
NQ: //And I don't [UC] to go over the whole++
situation.
((SH chuckles))
((DE steps into van))
SH: Hi Don.
DE: Hello.
Hey Marissa.
NQ: I been [UC]
MS: //Hey Don.
TD: //Hi Don.
((NQ speaks from outside the van))
MS: You don't have to get in right now.
We got to wait to um=
DE: =[UC]
MS: the office calls.
DE: Hey Marissa.
//[UC]
((NQ pokes his head into the van))
NQ: //Hey Marissa.
Your boy Quentin’s upset.
DE: Hey.
Marissa can we get in the front now?
MS: Yeah if you want to
you don’t have to.
((MS steps out of van))
DE: //Alright.
MS: //Hey Harry.
TD: Can we walk around some?
MS: OK.
SH: Your hair looks nice Nigel.
NQ: I'm sorry we didn't talk yesterday.
SH: I wasn't there.

((TD steps out of van))
((NQ follows after MS))
NQ: Marissa.
Your boy Quentin got you two notes.
Your boy Quentin got you two notes.

((To DE))
SH: Will you hold this?
DE: I will.
((SH hands DE a tape recorder))
((NQ continues to talk outside of van))
SH: Thank you.
Hello Harry.
How are you?
((Whispering to himself))
DE: Oh man.
((To DE))
SH: Is Kyle here?
DE: Oh yeah.
SH: He's just-- waitin?
DE: I wish I wish that,
awright let's start tomorrow
I'm gonna sta I gonna start packin++
tomorrow anyway.
I'm leavin,
I'm leavin from all.
From all the noise.
SH: Tomorrow?
DE: Not in the mornin,
at noon,
tomorrow night.
((SH raises pitch))
SH: O::oh.
For Illinois?
DE: No.
//Georgia.
SH: //For Georgia.
((DE mouths the word "Georgia" to himself))
SH: How long are you gonna be gone?
Just the weekend?
DE: Oh yeah.
Friday, Saturday, Sunday,
Monday.
I'm gonna be longer,
Tuesday,
come back Wednesday.
SH: That's great.
((NQ speaks from outside the van))
SH: You’re gonna go stay with your brother, is that right?
DE: Oh yeah. My brother’s and my sister-in-law’s house.

((TD speaks from outside the van))
TD: I be quiet [UC]
DE: They live in they live in at Old Towne Way.

((NQ walks toward the van))
((Agitated))
((To SH))
NQ: Like I said
I’m sorry about yesterday.
I couldn’t help I couldn’t do anything.
SH: I didn’t see ya yesterday.
NQ: Was that the day before that?
SH: Monday?
NQ: Monday.
SH: Monday I had to leave.
So it wasn’t your fault.
DE: Monday--

((Chuckling))
NQ: It wasn’t my fault huh?
SH: That’s right.
DE: Yesterday was Tuesday.
NQ: Yeah.
But I didn’t--

((Someone from another group home approaches the van))
((To visitor))
NQ: Hey
whatcha whatcha doin?
This is this is our van.
Whatcha gonna do?

((To SH))
So uh whatcha gonna do today?
Have a talk with me?

((NQ laughs))
((Chuckling))

Have a talk with me.
Isn’t that funny?
SH: Um actually I’m gonna be here a while today.
DE: You //are?
SH: //So I could.
I could have a talk with you.
DE: Good idea.
NQ: Let’s not get into-- Victor Newman. That’s one thing you don’t want to do I guarantee you that. I made the money. I made some money today.
DE: Good.
NQ: I don’t know how much money I made.
you know Ethan Morris?

**SH:** No.

**NQ:** The boss?

((Enthusiastically))

Well the boss jumped my case **real good**.

**SH:** Why?

((Chuckling))

**NQ:** *I mean real good._

You should have heard what he said.

**SH:** What’d he say?

**NQ:** I w I took the garbage the other way.

I told him he could keep me on— *keep me++* on the— payroll

but dispose of Maria.

((Insistently))

Maria did not want to go today.

He did— she did not go at all.

We had one rain out.

one rain out.

and I didn’t do anything.

But today,

look at this.

I went out today.

afterwards,

*made me a bunch of money._

The question is,

when do I get the check?

((NQ laughs))

((Authoritatively))

**DE:** Nigel.

**NQ:** When do I get //the check?

**DE:** //Nigel.

**DE:** Give me all //your attention.

**NQ:** //[UC]

**DE:** Listen.

You made m-- me and Deborah---

**NQ:** =Maria’s comin by today.

**DE:** I know it.

Would you listen?=

**NQ:** =I am NOT gonna have no mess from NOBODY I promise //you that.

**DE:** //Would you just listen?

Listen.

**NQ:** I’m even goin that STAFF meetin [UC]

**DE:** Would you just listen?

**NQ:** which I don’t.

So I ain’t gonna pull up,

I ain’t //gonna do that.

**DE:** //Me and--

Me //and Jesse

**TD:** //I think I’ll sit in the driver’s seat
DE: and you
TD: [UC]
   and Deborah had an agreement.
   ((Sound of steps approaching))
NQ: We had an agreement, huh?
DE: That’s right.
   We got you got your ol head, aw,
   you got
   ((To TD))
NQ: Don’t sit in this one.
DE: you got,
NQ: You don’t sit there.
DE: you got //ye ol hat on your ol head.
TD: //Oh yes I do.
   ((TD climbs into NQ’s seat))
   ((Irritated))
NQ: No you don’t.
TD: Oh yes //I do.
NQ: //No.
   That was the last time sittin in this seat.
   The last time sittin in this seat.
TD: I like the driver seat cause it’s--
   ((Teasing))
DE: Alright I start walkin.
NQ: [UC]
   ((To DE))
TD: Oh no you don’t.
   You’re stayin in--
   Where the keys at?
   ((Irritated))
NQ: You better figure it out.
    I’m gonna call off that staff meeting
    if I had a choice
    ((Calmly))
    which I don’t.
    So I won’t say anything.
    ((Irritated))
    I’m not gonna put up with this.
    [UC]
    ((A resident from another group home steps up to the van))
    ((To RE))
SH: Hey.
RE: Hey.
SH: What’s your //name?
NQ: //([UC]
    ((To SH))
DE: He name //Den Delaware.
NQ: //([UC]
SH: Dan?
TD: Den.
SH: Den.
DE: Den.
((Irritated))
NQ: I’m not gonna put up with that.
I was bein yelled at for something I didn’t do.
I was just followin orders.
I didn’t put know that.
Oh Maria’s van’s gone.
Oh in that case
((To SH))
I’m gonna go squawk at her a while.
I need someone to squawk once in a while.
((SH chuckles))
((Teasing))
SH: You need somebody to squawk at everyday don’t you?
DE: I tell you why.
NQ: [UC]=
DE: =He need to leave.
((Apologetically))
NQ: Look
I’m sorry about the other day.
SH: But it=
NQ: =It was completely my fault.
((Smiling))
SH: How is it completely your fault?
NQ: I didn’t need a hair cut.
SH: And—
NQ: =But I got one anyway.
SH: And?
What did I say?
NQ: Jesse wasn’t gonna listen to you.
SH: No.
That dodn’t have anything to do with it.
I had to leave early.
NQ: What’s my excuse?
((NQ chuckles))
SH: Y you don’t need //one.
DE: //Know what Fred said?
About on the van?
((NQ hits his thigh several times with the palm of his hand))
Keep, keep,
keep your voice down on the van.
TD: If trouble starts--
((Irritated))
NQ: This is my //seat.
TD: //he writes--
NQ: You understand that?
Speakin English.
I see anybody that’s in my seat
I’m gonna jump em.
SH: Why is that your seat?
((Calmly))
NQ: I-- it just is.
((SH laughs))
NQ: I can’t get into details right now.
((SH laughs))
TD: You ever see David drive?
SH: Uh uh.
Uh uh.
Who’s David?
TD: He used to stay at State. He drives.
He [UC]»
DE: =David Weaver?
TD: Yes.
NQ: [UC]
SH: And he he //would drive the van sometimes?
DE: //He used to be at State but not++
no more.
TD: Yeah.
I think he drives now probably.
DE: Yeah.
((To SH))
NQ: I think this is a good idea.
See.
See.
Let me tell you somethin.
Yesterday
we couldn’t do nothin honey. We couldn’t do anything yesterday outside cause it was rainin? Come today?
We went out pictures-- I was doin my job.

((DE sighs))
NQ: Honey
I was only doin my job. I didn’t need to have Ethan Morris come all the way from the back. You know the back uh shop?
SH: Mhm.
NQ: The boys in the shop? The boys in the shop jumped my case.
((Imitating the boys in the shop))
But where the garbage supposed to be? And then Barbara came out there showed me where the garbage went. There’s usually two dumpsters. VIP doesn’t have one.
I’ve got to take VIP’s trash clean across-- the parking lot.
I had to put it in the wrong one.

((Louder))
In the wrong one.
Can you think I’m stupid of me stupid of me
to put the garbage in the wrong one?
I put that garbage in the wooden one.
So we got all that straightened out.
I told E-- I jumped Ethan Morris.

SH: //Did they did they
did they tell you to put the garbage in++

the wrong one?
NQ: No I just figured out
one for wood
one for the trash.
D-- Usually there’s two trash.
SH: Uh huh.
NQ: I put I went the wrong direction.
SH: And you put the trash in //the wood.
DE: //You said it.
NQ: In the wu-- in the wrong //one.
DE: //To you ca cause++
you know why?
NQ: I did that the wrong time.
DE: Why’s did.
You know //why?
NQ: //Come to find out
Ethan Morris came steamin out of his office.

((NQ’s volume increases))
I mean just steaming out of there.
He didn’t have no time to-- chit chat.
Lu- You know Luke?
DE: You know //why?
TD: //[UC]
NQ: You know Luke?
Hey.
You wait a minute.
You know Luke?
SH: Em em.
NQ: He jumped me case good too.
He jumped me two times already.
He jumped me two times already.

((A residents from another home pokes his head into
the van))

((To RE))
SH: Hey.

((To NQ))
So--=

NQ: =And if I want if I want that job-- held++
oneto
I got to do it right.

((DE talks to person standing outside van))

((To RE))

DE: [UC] tell you //about our van?
NQ: //I told I told
DE: [UC]=
NQ: =Luke to leave it alone.
DE: //em good.
DE: //What?
NQ: And now Ethan jumped me good.
DE: What?

((To DE))

RE: [UC] day program.

((To NQ))

SH: So--
DE: Oh //where is your day program at?
NQ: //The matter of the story is
DE: Where’s your day program?
RE: [UC]//
NQ: //The boys in the shop
stay in the shop.
Put the wood someplace else.
But they don’t put it in
where the wood’s supposed to.
I did the wrong thing at the wrong time.
SH: Right.
RE: [UC]
NQ: So Barbara came out=
DE: =You said //it.
NQ: //so we straightened it out.
SH: Good.
RE: [UC]
NQ: And then and then Ethan jumped my case++
again.

((Irritated))

He tolle me not to put it in the dumpster in the++
wrong one.
SH: But you didn’t-- after he told you the++
first time
did you do it again?

((Almost a shout))
NQ: No!

((Calmly))

Well actually I did
but I wasn’t paying attention that time++
either.

SH: Why not?
((Resigned))
NQ: I just wanted to go home.

((Hummed rhythmically))
DE: Bm bm babm bm babm bm bm
NQ: So uh he jumped my case real good.

((To NQ))
KL: Good.

((KL enters van sliding door shut as he enters))
NQ: [UC] about it.
KL: A hangin party.
DE: Hi Kyle.

((MS gets into driver’s seat))
((To MS))
NQ: Guess what happened today?
MS: Put your seat belt on Nigel.
KL: Hangin party.
NQ: Have I got a story to tell you?
MS: Ooo that smells so bad.
KL: The sewer around there.
DE: Oh ain’t no //sewer around here.
NQ: //I tell you what happened.
KL: It is sewer.
NQ: I tell you what happened today.
KL: You go down there?
DE: No.
   Do you?
NQ: OK.
KL: Oh jo your job is to do it.

((KL laughs))
NQ: You know who Ethan Morris is
don’t ya?
DE: No //I make you I make you clean it.
NQ: //The big boss [UC]
KL: I flush it.

((MS turns up radio))
NQ: He jumped my case real good.
   You know how you jump me at home?
MS: Who jumped you?
NQ: Whoever did it.
   Anyway
   he told me to put it in the right one.
SH: Hey Kyle.
NQ: Well come to find out Kyle-- uh-- Ethan++
Morris jumped me on the wrong one.
   His boys got onto my butt about it.
   Can you imagine that?
Now
   you know you know if I got enough sense++
I’ll have Earl’s job
   I’ll have his job takin away from him.

((To NQ))
KL: Nope.
((To NQ))
DE: No you don’t.

((To KL and DE))
NQ: Then why in the world would the boys in++
the back
jump me in the front?

KL: Head boss
tell them do it.
Head boss.

NQ: His boss?
KL: Yes.
Main one.

DE: Shawn’s the //boss
NQ: //I’m gonna jump his case++
tomorrow and see what happens.

DE: Ned Neighbor’s the head //boss
NQ: //[UC]

DE: between AARC and Setro.
And then uh another kind like
he’s the boss
he’s //he’s the boss

NQ: //I had to get the--
DE: he’s uh--
would you listen?

NQ: I had I had I had //to get that garbage++
out of there.
DE: //He’s a boss++

KL: Yep.
DE: That’s -right.

((To NQ))
SH: Twice you had to get it out //of there?
NQ: //There was++
two bags.

((DE sighs))
NQ: I had I had to be jumped twice.

((Irritated))
Man [UC]
He doesn’t need to come ou come out of++
his-- office.

((To SH))
You know where his office is?
He does not need to jump my case like++
he did.

((To NQ))
KL: He did.
NQ: I feel like jumpin his case about now.
KL: Nuh uh
you fired.
You got stricctions back on you?
NQ: No.
KL: Well don’t tell him nothin.
((Frustrated))
NQ: I had to do something Kyley boy.

((Insistent))
KL: No.
   You blew it.
NQ: What?
   You weren't you weren't there.
KL: I did did.
   I saw it you did.
NQ: [UC]
   I'm just tryin to /[UC] about it
DE: //All of us did.
   All of us //did.
KL: //We all see the boss come do it.
NQ: He jumped m my case real good.
TD: The smell's gone //now.
NQ: //Now what would you [UC]
KL: Back by the sewer line?
NQ: Oh by the way thank you [UC]
SH: You got two notes today?
NQ: I'm just surprised I did that.

((SH chuckles))
SH: I am too.
It must not have been that bad then.

((Irritated))
NQ: I thought [UC] wanted me to-- [UC] jump---+
he wasn't nice about it.
   I seen Ethan Morris nicer than ever by now.
   He he did not need to jump my case like he++
did.
KL: Oh yeah.

((To KL))
NQ: That was uncalled for.
KL: Nope.
DE: No.
NQ: Marissa you won't //won't jump my case++
about something else would you?
KL: //You did it.
MS: I don't have any-- reason to jump your++
case Nigel.
NQ: I rest my case judge.

((Spots service truck on the road))
KL: Uh oh.

((Laughing about NQ's remark))

((To SH))
KL: //That type--
That type of gas truck
power service truck.
Pump type six.

((To MS))
NQ: I don't think he would do it again would he?
Huh?
I don’t understand Ethan Morris’ routine.
I been doin my routine now.
How’s that?
I’ve been goin by the book.

((To SH while NQ talks to MS))
KL: See my watch?
SH: Is that is that new?

((KL points to nearby strip mall))
KL: Ober dere.
Yep.
NQ: So whatcha gonna do?
KL: It sale.
Ten dollars.
NQ: You don’t jump my case //for nothin do ya?
KL: //Now fourteen++
dollars

NQ: I //know Fred jumped my case a couple of++
times.
Two batteries with it.
SH: Mhm.
KL: Two //batteries.
NQ: //I don’t like my case jumped.
Got that.
You can talk about anything under under++
the sun
but you’re not supposed to jump my case.
You understand?
I’m gonna stay up and wait for Fred to++
tell ya
I’ll stay up and wait for Fred
I’m gonna tell Fred a couple of things.
One,
I don’t need to be jumped by OK?
And second of all
I did not even go bowling last night.

((To NQ))
KL: Good.=
((To MS)
NQ: =Can you imagine //that?

((To NQ))
KL: //Good.
You’re so crazy anyway.

NQ: And uh
((SH chuckles))
NQ: and uh there’s nothin goin on tonight that++
I should know about?

((DE mouths "nothin bout" to himself))
NQ: There’s nothin goin on today right?
MS: Not that I know of.
[UC] house staff meetin.

NQ: Uh put it on a put it on a different++
night would ya?

KL: [UC] night.=

MS: =It always be on-- Wednesdays.

NQ: Yeah.

Can you imagine
your boy Quentin gettin jumped on?

((To NQ))

KL: Good idea

jump on you.

NQ: Kyle

I’ll take care of you later.

DE: Oh yeah.

Not of me you’re not.

NQ: You too buddy.

DE: I not in it.

((To SH))

KL: I got my hair cut.

NQ: I’m keepin my job.

SH: Is it [UC]

NQ: Da--

talk--

SH: Is it short?

Is your hair short?

KL: Yeah.

((To SH))

NQ: So how long you staying today?

SH: I //don’t know.

NQ: //Til I slip up right?

SH: I don’t know.

A couple of hours.

NQ: I guess until I slip up right?

SH: No.

NQ: What?

SH: You’re slippin up has nothing to do with++

me stayin or leavin.

((MS laughs))

NQ: What you laughin about?

((MS continues to laugh))

NQ: Marissa?

You never jump my case have you?

KL: Oh yeah.

Plenty //of time Nigel.

MS: //Nigel let’s //talk about++
somethin pleasant.

DE: //Plenty of time boy.

MS: Let’s talk about somethin pleasant.

DE: Yeah.

Good idea.

NQ: Somethin for dinner for jumpin [UC].

((NQ laughs))
Huh?
   I wonder what we got for dinner tonight?
   And what's on //TV?
DE: //We're havin rabbin
   we're havin
((MS honks van horn at passing car))
DE: rabbin rabbin food.
((MS laughs))
NQ: Wha wha what?
MS: [UC]
((DE mouths something to himself))
NQ: Which one?
   Which car?
MS: See that um-- station wagon goin [UC]
[UC]
NQ: You better honk to her again haven't you?
MS: She's gone.
NQ: She gone?
MS: Mhm.
NQ: Which way'd she go?
MS: That way.
   She lives on down there by the Dogwood home.
NQ: Let's go let's go to Dogwood awhile.
MS: No.
   N::ah.
((SH chuckles))
((Song-like))
DE: Bye bye Dogwood.
NQ: Wha whatcha got from me today Marissa?
((DE mouths something to himself))
NQ: You got a couple of surprises for me++
don't ya?
   Marissa?
   Marissa?
MS: What Nigel.
NQ: You got a couple of surprises for me++
today don't ya?
MS: What kind of surprises Nigel?
NQ: Well you know how [UC] I've been goofin off.
   To Rita.
   I don't know what you got planned though
   but I got some I got some you got++
something to say huh?
MS: I don't even know what you are talkin about.
NQ: Guess what?
   You [UC] your responsibility to go to++
Debbie--
   you know Debbie?
Oxford?
((To KL))
DE: //Tomorrow's bank day.
NQ: //Tell her I did good today.
better one. //You figure out time tomorrow is a++

((To DE))
KL: //Yep.
NQ: [UC]=
KL: =[UC] check too.
DE: They're thinkin bout-- raisin our checks++
huh?
KL: Forty-two
   forty-tree.
NQ: I got two today.
DE: They start-- raisin our raisin++
our //checks uh allowances checks.
((To NQ))
MS:
//How many [UC]?
NQ: One.
   No two.
   Two.
KL: Tomorrow.
DE: Tomorrow yeah.
KL: Huh huh.
   Me changin.
NQ: Ten?
DE: That's right.
KL: I did tell ya.
[UC]
DE: I know that.
NQ: Huh.
   What's he supposed to do?
   Sign me out?
KL: Uh huh huh huh.
NQ: I thought I was supposed to sign me out.
((KL chuckles))
DE: Nigel
everybody's everybody's ahead //of ya.
   //I'm++
gonna try it out.
   I'm gonna try it out and see what happens.
KL: Look.
MS: You say you got to get ten uh that's five++
days straight.
   Five days [UC]
NQ: I got [UC] two days.
   I got two days already.
KL: [UC]=
NQ: =Monday.
KL: One two
   four.
NQ: Monday?
   Two days huh?
MS: You got to be good tomorrow-- and Friday.
DE: That's right.
NQ: You got something up your sleeve too huh?
MS: No I don't.
I just know she says.
NQ: [UC]
That means [UC] twenty.
You gonna add em up when we get home?
MS: I already added em up.
You got six.
NQ: Six.
MS: Cause you brought two home yesterday [UC]
NQ: I got two I got two today.
MS: How many ya got yesterday?
NQ: Two.
NQ: OK
you got two Monday.
[UC]
NQ: That's six.
KL: Seven.
That's all I need right?
KL: No.
Ten.

((NQ chuckles))
NQ: Ten right?
MS: You got two more days [UC]

((NQ laughs))
NQ: //Maybe I can cut my losses.
MS: //I hope you can do it.
I hope you can do it Nigel.
NQ: Hey
you ever figure out what Jack Abbott’s++
been up to?
MS: Oh I don’t even watch that.
NQ: You never watch it?
MS: That’s right.
NQ: //Now wait a second.
DE: //Watch t too much TV.=
NQ: =You you watch them with me when we get home++
don’t you?
DE: Want to know why.
MS: [UC] We have to cook and clean up [UC]
NQ: Uh uh.
Skip today.

((SH chuckles))
((To NQ))
SH: You gonna give Marissa the day off?
NQ: I wish I could.
I wish I got a day off comin but I don’t.
I honestly don’t.
MS: Debbie gave you a good [UC] bring home++
[UC] notes [UC]
NQ: Yeah.
Probably lock me up.

((NQ laughs))
MS: No don’t even try that.
((NQ laughs))
((Imitating Marissa))
NQ: Don’t even try that.
((To SH))

See
I like I like to try that wif her.
You mean you’re just tellin me.
You mean you’re just tellin me right?
MS: [UC]
NQ: [UC] and not the guys.
MS: [UC]
NQ: That’s it.
I don’t
I don’t have to do all my-- special++
behavior do I?
MS: You’re not gonna start with me Nigel.
NQ: I know.
I know.
But you don’t try to [UC] me neither.
MS: Nigel I gonna try // [UC]
NQ: // [UC] me neither.
MS: You don’t try it with me
and I won’t try it with you.
NQ: I could use something to drink about now.
Where’s our money?

((To SH))
KL: Look
[UC]
see.
See how der doin the //balloons comin++
over here.

((To MS))
NQ: //Where’s our bank++
checks?
KL: Gas--// uh--// air balloons.
MS: //We cash checks on what day Nigel?
NQ: //Thursday.=
MS: =Is today Thursday Nigel?
NQ: Have we got em?
SH: Uh huh.
MS: We got em.
KL: Come over here now.
NQ: I want to make sure we got em now.
Clear the field out.
MS: We got em.
KL: Open up the riser.
NQ: First // [UC]
KL: //Lights on.
NQ: Ha ha.
((NQ grabs zippered pouch with checks and other mail and holds it out the front passenger seat window))
((Excited))
MS: Don’t throw that out the window.
((To SH))
KL: They do it.
((To NQ))
TD: Give it here.
MS: Give it back.
((To TD))
Uh uh.
Ted
Ted
that’s not even yours.
You’re not even in it.

((NQ brings the pouch back inside and undoes the zipper))
NQ: [UC]
((DE sighs))
((To NQ))
MS: What’s the use of you makin sure?
((NQ chuckles))
MS: And you still can’t do nothin with it.
Until tomorrow.
((NQ chuckles))
MS: It look good don’t it?
((Laughing))
NQ: I was makin sure it was in there.
MS: Yeah it’s in there.
//Now zip it back up.
KL: /[UC] day off.
((To NQ))
DE: Ha ha.
You lose.
MS: [UC]
((To KL))
SH: What are you gonna do tomorrow?
((DE sighs))
KL: I no know.
I workin-- morrow.
SH: Tomorrow //night?
KL: //Morrow day.
Friday night--
off Friday.
((To KL))
NQ: No it isn’t.
KL: Me.
NQ: No it’s not.
Kyle.
KL: Me off.
You not.
NQ: You off huh?
KL: Is.
NQ: Yeah you're off your rocker.
KL: You is rocker.

((Laughing))
DE: Oh huh huh //huh.
NQ: //OK [UC] now.
KL: He is.
NQ: [UC]
KL: He is off.
NQ: I don't need to see the doctor anymore++
neither.
KL: Muh paper in muh hand now.
NQ: Huh?
MS: [UC]
NQ: I don't need to go see Dr. Clearer.
NQ: [UC] take me back to Dr. Clearer's++
office //([UC]
DE: //No he nee he nee he needs head loose
head loose.=
KL: =He needs a hang man.
No uh shrink.

((SH laughs))
DE: Head shrink yeah.
That's a good answer.
KL: Yeah
how about gettin one?

((SH chuckles))
((KL laughs))
((To MS))

NQ: How'd you like to get dressed up fancy?
Marissa?
You hear me?
How'd you like to get dressed up fancy?
MS: [UC]
NQ: Wait I need some-- information.
MS: [UC]
NQ: You know a story about the other night?
You told me to get ten in a row.
MS: No I didn't.

[[Momentary break in the tape]]
NQ: I'm gonna get eight?
I'm gonna get bumped I know that.
KL: Get bumped.
NQ: Kyle.
I had enough argument with uh--=
KL: =Guess who?=
NQ: =with Maria.
I had-- I put it in the right spot at the++
right time.
KL: Maria ain't //boss.
NQ: //I’ll tell you that.
DE: Alright Kyle.
[UC] have //himself.
NQ: //I don’t care
I don’t care
//[UC] jump my case.
KL: //Hey
he no boss-- dere.
DE: Simpson.
KL: Uh uh.
Two days are ober.
The bosses—=
NQ: =Yeah and you know what?
You know who’s gonna stop me don’t ya?
Kyle?
Marissa?
Marissa?
You know who’s gonna stop me don’t ya?
KL: //Let Fred do it.
NQ: //Fred?
And Jesse’s gonna stop me.
They’ve done it in the past.
They do it in the future.
KL: Hang you.
NQ: They’re gonna stop me from goin out.
KL: Good.
NQ: Marissa?
You got a comment to that?
KL: No.
Hang men comin up.
NQ: Look.
Marissa.
I’m just protectin my butt.
KL: Look.
Zhaust fumes.
[UC]
Big time bloouie kaboom!
[UC]
NQ: Someone’s gonna get canned.
Either me.
Or Jesse.
Or Lee.
SH: Why?=
NQ: =Five of us are gonna get canned.
SH: Why?
KL: You=)
NQ: =I ain’t gonna open my mouth.
KL: He is.
Mouth //open.
NQ: //I gonna have to do somethin-- to++
save my butt.
KL: You ying-yang.
NQ: [UC] body.
   Marissa?
   KL: You baby goo-goo.

   ((To KL))
   NQ: You better not
       you better not
       you better jump on me yet.

   ((Taunting))
   KL: A baby goo goo goo.
   NQ: You understand what I'm saying?
   KL: Well //make me.
   MS: //If you're talkin about [UC]=
   KL: =You're gonna need a baby bottle already.

   ((NQ laughs))
   DE: Hey!
       Hey
       hey hey Kyle.
       mhave yourself.
   KL: No.
       A baby bottle you //too.
   NQ: //No.
   KL: Two bottles.
   DE: It may be him.
       It not me baby.=
   NQ: =Is Jesse gonna stop me //from goin out?
   KL: //Uh huh.
   DE: Hey Kyle.
   NQ: ///[UC]
   DE: //Make one for him.
   KL: I know.
       You next one.
   NQ: Don't do ///[UC]
   DE: //No I'm alright.
   KL: Me know [UC]
       ///[UC] on you.
   NQ: //You understand me?
       Tell me now.
       Tell me now Marissa.
       Even though I would get ten notes in a row
       that still won't save my butt.
   KL: M baby bottle goo goo.
   NQ: You didn't hear one word I said did you?
   MS: I heard it all [UC]
   NQ: Either way you want to do this
       I'm gonna get caught.
   MS: Nigel.=
   NQ: =/[UC]
   KL: //Good.
   MS: ///[UC] if you don't ///[UC]
   KL: //They'll hang you.

   ((DE hands tape recorder to SH))
   ((To SH))
DE: Here ya go.
NQ: That's what I'm supposed to do.

((To DE))

SH: Thank you.
NQ: Y'all are not supposed //to jump my case--=
DE: //[(UC]
MS: =Let's have a good day today.=
NQ: =every five minutes.
Uh.
The same goes for Duncan.
I can’t go see him until I know something.
KL: The hang men [UC]
NQ: You ain’t gonna-- askin me to-- Victor++

Newman's office.

((DE laughs)))

NQ: [UC] office.
Jack Abbott’s office.
DE: [UC]--=
NQ: =You too Donny boy.
DE: It’s gonna be
it’s gonna be
it’s gonna be uh-- [UC] office.

((Sound of van door slamming shut: horn honks in driveway))

DE: Who did that?
NQ: [UC]
[UC]
they did that.
But-- they’re gonna write me up.
They’re gonna write me up for stuff I++
don’t do.

MS: Oh //[(UC]
NQ: //For stuff I do do
[UC] write me up for it.
I have to have my name put in the in the
sign out book.
Whoever I go out with right?
KL: Yeah hang men too.=
NQ: =Whoever go whoever I go out with I gotta uh
go out with the uh-- sign out book.
KL: I come out with my butcher knife //[(UC]
NQ: //You++

ain’t gonna do no such thing.=
MS: =Nigel.
KL: Your name on it.
Yours.
DE: No you didn’t.

((To SH))

KL: How you doin?
SH: Alright.

((The residents place their lunch boxes on the kitchen
counter))
((To SH))
NQ: I haven't seen you in about two days.
    [UC]//[/UC]
MS: //Harry put your lunch bucket up.
NQ: I am not going to my room.
MS: You don't have to go to your room.
NQ: I meant tonight.
     I am not goin to room tonight-- at all.
MS: Come on Harry.
     Put your lunch bucket up.
     Don what I ask you about that everyday?
DE: What?
MS: I'm not gonna tell you another day.
     If you wanna bring it up with Jesse I will.
     Harry go put you coat up.

((MS heard in hallway))

((To SH))
NQ: Gee whiz.
    Want to watch TV together in a in a little++
while?
     After I do what I need to do OK?
SH: OK.
NQ: I don't want nobody messin around with me++
today.
DE: I don't want to hear it.
NQ: I am not in the mood to play games.
DE: I don't want to hear it.
NQ: Don.
     Go in your room and stay put.

((DE heard in hallway))
NQ: Oh my goodness.
     Hi Harry

((To SH))

((SH chuckles))
NQ: I am not gonna I am not gonna have that.
     I not gonna have what they did to me last++
night.
SH: Can I ask you about your training?
NQ: Go see who's higher up than me.
SH: Why can't I ask you?
NQ: Cause I am not in the mood for training++
today.
SH: No I didn't want to train you
     I wanted to ask you about it.
NQ: [UC]-- cocked.
SH: Huh?
NQ: Half-cocked.
SH: What?
NQ: I am still-- disappointed in what they++
did-- told me today.
They wanted me over there
they wanted they wanted to jump my++
case-- so good-- Ethan Morris did not want to see me++
go out to VIP again tomorrow.
   I’m goin again.
I put that bag in the wrong spot at the++
wrong time.
I’m still gonna be mad about it for a++
little while. They know-- that that garbage was supposed++
to be put out.
SH: Let me ask you a couple of questions about++
training.
   NQ: Go ahead and ask
       but you may not get em a few answers.
   SH: OK.
   What are what is your training?
   NQ: Stay-- out-- of-- the kitchen-- area.
       Monday was to do the dishes.
       I ain’t doin that.
       Still-- what-you-call-- pissed off at what++
happened today.
   SH: What other training do you have?
       Besides dishes?
   NQ: Uh grocery store-- on Saturday.
       I gotta leave it on Saturday and leave it++
alone.
   SH: What other training?
       ((NQ drinks from a glass of water))
       NQ: Washing washing clothes.
       SH: Mhm.
       NQ: And that’s about it.
       SH: Do you like training?
       ((NQ swallows))
       NQ: Not as much peoples-- comin over here and++
talkin with me.
       SH: What?
       NQ: Not as much as people like-- to come over++
and talk with me a lot.
       SH: But you don’t mind it?
       NQ: I don’t mind.
       I better talk to Ethan Morris about it++
tomorrow-- what happened today-- did not need to happen.
       I did not need to get all steamed up.
       But the-- staff over there-- don’t want to++
know what the staff over here are thinkin.
       I was just helpin do my job that’s all.
       It was totally my fault.
       I know the boys in the shop are still++
gonna be mad at me.
       I’d like to have meetin with the boys in++
the shop one day.
[(Tape ends)]

((NQ swallows))

NQ: They knew better than that.
They knew how to-- push my buttons.
As Jesse would say.

((KL and MS heard in the background))

((To KL))

MS: Gonna go to work today?
NQ: I don't.
  I'm done.
KL: I did.
  I did.
NQ: I'm done.
KL: Hey hey.=
MS: =Harry go take you bath.
KL: Hey Marissa?
NQ: [UC] later.//
KL: [UC] //asks who's tellin him that he++ need one.

I tell im
say
//[UC]

MS: //Harry you going to go to the bathroom?
Kyle?
You need to go to the bathroom before++

Harry does?

KL: No no no now.
NQ: I got this.
KL: Don't push that button in.
  Don't push that button it.
  No no no no.
  No need dat.
  That will shut off the whole thing.
SH: What're you doin?
NQ: You stayin for dinner tonight then?
SH: Um I might be.
KL: Hey darlin.
  How ya doin?
SH: I'm doin fine.
  How are you doin?
KL: I fine.
SH: When are you leavin for work?
NQ: I'm done

((Calmly))

Kyle don't get mad.
I w I w I w I was mad for both of us today
believe me.
KL: Yeah I heard dat.
[UC]
  You know why?
NQ: It wasn't my fault.
KL: You mouth
NQ: My job was supposed to—
KL: Your problem—

((NQ hits his thigh with his closed fist several times))

KL: Nuh uh.
NQ: My job was supposed to put the garbage++ where it was supposed to be.
KL: Nuh uh.
That man asked dem do it
let dem do it.

((NQ hits his open palm with his closed fist several times))

NQ: Yeah.
Jumped my case about it would ya?
KL: No.
//You
NQ: //And then Maria jumped my case again++
on the-- her-- on her van.
KL: You [UC]

((NQ hits his open palm with his closed fist several times))

KL: I learn my mouth
I learn-- long time //ago.
NQ: //I know what I’m++
supposed to do Gran-- Kyle.
KL: You //loud mouth trouble.
NQ: //I’m just tellin you what is++
supposed to happen.
KL: You blew
you in trouble
all the time.
NQ: All the time?
Listen to me.
KL: Bingo.

((NQ hits his open palm with his closed fist one time))

KL: I said Bingo you //UC
NQ: //Kyle

Kyle
let me tell you something.
Ethan Morris was so mad at me
I could have lost VIP for that.
KL: Good.
NQ: I did not want to lose it.
KL: You should try shut your mouth up next time.

((NQ hits his open palm with his closed fist one time))

NQ: They should have not told me to put the++
garbage where it’s not supposed to be.
KL: Ask-- someone else.
NQ: I was supposed to.
KL: No no no.
You left it dere.

NQ: I could have left it dere
    yeah
    but they would have been mad.
KL: Good
    [UC] mad.
NQ: Let em let em get mad.
    He ain’t payin me.
    I’m gonna write off Ethan right then++

and there.

KL: No.
    Him over you.

((NQ hits his open palm with his closed fist three times))
NQ: I don’t care if the man in the moon’s over++
    me.
    He is NOT gonna do that again.
KL: Oh yes.
NQ: I’ll put that garbage where it is supposed++
to be //and that is it.
KL:
    //Dat--
    dat--
    dat--
NQ: //UC
KL: //Dat dem boys
    put dat there--

((Angry))
NQ: I’m not puttin up with this anymore.
KL: Go your room.
    Walk outside.

((NQ hits his open palm with his fist several times))
NQ: I am not gonna have that.
KL: Oh yes.
NQ: If Jesse wants to have a meetin with me
    he can.
KL: Good.
NQ: I was only doin my job.
KL: Nah now
    no job.

((NQ hits the kitchen counter with his fist once))
KL: Tuesday your job.
NQ: What’d you think that today was?
KL: No.
    R:ain day.
NQ: That’s right.
KL: On Tuesday.
NQ: That’s right.
KL: You goof.
    Both //days.
NQ: //It was rainin.

((MS enters the room))
NQ: Kyle.
I couldn’t done nothin in the rain.

((To KL))
MS: Come put your clothes on.
NQ: I couldn’t do nothin in the rain.

((Calmer))
You know it was rainin Tuesday right?
KL: Yeah.
NQ: So they changed it to Wednesday.

((NQ hits the kitchen counter with his fist two times))
KL: Listen next time-- when people do it

((Irritated))
NQ: I am gonna listen
they’re gonna listen to me.
KL: No.
NQ: You ployee over there.

((NQ hits the kitchen counter with his fist several times))
KL: The lady over you.
NQ: I don’t care if the man in the moon’s over++ me.

KL: OK
no money.
NQ: Oh I made money.
KL: Uh uh.
NQ: I want Maria to be off all day over there.
KL: Nuh uh.
    VOA’s [UC]
NQ: I don’t care if the man in the moon’s++ vehicle.

KL: You nuts
not me.
NQ: You’re crazy.
KL: You wrong.
NQ: You’re sick.
KL: You’re double crazy.

((NQ starts to laugh))
((To SH))
NQ: He’s he’s double sick.
KL: Quatra- dooble sick.

((NQ laughs))
((SH chuckles weakly))
((Chuckling))
NQ: He’s double sick.
((Calmly))
But Sharon
if you should have seen the act that I++ pulled today.
KL: That Newman’s-- crazy day.
((To KL))
NQ: I ain’t pullin that.
But the next time anybody //walks++ through-- that door-- asks me what I did today
KL: //Oh yes.
NQ: I’m gonna sw-- ran and throw em.
KL: No no no.
You lie
someone else do.
You dood it.
NQ: I don’t want my job-- //taken away
KL: //Good.
I ain’t taken it away.
Nobody else-- taken away.
Your fault.

((NQ hits his open palm with his fist several times))

((Angry))

NQ: I d you mean to tell me
you tellin me-- that-- I put the garbage++
in the wrong spot at the wrong time?
KL: You lucky you hit your brains out.
//[UC] ober there.
NQ: //MAN I DON’T CARE.
KL: No care
no do it.
NQ: Oh I was told where to put it.
KL: Do it.
Tell dem
ask dem
the ladies //[UC]

NQ: //I AM NOT GONNA TELL NOBODY++

NOTHIN.

KL: Now go.

((NQ hits his open palm with his fist several times))

KL: How you do that--?= 
NQ: =I went today--
KL: Yeah stupid
you lucky you wouldn’t get the money.
You lucky you put you on suspension the++
fun you have.

((NQ hits his open palm with his fist several times))

NQ: I AM NOT GONNA HAVE THE BOYS IN THE++
SH--SHOP TELLIN ME HOW TO DO MY JOB.
KL: Tellin em off.
Tellin em off.

((Calm))

NQ: I’m sorry I’m sorry I’m gettin mad
but somebody’s got to let em know.
KL: Hey tell em off

((Angry))

NQ: I AM NOT GONNA PUT THEM OFF put their++
job-- //ahead of mine.
KL:
//No.
Do it.
Ask the boss
[UC] boss [UC]
NQ: EXACTLY!
KL: No you done did it.
((NQ hits his open palm with his closed fist several times))
KL: You fuckin-- retarded--?
NQ: I AM NOT GONNA PUT //UP WITH THAT.
KL: //in the head.

You damn fool head
you got dem jumpin //up and down.
NQ: //I AM NOT GONNA DO++

THAT GRANDMA KYLE
I'M TELLIN YA.
KL: Oh yeah
you do.
NQ: I'M SMARTER THAN ANYBODY OVER THERE.
KL: Drumb.
You mouth-- open-- ajoo.
[UC]=
NQ: =I'm just wantin to know
where to put it
and
what for.
KL: Now.
NQ: You see.
KL: Now.
NQ: and Maria did not need to jump my case++

about it.
KL: No cuss out Maria
[UC]
Do your own job
your own way.
Yeah you goof.=
NQ: =It matters //it matters in gettin in++

trouble with Ethan Morris is that it?
KL: //Your own [UC]
Him over you too fool.
((NQ hits his open palm with his fist several times))
KL: I tell him //go home
NQ: //I tell them I tell them at++

the shop to lay off.
KL: Lay off a cat.
Easy to do.
NQ: THAT'S
MY MONEY
I DECIDE WHAT TO DO ON THIS.
KL: Uh uh.
NQ: I GET IT-- THE WAY I WANT To GET IT.
KL: The main boss over in the main office++

really don't like it.
NQ: I DON'T CARE WHAT THE MAIN PEOPLE IN THE MAIN OFFICE THINK.

KL: =Uhh huh.
    Oh yeah?
    Who makes the checks out?

NQ: I don't care if the man in the moon makes

em out.

KL: Maybe-- you jump //up--
NQ: //THEY KNOW WHAT TO DO.
KL: Yeah they //do.
NQ: //THEY TOLD ME
    SO THEY HAD TO JUMP ETHAN.
    ETHAN JUMPED ME.

KL: Know why he do it?
NQ: I DON'T LIKE PEOPLE JUMPIN ON BUTT.
KL: You know why?
    You big mouth open.

((NQ hits kitchen counter with fist once))
KL: Shut your mouth up
    and walk over there--

((NQ hits kitchen counter with fist))

((NQ hits kitchen counter with fist)))

NQ: TELL THEM STAY OFF--=
KL: =No asshole.=
NQ: =the grounds.=
KL: =You goof.
    You goof.
NQ: Just stay off the grounds over there.
KL: Dumb bell.
    //[UC]
NQ: //Or what we have is grounded.
KL: No look here.
    I know you day off
    You know why I know you day off?
    No listen.=

NQ: =Look Curly.=
KL: =No listen.=
NQ: =LOOK
    I HAD ENOUGH OF THIS
    WITH ETHAN MORRIS.
    I'M NOT GOIN THROUGH THIS STUFF
    WITH YOU TOO.
    I HAD TO PUT THE GARBAGE SOMEWHERE RIGHT?

KL: NQ.
    You make---
NQ: =Right?==
KL: =yourself an ass.
NQ: I was---=
KL: =No no ass.
    You did it wrong.

((NQ hits his open palm with his fist several times))
NQ: Yeah that doesn't mean--
    I'm gonna be held-- responsible.
KL: Oh yes
[UC]=
NQ: =Oh no!
It does NOT!
KL: Oh yes
you do [UC]
NQ: Case closed.
KL: [UC]
NQ: I'M JUST TRYING TO DO MY JOB
THAT'S ALL.
I AM NOT
I AM
I don't like people tellin on me.
They I don't like people talkin behind my++
back.
SH: Nobody was talkin behind your back.
((NQ hits his open palm with his fist several times))
NQ: They just need to know where the garbage++
goes.
And Barbara got all huffy and puffy about++
it.
SH: And you know why too.
NQ: You're doggone right I'm gonna-- know.
Cause I'm gonna hold those-- those people++
in the back responsible.
SH: They=
NQ: =The people in the back?
SH: They were doin their jobs
just like you were doin your job.
NQ: Yeah but they don't need to jump my case++
about it.
MS: Nigel.
Either you sit down and-- calm down
or you need go outside and take a walk.
Because you can't do this to the guys++
every day.
((Softly))
NQ: It's just not like me Marissa
to-- come //in here with a full head of++
steam like this.
MS: //Nigel.
I--
Listen
listen
((Irritated))
I don't want to hear it.
((Calmly))
NQ: You don't want to hear it huh?
MS: I don't want to hear it.
NQ: It would have been settled.
I'll just forget about it.
Cause they knew they were in the wrong.
MS: I thought you said you were //gonna try to++
forget it.

NQ: //Ethan knew.

They knew I was wrong.
I was just doin what they told me.

((NQ turns up television))

SH: Are we gonna watch TV?
NQ: Yeah let's watch TV.
      Keep my mind off things.
SH: That's right.
      Is Victor Newman on yet?
NQ: Not yet.
      Mmmm
      let's put candy in the dish.
      You want to put candy in the dish?
SH: Sure.
NQ: Marissa
      let's put candy in the dish.

((Sounds of television))

((NQ talks to MS in the hallway))

NQ: Hey Sharon
APPENDIX E

SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT OF "HOUSE MEETING"

[[071894: 60.1: 44A: Esplanade: house meeting]]

FR: Harry
everyday.
DE: Sort of
//yeah.
FR: //Two times a day
sometimes.

((FR chuckles))
DE: My //my uh my uh
FR: //So we come to the meetings
and we tell you em before you come in
so that they know what you are
what they are
before you get into it.
DE: [UC]
FR: You have disagreements with any of them
and then you know y'all can talk about em
//then
DE: //Right.
FR: but once you sign em that means you agreed++
upon the rules.
KL: No sign em
no good.+
FR: =Yeah.
KL: You no sign em
//no good.
FR: //And the next one is
you have the right to be provided with++
suitable opportunities
with interactions with members of the++
opposite sex.
That means what?
Havin the parties all the time //and
DE: //That’s++
right.
FR: To the different games that the girls++
committee in and Ro
and I don’t know if y’all do the++
Roadrunner’s anymore
but all the other
clubs and Christmas parties and Ladies++
Auxiliaries and
then you can call over
you can call up if you get a girl //friend
DE: //How++
bout the [UC] dance?
FR: Dances.
Mhm.
You have all these opportunities so you know
it's up to you to take advantage of it=
DE: =How bout the uh
the Roadrunner trip?
KL: No.=
FR: =I don't know bout those anymore.
I don't know if they'll //do anything or++
not.
KL: //They out.
No more.
I know.
They did.
FR: OK.
Now does anybody have a concern that++
they'd like brought up and
make anybody at the office and around++
here aware of?
Don?
Ya have anything?
DE: Uh
how bout
how bout
contact Marsha and den
take us
to uh
Nashville Tennessee.
FR: Well well.
DE: That's a good //idea.
FR: //That's what the++
Roadrunner's are doin huh?
DE: Yep.
FR: Yeah that's what I thought.
KL: Not over.
FR: Well y'all are going=
KL: =Texas=
FR: =Well I was gonna say that in the++
announcements later
KL: In August.
FR: but y'all are gonna go
the first week of August to
Texas.
DE: Wow!
I //going.
((To SH))
KL: //You wanna go?
FR: OK.
KL: Your parents live back there.=
FR: =OK anybody else have any uh
concern they'd like to bring up.
KL: [UC] sippi [UC]=
FR: =Harry? Anything you’d like to talk about?  
KL: Texas.  
FR: What?  

((HR laughs))  
KL: Really rainin.  
DE: What say [UC]?  
FR: Just being real huh?  

((DE laughs))  
FR: OK. How bout you Lee?  
LU: Me?  
FR: Yep.  
LU: Anything?  
FR: Not really.  
OK. Kyle? Anything any concerns anything needs doin take //care of?  
KL: //I don’t know.  
FR: I don’t know.  
Nigel. How bout you?=  
NQ: =I got a couple things to ask a couple to ask?  
FR: Ask away. Now do these concern everybody?  
NQ: One person.  
FR: Uh. OK //well ask anyway.  
KL: //No.  
NQ: What am I gonna do about uh Bob Wilson about uh T TV off at night?  
FR: I //figured we  
KL: //[UC]  
FR: shoot off his big toe every time he turns++ it on.  

((NQ laughs))  
NQ: No s you know=  
FR: =He’ll learn.  
NQ: You know how you how it that happens don’t++ you?=  
FR: =Yeah //we’ve talked to him about it and=  
NQ: //[UC]
=You know //what happens
FR: //and we //explained it to him.
DE: //Slammin doors and+

harm people's ears.
FR: Mhm.
LU: Oh
not door thing.
NQ: Yeah
that TV thing you know.
DE: That TV thing too.
Yeah.
FR: OK.
NQ: He can come out here out and watch it++
with me and everybody.
FR: Yes I know.
Well we talked to him about it.
Jesse talked to him about it again today
so we'll just see
you know he's new
and he's young
and
and that's just the way he
is at the moment.
And that's //part of
NQ: //Slammin doors.=
FR: =that's why I could wish he could be here++
to uh
and hear what we had to say about this.
((FR chuckles))
Cause that's part of //[(UC]
DE: //I know.
I
I know the=
FR: =to be informed of the rules.
DE: I know that we not deaf //but he is right?
NQ: //I follow the++

rules real good don't I?
FR: Right.
Um.=
DE: =Is that right Fred?
Oh
you're OK most of the time.
//[(UC]
KL: //We need lady here
talk him.
Same lady here.
Let her //here.
NQ: //Hh
his mom's comin tonight
so I can [UC] with the uh
[UC] might figure it out.
MS: She won't be comin //tonight.
FR: //No she’s not comin++
tonight.

No class tonight.
DE: Sorry.
MS: The weather’s too bad.
DE: Sorry.
NQ: I went out today instead of tomorrow.
FR: Uh
she’ll be back up again next week.
DE: That’s right.
KL: You lucky me came out.
I come right time.
You come in.
FR: Yeah I know.
You got in just in time out of the //rain++
didn’t ya?
KL: //I++
come hour.

That four hours.
DE: He’s not interdicted.
I I I //am.
FR: //Well
are there any announcements anybody’s like++
to make?

Any parties
er
birthdays
or
happenings
or anything else?=
LU: =I don’t think so.
FR: Nothing you need announce.
LU: Nnnn=
DE: =Oh I know one.
FR: Alright //tell us.
LU: =//What?
DE: They’ll be a
a birthday
they’ll be a
another birthday party for Ann Tassone.
FR: Oh really.
When?
DE: July
July twenty-eighth.
FR: That’s her birthday?
DE: Yep.
FR: Mm OK.
Gonna write down what you say.
July twenty-eighth.
DE: And July twenty-//eighth
FR: //Good.
//And
DE: //Look.
    Is the last day
eatin hot lunches.
FR: Oh really?
DE: Yep.
MS: Remind me Don.
    I got to //[(UC)].
FR: //Yeah I’m glad you said that++

[(UC) note.
    Everybody start makin lunches.
DE: That’s right.
FR: That’s a good one there.
    [UC]=
MS: =Man I wish my [UC] show up like yours.
((MS chuckles))
FR: OK
    any other
    announcements or anything
    sides that?
    Any //[(UC]
KL: //Hmm.
FR: that.
    Well
    okey-dokey.
KL: Need a new=
FR: =OK
    routine household concerns.
KL: No work.
FR: OK.
LU: How we doin with our chores?
FR: I was just gonna say
    you’ve been pickin up a little bit
    but sometimes in the morning
    well not the last week or two
    so I must say that
    but you know
    sometimes in the mornings
    you been
DE: You gotta get=
FR: =gettin a little bit cluttered
    more than we should //so
DE: //That’s right.
FR: we’ve gotta try to keep up with that now.
DE: That means we got=
FR: =and sometimes we’re havin trouble with time
    problems in the mornin but //[(UC] doin the++
    best we can.
DE: //Yeah.=
KL: =Fred?
    Hey Fred?
FR: Mhm.
KL: Man comin over here.
FR: Who?
KL: Big man.
FR: Oh yeah.
KL: Hhh.
FR: Oh yeah I forgot.
KL: I'm glad you said that.
FR: That's not for a couple of weeks.
KL: I know.
FR: =[UC]=
DE: =You mean you mean //Dale Caffey?
MS: //That's
FR: Yeah.
MS: //That's the day before they leave uh=
FR: Day before y'all go on y'all's vacation
DE: Dale
FR: and a group of uh
DE: is it VOA people er?
KL: Uh huh.
FR: VOA
DE: //VOA Board of Directors.
FR: //Ss.
DE: Board of Directors right?
FR: Are gonna come and inspect the houses.
DE: //That's right.
FR: So we want it to look sharp.
FR: It's on stuff //we have to start with soon
DE: //That's right.
FR: and keep it sharp
DE: and over stuff //the major kind that we++
do every day.
FR: S have to remember to do it.
FR: Plus you gonna be leavin town the next day
DE: so we got a double reason
to get keep the house clean.
FR: Cause what do we always say?
DE: Leave the house clean right?
FR: //You //want to clean the house
DE: //How bout this?
FR: cause //when you come home
DE: //How bout this?
FR: How bout //this?
FR: //you're gonna make a mess.
DE: Listen me.
KL: Can I say somethin?
KL: No //bull.
DE: I went to I went to
DE: local national and state.
DE: We got so many boards.
Right Fred?
FR: Mhm.
KL: No bull.
FR: Yep.
We’ve got several boards all the way up.
Local
state
and national VOA boards.
I think we just got the state ones comin in.
KL: State ones.
FR: And the local ones.
KL: Local ones.
FR: This time.
DE: You mean this time huh?
FR: As far as I know.
DE: Why we don’t have to //worry about it.
NQ: //You mean to tell me++
I got to pack everything t--?
Not tonight though?
KL: No Nigel.
August fifth.
((UC) laughs))
FR: I think you got a little time.
DE: We got plenty of time.
It ain’t August yet.
FR: OK.
Now housekeepin assignments are the same as
they ar posted up on the thing.
LU: Yeah.
DE: Yeah.
FR: Um
DE: Where the staff meetin n n?
KL: I talked to my //lady minute ago.
FR: //I
KL: I work for?
DE: weh weh ha have the staff meetin?
KL: I talked to my lady a minute ago.
KL: I work.
I see my girl.
FR: [UC]
I’m sorry.
DE: Where ha have //staff meetin?
KL: //Her girl.
I know.
FR: When are we //gonna have a staff meetin?
KL: //UC]
love me
DE: Yeah.
FR: OK.
We’re gonna have a staff meeting
Friday.
DE: Friday?
FR: Yeah but not here.
DE: Not here.
FR: Not gonna have one this week here
cause that’s the meeting we have tonight
the sign language
is also our staff meeting
that we have on Mondays.
DE: Right.
FR: So we’re not havin one tonight cause of++
the weather.
DE: Right.
KL: //Hallelujah.
FR: //OK.
   How
   OK
   we’re gonna zip down to
((Excitedly))
   menu items.
   Alright.
   Anybody have any suggestions?
   Now’s you big chance.
   Don E.
DE: Alright.
   I pick one choice.
KL: Oh wo.
DE: Hot dogs!
MS: Hot //dogs.
FR: //Hot dogs.
   Alright.
   Hot dogs.
MS: We might //have that Friday Don.
FR:  //Harry?
   Harry?
   What’s your
   what thing do you like best?
((Suddenly animated))
HR: Pizza.=
((Pleased))
FR: =Pizza.
   I know it.
   That Harry loves pizza.
KL: I’ll take a piece of //that.
   Well
   he’s
   not here.
   Kyle.
KL: Mm.
   Shrimp.
FR: Shrimp.
NQ: I got one for ya uh uh=
FR: =Got one //for us tonight huh?
NQ: //Man--
Manwich.
MS: Oh Lord.
((NQ laughs))
FR: Oh. =
DE: =You can say that again.
FR: You been stuck on that one for several++ weeks.
((Excited))
NQ: I love em?
FR: And Lee Underwood.
LU: Oh
//you know.
KL: //Hot potatoes.
FR: I've already got it written down. =
KL: =Hot //potatoes.
FR: //Ready to go.
Steak and baked potatoes.
DE: Yeah that's right.
FR: I'm gonna write that one down for=
KL: =You make a boo //boo
FR: //I'm gonna write your++ name down.
KL: Ma ma.
FR: OK.
Now
is any places or plans or special events recreation.
Alright.
Kyle.
KL: I=
FR: =What do you want to do?
KL: I rannin.
I workin.
FR: You workin?
Well what would you like to do if you++ weren't?
As a=
KL: =Sunday I do it.
FR: What?
What's that?
KL: In the mall.
Sunday.
FR: MK.
KL: Me off Sunday.
FR: Don //Easton.
KL: //Off Monday.
DE: Triangle Mall
Friday night.
KL: Look //it.
FR: //We have the mall flies don't we?
KL: Look it here.

((SH chuckles))
KL: Friday night
   I workin.
NQ: =Oh I got one.
FR: OK.
NQ: I got one.
   I got one for Marissa to take me to too.
MS: Huh?=
FR: =Well wait just a darn minute.

((NQ laughs))
FR: I put //Don Easton down twice.
KL: //UC
FR: There's only one Don Easton in here.
   OK Nigel.
   I'm ready for you.
NQ: Eat chicken!
MS: Oh Lord.
FR: Eat chicken?
   Alright.
DE: =Boy.
   You tryin to do?
   Make us fat?
NQ: That's what I want //to do the best.
FR: //That's what he wants++ to do.

Alright.
NQ: Marissa?=
DE: =UC
FR: Lee.
LU: Triangle //Mall.
NQ: //UC member?
FR: Mall man.
NQ: Friday night?
KL: Two malls.
   All mall.
NQ: [UC]=
DE: =We got //free of em.
NQ: //UC
FR: Whatch you
   Harry?
   Whatch you like to do?
MS: Movies or mall Harry
   or what?
FR: Or what?
   He's thinkin.=
NQ: =Chicken.
FR: Harry?
KL: Me go you go.
FR: Whatcha like to do?
   Movies?

((Suddenly animated))
HR: Movies.

((Pleased))

FR: Oh yeah.

DE: There ya //go Harry.

KL: //[UC]

FR: OK.=

KL: =Go number one.

FR: Here's your last chance guy.

Comments?

Any last final thing you'd like to add
bring to attention.

DE: Bring so more
rags and towels.

FR: Uh oh.

Man you like them rags and towels huh?
OK.

((NQ laughs))

MS: Jesse brought a bunch of them Harry
I mean Don.=

FR: =Oh yeah.

//A whole stack of brand new towels.

DE: //Oh that's right.

We sure do.

FR: //I'll go get em out of the bottom of the++
closet.

LU: //I start work Monday.

DE: Right.

Do it.

FR: So we'll leave that one off cause we++
already took care of it.

DE: That's right.

//You did.

FR: //You know?

LU: I start work Monday.

FR: Start back to work Monday
you mean to //[UC].

LU: //Yeah.

Back to work Monday.

FR: Mhm.

DE: Next Monday the //twenty-fifth.

LU: //You could put that down.

FR: OK.

[UC]

DE: One more week
//[UC]

FR: //Anything else?

Anybody?

Anything?

Everything's OK?

LU: Yes.=

DE: =Oh yeah.

MS: Kyle //[UC]
DE: //There one thing wrong=
MS: =clean.

((Insistently))
KL: Me is.
DE: I=
DE: I go for
oh //I go for out
NQ: //You wanna know what it is?
DE: Human Rights Committee meeting.
NQ: I want a hot bath
every night.
FR: Well guess what?
You can have it.

((NQ chuckles))
DE: Hey Fred.
FR: [UC]=
DE: =I’m gonna put that=
NQ: =Not too hot though=
DE: =I’m gonna put that on n
the Human Rights Committee meeting.
FR: Not too hot.
DE: About=
MS: =That’s right.
Uh=
DE: =about //trainin.
MS: =Fred.
They got a Human Rights Committee meeting++

FR: Yeah they do.
//That’s that’s only Don that goes to that++

Wednesday.
FR: Yeah they do.
//That’s that’s only Don that goes to that++

though.
DE: //Yeah.
I put that on
slammin doors
and uh
hollerin loud
loud
in his ear.
FR: OK.

((NQ laughs))
((Laughing))
NQ: One of us are gonna get ///[UC]
DE: //And then uh
what else?
((MS laughs))
DE: //What else?
KL: //You hush your mouth.
KL: A a TV right?
FR: Right
//[UC]
KL //You hush you mouth.
You know this.

MS: Don?
FR: //All Bob Wilson stuff huh?
DE: //Yeah.
MS: Bob Wilson
he be
uh he he miss you during the day.
So when he see you at the end of the day
he just be lettin you know that he miss you.
That’s his way of lettin you know that

NQ: Yeah.=
MS: =that he misses you.
NQ: Works for //me.
DE: //I see him.
FR: Yeah /[UC] hard.

((SH chuckles))

((DE signs the word "stop"))

DE: //You know what that means?
Stop.
FR: If he really liked you
he’d shoot a gun at you.

((NQ and SH laugh))

DE: That’s right.
KL: He pull a knife //on you.
FR: //Yeah.
Alright.
Oh.
Everybody shared a thought they want to++
add to the list now?

OK.
Alright.
Everybody //sign.

DE: ///[UC]
FR: Sign your name please.
DE: I’m first.
APPENDIX F

QUESTIONS AND PROBES

1. Why do you live in a group home?
2. What does it mean to be a person with a disability?
3. Do you consider yourself disabled?
4. Does it bother you to be called mentally retarded? Why? Can you give me an example? (EX?)
5. How is living in a group home different than living with your family?
6. How is living in a group home different than living in a state institution?
7. How is living in a group home different than living by yourself?
8. Tell me about your first day in a group home.
9. Tell me about your best day in a group home.
10. Tell me about your worst day in a group home.
11. What are some things that people should do and say to get along in a group home?
12. What happens if they break these rules?
13. What about talking too loud? Why is that a problem?
14. What about interrupting someone while they’re talking? Why is that a problem?
15. Do people ever talk about things that bother you?
16. Are there certain things that you are not allowed to say in a group home?
17. How did you learn these rules?
18. Why are the VOA staff in the home?
19. What do you do with the staff?
20. What do you talk about with the staff?
21. Why do you have house meetings?
22. Do you ever get angry at the staff? Why?
23. Do staff talk about things that you are not supposed to talk about? What? Why?
24. Does it bother you when people tell you what to do?
25. Who is allowed to tell you what to do?
26. Does it bother you when someone else in the group home tells you what to do?
27. Has talking ever gotten you into trouble?
28. Has talking ever helped you out?
29. Who do you talk to on a regular basis?
30. What do you talk to that person/them about?
31. Who have you talked to today?
32. Who is your favorite person to talk to? Why? What do you talk to that person about?
33. Who do you not like to talk to? Why?
34. Do you talk about different things to staff members than you do with group home members? What? Ex?
35. Do you talk about different things to men than you do with women? What? Ex?
36. What is your favorite thing to talk about?
37. What do you not like to talk about?
38. Why do you talk to people?
39. Why do people talk to you?
40. If you are angry or upset, who do you talk to? Why?
41. If you are happy, who do you talk to? Why?
42. What do you talk to the other group home members about?

43. Do you talk to the other group home members about your personal problems? Why or why not? Ex?
APPENDIX G

DON TALKS ABOUT TALK

[[072494: 66.1: 47A: Esplanade: Don Easton: talk about talk]]

SH: July twenty-fourth 1994 Esplanade. OK.
I have questions I'm gonna ask you.
DE: Alright.
((EB enters room pulls notebook from shelf))
SH: So
we'll do that.
Let me get situated here.
((To EB))
Thank you.
((To DE))
I'm gonna put this close to you
so it'll get you
and not me.
Alright.
Why do you live in a group home.
DE: I live in a group home cause VOA
m m is more better.
SH: Um
what does it mean to be a person with a++
disability?
DE: Disability?
SH: Uh huh.
DE: Like
we do the chores
do the trainin.
SH: How um
let's see
how is living in a group home
different than living with your family?
DE: Uh
my family.
Like it very well.
SH: You like living in a group home very well?
DE: Yeah
//but
SH: //How?
DE: but it seem like
uh
((DE wets his lips))
it seem like
me and my family
the reason
my sister
split us apart
cause uh
my mother
did not l longer here anymore and
my mother
not getting well.
She got a a
she had a
she had a
[UC] on her legs.
And den uh
and den uh
sh she got a worser dan dat
and den uh
den after dat when uh
we got move her
n nursing home.
Wha it’s right off
South Lane.

SH: Mhm.
DE: And den uh
I visit
m m
I visit my sister
uh
no later
Friday
August the twenty-fourth 1990.
And den uh
I’da still live back past four weeks.
And den uh
on Fred’s birthday
on September the thirtieth
uh
I moved to Baton Rouge.

SH: Mhm.
DE: I live in
I live in 1414 Davidson
at that time.
And den uh
and den after dat
I was
in bed
uh had lunch
and den uh
I was uh
kinda sick for awhile and den
and den uh
my hernia’s actin up
one time.

SH: Mhm.
DE: And den
got dat over with.
And den uh
and den after dat
I went to group home
on on my birthday.
On Monday December the seventeenth 1990
and den uh
I stayed in the group home
past three years.

SH: If you
weren't living in a group home
where would you be living?

DE: Uh
((DE wets his lips))

DE: At
I be
I be s
I be stuck
I be stuck at South.

SH: What's that?

DE: I be
I be stuck
I be stuck at South?

SH: What is South?

DE: Uh
south part of Shreveport.
Can't afford to do that.
Cause I member
my sister
she got to do
uh
ubitation
with Momma.
She got help Momma.
She got
help her
out of the bed.

SH: Uh huh.

DE: Eat breakfast.
Get ready
get ready
get ready
get her
get her dressed
to get ready.
And den uh
and den after dat and den
sent her
Doctor's hospital.
And den
and den uh
in the
past
several months
in 91
she got it worse now.
She got
[UC] and
and you got two
she got two
amputated
amputaded legs.
SH: Mhm.
((DE designates the spot where they amputated his
mother's legs by making a slicing motions over his upper
thighs with his hands))
DE: They took em right here.
Very gently.
SH: How is living in group home
different than living in a supervised++
apartment?
DE: Supervised apartment?
((SH nods))
DE: Uh
I think
I think
I better
I better
look at the future.
And den uh
and den
live in the group home for awhile.
And den
and den after dat
do some trainin and chores.
And den after dat and den
I be
m-- get a job
go to the library
more often.
SH: Mhm.
DE: Ge-- get my allowance check.
Balance,
And den
draw your out your money out your account.
And den
and and
((DE yawns))
and
and budgeting.
((DE wets his lips))
SH: Tell me about you fist day in a group home.
DE: My first day at a group home
was on Monday.
SH: What was it like?
DE: What was it like?
Seemed strange.

SH: Why?

DE: Because
uh uh
my first day at a group home
1990
uh
three year back
it was strange cause
I couldn’t
I missed my
family
my brother
my sister.
And I missed
most part
my uncle.
My uncle
one of my uncles livin
a a an a num
an a and a
m my other brother
one of the older
the older uh
some of em
they go t
to his
his funeral.
88 it in.
And den
and den
and den
after dat
and den
it’s like
I I sat.

SH: Tell me about your best day
in the group home.

DE: My best day
uh
I I be so good
I have a good day
yeah.

SH: What about your worse day?
Tell me about your worse day in a group++

DE: Worse days?
Worse
do not
get up.
I know how to get up on time.
I know
I know how
m
keen
I know how er to everything.
And den uh
and sometimes I don’t
do around
uh
((DE wets his lips))
SH: Tell me what the rules are to live in a++
group home?
DE: We got
we got rules
and we got
regulations
and laws.
SH: Tell me what they are.
DE: It’s more like a
it’s more
like a state.
SH: Can you tell me what some of them are?
DE: Like like
no hitting.
No pinching.
Do what your told.
No yell and scream.
No talking loud.
SH: Why do you have those rules?
DE: Gotta have em
gotta have em
uh
to follow by.
SH: Why?
DE: Cause uh
they watch us
they watch us
uh
watch out we say.
SH: Are things easier if you follow the rules?
DE: Yeah.
SH: What happens if you don’t follow the rules?
DE: If you don’t follow the rules
you be out.
SH: Has anybody ever been kicked out for not++
following rules?
DE: Uh
there are some
but
but
I don’t member
I don’t member
SH: Let's see. Um do people ever talk about things that bother you?

DE: Uh I think I get out a point. I think sometimes Nigel Nigel’s alright but sometimes we void sometimes we don't. But there's one lil lil question. Bob Wilson uh the one the deaf guy?

SH: Uh huh. DE: Uh the reason he couldn't talk very well because uh uh he had uh a extreme loud voice.

SH: Uh huh. DE: He talks like he talk he yell and at he talk loud people's ears.

SH: Uh huh. And that bothers you?

DE: Yeah. SH: How did you learn the rules? To live in the house?

DE: I was ca

((DE yawns))

DE: I been learnin the rules ever since when I first been here.

SH: Who'd you learn them from?

DE: Fred. //And and Jesse.

SH: //[/UC]

DE: And Marissa and Lee.

And Bronwen Cates.
And Anne Borden.
And Ted
Ted.
And what else?
Alice
Traeger
and Stacey Waterson.
And [UC]

SH: Why does VOA have staff
in the houses?

DE: You gotta have em
you gotta have em
you gotta have em
you gotta have staff
because uh uh
make everybody ba
make everybody how to work.
Like
work on chores.

SH: Uh huh.
What do you do with the staff?

DE: Uh sometime
sometimes
I follow
the rules in here
yeah.

SH: Sometimes you what?

DE: Sometimes
I do what they say.
All you have to do
is listen
listen
to the staff tell ya
and listen
to the instructions.

SH: Mhm.
What do you talk to the staff about?

DE: Hmmm.
I think.

((DE taps table with his fingers))

DE: I think uh.

((DE taps table with his fingers))

SH: Here.
Let me go to another question.
Why do y'all have meetings?

DE: Meetins?
We gotta have meetins
we gotta have meetins at uh
are most important.
Like Human Rights Committee.

SH: Mhm.

DE: It goes on
every fr every free months.
Like March.
And May.
And June.
Not June
March
May and July.
September
and December.

((DE whispers "December" to himself))

SH: And what do y'all do at those Human++
Rights Committee Meetings?

DE: Uh
talk about people.
Kyle
Kyle’s on the
behavior plan.
Growlin
and cussin.
Bob Wilson have to wait.
Talkin loud
people’s ears.
And not
doin his chores.
He always late.
He always late
[UC] out of bed.
He always late
to go bowlin.
Harry LeFevre
is doin good.

SH: Uh huh.

DE: And den uh
what else?
Nigel Quentin.
Uh
he also
also on on on behavior plan.
Sometimes
he’s doin good yeah.
Sometimes
he don’t talk all that loud but
sometimes he does.
But
Nigel Quentin
sometimes
sometimes
he he paces little bit.
Sometimes
sometimes
sometimes
he tore his head.
Sometimes
sometimes
sometime
he have to way about
away
to his nose
people’s business.
But
sometimes
we all sittin out
sometimes.

SH: Do you ever get angry at the staff?
DE: I never have.
SH: Do other people get angry at the staff?
DE: Uh.
Yeah.
Some.
At me, yeah.
I did
I did uh also.
I get a l-- li-- little bit.
But
disturbs me like
when uh
like staff tells me not to do,
I can do it.
He wants me
wants me get out
by them
people’s
conversations
I say Excuse me.

SH: Uh huh.
Um
does it bother you when people tell you++
what to do?

DE: Uh
I don’t think so.
SH: Does it bother you when staff tells you++
what to do?

DE: Nope.
SH: Does it bother you when
somebody else in the group home tells you++
what to do?

DE: Uh like?
SH: Like if Nigel Quentin told you somethin++
would that bother you.

DE: Uh
Sometimes
not all the time.
SH: Um
have you ever gotten in trouble for talking?
DE: Uh talking?
SH: Uh huh.
DE: Not all that much.
SH: OK.
   Um
   who do you talk to?
   On a regular basis?
DE: Regular basis?
SH: Uh huh.
   Who do talk to usually?
   Who do you talk everyday?
DE: Uh like like Dorothy and Maggie.
SH: Who are they?
DE: They’re at the workshop.
SH: Uh huh.
   Who do you talk to in the home?
DE: At home?
SH: Uh huh.
DE: Over here?
SH: Yeah.
DE: I talk to I talk to uh
   sometimes I talk to my advocate.
   Sometimes I talk to the staff.
   And sometimes I talk I talk talk to head++
   man.

((Smiling))
SH: //Talk to who?
DE: //[[UC]]
DE: You know.
   Uh uh uh
   the home supervisor.
SH: Jesse.
DE: Right.
   Jesse Flagg.
SH: Uh huh.
   Um
   what do you usually talk to them about?
DE: Oh sometimes I talk about
   how you day w
   how you day w
   did you have a good day
   or bad days?
SH: Uh huh.
   Um who have you talked to today?

((DE yawns))
DE: Sometimes I
   sometimes I talk
   talk to somebody.
   Like one time I talked to Harry.
SH: Who’s Harry?
DE: My brother.
SH: Uh huh.
DE: And sometimes I talk to my sister. I talk her every Monday and Thursdays. //Sometimes.
SH: //Uuh.
Who is your favorite person to talk to?
DE: My sister.
SH: Why?
DE: Cause she’s loveable.
((Smiling))
SH: She’s loveable?
DE: Yep.
SH: Why is she loveable? What does she do that’s loveable?
DE: Uh she always cook food.
SH: Uh huh.
What do you talk to your sister about?
DE: Uh I talk to her about when we do grocery shoppin. Sometimes we do errands. L sometimes we busy. Sometimes we not.
SH: Uh huh. Um what do you talk to Kyle about?
Do you talk to Kyle?
DE: Oh yeah. I talk to Kyle I say How you day? Sometimes sometimes I said How’d your momma?
SH: Mhm.
DE: All that.
SH: What about Nigel Quentin?
DE: He’s the same way too.
SH: Mhm. Um let’s see. Why do you talk to people?
DE: Uh
Why I
talk to people?
SH: Uh huh.
DE: Uh
cause it seems like
when I talk to people
I talk straight at em.
SH: And why do people talk to you?
DE: Like
when
people people will want me to talk
I talk to them.
SH: Do you like talkin to people?
DE: Oh yeah.
SH: Mhm.
DE: Sure do.
But not by
but not by
interruptin.
SH: But not by what?
DE: Not by interruptin.
SH: Not by interrupting?
DE: Right.
SH: OK.
If you get angry or upset
who do you talk to?
DE: Staff
//or or talk to
your home supervisor.
SH: //And why?
 Uh huh.
Um why do you talk to staff when you get++
angry?
DE: Cause
((DE yawns))
DE: Cause it it more easier so
more easier so
like
you talk to staff
you talk to someone.
That’s the reason why.
SH: If you’re if you’re really happy
who do you talk to?
DE: Uh.
SH: Like if you had a really really good day
who do you talk to?
DE: I talk to Bronwen Cates.
SH: You talk to who?
DE: Bronwen Cates.
SH: Who’s that?
DE: She’s a lady
sl sl she’s a lady uh
she’s a lady who
care about us.
SH: And where is she?
DE: She at home.
Vacation.
She comin back in August.
SH: She work for VOA?
Um
do you ever talk to
like the guys in the home
about personal problems?
DE: Uh no.
Can’t always do that.
SH: Why not?
DE: Sometimes I do
sometimes I don’t.
SH: Who do you talk to personal problems about?
DE: Uh bout Kyle?
SH: Like what?
DE: Lot of times
lot of times
I talk to him.
SH: Uh huh.
DE: Sometimes I talkin to that person.
SH: So sometimes you’ll talk to Kyle about++
your personal
problems?
DE: Yeah.
SH: And does he?
Does he give you good advice.
DE: He say about
uh
he say about
when
like
sometimes you day
and sometimes you
always [UC].
That’s why?
SH: Um do you
feel
good talking to staff about your personal++
problems?
DE: Sometimes.
SH: Are there times when you don’t.
DE: Not security.
SH: Not security?
What’d you say?
DE: I can’t
I can’t
last time
I talked to the staff
they might
I talked to the staff when
when
last time I talked to em
uh
last time I talked to em
this seem while back.
SH: Mhm.
Well.
I’m offerin twenty-five dollars
to the diligent soul who finds this passage.
You can contact me through my mother.
That’s Sharon Croft,
three-nine, twenty-six, south twentieth,
Abilene,
Texas,
seven nine six oh five.
Well I’m through with all my questions.
We’re done.
DE: Thank you.
SH: Alright.
Is there anything else you want to say?
DE: I sayin
I sayin That’s good.
Good chat with you.
SH: Thank you.
Good.
DE: What name of street
What name of street you live?
SH: Hmm?
DE: What name of street do you live?
SH: August street.
DE: August street.
SH: I live over by LSU
//by the campus.
DE: //LS
Right close to
between them lakes huh?
SH: Yes.
Exactly.
DE: On Dickinson Drive.
SH: Mhm.
Close to Dickinson yeah.
DE: Yeah.
SH: Yeah.
DE: You know Baton Rouge
Baton Rouge Art Gallery?
((Smiling))
SH: Yes.
DE: Me and Ted w went other there one time?
SH: Did you like it?
DE: I like it.
SH: Uh huh.
DE: But it wasn’t
wasn’t finished and
it wasn’t finished
that time.
 Few years ago.
There was a all all
all raggedy all torn up.
Everything.
SH: Uh huh.
How is Ted doin these days?
DE: Huh?
SH: How is Ted doin these days?
DE: Ted?
SH: Uh huh.
DE: Ted Tressio?
Ted Tressio’s doin OK.
SH: Does he like livin in his new apartment?
DE: Oh yeah.
SH: Good.
Alright.
Well I’m done.
Thank you.
DE: You’re welcome.

[[Tape ends]]
APPENDIX H

TAXONOMY OF COMMUNICATION SITUATIONS

1. At Magnolia (a VOA-sponsored group home that serves as a transportation depot)

Genre (GR): Conversation.

Topic (TC): The topic varies from day to day. It usually centers on the interactants' personal lives and events at work, in the group home, or at VOA's main offices.

Function/Purpose (FP): Interactants exchange information and reaffirm the bonds between each other.

Setting (SG): Interactions take place inside and outside of VOA vans parked in front of Magnolia.

Interactants arrive in vans between 3:20 and 4:10, Monday through Friday.

Conversants interact with one another through open van doors and windows, standing or sitting on the front lawn or gravel driveway.

In good weather, interactants move freely within this space. If the weather is unpleasant, interactants stay in their assigned vans unless called to another location.

Emotional Tone (ET): The conversation is usually light-hearted. Conversants joke, flirt, and gossip with one another.

Participants (PT): The participants include group home members (GHMs) and DCWs who are on the van run.

Message Form (MF): Most conversations involve spoken English and
supplemental nonverbal gestures. A few interactants use sign language to converse.

Most conversants employ a comfortable volume level. Occasionally, one conversant will shout to another across the yard or whisper to the person sitting next to him or her.

Act Sequence (AS): At 2:30 p.m., VOA dispatches several vans to Setro Enterprises and the day program to pick up the residents of its six group homes and take them to Magnolia, a VOA-sponsored group home.

At 3:00 p.m., the vans not dispatched to Setro and the day program head for Magnolia to transport GHMs to their homes.

Vans arrive at Magnolia between 3:10 and 4:20.

None of the vans can return to their origination site (a group home) until all the vans have arrived.

While waiting for all the vans to arrive, GHMs and DCWs converse with one another.

At some point during the wait, DCWs step inside Magnolia to pick up any internal mail (mailings, pay checks, allowance, schedules).

As soon as all the vans have arrived and DCWs have conducted all necessary business transactions, GHMs and DCWs get into their van and depart.

Guidelines for Interpretation (GI): Only those associated with VOA interact with one another. Neighbors and
strangers do not interact with GHMs or DCWs. A GHM may approach someone not associated with VOA, but the interactions are brief and closely monitored by DCWs. GHMs are expected to be in their van, ready to depart, without having to be asked by a DCW.

Once deposited at Magnolia, a GHM may wait in his or her van, the front lawn, on the front step, or in the driveway. DCWs rarely wait in the van, but prefer instead to pass their time talking on the porch or under the covered carport. Some GHMs like to spend as much time as possible talking to others on the front lawn. Others like to move directly from one van to another.

A GHM cannot wait in another group home's van or on a neighbor's lawn. The residents of Esplanade, for example, do not allow members from the other group homes to enter Esplanade's van. Additionally, when a GHM steps onto a neighbor's lawn, a DCW will tell the GHM to go wait beside his or her van.

Conversants may carry on conversations with one another through van windows or doors.

DCWs may enter Magnolia. They discourage, however, GHMs who do not reside at Magnolia from entering Magnolia except to use the restroom or to find a DCW.

GHMs may converse with DCWs but should not interrupt them. DCWs ignore or chastise GHMs who interrupt their
conversations. DCWs may interrupt each other and GHMs. GHMs cease talking when interrupted by a DCW.

GHMs should not antagonize one another. DCWs chastise GHMs that quarrel. A DCW will take a GHM aside if the GHM cannot control his or her temper. Excessive and continuous demonstrations of emotion constitute a violation of the residential behavioral program and will be documented in a GHM's master book.

Penalties will be administered by DCWs.

Norms of Interpretation (NI): Although the primary objective of this situation is to facilitate the transport of GHMs and the delivery of mail, it serves as rich opportunity for GHMs and DCWs from different group homes to interact. At times, this situation assumes the feel of party. GHMs flirt with another, engage in extended conversations with one another (an activity discouraged at Setro), and catch up on recent events. During this situation, GHMs also talk to the DCWs who do not work at their homes. In this situation, DCWs are more likely to assume the role of supportive friend than the role of rule-enforcer.

If VOA-BR’s staff wanted to discourage interaction between and among DCWs and GHMs during this period, they could instruct the GHMs to move quickly from van to another and to wait quietly. Instead, VOA-BR’s staff tacitly encourages the interaction between and among DCWs and GHMs.
as long as it does not interfere with transportation of GHMs or the delivery of internal mail.

The sanctions about talk specified in "General Responsibilities of Individuals Residing in VOA" are in force, but not enforced unless there is a loud altercation. During my period of observation, I observed only two such altercations, both the result of work-related stress.

2. On the Van

GR: Conversation.

TC: It varies from day to day.

FP: GHMs inform the driver about their day or their plans for the evening.

SG: Conversation takes places in an 11-seat van.

A DCW drives, Nigel Quentin sits in the front passenger seat, and the rest sit on one of the three bench seats behind the driver and front passenger chairs.

The interactants participate in this event Monday through Friday, beginning sometime around 3:30 p.m.

The drive lasts about twenty minutes to thirty minutes, unless the driver makes a stop at a local bank or convenience store.

ET: The tone varies depending on the moods of the interactants.

PT: The participants include a DCW and GHMs.

MF: The interactants use spoken English and nonverbal communication to converse with one another.
Although one of the GHMs is hearing-impaired, none of the other GHMs know some sign language well enough to converse with him. Most DCWs know sign language but must concentrate on the road.

AS: As soon as the DCW slides into the driver’s seat, GHMs exchange greetings with the DCW.

While driving, the DCW listens to the GHMs, asking questions and providing information when appropriate.

Members, having conversed with the DCW or ceased making attempts to solicit the driver’s attention, use the drive time to stare out the window, take a nap, talk softly to themselves, or turn on their portable radios.

As soon as the van pulls into the drive, the DCW terminates his or her conversational involvement and concentrates on the tasks ahead.

GI: The driver and GHMs may speak to one another while in the van.

Although GHMs may talk to the DCW while the DCW is driving, their conversation should not distract her or him from the task of driving.

The DCW may interrupt or ignore a GHM.

GHMs must speak when spoken to by a DCW.

GHMs compete for conversational dominance, often engaging in simultaneous talk.
When interrupted by another GHM, the GHM may keep talking despite the interruption, cease temporarily only to reinitiate his conversation with the DCW later, or stop.

GHMs risk being chastised by the DCW if they incite another GHM. The DCW may choose not to chastise GHMs.

Rarely do GHMs talk to one another, unless to correct one another or to provide a bit of information.

A GHM may implore the DCW to side with him. If the DCW participates, it is to redirect, to probe, or to silence.

If the GHMs are abnormally quiet, the DCW may probe GHMs about their days or plans.

The driver controls the radio.

The driver may wake up any of the sleeping GHMs.

NI: As long as the GHMs do not interfere with the driver’s ability to negotiate her or his way through the traffic, GHMs may pass the time in conversation.

The sanctions about talk specified in "General Responsibilities of Individuals Residing in VOA" are in force. Enforcement varies according to the DCW’s mood.

3. Getting Ready for Dinner

GR: Conversation and directives.

TC: It varies from day to day. Often, however, it is a continuation of conversation started on the van ride or a directive issued by one of the two DCWs on duty.
FP: The purpose of these conversations is to receive closure on a topic initiated on the van or to ensure that certain activities are completed.

SG: Most of the interaction takes place in the kitchen, dining room, and living room. GHMs and DCWs move throughout the house to accomplish tasks, but return to the kitchen after the completion of each task.

ET: DCWs adopt a direct approach as they guide GHMs through a series of assigned activities. Occasionally, one of the GHMs may bristle at having been cut off or told what to do, but, for the most part, GHMs respond quickly, quietly, and politely to the directions being given.

PT: The participants include GHMs and the two DCWs on duty.

MF: The interactants use spoken English and nonverbal communication to converse with one another.

To communicate with the GHM with a hearing-impairment, DCWs use sign language in conjunction with spoken English and nonverbal communication.

AS: Once in the house, the DCW in charge of the van run (DCW1) walks to the office to deposit the internal mail picked up from Magnolia.

GHMs place their lunch boxes on a bar in the kitchen, refrigerate or throw away any leftovers, rinse out their boxes, and store them over the refrigerator.
The DCW in charge of meal preparation (DCW2) identifies the individuals responsible for setting the table and cooking dinner.

If not assigned a task, GHMs find some activity (checking the mail, watching television, resting) to occupy their time.

After depositing the mail in the office, DCW1 checks the training schedule. After checking with the DCW2 about the status of dinner, DCW1 tracks down one of the GHMs scheduled for training and escorts him to the office.

While DCW1 supervises a training session, DCW2 supervises dinner preparation.

While overseeing dinner, DCW2 converses with the GHMs. Once dinner is ready to be served and the GHM assigned to training has completed his lesson, DCW2 calls the GHMs to dinner.

GI: DCWs dictate the timing of tasks.

DCWs may interrupt, correct, or ignore a GHM. GHMs may not challenge the authority of a DCW.

GHMs may converse with the DCWs as long as it does not interfere with the scheduled tasks.

GHMs who do not respond immediately to a DCW’s directive are subject to correction.

A DCW may alter the schedule.

As long as a GHM is not assigned to perform a certain task, he may engage in whatever activity he chooses to
engage in as long as it does not interfere with someone
else's work and as long as he is ready to eat dinner when
ready.

GHMs who do not comply with a DCW's instruction are
sent to their rooms until they are willingly to comply.
Additionally, a failure to comply is documented in their
master book.
NI: The only talk that is sanctioned by the situation is
task-related talk. Other discussions are permitted as long
as they do not interfere with another's task performance.

The sanctions about talk specified in "General
Responsibilities of Individuals Residing in VOA" are in
force. Enforcement varies according to the DCW's mood.

4. Dinner
GR: Conversation and directives.
TC: It varies from day to day. The DCWs, when not
monitoring the activities at the table, converse with one
another and the GHMs.

GHMs compliment the food, ask others to pass various
items, and try to engage the DCWs in conversation. Often,
the GHMs' dinner conversation is an extension of the
conversations initiated on the van or a discussion of the
weather. Occasionally, GHMs talk about animals and the
noises they make. When talking to one another, the DCWs
catch each other up on their personal lives. One of the
replacement DCWs forbids conversation at the dinner table.
SG: Dinner takes place in the dining room. GHMs gather around a table with six chairs. Each resident sits in his assigned seat.

Dinner is usually served by five-thirty.

On Wednesdays, GHMs, scheduled to be at the bowling alley by six, usually sit down to dinner by five.

The two DCWs sit in between the dining room table and the entrance to the kitchen.

ET: Conversations are usually jovial and animated.

PT: PT include GHMs and the two DCWs on duty. Occasionally, visitors or other DCWs will join the GHMs for dinner.

MF: The interactants use spoken English and nonverbal communication to converse with one another.

To communicate with the GHM with a hearing-impairment, DCWs use sign language in conjunction with spoken English and nonverbal communication. AS: As soon as the GHM in charge of meal preparation starts placing the platters of food on the bar or table, some of the GHMs gravitate toward the dining room.

After checking to make sure that the table has been set properly and that all the food, serving utensils, drinks, and condiments are available, DCW2 calls the GHMs to dinner. GHMs fill their plates and glasses and wait at the table.
After serving themselves and waiting for the signal to eat, GHMs talk about the food, speculate about the whereabouts of missing members, chat about the weather, or continue conversations started earlier.

After all the GHMs have filled their plates, a DCW chooses someone to say grace.

GHMs bow their heads while the chosen GHM recites a short prayer. The DCWs watch the GHMs.

After grace, GHMs raise their heads and begin eating. One of the DCWs assists Harry, cutting his meal into small manageable pieces.

After one or two bites, many of the GHMs compliment the cooks.

After the GHMs have started eating, the DCWs serve themselves.

As the GHMs eat, the DCWs eat, chat, and monitor the activities at the table.

After each GHM has finished eating, one of the DCWs will inspect his plate and, depending on the GHM's dietary plan, grant the GHM permission to leave the table.

After the first person asks to leave, a DCW will quickly check the schedule of chores to find out who is on kitchen duty. After making a determination and surveying the GHM's plate, the DCW will grant him permission to leave. If the GHM is scheduled for training or chores, the DCW will direct the GHM to some activity: to get his
master book, to start filling the sink with warm water, or to take out the trash.

The person scheduled to clear the table waits until everyone except Harry has finished eating to begin his task. Harry takes longer to eat than anyone else in the home.

If not scheduled to train, to clean, or shower, a GHM is free to spend his time as he wishes.

Dinner ends when Harry leaves the table.

GI: Anyone who eats before grace is subject to chastisement by a DCW.

GHMs should ask politely to have items passed.

GHMs must ask a DCW for permission to leave the table.

GHMs must ask a DCW for permission to have seconds.

DCW2 determines the amount of talk at the table. If DCW2 forbids table talk, then any GHM who talks about anything other than the meal is subject to chastisement by DCW2. If DCW2 permits talk at the table, GHMs may readily talk about anything about which they care to talk.

If the GHMs's talk offends one of the DCWs, the GHMs are subject to chastisement.

A DCW may ignore, chastise, interrupt, or probe a GHM. If the two DCWs are talking about VOA-related events, GHMs are permitted to join their conversation. If the two DCWs are talking about personal matters, the DCWs may
rebuff or ignore the GHMs’ attempts to join the conversation.

NI: With one exception, all expect dinner to be a time of eating and sharing.

The sanctions about talk specified in "General Responsibilities of Individuals Residing in VOA" are in force. Enforcement varies according to the DCW’s mood.

5. Television Talk

GR: Conversation.

TC: It varies from day to day. It may be continuation of earlier conversation or related to program on the television.

FP: It is a way to pass the time. It also reaffirms the bonds between a GHM and a DCW.

SG: Talk takes place in the living room with the GHMs and a DCW (S1) seated on the sofa. The television rests on a table directly in front of the sofa, approximately twelve feet away. Occasionally, the other DCW (S2) will join the conversation while filling out the daily paper work at the dining room table.

ET: The key is relaxed.

PT: Participants include at least one of the DCWs and at least one of the GHMs.

MF: The interactants use spoken English and nonverbal communication to converse with one another.
AS: After the GHMs have finished their evening meal, their chores, showers, and training, they are free to spend their time how they wish. Many of the GHMs use this time to watch television in their rooms. One or two choose to watch television with SI in the living room.

If SI is not already watching television, a GHM will ask to turn on the television.

If granted permission, SI will ask the GHM what he wants to watch.

If the GHM does not have a specific program in mind to watch, SI will flip through the channels until the GHM expresses a preference.

After finding a program, SI and the GHM will settle themselves on the sofa.

If the program is less than engaging, the GHM and SI will converse. If the program is interesting, the interactants limited their talk to commercial time.

Talk ends when one of the DCWs announces that it is time to take one's medication and get ready for bed.

GI: GHMs must ask a DCW for permission to turn on the television.

DCWs may negotiate with GHMs about the choice of programming but GHMs have the ultimate say.

The DCWs enforce a "first-come, first-served" rule about television viewing. The first GHM to express a viewing preference gets to watch his program. If a GHM has
already chosen a program, the other GHMs get first choice in the next time slot.

A GHM who stands in front of the television while someone is watching it is subject to chastisement.

Talk by other GHMs should not interfere with a GHM's ability to fully enjoy a television program.

The volume on the television should be set at a comfortable level: one that allows the viewers to enjoy the program but not one that interferes with others' abilities to enjoy their free time.

Any of the viewers are free to leave the room at any time.

NI: If the program is captivating, talk is subordinated to television-watching. If the show is less than interesting, television serves as a potential catalyst for conversation. The interactants seem at ease with one another and their conversation. Each takes long turns speaking; they interrupt each other less.

The sanctions about talk specified in "General Responsibilities of Individuals Residing in VOA" are in force. Infractions of the rules rarely occur in this situation, however.

6. Training

GR: Instruction.

TC: The talk concerns the training module.
FP: The purpose of training is to facilitate a GHM's growth in specific areas. The purpose of talk during training is communicate information, reinforce certain ideas, and convey understanding.

SG: The setting depends on the training module. Most training sessions occur in the dining room or main office. If a module specifies that the GHM conduct a specific task in a specific area, DCW and GHM will relocate.

Each GHM participates in training once a day, five days a week.

Training usually takes place right before or immediately following the evening meal.

ET: The tone is serious.

PT: The participants include a DCW and a GHM.

MF: The interactants use spoken English and nonverbal communication to converse with one another.

If the module concerns reading or writing, the interactants will also use written English. If written English, the training may specify print or cursive lettering.

To communicate with the GHM with a hearing-impairment, DCWs use sign language in conjunction with the other forms.

AS: A DCW examines the schedule to see who has what training that day.
The DCW finds the GHM's training manual—a binder that contains the specified training objective, method of training, and the criterion for evaluation.

The DCW finds the GHM.

Together they find a space to work.

The DCW describes the task at hand. If necessary, the DCW demonstrates how to perform the task. The DCW asks the GHM if he has any questions. The DCW then observes the GHM as he attempts to perform the task. If the GHM appears to be having difficulty, the DCW may offer suggestions. If the GHM still appears to be having trouble after receiving suggestions, the DCW will demonstrate how to perform the task. If the GHM still appears to be having difficulty after receiving suggestions and watching a demonstration, the DCW will physically move the GHM through the steps.

The DCW rewards the GHM's success with praise.

Once the task is completed with or without the DCW's assistance, the DCW reviews with the GHM the steps involved in task, asks if the GHM has any questions, and then offers praise or encouragement.

After dismissing the GHM, the DCW makes a record of the training session in the training manual.

GI: A GHM who does not come immediately when called by a DCW is subject to chastisement by the DCW.
The DCW controls the session, determining when it starts, how it is conducted, and when the session is over. All talk should relate to the training module. A GHM should come to the session ready to learn. A GHM who resists participation is subject to chastisement. The DCW should offer whatever help is needed by the GHM to complete the task. A DCW should reward successes with praise and should mitigate failures with encouragement.

NI: In this situation, the only sanctioned form of talk is task-related.

The sanctions about talk specified in "General Responsibilities of Individuals Residing in VOA" are in force and are quickly enforced.

7. Group Counseling Session

GR: Instruction and discussion.

TC: The topic varies from session to session, but each one addresses some aspect of mental or physical health.

FP: The purpose of the session is to inform GHMs about different ways to care for themselves. It also allows GHMs to ask questions and to demonstrate their knowledge.

SG: It usually takes place on Monday after the evening meal.

The group counselor (GC) gathers GHMs in the living room where they position themselves so they can see the GC, sitting on the sofa, arm chairs, or the floor.
ET: The tone of the session is serious.

PT: The participants include GHMs, the GC, and a signer. Occasionally, other DCWs sit in on these sessions.

MF: The interactants use spoken English and nonverbal communication to converse with one another.

To communicate with the GHM with a hearing-impairment, a signer translates, using sign language in conjunction with spoken English and nonverbal communication.

AS: Sometime after the evening meal, the GC arrives.

In the GC’s chat with the DCWs on duty, the GC determines the schedule for the day and the mood of the GHMs. If the GC learns from the DCWs that the home is running behind schedule, the GC will spend time reviewing notes and looking over the GHM’s master books.

Once notified by a DCW that the GHMs have completed their tasks, the GC heads for the living room.

The DCWs help the GC call the GHMs into the room.

Once all the GHMs have situated themselves comfortably in the living room, the GC begins.

After introducing the topic, the GC asks the GHMs what they know about the topic.

The GC makes sure that each GHM speaks and reinforces answers that support the GC’s stance.

After each of the GHMs have spoken, the GC then provides an outline of the topic for the GHMs. When the GC
explicates each point, the GC uses the information provided by GHMs for examples.

Before moving on to the next item on the outline, the GC asks GHMs if they have any questions or concerns. If GHMs have additional questions or concerns, the GC lets them speak and provides a response.

If the GC feels that GHMs are getting off topic or repeating themselves, the GC will move on to the next topic.

After the GC has discussed each item on the outline, the GC guides GHMs through an activity directly related to the topic at hand. The GC explains the activity and coaches GHMs through it.

Afterwards, the GC asks GHMs to talk about the activity and the topic. Once again, the GC makes sure that each member has an opportunity to speak.

After completing the activity, the GC reviews the sessions main points and asks if the GHMs have any other questions. If they do not, the GC ends the session and thanks the GHMs for participating. If they do, the GC answers their questions until they seem satisfied then ends the session and thanks the GHMs for attending.

After the session, some of the GHMs head back to their rooms; other stay and talk to the GC.

GI: The GC controls the session.

Speakers should take turns speaking.
Speakers should not call one another names.
Off-topic discussion is discouraged.
Each GHM must speak when instructed to by the GC.
The GC and the DCWs support each other's decisions.
DCWs may listen in without participating. They may also choose when and where they participate.
NI: The talk in this situation should be topic-related.
The sanctions about talk specified in "General Responsibilities of Individuals Residing in VOA" are in force. Violations are allowed if they support the GC's agenda.

8. House Meeting
GR: Discussion.
TC: The topic is devoted to discussing issues that concern life within the home and future activities.
FP: The purpose of the meeting is to provide GHMs with a say in how they live their lives and to provide DCWs a chance to address problems and schedule outings.
SG: The meeting takes place in the living room with GHMs situated on the sofa, the arm chairs, or floor.
The meeting takes place on Monday night after the group counseling session.
ET: The tone is casual.
PT: The participants include the GHM and a DCW.
MF: The interactants use spoken English and nonverbal communication to converse with one another.
To communicate with the GHM with a hearing-impairment, DCWs use sign language in conjunction with spoken English and nonverbal communication.

AS: After conferring with the other DCW on duty, a DCW calls GHMs into the living room for the house meeting.

Once all the GHMs have been located and have situated themselves, the DCW opens with meeting with a reminder of the GHMs’s rights and responsibilities as GHMs. The DCW reads passages from "General Responsibilities of Individuals Residing in VOA," asking the members to explicate certain passages.

After talking about their rights and responsibilities as GHMs, the DCW asks if anyone has a concern they would like to bring to the attention to the DCWs. The DCW listens to the group’s concerns, jotting them down on a yellow legal pad.

The DCW then asks the group if they have any announcements they would like to make. Once again, the DCW jots down announcements (birthdays, parties, meetings) on a yellow pad.

The DCW then discusses household chores, evaluating GHMs’s performance. The DCW asks if anyone wants to propose a schedule change in terms of daily chores.

The DCW then asks GHMs to suggest menu items. The DCW records each person’s choices and promises to add them to the grocery list.
Next the DCW asks GHMs if they have any suggestions for weekend activities. Once again, the DCW solicits responses from each GHM.

The DCW wraps up the meeting by asking GHMs if they have any last comments.

After listening to GHMs's comment and taking a few notes, the DCW closes the meeting and has the GHMs sign a document attesting to their participation in the meeting.

GI: The DCW controls the meeting.

Each person's opinion is to be heard and respected.

NI: The meeting was designed as a way to ensure that the rights of GHMs are being respected.

GHMs are granted more time to talk in this situation than any of the others.

Interruptions and simultaneous talk are tolerated.

The sanctions about talk specified in "General Responsibilities of Individuals Residing in VOA" are in force. Infractions of the rules rarely occur in this situation, however.
VITA

Sharon Elizabeth Croft was born in San Antonio, Texas. She received her B.A. in Communication and Public Address from North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, in August 1987. As an undergraduate, she worked as a "special ed" bus driver for the Denton Independent School District in Denton, Texas. She received her M.A. in Communication and Public Address from the University of North Texas, Denton, Texas, in May 1989. Prior to entering the doctoral program in Speech Communication at Louisiana State University as a graduate fellow, she worked at I.B.M. as a technical writer and computer graphics technician.

She, her three cats, and nine fish currently live in Columbus, Ohio. She teaches in the Department of Speech and Theatre at Capital University.
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Sharon Elizabeth Croft

Major Field: Speech Communication

Title of Dissertation: Performing the Community, Telling the Self: Storytelling by Members of a Group Home for Men with Mental Retardation

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination:

August 2, 1995