NARRATIVE AS SELF-PORTRAIT: SOCIOCULTURAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF IDENTITY
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ABSTRACT

The ability of narrative to verbalize and situate experience as text (both locally and globally) provides a resource for the display of self and identity. This article focuses on two stories told by Jewish-American women about troublesome issues in their families. Analysis of the language of the stories shows how they reveal aspects of the storytellers' agentic and epistemic selves; how they construct positions in their families (pivoting between solidarity and distance, the provision of autonomy, and the exercise of power); and how they socially display their identities as mothers. The view identity offered through narrative analysis is briefly compared with other sociocultural and theoretical perspectives on identity. (Narrative, self, identity, gender, family, speech acts)

The stories we tell about our own and others’ lives are a pervasive form of text through which we construct, interpret, and share experience: “we dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, generate, fantasize, hate and love by narrative” (Hardy 1966:5). So wide and diverse a distribution of stories make it unsurprising that narrative form, meaning, and use have been the object of scholarly attention in fields ranging from developmental psychology (e.g. J. Bruner 1986, 1990; Bamberg 1987, Nelson 1989), social psychology (Harré 1987, Gerrig & Geerger 1988), and clinical psychology (Polkinghorne 1988), to literary theory (Bai 1990, Prince 1990), folklore (Bauman 1986), sociolinguistics (Riessman 1993), and sociolinguistics (Labov 1972b, Labov & Waletzky 1967, Jefferson 1978).

In contrast to some of the fields just mentioned, sociolinguistic studies have focused largely on oral narratives that recount personal experience. Labov (1972b, Labov & Waletzky 1967) has described such narratives as discourse units which have a fairly regular textual structure. After being prefaced by an abstract (a statement of the general theme or point of the story), a narrative is continued with an orientation: a background description of where, when, and by whom the events occurred. The performances themselves
arrive at an understanding of the self as a whole; our actions and experiences gain meaning through their relationship to one another, as well as their relationship to general themes or plots. J. Bruner argues (1987:15) that we eventually "become the autobiographical narratives by which we tell about our lives" (emphasis in original). One reason that narrative can have this self-transforming role is that narrative language provides a process of subjunctivitization: it reveals our presuppositions (our implicit meanings), permits multiple perspectives (different prisms through which we can view the world), and allows subjectification (reality can be filtered "through the consciousness of protagonists in the past - what we have done, and what has happened to us - into linguistically represented episodes, events, processes, and states. Prior research also tells us that this process of transforming personal experience into verbal performance is intertwined with the way stories are socially and culturally situated. When we verbalize an experience, we situate that experience globally: by drawing on our cultural knowledge and expectations about typical courses of action in recurrent situations, we construct story topics, themes, and points (Proppe 1958, Polanyi 1965, Chafe 1990, Bamberg & Marchman 1991). We also situate that experience locally: we verbally place our past experiences in, and make them relevant to, a particular "here" and "now," a particular audience, and a particular set of interactional concerns and interpersonal issues (Jefferson 1978, Rayve 1978, Schifrin 1984b). My interest in this article is how the ability of narrative to verbalize and situate experience as text provides a resource for the display of self and identity. I develop this interest by focusing on two stories, told by Jewish-American women about troublesome issues in their families, that reveal aspects of the storytellers' selves and social identities. After briefly discussing how prior work on narrative, self, and identity motivates my study, I analyze the two stories. In each story, a mother reports interactions in which a younger woman - in her family (a daughter, a daughter-in-law) - did something that conflicted with family expectations. Both speakers use their stories to construct positions that pivot between solidarity and distance, between the provision of autonomy and the exercise of power. The conclusion summarizes my analyses in more general methodological and theoretical terms, and briefly compares the view of identity offered here with another perspective in sociolinguistics.

Narrative, Self, and Identity

A great deal of scholarship suggests that narrative language contributes to the construction and display of our sense of who we are - our personal being as an integrated whole, with properties of stability and continuity over time. Thus Polkinghorne (1988) suggests that narrative structure is a way to


crea world of beliefs, desires and hopes." In this way, retelling a story ensures we create a "story world" in which we re-create ourselves against a backdrop of cultural expectations about the meanings of action; our identities as social beings emerge as we construct our own individual experiences as a way to position ourselves in relation to local and cultural expectations (see also Chafe 1994 on story retelling). While the oral-cultural expectations change, so too do our perspectives on ourselves and others. Thus Bruno 1986 shows that Native American storytelling involves the creation of a "narrative," while also Kerby 1994 have changed numerous tales of assimilation, which main characters are "victims," beneath in "appropriation" whose main characters are "heroes."

The way we tell our stories also reveals a self that operates within a cultural matrix of meanings, beliefs and normative practices. Theorists from a variety of traditions reveal that both the style and substance of stories are sensitive parameters of ethnicity (Michael 1981, 1990; Mofitt & McCabe 1991, Blum-Kulka 1993; social class, van Dijk 1990; gender, Fleschner 1990, Attarazine 1993); see (Cohler 1982, Copeland & Hornstein 1989); and region (Banham 1986, Johnstone 1990). All other research into storytelling style and substance to social roles and contexts at both conventional and institutional levels. Thus Heath 1981 and Ochs & Schieffelin 1989 show how storytelling facilitates socialization into family roots, and how the acquisition of literacy skills during family storytelling provides an important scaffold for the social roles and behaviors appropriate to school. The form of our stories (their textual structure), the content of our stories (what we tell about our stories, and our story-telling behavior (how we tell our stories) are all sensitive indicators not just of our personal selves, but also of our social and cultural identities.

Although all studies of personal narrative can further our knowledge of how narrative displays our self and identity, stories about women in families offer a particularly interesting site for such analyses. The family provides our first set of social relationships (and is thus said to provide a semiotic background for virtually all of our stories, Jones 1980; it also remains a traditional nexus of social life and cultural meaning for many women.

One particular relationship within the family, the mother-daughter relationship, is fraught with an ambivalence that is well documented in our culture. As literary works - e.g., Amy Tan's "The Joy Luck Club" (1989), "The Kitchen God's Wife" (1991) - and through scholarly studies, stress the social and psychological sources, and consequences, of such ambivalence (Wodak 1986, Wajans 1992, Kaplan 1993). Some popular authors blame daughters' ambivalence toward their mothers on a fear of becoming like their mothers. That Nancy Friday's My mother, my sex (1977) describes emotional parallels between mothers and daughters that are difficult for daughters to resolve. In The mother puzzle, Judith Schwartz (1994) wonders whether she can become a mother without becoming her mother. Other authors offer advice to mothers who are confronted by their daughters' alienation. Thus Evelyn Bassoff, Mothers and daughters (1986), tries to help mothers maintain connections with their daughters, while also allowing them to form independent identities during adolescence.

Our cultural beliefs about mother-daughter relationships suggest several sociolinguistic reasons why mother-daughter stories offer extremely difficult opportunities to examine the way narrative displays self and identity. First, stories are often told to justify one's own actions, not only during overt conflict, but also during subtle disputes over rights and obligations - exactly the kind of interpersonal tensions that arise from ambiguous relationships like those characterized by mothers and daughters. Second, the narrated recounting and resolution of such situations can highlight the different expectations and obligations associated with social identities, as well as the way we react to the narrative practices expected of us. Third, the management of interpersonal conflict within a story world often requires story characters to use language in ways that are said to be related to gender (a key aspect of this "mother" and "daughter" identities). Various authors (e.g., Brown 1982, Hall 1982, Goodwin 1980, Taunton 1990, Sheldon 1993) suggest that women avoid direct confrontation when they are trying to influence others so pursue a course of action or adopt a belief. The study of narrative actions in stories that provide an opportunity to discover women's own perceptions and their representations of particular interpersonal strategies to settle (or avoid) conflict. Finally, "mother" and "daughter" identities are themselves multifaceted; although gender is shared, it is not. The combination of these attributes may lead to a relationship built upon the two potentially conflicting dimensions of solidarity (based on same gender) and distance (because of different ages and power relationships in the family).

In sum, prize scholarship suggests that narrative is a powerful textual resource through which we manage our selves and identities. Although the study of all personal narrative provides a rich site in which to locate analyses of various identities, I focus in the next section on two stories told by mothers, both concerning conflict with younger women in their families.

ANALYSIS OF STORIES

This section presents my analyses of two stories, "That cured her!" and "It's only a name". Each story reports trouble with a young female family member whose action defies normative expectations in the family, and thus threatens family solidarity: doing something unacceptable to the family, or not using the term of address expected by the family. The general cultural theme of each story is thus similar - the integration of outsiders, who are unfamiliar and whose norms and practices may differ, into the nuclear fami-
that might lead to relationships whose closeness can not only supplement, but compete with, the rights and obligations underlying the bond between parent and child. It is thus not surprising that Jan, as a parent, would want to maintain some control over whom her daughter dates. But neither is it surprising, from the daughter's point of view, that such an effort to maintain control would challenge the daughter's claim to self-sufficiency and independence.

Before Jan tells her story, Ira and Jan are describing their son during a more general discussion of marriage.

1. Ira: Yeh well 111— I'll tell you when kids are away
2. Jan: [shy]
3. Ira: come into contact with everybody,
4. Ira: who’s away from home and—
5. Ira: for example uh—
6. Ira: Jan: Wasn’t about Craig
7. Ira: He’s gone out with girls that are Indiana
8. Ira: Oh yes
9. Ira: He’s very liberal, but ed
10. Jan: Ira: He see no difference.
11. Jan: He say that eh we’re old fashioned.
12. Jan: If he like somebody
13. Jan: If he like somebody he’s gonna go out.
14. Jan: Ira: who’s gonna go out with you
15. Jan: Well?

The excerpt begins during a discussion of marriage. After a general explanation of why their own sense of appropriate social boundaries is being violated by kids (1-3), Jan and Ira describe the behavior of their son Craig (3-14). Although the daughter is not yet mentioned in this section, it provides an important local context for the upcoming introduction of the daughter, as well as for Jan's upcoming story about the daughter.

The beliefs and behavior reported in this section are presented in a participation framework in which Ira and Jan are co-speakers directing remarks to me, as well as (or in front of) a third party. In reality, Ira and Jan share both authorial and animator roles (Goffman 1981): each is responsible for the content of their own talk and the presentation of their own words. Thus Ira begins to make a generalization in 1 (Yeh well I'll tell you when kids are away), but is overlapped by Jan before he reaches a turn transition (during away). Although he briefly accedes the floor to Jan — who proposes a completion of Ira’s sentence with 2 (they come into contact with everybody) — he returns to his prior generalization (3 kids are away from home and—), without attending topically to Jan’s proposed completion. Thus, although Jan completes an utterance that Ira had initiated, Ira also returns to his own utterance; he does not learn to take responsibility for their own decisions. A key part of the tension between teenagers and parents thus rests on striking a balance between subordination and equality, dependence and independence...
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herself from an open commitment to that view (i.e., she is not speaking as a principal) and from acknowledgment of any responsibility for bringing about that belief.

We have concentrated so far on how Ira and Jan co-produce a consensus opinion about interracial marriage, and on how they contrast the beliefs of their two children. We have said little about the story that Jan will tell—partially because there is little in what Ira and Jan have thus far said that necessarily indicates that a story is coming. Ira, in fact, prepares to close the son/daughter comparison after Jan’s 24 (She says, “It’s not what I am used to”) with the turn-transitional So em... (25). But Jan goes on to contextualize the three aspers of the daughter’s point of view noted in 18 (She wouldn’t go out with them again), 22 (they’re different), and 24 (It’s not what I am used to), in a narrative about her daughter’s date with a Gentile boy (28):

Jan: One was a—his father was a friend of my husband’s.

And when I heard she was going out with him.

I said, “You’re going out with a Gentile boy?”

She said, “Well Giddy knows his father.”

I said, “Don’t care.”

So she introduced him.

And they went out.

And she came home early.

And I said, “Well, what’ll you do with him again?”

She says, “Hope.”

I said, “Did you get fresh?”

She said, “No.”

She says, “But he’s different.”

She says, “I’m not used to Gentile boys.”

That cured her.

She’d never go out with one again.

Two very different perspectives on the daughter’s character are presented during Jan’s story, one in the complicating action (27–39), one in the evaluation (40).

The complicating action in Jan’s story is comprised largely of constricted dialog (Tannen 1989, Chap. 5) that performs actions directed to, and in response to, Jan’s daughter. The first interchange precedes the daughter’s actual date, in 27–30. Jan’s first verbal action in 28 (“You’re going out with a Gentile boy”) follows an off-record willingness strategy (Brown & Levinson 1987), whereby two different speech acts or intentions can be attributed to a single utterance. Since this strategy allows a speaker to deny either intention (e.g., one can say, “But I didn’t mean that...”), it can be used to reduce the degree to which the illocutionary force of a particular speech act imposes upon another (i.e., upon a hearer’s negative face).

“You’re going out with a Gentile boy!” can be interpreted either as a question or a challenge. Although “You’re going out with a Gentile boy!” is syntactically a declarative statement, it is presented with final rising intonation—
an incaution that often provides a declarative statement with functional status as a question (Quirk et al. 1972:386, Stanescu 1984, Selting 1992, Schiffrin 1995b:66-67). But note that the information status underlying "You're going out with a Gentle Girl boy?" is not typological of questions. The preparatory condition of questions requires that the speaker does not know "the answer," e.g., does not know if a proposition is true (Searle 1969:46), in the sense that it is an "answer" which the speaker is attempting to elicit. Since Ian has already told us that the heard (the daughter) was out with a boy (22), what she states in "You're going out with a Gentle Girl boy?" is a proposition whose truth value is already known to both parties. In addition to violating the speech act conditions for questions, asking a question whose answer is already known to both parties violates a Gricean maxim of quantity: if a question seeks information that is already available, it is more informative than is required for the current purposes of the exchange. This suggests that Ian's "You're going out with a Gentle Girl boy?" has a meaning and function in the exchange beyond seeking information about the truth of a proposition.

A good way to check an interpretation of an utterance as a speech act, especially when that utterance allows more than one interpretation, is to see how interlocutors themselves seem to interpret the assertion. Such interpretations are available through interlocutors' responses to the action. Note, then, that the response appropriate to a yes-no question — to confirm or deny the proposition — is not what Ian's daughter provides. Rather, the daughter's response in 29 ("Well Daddy knows his father") rearticulates the social membership of the date, defining him as someone whose father is known by her own father. Like Ian's own introduction of the date in 26 ("his father was a friend of my husband's"); the response "Well Daddy knows his father" places an outsider (a Gentle Girl boy) in a familiar realm of people within Ian's personal domain (people Daddy knows). By reducing the social and personal distance between Jews and Gentiles, "Well Daddy knows his father" justifies the daughter's plan to go out with a Gentle Girl boy.

Justifying one's own behavior is not the kind of action that typically follows questions. Rather, justifications (and defensive moves in general) typically follow a challenge. Labov & Fanshel suggest (1977:97) that challenges assert or imply "a state of affairs that, if true, would weaken a person's claim to be competent in filling the role associated with a valued status." Under this interpretation, "going out with a Gentle Girl boy" is an act that would weaken the daughter's claim to competence as the role of innocent adult, one who is able to choose her own friends and relationships. Because challenges make the status of the listener's problematic (Labov & Fanshel, 124), they are often followed by remarks that redress a presumed imbalance, and that seek to re-establish a claim of competence in a particular role. Thus the daughter's "Well Daddy knows his father" redresses the imbalance in status implied by her date with a Gentle Girl boy, by recategorizing him as someone whose identity is not defined by religion, but by personal relationship.

Note now that Ian's "You're going out with a Gentle Girl boy?" seems confrontational simply because it is followed by a justification of the role — a defense of her behavior. However, since confront talk requires at least two moves, e.g., active and passive, in the actions in the story world are not actually embedded in conflict talk. In fact, Ian's next move (I said, "I don't care") explicitly denies the confrontational nature of the question. The stress and intonation of "I don't care" is critical to this communicative force. The contrastive stress on I and the low-high-mid intonation contour (with each on of the three syllables) lack the rejection of the daughter's justification. Ian's lack of involvement in critical both for the redefinition of prior action and for the delimitation of the next action: if Ian doesn't care that her daughter's going out with a Gentle Girl boy, there is no intonational need for the daughter to defend herself. Thus "I don't care" transfers responsibility for the daughter's action to the daughter herself: whatever justification the daughter wants to provide for her own behavior results from her own moral sense of right and wrong. In the next interaction (31-33), Ian continues to portray her daughter as someone responsible for her own actions. The first few complicating action clauses in this section provide a good example of how the process of verbalization — transforming an experience into a linguistically encoded series of events — interacts with the theme and point of a story.

Note, first, that the first three events are reported from Ian's perspective as a parent at home: the daughter introduces a boy at the daughter's home (went out, 32) and then she returns (come home, 33). These three events are conjoined, without terminal intonational break, with a fourth event in 34 (and I said, "Well, you going out with him again?"). These four events are conjoined, without terminal intonational break, with a fourth event in 34 (and I said, "Well, you going out with him again?"). These four events are verbalized as one syntactic and intonational unit. Presenting these events together, despite their more objective temporal parameters, suggests that they form a single, subjectively defined episode in the story. This same subjective boundary is also suggested by the changed intonation of the next sentences, the changes in and intonational and syntactic shapes of the next events: the sentence with parallel syntactic structure and asyndetic connections (i.e. no and).

The process of verbalization just noted intersect with the theme and point of Ian's story: the episode (35-39) is differentiated syntactically and

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coda (She'd never go out with one again, 41). Not only does this reproduce the daughter's own generalization in 39 (She says, "I'm not used to Gentile boys"), but it also returns the story from an earlier level of specificity in 34 ("Well, you go in with him again?"). Within the story world, to the loss of generality from the narrative abstract: she wouldn't go out with them again (18). Thus 41 moves away from specific narrative events to a general evaluative coda of those events.

We have seen that what happens in the story world continues the portrayal of the mother/daughter relationship hinted at earlier: Jan's daughter is someone who takes responsibility for her own beliefs and actions; Jan does not have to openly endorse the daughter's beliefs or enforce her actions. Jan presents a second story, conjoined with and to continue - and evaluate - the first story (Schiffrin 1987, Chap. 6).

42 Jan: And when she met my son-in-law, she thought he was Jewish. 43 She said, "I don't think I'm gonna go out with you because my mother would object." 44 I said, "Why did you say that? I didn't even know you were gonna get him." 45 She said, "Well, I didn't think I was Jewish. And I didn't want to go out with him." 46 But it turned out he was Jewishyyyy. 47

Jan: And then they got married. 48

Jan's report of her daughter's initial encounter with the man she later married (my son-in-law, 42) replays the point of her earlier story, but with a slightly different set of characters and events. At this time Jan says nothing at all about the daughter's plans (cf. "You're gonna go out with a Gentile boy"); 28) or reaction ("Did he get fresh?"), 36. Rather, it is the daughter herself who aborts a date, and volunteers her own reason for doing so in 44 (she says, "I don't think I'm gonna go out with you because my mother would object"). It is interesting that Jan is said to be the one responsible for the daughter's behavior; this is consistent with the earlier story in which Jan's 'You're gonna go out with a Gentile boy' was interpreted by her daughter as indicative of a negative attitude toward interfaith marriage. Just as Jan defined this agentive role in her earlier story (with "I don't care"). 30, too, she denies it again in 45 ("Why did you say me, I didn't even know you were gonna get him."). As the next reported move reveals, however, the daughter is actually using Jan to animate a belief for which she herself is principal: She said, "Well, I didn't think he was Jewish. And I didn't want to go out with him." (46). Thus, not only has the daughter internalized Jan's attitude about intermarriage - again behaving the way her parents want her to, without having been told to do so - but the daughter is also replicating Jan's interactional strategy: a specific individual (a Gentile boy, 28) has become a general representative of a group (a general indefinite one) in the

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vidual who deviates from family norms poses a threat to that integration. Whereas Jan's story was about the threat of marriage with an "outsider" (and thus a potential need to incorporate an in-law of a different faith into the family), Zelda's story is about the threat posed by someone who has already become an "insider" (her daughter-in-law) but refuses to act like one. Interestingly, the symbolic meaning of the daughter-in-law's solution to the naming problem, namely using "nothing," replicates the central cultural dilemma underlying Zelda's story: being called "nothing" implies a lack of familiarity and/or certainty, exactly what has to be overcome if outsiders are to be integrated into one's family.

In contrast to Jan's story, which began as Jan developed her husband's comparison between daughter and son during a discussion of intermarriage, Zelda's story is told in response to direct questions that I ask during a discussion of address terms. (CA here marks complicating action clauses, E marks evaluation clauses.)

1. Debby: What does your uh daughter-in-law call you?
2. Zelda: Well, that's a sore [topic].
3. Debby: My older daughter-in-law does call me Mom.
4. Debby: Uh huh.
5. Zelda: Why younger daughter-in-law right now is it up to nothing.

CA 5 The she had said

CA 6 E 6 Zelda: We had quite a discussion about it.

CA 7 E 7 We did bring it up one morning.

CA 8 She said oh um ... that the Joe right now, that's it till she takes her time.

CA 9 E 9 Now they're married, it's gonna be on ... I think eh ... five years.

Debby: Uh huh.

10. E 10 Zelda: what they'll be married.

CA 11 E 11 And she said oh eh it was very hard t'ce: call someone else Mom beside her mother.

CA 12 E 12 So I had said to her: "That's okay!"

CA 13 E 13 Debby: I said, "If you-- if you can't say Mom, just call me by my [first name]."

Unheard

CA 14 E 15 Zelda: So, we've had quite a discussion about it.

CA 15 E 15 It was a little [tense] (at one time).

Debby: [Yes]

CA 16 E 16 Zelda: She said, "All right," she call me Zelda.

CA 17 E 17 But she still can't bring herself to say Zelda.

CA 18 E 18 as she calls me nothing.

Although Zelda's story is situated in prior discourse that is very different than Jan's, the story is similar in several ways. First, like Jan, Zelda recontextualizes a point prior to her story to in (My younger daughter-in-law right now is it up to nothing) within the events of her story (so she calls me nothing). Second, Zelda also presents herself in her story without having accepted and permissive with criticism more reached for her evaluation. The complicating action clauses in Zelda's story are also relatively free of criticism; the evaluation clauses reveal a more critical view of the daughter-in-law's behavior.
These acts, of Zelda's self-presentation help construct a dual position, placing between solidarity and distance, similar to that constructed by Jan.

Despite these similarities, the specific visual construction of Zelda's dual position differs from Jan's story: whereas Jan's story sexually segregates her from her critical stance, Zelda consistently weaves the two sides of her dual position together in her story and her post-story evaluations.

So pervasive is Zelda's interweaving of solidarity and distance toward her daughter-in-law that a duality appears as soon as she begins to answer my question: What does your daughter-in-law call you? (11). Since Zelda has two daughters-in-law, who address her differently, she cannot self-consciously answer my question without mentioning both. Rather than begin by repeating, and then providing the information I had requested, Zelda begins with the general evaluation: Well, that's a nice spot (2), based on the self-metaphorical view of behavior and relationships as Jan's. Since "a nice spot" is a small but ongoing irritation in an otherwise healthy system, that's a nice spot conveys that there is some small, ongoing trouble in the use of address terms.

When Zelda goes on to repair and press the information that I had requested, she provides a list as to why is causing the spot. Her repair of a daughter-in-law is based on the comparative/my-glider-daughter-in-law (3), since a comparative indicates two members of that family category. Zelda uses an to report that this daughter-in-law calls her Mom (3). Both negatives and do can be constraining in discourse. However, whereas the use of negatives reveals that an act does not fill an expectation, the use of do can convey that an act does fill an expectation. Thus my glider-daughter-in-law does call me Mom (3) conveys an expectation of being called "Mom."

Zelda's answer is informationally completed by My younger daughter-in-law right now is up to nothing (4). Yet, like the other parts of her answer thus far, this too reveals trouble. Up to is an aspirant ant-traumatic verbal posture that calls out not only progression past a baseline (e.g., a temperature can go up to 100; Clark 1974) but also progression toward a desired goal, or endpoint (e.g., we can be up to the last chapter in a book, or only up to Chapter 2). By saying that her daughter-in-law right now is up to nothing, Zelda presents her as moving along a trajectory of some kind, but as we find out later, when Zelda says But call them something (36), nothing is opposite to the desired endpoint. In combining an aspirant verbal posture that conveys accomplishment (approaching a goal) with an action (call her "Mom") which is viewed not as an accomplishment, but as an undesirable goal, she conveys a negative attitude (cf. the expression up to no good) or a sense of irony or sarcasm—another hint of the trouble to come in the story.

Although the complicating action clauses of Zelda's story are relatively free of criticism, evaluation devices throughout the story constitute a series of trouble. Thus Zelda begins the story events with She had said (9), but self-
problem that parallels the account provided by the daughter-in-law herself. Recall that Just call me by my first name! is presented as a consequence of what the daughter-in-law can't do (if you can't say Mom, i.e., a consequence of an inability (i.e., the basic meaning of being). Being unable to do something is semantically comparable with finding that not very hard. Finally Zelda minimizes the difficulty of adopting her alternative call me by my first name! does a great deal of work for Zelde. By basing the alternative being offered on the daughter-in-law's own account, grounding it in shared information, and minimizing its degree of imposition, it not only transfers responsibility for the next move to the daughter-in-law, and tries to guarantee its cooperative nature, but it also helps construct a position of solidarity with the daughter-in-law.

However, a speech act analysis of "If you can't say Mom, just call me by my first name!" suggests that the solidarity being constructed by these moves is somewhat fragile. On one level of analysis, "If you can't say Mom, just call me by my first name!" is a direct command. Call me by your first name is an imperative (a syntactic form often associated with directives) that clearly fills the felicity conditions for directives (e.g., the sincerity condition that wants H to do A, the essential condition that it counts as an attitudinal account, etc., the pronominal condition on which the dialogue is constructed). So compromises adjust what wants so that it is more in line with what H is presumed to want, compromises which is more frequent in cooperative speech acts (which focus more on H's wants than S's), such as offers. Indeed, we typically say that we offer (not request) a compromise.

Defining "If you can't say Mom, just call me by my first name!" as an offer helps explain why the outcome of the interaction is so unsatisfying: that makes their rejection a deliberate matter for both speakers and hearers. As I discuss elsewhere (Schiffrin 1994a:121-123), offers are face-threatening acts - an international meaning that makes their rejection a deliberate matter for both speakers and hearers. As I discuss elsewhere (Schiffrin 1994a:121-123), offers are face-threatening. The first type involves two kinds of "wants." The other may be made available. Because has no guarantee that A is what wants, S must guess what H wants. But since guessing another's desires means making assumptions about another's internal state, an offer can threaten H's negative face, i.e., the desire that one's own needs and wants be inherent in offers can be viewed as a sincerity condition (Bear 1969): S

Another similarity between the two stories is the use of narrative evaluation for criticism: neither Jan nor Zelda use story events to reveal the family’s criticism of her daughter was reserved for an external evaluation clause events. We have already noted how embedded orientation clauses in 9–10 they’ll be married), rather than narrative events, reject the daughter-in-law’s discussion about it, 14 and is explicit about its emotional tone (it was a bit cooperative. However, contrasted with Zelda’s ongoing construction of a dual position, even these criticisms are mitigated: the term discussion (14) does not necessarily convey confrontation; the intensity of the anger metaphor heated (Laskoff & Johnson 1980) is reduced with a little.

Note finally that both Jan and Zelda populate their story worlds with story lines. Jan’s daughter took responsibility for her own actions: she was also presented as a story character who animated her own beliefs, enacting them through directly reported speech. But Zelda’s daughter-in-law does not take a responsible, agentic role in the family: she does not follow through with a behavior to which she had agreed; even worse, her lack of compliance (calling Zelda nothing results in the absence of verbal behavior. It is only when the daughter-in-law does act agentially – when she accepts the compromise “All right” (16) – that Zelda allows her to speak for herself. In all other uses of indirect reported speech (in 8, 9, 9a, and 11), she said that she – just right now, she–– I’ll take her time, and in 11, And she said that eh it was very hard to call someone else Mom besides her mother, or switches to indirect speech (She said and she’ll call me Zelma, 16, 16). Thus, just as the agentic family role of Jan’s daughter was conventionally conveyed in her story world construction of the daughter as someone who speaks for herself, the non-agentic family role of Zelda’s daughter-in-law was conventionally conveyed in her construction of her story world character as someone who does not animate her own words.

Earlier we saw that the symbolic meaning of address terms makes the daughter-in-law’s inability to use a kin term or first name a sore spot; marking it as uncertain and open to negotiation. Despite this symbolic problem, Zelda minimizes the consequences of being called nothing immediately after her restatement of the problenative aspect of address term that she had suggested – showing, also, that she is a reasonable person who accepts diversity in her family. But Zelda’s mention of her son also reveals a lack of family symmetry, a non-reciprocity, that can itself be seen as troubling. Although her son shows appropriate respect for her in-laws, her daughter-in-law (his wife) does not reciprocate. Furthermore, although Zelda was able to teach her son the right thing to do, her in-laws did not do so with their daughter. Thus the offense has repercussions potentially wider than the relationship between Zeldas and her daughter-in-law.

My comments to Zelda partially sustain the dual position being created through Zeldas story: NARRATIVELY AS SELF PORTRAIT

as evaluative devices (a list is a discourse structure in which similar items are clustered together; Schurfin 1994b). The first list provides four items whose positive value contrasts with the negative behavior just reported, thereby helping to construct a position of solidarity between Zeldas and her daughter-in-law:

19 She do but we’re very di—we’re on very good terms, I’m
20 Zeldas: what’s her very sweet girl
21 and I like her very much
22 and uh: we don’t have any differences.

Zelda’s display of acceptance begins with but as a marker of contrast (Schurfin 1987, Chap. 6) and a statement of her closeness with her daughter-in-law (very good terms, 19). Next is a positive attribution (she’s a very sweet girl!); and Zeldas feelings about her daughter-in-law (and I like her very much). In 22, And uh: we don’t have any differences summarizes (through paraphrase of 19) the lack of dissonance in the relationship. Both the repeated use of the modifier very (19, 20, 21) and the list-like presentation of good qualities (with no terminal intonational break between them) enhance their evaluative function for the story; I.e., each quality adds to the others to build a cumulative picture of a generally good relationship (Schurfin 1994b). Zeldas thus disengages a behavioral called no nothing) from its symbolic meaning: even though the behavior is problematic, it is not a threat to family solidarity.

However, after minimizing the problematic consequences of her daughter-in-law’s behavior, Zelda reinforces her complaint by bringing up her sons use of first names for her mother and father. The shift in position is again initiated with but:

21 But, that’s the eh: just the: you know the point that oh: her: he my son calls her mother needed by her first names.
22 Which is a feel.
23 That’s all right.

By mentioning that her son calls her mother and father by their first names (24), Zelda reinforces the acceptability of the alternative address term that she had suggested – showing, also, that she is a reasonable person who accepts diversity in her family. But Zelda’s mention of her son also reveals a lack of family symmetry, a non-reciprocity, that can itself be seen as troubling. Although her son shows appropriate respect for his in-laws, her daughter-in-law (his wife) does not reciprocate. Furthermore, although Zelda was able to teach her son the right thing to do, her in-laws did not do so with their daughter. Thus the offense has repercussions potentially wider than the relationship between Zeldas and her daughter-in-law.

During our interchange, I first define the daughter-in-law's behavior as a problem when I prompt Zelda's answer to my question about Zelda’s answer to your question. After Zelda's answer (Yeh, I don’t think she says anything yet), I adopt the daughter-in-law's perspective with Yeh. It’s hard i imagine. Zelda’s repetition (i imagine it) also helps to mitigate the problematic status of the daughter-in-law's behavior.

We noted earlier than, in contrast to the cooperative and face-saving nature of the story events, Zelda’s narrative evaluations reveal criticism as well as acceptance of her daughter-in-law. The next part of Zelda’s post-story evaluation—a list of family members who use the appropriate address terms—continues to show the same pattern. However, Zelda also becomes more critical of her daughter-in-law in this section. Thus, although Zelda’s story implicitly rejects the daughter-in-law’s account in it (i’ll take her time) to say “Mom,” she explicitly denies the validity of that account through her list. The list opens with a general rule about using address terms that prescribes behavior exactly opposite to that preferred by the daughter-in-law:

27 And you have to start in the beginning.

The force of Zelda’s rule is here conveyed not just through stress on the modal have (conveying both obligation and contrast), but through the list of people who have followed the rule, and therefore provide evidence for its validity. First is the older daughter-in-law (mentioned earlier in 3):

28 Now my daughter-in-law gil.

29 My older daughter-in-law from the very beginning she said Mom,

30 and she’s used to it.

31 Zelda: Yeh and Mom and Dad.

The older daughter-in-law girl [follow the rule] in 28 (note the stress again); she said Mom from the very beginning (29) and therefore got used to it (30).

Before mentioning the second person who evades her rule, Zelda becomes more openly critical in another way. She embeds an evaluative gloss in her list that reveals the stark asymmetry between herself and her daughter-in-law:

32 See it’s don’t matter: it’s only a name! Warranted by the older daughter-in-law's behavior (28-31) is a conclusion about the symbolic non-importance of terms of address: it doesn’t matter (interrupted) and it’s only a name! The formulaic phrase it’s only a name!
ship and more general social problem that it can symbolize: she complains about her daughter-in-law's behavior, but denies the symbolic meaning of that behavior.

In discussing Jan's story "That cured her!", we noted that Jan presented herself in two different ways: she was neutral and permissive in the story world, but critical and controlling in her story evaluation. A similar disjunction appears in Zelda's story, resulting in a dual position that also pivots between solidarity and distance, and between the provision of autonomy and the exercise of power. However, the textual construction of Zelda's position differed from Jan's in several ways. Whereas Jan's dual position was apparent in the story only through a single evaluation clause (and from the complicating action, Zelda's dual position was woven into the story through external evaluation clauses and other evaluative devices. Whereas Jan's evaluation revealed only a negative view of her daughter's behavior, Zelda's evaluation was both negative and positive, i.e., her evaluation and distancing criticized her daughter-in-law with praise. Although both women evaluated their stories after completion, Jan used a second story to do so, while Zelda used lists. In what follows I further compare the two stories in the context of more general methodological and theoretical conclusions concerning narrative language, self, and identity.

CONCLUSION: NARRATIVE LANGUAGE, SELF, AND IDENTITY

Despite a rich and varied research tradition focusing on this topic, there are surprisingly few linguistically detailed analyses of how particular stories display their tellers' sense of who they are. One outcome of this is that there is no set of general sociolinguistic tools through which to analyze how narrative language reveals self and identity. In this section I apply analyses in more general methodological and theoretical terms in relation to verbalizing and situating experience, discursive representations of self and identity, and sociolinguistic perspectives on identity.

Verbalizing and situating the stories

I suggested earlier that the way we verbalize and situate our experience as text (both locally and globally) provides a resource for the representation of personal and social identity. My analysis tried to capture these processes by focusing on the language used before, during, and after the stories themselves. Here I mention some of the ways that Jan and Zelda verbalized and situated their stories in relation to their displays of identity.

Both stories were locally situated in ongoing discourse on several different discourse planes simultaneously. Jan's story began as part of a general discussion of intermarriage. Although Jan and Ira were describing their son's dating behavior together, and it was Ira who initiated a comparison with their
daughter, Jan gained quotidian status and the turn-taking rights to recontextualize the daughter's position on intermarriage within a story. Thus Jan's story was locally situated within a more general discourse topic (intermarriage), within which she claimed specific rights to develop a particular sub-topic (her daughter's position) through a story. Jan's story tied the subtopic to more general topics by paraphrasing general formulations from prior general statements from Jan's earlier presentation (referentially tied to a specific story event through repetition of key predicates; through presentation in the same linear order; and through pronominal switches from the general them, to the specific him and he, and then back to the general talk, "when Jan told another brief story about her daughter. Thus Jan's story discussed discursive activities, and evasively, in that the same point is built in relation to both pre- and post-story talk.

Although Zelda's story was situated in a question answer exchange, it too was locally situated on different planes of discourse simultaneously. Zelda's story began as part of a discussion of family naming practices. Because my question asked about Zelda's daughter-in-law, Zelda repaired the referential domain to two daughters-in-law when she mentioned her older daughter-in-law. Although the repair could have had a purely informational or referential function, it also had evaluative functions: what was expected about the older daughter-in-law (does call me Mom) revealed Zelda's daughter was developed in her story, and defined a practice whose distribution in Zelda's family provided a later source of evaluation in the list of family members who use appropriate address terms. In addition to being referentially and evasively used into pre-story talk, Zelda's story was also linked with her post-story talk. For example, the list Zelda's story (9-22) was also embedded in Zelda's later list of family member address terms (38-42). The list of family members also added a new layer of evaluative information relevant to Zelda's story. By providing evidence for the validity of Zelda's role (you have to start in-law's account for not calling Zelda "Mom" (an account only implicitly rejected in Zelda's story)).

Still another link between Zelda's story and post-story talk was through discourse referents and the referring terms used to evoke them. The main referent in Zelda's story (her younger daughter-in-law) remained a main referent in Zelda's list (accessible-topic, in the terms of Arifio 1996). Evidence for this was Zelda's use of the pronoun she to evoke the younger daughter-in-law in an environment that often disfavors the use of pronouns as first-mentions of prior referents. Specifically, Zelda evoked the younger daughter-in-law through she in And she's an intelligent girl, even though the most recent, semantically compatible antecedent in the text was the older daughter-in-law (Now my daughter-in-law did). (Now that referent was itself pronominally continued as she in 20-30, and therefore also had status as an accessible topic).

Both stories were also globally situated in relation to a similar cultural theme: how to integrate outsiders, whose beliefs and practices may differ from one's own, into one's family. That such integration may create difficulties was revealed through the same metaphor in both stories: a view of human behavior and relationships as an organism. This metaphor pervades both our public and private discourse (e.g., we complain about social life, an unhealthy society, we try to cure social problems). Thus its use as evaluation of the reported encounters situates the story topics - intermarriage, terms of address - as culturally salient and socially familiar terms. Both stories also told about a threat to family integration by recreating particular encounters, during which that threat was interpersonally negotiated through routines and face-saving strategies of speech acts. The stories instantiated the belief that face-to-face interactions can help solve more general social and cultural dilemmas (a sentiment we did bring it out in the open). Like the "society as organism" metaphor, the belief that talk can help solve problems is widespread and pervasive (e.g., psychotherapy is viewed as a "talking cure").

The way that the two experiences were verbalized as narrative also shows some similarities. Both stories crystallized what was probably an ongoing family issue into brief verbal exchanges in which familiar sequences of speech acts, realized through relatively conventional linguistic routines, were used to reveal family trouble and its resolution. But because the stories included the third move necessary to our definitions of conflict talk, the speech acts themselves could not be defined as conflictual. Even the act initially responsible for each particular interchange was absent from the stories. Thus, although it announced the source of family trouble prior to Jan's story (my daughter went out with a couple Gentle kids), the date that actually led to the interchange was not reported as an event in the story, but only presupposed by Jan's adverbial when clause (when I heard she was going out with him).

The process of verbalizing an experience was reflected not only in the content of the stories (what was said or not said), but also in how syntactic form, information status, and contextualization cues were used to convey pragmatic meanings central to the themes of the stories. The syntactic contrast between directly and indirectly reported speech, for example, had a role in the construction of story characters: the way Jan's daughter accepted
responsibly was enacted through direct speech; the way Zela's daughter-in-law avoided responsibility was enacted through indirect speech. Another example of the pragmatic role of syntax in Zela's offer at a compromise in "if you can't say Mom, just call me by my first name." What made this move accommodate was its verbalization as a conditional sentence with a prepositional (rather than postposed) clause, whose information status as shared knowledge had been textually grounded. A final example is the use of intonation as a contextualizing cue. Both Jan and Zela disengaged themselves from consequences, through reported speech (I don't care, That's okay) whose communicative force was conveyed not only intonally, but intertextually: both used a high-low mid-intonation contour (with each level falling on one of the three syllables in their utterance) that seems to conventionally indicate a lack of emotional involvement.

By situating and verbalizing a specific experience in the ways just described, Jan's and Zela's stories allowed them to display different aspects of self, to construct a position in relation to the actions performed. Furthermore, the stories were highly interpersonal and contextualized, the subjects were in familiar settings, and the stories were told to each other. Thus, Jan and Zela present episodic self in narrative speech, this narrative serves as the basis for the presentation of self in narrative performance.

Narrative displays of self, position, and role

Narrative is a means by which we arrive at an understanding of the self as emergent from actions and experiences, both in relation to general themes or plots and as located in a cultural matrix of meanings, beliefs, and practices. The form, context, and performance of narrative thus all provide sensitive indices of our personal selves and our social and cultural identities. In this section, I attempt to analyze these narratives by two different ways, i.e., as relatively accepting and as critical. The way these two displays of self were linguistically differentiated in the stories coincided with J. Brummett's distinction (1980) between epistemic and agentic selves. He suggests that we present ourselves epistemically when we state our beliefs, feelings, and wants: agentic aspects of self are revealed when we report actions directed toward goals, including actions that have an effect on others. Jan and Zela both presented themselves as figures taking actions (principally verbal actions such as saying I don't care, That's okay) that were part of cooperative interactions. These presentations were displays of agentic selves, but far from permitting and accepting practices not in keeping with family norms, the evaluations of both speakers viewed such practices metaphorically as disease that could either be cure (You remain a sure spot) or left alone (I remain a sure spot). These beliefs, and their indication of family trouble, were displays of epistemic selves. Thus the evaluations in both narratives presented epistemic selves that were in odds with the agentic selves displayed in the complicating actions.

Although the speaker who enacted the epistemic role as metaphorically was naturalized in complicating actions, and epistemic selves in evaluation clauses, the antithetical evaluation between self and text was not quite so neat. Not only were epistemic selves not restricted to complicate the evaluation clauses, they did not appear solely through the linguistic forms in which we might expect them (e.g., as first person epistemic predicates like realize, know, or convince factives like be glad). As in most analyses of oral narrative, I found that speakers convey their attitudes, feelings, and values through narrative performance, the narrative display of the epistemic self and self of narrative evaluation--in a variety of ways.

Event clauses in the complicating actions of both stories, for example, had epistemic functions simply because the actions performed there were conventionally associated with certain speaker intonations and/or attitudes. To be more specific, since making a request is a felicitous speech act only if the speaker wants the hearer to do a particular act, the performance of a request displays a particular attitudinal stance--in Zela's words (1969), a sincerity condition of ways. Thus, when Zela requested that her daughter-in-law just call her by her first name, we can assume that this was something that Zela wanted, and that this was a display of an epistemic self. Just as the linguistic display of an epistemic self was not restricted to a single section of text, neither was it confined to a single speaker's stance. Thus the second person attribution who's very sweet girl was combined with no international break to the first person statement I like her very much in Zela's list (a text structure in which similar items are clustered together). Since both seemed to reveal the second person's positive attitude toward her daughter-in-law, both displayed an epistemic self toward social conduct were also inferable in a variety of ways, including action clauses that had evaluative functions. For example, Zela suspended on reported actions as evaluation during her list of family members who behaved appropriately--a list that included her own reported actions (e.g., I did it, I got used to it). Finally, even the current presentations of Jan's and Zela's criticisms were not direct evaluations of attitudes, e.g., I didn't do what she did. Rather, both speakers acted on metaphors (That cured her, Well, that's a sure spot) to convey their feelings about normative-practices in their family.

In addition to widening the range of ways in which we can display an epistemic self, my analysis also move considered displays of self from a clause level to a text level. This allowed us to see presentations of self may contrast (as well as reinforce) one another; in addition it showed that we present ourselves through the forms and meanings of textual patterns that 
cannot always be anticipated until we do a detailed examina-
tion of particular ways of speaking, and the interpretation of the social and cultural mean-
ings of what is said. Thus the use of syntactic and textual forms as varied as constructed dialog, lists, and repetition - and a consideration of how these (and other) forms were sequentially and socially situated - worked together to display different aspects of self.

Moving the display of agentic and epistemic self to a textual level (and even more, to the way texts reconstruct interactions) also helps to build a connection between our linguistic displays of self and the construction of positions (Davies & Harré 1990). Many of the actions and attitudes that we represent through speech are interactional in nature: when we perform an action through speech, we are setting up another person with some possible effect on that person. We have beliefs and attitudes not only about situations and events in the world, but about other people, as well as their role in situations and events. Thus the agentic and epistemic selves that we display linguistically, through reported actions and beliefs in a story world, provide a sensitive index to our ongoing relationships with others in that story world. It is this ideological relationship - between agentic and epistemic selves, on the one hand, and ongoing relationships, on the other - that we have tried to capture through the term position. To take a concrete example from our analysis, Zelda’s ‘If you can’t say Mom, just call me by my first name!’ can be seen as an agentic display that indexed a position of solidarity with her daughter-in-law. Thus the way we use language to display epistemic and agentic aspects of self, during our stories, positions us in relation to the characters in those stories: what we say we do and believe within a story world continually reflects, and has consequences for, the way we construct our social relationships within those worlds.

So far I have reviewed the way that I have expanded the range of linguistic resources for the display of self; I have located those displays in texts, and suggested that such displays interactationally-position speakers within a story world. Implicit in my analysis was that our story-world positions helps reveal the social roles that we are occupying within a story. Traditional sociologi-
cal frameworks view role as the typical activity engaged in by an occupant, of a particular social status (as a position in a system of positions; see Coffman 1964 and references therein). But roles are not viewed as properties of individuals alone: our roles and statuses are bound together by sets of reciprocal expectations and obligations about what to do, and about how and when to do it. To talk a simple example, when I am teaching, I am expected to act in a certain way: to speak with some authority, raise topics for discussion, and give instructions. But such conduct will work only if others engage in the practices expected of them by taking up the recip-
rocal status of ‘students;’ etc. allowing me an extended floor of talk, build-
ing on top, and following my instructions. We sustain our roles and

status; there, in the face-to-face interactions and the everyday practices through which we reveal and negotiate reciprocal expectations about how to act and what to believe (Coffman 1967, 1971, Cicourel 1972). Put differently, who we are is sustained by our ongoing interactions with others, and the way we position ourselves in relation to these others. Likewise, when we report interactions through which to construct positions in narrative, we offer our audience a glimpse of ourselves as an occupant of a social status engaged in role-relevant behavior - but one which is located in a time, place, and situa-
tion quite different from that of the interaction in which our story is told.

The story-world role displayed by Jan and Zelda in the two narratives was the role of ‘mother.” Although I propose that their story-world roles, Jana and Zelda, were speaking as mothers is the way

obvious indicator that ‘mother’ role is being enacted in both stories. If we return to their story-world interlocutors: Jan spoke of her daughter rather than use her first name; Zelda spoke of her daughter-in-law (rather than first name or my son’s wife). Another obvious indicator is that role

children and, hence, as a daughter-in-law. Note finally that one of Jan’ s and Zelda’s most recent interlocutors (rather than name) defined a symbolic

behavioral role for Zelda as a mother.

Other indicators that Jan and Zelda were speaking as mothers in their story

rely on less obvious, depending work on social and cultural expectations for

occupants of a ‘mother’ role. First, both Jan and Zelda constructed repre-

sentations of self through their responses to another woman’s deviation from

the role of ‘mother.” In American middle-class society, conformity to

family solidarity is emphasized, to maintain family standards and control

efforts to resist the deviation, to maintain family relationships, displayed relatively traditional aspects of the

themes of family relationships, displayed relatively traditional aspects of the

themes and family solidarity, emphasized the role of ‘mother’ in middle-class society. Second, by telling me their stories, Jan and Zelda were engaged in what Coff-

man 1959 calls impression management. However, the impressions that they made managed, through both the events and actions, as well as the just impressions about self, but also about family. This conforms with the

role of ‘mother’ as one centered on the expressive/symbolic domain of fam-

ily life more than the instrumental/material domain.

Finally, the dual positions discussed in this article - positions that pivot between

the roles of Jan and Zelda as mothers, although perhaps in a more specialized capacity and relationship as mothers of ado-

lescents or adults. The actions and reactions of both Jan and Zelda

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a delicate balance between acceptance and rejection of a non-normative practice. This balance not only underlies the dual positions just noted; it also epitomizes the conflict between closeness and distance noted by many authors to characterize mother/daughter relationships. The linguistic construction of dual positions in both settings allows Jan and Zelda to present pictures of self in relation to another woman in their families, pictures that preserve their closeness with that woman at the same time that they permit some distance. The need to balance closeness with distance, and autonomy with control, is of course not unique to either parent/child or mother-daughter relationships. Creating such balance in all social relationships is often facilitated through linguistic strategies of indirectness. The dual positions displayed by Jan and Zelda in their roles as mothers both relied on indirectness. Besides not directly setting another person how to act, both women's strategies depended on an intricate disengagement of the literal and more conventional meanings of what is said from situational inferences about what is meant. Thus one of Jan's central acts in "That cursed boy!" was "You've got me out on a limb!" Jan's daughter interpreted this question as a challenge, but Jan relied on its literal function, as an information-seeking question, to display a lack of involvement in her daughter's decisions. Zelda's reliance on indirectness was somewhat more complicated. Zelda disengaged a linguistic practice, the use of an address term, from the social relationship that it can symbolize. By listing valued attributes of her daughter-in-law and describing the closeness in her relationship, Zelda implied that the conventional relationship with her daughter-in-law, thus Jan and Zelda both crossed dual positions by disengaging the general and conventional meanings of words from the individual and particular inferences that words can evoke. I have reviewed the ways that I relax self, position, and role, and how I locate these concepts in sociolinguistic analysis of narrative. I have suggested that the agentic and epistemic selves displayed by Jan and Zelda helped construct dual positions that induce them in the social role of "mother." Finally, I will briefly compare the view of social identity that has emerged from this analysis with a different view in sociolinguistics.

Sociolinguistic constructions of identity

This article has used a detailed analysis of two stories to show how the language used in narrative creates a story world in which both agentic and epistemic displays of self can position a story teller in a matrix of actions and beliefs that together display a social identity. The analysis suggested that social identity is locally situated: who we are, is, at least partially, a product of where we are and who we are with, both in interactional and story worlds.

NARRATIVE AS SELF-PORTRAIT

To use a visual analogy, we can lay that telling a story provides a self-portrait: a linguistic lens through which to discover people's own (somewhat idealized) views of themselves as situated in a social structure. The verbalization and textual structure of a story analogous to the creation of form and composition in a portrait) combines with its content, and with its local and global contexts of production, to provide a view of self that can be either challenged or validated by an audience. From Kukla's distinction (1993:633-65) among three different aspects of narrativity provides another way of capturing this analogy: just as a self-portrait displays oneself (the artist) through both the context and means of production of an image (e.g., the use of color, the composition), so too a story displays oneself (the teller) through both a tale and the telling of an experience.

Of course it is hardly surprising today that language displays social identity and relationship. This is a common assumption of sociolinguistic and other contextual approaches to language, and the view that identity is locally situated is well established in interactional and conversation-analytic approaches to discourse (Goffman 1984). But the suggestion that identity is locally situated does differ somewhat from the view of identity assumed by many sociolinguistic analyses, especially those that focus on levels of language structure other than the textual. Sociolinguistic studies of variation, for example, often assume that identity is like fixed attributes that are permanent properties of speakers. It is this assumption that underlies the variationist practice of coding identity as a categorical variable, remaining constant despite contextual changes. Thus speakers like Jan and Zelda would be coded as "White, middle-class, middle-aged Jewish women. They would be assumed to maintain that same identity, with the same constellations of features, regardless of the activity or interaction in which they were engaged. The view offered here suggests that identity is not categorical nor fixed: we may act more or less middle-class, more or less female, and so on, depending on what we are doing and with whom. This view forces us to attend to speech activities, and to the interactions in which they are situated, as a frame in which our social roles are realized and our identities are displayed and even further, as a potential resource for the display (and possible creation) of identity. Our transformation of experience into stories, and the way we carry it out, is thus a way to show our interlocutors the essence of particular aspects of our identities.

This view of social identity need not conflict with the methodological and theoretical interests of those sociolinguists seeking to identify and explain community-wide variation in language use (cf. Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992, Baugh & Mc Mahon-Krown 1993). In fact, variationists can build on this view of identity in two ways. First, being a very practical methodological level, variationists can modify the way identity is coded as a factor or constraint. Just as variationists already build into coding procedures the belief that there

are no single-style speakers (Lahov 1972a), so too they can incorporate the notion that identity is dynamic, i.e. that there are no single-identity speakers. In coding the identities displayed during the two stories discussed here, for example, one might emphasize gender and/or family role - a role that might be downplayed in other sections of the interaction. Second, on a more conceptual level, variationists can rethink their view of social identity. The identities that we display and that others act upon during sociolinguistic interviews, and during the narratives told during such interviews, are no less salient than those whose relevance emerges during other activities. We are continually locating and relocating ourselves, defining and redefining ourselves and our worlds: telling a story about a personal experience is merely another example of a process that pervades our ways of speaking, acting, and being in the world. Perhaps integrating an understanding of this process into all areas of sociolinguistics will help us explain how both social and linguistic heterogeneity are not only common products, but also locally situated interactional processes.

NOTES
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1 Although I do not discuss it here, there are further indications of Ita's shift in participation status, e.g. Ita's outlining shift in (see example in 4, Jan's offer of Ovye as an example in 5, and Ita's but... or as a coda-motivated device in 6. The reference in my notebook is a shifting shift in ditotic context (see a reference to pertinent type speech in time, rather than narrative time). Perhaps it is used to encourage the onset of the utterance.

2 Schifflin (1994:72-76) discusses the relationship between offers and requests.

3 Although I speak of agentic and epistemic selves, this is for convenience only: I view both as aspects of self, not distinct "acting" vs. "feeling" selves.

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