

**The Discursive Construction of Hegemonic and  
Pariah Femininities in the Spoken Accounts of a  
Group of Japanese Women**

**Justin M. Charlebois**

**B.A. (State University of New York at Oswego) Education;  
M.A. (Columbia University) Applied Linguistics**

**This thesis is submitted in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Linguistics and English Language  
Lancaster University**

**January 2010**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis investigates the discursive construction of culturally idealized ('hegemonic') and alternative ('pariah') femininities in the spoken accounts of a group of Japanese women. Semi-structured individual and group interviews were conducted with a sample of women and the data was analyzed using a Critical Discursive Psychology (CDP) approach. This study makes a contribution to both gender theory and critical discursive psychology. It contributes to gender theory by empirically investigating the theoretical constructs of 'hegemonic' and 'pariah' femininities. The results of this study indicate that a full-time homemaker is a culturally dominant image of hegemonic femininity. In contrast, working professional women challenge and potentially subvert the homemaker image and thus can be seen as 'pariah' femininities. Second, this study fills a gap in existing research by attempting to relate concepts from discursive psychology to characteristic discursive features. These relationships suggest

that critical discursive psychologists can make claims about the workings of gender hegemony assisted by identifying participants' use of characteristic discursive features. Inquiries such as this one contribute to closing the gap between critical discursive psychology and discourse analysis and the development of a more robust and synthetic form of discourse analysis.

KEY WORDS: *critical discursive psychology, hegemonic femininity, pariah femininity*

## **Declaration**

The research presented in this thesis represents the author's original work and has not been reproduced for a higher degree elsewhere.

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## Table of Contents

	<b>Page Number</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	
2	
<b>Declaration</b>	
4	
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	
5	
<b>Table of Contents</b>	
7	
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	<b>13</b>
1.1 Personal motivation for the research	13
1.2 Intellectual justification for the research	14
1.3 Relevant Japanese background	17
1.4 Structure of the thesis	24
1.5 Conclusion	24
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b>	
<b>26</b>	
<b>2.1 Gender</b>	
26	
2.1.1 The Gender/Sex Dichotomy	26
2.1.2 The social construction of gender	31
2.1.3 Gender Identity	
35	

2.1. 4 Gender Performance	
36	
<b>2.2 The ‘Gender Relations Approach’</b>	<b>38</b>
2.2.1 Power relations	
40	
2.2.2 Production relations (‘sexual division of labor’)	42
2.2.3 Emotional relations (‘cathexis’)	
44	
2.2.4 Symbolic relations	47
<b>2.3 Gender Regimes and the Gender Order</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>2.4 Gender Relations and the present study</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>2.5 Femininities and Masculinities</b>	
<b>53</b>	
2.5.1 Hegemony and gender	
56	
2.5.2 ‘Hegemonic Masculinity’	58
2.5.3 ‘Emphasized Femininity’ and ‘Hegemonic Femininity’	61
2.5.4 ‘Pariah Femininities’	71
<b>2.6 The current study: Hegemonic femininity and critical discursive psychology</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>2.7 Conclusion</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology Part 1: Discursive Psychology</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>3.1 Qualitative Research</b>	<b>81</b>
3.1.1 Qualitative Interviewing	81
<b>3.2 Social and Discursive Psychology</b>	<b>84</b>



3.2.1 Social Psychology	84
3.2.2 Discourse	86
3.2.3 Discursive Social Psychology	91
<b>3.3 Branches of Discursive Psychology</b>	<b>98</b>
3.3.1 Conversation Analysis-Based Discursive Psychology	100
3.3.2 Post-structuralist-Based Discursive Psychology	104
3.3.3 Theoretical tensions between the two branches and possible resolutions	106
3.3.4 Possible resolutions between the two branches of DP	113
<b>3.4 Critical discursive psychology</b>	<b>118</b>
3.4.1 Interpretative repertoires	119
3.4.2 Ideological dilemmas	120
3.4.3 Subjectivity and Subject positions	123
3.4.4 Critical discursive psychology and the present study	127
3.4.5 The role of language in critical discursive psychology	128
3.5 Research Questions	132
<b>3.6 Conclusion</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Chapter 4: Data, Data collection, and preparing data for analysis</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>4.1 Introduction: Aims and objectives of the study revisited</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>4.2 Data needed</b>	<b>137</b>

<b>4.3 Data collection: interviews and focus groups</b>	<b>140</b>
4.3.1 Individual interviews	140
4.3.2 Group interviews	141
4.3.3 Ethical considerations	144
4.3.4 The reflexive researcher	145
<b>4.4 The participants</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>4.5 Data Collection: Recorded Sessions</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>4.6 Transcription and translation</b>	<b>151</b>
<b>4.7 Categorization and analysis of the data</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>4.8 Conclusion</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>Chapter 5: Methodology Part 2: Discursive Analytical Features</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>5.1 Introduction: discourse analytical features in this study</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>5.2 Reported Speech</b>	<b>160</b>
5.2.1 Reported speech	160
5.2.2 Conveying the central point of a narrative	166
5.2.3 Evidential function	167
5.2.4 Assessment function	168
5.2.5 Speaker Accountability	170
5.2.6 'Footing' shifts	

173	
5.2.7	Reported thought 175
5.2.8	Hypothetical reported speech and thought 177
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Membership Categories</b>
180	
<b>5.4</b>	<b>The discourse marker ‘yappari’</b>
190	
5.4.1	Semantic function 191
5.4.2	Discursive function 192
<b>5.5</b>	<b>Conclusion 196</b>
<b>Chapter 6: Analysis and Discussion: Hegemonic Femininity Part I 198</b>	
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Introduction 198</b>
<b>6.2</b>	<b>‘Women as natural caregivers’</b>
200	
6.2.1	Mayumi: Legitimizing Hegemonic Femininity 201
<b>6.3</b>	<b>‘Women as eventually domestic’ 220</b>
6.3.1	Akiko: Resisting Hegemonic Femininity 220
6.3.2	Yurika and Yuka: Gender Relations are Gradually Improving 231
6.3.3	Reiko, Manami, Moeko: Challenging Hegemonic Femininity 234
<b>6.4</b>	<b>The main discursive functions of reported speech and thought in the IRs used to construct hegemonic femininity</b>
250	
6.4.1	The discursive functions of reported speech and thought 250
6.4.2	The discursive functions of hypo. reported speech and thought 253

<b>6.5 Conclusion</b>	<b>255</b>
<b>Chapter 7: Hegemonic Femininity Part II: ‘Privileged’ and ‘Bounded’ Femininity</b>	
<b>257</b>	
<b>7.1 Introduction</b>	<b>257</b>
<b>7.2 The role of ‘Privileged femininity’ in the construction of HF</b>	<b>261</b>
<b>7.2.1 ‘Privileged femininity’ at high school and university</b>	<b>262</b>
<b>7.2.2 ‘Privileged femininity’ at work</b>	<b>272</b>
<b>7.3 The role of ‘Bounded femininity’ in the construction of HF</b>	<b>284</b>
<b>7.3.1 ‘Bounded femininity’ at work</b>	
<b>285</b>	
<b>7.4 The main discursive functions of reported speech and thought in the IRs used to construct hegemonic femininity: reported speech and thought</b>	<b>296</b>
<b>7.4.1 The discursive functions of reported speech and thought</b>	<b>297</b>
<b>7.4.2 The discursive functions of hypo. reported speech and thought</b>	<b>298</b>
<b>7.4.3 The discursive functions of deploying hypothetical reported speech and reported speech together</b>	<b>299</b>
<b>7.5 Conclusion</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>Chapter 8: Alternatives to ‘Hegemonic Femininity’: ‘Pariah Femininities’</b>	<b>305</b>
<b>8.1 Introduction</b>	<b>305</b>
<b>8.2 ‘Troubled’ identity</b>	<b>305</b>
<b>8.2.1 ‘Career woman’ as a ‘troubled’ identity and ‘pariah femininity’</b>	<b>310</b>

8.2.2 ‘Superwoman’ as a ‘troubled’ identity and ‘pariah femininity’	317
8.3 The main discursive features used to construct ‘pariah femininities’	328
8.3.1 The discursive functions of reported speech and thought	328
8.3.2 The discursive functions of ‘self’ versus ‘other’ reported thought	332
8.4 Conclusion	334
<b>Chapter 9: Conclusion</b>	
<b>338</b>	
9.1 Introduction	338
9.2 Revisiting the research questions	338
9.3 Contributions of the study	349
9.3.1 Gender theory	
351	
9.3.2 Critical discursive psychology	354
9.3.2.1 Identifying interpretative repertoires	354
9.3.2.2 Identifying ideological dilemmas	357
9.3.2.3 Discursive Trouble	
360	
9.4 Limitations of the study	
362	
9.5 Further research directions	364
9.6 Conclusion	366
<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>369</b>	
<b>References</b>	

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Personal motivation for the research**

My association with Japan began in 1998 as a university exchange student. I clearly remember the first time I entered an administrative office in order to file some paperwork. I walked into a room filled predominately with middle-aged men sitting at their desks and young women serving them tea. My initial impression was one of shock at this highly gendered division of labor. At the same time, I reminded myself that I was a visitor in this culture, thus I was not in a position to criticize a system that I did not fully comprehend. During my one year there I was able to observe many other things that did not conform to my western notion of ‘gender equality.’

That year was the catalyst for what is turning into a long association with Japan

and a research area that is evolving into a professional career. My initial observation of gender relations left a strong impression on my mind. I pondered various questions during that time. For example, why aren't women able to work on the same level as men? Why do women who supposedly 'control' the household through managing the household budget occupy such professionally weak positions? But as with other cultures and situations, Japanese gender relations are not as simple as they appear on the surface.

## **1.2 Intellectual motivation for the research**

The passage of the 1985 Equal Employment Opportunities Law (EEOL) in Japan was a major step forward for increasing women's rights because their gender inequality then became recognized at the national level. This law prohibits gender-based discrimination in recruiting, hiring, pay, and promotion (Mouer & Kawanishi, 2005). Nonetheless, significantly, there is no penalty clause for employers who engage in discriminatory employment practices.

This law was passed at least partially in response to growing international concern over gender-based discrimination (Ehara, 2008a). Since this legislation was prompted by international, rather than grassroots pressure, the extent to which it benefits the lives of individual Japanese women is questionable. As Sugimoto (2003)

points out, “While advocating the *tatemaie* [‘surface level’] of gender equality, the *honne* [‘hidden sentiment’] of many employers appear to be that the bulk of women should remain in subordinate positions in the workforce” (Sugimoto, 2003, p. 157). Sugimoto’s comments suggest that women’s main task in life is still the fulfillment of domestic roles. Relatedly, I am interested in the extent to which this ‘equal opportunities’ discourse (Wetherell et al., 1987) articulated by the state translates actually into the everyday lives of women and their discourse surrounding this.

My intellectual motivation to pursue this topic was piqued by the concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (see section 2.5.2). The notion that femininity is rendered subordinate to masculinity seemed to correspond to my initial observations of gender relations in Japan, so I saw hegemonic masculinity as the link between my interest in gender studies and Japan. However, as I mention in section 2.5.2, the concept of hegemonic masculinity has generated a plethora of masculinities research (see Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), but unfortunately femininities research has fallen by the wayside. Therefore, I thought it would be interesting and provide a new contribution to gender studies research not to study the idealized form of masculinity in Japanese society, but instead locate my focus on femininity.

The central aim of this study is to investigate the discursive construction of



culturally idealized or ‘hegemonic’ and alternative or ‘pariah’ femininities in the spoken accounts of a sample of Japanese women. More specifically, I am interested in the ‘interpretative repertoires’ (see section 3.4.1) or cultural themes that participants draw on as they discuss gender roles during semi-structured interviews. The identification and analysis of repertoires that participants invoke during talk indexes and thus provides insight into the commonsense notions of hegemonic and pariah femininities.

The apparent discrepancy between equal employment opportunities legislation and my informal observations suggests that tensions may exist between repertoires constituting femininity and participation in the paid labor market. Therefore, this study is also concerned with identifying the emergence of any contradictions between repertoires as participants discursively construct their accounts. Contradictions between repertoires suggest that gender relations are in a state of flux and illustrate individuals’ agency to accept, contest, or even reformulate these repertoires. Hopefully, the results of this inquiry will contribute to furthering our understanding of the fluid nature of identity construction, individual agency, and allow us to draw parallels between Japan and other societies.

This study is part of a growing body of gender research which emphasizes the importance of investigating the discursive practices of specific speech communities or,

more recently, ‘communities of practice’ (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992). Such research takes as given that the ‘accomplishment’ of gender is shifting and fluid and interacts with other categories such as age, race, ethnicity, and social class (Bergvall et al., 1996; Bucholtz et al., 1999; Hall & Bucholtz, 1995; Thorne, 1993). A shift has occurred from making general claims about women and men as distinct or even overlapping social categories to the multifarious ways that social actors ‘perform’ (Butler, 1999) gender in specific interactional and situational contexts. Gender is also described as ‘accomplished’ (Coates, 1999), ‘done’ (West & Zimmerman, 1987), ‘performed’ (Butler, 1999), or ‘practiced’ (Yancey Martin, 2003) in specific ‘communities of practice.’

Despite this growing body of research, relatively few studies investigate the accomplishment of gender by non-western women. To assist with filling this gap, this study is contributing to a small but growing body of research investigating the discursive practices of non-western women both outside Japan (e.g., Martin Rojo & Gomez Esteban, 2003) and inside (Kamada, 2005, 2008, 2009; Okamoto & Smith, 2004). Although research is transcending cultural boundaries, the focus remains on middle-class women.

### **1.3 Relevant Japanese background**

The role women play has been crucial to the successful management of the Japanese household and men's ability to devote themselves to their institutions of employment (Borovoy, 2005; Ito et al., 2007; Iwao, 2003; Nemoto, 2008). This role involves caring for the children and husband's parents, doing housework, and managing the budget. The roots of this caregiving role can be traced back to the Meiji Era (1869-1912) with the birth of the 'good wives, wise mothers' ideology.

Ideologies have been defined as the beliefs, values, and practices of a particular society (Billig et al., 1988; Edley, 2001a) which both guide and rationalize social actions (Wetherell et al., 1987). Therefore, the role of wife and mother can become exonerated above other roles and develop into 'commonsense' for members of a society. A 'good wives, wise mothers' ideology emerged in educational texts during a time when Japan was undergoing rapid changes due to the advent of westernization (Davies & Ikeno, 2002; Koyama, 1991). One major change was that compulsory education was instated for all children. However, the type of education that girls and boys received was different. For women, education focused on producing dutiful wives and mothers (Davies & Ikeno, 2002). The education of women advocated the values of simplicity, thrift, honesty, selflessness, and obedience (Koyama, 1991). While Japan was rapidly transforming itself economically and culturally during this period, women's

professional opportunities decreased. Evidence that this ideology still influences women's lives today is suggested by the central role they are expected to play in their children's education.

The nomenclature *kyoiku mama* or 'education mothers' (Allison, 1991, 2000) signals the pivotal role that mothers are expected to play in their children's educational success. Japan is still very much a *gakureki shakai* or 'pedigree society' that places great value on academic achievements (Sugimoto, 2003). Admission to prestigious junior and senior high schools and institutions of higher education is based upon performance in entrance examinations. Thus, children and teenagers spend much of their time studying and attending specialized *juku* or 'cram schools' that prepare them for these examinations. The goal is to enter a prestigious junior high school, high school, university, and ultimately secure employment with a top company. Mothers play a pivotal role in embedding the importance of studying in their children, offering their children emotional support, and even 'boning up' themselves on subjects where the children fall short (Allison, 1991, 2000). This is done by encouraging their children to study, making them snacks, and organizing the payment for their private tutoring lessons. Some mothers finance these lessons with their earnings from their own part-time employment.

The above discussion suggests that dominant or hegemonic femininity (for a full discussion see section 2.5.3) in Japan involves being a ‘good wife, wise mother.’ Performing the role of a ‘good wife and wise mother’ involves considerable self-sacrifice and privileging the needs of family over self. Similar values are reflected in what Michelle Lazar (2000) calls ‘Other-centeredness’ (see section 3.2) as a defining feature of heterosexual femininity, where other-centeredness is “the systematic cultivation of an acute consciousness and devotedness to men (boyfriends and husbands) and children in the achievement of woman’s own self-identity” (Lazar, 2002, p. 112). Similarly, Japanese hegemonic femininity, as I hope to show, is constructed around the roles of mother and wife. The extent to which the institution of marriage is revered is reflected by the ‘synonymous’ term *eikyu shushoku* (‘lifetime employment’) (Iwao, 1993), which suggests women’s dependency on a male breadwinner and men’s autonomy and professional development.

A ‘good wives, wise mothers’ ideology constructs Japanese femininity in a specific way. Traditional virtues of Japanese femininity include *bi* (beauty), *jujun* (obedience), and *hairyo* (consideration) (Inoue, 2004, p. 120). These traditional virtues are still expressed in the modern ritual of secular marriages. Even today, a groom usually says, “*Korekara ha anshinshite katei no koto ha X kosan ni makasete, ooi ni*

*shigoto ni hagendekudasai*” (I will leave the household matters up to X. Please allow me to devote myself to my work) (Inoue, 2004, p. 118). A bride, on the other hand, says to her husband, “*X kun no tameni, oishi teryori wo tsukuteagete kudasai. X kun ga shigotode osokunattemo atatakakute mukaete agetekudasai*” (Please allow me to make homemade food for X. Even when he is late due to his work, please allow me to wait for him) (Inoue, 2004, p. 118). Another example of a typical promise brides make is, “*Kodomo wo hayaku unde goryoshin wo anshinsasetekudasai*” (Please allow me to have children early and put his parents at ease) (Inoue, 2004, p. 118). This expression rests upon the patriarchal assumption that a wife’s primary role is to continue the male line. Inoue (2004) maintains that these highly formulaic expressions reflect different expectations for men and women regarding a traditional division of labor, and, indeed, gendered social and reproductive obligations within the social institution of marriage. A wife is responsible for managing the household and is supposed to consider her husband’s and his family’s needs as paramount. Women who work outside the home almost always also face a ‘second-shift’ (Hochschild & Machung, 2003) once they finish their day jobs (Inoue, 2004).

The femininity constructed for a ‘good wife and wise mother’ is incompatible with the pursuit of a serious career. While women often choose to work for several years

after college graduation, often doing clerical work, many still resign after marriage or pregnancy (Ito et al., 2007; Iwao, 1993; Sugimoto, 2003). For this reason, a large proportion of managerial positions are occupied by men (Ito et al., 2007; Sugimoto, 2003). Women may return to work later in their lives, but this is almost always in a part-time capacity.

This current employment pattern first emerged after World War II, when a shift occurred in Japanese society from manufacturing silk and cotton to more heavy industry such as steel. This shift led to the ‘masculinization’ of the manufacturing work force (Broadbent & Morris-Suzuki, 2000). At the same time, a labor shortage in the service sector led to the recruitment of women in the capacity of part-time workers (Broadbent & Morris-Suzuki, 2000). State labor policies encouraged full-time work for unmarried women and part-time work for married women, as long as it did not interfere with their ‘domestic’ responsibilities (Nemoto, 2008). This trend, where increasing numbers of married women are working as marginalized part-time employees, is still evident today (Broadbent & Morris-Suzuki, 2000; Gottfried, 2003; Ito et al., 2007; Sugimoto, 2003).

Women who work full-time are typically young and unmarried. The term OL (‘office lady’) denotes a woman working in a clerical position in a company, “a woman working regularly in an office who engages in simple, repetitive, clerical work without

any expert knowledge or management responsibility” (Ogasawara, 1998, p. 27). They are also responsible for light cleaning tasks before the office opens and making tea for other employees and customers. Due to the large number of women in this position, this is referred to as the ‘mommy track’ (Gelb, 2003). The term ‘*shigoto nyoubyou*’ (‘office wives’) (Inoue, 2001) indicates their largely supportive but extremely important role they play in the company. They are also referred to as ‘*shokuba hana*’ (‘office flowers’) to express their symbolic function of portraying a certain image of the company to customers (McVeigh, 1997). This image is formed from their institutionally polite manner of speaking and behaving, youth, and pleasing appearance.

Ogasawara (1998) points out that on one level OLs are more liberated than their male counterparts working as ‘salarymen’ (‘white-collared employees’). Given that most OLs do not intend to work long-term, they are not as bound to their roles as their male colleagues working as salarymen (‘white-collared employees’). Former OLs interviewed by McVeigh (1997) viewed their time as OLs as their *hana no jidai* (literally, ‘flower period’: best days of their lives) and an opportunity for *shakai benkyo* (‘learning about society’) before marriage. Similarly, Ogasawara (1998) comments that, “they remain aloof from the office hierarchy because they are excluded from the race for promotion” (p. 92). This ‘flower period’ is however of course highly problematic. As



Ogasawara (1998) further maintains, “being powerful means having simultaneously fewer and more constraints. Similarly, being powerless means having both less and more freedom” (p. 138). So while women are powerfully positioned by their ability to ignore hierarchical relations, at the same time their marginalized position outside the company hierarchy ensures that they do not attain powerful positions within the organization. Ogasawara is also careful to cite the unchallenging nature of OLs’ work and lack of opportunities for advancement as reasons why they remain uncommitted to their work. Ogasawara’s (1998) study demonstrates how different expectations for men and women can ultimately disadvantage women. If OLs were given more responsibilities and opportunities for advancement, they might regard their work differently.

#### **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis is composed of nine chapters. The first three chapters provide relevant background information which contextualizes the study within the field of gender studies and critical discursive psychology (my chosen analytical approach). Chapters four and five provide detailed information about my data collection and analysis procedures. Chapters six through eight are the analytical chapters of the thesis where I present and analyze extracts from my data. In the final chapter, I draw

conclusions from the study and discuss their implications.

## **1.5 Conclusion**

Chapter one began with my personal and intellectual motivation for conducting this study. I traced the development of a ‘good wives, wise mothers’ ideology which has influenced modern conceptualizations of Japanese femininity. Women still play a pivotal role as caretakers of their children’s education and managers of domestic responsibilities. The focus of this study is how a group of Japanese women discursively construct what I call hegemonic and pariah femininity in a society where the roles of wife and mother are exalted above all others.

In the next chapter, I provide an overview of research on gender, masculinities, and femininities, both outside and inside the Japanese context.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Gender**

#### **2.1.1 The gender/sex dichotomy**

While commonsense understandings of ‘sex’ see it as referring to bodily differences between men and women, ‘gender,’ by contrast, is ‘learned’ through socialization in a particular society. ‘Sex’ and ‘gender’ are not neutral, value-free terms, but it has been argued, are used to serve political agendas.

Weedon (1997) argues that “patriarchal power rests on the social meanings given to biological sexual differences” (p. 2). Social meaning is attached to childbearing when women are also constructed as ‘natural *childrearsers*’ and thus encouraged to stay in the home. Weedon continues:

Behind the general unwillingness, except among feminists, to rethink the

sexual division of labor and its implications for the equality of women lies a fundamental patriarchal assumption that women's biological difference from men suits them for different social tasks (p. 2).

In addition to rationalizing full-time mothering, such an understanding can accordingly construct women as unsuited for 'masculine' professions, for example, law, medicine, or politics, which incur greater symbolic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977) as well as financial reward.

In light of the above discussion, we can now define both sex and gender. Sex refers to the biological and anatomical differences between men and women. Gender, on the other hand, "refers to the meanings that are attached to those differences within a culture" (Kimmel, 2000, p. 3). In North American culture, exemplary physical strength is associated with 'masculinity' while in Japan it is not. Miller (2003) points out that attention to appearance has become part of Japanese heterosexual masculinity. Men go to beauty salons where they receive facials, electrolysis, and also use cosmetics. Much earlier, Mead (1935) had demonstrated that men do not always perform in aggressive roles and women in passive roles, thus demonstrating that meaning is attached to sex, creating gender—perhaps to serve political purposes. These examples illustrate how gender is socially constructed and does not preexist individuals (e.g., Baxter, 2003; Burr, 1998; Butler, 1999; Lorber, 1994; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Extending this further, Sunderland maintains that gender is "a *process*, something that

people *orient to* and *do*—including in their spoken and written discourse” (Sunderland, 2004, p. 17). Sunderland importantly points out that gender is not solely the property of individuals, but that discourse also indexes gender. Hence, a married couple’s promise to perform in traditional roles reflects cultural norms about masculinity and femininity and therefore is gendered. Individuals have agency to actively construct gender, whether in accordance with or against culturally accepted notions of masculinity and femininity.

In many western cultures it is common to view sex and ultimately gender as dichotomous categories (Burns, 2004), but this tendency is not ubiquitous elsewhere. As an example, over 155 North American Native American Indian tribes distinguish more than two sexes (Roscoe, 1998; Williams, 1986). The term ‘berdache’ or ‘two-spirit’ refers to those who are biologically male or female, but adopt the social roles associated with the opposite sex. This is similar to girls are seen as ‘tomboys’ in western cultures. Unlike ‘berdaches,’ ‘tomboys’ however eventually construct an identity which embraces ‘normative’ femininity (Thorne, 1993). Cultures, then, assign social significance to biological differences. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) maintain that “gender builds on biological sex, it exaggerates biological difference and, indeed, it carries biological difference into domains in which it is completely irrelevant” (p. 10). For example, women’s childbearing capacity becomes the basis for developing an argument that

women have a ‘maternal instinct’ and thus are suited for raising children. The ‘maternal instinct’ serves the ideological function of legitimizing women’s exit from the workforce to oversee childcare and gender-based social inequalities such as unequal wage structures and restricted access to top-level positions are legitimized.

The existence of multiple masculinities and femininities (see section 2.5) illustrates that gender does not map evenly onto binary biological sex. ‘Femininity’ does not always neatly correspond to ‘female’ bodies, nor does ‘masculinity’ always with ‘male’ bodies. As I later discuss (see section 2.5), masculinity and femininity are embodied by individuals regardless of biological sex. For example, women can work in ‘masculine’ professions’ such as the military or civil service and men in ‘feminized’ professions such as nursing and primary education (Bagilhole, 2002; Williams, 1989). Nevertheless, such non-normative gender performances are often sanctioned (Butler, 1999; Messerschmidt, 2004; Schippers, 2007; Sunderland, 2004). As Judith Butler eloquently stated, “we regularly punish those who fail to do their gender right” (Butler, 1999, p. 178). ‘Right’ refers to doing hegemonic masculinity and femininity. When an individual’s embodied social actions are incongruent with hegemonic masculinity or femininity, the individual becomes ‘gender deviant’ (Messerschmidt, 2004) and can face stigmatization (see section 2.5.4)

Doing gender is an active process that is not ‘universal’ but in part regulated by the ‘communities of practice’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991) it emerges in, which in turn it constitutes. For this reason, gender is a form of ‘embodied structured action’ (Messerschmidt, 2000, 2004). In the process of embodying masculinities or femininities, individuals perform social actions such as styles of dress, ways of moving, or manners of speaking. Actions are structured in that ‘normative’ masculinities and femininities are defined within particular communities of practice. Nevertheless, individuals possess agency to accept, contest, or even reformulate masculinities and femininities (see section 2.5). Accordingly, gender is done in different ways which reflect the norms of particular social structures, ways which in turn reproduce and sometimes change those social structures (West & Fenstermaker, 1995). The previous discussion of the ‘good wives, wise mothers’ (see section 1.3) ideology illuminated how educational policies came to shape and in part determine hegemonic femininity, in many Japanese communities of practice. Women were encouraged through education to embody social actions befitting a ‘good wife and wise mother’, which in turn constructed hegemonic femininity.

Because gender can be shaped in part by particular communities of practice, individuals may be unaware that they are ‘doing gender’ in line with certain normative

assumptions. In other words, they are not always ‘reflexive’ (Yancey Martin, 2003) about their performances of gender in situationally ‘appropriate’ ways. To practice gender reflexively, one would “carefully consider the content of one’s actions and act only after careful consideration of the intent, content, and effects of one’s behavior” (Yancey Martin, 2003, p. 356).

Yancey Martin (2003) demonstrated how corporate executives practiced gender with varying degrees of reflexivity. One executive, Tom, discussed with Yancey Martin his policy not to dine alone with women colleagues when away on business trips. For Tom, this policy prevented others from developing the ‘wrong impression’ about his relationship with these associates. While Tom positively evaluated his heteronormative policy, he was also unreflexively practicing gender because he was not consciously aware that his policy constructed women as ‘temptresses’ and men as ‘easily tempted.’ Tom became aware of all this after participating in a gender sensitivity group.

The notion of reflexivity captures how individuals consciously and unconsciously practice gender in situationally specific ways which are regulated by social institutions and an individual’s role and status within them. Agency is also closely linked with reflexivity. Tom was eventually reflexive about his heteronormative policy and ultimately the way in which he practiced gender. Like most people, Tom had agency



to do gender differently; however, he chose to adhere to his policy.

In the next section I develop this discussion of how gender is not predetermined by biological sex but is accomplished in social interaction.

### **2.1.2 The Social Construction of Gender**

This study takes a social constructionist view of gender (Lorber, 1994; Sunderland, 2004; Weatherall, 2002). Social constructionist perspectives emphasize the continued and active accomplishment of gender and fluidity of identities. Gender is neither something we are born with nor acquire solely through socialization, but is a continuous, dynamic process or ‘gender project’ (Connell, 1995). It is “created and renegotiated in interpersonal relationships and encouraged and maintained through social structures” (Weatherall, 2002, p. 85).

An important contribution to the view of gender (and other identities) as socially constructed is the concept of community of practice (see section 1.2). Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992), who apply the construct to gender, define a community of practice (hereafter CofP) as:

an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations—in short, practices—emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor (p. 64).

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999) cite a choir, gang, family, and friendship groups as

examples of CofPs. The wide range of possible CofPs indicates they can be seen on a continuum from more formally organized (e.g., a choir) to less formally organized (e.g., a friendship group) and vary in permanence. Accordingly, members engage in various levels of participation, from active to more peripheral, in different groups.

It is through these various levels of social engagement in various CofPs that identities can be seen as constructed (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992). In reference to gender:

Individuals produce themselves as ‘gendered’ by habitually engaging in the social practices of a community—i.e. in different communities of practice—that are practically and/or symbolically associated with a community’s notions of masculinities or femininities (Ehrlich, 1999, p. 240).

Group membership does not determine gender, but it is actively constructed. We can see that gender identities are thus emergent in social interaction with CofPs which entail particular conceptualizations of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity.’ For instance, Japanese middle-class femininity involves privileging the role of wife and mother in lieu of or at least before that of a career professional (see section 1.3).

Approaching gender from the perspective of situated practice, social actions located within communities of practice, shifts the focus from studying ‘gender differences’ and from deterministic ideas about gender being located in ‘males’ and ‘females’ to gender as fluid and emerging from embodied social actions. Eckert and

McConnell-Ginet (1999) do concede that men and women tend to participate in some CofPs more than others, but few CofPs are sex-exclusive. For example, women are more likely to be members of elementary-school staffs while men are more like to be members of physics faculties. Nevertheless, the multifarious ways that gender interacts with other identities cannot be overstated. For instance, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999) suggest that women's 'politer speech' may be due to the nature of many women's work and not their gender per se. The jobs which women have traditionally gained access to (e.g., flight attendant, nurse, customer service, and teacher) require attention to standard forms of language. Cameron (1992) is careful to distinguish between "gender differences" and "the difference gender makes" (p. 13). Gender can make a difference in, say, 'masculinized' social institutions or face-to-face social interactions, for example, by individuals in that CofP who engage with and appropriate various discourses (see section 3.2.2) about 'masculinity' or 'femininity' as they construct their own and others' gender identities (see section 2.1.3).

Messerschmidt's (2004) uses the term 'disrupting difference' to illustrate that sex-based bodily differences are not always salient in a given social context. The significance of disrupting difference indicates that gender is not always the most salient feature affecting a particular social setting. Gender intersects with ethnicity, race, and

social class in specific interactional and social settings (Archer, 2001; Connell, 1995; Messerschmidt, 2004; Pyke & Johnson, 2003). In a study of adolescent violence, Messerschmidt (2004) found group membership was defined by engaging in physical violence on certain occasions, so girls and boys collectively took part in violence in order to protect their gangs. Gender was relevant, however, when girls were restricted from participating in robberies and burglaries. In any given social interaction, a variety of factors, including or even excluding gender, can potentially influence the social and linguistic behavior that individuals engage in.

The strength of a social constructionist view of gender is that it sees gender as fluid and locally produced and avoids falling back on essentialist notions related to ‘gender differences.’ Furthermore, a nuanced and social constructionist view of gender is strengthened by the concept of CofP, which emphasizes studying the specific ways that groups of people construct gender through their locally constructed ‘situated practices’ or ‘embodied social actions’ (Messerschmidt, 2000, 2004).

### **2.1.3 Gender Identity**

The last section argued for a view of gender as fluid and locally situated in large part within specific communities of practice. This situated and ‘emergent’ view of gender has implications for gender identity as well. Identity is one’s sense of self, thus

gender is one aspect of an individual's identity. Bucholtz (1999) points out:

Contemporary feminists view identities as fluid, not frozen; they note that, although identities link individuals to particular social groups, such links are not predetermined. Instead, identities emerge in practice, through the combined effects of structure and agency (p. 209).

Bucholtz importantly points out that identities do not preexist individuals, but at the same time, there are constraints, 'structure,' on the identities we construct. Importantly, Bucholtz also incorporates agency into her definition, emphasizing that individuals are not simply passive victims of repressive social systems. Similarly, from the perspective of discursive psychology, Weatherall (2002) reminds us that "...identities are progressively and dynamically achieved through the discursive practices that individuals engage in" (p. 138). So individuals construct various identities in social interaction (i.e., parent, spouse, professional) within specific CofPs (see section 2.1.2). Importantly, identities are fluid and emerge in social interaction.

Others play roles in our identity construction. Sunderland and Litosseliti (2002) argue that "identities also come from the *attributions* or ascriptions of others—though ascription may contribute to a resulting identity very different in nature to that intended by the ascriber" (p. 7). This suggests that identities are constructed through interpersonal relationships and that individuals can accept, contest, or reformulate identities which others ascribe to them. Significantly, identity is not simply

self-constructed, i.e. through agency, but shaped by other individuals in interaction, institutions, and the norms governing ‘masculinities’ and ‘femininities’ in specific communities of practice.

#### **2.1.4 Gender Performance**

Erving Goffman (1959) likened the construction of gender and other social identities to an interactional ‘performance’ or ‘self-presentation’. Individuals engage in social actions which create and sustain a certain self-impression and underplay actions which contradict that impression. Therefore, a middle-class Japanese woman may conceal her part-time employment from her child’s teacher because mothers are expected to fully devote themselves to their children, thus a working mother could be seen as neglecting her maternal duties (Allison 1991, 2000). Gender performances include those which legitimate, subvert, or even reformulate culturally and CofP-specific (see section 2.1.2) gender norms. For instance, a working class Japanese woman constructs her femininity through balancing factory work with the ‘second-shift’ (Hochschild & Machung, 2003) of housework and childcare (see Roberts, 1994). A middle-class Japanese woman, on the other hand, constructs her femininity through performing in the role of professional housewife (see section 1.3). Both women create a positive self-presentation in line with class-specific norms governing femininity.

There are a number of important implications of performance theory. Individuals regulate their linguistic and non-linguistic behavior (in line with the gender appropriate performances defined by specific CofPs). These performances become ritualized and it is this which in turn creates ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ (see section 2.5). The far-reaching implications of performance theory are that gender is not natural but only appears that way because ritualized gender performances become naturalized and embedded in the fabric of social interaction through their repetition.

Both social constructionism and performance theory account for multiple configurations of gender. ‘Masculinities’ and ‘femininities’ are locally produced in CofPs as individuals engage in ritualized performances. These performances, in turn, ‘congeal’ and naturalize gender in these CofPs. Despite the fluidity of gender, individuals are not ‘free’ to perform gender any way they please. Individuals who choose to engage in non-normative performances may face stigmatization (Butler, 1999; Messerschmidt, 2004; Schippers, 2007; Sunderland, 2004). This stigmatization can come in the form of derogatory terms such as ‘sissy,’ ‘fag,’ ‘bitch,’ ‘slut’ (Schippers, 2007; Pascoe, 2007) or physical violence (Connell, 1995). Nevertheless, social constructionism and performance theory demonstrate and explain how individuals can and do perform gender in a multitude of ways that may challenge, conform, or modify

normative, hegemonic conceptualizations of masculinities and femininities.

The above discussion of performance theory should not be confused with ‘performativity theory’ (Butler, 1999). Butler’s work has contributed greatly to the field of gender studies, but a proper discussion of her influential theory is beyond the scope of this thesis (see Brickell, 2005; McIlvenny, 2002).

## **2.2 The ‘Gender Relations Approach’ (Connell 1987, 2002)**

In order to capture the sheer complexity of gender, we need a model that incorporates the social construction of gender while acknowledging how social structures restrict that construction. As discussed in section 2.1.1, gender is a form of ‘embodied structured action’ (Messerschmidt, 2000, 2004). Connell’s ‘gender relations approach’ provides us with a model which incorporates the notion of multiple masculinities and femininities and at the same time acknowledges the structural constraints on gender (Connell, 1987; 2002). According to Connell (2002), “when we look at a set of gender arrangements, whether the gender regime of an institution or the gender order of a whole society, we are basically looking at a set of *relationships*—ways that people, groups, and organizations are connected and divided” (p. 54). Connell draws on West and Zimmerman’s (1987) concept of ‘doing gender’ and locates the formation of these relationships in the face-to-face interactions between people. When a



certain degree of consistency is found in these relationships between people, in socializing groups or social institutions, ‘social structures’ are formed. So if institutional and conversational practices place men in positions of authority over women, then a ‘patriarchal structure’ of gender relations results where women are subordinate to men (Connell, 2002, p. 55). Connell is careful to emphasize that these social structures only ‘endure’ when an individual’s everyday social interactions support them, and that gender is not permanent, but ‘accomplished’ on a moment-to-moment basis within specific communities of practice (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

The following sections detail the four components of Connell’s approach.

### **2.2.1 Power relations and dominance**

Power is central to this thesis on hegemonic femininity because the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and femininity is one of dominance and submission. Connell (2002) sees institutionalized power as materializing in two forms. First, it is power as an oppressive force used by one group to dominate others. To illustrate, Connell cites the masculine bias common in many organizations which favors men. It is this form of power which became the basis for the far-sighted concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (see section 2.5.2). Second, she sees power in a post-structuralist sense:

Especially it operates discursively, through the ways we talk, write and conceptualize. This diffuse but tenacious power operates close up, not at a

distance. It impacts directly on people's bodies as 'discipline' as well as on their identities and sense of their place in the world (Connell, 2002, p. 59).

In this sense, power is woven into the fabric of everyday life. For instance, women who subject themselves to relentless dieting regimes in order to embody hegemonic femininity. This view of power as implicit is an example of how gender hegemony works. Connell argues that power needs to be conceptualized in both senses. In addition, she proposes the necessity of incorporating the idea of resistance, as "a full account of power relations requires an account of the way power is contested, and countervailing power is mobilized" (Connell, 2002, p. 59). This definition conceptualizes power as a constraint on social practice, but as people having social agency to resist it.

Connell's account of power however fails to incorporate how power is a positive resource for all individuals, in other words, 'empowerment'. In addition to conceptualizing power as a repressive force, post-structuralism emphasizes that power does not only operate as a one-dimensional and oppressive force but is potentially omnidirectional (Baxter, 2003; Burr, 2003; Weedon, 1997). This is because individuals "are multiply positioned according to competing discourses, at times powerful and at other times as powerless" (Baxter, 2003, p. 183). For instance, a disruptive student could be located relatively powerless in a discourse of 'teacher approval' but comparatively powerful in a discourse of 'peer approval' (Baxter, 2003; see section

3.2.2).

A post-structuralist view of power sees it as both repressive and liberating depending on the social actors, social context, and relations between social actors. This is not to deny that, for example, a full-time housewife who is powerfully positioned within the domestic sphere is powerlessly positioned in the larger social order due to her financial dependence on her husband. Similarly, a post-structuralist account of power does not deny that the average income of women is less than men and that women still remain vastly underrepresented in top-level positions in corporations and other institutions (Burr, 1998; Connell, 2002). In sum, although people both position themselves and are positioned in multiple ways dependent upon the interactional setting, these positions, to use post-structuralist terminology, are always constrained by embedded institutional arrangements and articulated in ‘dominant discourses’ (see section 3.2.2).

### **2.2.2 Production relations (‘sexual division of labor’)**

The term ‘production relations’ refers to the ‘sexual division of labor’ or type of work that men and women do. In modern western societies, a common division of labor is between ‘work’ and ‘home’ (Connell, 2002). Work is done outside the home and incurs wages, a symbol that an individual has produced something worthwhile and has

thus positively contributed to society. Conversely, domestic work is not usually viewed as a job when performed by a wife or female partner but often as a ‘labor of love’. This pattern is not uniform across all societies or generations and changes over time (Connell, 2002), but is the case in that vast majority of modern societies where women are positioned as ‘caregivers’ and perform most domestic work (Nemoto, 2008).

The result of this unequal division of labor is a ‘gendered accumulation process’ (Connell, 1995), i.e., public labor is paid while domestic labor is unpaid, which creates a ‘patriarchal dividend’ (Connell, 2002). Men accrue not only economic advantages from engaging in paid work but also other material advantages or ‘symbolic capital’ (Bourdieu, 1977) since they hold powerful positions in major social institutions such as corporations, schools, government, and religious institutions. There is a clear interplay between power relations and production relations.

A further implication of this public/private gender division of labor is that it notably reflects but also influences constructions of masculinity and femininity. The significance of the male-dominated public sphere and female-dominated private sphere begins to emerge in adolescence. Working in the USA, Eckert (1993) documents a telling change in girls’ behavior as they approach adolescence and enter what Eckert terms the ‘heterosexual market.’ Girls replace physical activity with attention to their

appearance and talking about boys. Girls receive recognition through fashioning their bodies, engaging in heterosexual relationships, and building peer relationships. For boys, recognition comes from active participation in the public arenas of the classroom and organized sports. This study illustrates how masculinity, at least in the context of North America, is associated with active involvement in public arenas. Femininity, on the other hand, is seen as assuming a supportive role in more private contexts. A clear example of this is the cheerleader whose popularity depends upon her physical appearance, sex appeal, and supporting male athletes who take center stage. Thorne (1993) also found that adolescent girls' social status is dependent upon heterosexual relationships with boys.

The association of masculinity with the public realm and femininity with the private realm has implications for working women. Certain public but 'pastoral' occupations are seen as compatible with femininity, such as flight attendants, nurses, home helpers, and teachers, women's supposed 'natural' caregiving ability apparently making them more suited for these often underpaid human 'service' professions. This justification is not based on scientific evidence (Burr, 1998; Connell, 2002), but I argue, illustrates the power of 'gender differences' discourses (Sunderland, 2004) which construct social significance from reproductive differences between men and women

(Connell, 2002). The association between femininity and caregiving is also related to ‘emotional relations.’

### **2.2.3 Emotional relations (‘cathexis’)**

The association between femininity and caregiving is also related to ‘emotional relations.’ Cathexis refers to the emotional attachments that form between people (Connell, 1987, 2002). This structure materializes in many western societies in the form of a distinction between heterosexual and homosexual—also coined ‘hegemonic heterosexuality’ (Connell, 1987) or ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ (Rich, 1980), where dominant discourses construct normative sexuality as heterosexual (Dasgupta, 2000; Roberson & Suzuki, 2003). Japanese society conforms to this pattern.

The significance of emotional relations extends far beyond the privileging of heterosexuality to include an emotional division of labor. In post World War II Japanese society, women were increasingly positioned as possessing a ‘motherly’ or ‘nurturing’ instinct, making them optimally suited for both childcare and eldercare (Borovoy, 2005). Traces of these discourses surfaced in child-rearing books at that time and can still be found in these books, manuals, and magazines in Japan and beyond today (Borovoy, 2005; Sunderland, 2000, 2004). As discussed in section 1.3, when children enter school, women become *kyoiku mama* (‘education mothers’) who exert tremendous effort to

support their children's, particularly sons', academic success (Allison, 1991, 2000; Borovoy, 2005; White, 2002). As early as nursery school, schools expect a mother to assume an active role in her child's education. For example, she is expected to keep a detailed list of the activities that her child did during summer vacation, and much time and effort is spent preparing elaborate *obento* (boxed lunches) for children (Allison, 2000). When children begin studying for competitive junior high school, high school and eventually university entrance examinations, mothers continue to assume an active role (see section 1.3). Caring may extend to 'around-the-body care' of husbands. Lebra (1984) found that women managed almost all of their husbands' daily needs including laundry, preparing meals, scheduling appointments, and even laying out outfits for them to wear. These practices are all shaped by discourses surrounding hegemonic femininity.

What we might call this 'nurturing instinct' discourse positions women as natural caregivers in the commercial sector as well. As I discussed in section 1.3, the vast majority of Japanese women who work outside the home in companies perform clerical duties and are often seen as 'office wives' (Inoue, 2001; Ogasawara, 1998). Their bosses rely on them to fix paper jams, file important documents, serve tea when customers come, and arrange business trips (Ogasawara, 1998). Outside the office, women pursue careers in service-related professions such as social welfare, nursing, and

teaching in far greater numbers than in engineering, law, and medicine (Inoue, 2001).

The positioning of women as natural caregivers has implications for their place both in power relations and production relations. In Ogasawara's (1998) study, 'office wives' had a certain degree of power over their bosses who depended on them to perform routine tasks. This is in accordance with a post-structuralist view of power as shifting and unstable (Baxter, 2003; Burr, 2003; Foucault, 1980; Weedon, 1997). The bosses even went so far as to buy these women gifts in order to curry favor with them. Nevertheless, these women did not receive the benefits of lifetime employment, seniority-based promotions, or benefits packages. The limited degree of power these women wielded was overshadowed by their relatively marginalized status in the overall gender regime in which they work for a few years, quit after marriage or pregnancy, and then resume part-time work once their children reach a certain age (Gottfried, 2003; Inoue, 2001; Iwao, 1993; Ogasawara, 1998). This reproduces a gender stratified division of labor where women largely perform unpaid domestic work and low-paid non-domestic work while men engage in paid non-domestic work and little or no domestic work.

#### **2.2.4 Symbolic relations**

Hegemonic femininity and masculinity can be seen as located in the symbolic



rather than material dimension of gender relations. Symbolic relations refers to the meanings that we assign to particular concepts (Connell, 2002). The meanings assigned to the categories of women/men and feminine/masculine respectively are variously situated in specific social and interactional contexts. As an example, the body-reflexive practices (Connell, 1995) engaged in by professional Japanese men include facials, eyebrow shaping, and body hair removal (Miller, 2003). From a western perspective, these social practices are very ‘feminine’ and western men who aim to embody ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (see section 2.5.2) tend to avoid them, though there may be a shift such as the use of moisturizers and cologne. While Japanese masculinity can be seen as becoming more ‘feminized’, men maintain positions of power despite engaging in these practices. This example illustrates how ‘hegemonic masculinity’ reformulates itself across time space and space so that men maintain powerful social positions (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Johnson, 1997). Japanese femininity, by contrast, is constructed around nurturing others which prevents women from attaining social and economic power and militates against most Japanese women attaining any sort of autonomy. These examples illustrate how an array of social practices converges to form a particular construction of masculinity that is located in a specific place and time.

Symbolic meanings attached to gender are also evident in discourse (see

section 3.2.2). In a secondary school, Edley and Wetherell (1997) identified two oppositional groups. One group, the 'hard lads,' embodied aspects of 'hegemonic masculinity' or the dominant form of masculinity in the gender regime of the school. Their exalted status from participation in rugby entitled them to a number of different privileges. The blazers they wore were outward signs of their superior sports ability and their overrepresentation in positions such as 'head boy' signified their institutional power. Another group, the 'non-rugby lads', positioned themselves in opposition to the dominant group. These lads faced the dilemma of embodying masculinity while at the same time distinguishing themselves from the 'macho' masculinity the 'hard lads' embodied. A strategy used to manage this dilemma was to establish a categorical difference between themselves and 'the hard lads.' In group interviews, the non-rugby players made a distinction between physical strength and mental intelligence. The version of masculinity they constructed involved not only physical strength, but also self-control and mental savvy. This 'pattern of accounting' constructed them as possessing physical strength, the self-discipline to refrain from physical violence, and mental astuteness to win verbal arguments with the 'hard lads'. For example, the non-rugby lads discursively constructed the decision to resort to physical violence as a 'show of weakness' while 'talking your way out of a situation' was constructed as

requiring self-control and evidence of mental strength. Interestingly, this account does not completely redefine masculinity but constructs a version of masculinity where verbal superiority is an overt display of masculinity: “The real hard men are those who do not need to dive on each other in an attempt to prove their masculinity” (Edley and Wetherell, 1997, p. 214). Superiority in some sense or the ability to dominate another group (however this is done) is a symbolically important indicator of masculinity and interestingly not associated with femininity or, if it is (e.g. caring), it is not in ‘valued’ areas of life.

Symbolic relations intersect with power relations, production relations, and emotional relations. The symbolic importance attached to dominance is evident in hegemonic masculinity. The success of corporate executives often rests upon their ability to outmaneuver other men in their quest for success in the corporate world (Connell & Wood, 2005). Japan’s post-World War II ‘economic miracle’ was due to the efforts of businessmen who were referred to as ‘corporate soldiers’ and who toiled long hours in companies (Roberson & Suzuki, 2003). Their ability to devote most of their time and energy to work however resulted from production relations where their wives completely managed the household and raised the children, which provided unacknowledged support for these men to go out and do this (Ito, et al., 2007; Iwao,

1993). This was because women's domestic role as wives and mothers was 'naturalized' and viewed as 'common sense' (see section 1.3). Related to emotional relations, hegemonic forms of masculinity thus maintain their extolled position through the subordination of femininities (see section 2.5). Also evident here is the 'tough' work done by men in the economic marketplace and more emotional work done by women at home or in the human service professions. Heterosexual men and women live together by choice, yet social norms contribute to the formation of asymmetrical emotional relations.

In distinguishing these four levels of gender relations, Connell is not suggesting that they operate in isolation from each other. Quite the contrary, there is a large degree of overlap and intersection. The relations between these four dimensions form the basis of gender regimes of particular social institutions and the overall gender order of a society. These two concepts are taken up in the next section.

### **2.3 Gender Regimes and the Gender Order**

In post-structuralist thinking, power operates through discourse in major social institutions such as corporations, schools, and hospitals (Baxter, 2003; Burr, 2003; Foucault, 1980; Weedon, 1997). The construction of gender is salient not only at the micro level of face-to-face encounters but also at the macro level. Connell (1987)

contends that “gender relations are present in all types of institutions” (p. 120). I will qualify this by acknowledging that while gender is an ever-present force in social institutions, its salience and relevance varies. Messerschmidt’s (2004) finding that gang membership, not gender, was the reason for engaging in violence illustrates this point (see section 2.1.1). Fenstermaker, West, and Zimmerman (2002) similarly contend “the salience of gender cannot be determined apart from the context in which it is ‘done’” (p. 31).

Connell’s (1987) term for gender relations in a given social institution is a ‘gender regime’. We can speak of gender regimes of the family, schools, corporations, and legal institutions. Gender regimes are formed based upon the interaction between relations of power, production, emotion, and have symbolic dimensions. The gender regimes in a particular society constitute its overall ‘gender order’. The advent of globalization and consequently interaction between gender orders of societies has led Connell to extend this concept to the emerging ‘global gender order’ (Connell, 2000, 2002). The gender regimes of particular institutions usually dovetail the society’s overall gender order, but this is not always the case.

Globalization is contributing to increased interaction between gender orders of different societies. In Japan, which is of course part of the ‘global gender order’, the

passage of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOA) was partly due to international pressure (see section 1.2).

#### **2.4 Gender Relations and the present study**

Gender is not entirely discursively constructed because there are nondiscursive practices which are related to gender such as the accrual of wealth and institutional power (Connell, 2002). For this reason, the gender relations approach is crucial for this study because conceptualizing gender as entirely discursively constructed fails to acknowledge the material constraints on gender such as the higher salaries and social positions attained by men. Connell (2002) argues that gender operates on four different levels, i.e. power, production, emotional, and symbolic. This study's focus on the discursive construction of hegemonic and pariah femininities, locates it in the *symbolic* realm. By incorporating Connell's model into my study, I am acknowledging that the discursive construction of gender is just one aspect of gender relations.

#### **2.5 Femininities and masculinities**

Judith Butler's (1999) concept of the 'heterosexual matrix' provides a useful starting point for conceptualizing masculinities and femininities. Butler maintains that the current gender order is formed on the assumption of two dichotomous sex categories. Men and women who embody masculinity and femininity, respectively, are different

from each other, so a man performs masculinity by disavowing femininity. Masculinity and femininity exist in a relationship of dominance and submission. While ‘she throws like a boy’ could be a compliment for girl the reverse is an insult for a boy.

‘Femininities’ and ‘masculinities’ are ‘embodied social actions’ (Messerschmidt, 2000, 2004) which are situated in specific CofPs (see section 2.1.2) that we define as ‘normative’ behavior for men and women. The embodied social actions associated with ‘masculinity’ include demonstrating authority, independence, competitive individualism, aggressiveness, and permissive heterosexuality (Messerschmidt, 2000). These social actions also exemplify the qualities which define ‘successful’ corporate executives. Actions associated with femininity include adherence to authority, reliance on others, the ability to cooperate, and conservative sexuality.

Despite the tendency to associate men with ‘masculinity’ and women with ‘femininity’, this is not always the case. Sex-category membership does not determine gender, so masculinities and femininities can be embodied by members of either sex (Connell, 1995; Messerschmidt, 2004; Halberstam, 1998; Schippers, 2007). Messerschmidt (2004) demonstrated how ‘Kelly’ embodied masculinity through a masculine style of dress and engaging in assaultive violence with fellow gang members. In many ways she became ‘one of the guys’, yet her biological sex ultimately prevented

her from participating in robberies and burglaries because the boys decided these 'harder' forms of crime were 'men's territory.' Furthermore, this is not to suggest that such gender 'transgression' goes unnoticed or without punishment (Butler, 1999; Messerschmidt, 2004; Schippers, 2007; Sunderland, 2004). Kelly turned to the gang because her embodied masculinity that she expressed through style of dress and behavior led to her expulsion from the popular 'preppy' group at school.

'Femininities' and 'masculinities,' used in the plural, emphasize that these concepts are each multiple, thus exist in a network, and are not dichotomous categories.

Whitehead points out how various factors interact in the construction of masculinity:

We can see that masculinities are plural and multiple; they differ over space, time and context, are rooted only in the cultural and social moment, and are thus, inevitably entwined with other powerful and influential variables such as sexuality, class, age and ethnicity (Whitehead, 2002, pp. 33-34).

Whereas caring about one's appearance was not associated with masculinity in the past, the circulation of men's magazines today indicates that a shift has occurred.

Whitehead's comments also apply to the construction of femininities. While current notions of western femininity may involve juggling a career with doing the majority of the housework, modern Japanese femininity is still very much centered around a domestic role. Similar to Butler's (1999) 'heterosexual matrix', Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) remind us that "gender is always relational, and patterns of



masculinity are socially defined in contradistinction from some model (whether real or imaginary) of *femininity*” (p. 848; my emphasis). In practice, reflexively engaging in a fundamentally masculine ‘gender project’ (Connell, 1995) involves distancing oneself from what has been called hegemonic femininity (Schippers, 2007; see section 2.5.3) and engaging in a fundamentally feminine gender project.

The relationship between hegemonic and subordinated forms of masculinity and femininity is the subject of the next section

### **2.5.1 Hegemony and gender**

The concept of ‘hegemony’ originates with Gramsci (1971) who used it to describe the maintenance of power by the ruling class through consent rather than coercion. In a ‘civil society’ a dominant social group establishes a state of hegemony when their ideologies infiltrate ‘commonsense’ understandings and naturalize existing social arrangements. This type of society is different from a totalitarian ‘political society’ where ruling is accomplished through force and coercion. The result of ruling through hegemony is that the current social order appears natural and non-oppressive.

The concept of civil society is also applicable to the subtle workings of gender hegemony. Gender hegemony is the dominance of one gender over another, as exemplified by the relationship between masculinity and femininity. A state of gender

hegemony exists when certain social practices become embedded in social institutions and thus normative. This is achieved not through brute force but through obtaining the consent of the populace. For example, a woman may accept her husband's few contributions to domestic work because the modern sexual division of labor has become ritualized. Gender hegemony is also at work in what Sunderland (2004) calls an 'Incomplete woman' discourse, i.e. women are considered somehow incomplete until they enter into long-term partnerships with men. Accordingly, what has been called 'Compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich, 1980) is very much a part of mainstream femininity. The pursuit of a long-term partnership, having and raising children then all become part of a quest that many women willingly engage in and perhaps associate with fulfillment, and are widely expected to do so.

One site where traces of the two aforementioned discourses is apparent is mainstream media, particularly Disney films. Belle, the protagonist from Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, is an example. Belle is labeled 'odd' by the other villagers due to her interest in books, independence, and lack of interest in marrying Gaston, the local 'heart-throb' who represents a recognizable form of 'hegemonic masculinity'. In one sense, Belle's rejection of the narcissistic Gaston and acceptance of the Beast appears to be a rejection of 'hyper-masculinity' (Giroux, 1996). However, Belle's existence is

defined by instructing the Beast in ‘proper’ etiquette and ultimately reforming him. Belle represents the traditional view that women civilize men. From this perspective, the film is not simply about Belle’s desire for a more sensitive form of masculinity, but instead is constructing her existence around solving a man’s problems (Giroux, 1996). By the end of the film, Belle is the prototype of a woman whose life has been ‘completed’ by a heterosexual relationship, i.e. hegemonic femininity. Disney films are one example of how gender hegemony operates through media representations, which arguably contribute to constructing normative understandings of masculinity or femininity in particular CofPs (see section 2.1.2).

Gramsci’s (1971) concept of hegemony had a lasting influence on the field of gender studies, providing the basis for the concepts of hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity (see sections 2.5.2-2.5.3), which are the central concern of this thesis.

Below I provide an overview of the path-breaking concept of hegemonic masculinity from which hegemonic femininity developed.

### **2.5.2 ‘Hegemonic Masculinity’**

Connell’s concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ provides insight into the hierarchical but shifting arrangements of different forms of masculinity and is essential

to gain a full understanding of femininity. This is because hegemonic masculinity is “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and subordination of women” (Connell, 1995, p. 77). Dominance over other masculinities and femininities is a defining feature of hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, hegemonic masculinity is a “historically mobile” and also geographically mobile relation (Connell, 1995, p. 77). Hegemonic forms of masculinity change from those emphasizing physical strength to technical expertise (Connell, 1995, 2000). The ‘historical mobility’ of hegemonic masculinity indicates that it reformulates over time in order to maintain its dominant position by subordinating women in different ways. Hegemonic masculinity’s geographic mobility indicates that it has multifarious configurations depending on the particular society and CoFP (see section 2.1.2) in which it emerges (e.g. Dasgupta, 2000; Gutmann, 1996).

The multifarious ways in which hegemonic masculinity manifests itself makes it tricky to define. Edley (2001a) defines it, for the UK context and somewhat tongue-in-cheek, as involving “watching football, drinking pints of beer at the pub and trying to get away from traffic lights faster than cars in the next lane” (p. 191). Hegemonic masculinity is here a set of social practices that is prototypically associated

with 'macho' or 'hard' masculinity (i.e. displaying physical strength, playing sports, consuming alcohol or other drugs, and not expressing emotions); however, Connell stresses that masculinities are not fixed, so hegemonic forms reformulate over time. They also vary by culture. In Japan, hegemonic masculinity is arguably embodied by the 'salaryman' (Dasgupta, 2000), as in the emerging 'world gender order', the hegemonic form, Connell (2000) claims, is 'transnational business masculinity'. This formulation of masculinity distances itself from 'hard' masculinity that retains its position through physical force (e.g. violence against women) and replaces it with a hegemony that is built on technical competence and control over major political and corporate institutions. Women who occupy powerful positions in major social institutions are seen as 'masculine' by men because they threaten the asymmetrical relationship between masculinity and femininity. But regardless of the form it takes, hegemonic masculinity is that which maintains dominance over other masculinities and femininities and entails not being homosexual because sexual desire for men is associated with femininity.

An important point about hegemonic masculinity is that while it may not be embodied by many men, it is the cultural ideal many strive for. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue that "hegemony works in part through the production of

exemplars of masculinity (e.g., professional sports stars), symbols that have authority despite the fact that most men and boys do not fully live up to them” (p. 846). Despite the fact that such social embodiment is impossible for most men, these cultural models still exert an influence on the everyday ‘body-reflexive practices’ (Connell, 1995) of many. We see evidence of this in toxic social practices such as participation in aggressive sports, excessive bodybuilding, and sometimes even steroid use (Connell, 1995, 2000; Messner, 1992). In the process of constructing their masculinity, such men are reproducing hegemonic masculinity and emphasizing their distance from and superiority over femininity.

Critiques have been directed at the notion of hegemonic masculinity (Demetriou 2001; Wetherell & Edley, 1999; Whitehead, 2002). For example, Wetherell and Edley (1999) suggest the concept is theoretically vague. Similarly, Whitehead (2002) takes issue with who actually embodies hegemonic masculinity, “Is it John Wayne or Leonardo DiCaprio; Mike Tyson or Pele? Or maybe, at different times, all of them?” (p. 93). Surely, hegemonic masculinity is continually shifting over time within specific CofPs (see section 2.1.2).

Shifting the theoretical focus back to femininities, I next devote attention to ‘hegemonic femininity’ and its historical predecessor ‘emphasized femininity’. I then

critique the ambiguities and tensions present in these concepts.

### **2.5.3 ‘Emphasized Femininity’ and ‘Hegemonic Femininity’**

Connell’s (1987) concept of ‘emphasized femininity’ constitutes an important theoretical underpinning to guide femininities research. Connell (1987) vaguely defined emphasized femininity as “compliance with this subordination [of women] and oriented to accommodating the interests and desires of men” (p. 183). Compliance materializes in the form of:

...the display of sociability rather than technical competence, fragility in mating scenes, compliance with men’s desire for titillation and ego-stroking in office relationships, acceptance of marriage and childcare as a response to labor market discrimination against women (Connell, 1987, p. 187)..

Connell appears to be discussing a submissive form of ‘hyper-femininity’, but a broader definition is necessary in order to make emphasized femininity a historically and geographically mobile relation like hegemonic masculinity. Messerschmidt (2004) defines it as “the culturally idealized form of femininity in a given historical and social setting” (p. 42). This definition is more comprehensive and could incorporate both the housewife who is financially dependent on her husband and the working professional woman who faces a ‘second-shift’ (Hochschild & Machung, 2003), both forms of emphasized femininity in specific times and CofPs (see section 2.1.2).

According to Connell, subjectivities outside emphasized femininity are

available for women who assume more resistant positions in relation to hegemonic masculinity. These other femininities “are defined centrally by strategies of resistance or forms of non-compliance. Others again are defined by complex strategic combinations of compliance, resistance and co-operation” (pp. 183-184). Ostensibly, lesbians, nuns, or women embodying ‘female masculinity’ (Halberstam, 1998) provide examples of resistance or non-compliance since they minimize (versus ‘emphasize’) their femininity. Connell (1987) adds, “Marilyn Monroe was both archetype and satirist of emphasized femininity” (p. 188), presumably because Monroe embodied both a compliant and resistant relationship with hegemonic masculinity. Monroe expressed confidence in her appearance and sexuality, but that sexual appeal was ultimately for the benefit of men. Despite acknowledging this complexity, unfortunately, neither Connell (1995, 2002), nor later Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), elaborate on this definition of ‘emphasized femininity’, thus all that remains is the original and somewhat outdated 1987 definition. The definition remains somewhat obscure, beyond that it supports the “global domination of men over women” (Connell, 1987, p. 183).

Recognizing that this original definition of gender relations was overly deterministic, in their later work, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) formulate a less static definition of ‘gender hierarchy’:



...our understanding of hegemonic masculinity needs to incorporate a more holistic understanding of gender hierarchy, recognizing the agency of subordinated groups as much as the power of dominated groups and the mutual conditioning of gender dynamics and other social dynamics (p. 848).

This reformulated notion of gender hegemony is less static and a more dynamic conceptualization of power as it incorporates the notion of agency (Baxter, 2003; Burr, 2003; Foucault, 1980; Weedon, 1997). However, Connell and Messerschmidt's focus on hegemonic masculinity disregards the specific ways and contexts in which women are oppressed and empowered. Furthermore, whereas cultural icons such as movie stars, sports figures and corporate executives are cited as archetypes of hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), comparable models of emphasized femininity are not provided. Questions remain such as who actually embodies emphasized femininity and what compliance with hegemonic masculinity actually entails. In sum, Connell's (1987) formulation of emphasized femininity is both inadequately operationalized and the relationship between masculinity and femininity as one of dominance and subordination is left oversimplified. More recently, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) acknowledge that this original theorization failed to incorporate the notion of agency (see the above quote), yet once again it was left underdeveloped. Consequently, emphasized femininity remains theoretically vague and hence difficult to empirically investigate.

A further issue with Connell's (1987) definition of emphasized femininity is that it fails to incorporate hierarchical relations among femininities. In fact, Connell maintains relationships of dominance and subordination are absent from the construction of femininities (in terms of women's relations with other women): "the concentration of social power in the hands of men leaves limited scope for women to construct institutionalized power relationships over other women" (Connell, 1987, p. 187). For Connell, the overall subordinated status of femininity in relationship to masculinity means that femininity is not in a position to establish dominance over other forms of femininity. Connell argues that dominance is less inherent to the construction of femininity as to that of masculinity: "power, authority, aggression, technology are not themselves in femininity at large as they are in masculinity" (Connell, 1987, p. 187). This implies that women focus more on creating egalitarian versus hierarchical relationships among themselves. While this may be true, recent research has demonstrated it is not always the case. For example, in the UK classroom context, Judith Baxter (2005) has demonstrated that girls and boys both compete to gain access to the floor in classroom interactions. In workplaces, female managers have been shown to combine features from 'masculine' and 'feminine' interactional styles such as giving directives and expressing interest in their employee's lives as they construct their

workplace identities (Baxter, 2008; Holmes, 2006). These examples illustrate that power, authority, and aggression can be at play in the construction of femininities. Depicting women as somehow inherently less focused on hierarchical relationships than men runs the risk of falling back into essential and appealing notions of ‘gender differences’.

Pyke and Johnson’s (2003) study of Asian-American femininities represents one attempt to develop the concept of hegemonic and subordinated femininities. In contrast to Connell, they see the relationship between different forms of femininity as hierarchical. Accordingly, they apply Connell’s (1987, 1995) framework of the relationship between hegemonic and subordinate masculinities to femininities. In Pyke and Johnson’s formulation, controlling images promoted by the media represent white femininity as hegemonic (i.e. confident and strong) and Asian femininity as subordinated (i.e. passive and weak). These media-based representations were confirmed in interviews with Korean and Vietnamese women who constructed Asian cultural settings as patriarchal and gender-oppressive and American (white) cultural settings as more egalitarian. Pyke and Johnson (2003) however emphasize that while the ‘exalted’ status of white femininity over Asian femininity mimics hegemonic masculinity, the two cannot be conflated: “Whereas hegemonic masculinity is a superstructure of domination, hegemonic femininity is confined to power relations

among women” (p. 51). Pyke and Johnson maintain, like Connell, that women are collectively subordinated by men. While this is generally true, women can occupy superior positions to men such as female bosses.

The important contribution of Pyke and Johnson is that they incorporate power relationships among femininities. Nevertheless, there are some points of caution regarding their conceptualization and framework. Schippers (2007) notes that locating the relationship between Asian and white femininities along a single axis of dominance and subordination obscures the contribution and interplay of race, ethnicity, and class dynamics. Accordingly, Asian femininities do not align on a level playing field, so it is quite feasible that hegemonic and subordinate forms exist within this category. For these reasons, Schippers contends that racial as well as gender hegemony is operating in Pyke and Johnson’s study. With these objections in mind, Schippers observes that:

We are still in need of a theoretical framework for multiple femininities that can account for the cultural hierarchy established between white women and Asian women as identified by Pyke and Johnson and can explain the role of femininities and masculinities in ensuring relations of domination that benefit men as a group (p. 89).

Schippers is correct in her observation that we need a model which encompasses power relations between femininities, but does not ignore the overall subordinate status of femininity in relation to masculinity in the current gender order. Schippers then offers a model that captures the dynamic relationship between race, class, and gender, and offers

much promise for the future of femininities research. In order to more fully comprehend the workings of hegemony, she claims, the relationship between masculinity and femininity needs to be more clearly articulated. Schippers (2007) does this by utilizing Judith Butler's (1999) concept of the 'heterosexual matrix' (see section 2.5) which assumes heterosexuality as the 'structuring agent' for gender and the relationship between masculinity and femininity. In the 'heterosexual matrix', gender and heteronormativity work to construct men and women as two distinct classes of people. Certain activities, behaviors, and patterns of consumption tend to correspond to each category and consequently define masculinity and femininity. The relationship between masculinity and femininity, then, is one of difference and complementarity because the differences between masculinity and femininity are complemented by heterosexual desire which fuses men and women together. Hegemony is maintained through constructing complementary but asymmetrical relational differences between men and women. For example, the importance of men's emotional strength is dependent upon and feeds off women's relative emotional weakness, thus men control their emotions and comfort women. This situation assumes a heterosexual relationship as normative. Of greater importance, however, is Schippers' point that the relationship between masculinity and femininity thus extends beyond difference to one of dominance and

submission.

As the above discussion has suggested, the relationship between masculinity and femininity is not only one of difference but also the asymmetricality of domination and submission. Schippers (2007) builds on Connell's (1987) notion that hegemonic masculinity is constructed through its domination of femininity. She conceptualizes hegemonic masculinity as articulating a complementary and hierarchical relationship to femininity. Hegemonic masculinity is "the qualities defined as manly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to femininity and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and subordination of women" (p. 94). Hegemonic femininity, accordingly, "consists of the characteristics defined as womanly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to hegemonic masculinity and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (p. 94).

This reformulation of hegemonic masculinity and femininity clarifies some of the ambiguities present in Connell's original definition of hegemonic masculinity. The earlier somewhat vague "configuration of gender practice" (Connell, 1995, p. 77) is now more clearly defined as specific characteristics which are viewed as 'manly' or 'womanly'. Schippers is referring to the 'quality characteristics' of each gender category

such as men's physical strength and women's physical vulnerability. Nevertheless, quality characteristics are not restricted to the level of face-to-face interaction but also exist on the social and institutional level, for example, the 'masculinist' culture found in many corporations (Connell, 2002; Fletcher, 1999) and media representations of exemplary athletes and movie stars (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Schippers' conceptualization incorporates multiple manifestations of masculinities and femininities dependent upon specific sociocultural contexts and the passage of time. For example, working-class men in Mexico reportedly participate in childcare which in no way infringes on their sense of 'masculinity' (Gutmann, 1996). Economic changes triggered men's increased participation in childcare and consequently the symbolic meaning of fatherhood also changed. In contrast, for Mexican men of higher classes, childcare is still very much a 'feminine' practice. In this culture, 'masculine' and 'feminine' quality characteristics are stratified by social class.

Theorizing the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity not simply as the "the global dominance of men over women" (Connell, 1987, p. 183) but as both hierarchical and complementary articulates a more dynamic view of power in line with principles of poststructuralism (Baxter, 2003; Burr, 2003; Weedon, 1997). For example, 'Office Ladies' willingly quit their jobs not necessarily

due to family-related responsibilities but because the job itself is unstimulating. However, men may attribute this to a ‘maternal instinct’ or unsuitability for the harsh, ‘masculinist’ corporate culture. Therefore, the ‘complementary’ relationship between masculinity and femininity implies domination through consent and not force, i.e., hegemony. Given that men and women normally live together, certainly more often than members of different social classes and ethnic groups, they are ‘supposed’ to ‘complement’ each other.

A conceptualization of hegemonic femininity remains incomplete without considering non-hegemonic forms of femininity. By non-hegemonic forms of femininity, I am referring to single women of marriageable age, homosexual women, and women involved in occupational fields deemed ‘masculine’ such as law enforcement and the military, that is, women who somehow challenge traditional notions of femininity. Non-hegemonic femininities were not specifically incorporated into Connell’s (1987) concept of emphasized femininity, yet she maintained that emphasized femininity prevents other forms of femininity (i.e., ‘spinsters’, ‘lesbians’) from gaining cultural articulation. In order to extend Connell’s model, Schippers (2007) proposes the notion of ‘pariah femininities’.

#### **2.5.4 ‘Pariah Femininities’**



‘Pariah femininities’ refers to women who embody ‘manly’ characteristics or aspects of hegemonic masculinity which include erotic desire for women, explicit sexual promiscuity, physical strength and assertiveness. Schippers (2007) proposes the term ‘pariah’ in lieu of ‘subordinated’ femininities in order to emphasize not so much their inferior status, but their perceived and actual potential to ‘contaminate’ the hegemonic relationship between masculinity and femininity. Once again, masculinity and femininity exist in a relationship exemplified by difference and complementarity organized around a ‘heterosexual matrix’ (Butler, 1999).

‘Female masculinity’ (Halberstam, 1998) refers to women who embody masculinity such as ‘tomboys’ or ‘butch’ women. The significance of this concept is that it captures how masculinity (and presumably femininity) can be embodied regardless of biological sex. However, the concept ignores women who neither embody hegemonic femininity nor ‘masculinity’, e.g. nuns. Pariah femininities, by contrast, could incorporate these femininities and is thus a more theoretically sophisticated concept. While variation among pariah femininities exists, a similarity is that they are sanctioned for their ‘deviant’ behavior. Discursive sanctioning is incurred in the form of derogatory terms such as ‘bitches’ to describe authoritarian women, ‘lesbians’ or ‘dykes’ to describe homosexual women, and ‘slags’ to describe permissive women. Non-discursive forms

of sanctioning including sexual harassment and physical violence.

Pariah femininities challenge the exalted status of hegemonic masculinity both because they enact an alternative to hegemonic femininity and do not assume a subordinate position in relation to hegemonic masculinity. On the contrary, this form of femininity embodies and enacts aspects of hegemonic masculinity. Schippers (2007) cites the example of Tina from Messerschmidt's (2004) insightful work on adolescent violence and gender. Tina is a working-class girl who originally embodied hegemonic femininity because of her attention to appearance and style of dress; consequently, she possessed membership of a popular clique at school. However, her decision to engage in physical violence led to her expulsion from the popular or 'preppy group' and recruitment by the 'badass group'. The badass girls participated in physical violence and dressed provocatively. The 'manly' characteristics of violence and permissive sexuality threatened the position of the hegemonic femininity (preppy girls) and ultimately the status of hegemonic masculinity (the relationship between preppy boys and girls). The consequences of embarking on this pariah femininity gender project were that Tina was initially ridiculed by members of the preppy girls, ridicule which eventually ceased once she entered the badass group because of this group's threat of physical violence.

The example of Tina illustrates multiple configurations of hegemonic and pariah

femininities which emerge differently in specific communities of practice (see section 2.1.2). Within the CofP of this particular school, preppy femininity is the hegemonic form and badass femininity the pariah one. On the street, by contrast, badass femininity is hegemonic and preppy femininity pariah. Thus, a particular form of femininity can be simultaneously hegemonic in one CofP and pariah in another. The extent to which hegemonic forms of femininity and masculinity vary cannot be overemphasized.

The example of 'badass' femininity as the hegemonic form of femininity on the street does not, however, challenge the notion of hegemonic masculinity. While badass girls expressed their sexuality more explicitly than preppy girls, the heterosexual matrix (see section 2.4) was still the structuring agent for gender relations within the gang. Girls still expressed their femininity through dressing provocatively, wearing makeup, and ultimately by forming heterosexual relationships. At the same time, they participated in assaultive violence and crime, but only to a certain degree; the 'harder' crimes such as robberies and burglaries were exclusively performed by boys, thus gender relations within the gang were unequal. Although 'badass' hegemonic femininity adopted some of the social practices of 'badass' hegemonic masculinity, it never challenged the exalted status of hegemonic masculinity.

Before leaving the topic of non-hegemonic femininities, I would like to make some final comments about the terms ‘pariah femininities’ and ‘female masculinity’. Following Schippers (2007), I prefer ‘pariah femininities’ to ‘female masculinity’ (Halberstam, 1998), as female masculinity fails to capture the whole range of non-hegemonic forms of femininity that exist. Female masculinity is limited to women who embody and enact masculinity such as ‘butch’ women and ‘tomboys’. Nevertheless, as I argued earlier in this section, pariah femininities should be extended to encompass both women who embody aspects of hegemonic masculinity and women who do not embody hegemonic femininity, but are not necessarily ‘masculine’ such as nuns, single women, or working professionals. My expanded conceptualization of pariah femininities opens up more conceptual and theoretical space for researchers to identify and empirically analyze a greater range of femininities.

Particularly important to this thesis is the potential for cross-cultural variation in the construction of hegemonic femininity. To reflect this, Schippers (2007) suggests viewing racial and class-based variation in masculinity and femininity not as different masculinities and femininities altogether but as masculinity and femininity refracted through the lenses of race and social class. This framework perceives the complementary and hierarchical relationship between masculinity and femininity as

fundamentally the same across cultures, i.e. the heterogeneous configurations of masculinities and femininities found within various CofPs (see section 2.1.2) are not different masculinities and femininities per se, but variations in the embodiment of hegemonic masculinity and femininity. We also need to acknowledge that Schippers is privileging gender over race and class. There are social contexts and occasions when gender is overshadowed by race, ethnicity, or social class. For instance, male and female gang members collectively participate in certain forms of violence and concomitantly construct gang member identity (see section 2.1.2). In this CofP (see section 2.1.2) women are not performing masculinity, but a 'badass' femininity.

Schippers' claim that masculinity and femininity exist in a complementary and hierarchal relationship can be investigated through further research into hegemonic and pariah femininities, such as this study. Schippers' formulation of hegemonic femininity thus paves the way for further investigation of the construction of these constructs within specific CofPs.

Masculinities and femininities are located in the symbolic realm of gender relations (see section 2.2.4). The strength of locating hegemonic masculinities and femininities in this symbolic realm clarifies some of the empirical ambiguities in the original concept of hegemonic masculinity, e.g. theoretical vagueness and hegemonic

relationships among women (see section 2.5.3). This is not to suggest that gender relations are entirely symbolically constructed because disparate salaries, sexual harassment, and domestic violence are material consequences of asymmetrical gender relations; nonetheless, gender is at least partly constructed through discourse. For instance, Japanese hegemonic femininity has been socially constructed as involving the roles of ‘good wife and wise mother’ (see section 1.3). However, the main issue with hegemonic masculinity is how can a symbolic form of masculinity that applies to a minority of men attain a symbolically dominant position in society? Theorized as a symbolic construction, the notion of hegemonic masculinity explains why this still remains the aspirational goal of many men. Most men cannot achieve the physical ‘perfection’ of professional athletes or movie stars; nevertheless, these idealized images of masculinity exert an influence on people’s day-to-day practices, such as the rigorous body-reflexive practices that actual men engage in like bodybuilding. Most women cannot attain the hegemonic femininity represented by supermodels and movie stars, but many attempt to do so through rigorous dieting and exercise. In addition, the discursive construction of femininity as ‘weak’ and subordinate to masculinity accounts for how certain culturally ascribed ‘feminine’ behaviors such as empathy and interdependence are undervalued and ‘get disappeared’ at the workplace despite the pivotal role they play

in supporting corporations' success (Fletcher, 1999). In addition to symbolically defining masculinity and femininity, we also need to keep in mind the original sense of hegemony.

In conclusion, in order to adequately develop a conceptualization of hegemonic femininity, we need to remember that hegemonic ideologies attain their privileged status through popular consent and not coercion (Gramsci, 1971; Edley 2001a, b). The media, then, is one realm where images of hegemonic masculinity and femininity circulate (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Individuals, in turn, have the agency to elevate their exalted status or decrease it. Nevertheless, the popularity of certain media images suggests that individuals are accepting these images as exemplars of hegemonic masculinity and femininity. Sarah Jessica Parker ("Carrie Bradshaw") in *Sex and the City* is a good example of a popular media image of hegemonic femininity for the 1990s and 2000s and heterosexual matrix in extremis. Although Bradshaw appears to challenge hegemonic femininity (through assertiveness), she simultaneously embodies and enacts it (through male-dependence). She is simultaneously a 'modern woman' with a career, self-confidence, and financial and sexual independence; however, these are undermined by her continual search which drives her for a fulfilling heterosexual relationship. 'Having it all' requires 'having a man.' To shift the discussion to the

workplace, hegemonic masculinity is not only reflected in the ‘masculinist’ culture or management style dominating many organizations. Far from an overwhelmingly ‘masculinist’ culture, ‘hegemonic feminine’ ways of doing business are essential for corporations to function but unacknowledged (Fletcher, 1999), which is an indirect form of subordination. The media images and so-called ‘masculinist’ corporate culture discussed above illustrate that hegemony operates in subtle ways.

## **2.6 The current study: Hegemonic femininity and critical discursive psychology**

A major goal of this study is to make an original contribution to gender theory by empirically investigating the theoretical construct of hegemonic femininity (see section 2.5.3). I do this from the perspective of critical discursive psychology (see section 3.4). I seek to investigate how a group of Japanese women discursively construct hegemonic and pariah femininities. Furthermore, the study investigates the various positions (resistant, complicit) these women assume in relation to these femininities, the symbolic construction of hegemonic and pariah femininities, and the multiple ways this group of women orients to them. Hegemonic femininity has been theoretically operationalized (Schippers, 2007), but empirical research has yet to demonstrate how it is displayed in discourse. I will do this through the analysis of these women’s interview data.



## **2.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter I distinguished gender from sex and discussed two concepts central to this thesis: hegemonic femininity and pariah femininities (see sections 2.5.3-2.5.4). I also traced the development of hegemonic masculinity from its early conceptualization (1987) to a more recent reformulation (Schippers, 2007) and its relationship to hegemonic femininity as well as to other masculinities and femininities. While I am concerned with the discursive and thus symbolic construction of hegemonic and pariah femininities, I take as given that gender relations are multidimensional and involve power, production, emotional, and symbolic relations. In order to reflect this, I discussed Connell's (2002) model of gender relations I have relied heavily on the work of Connell in this chapter, but she is an important figure in the field of gender studies and originally developed the key concepts of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity.

In the next chapter I provide an overview of the methodology for this study, discursive psychology.

## **Chapter 3 Methodology Part 1: Discursive Psychology**

### **3.1 Qualitative Research**

To investigate the discursive construction of hegemonic and pariah femininities in Japan, I chose to adopt a qualitative approach from the onset because of its arguably greater compatibility with a social constructionist view of gender as a situated accomplishment than a quantitative approach would have been (Mason, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Silverman, 2005). Qualitative interviews served as an appropriate data elicitation technique to elicit individuals' discursive accounts of gender relations. I then utilized critical discursive psychology (see section 3.4) to analyze these accounts

because I felt the methodology's concern with how individuals use language to perform various aspects of their social identities was appropriate to address my research questions (see section 3.5). Discursive psychological research typically draws on qualitative materials (i.e., news reports, telephone conversations) and interviews as data. (Edwards, 1997; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

### **3.1.1 Qualitative Interviewing**

I used semi-structured interviews as my data-collection methodology. Semi-structured interviews are loosely structured interviews which involve the preparation and use of an interview schedule or 'interview protocol' (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), but these questions serve more as general guidelines than a stringent schedule that must be strictly adhered to. With this in mind, I attempted to design questions which were general and open enough to encourage the participants to discuss their specific experiences and views related to gender (see Appendix A). Despite my efforts to create a comfortable and 'natural' setting, the resulting interaction is still the product of an interview situation which is different from 'natural' interaction, i.e. spontaneous conversation or telephone call.

Although qualitative interviews provide a rich resource, this data is not

naturally-occurring talk, but rather generated or elicited (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The data would not have ‘occurred’ without the researcher. An interview is not a ‘natural’ context, in the sense that the researcher presets the topics and controls the flow of the ‘conversation’ to some extent. In other words, the turn-taking rights are unequally distributed. With these concerns in mind, what we have is a specific type of social interaction which is nevertheless analyzable in its own right. In line with Schiffrin (1994), I would like to argue that interviews are a speech event that individuals have participated in, so it is different than, say, data from a completely controlled and thus ‘artificial’ laboratory setting. Rubin and Rubin (2005) even suggest the term ‘conversational partners’ to emphasize interviewees’ active role. Preempted by this, I made a concerted effort to view the interviewees as active participants in the interaction and did not position myself as an ‘expert’ but as someone there to learn from them. One way I attempted to position myself as a conversational partner was by informing them of my status as a doctoral student studying men’s and women’s roles in Japan, and expressing that their insights were a crucial element of my research project.

I would also like to critically and reflexively assess the role of my ethnicity and gender on the data. My ethnicity worked both as a constraint and resource in conducting the interviews. My status as non-Japanese located me in a unique position which helped

to rebalance any power inequalities present. For example, when interviewing younger women, where I was powerfully positioned in terms of age, they were powerfully positioned in terms of language and cultural competence. I conducted the interviews in Japanese in order to create an environment where interviewees could most fully express themselves. My status as a cultural ‘outsider’ may have resulted in more open and explicit disclosure than if a Japanese had conducted the interviews. On the other hand, the interviewees may have been more comfortable and consequently more open with a Japanese interviewer. At times my ethnicity located me in a position of relative power, while at other times it located me in a position of relative powerlessness.

As regards the potential effect of my gender on the interview, research suggests that even in mixed gender interviewers, rapport can be established with the interviewees (Messerschmidt, 2004; Williams & Heikes, 1993). Although gender was a pervasive topic throughout the course of the interview, I attempted to play down the salience of my gender within the context of the interview. As much as possible, I turned the floor over to the participants and assumed the position of active listener. At the same time, I could not assume an entirely passive role, so I disclosed some of my own experiences and views and readily answered any questions posed to me. In retrospect, I do not regret my decision to conduct all of the interviews, but in fact welcome the unique interactions

that evolved. Finally, one goal of third-wave feminist research (Heywood & Drake, 1997) is to deconstruct traditional boundaries (e.g., Bucholtz, et al., 1999; Hall & Bucholtz, 1995), so we should encourage research designs where males interview females or vice versa.

## **3.2 Social and Discursive Psychology**

### **3.2.1 Social Psychology**

Social psychology concerns the interaction between the individual and society—specifically, the study of how an individual’s perceptions, attitudes, or behaviors are influenced by the presence of others (Gilbert et al., 1998). The discipline’s beginnings are traceable to post World War II where social psychologists studied the United States military’s use of persuasion and propaganda.

Social psychologists study both intrapersonal phenomena and interpersonal phenomena, that is, an individual’s attitudes, perceptions, or stereotypes of others and other social groups, e.g. other races, and the ways in which group membership influences collective action or attitudes. For example, Tajfel (1982) suggests that a salient feature of group membership is accentuating intergroup differences and emphasizing intragroup similarities. In the process of creating strong in-group and out-group distinctions, individuals construct social identities (see section 2.1.3). Group

affiliation and the construction of these social identities become the basis for comparison with other groups and can result in intergroup conflicts. Discursive psychologists do not disassociate ‘individual’ from ‘social’ or ‘group-based’ identities. Identities are seen as constructed in the process of social interaction with others (Edley, 2001a; Edley & Wetherell, 2008).

Methodologically, social psychologists tend to conduct their research in laboratory settings or use surveys and questionnaires (Ajzen, 1991; Marsh, 1976; Zimmerman & Pollner, 1971). Discursive psychologists criticize this because they view displayed attitudes and identities not as stable and easily elicited by the researcher, but as performed in specific interactional contexts.

Before extending my discussion of discursive psychology, I first define ‘discourse’.

### **3.2.2 Discourse**

Purely linguistic definitions see discourse as “language above the sentence” (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 23) or “units of language production (whether spoken or written) that are inherently contextualized” (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 41). While these definitions are useful, post-structuralists (see section 3.3.2), which includes discursive psychologists, conceptualize discourse in a slightly different manner.

The term *discourse* as used in post structuralism has two dimensions. First, a

discourse is a group of statements which represents or discusses a topic in a certain way (Foucault, 1972). This has been referred to as ‘descriptive discourse’ (Sunderland, 2004). Discourse extends beyond language to include “a whole range of different symbolic activities, including style of dress, patterns of consumption, ways of moving, as well as talking” (Edley, 2001a, p. 191). Examples of this include ‘medical discourse’, ‘academic discourse’, ‘legal discourse’ and so on. There are certain context-specific conventions that govern academic discourse such as active engagement in whole class discussions and adhering to certain standards when writing. On another level, discourse “is producing and maintaining certain identities and power relations” (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 5), which has been referred to as ‘interpretive discourse’ (Sunderland, 2004).

In this second sense, language is a form of social action (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) or ‘practice’ (Edley, 2001a). The multifarious ways that people speak or write about a certain topic are performing an action, e.g. legitimating or subverting a normative social order. Lazar (2000) incorporates this social order dimension in her definition of discourse as “a set of related statements that produce and structure a particular order of reality, and which within that reality makes available specific subject positions” (p. 376). Although discourse may make available certain subject positions



(see section 3.4.3), social actors have a measure of agency to accept, resist, or even reformulate these subject positions.

Lazar identifies and names two interpretive discourses in her study of a Singaporean national advertising campaign to encourage pregnancy: a dominant discourse of ‘conservative gender relations’ and a counter discourse of ‘egalitarian gender relations.’ In the counter discourse, parenthood was represented as equally important for both men and women. Contrary to a traditional division of labor, men are actively involved in parenting and women are actively involved in the pursuit of their careers.

In the dominant discourse, by contrast, a very traditional division of labor was represented. For example, the father’s role largely centered around fun and physical play, which has also been identified as a ‘Father as baby entertainer’ discourse (Sunderland, 2004). In addition, the twin pursuits of career and family were not portrayed as dilemmatic for men as they were for women. Motherhood was represented as foregrounding the needs of others. Lazar terms this ‘Other-centeredness’ (see also section 1.3) and defines it:

women’s acute consciousness (or consideration) of their husbands and their children in the enactment of their own motherhood identity. The implication to be drawn from this is that women derive self-fulfillment indirectly through the happiness and fulfillment of others (p. 388).

For example, the birth of another child was not portrayed as a personally fulfilling endeavor for mothers themselves but as a “precious gift” for their other children. Furthermore, the combination of a career and family was deemed problematic for women, requiring them to “balance” these dual pursuits, with priority given to motherhood.

Lazar’s study illustrates how discourse has both a representational and constitutive function. (Sunderland & Litosseliti, 2002). The discourses she identified are both parenthood discourses. As with the academic discourse example above, certain socioculturally based assumptions are entailed in these discourses. The assumptions embedded in the discourse of conservative gender relations and egalitarian gender relations are quite different and can thus both be seen as a form of social action. Through the portrayal of parenthood in specifically gendered ways, individuals have available certain subject positions they can assume in relation to these discourses. The discourses provide subject positions for men whereby they can easily combine their father and professional identities. Women, by contrast, have a much narrower range of subject positions. For them, the combination of motherhood and career involves balancing the dual identities, with priority given to motherhood. This discussion illustrates that discourse is more than just spoken or written interaction and should be

seen as “a system which structures the way we perceive reality (Mills, 2007, p. 55). Discourses, then, are “practices that systematically form the object of which they speak” (Foucault, 1972, p.49).

Discourses do not exist in isolation but draw on other discourses. The interplay between different discourses is termed ‘interdiscursivity’ (Kristeva, 1986). These different discourses may ‘come together’, for a time, to form a ‘discursive formation’ which constitutes knowledge about a certain topic (Foucault, 1977). For example, the discursive formation constituting ‘normative sexuality’ as ‘heterosexual’ or ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ (Rich, 1980) can be found in various texts and social practices. ‘Linguistic traces’ (Talbot, 1998) of this discourse could emerge in religious doctrinal texts condemning homosexuality, psychiatric texts classifying it as ‘deviant’, anti-sodomy legislation, and the policing of homosexuals. As the ‘normative sexuality’ discourse example illustrates, discursive formations do not exist on a level playing field.

Certain discursive formations that are legitimized by social institutions sustain a ‘regime of truth’ or knowledge about a certain topic (Foucault, 1980). In reference to the previous example, other discursive formations around ‘sexuality’ exist, but they lack the authority of the hegemonic ‘normative heterosexuality’ discourse and some such as homosexuality are even considered ‘deviant.’ Marriage discourses are prime examples.

In most contexts, the regimes of truth constructing 'marriage' define it as a union between a man and a woman. Alternative discourses that define marriage differently circulate but lack force and consequently do not sustain a regime of truth. Therefore, discursive struggles exist where alternative marriage discourses compete to regulate knowledge, which therefore is constantly changing.

Discursive psychologists take a performative view of both descriptive and interpretive and discourses. Individuals perform actions such as attributing blame or justifying decisions when they speak or write about a certain topic. The 'action orientation' (Heritage, 1984) of discourse is of central importance in discursive psychology, which is not the case for other social psychological research as I show.

### **3.2.3 Discursive Social Psychology**

Discursive social psychology is the study of how people construct and perform psychological phenomena, 'mental states', in social interaction (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Traditionally, social psychology views the display of attitudes or expression of emotions as cognitive processes which reside within the individual and drive behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Marsh, 1976; Zimmerman & Pollner, 1971). Discursive psychologists, by contrast, see these psychological phenomena as constructed for specific social interactions. For example, an individual may attempt to

construct a neutral attitude in order to avoid the attribution of being seen as a racist (Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Psychological phenomena, then, for discursive psychology, are constructed in response to how we want others to view us.

Discursive psychology represents a reworking of the view traditionally taken by psychologists that language expresses cognitive processes of the mind (Edley, 2001a; Horton-Salway, 2001). Rather, for discursive psychology, it is through language that individuals perform social actions such as making justifications, expressing views, and attributing blame (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Therefore, discursive social psychology is very much concerned with the ‘action orientation’ (Heritage, 1984) of discourse. The view of language taken by discursive social psychologists thus sharply diverges from that taken by other social psychologists.

As indicated, traditional social psychological research often uses questionnaires and surveys to uncover individual’s ‘underlying mental states’ (Ajzen, 1991; Marsh, 1976; Zimmerman & Pollner, 1971). Within this research tradition, a researcher may for example ‘elicit attitudes’ by having participants select a documented attitude from a set number of choices—categories elicited by the researcher. This is problematic from a discursive social psychologist’s perspective because it sees a neat correspondence between categories constructed by the researcher and the participants’ indicated

underlying mental entities, especially if these are seen as fixed and stable. In contrast, discursive social psychology sees the display of attitudes, evaluations, emotions, and remembering as constructed for specific interactional contexts and thus ‘action oriented’ (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). For example, an individual may ‘remember’ an event in a certain way to construct a ‘self-presentation’ (see section 2.1.4) as a ‘responsible person’. Discursive social psychologists have thus reconceptualized the conventional social psychological view of language as an expressive medium of stable, underlying states to a flexible resource individuals draw on to perform actions. Reported attitudes, memories, descriptions, and the like are seen as ‘accounts’. Because discursive accounts are ‘action oriented’ versus static, discursive psychologists use qualitative interviews (one-to-one and focus groups) in lieu of questionnaires or surveys (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

In contrast to the view that researchers can access participants’ attitudes and underlying mental states and indeed that there *are* underlying mental states, discursive psychology is anti-cognitivist (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Within cognitive psychology, individuals’ accounts are viewed as representations of their mental states (Bubbenzer & West, 1993; Cantor & Mischel, 1977; Duck, 1993). Discursive psychology, in contrast, is not concerned with people’s knowledge (e.g., the

factual accuracy of a memory) or elicitation of attitudes but how ‘knowledge’ and ‘attitudes’ are used in interaction.

Edwards (1994, 1995) illustrates how, for discursive social psychology, cognitive entities (descriptions of mental life) are strategically deployed with his concept of ‘script formulations’. Script formulations are used by a speaker to construct an event or a speaker’s disposition as following a predictable pattern or ‘script’ which helps bolster the description and protect against refutation. This assumes that description is what is happening. Similar to a ‘rhetorical commonplace’ (Billig 1987), it is ‘rhetorically self-sufficient’ (Wetherell & Potter, 1992) and ‘stands alone’ to explain a particular phenomena, e.g. ‘present generations cannot be blamed for the mistakes of past generations’ (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 177). The rhetorical effect of script formulations is that the account is constructed as unmotivated by a speaker’s ‘stake’ or ‘interest’ and is thus unbiased. Script formulations are an example of what Potter (1996) calls an ‘externalizing device’ where an action or event is constructed as occurring independent from the describer. Through distancing oneself from the event or action, the account is given more corroboration because it is constructed as ‘neutral’ and not motivated by the describer’s own interests. For example, a participant in a marriage counseling session produced a description of her husband as ‘jealous’ (Edwards, 1995).

The woman constructed her husband's 'dispositional jealousy' as the reason why he misconstrued her 'sociability' as 'flirtatiousness'. By producing a description of his actions as following a predictable script, the speaker was able to blame her husband for various marital difficulties while at the same time present her own conduct as blameless. This example of script formulation illustrates how an emotion such as jealousy is not seen simply as a mental entity, but is discursively constructed in order to perform a particular function such as the attribution of blame. This non-cognitivist stance is consistent with an 'action oriented' (Heritage, 1984) conceptualization of discourse.

The theoretical roots of discursive psychology can be traced back to the 1980s with the publication of Potter and Wetherell's (1987) seminal work, *Discourse and Social Psychology*, which foregrounds discourse as the topic of study. Potter and Wetherell (1987) directly challenged social psychological research on attitudes. Whereas attitudes researchers had attested to a high degree of coherence within individual's questionnaire responses (Ajzen, 1991; Marsh, 1976; Zimmerman & Pollner, 1971), Wetherell and Potter (1992), in their interviews with Pakeha (white) New Zealanders, demonstrated that variability was normative within and across individuals. This variation directly challenges (but does not disprove) attitudes researchers' claims that 'attitudes' are stable mental entities.



In order to study ‘mental’ phenomena, Potter and Wetherell (1987) outline a form of discourse analysis which draws variously on the tools of ‘conversation analysis’ (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Sacks, 1995), ‘membership categorization devices’ (Sacks, 1995; see section 5.3), and the concept of ‘interpretative repertoires’ (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Conversation Analysis (CA) is concerned with the local-organization of conversations and has developed terminology to explicate this. Researchers who adhere to the principles of CA are more concerned with micro-oriented analysis, e.g. the salience of a pause. Those researchers who draw on the concept of interpretative repertoires, culturally specific ways of discussing certain topics, are however also interested in macro-level analysis, i.e. the relevance of a particular social context on the interaction. Accordingly, the field has split into those scholars who remain faithful to the principles of CA and ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967; Sacks, 1995; Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974) and those who follow a more post-structuralist influenced branch and draw on the concept of interpretative repertoires (Edley, 2001a; Edley and Wetherell, 2008) and discourses. These two branches of discursive social psychology are explored in greater depth below.

The field of discursive social psychology has been heavily influenced by Michael Billig’s (1987) work on rhetoric, notably his concept of ‘rhetorical

commonplaces', e.g. culturally specific terms or phrases that construct something as beyond question. When invoking them they function as being 'rhetorically self-sufficient' (Wetherell & Potter, 1992) and thus are effective devices to 'manage accountability' (attribute responsibility for an action). For example, the phrase 'you can't turn the clock backwards' often functions to reduce Pakeha New Zealanders' accountability for past injustices inflicted on the Maori people, and may form the basis for an argument against compensating Maori people for such injustices (Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

A further contribution to discursive social psychology was Edwards & Potter's (1992) 'Discursive Action Model,' in which the concepts of 'action,' 'fact and interest' and 'accountability' were introduced. 'Action' follows Potter and Wetherell (1987) who view 'psychological' phenomena such as 'remembering', 'describing', and so on as discursive acts which perform actions like denying responsibility or placing blame, as shown above. 'Fact' and 'interest' refer to individuals' 'stake' or personal investment in making certain claims. If a speaker is seen as having such a 'stake' or 'interest', the account is in part undermined because it is no longer viewed as neutral (Edwards & Potter, 1992). Accordingly, individuals are often caught in a 'dilemma of stake or interest' of how to produce 'neutral' accounts while managing their self-interest. In

order to manage this dilemma, individuals produce accounts where an attributional action such as blaming is done implicitly, so as not to undermine their accounts and reduce their own accountability.

Edwards and Potter (1992) further locate 'accountability' at two different, yet interrelated, levels. First, in the process of constructing an account, a speaker is making claims about who is responsible for certain events or actions. In particular, when the speaker is a participant in that account, his or her personal and relative responsibility for certain actions or events is also being constructed: within the 'story world' of the account, the speaker is managing his or her own accountability. The speaker's accountability in the story world has implications for the type of 'self-presentation' (Goffman, 1959) she or he is constructing in the current interactional context (e.g. interview, courtroom testimony). The version of self constructed in the story world encourages the listener to form a certain impression of the teller, e.g. someone who believes in racial or gender equality. Speakers design their accounts in accordance with these two levels of accountability: within the story-world and current interactional context.

These two seminal works, Potter and Wetherell (1987) and Edwards and Potter (1992), have provided the foundation of the field of discursive social psychology. They

also formed the basis for the theoretical division that has occurred in the field. Potter and Wetherell (1987) have heavily influenced post-structuralist or ‘critical discursive psychology’ (hereafter CDP; Edley, 2001a; Edley & Wetherell, 2008); in contrast, the approach advocated by Edwards and Potter (1992) draws on the principles of CA (hereafter CADP; Antaki, 1988, 1994; Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Speer, 2001, 2005). In the next sections, I outline the main principles of and differences between CADP and CDP.

### **3.3 Branches of Discursive Psychology**

Discursive psychology can be divided into two main branches: CADP (see Benwell & Stokoe, 2006) and CDP (Edley, 2001a; Edley & Wetherell, 2008). Those working within CADP are committed to the principles of CA, thus they do not make claims about the larger social context the social interaction occurred unless it is directly traceable to the data (see Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). In CA terminology, unless the participants ‘make relevant’ or ‘orient to’ the larger social context. Antaki and Widdicombe (1998) are careful to point out that to ‘orient to’ something does not always involve specifically naming it. A recipient can orient to a speaker’s utterance as if it were a question or statement, or, rather differently, as a father, successful businessperson and so on.

CDP researchers, who are more concerned with social issues such as gender hegemony, see discourse as inseparable from the larger social context even if the participants do not specifically reference that context (Edley, 2001a; Edley and Wetherell, 2008). For example, the construction of non-racist views reflects a social climate where the expression of explicitly racist views is unacceptable (Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Although discursive psychology has been seen as falling into these two branches (see also McIlvenny, 2002), some scholars such as Jonathan Potter have worked in both ‘camps’ (e.g., Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987) while others discourage this theoretical separation and instead propose a more synthetic form of analysis which utilizes the ‘tools’ from both branches (e.g., Kamada, 2008; Edley & Wetherell, 2008; Reynolds, 2008; see section 3.3.4).

I discuss the two branches in greater detail below.

### **3.3.1 Conversation Analysis-Based Discursive Psychology**

Conversation analysis is the study of the organization of ‘mundane’ or everyday conversation and also institutional interaction (see Drew & Heritage, 1992; Thornborrow, 2002). The founders of CA set out to detail the ‘local organization’ of naturally-occurring conversation (Sacks, 1995; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff et al., 1977), i.e. the rules that individuals follow which make conversation ‘orderly’. In doing

so they developed a specialized ‘tool kit’ (see Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Wooffitt, 2005). For example, ‘adjacency pairs’ are a common feature of conversation, e.g. questions are usually accompanied by answers (Sacks, et al., 1974) and invitations by acceptances. Responses differ in that they can be classified as ‘preferred’ and ‘dispreferred’ (Pomerantz, 1984). The ‘preferred’ turn is the kind of response that a question invites. The ‘preferred’ response to an invitation is an acceptance while the ‘dispreferred’ response is a refusal. ‘Preferred’ responses are recognizable by a minimal amount of delay, brevity, and lack of mitigation (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). ‘Dispreferred’ responses are indicated by delay and an account indicating why the person say cannot accept the invitation. Individuals orient to or exploit the normative features of conversations in order to perform certain actions such as acceptances and refusals. CA is not interested what is going on in individuals’ heads, but what they are doing in conversation.

Prior to discussing the differences between CADP and CDP, I first look at the similarities between the two branches. Both branches of discursive psychology treat discourse as situated in three ways (Hepburn & Wiggins, 2007; Potter & Hepburn, 2007). First, utterances are situated in relation to each other as CA has demonstrated (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Sacks, 1995; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff et al., 1977), e.g.

greetings are usually followed by greetings. Second, much discourse is situated in particular institutional contexts with specific norms (e.g. courtrooms, therapy sessions, workplaces). One feature of certain institutional contexts is asymmetrical speaking rights (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). For example, in a counseling session the longer turn-taking rights allocated to clients are normative whereas in 'ordinary conversation' an extended turn by one party would violate the 'turn-taking system'. Therapists usually ask questions that would normally breach rules of etiquette. Therefore, the conversational norms of particular institutional contexts impact social interactions which occur within those contexts. Third, individuals' discourse is situated rhetorically in order to avoid the accusation of personal investment in creating a certain account. For example, when calling a child abuse helpline, an individual identifies herself as a 'very close friend' of the victim to prevent being seen as a 'snitch' (Potter, 2003). By placing herself in the category of friend, expressing concern for the child is a normative activity, thus she presents herself as 'concerned' and not intruding on someone's privacy.

CADP and CDP also both view discourse as constructed and constructive (Hepburn & Wiggins, 2007; Potter, 2003; Potter & Hepburn, 2007). Discourse is constructed from various resources (words, membership categories, rhetorical commonplaces, interpretative repertoires). Subsequently, constructed discourse

functions to create different versions of the world. To illustrate, an individual can account for missing a meeting as due to traffic problems (Potter, 2003). This individual's account constructs his/her lateness as due to external circumstances which she/he could not control. In this account, the individual is self-constructed as intending to arrive at the meeting on time, but external circumstances prevented him/her. This constructed reality presents the individual as conscientious. The example also demonstrates the rhetorical nature of discourse in that the individual has a stake or interest (see section 3.2.3) in constructing an account where he/she positively presents her/himself (Goffman, 1959).

If discourse is constructive, then where does that leave the role of the material world? When addressing the question of the relationship between social construction and the material world, both branches of DP takes a relativist view of social construction (Burr, 2003; Wetherell, 2001). That is, 'truth' exists only in relation to the discursive context where it is constructed. Potter (1996) comments on the relationship between descriptions and the material world: "descriptions are not just *about* something but they are also *doing* something; that is, they are not merely *representing* some facet of the world, they are also *involved* in that world in some practical way" (p. 47). Potter is proposing that descriptions are occasioned or situated in social interaction which



works to construct different versions of reality. The question remains, then, if truth is discursively constructed what role does material reality play? Edley (2001c) gives the example of the city of Nottingham as existing due to a text (i.e., by royal decree) and that its boundaries were negotiated and agreed upon, but does not dismiss the material, i.e. literally bricks and mortar. Edley reminds us that the material and symbolic realms are inextricably related. Discursive psychologists suggest that the ‘symbolic’ act of constructing an account has material *consequences* because it constructs one particular version of the world, but they privilege discourse (Edwards, 1997; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996; Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

In the next section, I discuss the post-structuralist influenced branch or ‘critical discursive psychology’.

### **3.3.2 Post-structuralist-Based Discursive Psychology: Critical Discursive Psychology**

CDP’s broader view of ‘orientation’ is evident in research on the stigmatization facing single women (Reynolds, 2008; Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003), racism (Wetherell & Potter, 1992) and hegemonic masculinity (Wetherell & Edley, 1999). For these researchers, analysis which integrates contextual information is a crucial component of conducting empirically rigorous discourse analysis.

The temporary and fluid nature of both meaning and subjectivity is a

fundamental tenet of post-structuralism (e.g., Barthes, 1973; Baxter, 2003; Derrida, 1987; Foucault, 1972, 1977, 1980; Kristeva, 1986; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Weedon, 1997). This idea is built on the assumption that the meaning constructed from any text or social interaction is inseparable from the broader context. The implication for post-structuralist-driven discursive psychology is that discourse (see section 3.2.2) is highly and profoundly situated and researchers *must* integrate the broader social context into their analysis.

Similar to their CADP counterparts, post-structuralism-influenced discursive psychologists are also concerned with the ‘action orientation’ (Heritage, 1984) of talk, but take a much broader view of discourse. As Edley and Wetherell (1999) eloquently state: “people are both the products and the producers of discourse; the masters and the slaves of language” (p. 182). This perspective acknowledges that there are multiple ways of understanding the world, but at the same time certain understandings are more culturally dominant or hegemonic than others (Edley, 2001a). CADP, by contrast, does not engage in macro-level analysis unless the participants themselves ‘orient to’ the larger social context.

CDP analysis tends to focus on identifying ‘interpretative repertoires’ (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), i.e. socio-culturally shared understandings about certain topics, look

for their discursive functions, and make claims about gender hegemony, racism, and so on through analyzing the workings of these repertoires (Edley, 2001a; Edley and Wetherell, 2008; Reynolds, 2008; see section 3.4). An example will more clearly illustrate this point.

In a seminal CDP study, Edley and Wetherell (1999) identified the workings of hegemonic masculinity in interviews with men. Some participants constructed accounts where they were ‘gender rebels’; one such individual presented himself as comfortable partaking in the ‘feminine’ pursuits of knitting and cooking. What is striking, however, in this seemingly ‘rebellious’ account, is that it can be seen as drawing on traditional features of hegemonic masculinity such as autonomy, self-confidence, and superiority (Connell, 1987; Schippers, 2007). In this ‘gender non-conformist’ account, what is being celebrated is arguably not only this man’s ability to knit and cook, but his courage as a man to engage in these ‘risky’ feminine pursuits. Thus, we see the workings of hegemonic masculinity (see section 2.5.2) within this ‘gender non-conformist’ account.

The two branches of CADP and CDP have resulted from tensions between their different intellectual and epistemological underpinnings. These tensions include both the level at which analysts restrict their analysis and the data they analyze. In the next section, I discuss these tensions and possible resolutions.

### **3.3.3 Theoretical tensions between the two branches**

As indicated, participants' 'orientations' is a key point which divides CADP and CDP researchers. In contrast to CADP, CDP researchers approach their data from the perspective that certain ways of talking about the world already exist (Edley, 2001a; Edley and Wetherell, 2008). Accordingly, speakers often draw on these 'interpretative repertoires' (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Interpretative repertoires are deployed for rhetorical purposes, e.g. working up a self-presentation as a 'gender rebel' who is in touch with his emotional side (Wetherell & Edley, 1999). Nevertheless, this repertoire is built on the very characteristics (e.g. individualism and self-confidence) which define hegemonic masculinity. What appears to be a 'New Man' form of masculinity is in fact a reformulated version of hegemonic masculinity. In the process of deploying such repertoires, participants are constructing their identities (Weatherall, 2002; Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

Although a range of interpretative repertoires exists about a certain topic (e.g. racism), they do not align on a level playing field. Certain understandings about the world are culturally dominant or hegemonic (Edley, 2001a; see section also 2.5.1). CDP researchers thus often focus their attention on the workings of these interpretative repertoires within local interactional contexts while making claims about the workings

of power or ideology. For example, the inclusion of marriage into what constitutes a 'normal life cycle' means that 'single woman' is a 'marked' social category (Reynolds, 2008; Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003). Accordingly, interpretative repertoires which denigrate singleness, e.g. 'singleness as personal deficit', dominate those which celebrate it, e.g. 'singleness as independence and choice'. In many western societies marriage and motherhood are accordingly central tenets of femininity (Reynolds, 2008; Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003).

The issue of how 'participants' orientations' are demonstrated by the researcher has generated a long-standing debate (Billig, 1999a, b; Schegloff, 1997; Schegloff, 1998; Schegloff, 1999a, b; Wetherell, 1998) and is the main point of division between the two branches of discursive social psychology. The CA claim that the researcher does not approach the data with any prior theorizations or research agenda (Schegloff, 1997) has in particular generated criticism. In response to the CA justification of 'positive naiveté', Billig (1999a, b) and Edley (2001b) maintain that while CA researchers have no problem integrating the technical terminology from their field into their analysis (e.g., adjacency pairs, extreme case formulations, and three-part lists), they nevertheless attest they are studying participants' talk 'in its own terms'. As Billig (1999a) critically states, "the 'naïve methodology and epistemology' allows conversation analysts to claim that

they are not ‘imposing’ categories: they are merely labeling what actually exists and can be observed to exist” (p. 547). Billig’s important point, with which I concur, is that CA terminology is not therefore value free but indicative of the points in the participants’ talk the analyst is focusing on. In this way, it is not so different from the claims about ideologies that CDP researchers make (Edley, 2001b).

The CA focus on ‘participants’ concerns’ is methodologically sound in that it encourages close textual analysis and discourages over-interpretation. Nevertheless, as Edley (2001b) argues, “in attempting to maintain ‘participants’ orientations,’ conversation analysis (CA) renders itself particularly unsuited to researching questions of hegemony and ideology” (p. 137): CA researchers cannot make claims about the workings of gender hegemony or ideology unless the participants orient to it. This is paradoxical because the touchstone of gender hegemony is that power is maintained through consent versus explicit coercion (Edley, 2001b). As Edley (2001b) claims, “a state of hegemony exists when a particular cultural understanding or practice comes close to achieving that aim; when it becomes widely taken for granted or common sense” (p. 137). Thus, individuals are not always critically aware of hegemony, and it is precisely on those occasions when gender hegemony is not explicitly oriented to that analysts need to and can point to its covert workings. For analysts who wish to study the

subtle workings of gender hegemony, CADP may not be the most suitable methodology.

Closely related to this tension is the issue of how analysts generate data for analysis. CADP researchers tend to use naturally-occurring material such as conversations, telephone calls, news interviews, meetings, and online discussions (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Edwards, 1997; Hepburn & Wiggins, 2007). CDP researchers, on the other hand, tend to rely heavily on individual and group qualitative interviews (Edley, 2001a; Wetherell & Potter, 1992), i.e. elicited data. CDP's use of qualitative interviews to generate data has been criticized by CADP researchers (Potter & Hepburn, 2005; Hepburn & Wiggins, 2007; Speer, 2004). Potter and Hepburn (2005), for example, note that the interviewer is often deleted from the transcripts, so readers are only provided with the interviewees' responses. In addition, they maintain that researchers often have a stake or interest (see section 3.2.3) in certain findings, which potentially influences the interview, and that researchers' own agendas can affect question construction.

Potter and Hepburn (2005) thus argue that interviews are not always treated as interaction, and accordingly that, although extracts from the interviewees' responses are presented, the interviewer's questions and responses to the interviewees are often not given adequate attention. Clearly, the ways in which original and follow-up questions

are constructed and posed to interviewees exert an influence on the interaction. This is closely tied to the notion of the researcher's and participant's respective stake or interest in the topic. For example, the interviewer's investment may be indicated by expressing an affiliative or disaffiliative response. For these reasons, Potter and Hepburn (2005) suggest that naturalistic records (versus elicited data) might be a more fruitful 'epistemological site' (Sunderland, 2004) for generating data and conducting analysis.

The issues raised by Potter and Hepburn (2005) are valid and require addressing in a CDP study such as mine. A researcher can provide the interview schedule and include *interview questions* alongside *participant responses* to address the 'interviewer' issue. The questions of the interviewer's personal investment in the topic and the interviewee's involvement in 'impression management' (Goffman, 1959) are also resolvable. Weatherall (2000) makes the important point that research is rarely value free and thus calls for greater reflexivity. Certain 'invested' formulations by the researcher, such as 'loaded questions', agreement, or disagreement, which could indicate the researcher's stake in a particular response, need to be integrated into the analysis as do the ways the interviewees respond to them. For example, an interviewee might refuse to answer a question or orient away from a particular topic and indeed the interviewee's personal investment in managing positive self-presentation (see section



2.1.4) is a topic of study on its own. Discursive psychological research has demonstrated how participants' manage their accountability due to their 'stake' or 'interest' in constructing a positive self-presentation in various interactional contexts (Edwards, 1995; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996; Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

As long as the important concerns raised by Potter and Hepburn (2005) are addressed, I concur with Edley (2001a) and Wetherell (1998) that interviews remain a fruitful epistemological site for data elicitation. However, the CA-discursive psychologist, Speer (2004), raises further specific issues related to the use of interviews.

Speer's (2004) case against interviews interestingly draws on her own previous work with interviews (Speer, 2002). She was interested in accessing views about men and women engaging in activities considered 'inappropriate' for their sex. She originally thought the use of visual prompts of people engaging in 'gender-inappropriate' activities (e.g., men doing ballet) would elicit 'gendered' views but instead these generated a whole set of other issues. Contrary to what Speer hypothesized, some participants resisted producing 'gendered' views. For example, they did not react with surprise or disdain to men doing ballet or women playing rugby. Speer contends that the participants were very aware of and thus resistant to producing the 'gendered' views she was expecting to elicit. This resistance may come as no surprise, with certain social

groups of respondents, given that many people today overwhelmingly present themselves as supporters of gender equality (Edley & Wetherell, 1999; 2001; Gough, 1998; Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Wetherell, et al., 1987) and are sophisticated ‘resistors’ of gender stereotyping, at least in what they say.

Speer is very clear that she had a vested interest in eliciting stereotypically gendered views, which affected her selection of prompts, question design, and responses to her interviewees’ remarks. For example, a picture of a male ballet dancer was shown to the participants, and the moderator asked, “Do you think that it breaks stereotypes at all?” The participant responded negatively, which prompted the moderator to press him further, “I mean some people would say he’s a ‘poof’ or something”. He answered “some people would” but contended that he would not. Despite the interviewer’s two attempts, the interviewee failed to express the ‘gendered’ views she was trying to elicit, and Speer apparently approached the interview with a predetermined agenda.

We need to heed Potter and Hepburn’s (2005) advice and treat Speer’s interviews as a specific form of situated interaction with the researcher’s vested interest in eliciting stereotypically gendered views and participants’ potential interest in not being seen as ‘sexist’ or ‘homophobic’. At the same time, the participants’ resistance to Speer’s positioning is noteworthy because it arguably illustrates critical awareness of

the potential stigma attached to explicitly expressing gendered views. Instead of using these issues as reasons to discredit qualitative interviews, issues of accountability and stake or interest (see section 3.2.3) can be studied as long as the researcher is open and reflexive about the specific form of interaction that occurs. I would contend that Speer's findings should not serve as evidence to abandon the use of qualitative interviews but rather as illustrative of the issues that arise in this type of interaction.

### **3.3.4 Possible resolutions between the two branches of DP**

Wetherell (1998) attempted to bridge the gap between the more narrow definition of context adapted by CADP researchers and broader conceptualization taken by CDP researchers by calling for a more integrated and synthetic form of discourse analysis:

My aim was not to endorse this division of labor—conversation analysis then ethnomethodology then post-structuralist analysis or ethnography of communication or critical discourse analysis—but to suggest that for social psychological discursive projects a more synthetic approach is required focused on the development of analytic concepts which work across some of these domains such as, for instance the notion of positioning, interpretative repertoires, ideological dilemmas, and so on (p. 405).

Despite the tensions between the two branches of DP, Wetherell's position is that a resolution is indeed possible. Wetherell is not advocating strict adherence to either CA or post-structuralist principles, but instead is advocating a more integrative form of discursive psychology which combines the rigorous, turn-by-turn analysis advocated by

CA practitioners with analysis of the broader, culturally available ‘interpretative repertoires’ that individuals draw on as they construct the world and their subjectivities.

I will demonstrate how researchers can perform more synthetic discourse analysis by discussing Speer’s (2001) study of masculinity where she criticizes Edley and Wetherell’s (1999) study of hegemonic masculinity (see section 2.5.2) on the grounds that the category is not oriented to by the participants; however, I argue that the implicit nature of hegemony ensures that participants do not explicitly reference it.

Speer (2001) conducted semi-structured interviews with men investigating the construction of gender in talk about sports and leisure. She identified the ways in which a group of men constructed masculinity, i.e. ‘masculinity as extreme’. One of her participants, David, constructed the ‘laddish’ activities of being ‘out on the pull’ and excessive alcohol consumption as ‘extreme’. He thus produced an account of a particular form of masculinity, but then distanced himself from that construction. According to Speer, David manages the ‘ideological dilemma’ (see section 3.4.2) of constructing a masculine identity while at the same time not presenting himself as a conformist to a traditional image of masculinity. David maintained that he did not always go ‘out on the pull’, drink excessive amounts of alcohol, and was not competitive in sports. The crux of Speer’s argument is that the identity ‘hegemony’ and

‘hegemonic masculinity’ are not participants’ categories, but instead masculinity is contingent, constructed in different ways dependent upon specific interactional contexts. In this case, David is managing his accountability as ‘masculine’ and simultaneously as a ‘non-conformist’ to traditional masculinity. Speer contends that a participant’s construction of any type of masculinity functions to manage interactional accountability, and therefore cannot be taken as evidence of its existence. Therefore, even if a participant orients to an identity we can gloss as hegemonic masculinity, this is not evidence that hegemonic masculinity actually exists.

The ‘extreme’ form of masculinity that David distances himself from is not specific to this data. As discussed in 2.2.4, Edley and Wetherell (1997) found a similar construction of masculinity in their group interviews with adolescents. These participants displayed antipathy toward the ‘hard lads’ who were members of the school rugby team. They faced an ideological dilemma, i.e. to remain accountably ‘masculine’ while at the same time to distance themselves from the ‘hard lad’ masculinity. In order to manage this dilemma, they established a categorical difference where the ‘hard lads’ were constructed as violent and lacking in individuality. By contrast, the non-rugby players constructed themselves as capable of engaging in physical violence but self-disciplined enough not to. Similar to Speer’s (2001) participant, David, a

hegemonic form of masculinity was reconstructed in order to manage an ideological dilemma.

Speer's (2001) claim that hegemonic masculinity is not a participants' category here is indeed correct; nevertheless, this does not mean that what it describes is absent from talk (Edley, 2001b). Granted, it is unlikely participants will reference hegemonic masculinity in any explicit way, just as they do not refer to phenomena such as 'adjacency pairs' (Sacks et al., 1974) and 'preference structure' (Pomerantz, 1984). But just as the analyst refers to such terms, not used by conversationalists, we can also make claims that participants are implicitly orienting to a hegemonic form of masculinity.

Speer is also correct in her assertion that not only do participants' alignments with certain constructions of masculinity change, but so do definitions of masculinity themselves (see section 2.5). CDP research has demonstrated that variation, not consistency, is a normative feature of participants discourse (Edley, 2001a; Reynolds, 2008). Accordingly, the same participant aligns himself with different constructions of masculinity in order to manage the rhetorical demands of that interactional moment (Edley & Wetherell, 1997; Wetherell & Edley, 1999). Therefore, a participant may shift between constructing himself as 'hyper-masculine', 'ordinary', or 'gender non-conformist' within the same interactional context (Wetherell & Edley, 1999).

CDP research has demonstrated that when researchers engage integrate micro and macro levels of analysis, the workings of ideologies can become apparent (Edley, 2001a, Reynolds 2008; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). The above discussion illustrates how a micro versus macro level of analysis need not be a point which divides researchers. On the contrary, researchers can combine different levels of analysis in order to strengthen their claims. It is critical to acknowledge that individuals are positioned by interpretative repertoires, yet they also actively assume positions in relation to them (Edley and Wetherell, 2008; Wetherell, 1998, 2007). For example, we can extend Speer's usage of the 'inference-rich' nature of 'membership categories' (see section 5.3) to point out that David resists constructing an identity around 'hegemonic masculinity' in order to manage his accountability in the interview. In addition, as CDP research has demonstrated that individuals present themselves as in favor of gender equality (Edley & Wetherell, 1999; 2001; Gough, 1998; Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Wetherell, et al., 1987), David's construction of 'hard masculinity' as 'extreme' is by no means unique to his interview. Another interpretation is that David is drawing on the image of the 'New Man' (Benwell, 2002) as he reconstructs hegemonic masculinity. Despite Speer's insistence on restricting analysis to categories that participants 'orient to', and CDP's refusal to do this, I concur with Edley (2001b) that "there is even less of a difference

between our approaches than Speer seems to imagine” (p. 136).

In the next section, I discuss CDP in greater detail which is the central methodology of my study.

### **3.4 Critical discursive psychology**

Post-structuralism-influenced analysts working in the tradition known as CDP typically draw on three key analytic concepts: ‘interpretative repertoires’ (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), ‘ideological dilemmas’ (Billig et al., 1988), and ‘subject positions’ (Harre & Davies, 1990; Hollway, 1998; Weedon, 1997). I draw on all three of these concepts in conducting data analysis for this study (see chapters 6-8).

#### **3.4.1 Interpretative repertoires**

Interpretative repertoires (IRs; see section 3.3.3) are the preexisting discursive resources social actors draw on when they talk about objects and events (Edley, 2001a; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). So when people construct their versions of the world, they normally do so largely with terms provided to them by history (Edley, 2001a). Potter and Wetherell (1987) define interpretative repertoires as “basically a lexicon or register of terms and metaphors drawn upon to characterize and evaluate actions and events” (p. 138). Because IRs are so familiar to members of a given community: “only a fragment of the argumentative chain needs to be formulated



in talk to count as an adequate reference and for the participants to jointly recognize the routine that is developing” (Edley & Wetherell, 2001, p. 443). For the purposes of this study, I am defining interpretative repertoires as common themes which emerge in individuals’ discourse and index culturally-shared ways of understanding certain topics or events. To illustrate, the ‘liberal feminist repertoire’ positions feminists as desiring equality and was identified by Edley and Wetherell in interview transcripts by lexical references to ‘equality’. Although repertoires are suggested by “particular images, metaphors, or figures of speech” (Edley, 2001a, p. 199) or “familiar clichés, anecdotes and tropes” (Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003, p. 496), they tend to be identified and named thematically by researchers. For example, studies have identified and named a ‘progressive view of history’ or ‘times are changing’ repertoire which rests on the assumption that society is continually improving, albeit at a slow rate, toward a ‘golden age’ (Edley & Wetherell, 2001; Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Reynolds, 2008; Wetherell et al., 1987). Repertoire names are sometimes specifically articulated, or suggested, by participants, but are more usually implied. For example, what Edley and Wetherell (2001) call a ‘times are changing’ repertoire is suggested by the phrase ‘you can’t have women managers overnight’. The issue of how interpretative repertoires are identified will be taken up again in section 3.4.4.

In the process of constructing their identities and managing accountability, people arguably draw on multiple interpretative repertoires (Edley, 2001a; Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003; Wetherell, 1998). Variation is a key feature of people's discourse (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Reynolds, 2008). Sets of repertoires do not usually feed off each other in a complementary or longitudinal fashion, but instead are often fraught with tensions and contradictions which can create 'ideological dilemmas' (Billig et al., 1988) for individuals. I explain this below.

### **3.4.2 Ideological dilemmas**

'Lived ideologies' consist of the beliefs, values, and practices of a given society or culture. Billig et al. (1988) argue that, far from exhibiting coherence, lived ideologies are fraught with inconsistencies and contradictions. A simple example is that the proverbs 'too many cooks spoil the soup' and 'many hands make light work' contradict each other (Billig et al., 1988). The variation inherent in lived ideologies however makes them invaluable resources for a multitude of rhetorical purposes. For example, woman's purported compassion can be used to construct them as effective lawyers; however, the same alleged quality can construct them as 'overemotional' and thus unsuitable for the job (Marshall & Wetherell, 1989).

The contradictory nature of lived ideologies can contribute to the formation of

ideological dilemmas, i.e. “the contradictory beliefs and ideas that constitute our common-sense understanding of the world” (Weatherall, 2002, p. 90). For example, a ‘femininity changes the law’ repertoire, constructs women as contributing to humanizing a cold, ‘masculinized’ legal profession. A ‘femininity as lack’ repertoire, on the other hand, constructs women as unqualified for a profession where the ‘masculinized’ qualities of emotional disassociation, and bravado are characteristics of successful lawyers (Marshall & Wetherell, 1989). The noteworthy point about interpretative repertoires is that the same individual may draw on several, often contradictory repertoires within the same speech event (Edley, 2001a; Marshall & Wetherell, 1989; Reynolds, 2008).

As an example, Wetherell et al. (1987) interviewed university students about women’s employment opportunities. The contradiction between an ‘equal opportunities’ and a ‘practical considerations’ repertoire lead to the formation of ideological dilemmas. The equal opportunities repertoire is built on the assumption that people are fundamentally equal and equally able, thus it is up to the individual to demonstrate his or her capacity for a particular job. However, the practical considerations repertoire, as shown by comments that women might quit their jobs due to childbirth and childcare, contradicts the equal opportunities repertoire and may inhibit women’s actual equal

employment opportunities. It was common in Wetherell et al.'s study for respondents to draw on both repertoires, and to do so in order to manage the ideological dilemma of endorsing gender equality, while legitimizing the status quo, i.e. current hiring practices are constructed not as sexist, but as responding to the reality that women may quit.

Managing ideological dilemmas is a reason why variation is a key feature of individuals' accounts (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003). Accounts are also highly variable because they are used for multiple rhetorical purposes such as attributing blame or responsibility elsewhere in order to manage personal accountability, where accountability refers to the personal investment individuals have in managing a positive 'self-presentation' (see section 2.1.4), such as endorsing gender or racial equality (Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Wetherell et al., 1987). In the previous example (Wetherell et al., 1987), an employer attributed responsibility for not hiring women to the likelihood of their premature resignation. Thus, although he positively presents himself earlier as endorsing gender equality, he also says that he is unable to hire women because they are a 'risk not worth taking'. The rhetorical effect of this on a hearer may be that responsibility for not hiring women is attributed to women's reproductive role, which is beyond one individual's control.

### **3.4.3 Subjectivity and Subject positions**

The above discussion of interpretative repertoires indicates that certain ways of talking about ourselves are provided to us by a particular society or culture, with a discursive history. In the process of drawing on various interpretative repertoires within social interaction, ‘subjectivities’ are constructed. Interpretative repertoires can be accepted, contested, or even reformulated. For Weedon (1997), subjectivity refers to “the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relations to the world” (p. 32). Since subjectivities are fluid, individuals’ thoughts and emotions are not stable, but constantly shifting within specific interactional contexts. The ways in which individuals understand themselves is suggested by the various ‘subject positions’ (Davies & Harré, 1990; Hollway, 1998; Weedon, 1997) they assume in relation to interpretative repertoires (‘subject position’ is discussed below). For example, a woman can self-position herself as a ‘good mother’ by accepting a ‘marriage and motherhood as ultimate fulfillment’ repertoire. Weedon emphasizes the crucial role of discourse in the process of subjectivity construction, certain discursive ‘fields’ offering the individual “a range of modes of subjectivity” (Weedon, 1997, p. 34). Edley (2001a) professes that ‘discourses’ and ‘interpretative repertoires’ are similar theoretical concepts as both index commonsense ways of understanding the world. Weedon’s comments can also be

applied to interpretative repertoires. Further, certain interpretative repertoires and consequently subjectivities are arguably not equally ‘appropriate’ in a particular culture. That is, certain interpretative repertoires and consequently subjectivities become ‘hegemonic’ (Gramsci, 1971).

Reynolds and Wetherell’s (2003) study of single women is an example of the hegemonic nature of some subjectivities (see section 3.3.3). The influence of ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ (Rich, 1980) in many western societies constructs women and men in domestic partnerships, thus ‘single woman’ is a ‘troubled’ identity (difficult to align with; see section 8.2). The stigma toward ‘single woman’ made it difficult for women to exclusively draw on repertoires which celebrated singleness, i.e. ‘singleness as self-development and achievement’. Instead, they drew on repertoires which celebrated singleness, but at the same time articulated how other, more denigrated repertoires did not apply to them. So ‘singleness as personal deficit’ did not apply to an individual because, she said, she had three marriage proposals which she rejected. The fact that these women constructed themselves as not ‘desperate’ indicates the overall social stigma toward single women. Despite the availability of different interpretative repertoires, repertoires which celebrate the institutions of marriage and motherhood remain hegemonic.

A 'subject position' (Hollway, 1998; Davies & Harre, 1990; Weedon, 1997) is the identity we construct within social interaction by drawing on, resisting, or reconfiguring interpretative repertoires. Taylor (2005) defines a subject position as "a temporarily occupied coherent identity with its own 'vantage point' or perspective" (p. 253). Subject positions are temporary because we draw on multiple IRs in the same interactional context in the process of constructing our subjectivities or identities (see section 2.1.3) which are fluid. I see 'vantage point' as applicable to both interpretative repertoires and subject positions. Interpretative repertoires are not neutral, but infused with a culture's 'lived ideologies' (see section 3.4.2). Similarly, assuming a subject position in relation to a repertoire is not a value-free endeavor, but suggests a certain view of self and others. For instance, a 'canonical' 'singleness as personal deficit' repertoire (Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003) is heteronormative in that it presupposes women desire marriage. By taking up a resistant subject position in relation to this repertoire, a woman could construct an identity such as 'independent woman'. The association between 'woman' and 'independence' is far from automatic in a culture that continues to be heavily influenced by the 'heterosexual matrix' (see section 2.5), which constructs women as dependent on men (Reynolds, 2008). Although a woman may positively position herself as 'independent', from another person's vantage point she is a

‘spinster’ who was never chosen by a man. Like the singleness as personal deficit repertoire itself, each subject position is infused with lived ideologies and indicates a particular world-view.

The above discussion has demonstrated how identities are constructed through specific ways of talking (Edley, 2001a; see section 3.4.1). Davies and Harre (1990) point out that individuals position others in the course of social interaction, and people are positioned by interpretative repertoires. As an example, a heterosexual man in a particular context individual could draw on a ‘permissive sexuality’ (Hollway, 1998) discourse or repertoire and position a woman and self as engaging in ‘consensual sex’ (Lea & Auburn, 2001). In addition, one could adopt a resistant subject position of oneself in relation to the interviewer. This was the case in Speer’s (2004) study (section 3.3.3) where participants resisted the interviewer’s attempt to elicit their ‘gendered’ views and to position them as ‘sexist’, thus positioning themselves as accepting of men engaging in the ‘feminine’ pursuit of ballet. These examples highlight the point that people shift between positions in accordance with the rhetorical demands of different interactional contexts. The process of assuming different subject positions in relation to interpretative repertoires and others’ positioning are resources individuals use to construct their subjectivities in multiple ways.



The interrelated concepts of interpretative repertoires, ideological dilemmas, and subject positions are the main analytical tools critical discursive psychologists and I draw on. In sum, because tensions and contradictions are inherent in different interpretative repertoires, ideological dilemmas can develop as individuals shift between different subject positions in the process of constructing their subjectivities. These three concepts have laid important theoretical groundwork. In the next section I discuss the role of critical discursive psychology in this study.

#### **3.4.4 Critical discursive psychology and the present study**

The current study draws on CDP in order to critically examine the workings of the notions of hegemonic and pariah femininities (see sections 2.5.3-2.5.4), specifically in the Japanese context. With this goal in mind, I aim to identify interpretative repertoires related to both types of femininities and their functions in discourse. However, the way in which interpretative repertoires are identified and actively deployed in discourse represents a gap in the CDP literature and will thus benefit from additional clarification. With this in mind, a further goal is to contribute to CDP research by operationalizing the concept of interpretative repertoires in terms of specific discursive features. This theoretical contribution deliberately further blurs the distinction between ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ levels of analysis and moves toward a more

synthetic form of discourse analysis, as recommended by Edley and Wetherell (2008) and Wetherell (1998, 2007).

In the next section I take the role of language in critical discursive psychology as my point of departure.

### **3.4.5 The role of language in critical discursive psychology**

As discussed, the focus of much CDP research is to analyze how interpretative repertoires function in discourse. Contradictions between different interpretative repertoires are common (see e.g. Reynolds, 2008) and can lead to the formation of ideological dilemmas, which participants are left to discursively resolve. However, as indicated, the exact way in which interpretative repertoires are identified in discourse by analysts is not clearly indicated and thus remains somewhat vague. To elaborate on this, some discussion of the discursive features associated with different interpretative repertoires is necessary.

The original definition of interpretative repertoires has remained largely unchanged (Potter & Wetherell, 1987); however, there are some important additions in later definitions regarding associated discursive features. In the original formulation, interpretative repertoires are “basically a lexicon or register of terms and metaphors drawn upon to characterize and evaluate actions and events” (Potter & Wetherell, 1987,

p. 138). The discursive devices indicated here are ‘lexicon or register or terms’ and ‘metaphors’. In a more recent definition, repertoires are “broadly discernable clusters of terms, descriptions, and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images” (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 90). ‘Vivid images’ are thus added. Reynolds and Wetherell (2003) define them as “the recognizable routines of arguments, descriptions and evaluations found in people’s talk often distinguished by familiar clichés, anecdotes and tropes” (p. 496). In this more recent formulation, we have the additional features of ‘clichés’, ‘anecdotes’ and ‘tropes.’ Key to all three definitions is the argumentative and descriptive function of interpretative repertoires. Accordingly, individuals use interpretative repertoires as discursive resources to make accusations, attribute blame and responsibility, and manage accountability (Edley, 2001a; Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003; Wetherell, 1998; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). The discursive devices which suggest and constitute interpretative repertoires have thus already been laid out as the above definitions indicate. Nevertheless, much discursive psychological research tends to focus on thematically identifying interpretative repertoires and connecting them to broader issues of power and ideology in lieu of specifically referencing discursive features such as clichés, lexical items, metaphors, and tropes.

More recent research is however moving toward the more integrative micro

and macro levels of analysis that Edley and Wetherell (2008) and Wetherell (1998, 2007) call for, hence closer linguistic analysis. Sheriff and Weatherall (2009) for example conducted a critical discursive analysis of popular-press accounts of post-maternity. In their analysis of newspaper articles, the authors identified specific lexical items and an 'empty nest' metaphor which suggested interpretative repertoires. Notably, the 'empty nest' metaphor was 'gendered' (Sunderland, 2004) in that it was absent from accounts of post-paternity. A major strength of Sheriff and Weatherall's study is that their claims about the workings of gendered ideologies are grounded in specific discursive features, e.g. metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), idiomatic phrases (Drew & Holt, 1989, 1998) and extreme case formulations (Pomerantz, 1986). This study illuminates how multi-level analysis is further strengthened by identifying discursive features such as metaphors which suggest interpretative repertoires and their functioning in discourse.

The identification of the workings of power and ideology through interpretative repertoires provides insight into how 'lived ideologies' (see section 3.4.2) are very much a part of our daily lives. Therefore, the claims that critical discursive psychologists make could arguably be further corroborated and/or made more robust by identifying interpretative repertoires in part in terms of specific discursive features. This would

place critical discursive psychologists in a more advantageous position to discredit the accusation that their claims are not based on categories participants ‘make relevant’ (Schegloff, 1997; Speer, 2001), or that their research is a form of content analysis (Mills, 2007).

In order to assist with the task of identifying interpretative repertoires, rhetorical devices such as those identified by CADP can be drawn on. These include script formulations (Edwards, 1994, 1995), extreme case formulations (Pomerantz, 1986), externalizing devices (Potter, 1996), and shifts in ‘footing’ (Goffman, 1981). We can also draw on the more linguistic ‘metaphors,’ clichés,’ ‘anecdotes,’ ‘tropes,’ and ‘figures of speech’ referenced above. In addition, I am suggesting reported speech, the Japanese discourse marker *yappari*, and membership categorization devices (see sections 5.2-5.4) because they surfaced in my data. My analysis will link these discursive devices to specific interpretative repertoires and make a contribution to the linguistic turn in the social sciences (see Wodak & Meyer, 2005). Consequently, broader claims about gender hegemony in relation to interpretative repertoires are more firmly grounded in discourse. If analysts will perform more detailed and nuanced analysis, accusations that they are approaching the data with a preset theoretical agenda can be more easily refuted (Schegloff, 1997; Speer, 2001). They will be better able to address

the issue of how particular repertoires are identified (Potter & Hepburn, 2007; Wooffitt, 2005) and more firmly grounded in discourse. Claims from the critical study of social psychological issues can thus be further substantiated.

In the next section I discuss the research questions which frame this study.

### **3.5 Research Questions**

1. What *interpretative repertoires* do participants draw on as they discursively construct (a) *hegemonic femininity* and (b) *pariah femininity*?

As I discuss in 2.5.3-2.5.4, ‘hegemonic’ and ‘pariah’ femininity have been theoretically conceptualized but not yet empirically investigated. Using critical discursive psychology (see section 3.4), I have identified repertoires which suggest that participants are constructing hegemonic and pariah femininity subjectivities.

Research question one can be further broken down into the following sub-questions:

- 1(a). What discursive features are associated with *interpretative repertoires* constituting (a) *hegemonic femininity* and (b) *pariah femininity*?

I discuss how the concept of ‘interpretative repertoires’ (see section 3.4.1) can be strengthened by identifying them in terms of specific discursive features (see section 3.4.5). I have identified ‘reported speech’, ‘membership categories’, and *yappari* (see

sections 5.2-5.4) as specific discursive features. Accordingly, this study seeks to contribute to a small but growing body of research that is beginning to identify interpretative repertoires through specific linguistic features (e.g., Sheriff and Weatherall, 2009) and contributing to multi-perspectival discourse analysis (e.g., Kamada, 2008, 2009).

1(b). What *subject positions* (self and other) do participants take up in relation to *interpretative repertoires* constituting (a) *hegemonic femininity* and (b) *pariah femininity*?

Individuals are not simply passive victims who are positioned by repertoires but also possess agency to accept, contest, or even reformulate repertoires (see section 3.4.3). Therefore, I was interested in how participants discursively positioned self and others in relation to these repertoires and thereby constructed hegemonic or pariah femininity subjectivities.

2. Is there evidence of *ideological dilemmas* generated from contradictions between different *interpretative repertoires* in participants' discourse?

Discursive psychological research (see chapter 3) has demonstrated how contradictions between interpretative repertoires can lead to the formation of 'ideological dilemmas' (see section 3.4.2). For example, repertoires which position

women as ‘mothers’ and ‘working professionals’ can contradict one another because motherhood is considered a full-time endeavor within some Japanese ‘communities of practice’ (see section 2.1.2). Accordingly, participants can face an ideological dilemma when they attempt to draw on contradictory repertoires and construct subjectivities which bridge domestic and non-domestic realms. Therefore, I was also looking for the presence of contradictions in participants’ discourse which could suggest the presence of ideological dilemmas.

3. What discursive features are associated with *ideological dilemmas* generated from contradictions between *interpretative repertoires* in participants’ discourse?

After identifying the presence of ideological dilemmas, I wanted to exemplify how they were displayed in terms of specific discursive features. In doing so, I can identify the presence of ideological dilemmas in terms of specific discursive features which further strengthens my claims.

In sum, the aims of this study are to make a contribution to both gender theory and critical discursive psychology. I want to investigate the concepts of hegemonic and pariah femininities and contribute to conducting more ‘synthetic’ discourse analysis, as suggested by Edley and Wetherell (2008) and Wetherell (1998, 2007) (see section 3.3.4).



### **3.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter I outlined the methodological framework employed in this study: discursive psychology. I provided a historical overview of how discursive psychology emerged as a discipline in response to traditional social psychological research. I then discussed the CA-based and post-structuralist-based branches of DP, including the theoretical tensions and possible resolutions between them. Following Wetherell (1998) and Edley and Wetherell (2008), I suggested that these two branches can be combined, resulting in more integrated and synthetic discourse analysis. Following that, I discussed the analytic concepts interpretative repertoires, ideological dilemmas, and subject positions, which are used in CDP, the methodological framework for this study. Then, I discussed the role of language in CDP and suggested that discursive devices such as reported speech and MCDs (see sections 5.2-5.4) could assist analysts with identifying and analyzing the workings of interpretative repertoires. Finally, I discussed the research questions which frame this study.

In the next chapter I discuss my data collection and analysis process.

## **Chapter 4: Data, Data collection, and preparing data for analysis**

### **4.1 Introduction: Aims and objectives of the study revisited**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the discursive construction of hegemonic and pariah femininities (see sections 2.5.3-2.5.4), within the specific context of Japan. I am drawing on critical discursive psychology. I am particularly interested in the interpretative repertoires (see section 3.4.1) that my female participants draw on to discursively construct these femininities and the multiple ways these female participants

position (see section 3.4.3) themselves and other women in relation to these IRs.

The second purpose of the thesis is to explicate the discursive devices participants draw on as they discursively construct femininities. In other words, I want to identify and describe the discursive features that indicate participants are drawing on particular IRs as they discursively construct hegemonic or pariah femininities. I also aim to analyze the discursive function of reported speech, membership categories and discourse marker *yappari* (see sections 5.2-5.4) in relation to the construction of femininities.

#### **4.2 Data needed**

In order to obtain accounts of hegemonic and pariah femininities, data was generated and not naturally-occurring. Discursive psychologists reject the use of questionnaires because they fail to capture the ‘performative’ nature of individual’s discourse (see section 3.2.1), so I used individual and group interviews as my data elicitation technique.

I selected women participants because my aim was to investigate the discursive construction of femininities. This is not meant to suggest that ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ always align (see section 2.1.1); however, ‘gendered’ repertoires (Sunderland, 2004) circulating in Japanese society position women as accountable to ‘femininity’ and men accountable

to ‘masculinity’ (see section 1.3). My focus, then, was on the various subject positions these women assumed in relation to these repertoires as they constructed their gendered subjectivities.

Since gender is ‘done’ differently (Fenstermaker & West, 2002) within specific communities of practice (see section 2.1.2), a diverse group of participants is ideal to investigate my topic. A heterogeneous population would allow me to investigate the gendered repertoires which are salient within specific CofPs (see section 2.1.2), which vary by age and marital status. For example, is the dated ‘good wives, wise mothers’ ideology (see section 1.3) appropriated into any repertoires currently circulating in Japanese society? If so, are the repertoires only salient within certain social groups and not others? In order to address these questions, I interviewed a diverse group of women in terms of age, educational and occupational background, and marital status (see section 4.4).

Discursive psychological research does not aim to generate and analyze large samples of data, but instead conducts an in-depth analysis on a relatively small sample of participants (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003). Interpretative repertoires participants draw on, subject positions they assume, and ideological dilemmas which emerge (see sections 3.4.1-3.4.3) are present even in a relatively small

sample. Further,

Because a large number of linguistic patterns are likely to emerge from a few people, small samples of a few interview are generally quite adequate for investigating an interesting and practically important range of phenomena. For discourse analysts the success of a study is *not* in the least dependent on sample size (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 161).

In the same vein, the success of this study is not dependent upon the size of the sample, but on performing close analysis on the data collected.

In addition to investigating this diverse pool of participants, I decided to apply diverse data elicitation techniques. While critical discursive psychologists tend to draw on either individual or group interviews (e.g., Edley, 2001a; Reynolds, 2008), I chose to combine both semi-structured individual interviews and group interviews. This allowed me to investigate femininity construction in two different interactional contexts. In individual interviews, participants may be more oriented to the interviewer and performing in the role of interviewee. On the other hand, this provides a context where they might disclose private information. In group interviews, participants may be more oriented to each other thus enabling a more ‘natural’ interaction. At the same time, the presence of peers may inhibit some of them from disclosing certain views. Combining methods allowed me to investigate the research topic from different angles.

Using two different data collection methods to interview a relatively small

number of carefully chosen participants with diverse backgrounds, would, I thought, yield close to what might be considered ‘ideal’ data for a CDP study.

### **4.3 Data collection: interviews and group interviews**

#### **4.3.1 Individual interviews**

Qualitative interviews were used as the method for data collection. The interviews were semi-structured meaning that a provisional interview schedule was used (Appendix A). This provided some topical consistency, but I viewed it more as a set of general guidelines. Topics were not solely pre-determined, but also naturally emerged from the interview itself. I followed the principles of ‘responsive interviewing’ (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) which involves treating the participants as ‘conversational partners.’ Participants did not always orient to my pre-selected topics and sometimes introduced additional topics, which I encouraged them to pursue.

Conducting individual interviews proved to be a useful technique for eliciting interpretative repertoires, subject positions participants assumed in relation to them, and ideological dilemmas which emerged from tensions or contradictions between the repertoires.

#### **4.3.2 Group interviews**

In addition to semi-structured, individual interviews I also conducted group or

‘multi-person interviews’ (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) using broadly the same interview schedule. This type of interview is common in critical discursive psychological research (see Edley, 2001a; Kamada, 2008).

Kamada (2008), for example, conducted interviews with a group of multi-ethnic, Japanese-Caucasian adolescent girls. Since social conformity and homogeneity are honored values in Japan, these girls’ ethnicity posed a dilemma for them. On the one hand, they were disempowered by repertoires of ‘homogeneity’ and ‘conformity’, but simultaneously empowered by a repertoire of ‘Western female attractiveness’. The dilemma posed by ‘ethnic embodiment’ became apparent in the interviews as the girls constructed accounts where they desired a Japanese appearance, yet at the same time their ‘exotic’ appearances made them attractive. In group interviews participants draw on interpretative repertoires and discursively position self and others. Group interviews are a particularly fruitful epistemological site as they create an environment where participants can and often do collectively draw on interpretative repertoires, discursively position self and others, and manage emergent ideological dilemmas.

In group interviews, even more so than in the individual interviews, the interview schedule was a starting point from which group participants often moved

beyond, even introducing new topics. This was important because the purpose of my schedule was to give some overall topical consistency to the interviews, but at the same time incorporate flexibility so that we could pursue other topics and themes which were salient to specific groups. At times, they oriented more towards each other than me and thus a more 'natural' interaction occurred.

In line with focus group research (Kreuger, 1994; Litosseliti, 2003), I was interested in the interaction that occurred in these sessions, not simply the content of the responses. However, the multi-person interviews administered differed from 'focus groups' (Kreuger, 1994; Litosseliti, 2003) in a number of ways. First, the moderator's role in executing the focus group is to maintain the group's focus on a particular topic (Litosseliti, 2003). In contrast, in my interviews, although we were 'focusing' on the broad topic of men's and women's social roles, our discussions often transcended these topics, and when this happened, as the interviewer, I did not refocus their attention on the interview schedule. Instead, we pursued topics which emerged in the course of the interview. In this way, I was not simply eliciting accounts about pre-selected topics, but creating a context where we were co-participants and a more 'natural' interaction developed. Second, proponents of focus group research discourage the use of 'loaded questions' because the participants can become defensive (Kreuger, 1994; Litosseliti,



2003). In contrast to this principle but in line with other discursive psychological research (Wetherell & Potter, 1992), some of my questions could be considered ‘loaded’ (e.g., questions about social pressure) and I did not hesitate to ask follow-up questions which might generate argument. Actually, these questions produced some of the most interesting responses or non-responses. For example, in response to question 10 (‘do you think that women face social pressure today to do certain things’), participants hesitated to formulate accounts about ‘social pressure’ (see Chapter 6). It was conceivable that this resistance was related to the type of self-presentation (see section 2.1.4) they were managing, in the sense that they did not want to present themselves as agentless victims, assuming that they saw ‘social pressure’ in this light. If I had restricted myself to less provocative questions, I would never have accessed some of the most interesting responses.

Similar to individual interviews, group interviews were a useful epistemological site for eliciting interpretative repertoires, subject positions, and ideological dilemmas. The discursive devices that the participants repeatedly drew on when interacting with others versus with me were more apparent because they were not orienting to an ‘outsider’ but to their peers.

### **4.3.3 Ethical considerations**

As regards ethical considerations involved in the research process, in my design and implementation, I made a concerted effort to follow the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL) ‘Recommendations on Good Practice in Applied Linguistics’ (2006).

The participants in my study were all consenting adults; however, I felt that the ethical issues varied slightly vis-à-vis whom I was interviewing, i.e. students or non-students. The main issue in relation to the non-students was respecting their privacy. To address this, I assured them that our interviews were confidential and that pseudonyms would be used when presenting the results of the research. Since I did not associate with them on a daily basis (e.g., at work), there was a low probability that any shared acquaintances would even discover they had been interviewed. The student participants, by contrast, were from the university I am affiliated with, so we share some mutual acquaintances. To address this, I assured them that other students or faculty members would not be informed of their cooperation with my research endeavor.

In line with the BAAL guidelines, I took several steps to ensure that participants’ confidentiality was respected. First, in line with guideline 2.2, I obtained written informed consent (Appendix B). I informed my participants of both my status as a PhD student and research objectives in broad terms: the investigation of men and

women's changing social roles, thus the general purpose of my study was disclosed to them and they were not deceived (BAAL: 2.5). Second, I assured my participants of my confidentiality and their anonymity by explaining that pseudonyms would be used when drawing on the data for academic research reports or conference presentations (BAAL 2.4). Furthermore, the participants were informed that they could withdraw their permission for me to use the data upon completion of the interview (BAAL 2.3). This request was never made. Finally, participants who wanted to see the results of this study were encouraged to provide me with their contact information (BAAL 2.6).

#### **4.3.4 The reflexive researcher**

In the design and execution of this study, I made a conscious effort to maintain reflexivity about the entire research process. Yancey Martin (2003) contends that “to be reflexive means to mediate or engage in careful consideration; it also means to ruminate, deliberate, cogitate, study, or think carefully about something” (p. 356). I attempted to maintain reflexivity during the design, delivery, execution, and data analysis phases of this study. In the course of selecting a research methodology, I chose CDP after carefully considering Feminist Post-Structuralist Discourse Analysis (Baxter, 2003), which I rejected because I felt the concepts of interpretative repertoires, ideological dilemmas, and subject positions (see sections 3.4.1-3.4.3) were the most suitable ‘tools’

to address my research problem: the discursive construction of femininities. The critical discursive psychological social constructionist view of discourse that there are culturally-specific ways of talking about the world, but some are more legitimized and thus 'hegemonic' than others, was consistent with my view of subjectivities. The concept of ideological dilemmas, which FPDA does not draw on, foregrounds how inconsistencies between interpretative repertoires pose dilemmas as individuals discursively construct their 'gendered' subjectivities also seemed analytically appropriate for the study of subjectivities. Critical discursive psychology's social constructionist view of subjectivities coupled with these three analytically useful concepts discussed above are the main reasons why I selected this approach over FPDA.

I planned to rely solely on semi-structured individual interviews as a data elicitation technique, but my supervisor advised me to at least pilot and potentially use group interviews. This was sound advice because the group interviews resulted in interactionally-rich data in that the women were drawing on and positioning others in relation to interpretative repertoires. The individual interviews, by contrast, did not have this added interactional element, but they did provide an arguably 'safer' environment where participants could construct accounts away from others.

In the process of carrying out the interviews, I realize that my gender and

ethnicity positioned me in multiple ways in relation to the participants which resulted in a unique interaction, or ‘situational truth’ (Goetting, 1999; Messerschmidt, 2000, 2004). The ‘reality’ constructed from this interaction resulted from the interaction between the participants which occurred at a specific time and was situated in the ‘epistemological site’ (Sunderland, 2004) of an interview, stemming also from the interaction and in an interview (see also section 3.3.3). Therefore, analytical claims must remain faithful to this ‘situated reality’. Accordingly, a different ‘situated truth’ would have emerged between different participants.

Personally conducting the interviews provided me with the status of ‘insider’ when eliciting and analyzing the data. On the other hand, my involvement arguably disadvantaged me in that and accordingly I needed to try to separate myself from the data to engage in properly rigorous analysis. Following Baxter (2003), however, I concur that “any interpretation of data must explicitly acknowledge that it is constructed, provisional, perspectival, and context-driven” (p. 59). My claims come from the perspective of critical discursive psychology and arguably another research methodology would produce other claims. The analyzed data represent my own interpretations of the ‘situated reality’ of the interview which were conducted upon the completion of the interview data. This cyclical process of reflecting and acting on my

reflections is how I conducted the entire research process.

#### **4.4 The participants**

The participants in this study were a diverse group of 17 Japanese women (Appendix C). The criteria for participation in this study were that the participants be female and of Japanese ethnicity. Beyond these, I did not specify any further stipulations. The interviews were all conducted in Japanese and lasted on average ninety minutes, but ranged from one to two hours. I conducted ten interviews: five individual interviews, and five group interviews with two to three participants. The participants were recruited from my network of acquaintances (e.g., former colleagues and students) and through ‘snowballing’ (Reynolds, 2008) where interviewees provided me with contact information for other potential participants. I recruited students through a posting on the campus announcement board. The result was a pool of interviewees who ranged from 19 to 60 years old. They were homogenous in terms of social class (middle class), but heterogeneous regarding age, educational background, occupational background, and marital status. I interviewed students, professional homemakers, clerical workers, self-employed, and working professionals. Prior to the interviews, I told candidates that we were going to have an informal discussion about social roles. Beyond this they were not given any specific information about the content of the

interview. Contextualizing the study in this way is in concert with BAAL's (2006) guideline: "the information given at the outset of the project should cover the objectives of the research, its possible consequences, and issues of confidentiality and security" (p. 4). Participants who wanted to learn more about the research and results were encouraged to provide their contact information. The research was carried out in different locations around the greater Nagoya area, a major city located in central Japan (see section 4.5).

#### **4.5 Data Collection: Recorded Sessions**

Early on in the data collection, the issue arose concerning where to conduct the interviews. Individual and group interviews with students were conducted at my university; the individual interviews with non-students were conducted elsewhere. The sessions with students were conducted in empty classrooms where we sat facing each other around a table. Students were 'rewarded' with an informal English conversation lesson following the interview. Given that the non-student participants agreed to take time out from their busy days to assist me, I did not want to further inconvenience them by asking them to come to my university. Since Japanese tend to regard their homes as very private places (Davies & Ikeno, 2002; Sugimoto, 2003), it was also unfeasible for me to meet them there. Therefore, we met at locations around Nagoya which were

convenient for them such as coffee shops, restaurants, or the local community center. Beyond a cup of coffee or tea, the participants were not given any financial compensation for their cooperation. Nonetheless, my impression of both types of interviews was that the participants thoroughly enjoyed discussing gender-related issues. This impression is based upon the fact that our discussions extended beyond my prepared interview schedule. I also felt that the interviews progressed smoothly and we had little trouble discussing these issues.

I learned early on in the research process the importance of selecting an appropriate time and location to conduct the interviews. I made every effort to select relatively quiet venues which would result in higher-quality recordings. In the early evenings or on weekends, shops became very crowded, making it difficult to conduct the interviews in these noisy environments. During these times, we met at restaurants or coffee shops which were less crowded. In any event, my experience was that once they became involved in discussing these issues, they were not distracted by the surrounding environment.

#### **4.6 Transcription and translation**

Transcription of interview data is necessary in order to produce transcripts which reflect speech which can be reviewed and analyzed. The particular transcription



convention system a researcher selects depends upon the level of detail he or she wishes to convey, which is informed by the selected research methodology (Taylor, 2001). So the system adopted by a CA analyst (Speer 2001, 2002), for example, is more detailed than that adopted by a critical discursive psychologist.

My transcription system is standard for critical discursive psychological research (e.g., Reynolds, 2008; see Appendix D). However, the fact that a transcription system has been standardized in a discipline is insufficient basis for adopting it, as it needs to reflect the research goals of the study (Reynolds, 2008). Accordingly, I adopted this system because it reflects my research goals: the discursive construction of hegemonic and pariah femininities and the discursive devices associated with femininities repertoires (see section 2.5). These discursive devices of membership categorization devices, reported speech, and *yappari* (see sections 5.2-5.4) are located at the phrasal level of conversation, so this system is adequate.

I transcribed my interviews from the Japanese recordings into Japanese orthography. The data categorization and analysis was then conducted on these Japanese transcripts. The issue of my Japanese proficiency may thus require discussion.

I would evaluate my overall Japanese ability as quite high. I have been living in Japan for several years and have become orally proficient and literate in the language

and knowledgeable about the culture. My job demands that I fully participate in the university culture, which in addition to teaching and advising students, involves attending meetings and serving on committees. These responsibilities have contributed to the development of my proficiency with Japanese academic discourse. I can now for example easily read the newspaper and memos which circulate around the university.

I conducted the original data analysis on the Japanese transcripts, in response to Fairclough's (1999) call to perform discourse analysis in the source language: "In my opinion, discourse analysis papers should reproduce and analyze textual samples in the original language, despite the added difficulty for readers" (p. 186). On the few occasions when I was unable to decipher part of the recording, I called on the assistance of a Japanese native speaker.

Only after the data was transcribed, categorized, and analyzed in Japanese did I translate the relevant data extracts into English, which were also proofread by a bilingual Japanese native speaker. Translation was the final stage of the research process in an effort to remain faithful to the original Japanese.

I present English translations of the interviews for the sake of readability, to reach a larger audience. When the nuances of lexical items or phrases cannot be captured by the English translation, I use the Japanese original in the body of the thesis,

e.g. *yappari*.

#### **4.7 Categorization and analysis of the data**

I followed two general guidelines throughout the data categorization and analysis process, which reflect the overall goals of my study: the thematic identification of interpretative repertoires and identification of discursive features which suggest that participants are drawing on and assuming subject positions in relation to those repertoires. I was also looking for discursive evidence of ideological dilemmas generated from contradictions between repertoires

I used Potter and Wetherell's (1987) definition, "a register of terms and metaphors drawn upon to characterize and evaluate actions and events" (p. 138) as a general guideline to identify interpretative repertoires. When I initially listened to and then later when I transcribed the data, read and reread it, it seemed to me that something like a 'gender differences' repertoire (Sunderland, 2004) was in evidence. I therefore decided to look at this more systematically by identifying 'gendered' lexical references (e.g., 'mothers', 'fathers'), and what participants were doing with those 'register of terms' (e.g., justifying a conventional sexual division of labor). Participants were using gendered categorical references and category-bound activities (see section 5.3) to construct men and women as performing in different roles, hence, I hypothesized, they

were drawing on a 'gender differences' interpretative repertoire (Sunderland, 2004).

The second theme that I noticed when conducting the analysis was that participants were constructing femininity in polarized ways, i.e. as a constraint at times and source of freedom at others. For example, while women's career choices were often limited to clerical-type work, marriage was an attractive option once this work became mundane. After reading about the highly situated 'bounded masculinity/unbounded femininity' discourse (Sunderland, 1995) (i.e. 'fag' is almost always a derogatory term while 'tomboy' is not necessarily) and studying my data, I hypothesized that femininity is 'privileged' in certain contexts, 'bounded' in others.

The third theme that I noticed was that an ambitious single woman was articulating concern about how her various interests may in fact reduce her chances of securing a heterosexual partnership and a married woman was working up 'guilty feelings' about her inability to properly manage domestic responsibilities in addition to her career. In the discursive psychology literature, I came across the concept of 'troubled' identity (Wetherell & Edley, 1998), i.e. a category that is difficult to align with, and hypothesized that single 'career woman' and 'superwoman' are 'troubled' subjectivities for some of my participants.

Contradictions and inconsistencies between interpretative repertoires can lead

to the formation of ideological dilemmas which participants are left to resolve (see section 3.4.2). Ideological dilemmas were suggested in the accounts of participants whose status as career women and superwomen 'troubled' the normative gender order which positions women in domestic or when participants puzzled over the contradictions between different repertoires, i.e. 'privileged' and 'bounded' femininity. For example, a woman's 'freedom' to dabble in clerical work for a few years rests upon the assumption that she will one day marry and become economically dependent on her husband.

The whole time I was listening to and transcribing the recordings, and rereading the transcripts, I also noticed that the women were frequently drawing on the voices of others, 'membership categories' and the discourse marker *yappari* (see sections 5.2-5.4). This led me to read about the various discursive functions of these, which I could then relate to specific repertoires.

While I am presenting the thematic categorization of interpretative repertoires and identification of discursive features as discrete processes, in reality they were not. Rather, I shuttled between both processes. After I identified the discursive features, I returned to the data, this time not looking at the content of the accounts, but the discursive features in order to find additional examples of interpretative repertoires and

their functions. The discursive devices became a ‘tool kit’ for making a systematic link between thematically identified repertoires and language.

The discursive devices which I identified could now be systematically linked to interpretative repertoires. Accordingly, I can make the claim that hegemonic femininity (see section 2.5.3) is discursively constructed through accepting the subject positions offered by gender differences repertoires, i.e., a wife and mother. While constructing a gendered subjectivity in line with hegemonic femininity may be ‘privileged’ in some contexts, ultimately a woman remains ‘bound’ to the domestic realm, which is suggested by a discursive dilemma in some participants’ accounts. Women who discursively resist the subject positions offered by ‘gender differences’ repertoires, construct ‘troubled’, pariah femininities subjectivities. These repertoires, ideological dilemmas and subject positions are traceable to the discursive features of membership categories, reported speech and *yappari* (see sections 5.2-5.4). Therefore, I am able to point to specific discursive features when I reference interpretative repertoires.

The recursive process of thematically identifying repertoires and looking for discursive devices which suggest participants are drawing on those repertoires resulted in my being able to answer research question one: ‘What *interpretative repertoires* do participants draw on as they discursively construct (a) *hegemonic femininity* and (b)

*pariah femininity*?' and research question 1(a): 'What discursive features are associated with *interpretative repertoires* constituting (a) *hegemonic femininity* and (b) *pariah femininity*?' The participants' use of discursive devices also suggests that they were assuming subject positions in relation to these repertoires, thus I was able to answer research question 1(b): What *subject positions* (self and other) do participants take up in relation to *interpretative repertoires* constituting (a) *hegemonic femininity* and (b) *pariah femininity*?' Finally, I was also able to answer questions two: 'Is there evidence of *ideological dilemmas* generated from contradictions between different *interpretative repertoires* in participants' discourse?' and research question three: 'What discursive features are associated with *ideological dilemmas* generated from contradictions between *interpretative repertoires* in participants' discourse?'

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

This methodological chapter has discussed the data collection and analysis process. A conscious effort was made to collect a diverse set of data through interviewing participants with dissimilar backgrounds in order to investigate whether or not women from different groups draw on similar interpretative repertoires as they construct their subjectivities. At the same time, consistency was maintained in terms of gender, ethnicity and social class so the data was also relatively homogenous. Individual,

semi-structured interviews and ‘multi-person’ interviews were used to collect the data. I viewed my participants as ‘conversational partners’; therefore, we all had participant roles in the context of the interview. Clearly, my role was more active in the interviews, although in the group interviews there were occasions when the participants oriented more toward each other than me and I assumed a more receptive role. Finally, the data analysis was performed on the original Japanese and translation of Japanese into English was the final part of the process.

In the next chapter, I discuss existing research about the discursive features reported speech, membership categories, and *yappari* (see sections 5.2-5.4).

## **Chapter 5: Methodology Part 2: Discursive Analytical Features**

### **5.1 Introduction: Discourse analytic features in this study**

During the interviews I was struck by participants’ frequent usage of reported speech, membership categories, and *yappari*. It seemed to me that participants were using reported speech and *yappari* to assert claims and membership categories to



construct gender appropriate or ‘inappropriate’ activities. These informal observations and hypotheses prompted me to pay closer attention to the frequency and *discursive function* of these features during the data analysis process. A closer analysis confirmed that while participants did use other discursive features such as ellipsis, mitigation, and backchannels, their frequency paled compared with reported speech, membership categories, and *yappari*. After drawing this conclusion, I read existing literature about these discursive features which I outline below (see sections 5.2-5.4).

I hypothesized that investigating the discursive functions of reported speech, membership categories, and *yappari* would allow me to meet a central goal of this study which is to link the critical discursive psychological concepts of interpretative repertoires, subject positions, and ideological dilemmas to specific discursive features (see section 2.6). By doing so I am further blurring the distinction between ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ levels of analysis and answering Wetherell (1998) and Wetherell and Edley’s (2008) call to perform more ‘eclectic’ discourse analysis.

## **5.2 Reported Speech**

### **5.2.1 Reported Speech**

Discourses are not isolated from, but are interspersed with and related to other discourses, referred to as ‘intertextuality’ (Kristeva, 1986). The influential work of

Kristeva (1986) and Bakhtin (1981; 1986) has contributed to our understanding that our talk is interspersed with the words of others, thus it is intertextual. Bakhtin's (1981) concept of 'polyphony', or the multiple voices which coexist within a given text, is an example of intertextuality. For example, Lazar (2000) found the competing discourses of 'Egalitarian gender relations' and 'Conservative gender relations' in the same advertising campaign encouraging marriage and childbirth (see section 3.2.2). By conducting an intertextual analysis across several advertisements, Lazar found that while there was a tension between combining a career with parenthood in representations of women; this same tension was absent from representations of men. Whereas striking a 'balance' between career and family was lexically present in advertisements targeting women, 'balance' did not appear in advertisements aimed at men. This 'discursive absence' (Sunderland, 2004) was detectable by doing a comparative analysis of advertisements targeting men and women. This advertisement positions women but not men as responsible for domestic work, thus it is intertextually related to a 'Women as domestic discourse' (Sunderland, 2004).

Lazar's (2000) study illustrates how the multiple voices dispersed throughout a text can compete with one other to construct meaning in a certain way, a phenomenon Bakhtin (1981) calls 'heteroglossia'. 'Polyphony' and heteroglossia both index the

co-existence of multifarious voices; however, heteroglossia foregrounds the discursive struggle between voices to permanently fix meaning and is thus tied to power. The discourses of conservative and egalitarian gender relations compete to define men's and women's social roles and thus masculinity and femininity in certain ways. The discourse of conservative gender relations positions women and men in the traditional roles of caregiver and breadwinner respectively, while the discourse of egalitarian gender relations positions the pursuits of career and family as important to both women and men. These advertisements can be seen as heteroglossic because they portray a struggle between two competing discourses over how to construct masculinity and femininity. The discourse of conservative gender relations represents a more 'retrogressive' version of masculinity and femininity, while the discourse of egalitarian gender relations portrays a more 'progressive' form.

It is necessary to mention that discourses are not however always easily classifiable as 'competing' or 'complementary'. Lazar makes the careful observation that the discourse of egalitarian gender relations is far from subversive. For example, one advertisement targeted at women proclaimed that it is easier than in the past to combine a career and motherhood. The assumption embedded within this advertisement is that women desire motherhood. Significantly, this more 'progressive' discourse is

constituted by these intertextual traces of another more 'conservative' discourse which positions women as mothers. Lazar's study demonstrates that even within an apparently transgressive discourse there are heteroglossic traces of other more hegemonic discourses. Language use can be seen as a 'site of struggle' to fix meaning (Bakhtin, 1981).

Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) work represents an important contribution to our understanding of what is commonly, but more narrowly, referred to as 'reported speech' (Baynham, 1996; Buttny, 1997, 1998; Buttny & Williams, 2000; Holt, 1996, 2000; Holt & Clift, 2007; Semino et al., 1999; Shuman, 1993; Tannen, 2007). Reported speech is the conversational phenomenon where a speaker quotes or 'reports' the speech of self or another within the current conversational framework. Reported speech is characterizable as 'direct' or 'indirect'. Direct reported speech involves 'voicing' someone else within the current interactional framework and is an example of 'manifest intertextuality' (e.g., she said, 'I'd love to come'). 'Manifest intertextuality' (Fairclough, 1992) is the verbatim transfer of words from one text or conversation to another. 'Indirect' reported speech is a summarization with entailed grammatical changes of another's words (e.g., she said that she would love to come).

Reported speech can assume many forms such as self-quoting, or quoting the

speech of an individual, conversation, aggregate (e.g., ‘people say’), or prototypical group member, e.g. ‘I’ve heard a lot of white people say’, or an indirect quote, e.g. ‘she said to meet at 6:00’ (see Buttny & Williams, 2000; Holt & Clift, 2007).

Researchers have however taken issue with the nomenclature ‘reported speech’ because speakers do not simply recite previously uttered speech in another interactional context (Baynham, 1996; Buttny & Williams, 2000; Holt & Clift, 2007; Tannen, 2007), but rather manipulate words to fit the rhetorical needs of the current interactional context. The disputability of ‘accurate’ reported speech is underpinned by research which has demonstrated that both content and form of speech can be altered in the ‘reporting context’ (Clark & Gerrig, 1990; Lehrer, 1989; Mayes, 1990). This makes reported speech a discursive resource which speakers use to accomplish specific discursive actions in the current reporting context such as to convey the central point of a narrative, provide evidence to support a claim, make a complaint, all of which can be tied to managing one’s accountability (see sections 5.2.2-5.2.5). Since reported speech is far from ‘verbatim recall’ but designed to perform specific interactional functions, Tannen (2007) prefers ‘constructed dialogue’ to capture that recontextualized nature of reported speech. Building on Bakhtin’s (1981) early observations, Tannen (2007) maintains that “the construction of dialogue represents an active, creative, transforming

move which expresses the relationship not between the quoted party and the topic of talk but rather the quoting party and the audience to whom the quotation is delivered” (p. 111). Tannen rightly points out that the act of reporting speech is thus more oriented to the current interactional context rather than providing an accurate rendition of that speech. Hence, journalists report only part of an utterance or remove an utterance from its original context in order to construct a speaker in an unfavorable manner. Tannen (2007) claims that speech is not ‘reported’ for two main reasons. First, much of what is constructed as ‘reported speech’ was never actually uttered but instead is constructed as dialogue in order to serve particular rhetorical purposes, such as those outlined above. Second, the act of reporting utterances that originated in another context changes the meaning of that utterance. The current context involves a new set of participants with different relationships who are creating a unique interaction at that very moment. Therefore, a journalist uses reported speech in order to slander a famous person and in the process establish credibility with his or her readership as a good journalist.

Tannen has raised a legitimate concern regarding the ‘constructed’ nature of reported speech; however, she does not look at how reported speech is intertextually related to wider discourses or interpretative repertoires. Reported speech is more than dialogue transferred to another interactional context in order to perform a particular

rhetorical function, e.g. justify one's lateness. Reported speech may also be used in the articulation of what can be seen as interpretative repertoires (see section 3.4.1) circulating in a particular culture, context, or community of practice. For instance, one of my own participants, Mayumi, 'voiced' her friend in order to corroborate her claim that the dual pursuits of a career and motherhood are incompatible (see section 6.2.1; Extract 4). In the process of utilizing reported speech, Mayumi can also be seen as drawing on and assuming a complicit subject position in relation to a 'Women as natural caregivers' repertoire because she is using the speech to justify a conventional division of domestic labor. Therefore, reported speech involves not only recontextualizing another's purported words within another context but also, in using it, drawing on and assuming subject positions in relation to particular interpretative repertoires. For this reason, 'reported discourse' (Sunderland, 2004) more accurately captures how 'reported speech' is intertextually related to interpretative repertoires.

I now discuss the functions of reported speech reported in previous research. These studies are CA-based, so they take a more restrictive view of reported speech, i.e., they do not take into account the larger social context surrounding the reported speech unless that context is 'oriented to' by the participants. These researchers are not concerned with the relationship between reported speech and interpretative repertoires

or the concept of interpretative repertoires at all. Nevertheless, they are important because they demonstrate the various functions of reported speech such as conveying the central point of a narrative, evidencing claims, making assessments, managing speaker accountability, and shifting footing.

### **5.2.2 Conveying the central point of a narrative**

Reported speech is sometimes used to actively convey the central or a crucial point of a narrative (Buttny & Williams, 2000; Couper-Kuhlen, 2007; Schiffrin, 2002). For example, Couper-Kuhlen (2007) demonstrated how a woman, Margy, called Edna to apologize on behalf of her husband, Bud, who had failed to return a power tool on time and Margy gave an account explaining why. She frames both her own reminder to Bud and his subsequent reassurance to her that there is no rush to return the tool within reported speech. In addition to accounting for Bud's mistake, she thus also assigned blame to him and managed a positive self-presentation (Goffman, 1959) as a responsible individual. Since the story's main point is constructed within reported speech, we can gain insight into what the speaker is 'doing' in the account by looking at the reported speech.

### **5.2.3 Evidential function**

The evidential function of reported speech (see Holt & Clift, 2007) occurs



when the current speaker invokes another's purported speech in order to corroborate his or her claim. For example, reported speech serves as evidence for witnesses during cross-examination in courtrooms in that the defensive nature of testimonies makes reported speech an effective resource to bolster a claim (Galatolo, 2007). For instance, a witness could deploy reported speech as evidence during testimony as against an accused murderer, i.e. I heard the criminal say, 'I'm going to kill so and so'. Evidence is necessary in order to establish a witness's credibility and authenticate a disputable claim such as the guilt or innocence of a defendant. In effect, reported speech provides evidence that a person has the 'category entitlement' (see section 5.3) or status of 'witness' because he or she experienced the events and thus can comment on them with a certain degree of authority.

Another example which attests to the evidential function of reported speech is Wooffitt's (1992) study of people's reports of paranormal experiences. Wooffitt found that reported speech was used to establish the factuality of the description and their category entitlement as 'sane individuals'. The reported speech of deceased individuals served as evidence they had made contact with the dead. 'Working up' this category entitlement was particularly important for these individuals due to the questionable nature of the events they were describing. Nevertheless, providing evidence through

reported speech is not simply reproducing a prior locution, but is using a version of that speech to construct evidence within the current interactional context. Reported speech allows an individual to construct a witness identity or identity as a 'sane individual'. These examples illustrate how reported speech can be a form of 'fact construction' (Potter, 1996) or constructing a situated truth.

#### **5.2.4 Assessment function**

Reported speech is also strategically utilized to achieve an implicit assessment or evaluation (Buttny, 1997; Buttny & Williams, 2000; Holt, 2000), e.g. complain about someone's behavior. To achieve this, reported speech is invoked to invite the hearer to evaluate someone else's utterance or behavior in a particular way. In this way, explicit assessment is generated by the hearer and the speaker maintains his or her 'neutrality'.

Holt (2000) looked at the assessment function of reported speech within the specific speech event of making complaints. In her corpus of naturally-occurring telephone conversations, Holt found that reported speech was used to elicit an implicit evaluation or assessment from the listener which the speaker then concurred with in the next turn. For example, Lesley complained to her friend Joyce about an incident that occurred when she was shopping at a sale at a vicarage sale. Before relating the incident, Lesley stated that there was something she was 'broiling about', which framed the story

as a complaint because ‘broiling’ metaphorically signals a strong reaction. Apparently, Lesley was browsing when an acquaintance approached her and said, “still trying to buy something for nothing”. Joyce oriented to the ‘complainable’ nature of this person’s reported comment by responding, “isn’t he dreadful”. Lesley then more directly assessed his comment with “I cannot stand him”. By providing contextual information prior to the reported speech, Lesley conveyed the reprehensible nature of his comment to Joyce. Furthermore, the sequential position of Lesley’s explicit assessment is significant because it appears to be an affiliative response to Joyce’s assessment. However, by first framing the utterance as a complaint (‘broiling about’), Lesley implicitly guided Joyce to that assessment. Therefore, Lesley did not ‘neutrally’ report the utterance, but presented it in such a way so that Joyce would judge its reprehensibility and thus concur with Lesley’s assessment. Reported speech allowed Lesley to position her assessment following Joyce’s, which reduced her own accountability to the assessment and increased Joyce’s, who initially produced the assessment.

As regards sequencing, although speaker assessments preceded the reported speech in Holt’s corpus, Buttny (1997) and Buttny and Williams (2000) found assessments sequentially positioned prior to, embedded in, or following the reported

speech. For instance, in Buttny's (1997) investigation of the use of reported speech in group discussions about racism, when relating experiences of racism, some participants directly assessed the incident as "the worst experience of my life" prior to invoking the reported speech. In a follow-up study (Buttny & Williams, 2000), participants were found to implicitly convey the racist subtext of an utterance. One participant discussed how Caucasian salespeople often give too much attention to their African-American customers, drawing on prosody to mimic a prototypical Caucasian salesperson's voice, "oh can I help you with anything", which suggested a subtext of surveillance. Similar to Holt's (2000) findings, the teller is not only reporting but also assessing speech.

The sequential positioning of reported speech is significant because it is also tied to the issue of speaker accountability to a claim.

### **5.2.5 Speaker Accountability**

Reported speech can also be seen as a device which speakers use to manage their accountability. Speakers are accountable to the veracity or 'factuality' of the claims or attributions they make within their accounts (see section 3.2.3). Therefore, an explicit assessment or evaluation increases speaker accountability and risks the attribution of having a 'stake' or 'interest' in an assessment which would undermine the overall account (see section 3.2.3). In the previous example, Lesley provided contextual

information (i.e., 'I'm broiling about something') leading up to the utterance, 'still trying to buy something for nothing' in order to elicit a direct assessment from Joyce which Lesley could then concur with. Therefore, in Holt's (2000) data, the hearer's explicit assessment of the reported speech bolstered the reporter's account by reducing his or her accountability to the claim. The hearer was given access to the 'original utterance' and 'invited' to assess its reprehensibility. In Buttny's (1997) and Buttny and Williams' (2000) findings, by contrast, the assessments were positioned prior to the actual reported speech. For example, "it was ridiculous the way the White students reacted" was articulated prior to the reported speech of these students (Buttny, 1997). This sequential positioning increases the speaker's accountability and also leaves the speaker open to the charge of having a personal investment in the claim. One possible reason for this 'rhetorically risky' sequential positioning is that the severity of the reported offense was much greater than in Holt's (2000) data. In Holt's data the participants were complaining about everyday matters, while in Buttny (1997) and Buttny and Williams' (2000) data, they were formulating accounts about racism. In other words, their accounts were indisputably concerning racism, and thus the reporting speaker was not likely to be seen as having a personal investment in producing an account about racism. A complaint, by contrast, is harder to categorize because it is

dependent upon the reporting speaker's interpretation of the event in question. Therefore, the reporting speakers had to formulate the account in such a way that the hearer would recognize the 'complainable' action and assess it as such.

Assessments of reported speech can thus be tied to the notion of speaker accountability—but reported speech itself can also be seen as a device which speakers use to manage their own accountability. In Holt's (2000) study, for example, contextual information ('broiling about') which preceded Lesley's reported speech ('still trying to buy something for nothing') suggested that she was about to formulate a complaint about someone. I previously suggested that Bakhtin's (1981) concepts of polyphony and heteroglossia imply that language itself is 'multivocal', and that reported speech is geared more toward accomplishing rhetorical purposes within the current interactional context rather than reconstructing an 'accurate' report (see section 5.2.1). Therefore, Joyce did not have access to the 'original' utterance but only Lesley's reconstruction of that purported utterance, which was ostensibly altered so that Lesley could formulate a complaint about the person who accused her of being stingy. Joyce did not explicitly question Lesley's motives for reproducing that utterance (e.g., she is angry with him) or the context surrounding the reported speech (e.g., he was making a joke), but instead immediately denounced the accused party. Therefore, Lesley was able to implicitly

formulate a complaint against this man through his reprehensible reported comment, which served as evidence to legitimize Lesley's apparent displeasure over his comment (see section 5.2.3). At the same time, she was not accountable to this utterance because it was formulated as originating with him, thus she presented herself as a 'neutral' 'animator' (see section 5.2.6) or messenger, which allowed her to avoid the charge of having a stake or interest in criticizing him.

### **5.2.6 'Footing' shifts**

Reported speech also signals a change in 'footing' (Goffman, 1981), i.e. "a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance" (p. 128). Alignment is the 'projected self' or subjectivity that a speaker constructs with interlocutors, i.e. solidarity or distance. For instance, a speaker may use reported speech to mimic someone else as a rhetorical device to induce laughter from his or her audience and thus build solidarity with them. Goffman (1981) rightly maintained that a model of communication which assumes that meaning is constructed between an aggregate of speakers and hearers is 'oversimplified' because it fails to capture the dynamic nature of conversation. Goffman partitions the 'speaker' into three different but interrelated 'production formats': 'animator', 'author', and 'principal'. The animator is the person

who actually articulates the utterance. The ‘author’ is the party responsible for constructing that utterance and those whose views it represents is the ‘principal’. To take a simple example, an official leader performs the ‘animator’ and ‘principal’ roles by delivering a speech to the public, which was written by a speech writer who is the ‘author’. If the leader could not deliver the speech, then a proxy would serve as the ‘animator’ of a speech that was ‘authored’ by a speech writer, but represents the leader’s views (who is therefore the ‘principal’). A single speaker could assume all three of these production formats or purposely blur the distinction between them for a certain rhetorical purpose, i.e. to attribute responsibility away from self. By assuming a particular production format, a speaker shifts footing and thus constructs different subjectivities.

Shifts in footing are particularly relevant to (the study of) reported speech. Reported speech allows an individual to assume the footing of ‘neutral animator’ who is simply voicing the words of another ‘principal’ or ‘author’. In this way, the speaker potentially has no stake or interest (see section 3.2.3) in making a claim because he or she is simply reproducing a previous locution. However, the above discussion suggests that speakers never simply report the speech of others but use it as a discursive device to perform different functions in conversational interaction, for example, to elicit an



evaluation or assessment from the hearer (Buttny, 1997; Buttny & Williams, 2000; Holt, 2000). The notion of ‘neutral animator’ is yet another way reported speech can be strategically deployed to perform specific functions within interaction.

### **5.2.7 ‘Reported thought’**

In addition to reporting the speech of others, speakers also construct thought (Couper-Kuhlen, 2007; Haakana, 2007; Semino et al., 1999). Reported thought is the conversational phenomenon where a speaker quotes or ‘reports’ the thoughts of self or another within the current conversational framework to serve particular rhetorical functions such as conveying the main point of a narrative, providing evidence, and making an assessment (see Holt & Clift, 2007).

In my data, participants constructed the thoughts of an aggregate in order to criticize that group’s way of thinking (i.e., ‘men think that women should do housework’) or in an attempt to elicit an assessment of that reported thought from other speakers. The rhetorical effectiveness of reported thought lies in the fact that although it was never ostensibly ‘uttered’, nevertheless it constructs the ‘normative’ thinking of a particular group. One way to construct an event as more than an isolated incident is to invoke a summary quote, i.e. ‘I’ve heard many men say that women should do housework’ (see Buttny & Williams, 2000). Reported thought, i.e. ‘men think that

women should do housework' performs a similar function by constructing this particular way of thinking as representative of the 'normative' thoughts of men as an aggregate and thus bolsters a speaker's claim, i.e. men are sexist.

Similar to the critical function of reported thought, Haakana (2007) found that reported thought is used to construct complaints. In one of Haakana's extracts, Juha is complaining to his brother about a domestic incident. According to Juha, he and his wife, Leena, were just about to have dinner when she remembered that she forgot to let her cat inside (the cat is in a different, distant apartment). In Juha's account, although Leena assures him that she is fit to drive, he knows that she is drunk, necessitating that he go and let the cat out. Leena reportedly assures him, 'I can still drive, yeah' but Juha constructs his disbelief and thus criticizes her when he sarcastically utters, 'I thought that yeah, yeah, yeah'.

Haakana's example exemplifies a slightly different function of reported thought from that of my data. In Haakana's example, Juha constructs self-reported thought to make a 'silent criticism' of his wife's request. The common pattern in my data was to invoke other-reported thought of an aggregate in order to criticize that group's purported line of thought, i.e. 'men think that women should do housework' (see section 6.3.3), as I show. Both data sets illustrate that reported speech can be used to criticize actions or

ways of thinking.

‘Habitual thought’ (Couper-Kuhlen, 2007) is another variation of reported thought. Habitual thoughts are invoked to account for *hic-et-nunc* actions or lack thereof (Couper-Kuhlen, 2007). In my data, Akiko (see section 8.2.2), a working professional, used habitual reported thought to simultaneously account for her inability to do the housework and present herself as struggling to balance domestic and non-domestic roles (‘I think “it’s my fault” when the house needs cleaning’). Habitual thought allowed her to construct this struggle as continuous and present herself as a ‘good wife, wise mother’ (see section 1.3).

### **5.2.8 Hypothetical reported speech and thought**

‘Hypothetical’ reported speech or thought is the discursive phenomena where a speaker ‘reports’ speech or thoughts that were apparently never uttered (Buttny & Williams, 2000; Myers, 1999; Semino et al., 1999), i.e., ‘he never said, “I’m sorry”’. This frames such ‘unreported’ speech as ‘marked’ because the speaker explicitly constructs speech or thought which did not occur, but arguably should have. In the example above, the speaker is not simply commenting on the absence of an apology, but conveying that an apology was necessary.

In Buttny and Williams’ (2000) focus-group sessions with African-Americans

concerning their experiences of racism, one participant discussed a service-encounter situation where he or she felt unfairly treated by a salesperson. The participant reportedly asked the salesclerk for assistance once she was finished waiting on another customer; however, after the clerk finished with the first customer, she reportedly ignored the African-American customer and instead waited on a different customer. When the African-American customer brought this ‘oversight’ to the clerk’s attention, she reportedly responded, “well you have to wait your turn” (Buttny & Williams, 2000, p. 123). In addition to reporting the speech of the salesperson, the African-American also invoked hypothetical reported speech in order to convey the racist subtext of the clerk’s remark, “she was like telling me, well you just have to wait till I get finished and when I get finished with them [White customers], I’ll take care of you” (Buttny & Williams, 2000, p. 123). By combining reported and hypothetical reported speech, the participant was able to convey what the clerk reportedly said and the implication behind that utterance.

Hypothetical reported speech and thought has the rhetorical function of expressing the implication of a reported utterance, while simultaneously allowing the current speaker to remain ‘detached’ from that utterance (Myers, 1999). In the previous example, although the salesperson did not make an explicitly racist remark, the

African-American customer conveyed the racist undertones of her remark through hypothetical speech ('she was like telling me...'). Framing the implied meaning of this utterance within hypothetical reported speech versus a direct evaluation, i.e. 'she treated me unfairly', allows the speaker to convey what she saw as the racist subtext of the reported speech without directly evaluating or even identifying it. Making an explicit evaluation is more rhetorically risky because the speaker could be charged with having a personal investment in making such an assessment, i.e., here, a grudge against Caucasians.

Similar to reported speech, hypothetical reported speech and thought can be tied to the notion of speaker accountability (see section 5.2.5). A speaker reduces her or his accountability to a claim such as 'the salesclerk's remarks were racist' by invoking hypothetical reported speech to convey the racist subtext, while simultaneously distancing self from that claim. Granted that reported speech is 'constructed' and may never have been uttered (see section 5.2.1), 'hypothetical' reported speech and thought is even less 'authentic' because it is a constructed interpretation of what was reportedly meant, i.e. 'she was like saying X'. Hypothetical reported speech and thought, then, do not have the same evidential function as reported speech (see section 5.2.3). Nevertheless, hypothetical reported speech and thought allows the speaker to indirectly

make an attribution, by taking up the position of a ‘neutral’ animator who voices the speech of another ‘principal’ (see section 5.2.6).

Reported discourse’s multiple discursive functions include conveying the central point of a narrative, serving as evidence, assessing or evaluating actions, footing shifts, and can also be tied to the notion of managing speaker accountability.

I discuss the second discursive analytical device related to this study, membership categories, in the next section.

### **5.3 Membership categories**

In his work at the Suicide Prevention Center in Los Angeles, Harvey Sacks (1995) provided the insight that the categories interlocutors use in conversational interaction carry with them certain assumptions about normative actions or behaviors. Sacks’ work formed the basis for the discipline and analytical approach known as ‘membership categorization analysis’ (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Schegloff, 2007), which discursive psychologists also draw on (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996). Membership categorization analysis (MCA) is concerned with members’ strategic use of these categories to perform certain actions. ‘Members’ are individuals from the same society who possess shared understandings about particular shared categories and activities. For example, members

of many western societies associate the categories of ‘husband’ and ‘wife’ with ‘monogamy’ (at least ideally). Therefore, in a counseling session, a husband’s downgrading of his wife’s categorization of his extra-marital relationship as an ‘affair’ to a ‘bit of a fling’ (Edwards, 1998), constructs the extra-marital relationship as short-term and thus implicitly not the major source of their marital problems, which he claimed were ongoing. Through categorizing the extra-marital relationship as a ‘fling’, the husband attributed their marital problems elsewhere.

MCA and CA reject the view of cognitive psychology that language is a reflection of individuals’ underlying mental states or attitudes and instead focuses on the ‘action orientation’ (Heritage, 1984) of discourse (see section 3.2); however, they also differ in important ways. Whereas CA focuses on the turn-by-turn analysis of conversation, MCA is “concerned with the organization of common-sense in terms of the categories members employ in accomplishing their activities in and through talk” (Francis & Hester, 2004, p. 21). CA is more concerned with the local organization of talk such as how individuals accomplish refusals (e.g. since refusals are ‘dispreferred’, they are often prefaced by a statement of regret and account explaining why the individual cannot accept the invitation: see section 3.3.1). MCA is concerned with the ways categories and their associated activities are deployed in discourse, i.e. invoking a

certain category to manage speaker accountability. In the counseling-session example above, the husband attributed blame for their marital troubles to his wife, which reduced both his own accountability and the severity of his affair. This husband's use of 'fling' versus 'affair' is related to socio-culturally available knowledge which largely condemns extra-marital affairs. CA in contrast would not claim the husband is drawing on sociocultural knowledge denouncing extra-marital affairs unless he specifically 'oriented to' that knowledge in the conversation.

The reason members of a society are able to associate categories of people with certain actions is due to, relatedly, what Sacks refers to as a 'membership categorization device' (hereafter, MCD), a definitive feature of which is that categories are organized into collections. Individuals classify others with 'membership categories' such as 'student', 'child', 'doctor', 'feminist'. Doctor, lawyer, and professor, for example, are part of the collection which forms the MCD 'professional occupation'. Some MCDs such as age and sex are applicable to everyone.

Categories are 'inference-rich' because members of a particular community of practice (see section 2.1.2) possess knowledge of typical actions and behaviors that members usually engage in (Sacks, 1995; Schegloff, 2007), and can make meaningful inferences about. Speakers can attempt to counter an inference which could result from



category membership and thus deny that membership. In Sacks' (1995) data from the suicide prevention center telephone calls, a man answers a question about his age but immediately claims that he looks much younger, presumably attempting to counter the counselor's knowledge about the appearance of men in his age category.

Another type of inference that categories carry relates to activities which members engage in. Category membership entails associated 'category-bound activities', which form part of individuals' knowledge about category membership. Therefore, membership in the occupational category 'doctor' is associated with the category-bound activities of diagnosing patients and prescribing treatment. Category membership is defined through category-bound activities and the activities themselves also define category membership. Therefore, an individual could be placed into the membership category 'doctor' based upon performing the actions stated above. The issue of how members 'orient to' or 'make relevant' category membership will be discussed later in this section. However, importantly, in MCA analysis, explicit reference to a category by a speaker is not necessary to demonstrate that a member is orienting to that category.

A key issue in MCA is how membership categories are 'made relevant' or 'oriented to' in discourse (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Sacks, 1995; Schegloff, 2007). In line with CA, MCA concerns itself with the situated use of

categories within talk-in-interaction. Category membership alone is an insufficient basis for claiming that membership is salient in the current interaction (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Sacks, 1995; Schegloff, 2007). For example, the sex of the participants alone is insufficient basis to claim that gender is operating in the interaction (it may be irrelevant). Instead, analysts must demonstrate that participants are orienting to a particular category or category-bound activity. In the marriage counseling session referenced above (Edwards, 1998), the husband's shifting classification of his relationship with 'another woman' to 'a girl' was deemed significant because it arguably downgraded the seriousness of the relationship—semantically, 'girl' may imply someone who is less threatening than a 'woman'. The analyst was able to make this claim based upon the inference-rich nature of the cited categories. Since the categories 'girl' and 'woman' were deployed by husband and wife during the interaction, the researcher's claims were based upon categories that both participants invoked.

Another example of research on how members orient to categories within discourse is Hester's study of teachers' classification of 'deviance'. Hester (1998) investigated the construction of 'deviance' in 'referral talk' between teachers and educational psychologists. Teachers drew on 'category contrasts' and the 'stage of life MCD' (Sacks, 1995) in order to construct 'deviance'.

A 'category contrast' constructs certain behavior as deviating from the norm. For example, a teacher contrasted the behavior of one student with the 'normative' behavior of many other students in order to emphasize that student's behavior was marked and therefore 'deviant' (Hester, 1998). The teacher stated that all children initially require time to adjust to a new teacher and may misbehave, but they eventually 'settle down'. The 'deviant' student, by contrast, continually refused to cooperate with the teacher, thus his behavior diverged from the norm.

The 'stage of life' MCD (Sacks, 1995) rests on the assumption that at each age there are normative behaviors or actions that individuals are able to do. In reference to education, children are expected to attain a certain level of academic achievement at different ages. Children who fail to do this can become labeled as 'slow' (Hester, 1998). For example, a teacher described a child's academic achievement as 'two years behind' (Hester, 1998). This MCD indicates the student has failed to acquire the appropriate level of academic achievement in relation to other students of the same age. The stage of life MCD *in conjunction* with category contrast constructs the child's academic skills as below those of other students and thus 'deviant'.

The teachers' authority to make claims about students' 'deviant' behavior and educational progress comes from their 'category entitlement' (Sacks, 1995) as teachers.

Membership in the category 'teacher' provides them with the status of being viewed as knowledgeable about education-related issues; however, and importantly, category entitlements are not stable or fixed, but instead can be built up or undermined in talk (Potter, 1996). For instance, one teacher worked up a category entitlement in the following way: 'now I've been teaching now for something like twenty five or thirty years and never have I had to call on the help of a year tutor or anybody else to assist me with a child but in this one I must admit that I just don't know what to do to handle him' (Hester, 1998, p.145). Notice that the teacher's claim to category incumbency as an 'experienced teacher' provides him/her with the knowledge to claim that this particular student's behavior is 'deviant', and thus the intervention of an educational psychologist is necessary. By professing the 'experienced teacher' category incumbency, the teacher also protects him/herself from being seen as 'incompetent' and instead implicitly positions the student as the 'problem'. Quite feasibly, the administration could position this teacher as 'incompetent' by claiming that despite his or her many years of service she/he is unable to discipline problems students, thus undermining his category entitlement.

In addition to claiming membership in a category, individuals also reject category membership and contest category affiliation. In a study of youth subcultures,

Widdicombe's (1998) interviewees responded negatively when asked if they considered themselves to be 'punks': they denied characteristics of 'punk' group membership such as having an 'attitude' and dressing in a certain way. A more implicit way to resist category incumbency was to orient away from the 'punk' category entirely. For example, when asked to describe his or her appearance, an interviewee responded, 'slightly longer than average hair'. As in Speer's study (see section 3.3.3), interviewees can and do actively resist the subject positioning of the interviewer.

The significance of MCDs is that categories which individuals use in discourse carry certain assumptions about 'normative' activities and behaviors, which in turn 'perform actions' in discourse. Through invoking the contrastive categories 'fling' versus 'affair', the husband was attempting to downgrade the significance of his relationship and construct his extra-marital affair as temporary (Edwards, 1998).

Both CADP and CDP are also concerned with the categories that speakers draw on in conversation. Specifically, MCDs have important implications for the discursive psychological notion of a speaker's stake or interest (see section 3.2.3) in using certain categories. In the marriage counseling session (Edwards, 1998), the husband clearly had a personal investment in justifying his affair and reducing his own accountability for their marital troubles. Similarly, Hester's (1998) teacher had an investment in

constructing certain students' behavior as 'deviant', through the use of a category contrast between 'normative' and 'non-normative' behavior. The teacher's claim was corroborated by the 'stage of life' MCD which constructed students' failure to perform at an appropriate level due to their inadequate cognitive development. The MCD effectively performed the action of justifying the teachers' classification of the students.

In the study of the 'punk' subculture discussed above (Widdicombe, 1998), the active resistance to category membership can also be linked to speaker investment. One inference which can be made from a speaker's explicit affiliation with the 'punk' category is that the member lacks individuality (Widdicombe, 1998). Accordingly, an individual may resist category membership due to a personal investment in presenting oneself as a unique individual. The individual may claim that their style of dress or behavior is unrelated to punk group membership and simply a reflection of personal preference. The active resistance of category membership is a discursive resource which allows individuals to construct a certain self-presentation (see section 2.1.4).

Similar to reported speech (see section 5.2), membership categories and category-bound activities are intertextually (see section 5.2.1) linked to the concept of interpretative repertoires' (see section 3.4.1). For example, 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich, 1980) can be seen as an interpretative repertoire associated with hegemonic

femininity (see section 2.5.3). Therefore, a woman may engage in the category-bound activities of marriage, childbirth, and fulltime motherhood in an attempt to embody hegemonic femininity.

Categories and their associated activities are not value-free, but interspersed with interpretative repertoires that are infused with a culture's 'lived ideologies' (see section 3.4.2). For example, a young man may construct his sexual prowess as 'out on the pull' (Wetherell, 1998) in order express membership in the category 'hard lad'. The 'hard lad' could be a very desirable category to position oneself as in an environment where 'permissive sexuality' (Hollway, 1998) is the cornerstone of hegemonic masculinity (see section 2.5.2). The affiliation with and resistance toward certain categories involves drawing on and assuming subject positions in relation to interpretative repertoires, thus constructing one's subjectivity (see section 3.4.3).

It is also necessary to emphasize that the names which analysts assign to categories are provisional, as is category membership itself. Category names are constructed within a specific time and place and those category names change over time and vary by community of practice (see section 2.1.2). For example, the category 'queer' has historically been an abusive epithet directed at homosexuals, but it has been reclaimed by scholars in the field of 'queer studies' who use it in reference to the

destabilization of binary sexual identities (Butler, 1999; Sauntson, 2008).

In the next section, I discuss the final discursive analytic device, the discourse marker '*yappari*' ('as expected') which suggested that participants were drawing on and assuming particular subject positions in relation to particular repertoires as they constructed hegemonic and pariah femininities (see sections 2.5.3-2.5.4).

#### **5.4 The discourse marker '*yappari*'**

Discourse markers are "members of a functional class of verbal (and nonverbal) devices which provide contextual coordinates for ongoing talk" (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 41). Therefore, a hearer can elicit an inference from a speaker's use of a discourse marker. Such inferences exemplify the 'action orientation' of language which is of keen interest to discursive psychologists (see section 3.2.3). '*Yappari*' ('as expected') is used to emphasize that the information a speaker is conveying is not new but commonly known or accepted, thus a form of 'commonsense' (Fairclough, 1989), critical discourse analysts see 'commonsense' as knowledge which has become 'naturalized' by groups with institutional power in order to sustain unequal power relations (Fairclough, 1989, 1992; Wodak & Meyer, 2005). *Yappari* can be used to a speaker to construct information as commonsense and thus corroborate the overall account. We always need to question whose 'commonsense' *yappari* refers to and what



discursive actions the speaker is performing by constructing a claim as ‘commonsense’, e.g., attributing blame. I address these points in section 5.4.2.

#### **5.4.1 Semantic function**

‘*Yappari*’ functions semantically to emphasize that an outcome or result confirms a speaker’s expectation, translating best as ‘as expected’ (Makino & Tsutsui, 2002; Morimoto, 1994). For example a speaker could make the following prediction based upon watching the weather forecast, “*Yappari furanakatta darou*” (As expected, it didn’t rain) (Collins, 2004). The speaker uses *yappari* to emphasize that his or her expectation about the weather was confirmed. Without *yappari* the connotation that the speaker had expected the temperate weather would not be conveyed. *Yappari* would not however be used in cases such as, ‘*Ame ga furu to omoimashita kedo yappari furanakatta*’ (I thought that it would rain, but as expected it didn’t), since the speaker’s prediction proved false. *Yappari* would not be used because *yappari* is only used in situations when a speaker’s expectation is confirmed and not countered.

An important point about *yappari* is that the claims individual speakers make are seen as generalizable to members of society at large (Itasaka, 1971) which indicates its social function. Regarding the previous example, as the information about the weather forecast was widely available, a listener could make the following reply,

‘*Yappari sou ka*’ (It figures). The listener’s reply indicates that the speaker’s weather prediction is not simply the speaker’s expectation, but that of many people. *Yappari* functions to accentuate the taken-for-granted nature of a claim.

#### **5.4.2 Discursive functions**

We also need to consider the discursive function of ‘*yappari*’, i.e., what the speaker is ‘doing’ by using ‘*yappari*’ to assert that a claim or result is expected and thus ‘commonsense’. This can be tied to the notion of speaker accountability (see section 3.2). Speakers arguably draw on *yappari* to position claims as ‘commonsense’ thereby reducing their own ‘accountability’ by shifting responsibility to society (Sasamoto, 2006). To illustrate with a simple example, “*Yappari nihon no biru ha oishii desu ne*” (As expected, Japanese beer is good) (Makino & Tsutsui, 2002, p. 539). This type of praise for Japanese products is common in Japan where people often assert the superiority of Japanese items and uniqueness of Japanese culture (Sugimoto, 2003). Prefacing the claim about Japanese beer with *yappari* is one way to position this claim not as the speaker’s opinion, but as ‘commonsense’ shared by members of Japanese society. Consequently, *yappari* allows speakers to avoid the charge of having a stake or interest in their claims (see section 3.2.3) and effectively corroborates them. For example, one of my participants prefaced her claim that a mother’s care is essential

during the first three years of a baby's life with *yappari*, thus framing women's maternal role as 'commonsense' and not simply her individual or potentially biased claim (see section 6.2.1). *Yappari* allowed her to position women who are fulltime homemakers as adhering to social norms, while working women as 'outliers'. Her potential stake in the claim that women are 'natural' caregivers was reduced because *yappari* framed this information as 'commonsense' and not simply representative of her personal opinion.

The issue of whose 'commonsense' *yappari* refers to requires further discussion. As discussed, interpretative repertoires are common ways of talking about certain topics or events which are available to members of a given society (see section 3.4.1). I also suggested that repertoires are not neutral but infused with a culture's lived ideologies (see section 3.4.2). I propose that when speakers use *yappari* to frame information as commonsense, they are drawing on and assuming subject positions in relation to interpretative repertoires. For example, one of my participants claimed, '*yappari* children are best raised by their mothers' hands'. In this example (see Chapter 6; Extract 2), Mayumi can be seen as drawing on a 'Women as natural caregivers' repertoire (see section 6.2.1) and positioning women in a domestic role. 'Women as natural caregivers' is not a neutral representation of women, but positions them as caregivers because of their childbearing capacity. The 'commonsense' articulated by this

repertoire, then, is that since women give birth to children they also possess a natural predisposition to care for them. Similarly, a ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoire (see section 6.2.2) presumably positions women in a domestic role because of the association between femininity and the domestic sphere. The ‘commonsense’ espoused by these repertoires illustrates how social significance can be constructed from biological differences between men and women and in the process position women in a subordinate role. If these repertoires are accepted by individuals as ‘natural’ or ‘commonsense’, which the use of *yappari* would indicate, then they can contribute to the maintenance of a patriarchal gender order whereby men normatively maintain economic and social power over women.

Fairclough (1989) discusses the process of ‘naturalization’ as entailing certain discourses achieving the status of ‘commonsense’. Similarly, specific interpretative repertoires, infused with lived ideologies, can gain dominant or ‘hegemonic’ status; however, through the process of naturalization they lose their ideological character and become accepted as ‘cultural truths’. For example, the long-standing influence of ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ (Rich, 1980) is so ingrained in many societies that married women (or men) are rarely asked ‘how did you end up married?’ (Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003). ‘Women as natural caregivers’ and ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoires

(see sections 6.2.1-6.2.2) may be accepted as value-free, ‘commonsense’; however, they are infused with an ‘invisible’ ideology which constructs women’s roles and ultimately femininity as involving ‘other-centeredness’ (Lazar, 2000; see section 1.3), i.e. foregrounding the needs of other family members.

According to Fairclough (1989), one way that ‘naturalization’ occurs is through individuals’ explanations which ‘rationalize’ certain phenomena. As individuals construct accounts, they ‘naturalize’ certain phenomena, e.g. heterosexuality, which, in the process, loses its ideological underpinnings and becomes sanctioned as commonsense. Therefore, a question about marital status may be deemed ‘normative’ within many communities of practice (see section 2.1.2); however, it rests on the ‘heteronormative’ assumption of ‘compulsory heterosexuality’. It could be argued, then, that individuals’ accounts are a fruitful ‘epistemological sites’ (Sunderland, 2004) to investigate the process of ‘naturalization’ and construction of ‘commonsense’. In my data, some speakers seemed to draw on ‘Women as natural caregivers’ and ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoires (see chapter 6) as they constructed accounts which rationalized a conventional division of domestic labor, apparently accepting the ‘commonsense’ constructed by these repertoires. Other participants, by contrast, assumed more resistant subject positions and thus challenged the ‘commonsense’

embedded in these repertoires.

*Yappari* is thus, I argue, a discursive device which constructs a claim as ‘commonsense’, and the ‘commonsense’ to which *yappari* refers is that of different interpretative repertoires. I suggest that when participants utilize *yappari* to make a claim, they are drawing on and assuming subject positions in relation to particular interpretative repertoires. By allowing participants to construct claims as ‘commonsense’, *yappari* thus reduces participants’ own accountability by attributing it to ‘society’. Since the claim has the ‘authority’ of ‘commonsense’ it is rhetorically stronger. Participants’ taking up subject positions in relation to interpretative repertoires contributes to the ‘naturalization’ of the ‘commonsense’ articulated by these repertoires.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter I discussed the discursive analytic devices of reported speech, membership categories, and *yappari*. I selected these discursive devices because they frequently surfaced in participants’ discourse and suggested that participants were drawing on and assuming subject positions in relation to certain interpretative repertoires (discussed in chapters 6, 7, 8). In the analytical chapters 6-8 I demonstrate how participants use reported speech, MCDs, and *yappari* to draw on and assume subject positions in relation to interpretative repertoires and in the process construct

hegemonic or pariah femininity subjectivities.

In Chapter 6 I focus on the discursive construction of hegemonic femininity.

## **Chapter 6: Analysis and Discussion: ‘Hegemonic Femininity’: Part I**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This is the first of two chapters concerning the discursive construction of hegemonic femininity (see section 2.5.3). I address research question one: ‘What

*interpretative repertoires* do participants draw on as they discursively construct (a) *hegemonic femininity*? I also address research question 1(a): ‘What discursive features are associated with *interpretative repertoires* constituting (a) *hegemonic femininity*? This chapter also addresses research question 1(b): ‘What *subject positions* (self and other) do participants take up in relation to *interpretative repertoires* constituting (a) *hegemonic femininity*?’ Finally, the chapter addresses research question two: ‘Is there evidence of *ideological dilemmas* generated from contradictions between different *interpretative repertoires* in participants’ discourse?’

In order to answer research questions 1, 1(a), and 1(b), I was attempting to identify interpretative repertoires (IRs) that participants draw on, and position self and others in relation to, as they constructed hegemonic femininity subjectivities (see section 2.5.3). In the course of my data analysis and categorization (see section 4.7), I noticed that participants were constructing binary differences between men and women in their talk (e.g., women possess a maternal instinct), which led me to identify ‘gender differences’ as an overarching interpretative repertoire.

‘Gender differences’ has been identified as a discourse (Sunderland, 2004), but can also be seen as an IR circulating in popular culture (see section 3.4.1). ‘Gender differences’ is built upon the essentialist assumption that ‘fixed’, biologically-based,



differences between men and women predispose them to perform different social roles and rationalizes an unequal gendered division of labor. Women's ability to give birth is used as a rationale to position them as 'natural caregivers', while men's inability to do so is used to position them rather as 'family providers'. The material consequences of this discourse are a 'naturalized' gender order where women may be relegated to the domestic sphere or else marginalized in underpaid 'pastoral occupations' in the service sector.

'Gender differences' is politically problematic for a number of reasons. First, purported 'differences' rarely translate to 'equality' (Burr, 1998; Cameron, 2007; Connell, 2002; Weatherall, 2002), which can result in women's suppression, i.e. it can be articulated as justification for women performing most aspects of childcare. Quite the contrary, this repertoire may also position 'male as norm' (e.g., Sunderland, 2004). For example, if corporations are 'masculinized' (Baxter, 2008; Holmes, 2006; Tannen, 1995), this entails that women need to adapt their interactional styles to fit this norm. This fails to challenge the legitimacy of an unmarked 'masculine' and 'feminine' as marked. Women who wish to compete with men in the public sphere need to somehow cast themselves as reflections of the masculinist norm (Crawford, 1995; Weatherall, 2002; Weedon, 1997). The alternative may be to retreat to more 'feminized', and not

coincidentally, lower-paid professions in education, service industries or health. The result is an unequal, largely ‘heteronormative’ social order where ‘masculinity’ involves providing for a family and ‘femininity’ involves caring for them and often replicating this role at work.

I will show how participants constructed women and men as inherently different and thus predisposed to certain gendered roles. Against the backdrop of an overarching ‘gender differences’ IR, participants drew on what I have called a ‘Women as natural caregivers’ and a ‘Women as eventually domestic’ IR as they constructed subjectivities in line with hegemonic femininity.

## **6.2 ‘Women as natural caregivers’**

In this section I present extracts from an individual interview with Mayumi. I present the interview extracts chronologically to illustrate the cumulative ‘force’ of this repertoire which Mayumi draws on to position women domestically and in the process constructs hegemonic femininity. The fact that Mayumi articulates this repertoire does not indicate that it is ‘dominant’; however, it does show that this is a repertoire which currently circulates in Japanese society and constructs one version of Japanese femininity.

### **6.2.1 Mayumi: The Legitimation of Hegemonic Femininity**

At the time of the interview, Mayumi was sixty, married with two adult children, and self-employed. In the first extract ‘Women as natural caregivers’ is suggested by Mayumi’s attribution of different social roles to men and women due to their ‘different makeup’ (‘Men’s and women’s makeup is basically different’). When I ask her to further elaborate on this point, she makes reference to a ‘maternal instinct’:

*Extract 1*

43 Mayumi: Although there is a childcare leave system in Japan, the idea that men miss  
44 work for a long period of time is not generally accepted.

45 Justin: So how is this related to men’s and women’s different makeup?

46 Mayumi: (laugh). The maternal instinct. The ability to mother is something that men  
47 probably don’t have. I wonder if that doesn’t say it all? So especially since women  
48 have this instinct, I think it’s a good idea for them to raise children. I’m not sure  
49 about this, but only the person who has borne a child can experience this. Despite  
50 this feeling [maternal instinct], there are many incidents lately. Even though the  
51 person gave birth to the child, there are many incidents. Those people are a  
52 different story.

Mayumi thus constructs an account where women are positioned as ‘natural caregivers’ due to a purported ‘*bosei honnou*’ (‘maternal instinct’; l. 46). In order to support this construction, she draws on the idiomatic phrase ‘*sore ga subete jyanai kashira*’ (I wonder if that doesn’t say it all; l. 47) to terminate further discussion of the topic (see Drew, 1998; Drew & Holt, 1989, 1998). The idiomatic ‘*sore ga subete jyanai*’ rhetorically both supports Mayumi’s claim about a ‘maternal instinct’ and releases her from the necessity of providing further elaboration. ‘*Kashira*’ (I wonder) appears to function to mitigate Mayumi’s claim that a ‘maternal instinct’ is sufficient basis to

rationalize women raising children. However, since such ‘non-confrontational’ discourse markers are normative in Japanese, the direct assertion of an opinion is typically avoided (Watanabe, 1993).

A ‘maternal instinct’ thus becomes the rationalization for women undertaking childcare. ‘Maternal instinct’ constitutes a discursive resource which constructs a gendered ‘natural order’ (Edley & Wetherell, 1999) where childrearing becomes women’s and not men’s natural vocation. Rhetorically, this argument is effective because it is difficult to dispute something that is rooted in biology and purportedly unchangeable. Thus, a ‘maternal instinct’ becomes the rationalization for women undertaking childcare.

Mayumi further corroborates her account by incorporating exceptions to her argument which function to ‘prove the rule’. The strategy of identifying discounting exceptions is what Billig (1987) terms ‘particularization’. The reference to ‘incidents’ (l. 50) functions to construct women who do not fulfill their maternal role as ‘outliers’ which thereby pathologizes these cases and constructs them as misrepresentative of the general population. ‘Incidents’ refers to cases disseminated in the media where children are somehow presumably mistreated by their mothers. Acknowledging these anomalies however further corroborates the account because it illustrates Mayumi’s critical

awareness of potential deviations from the normative pattern she constructs. In other words, she constructs a ‘nuanced’ account which encompasses multiple scenarios and is thus difficult to dispute.

Mayumi’s reference to a ‘*bosei honnou*’ and incorporation of exceptions into her account are discursive resources which allow Mayumi to maintain her own accountability. She does not directly position women as homemakers but instead constructs women as having an ‘instinct’ which makes them naturally suited to the task. In this way, Mayumi avoids the charge of having a ‘stake’ or ‘interest’ (see section 3.2.3) in positioning women as homemakers, i.e. that she is opposed to working mothers.

Mayumi further elaborates on the ‘maternal instinct’ in the continued extract below:

*Extract 2*

53 Justin: So you mean generally speaking?

54 Mayumi: That’s right. People who cause incidents. The way that young people today  
55 think might be different. In our, since a long time ago in Japan, *yappari* only the  
56 person who had the child can understand. I don’t think that those who’ve never given  
57 birth to children can understand. The cuteness of children. Even though there is a  
58 maternal instinct, there might be people who don’t have that instinct such as monks.  
59 When asked what that instinct is, I can’t express it.

60 Justin: Isn’t there a proverb about until age three?

61 Mayumi: *Mitsugo no tamashi hyaku made. Yappari* from the time the child is born  
62 until age three, his or her life changes. *Yappari* somehow throughout one’s life until  
63 age three, raising a child with love involves taking him or her in your arms. But

64 when I hear that quite a few foreign people leave their children in childcare from an  
65 early age. Is that usual?

66 Justin: Yes it is.

67 Mayumi: You probably will disagree with the way I think. *Yappari* I'm thinking that  
68 children are best raised by their mothers' hands. I don't know which is better. But  
69 when you think about raising children it's probably not about words, but about  
70 skinship [physical closeness] and the heart.

Mayumi is first going to construct an account of her generation, with 'in our' (l. 55), but then 'self-repairs' (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977) to the more 'mystical' 'since a long time ago'. This formulation is effective because her comments are now constructed as representative of traditional Japanese thinking and not just her own generation. In addition, it functions again to avoid an accusation that Mayumi has a stake or interest in the claims she is making because the account encompasses many women across time.

A third strategy which strengthens Mayumi's account is a 'category entitlement' (see section 5.3) provided by category incumbency as a mother which corroborates her claim about a 'maternal instinct'. Mayumi never explicitly makes this categorical reference; however, she cites category-bound activities (see section 5.3) associated with motherhood. Mayumi could not convincingly make the claim that only mothers can truly understand 'the cuteness of children' (l. 57) unless she possessed membership of this category. She also mentions that she is unable to express the 'maternal instinct' (l. 59), which would not apply to her unless she was a mother. Drawing on a category

entitlement is a rhetorically effective strategy because Mayumi in effect positions herself as more knowledgeable than me (at least), which further corroborates her account

I next attempt to introduce a proverb which Mayumi first clarifies and then elaborates on (l. 60). The proverb translates as ‘what’s learned in the cradle is carried to the grave’. The proverb implicitly positions mothers as responsible for teaching their children right from wrong which is needed for proper social development into adults. Proverbs often function like idiomatic phrases which are often used to both close down a topic from further discussion and corroborate accounts (Drew, 1998; Drew & Holt, 1989, 1998). Although in this case the proverb was ‘made relevant’ by the interviewer, Mayumi’s elaboration of the topic of motherhood suggests that she is orienting toward it and thus the account is not simply elicited by me. Combined with *yappari*, Mayumi uses the proverb as evidence to support her account of women’s crucial caregiving role.

Mayumi carefully manages her accountability in relation to her philosophy of raising children. Her account expresses awareness that the interviewer may not agree with her: she first questions me about how children are raised abroad (ll. 64-65), and then specifically concedes that I may not agree with her formulation (l. 67). She continues by taking an apparently neutral stance (‘I don’t know which is better’; l. 68),

but later on in the account her own reported view is clear. For Mayumi, raising children involves ‘skinship’ (physical contact between a mother and child) and the reference to ‘heart’ (l. 70) and her use of a proverb indicates that her opinion is that mothers are most suitable for performing these tasks.

In this account, the proverb, coupled with *yappari*, thus provide discursive evidence that Mayumi is drawing on a ‘Women as natural caregivers’ IR. I am suggesting that proverbs are part of a ‘lexicon or register of terms’ (see section 3.4.1), shared by members of a society and thus a form of ‘cultural commonsense’ that indicates a repertoire. *Yappari* also suggests that Mayumi is drawing on this interpretative repertoire because it frames the crucial role that mothers play in their children’s development as commonly accepted. So Mayumi uses the proverb and *yappari* to invoke the authority of a ‘Women as natural caregivers’ IR and discursively position women in a domestic role.

Mayumi constructs a gendered subjectivity in line with hegemonic femininity as she accepts the commonsense espoused by a ‘Women as natural caregivers’ repertoire, which positions women as full-time homemakers. Her account can be seen as a paradigmatic example of hegemonic femininity since she positions women as self-sacrificing wives and mothers who place their family’s needs before their own.



Later in the interview, Mayumi constructs an account of her friend to support her ‘maternal instinct’ account and positioning of women as mothers or of mothers as the ‘better parents’. A striking aspect of this extract is the multiple voicing and thus its ‘polyphonic’ nature (see section 5.2.1).

*Extract 3*

222 Mayumi: It’s difficult for women to continue their jobs, but it’s quite easy for  
223 teachers because they have a license.

224 Justin: Civil servants are the same.

225 Mayumi: That’s right. That’s because they’re in a situation where it’s easy to return  
226 to work.

227 Justin: There are many women teachers.

228 Mayumi: Now women can also easily return to work. But a friend of mine who’s a  
229 nurse said, “It’s no good.” *Yappari* since medicine is advancing everyday everyday,  
230 if you take leave it’s hard to stay up to date with current techniques. If you get  
231 recertified you can return to work. It’s hard to become a nurse though. I have a  
232 friend who’s a nurse. We study English together. She’s about 38 now and her child  
233 is how old? The child entered fourth grade. She was asked to come back, but  
234 medicine is advancing, so *yappari* she can’t stay up to date with it. She’d need to go  
235 to the hospital for training. What’s more since her husband is the type of person  
236 who wants her at home, he doesn’t support her working. If you’re wondering why,  
237 her husband’s parents got divorced when he was young. *Yappari* since he grew up  
238 without a mother figure, he has extremely painful memories. He wants the mother  
239 at home when their child gets home [from school]. He’s an old-fashioned Japanese.  
240 I think it’s fine for people to think in that way. Her husband earns quite a bit of  
241 money. Even without working, she’s fine. Needless to say, even without working,  
242 she has a comfortable lifestyle. Since her son has grown up a little she says, “I want  
243 to do some sort of part-time job”. Since they only have one child she doesn’t have  
244 much to do, you see. Regarding that part-time job, she’s saying, “I only want to  
245 work during the daytime.”

246 Justin: Can’t she work as a nurse part-time?

247 Mayumi: Since there’s such a huge shortage of nurses and doctors in hospitals right  
248 now, once you start working, they won’t let you quit. Even though you have the

249 feeling that you want to quit or say that you can only work for a certain amount of  
250 time, no matter what when you're faced with the actual situation, you definitely  
251 won't be able to say "Goodbye" and go home early. My friend says, "I can't go  
252 back." I have the feeling that I understand how she feels now. It's difficult (laugh).

The phrase 'easy to return to work [for women]' (ll. 225-226) brings to mind an 'Equal employment opportunities' IR (Wetherell et al., 1987). Yet Mayumi is critically aware that while equal opportunities exist in theory, in practice, she says, they are unavailable to women, who thus face an ideological dilemma (see section 3.4.2). Women are thus multiply positioned by an 'Equal opportunities' IR and 'Practical considerations' repertoire which make it difficult to achieve the goal of equal opportunities in practice (Wetherell, et. al., 1987). The story of her friend functions to illustrate this dilemma.

In Mayumi's account, her friend's situation evidences why returning to work is unfeasible for many mothers. By drawing on reported speech ('it's no good'; l. 229), the words of her friend are employed to actively build support against mothers working outside the home (see section 5.2.3) and thus the account again goes beyond Mayumi's possible personal investment in the claim. Mayumi is here the 'neutral' animator of another 'author's' speech ('it's no good'; see section 5.2) by which she makes an implicit assessment regarding women returning to work, but then continues to more directly assess the situation. However, the significance of this move lies in the fact that

Mayumi's own stake or interest (see section 3.2.3) in this assessment is discursively reduced as she presents the assessment as first coming from her friend. Following this, she uses *yappari* to construct the difficulty of staying up-to-date with medical advancements as 'commonsense' (ll. 229-231).

The difficulty of returning to work, however, is expressed not only through the logistics of staying up-to-date with the field, but also a 'Women as natural caregivers' repertoire. The repertoire is reflected in Mayumi's account of her friend's account of her husband who positions women as caregivers. The husband reportedly has 'painful memories' (l. 238) because he 'grew up without a mother figure' (ll. 237-238). We can deduce the husband is positioning women as caregivers from the category 'old-fashioned Japanese' and category-bound activity (see section 5.3) of being at home when the child returns from school (l. 239). Notably, in the account there is no mention of the husband assuming an active role in childcare, so we can infer a discursive absence of a 'Shared parenting' repertoire (see Sunderland, 2004).

Another reason why Mayumi's friend's financial contribution is reportedly unnecessary is that the family is comfortably supported by the husband's income (ll. 240-241). Interestingly, Mayumi constructs women working to supplement the household income and not for personal development (ll. 242-243). In Mayumi's account,

we thus see the discursive absence of a repertoire where individuals work for non-economic reasons, e.g. contributing to society or personal development. Once again, Mayumi positions women as wives and mothers whose role is to support the household in a non-economic way, but as hypothetically and implicitly able to do so in an economic way.

Mayumi uses reported speech (see section 5.2.3) to provide evidence that her friend wants to resume working and to position women returning to work in a certain capacity, i.e. as part-time employees (l. 243). The friend reportedly wants to resume working because now that her child is grown up she ‘doesn’t have much to do’ (l. 244). Despite this, her friend still apparently privileges motherhood above all else and thus does not want to return to nursing. To reflect this, Mayumi again voices her friend’s desire to work ‘during the daytime’ (l. 245). This desire is framed within direct reported which constructs it as originating from the friend. The implication, then, is that she does not really want to resume nursing. When I directly ask if the friend could resume nursing part-time, Mayumi claims this is impractical (l. 246).

In this account, ‘practical considerations’ (Wetherell et al., 1987) are given as the main deterrent for resuming a (nursing) career, i.e. that the critical shortage of nurses would place the friend’s skills in high demand and would make working only part-time

or quitting altogether next to impossible (ll. 247-250). The second ‘practical consideration’ is the difficulty of leaving work at the end of your shift. Overtime is a common practice in many Japanese workplaces and ‘*giri*’ (‘social duty’) may make it difficult to refuse a request to work overtime (Mouer & Kawanishi, 2005; Sugimoto, 2003). Mayumi constructs hypothetical reported speech to vividly convey the difficulty for her friend to say ‘goodbye’ and leave work early (l. 251; see section 5.2.8). Reported speech is used again to express Mayumi’s main point of the narrative—that the dual pursuits of career and motherhood are incompatible (‘it’s no good’; l. 229; see section 5.2.2). By assuming the role of ‘animator’, Mayumi again avoids the charge of having a stake or interest in this particular claim. Since her friend has said she ‘can’t go back’ (ll. 251-252) there is no need for Mayumi to assess the situation. Instead she makes an ‘affiliative remark’ (Holt & Clift, 2007) (‘I understand how she feels now’; l. 252). While this presents her as orienting sympathetically toward her friend, Mayumi is in fact arguably using the account of her friend to construct the dual pursuits of work and motherhood as incompatible. The decision not to resume nursing is constructed as resulting from ‘practical considerations’ that her friend carefully weighed up before coming to this decision. ‘Practical considerations’ is a rhetorically effective argument as it stresses the ‘inevitability’ of the current situation and reproduces the status quo

(Wetherell et al., 1987). Nevertheless, it ignores the fact that structural obstacles to returning to work are amenable to change and are standing in the way of real choice.

In this account, Mayumi's friend thus reportedly faces an ideological dilemma between honoring work and family commitments on several different levels. First, privileging her maternal role over career results in her falling behind in developments in the medical field. Whereas 'equal opportunities' are in principle available to male and female nurses, women have to weigh the 'practical considerations' of potential recertification and combining this demanding job with motherhood largely because husbands do not share parenting, which was reflected by the discursive absence of a 'Shared parenting' repertoire and indeed no mention of the husband's domestic role at all. The second dilemma involves her friend's husband's reported desire for her to remain at home. We can conceptualize the husband as drawing on a 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoire. Therefore, if such repertoires reflect actual discourse and past talk, Mayumi's friend must consider whether or not she is willing to put a potential strain on her marriage. The third dilemma concerns reemployment options for women who wish to reenter the workforce and is applicable to many women without any type of skills or certification. Although Mayumi's friend does not need to work out of economic necessity, the decision not to work results in boredom once her child grows

up. Yet, while nurses are in high demand, this is not reportedly an attractive option for Mayumi's friend, because part-time work is reportedly unfeasible. Consequently, the friend's employment choices are limited to marginalized (in terms of benefits) part-time positions. The 'practical consideration' for women who wish to resign from their jobs is that only a limited number of reemployment options would then await them. Many middle-aged Japanese women without particular skills or certification are confronted with this bleak reality (Gottfried, 2003; Sugimoto, 2003). According to Mayumi's account, her friend rhetorically solves this dilemma by embracing a 'Women as natural caregivers' repertoire and constructing an identity in accordance with hegemonic femininity through positioning herself as a 'devoted' wife and 'dutiful' mother.

Mayumi positions her friend as accepting the full-time homemaker subject position offered by a 'Women as eventually domestic' IR and thus constructing subjectivity which aligns with hegemonic femininity.

Later in the interview, Mayumi formulates an account where getting married and raising children are part of a 'natural' life course:

*Extract 4*

546 Justin: I'm reading a book *The Terms of Marriage*. The author thinks that the  
547 average age of marriage is gradually increasing because women want someone who  
548 will support them financially and this type of man is difficult to find. What do you  
549 think of this?

550 Mayumi: I can understand it. In my case, I ended up getting married at 22. Ended

551 up, I mean I got married at 22. At about 23. Though I was an adult in terms of my  
552 age, I was still very much a child. *Yappari* my thinking, how do I say it, was  
553 Since I was still young, I couldn't see the big picture. It was a matter of course to  
554 have and raise kids. I *isshokenmei* [worked with my whole heart] everyday  
555 everyday, even though I didn't have much money. I *isshokenmei* to spend each day.  
556 That was normal for us. Regarding late marriage, there are several women in my  
557 shop. As I said before, even though a woman who is around 43 has many formal  
558 introductions [to men].

559 Justin: Yes.

560 Mayumi: Like informal introductions. Even though she is informally introduced to  
561 many men, as your age gradually increases, once you pass 30, *yappari* you have  
562 many requirements, salary and needless to say interests don't match. Many different  
563 requirements, but at the very least your interests are different. For example, you  
564 have to live with his parents (laugh). You have many requirements and there's a  
565 good chance you don't marry. For that reason, the feeling, how do I say it? Since  
566 you didn't initially fall in love with that person because it's an introduction, you  
567 won't think, "I want to date this person."

Mayumi initially orients away from the topic I introduce about '*bankon*' ('late marriages') and instead produces an account of marriage for women of her generation. She self-repairs (Schegloff, et al., 1977) '*kekkon chatta*' ('I ended up getting married') with '*kekkon shita*' 'I got married' (ll. 550-551) which stresses her active choice to marry. Despite her apparent positive decision, Mayumi constructs herself as 'still very much a child' (l. 552) and her naiveté ('I couldn't see the big picture') is constructed as 'commonsense' through the use of *yappari* (see section 5.4.2). Mayumi draws on a stage of life device (ll. 553-556; see section 5.3) to construct marriage and raising children as category-bound activities for young women, i.e. a 'normative' life trajectory involves devoting much effort to getting married and raising a family during your early twenties.



The lexical item *'isshokenmei'* (l. 554) is frequently invoked in conversation to emphasize that one is exerting tireless effort to accomplish a task (Davies & Ikeno, 2002; Sugimoto, 2003). Apparently, 'working with your whole heart' is gendered and involves having and raising children for women. The question remains as to who defines and benefits from this 'natural course'. I propose that the construction of marriage and childbirth as a 'matter of course' suggests that Mayumi is at least drawing in part on a 'Women as natural caregivers' repertoire. What Mayumi is doing is working up an account of hegemonic femininity for women of her generation, which she later uses as a category contrast (see section 5.3) to emphasize what women today are not doing and support her overall account of women as natural caregivers. Mayumi positions herself as embracing this repertoire and manages a positive self-presentation (see section 2.1.4) as embodying hegemonic femininity through her reported actions of marrying young and raising her children.

Mayumi's account of hegemonic femininity for women of her generation further serves to highlight and criticize what women of today are not doing. She uses this account to construct a category contrast between women of her generation and women today. In line 556, Mayumi reintroduces my topic of 'late marriages' and distinguishes between 'formal' (l. 557) and later 'informal' (l. 560) introductions.

‘Formal introductions’ refers to the not uncommon practice of arranged marriages (Sugimoto, 2003). In arranged marriages, while the initial meeting between prospective marriage partners is arranged by an intermediary, the couple decides whether or not the courtship will continue and ‘informal introductions’ refers to blind dates arranged by friends. Mayumi’s account then proceeds to the issues facing women who ‘delay’ marriage: as your age increases, so do the conditions you set for marriage (ll. 561-562), which is constructed as commonsense knowledge through *yappari*. In addition, dissimilar interests are provided as evidence for why women tend not to marry later in life. (ll. 562-563). Finally, negated hypothetical reported thought (see section 5.2.8) is used to convey the subtext that as your age increases, so does the likelihood that you will remain single (ll. 556-557).

Mayumi’s construction of hegemonic femininity for women of her generation has a dual function. First, she is able to manage a positive self-presentation as a ‘good’ wife and ‘wise’ mother, the cornerstone of hegemonic femininity (see section 2.5.3). This self-presentation is accomplished by creating an account of how she engages in the category-bound activities of marrying and bearing and raising children, which follows a ‘normal’ life cycle (see section 5.3). Accordingly, her constructed account is not a neutral move, but one in which Mayumi has an invested interest (see section 3.2.3) in

presenting herself to me as conforming to hegemonic femininity. In other words, her rhetorical actions are in line with those that constitute hegemonic femininity. Second, by constructing hegemonic femininity for women of her generation, she is also indirectly criticizing younger women today as failing to embody hegemonic femininity by highlighting that they are not following a ‘normal’ stage of life trajectory. Mayumi’s own reported actions stand in sharp contrast and accentuate what women of today are not doing.

Excerpts from Mayumi’s interview illustrate how hegemonic femininity is discursively constructed by drawing on a range of discursive devices. Mayumi draws on a ‘Women as natural caregivers’ IR and positions women as wives and mothers. Discursive evidence which suggests that she is drawing on the repertoire is suggested by her uncritical use of the phrase ‘maternal instinct’, which she proffers as sufficient basis to position women as mothers through an idiomatic phrase, ‘say it all’. In extract two, Mayumi extends this positioning of women through the use of the proverb ‘what’s learned in the cradle is carried to the grave’ to stress the vital role that mothers play in their children’s early development. In extract three, she draws on reported speech to construct an account where her friend possesses agency to choose a domestic role due to ‘practical considerations’ which make combining fulltime work with motherhood

impractical. By constructing an account of her friend, Mayumi is able to further support her claim that children require a full-time, stay-at-home mother while maintaining her ‘neutrality’. In her friend’s account, there is also a discursive absence of a ‘Shared parenting’ repertoire which further suggests that parenting is gendered in modern Japan. In extract four, we see how Mayumi draws on the ‘stage of life device’, ‘*isshokenmei*’ (work with your whole heart), and category contrasts to construct a normative life trajectory and present ‘late marriages’ as ‘deviating’ from this course (see section 5.3). *Yappari* is used throughout the interview to construct full-time motherhood as ‘commonsense’. Mayumi draws on all these devices to discursively construct hegemonic femininity.

In section 6.2.1, I have addressed research question one, i.e. ‘What *interpretative repertoires* do participants draw on as they discursively construct (a) *hegemonic femininity*?’ I demonstrated how Mayumi draws on a ‘Women as natural caregivers’ IR to discursively construct hegemonic femininity.

Research question 1(a) asks: ‘What discursive features are associated with *interpretative repertoires* constituting (a) *hegemonic femininity*?’ Mayumi draws on a ‘maternal instinct’, proverb, reported speech (see section 5.2), category entitlement (see section 5.3) and *yappari* (see section 5.4) to construct women as natural caregivers,

thereby suggesting that she is drawing on a ‘Women as natural caregivers’ IR.

Research question 1(b) asks: ‘What *subject positions* (self and other) do participants take up in relation to *interpretative repertoires* constituting (a) *hegemonic femininity*?’ Mayumi discursively positions herself, her friend, and other women her age as conforming to hegemonic femininity by taking up the position of ‘good’ wife and ‘wise’ mother, and positioning those women who are ‘delaying’ their marriages as outside her construction of hegemonic femininity.

In response to research question two, i.e. ‘Is there evidence of *ideological dilemmas* generated from contradictions between different *interpretative repertoires* in participants’ discourse?’ I have shown how ‘Women as natural caregivers’ can become dilemmatic for women attempting to construct subjectivity outside of hegemonic femininity. An ideological dilemma was suggested in extract three where Mayumi’s friend attempts to construct a ‘working mother’ subjectivity, but Mayumi draws on a practical considerations argument to resist this subjectivity.

In the next section, I address the second repertoire, ‘Women as eventually domestic’, which was initially identified and named as a discourse (Sunderland, 2004), and its connection with hegemonic femininity. This repertoire also relates to research questions 1, 1(a), and 1(b) in that participants drew on and assumed subject positions in

relation to ‘Women as eventually domestic’ as they constructed subjectivities in line with hegemonic femininity.

### **6.3 ‘Women as eventually domestic’**

In this section I present extracts from an individual interview with a working professional, Akiko, and two group interviews with students. I have selected these participants to illustrate how women of different ages draw on and assume subject positions in relation to a ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoire and in the process constructed hegemonic femininity. However, not all participants uniformly accept the ‘commonsense’ offered by the repertoire, which highlights individuals’ agency to assume resistant subject positions in relation to interpretative repertoires.

#### **6.3.1 Akiko: Resisting Hegemonic Femininity**

At the time of the interview, Akiko was forty-two years old, married with a four-year old, and a university lecturer. Akiko’s account constructs women’s social roles as managing the dual pursuits of career and domestic responsibilities; nevertheless, she maintains that women are more accountable to the domestic role than are men:

*Extract 5*

27 Justin: What do you think about women’s roles today?

28 Akiko: Women’s roles today. If you think about what I said before, then I think  
29 [their role] is to do housework and work alongside men. But I think there is a chance  
30 that looking after the children and taking care of the neighborhood affairs becomes  
31 the role of women as long as men are busy [with their work].

32 Justin: Do you think that workplaces are equal?

33 Akiko: I think that school teachers are probably equal. But it's not about whether or  
34 not a particular school is equal. For example, women need to pick up their children  
35 from nursery school by six o'clock. I think it's unfair that due to this women are not  
36 given important responsibilities or their workload is decreased.

37 Justin: Does the same apply to schools?

38 Akiko: I don't think that it's necessarily a problem with particular workplaces.

In Akiko's account, membership in the category 'woman' involves the category-bound activities (see section 5.3) of 'housework' and 'work alongside men' (l. 29). Nonetheless, Akiko suggests that the burden of domestic work still falls on women's shoulders. The result of men's reported busyness at work is that women 'look after the children' and 'take care of the neighborhood affairs' (l. 30). Paralleling Mayumi's account, in Akiko's there is a discursive absence of a 'Shared parenting' IR.

Significantly, Akiko takes a resistant subject position in relation to a 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoire; she says: 'women need to pick up their children from nursery school at six o'clock' (ll. 34-35). 'Need to' implies a critique of society's automatic assumption that women perform this task. This 'commonsense' (see section 5.4.2) assumption is embodied in a 'Women as eventually domestic' IR, which Akiko discursively resists by evaluating the practice of reducing women's work-related responsibilities as 'unfair' (l. 35).

Akiko attributes these gendered category-bound activities to structural inequalities that exist on the level of the gender order (see section 2.3) which structures

Japanese society. In Akiko's words, 'it is not about whether or not a particular school is equal' (ll. 33-34) or 'particular workplaces' but about the premise that women perform domestic work because 'men are busy' (l. 31) with their jobs.

In the next extract, Akiko discusses how even at the workplace women are sometimes expected to perform 'feminine' duties such as serving tea, which she apparently opposes:

*Extract 6*

154 Justin: Do you think that women can resist social pressure?

155 Akiko: I think that if women have the mind to, they can do it. It might be an  
156 overstatement to say that many can. Japanese women of my generation did not go  
157 as far as wanting to resist [social pressure]. I'm the same way. *Yappari* the feeling  
158 that because you're a woman, do such and such is big. If someone says, "Because  
159 you're a woman, if you don't make the tea..." I hate it. But when someone says,  
160 "you can't do this job because you need to go and pick up your kids", I think it's  
161 true. There are many people who think this way. I do too.

162 Justin: How do you think your female students feel about this?

163 Akiko: I feel that this conservative tendency is even stronger. I think it's a social  
164 or economic issue. But I have the feeling that women want to get married early, quit  
165 their jobs and become professional homemakers even more so than people in my  
166 generation. But I'm not sure of the exact number.

167 Justin: What do you make of this?

168 Akiko: Because they don't have their own dreams. They get a job either to  
169 contribute to the family budget or buy personal items.

In this extract, Akiko discursively resists the 'commonsense' within 'Women as eventually domestic' by drawing on hypothetical reported speech, membership categories, and *yappari* (see sections 5.2-5.4). Akiko prefaces her claim that gender-category membership is the basis for women performing unspecified



category-bound activities ('because you're a woman, do such and such': l. 158) with *yappari* to emphasize that these gendered category-bound activities are accepted as 'commonsense' (see section 5.4.2). She next invokes hypothetical reported speech (see section 5.2.8) to criticize gender as the basis for assigning women to the task of making tea ("because you're a woman, if you don't make the tea..." I hate it; ll. 158-159). Framing the assumption that women make tea within hypothetical reported speech and then criticizing it ('I hate it') demonstrates how hypothetical reported speech can be used to construct a hypothetical situation, i.e. women should make tea, which the speaker can then criticize. Akiko's negative assessment of this hypothetical scenario suggests that she is taking up a resistant subject position in relation to 'Women as eventually domestic' and ultimately to hegemonic femininity.

Akiko further extends her argument that women are positioned in domestic roles by applying 'Women as eventually domestic' to the workplace. She comments on the gendered assumption that women pick up their children and its repercussions for their career advancement: ("you can't do this job because you need to go and pick up your kids" (l. 160). Although Akiko would reportedly resist being asked to make tea (ll. 158-159), she concedes that many working women are expected to—and do—pick up their children ('I think it's true'; ll. 160-161). Notably, working women are still

expected to privilege their maternal role while men give precedence to their careers.

In the next part of the account, Akiko discursively positions university students as accepting the ‘commonsense’ offered by a ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoire. She refers to a ‘conservative tendency’ (l. 163) where women are choosing to forgo a career in exchange for a domestic role. However, she does not attribute this to structures of gender inequality, but to young people lacking dreams (‘because they don’t have their own dreams’; l. 168).

The reason why Akiko positions university students as accepting the subject position of ‘professional homemaker’ offered by ‘Women as eventually domestic’ is clearer in the next extract:

*Extract 7*

180 Justin: So in one sense choosing to become a professional homemaker is easier than  
181 working?

182 Akiko: My generation was heavily influenced by Women’s Lib and feminism. We  
183 *sugoku isshokenmei* [worked really hard with our whole hearts] because the Equal  
184 Employment Opportunity Law had just been passed. Men ended up continuing as  
185 they always had. We felt fortunate [to be working] so we had to do the housework  
186 as well as our jobs. The generation that saw this are now university students. So  
187 they don’t think they will go to the extent where they do housework and a job. They  
188 choose to become professional homemakers because *yappari* they hate the fact that  
189 it’s OK for their fathers only to work, while their mothers are expected to work and  
190 do housework. Those who work choose not to get married. I think they’ve become  
191 more conservative because one generation has seen this pattern. We didn’t know. At  
192 any rate, women in my generation were so happy to be working that we were a  
193 generation that thought we needed to do the housework.

Akiko draws on a category contrast (see section 5.3) to construct a contrastive

account between women of her generation (Akiko is 42 years old) and those of today, highlighting how women of both generations are similarly positioned by ‘Women as eventually domestic’. The intensifier ‘*sugoku*’ (‘really’) prefaces ‘*isshokenmei*’ (‘with our whole hearts’; l. 183) to stress the tireless effort exerted by women of Akiko’s generation (Davies & Ikeno, 2002; Sugimoto, 2003). Unlike men who were ‘continuing as they always had’ (ll. 184-185), women ‘had to’ do housework in addition to their ‘day’ jobs. Notably, there is again a discursive absence of a repertoire which positions men and women as equally responsible for housework or a ‘New man’ repertoire (see Benwell, 2002; Edley & Wetherell, 1999).

Akiko discursively positions women today as possessing agency in their refusal to combine paid with domestic work (l. 187). *Yappari* prefaces the comment, ‘it’s okay for their fathers only to work, while their mothers are expected to work and do housework’ (ll. 188-190) to emphasize that this is ‘commonsense’ inherent to a ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoire, which they reportedly resist: ‘they hate’. Women who do desire careers are also presented as agentive as they reportedly ‘choose’ to remain single (l. 190). Notably, the dual pursuits of career and family are not easily combinable for women, so ‘career or family’ is also an IR for women.

In Akiko’s account, women of both generations are positioned as caregivers

within a 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoire. The somewhat 'naïve' women of the 1980s ('we didn't know'; l. 191) reportedly felt 'fortunate' to finally have the opportunity to work. However, 'Women as eventually domestic' positions these women as homemakers regardless of their occupational status. In extracts five and six, we see how women are expected to leave work early because they 'need to' pick up their children from school. In extract 7, domestic obligations are conveyed with 'we were a generation that thought we needed to do the housework' (l. 193). 'Need to' suggests that Akiko is referring to the 'commonsense' of a 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoire, which she constructs as the reported thought of an aggregate (see section 5.2.7). Reporting the thoughts of a group here constructs the expectation that women perform domestic work as 'commonsense' for women of her generation and thus corroborates her claim. In Akiko's account, for women today, the subject position of 'professional homemaker' is made to appear more appealing than that of a 'superwoman' who balances the conflicting demands of a career with the 'second-shift' (Hochschild & Machung, 2003) of domestic responsibilities due to the discursive absence of a repertoire which positions women and men as equally responsible for domestic duties.

Akiko's account next moves into the topic of the long working hours which are normative in Japan (Mouer & Kawanishi, 2005; Sugimoto, 2003). In the extract below

she discusses after-hours socializing:

*Extract 8*

302 Akiko: The way of thinking might be a little old-fashioned at Bunri University, but  
303 if I say, “Let’s hit the next bar” someone would say “Your husband’s waiting, so  
304 why don’t you go home?”

305 Justin: Have you ever been told that?

306 Akiko: Yeah, I’ve been told that before. But if someone else says that then you can  
307 go home early. But especially when you have a child and even attend a meeting and  
308 someone says, “It’s OK to go and pick up your child” and are sent home early and  
309 then important jobs don’t come your way. I think there’s an assumption at a regular  
310 company you’d be passed over for promotion. But my friend comes home after  
311 midnight even though she’s married and has a family. Even though she has a child.  
312 She was born and raised in England but spent elementary and junior high school in  
313 Japan and after that lived in the United States. She’s fine with that, but she’s  
314 probably a special case. As far as I know, I think the general consensus is that you  
315 aren’t expected to go [out drinking] and don’t go as long as your child’s small.  
316 *Yappari* many things are extremely equal in the educational world. There isn’t that  
317 much male-female discrimination. For example, we can go home at five and both  
318 men and women regularly submit articles for publication. I don’t think there are so  
319 many merits to attached to being a woman or man.

In this extract we also see the workings of ‘Women as eventually domestic’.

Akiko positions herself as a ‘fellow employee’ when she reports herself as saying, ‘let’s hit the next bar’ (l. 303); however, her colleague reportedly draws on a ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoire, positioning women as wives and mothers, by saying, ‘your husband’s waiting, so why don’t you go home’ (ll. 303-304). Akiko conveys the central point of her narrative through hypothetical reported speech (see section 5.2.2; 5.2.8). We can see interdiscursive ‘traces’ (Talbot, 1998) of ‘Women as eventually domestic’ in extracts 5, 6, and 7 when Akiko references the category-bound activities

(see section 5.3) of looking after children and taking care of neighborhood affairs (l. 30), picking up children from school (l. 160), and doing housework (l. 190).

Akiko is careful to distinguish between leaving a social event early, which she apparently appreciates (ll. 306-307) from the repercussions of leaving a meeting early, when ‘important jobs don’t come your way’ (l. 309). Akiko draws on reported speech yet again to convey the central point of her narrative (‘it’s okay to go and pick up your child’; l. 308), i.e. women are positioned as mothers within a ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoire. Reported speech is a discursive resource which strengthens Akiko’s claim that others such as her colleagues position women within a ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoire (see section 5.2.3).

Akiko next discusses a friend who, despite having a family, is still reportedly held to the same responsibilities as her male colleagues, e.g. working late (ll. 310-311). In her case, gender-category membership does not exclude her from the category-bound activities of corporate employees. The inclusion of this ‘special case’ (l. 314) who does not represent most Japanese women, i.e. she grew up abroad, functions to strengthen her claim that most women are ‘released’ from work-related obligations due to their assumed domestic duties (ll. 314-315), thus her friend can be seen as the exception which ‘proves the rule’.

In the last part of the account, Akiko claims that almost egalitarian gender relations are normative in education (l. 316). *Yappari* constructs this near-equality as ‘commonsense’ (see section 5.4.2) and supports her earlier formulation (‘I think that school teachers are probably equal; extract 6; l. 33). Thus, women and men teachers are reportedly positioned as the same within an ‘Equal employment opportunities’ repertoire. Education is presumably a special case because job responsibilities are not distinguished by gender as they are in regular companies where many women work as ‘OLs’ and men as ‘salarymen’ (see section 1.3).

If we accept that discourse reflects the symbolic dimension of gender relations, i.e. the way we define masculinity and femininity (see section 2.5), then discourse is arguably one area where non-discursive aspects of gender relations are also reflected, e.g. power, production, and emotional relations (see section 2.2). In Akiko’s discursive account of schools, power relations between male and female teachers are equal, thus Akiko’s account provides hope that more egalitarian gender relations are the benchmark of some institutional contexts, i.e. schools. Nevertheless, underpaid, ‘pastoral’ occupations such as school teaching are typically associated with femininity (Burr, 1998; Connell, 2002), so the fact that egalitarian gender relations are reportedly normative in some educational institutions does not provide hope that the hegemonic

gender order (see section 2.3) of Japanese society is in the midst of social transformation. In fact, Akiko's friend, who may have the status of 'honorary male' since she adapts to the working style set by men, suggests that in non-educational contexts egalitarian gender relations are not the norm. Akiko's account discursively supports previous research which has demonstrated that major social institutions are still overwhelmingly dominated by men (e.g., Connell, 2002). In Akiko's account, women who desire 'equal employment opportunities' need to balance the 'double-burden' of housework and a career which renders the notion of equal employment opportunities meaningless.

In the next part of this section, I present extracts from interviews with university students. While Akiko discursively positioned female university students as overwhelmingly taking up the professional homemaker subject position, we can now investigate the various positions such students themselves assume. The students' accounts are interesting because they assumed both complicit and resistant subject positions in relation to 'Women as eventually domestic'.

### **6.3.2 Yurika and Yuka: Gender Relations are Gradually Improving**

This first extract is from an interview with a dyad of first-year university students who were eighteen at the time of the interview:



*Extract 9*

24 Justin: How about women's roles today?

25 Yurika: In the past many women didn't go on to college, but now women are going  
26 to college in the same numbers as men, so they have careers. The number of women  
27 who *ganbaru* [work hard] in relation to their careers is increasing. *Yappari* you see  
28 this in the media and news, so viewers' ideas are changing. Women's choices are  
29 increasing. Their roles aren't changing though. They still do housework. The number  
30 of women who are working is increasing.

31 Yuka: But "*onna no hito dakara*" [because you're a woman] many things don't  
32 change.

33 Yurika: Women's ability to have children is something that doesn't really change.  
34 The reality is that women think a little bit about staying at home for awhile. Some  
35 basic things aren't changing.

36 Justin: Only women can have children, but both men and women are able to raise  
37 kids, right?

38 Yurika: If women use their maternity leave well, then probably they can take a little  
39 time off, have kids, and then go back to work. Since I have not been out in society  
40 yet, I don't really know that much about the childcare leave system. I don't know if  
41 women can use the system or not.

At the beginning of this extract we see traces of a 'Progressive view of history' repertoire (see Edley & Wetherell, 2001) which portrays society as progressing from a state of relative 'underdevelopment' to 'sophistication'. This repertoire is suggested by Yurika when she says, 'in the past many women didn't go to college, but now women are going to college in the same numbers as men' (ll. 25-26). Yurika prefaces her claim that the media is representing working women with *yappari* to construct this phenomenon as 'commonsense', thus bolstering her claim (ll. 27-28; see section 5.4.2).

A 'Progressive view of history' repertoire is sometimes employed to justify the current status quo and discourage social action because progress is ongoing and requires

time (Edley & Wetherell, 2001; Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Wetherell et al., 1987). In this repertoire, social development is constructed as ‘evolutionary’, thus certain inequalities are an inevitable part of this gradual process, i.e. women are underrepresented in managerial positions; however, these disparities, it is implied, will gradually cease to exist as society becomes increasingly egalitarian. Rhetorically, the repertoire can be deployed to rationalize current inequalities as simply ‘temporary’. Yurika and Yuka, however, do not use this repertoire to rationalize current gender inequalities, but instead they draw on the repertoire to compare social change with the apparently unchangeable, i.e. women’s reproductive capacity, thus constructing childcare as women’s ‘responsibility’, which effectively limits the degree of professional advancement women can attain. Notably, Yurika and Yuka’s account is essentialist in that not all women have children.

Yurika and Yuka thus draw on a ‘Progressive view of history’ IR in conjunction with a ‘Gender differences’ repertoire (see section 6.2) to construct a ‘natural order’ (Edley & Wetherell, 1999) that limits the degree to which women’s social advancement is possible. ‘Gender differences’ is suggested by the unmodified use of women: ‘their roles aren’t changing’ (l. 29), ‘some basic things aren’t changing’ (ll. 33-34), and most noticeably in the membership categorization device (see section 5.3) ‘*onna no hito*

*dakara*’ (because you are a woman’; l. 31). In Yurika’s account, membership in the category ‘woman’ involves the category-bound activities of ‘housework’ (l. 29) and ‘staying at home for awhile’ to raise children (l. 33).

In the final part of the exchange, I pose the provocative question, ‘only women can have children, but both men and women are able to raise kids, right’ (ll. 35-36) to encourage further elaboration on the limitations imposed by ‘natural’ differences. Notably, Yurika does not directly answer my question about men’s and women’s potentially shared parenting responsibilities, but instead ‘orients to’ the ways in which women can manage the ‘double-burden’ of paid and non-paid work (ll. 37-38). The ‘commonsense’ of ‘natural’ differences which positions women in a domestic role rationalizes the status quo and discourages the emergence of a ‘Shared parenting’ repertoire.

In contrast to Akiko, who took up a resistant subject position in relation to a ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoire, Yurika and Yuka appear to position themselves within what we can call a ‘professional homemaker’ subject position. Although the reason why university-aged women accept the homemaker position is not specifically articulated in Yurika and Yuka’s interview, Akiko had attributed university students’ unwillingness to juggle the ‘double-burden’ of domestic and non-domestic

work as a reason for their choice, but the reason why is unclear from their interview. Although it is unclear from their interview whether Yurika and Yuka assume the ‘homemaker’ or ‘superwoman’ subject position, they can be seen as constructing their subjectivity in line with hegemonic femininity (see section 2.5.3) because they accept the ‘commonsense’ offered by a ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoire which positions women in a domestic role irrespective of their non-domestic responsibilities.

### **6.3.3 Reiko, Manami, Moeko: Challenging Hegemonic Femininity**

The third group of extracts is from an interview with a group of three university seniors who were then twenty-two. Reiko, Manami, and Moeko. Their extracts are interesting because of the way they resist a ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoire through reported speech. In the first extract, Reiko complains about her father’s non-involvement in domestic affairs:

#### *Extract 10*

28 Justin: So you said that ideas about masculinity are changing, but have men’s ideas  
29 about things like housework and childcare changed?

30 Reiko: My dad definitely won’t do housework. Women should do housework. It’s  
31 not just because I’m a kid. It’s like, “because you’re a woman, why not do it? Even  
32 though I’m not doing anything, women should definitely do it”.

33 Moeko: My older brother is in his late twenties, so he’s slowly starting to think about  
34 marriage. If he gets married, they might both work. If he can’t cook, then it becomes  
35 a burden on his wife. So recently he’s started cooking.

36 Reiko: Come to think of it, *yappari* your brother has that way of thinking. I don’t  
37 think my dad thinks like that.

38 Manami: But it reflects his generation, don’t you think?

39 Reiko: Yeah and my mother understands that.  
40 Manami: Older men are probably thinking in that way. My dad doesn't cook either.  
41 Reiko: It's not "help out your mother", but "because you're a woman help out". It's  
42 like because he's a man it's okay not to help out.  
43 Manami: Not "help out your mother" but "you do it".  
44 Reiko: Men who live alone are probably different.  
45 Justin: Has he ever been '*tanshinfunin*' [transferred to a far-off post] before?  
46 Reiko: Yeah. It looks like he cooked, did housework and laundry during that time. I  
47 don't really know to what extent he actually cooked.

In contrast to Yurika and Yuka who do not challenge the 'naturalness' of women's domestic role, Reiko, Manami, and Moeko resist a homemaker subject position offered by a 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoire. Reiko produces the following strong claim about her father's refusal to do domestic work, 'my dad definitely won't do housework' (l. 30), which challenges the 'commonsense' intrinsic to a 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoire because it implies that he should. The membership categorization device, '*onna no hito dakara*' (because you're a woman; l. 31), which is presented within hypothetical reported speech, frames housework as a category-bound activity that women engage in (see section 5.3). Reiko uses hypothetical reported speech in order to evidence her father's views about the division of domestic labor (see sections 5.2.3; 5.2.8).

Reiko, I argue, strategically employs reported speech not only to evidence but also to criticize her father's views of housework (see sections 5.2.3-5.2.4). Arguably, she is 'voicing' (see section 5.2.1) her father in order to offer up his purported 'gendered'

views to the other participants for them to negatively assess. She attempts to elicit their assessment on four occasions. First, she produces the statement, *'jibun ha nani mo yateinai no ni onna no hito ga zetai yaru beki da'* ('even though I'm not doing anything, women should definitely do it'; ll. 31-32). The 'critical' nature of this utterance is conveyed by *'nani mo'* ('anything'), which is an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) that 'upgrades' Reiko's negative assessment of her father's domestic contribution from minimal to non-existent and makes her account rhetorically stronger. The extreme case formulation may leave no doubt in her hearers' minds that her father makes no contribution whatsoever to domestic affairs. She discursively contrasts her father's lack of contribution with his expectation that women *'zetai yaru beki da'* ('should definitely do it') to criticize the sexist nature of his alleged views.

In the next turn (l. 33), Moeko does not evaluate Reiko's use of reported speech, but instead works up an account of her own brother which suggests that younger men's consciousness about domestic work is changing (ll. 33-35). Reiko continues by acknowledging Moeko's contribution (*'yappari* your brother has that way of thinking'; l.36), but then shifts the topic back to her father and explicitly asserts, 'I don't think my dad thinks like that' (l. 37). The shift back to the topic of her father represents Reiko's second attempt to elicit an evaluation of her critical account of her father. Nevertheless,

Manami orients to Moeko's contribution instead and proposes that Reiko's father is simply a product of his generation ('but it reflects his generation'; l. 38). Instead of supporting Reiko's account of her father, Moeko and Manami reconstruct and restrict Reiko's account as applicable to men of a certain age.

Reiko's third attempt to elicit an assessment of the account of her father is by criticizing him within reported speech ('it's not "help out your mother", but "because you're a woman help out"; l. 41). The account contrasts sex-based category-bound activities (e.g., preparing a meal) to elicit this assessment. Diverging from her previous turns, however, she not only reports speech, but also explicitly assesses that speech (ll. 41-42). Although she risks being seen as having a personal investment in criticizing her father, this explicit assessment may represent a fourth attempt to get the hearers to critically assess the account of her father. If so, this time Reiko is successful as Manami reproduces Reiko's reported speech which criticizes Reiko's father ('not "help out your mother" but "you do it"; l. 43). The critical nature of Manami's contribution is suggested by the use of the imperative 'you do it,' which was not present in Reiko's original utterance ('because you're a woman help out'; l. 41).

Reiko acknowledges that her comments may not apply to men who live alone (l. 44), which may strengthen her account. Discounting exceptions is an example of

‘particularization’ (Billig, 1987; see Section 6.2.1, Extract 1), which Reiko accomplishes by acknowledging exceptions, e.g. men who live alone and men like Moeko’s brother, which results in ‘particularizing’ her account to men of her father’s generation. ‘Particularization’ allows Reiko to formulate an account which is not simply a personal attack on her father, which could arguably be attributed to another reason, e.g. she is angry with him. Therefore, when seen with other considerations, Reiko’s use of reported speech reduces the chance that the other participants will view her as personally invested in criticizing her father and strengthens her overall account.

This example nicely illustrates the assessment function of reported speech and its use as a device to manage speaker accountability (see sections 3.2.3; 5.2.5). The first instance of reported speech is presented to Reiko’s interlocutors in order to elicit an evaluation from them (l. 31). The ‘critical’ and thus evaluative nature of Reiko’s reported speech is suggested by the extreme case formulation ‘anything’ and ‘should definitely do’ (l. 32) when Reiko formulates her father’s presupposition that women make domestic contributions. This initial attempt to solicit an evaluation is unsuccessful because Moeko formulates an account of her brother, which actually counters Reiko’s account (ll. 33-35). Reiko makes a second attempt to elicit the hearers’ assessment by switching the topic back to her own father and asserting that Moeko’s account is



inapplicable to him (l. 37). Manami, however, does not assess Reiko's father's reported views, but instead proposes that he is simply a product of his generation. Reiko's third attempt (l. 41) is upgraded by Reiko's explicit evaluation of her father (ll. 41-42). A potential reason why Reiko makes this assessment is because Manami and Moeko fail to pick up on her criticism, so she now more directly points them to the critical nature of her account. In contrast to Holt's (2000) findings, where speaker's explicit assessments follow hearer's assessments, Reiko directly assesses the reported speech. The case of Reiko does however support Buttny (1997) and Buttny and Williams (2000), who found that speaker's direct assessments can follow reported speech (see section 5.2.4). Reiko's final attempt, i.e. 'it's like because he's a man it's okay not to help out', is indeed successful as Manami orientates to it as a complaint and extends it further through reported speech ('not "help out your mother" but "you do it"'); l. 43).

The sequential location of the speaker's explicit assessment can be tied to speaker accountability. As Holt (2000) illustrates (see section 5.2.4), when a hearer first makes an assessment of a speaker's reported speech, the speaker can then produce an assessment which appears to be in response to it and thus to affiliate with the hearer. The speaker's accountability to the assessment is reduced and thus the speaker does not have a stake or interest (see section 3.2.3) in producing that assessment. In Reiko's

account, there are clues which indicate that she is formulating a criticism of her father, thus she is not simply the ‘neutral’ ‘animator’ of another ‘principal’s’ speech (see section 5.2.6). On the other hand, explicitly assessing the reported speech before the hearer’s assessment greatly increases the speaker’s accountability and the speaker risks being seen as having a personal investment in the assessment, e.g. that Reiko is criticizing her father because she has a bone to pick with him. We can see how Reiko’s initial attempts to elicit an assessment from Moeko and Manami are unsuccessful, her next strategy is the interactionally risky move of explicitly assessing the speech which does elicit the evaluation she is looking for. After Manami makes this assessment, Reiko attempts to distance herself from being seen as having a personal investment in criticizing her father by acknowledging that there are exceptions to her account. We see here then that reported speech is very much geared toward the interactional function of making an assessment and managing accountability.

In the next extract, Reiko and Manami further challenge the ‘commonsense’ of a ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoire:

*Extract 11*

134 Justin: Since you are planning to be a fulltime mother at least for a certain period of  
135 time, is it all right for your husband not to help out with the housework?  
136 Reiko: No, he needs to help out. My mother often says, “Even though you are tired  
137 from your job, the housework is waiting once you get home”. I suppose that applies  
138 to both full-time and part-time working women. For example, even if you are at

139 home for the whole day there is always so much to do. Men are thinking that since  
140 you are home all day there is plenty of time to relax.

141 Manami: My mom can't take time off all week. She has time off from her part-time  
142 job, but since she has housework to do, she has no time off. My dad rests when he's  
143 at home.

144 Reiko: Men think that because they're working at a company, it's okay to do  
145 nothing once they get home. "Because you're a member of this family, the chores  
146 you can do on your own, do them". My mom said that when she was cooking my  
147 dad said, "Can I help out". She seemed really disgusted. He thought something like,  
148 "I'm going to help out". She thought something like, "It's not 'can I help out' just  
149 pitch in". Men think that it's okay to do nothing. "My wife's cooking, but 'can I  
150 help out'". 'Can I help out'. It's not 'can I help out'. It's okay to help out. It's  
151 okay to help out. If it's okay to help out, then that means the mother is playing the  
152 central role. It's like it goes without saying. It doesn't go without saying. It just so  
153 happened that mom's cooking. It would be fine for dad to make dinner as well. It  
154 would be fine for him to cook.

Reiko uses reported speech to frame the central point of her narrative: housework is a task couples should share (ll. 136-137; see section 5.2.2). However, Reiko constructs 'company' men as not thinking this way, 'men are thinking that since you are home all day there is plenty of time to relax' (ll. 139-140)—reporting the thoughts of 'men' as an aggregate and criticizing their views about housework (see section 5.2.7). By reporting the thoughts of men as a group, Reiko frames the account which follows as not simply representative of her father but of the 'normative' thinking of most men, which she criticizes. Manami produces a turn which affiliates with Reiko's construction of men by constructing an affiliative account concerning her mother's fatigue and father's lack of involvement in domestic affairs (ll. 141-143). In contrast to

Manami's father, her mother is never able to rest because of ever present domestic responsibilities. In Reiko and Manami's critical accounts, 'housework' is a category-bound activity wrongly restricted to 'women' (see section 5.3).

Reiko uses Manami's turn to continue working up a critical account of men through both reported thought and reported speech. She uses reported thought to construct the account of her father's views about housework as representative of most men: 'men think that because they're working at a company, it's okay to do nothing once they get home' (ll. 144-145), and reported speech as evidence to support her claim that men in general (and her father in particular) position housework as women's duty, which she contests: "because you're a member of this family, the chores you can do on your own, do them" (ll. 145-146). The critical nature of her account is suggested by the entire utterance and particularly the imperative, 'do them', which she directs at her father. Reiko's direct criticism of her father is interactionally risky because she sets herself up for the charge of having a stake or interest (see section 3.2.3) in criticizing her father and being 'unaffiliative'. Nonetheless, she attempts to avoid this by first reporting the thoughts of men as a group (ll. 144-145), perhaps to make it appear as though she does not have a stake in specifically criticizing her father. To further support her claim that men position women as responsible for domestic work, she reconstructs a

narrative originally constructed by her mother (ll. 146-154).

At the onset of the narrative, Reiko reports her father's speech, '*tetsudaou ka*' ('can I help out'; l. 147). This utterance becomes the basis from which Reiko formulates a critical account of her father. Reiko constructs her mother's assessment of 'can I help out' as '*sugoi mukatsuku rashi*' ('she seemed really disgusted'; l. 147). By constructing the assessment of her father's utterance as generated from her mother, Reiko reduces her own accountability when it comes to the criticism of her father, her mother's reported assessment supporting Reiko's critical account of her father. In other words, Reiko's mother's assessment of her father's reported speech functions to support Reiko's own assessment of her father and men in general.

Reiko next interprets her parents' thoughts about 'can I help out' (ll. 148- 149). Although Reiko's father offered to 'help out', her mother expected him to '*yaru mitai*' ('pitch in'; ll. 148-149). Reconstructing the thoughts of her parents is an interactionally risky move because it is impossible to know for certain what others think. Again, Reiko risks being seen as having a personal investment in criticizing her father, i.e. a bone to pick with him regarding another issue. However, she avoids this charge by mitigating their reported thoughts with 'something like' in lieu of the more direct 'they thought'. 'Something like' provides Reiko with the rhetorical flexibility to make a claim about her

parents' thoughts, while at same time it reduces her accountability for those thoughts, i.e. 'something like' is deniable while 'they thought' is not. Their reported thoughts also function to reassert the previously stated central point of her narrative, 'men think it's okay to do nothing' (ll. 144-145).

Reiko next problematizes the embedded assumptions in 'can I help out' (l. 148) and produces an extended complaint sequence about her father in particular and men in general ('men think that it's okay to do nothing'; l. 149). 'Help out' entails the peripheral role of an assistant (her father), whereas her mother plays the primary role. Reiko repeats her father's reported 'can I help out' and then explicitly criticizes it through negation: '*tetsudaoukajyanakute*' ('it's not "can I help out"'); l. 150). Therefore, she does not simply present the reported speech to the hearers to elicit their evaluation, but instead directly criticizes her father's reported peripheral role ('it's not "can I help"'). A direct assessment is rhetorically risky because Reiko is assuming a very clear stance in relation to the reported speech, i.e. that her father is wrong. One reason why she may have performed this direct criticism is because it is in relation to her mother's account and not an account which Reiko constructed and might be seen as having a personal investment in blaming her father, i.e. she has another bone to pick with him. Since Reiko's mother first reportedly criticizes her husband ('she seemed really

disgusted'; l. 147), Reiko can now 'safely' construct her own criticism as a response to her mother's assessment. Rhetorically, Reiko's mother's account functions to bolster Reiko's reported claim that men view housework as 'women's work', e.g. 'women should do housework' (Extract 11; l. 30). Reiko continues to problematize 'can I help out' by proclaiming '*sore ha atarimaijyanai*' ('it does not goes without saying'; l. 152) that women are primarily responsible for the management of domestic affairs, thus building up her account. Instead, Reiko constructs her mother cooking as 'happenstance' and maintains that her father is equally capable of cooking, implying that if he can cook, he should ('it's fine for him to cook'; ll. 153-154).

The extracts in section 6.3 have demonstrated how reported speech is a discursive device which can be used to or can function as evidence to support individuals' claims and thus corroborate accounts. In extract five, Akiko claims that while women today have careers, they are still expected to assume the greater burden of childcare (l. 30). In extracts six and eight she claims that women are 'released' from work-related responsibilities due to their assumed domestic burden, which she authenticates by 'voicing' a colleague (ll. 160; 309) in lieu of simply stating the assumption as her own opinion, and in doing so positions her colleague as drawing on a 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoire in his conceptualization of gender-based

roles. Similarly, Reiko uses the reported speech of her father as evidence for her claim that men conceive of domestic work as women's responsibility, which she criticizes (extract 10; l. 31). The evidential function of reported speech is even more apparent in extract eleven where Reiko reconstructs her mother's reported account of her husband's assumption that women perform domestic work. Reiko's claim that men position women as 'domestic' was initially demonstrated by 'voicing' her father (extract 10), which was then further corroborated by 'voicing' her mother (extract 11). For both Akiko and Reiko, simply stating their claims in the form of an opinion, i.e. men believe that women should do domestic work, would not have been as rhetorically effective as using reported speech or thought. Reported speech and thought can thus be rhetorical devices which strengthen one's claims and thus corroborate accounts.

The accounts of Akiko, Reiko, Moeko, and Manami also illustrate how reported speech is a discursive phenomenon that involves drawing on and assuming subject positions in relation to interpretative repertoires. Akiko contested a 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoire by evaluating the expectation that women are expected to leave work early in order to pick up their children from school and consequently are passed over for promotion as unfair (Extract 5, ll. 35-36; Extract 6, l. 160). By rejecting a professional homemaker subject position and adopting a superwoman position, Akiko



attempts to challenge hegemonic femininity as a subjectivity located exclusively in the domestic realm to an identity that is situated in both domestic and non-domestic spheres (see also Chapter 8). Reiko, Manami and Moeko also resist a professional homemaker subject position when Reiko criticizes her father and many men's reported assumption that women should perform all the domestic work. Reiko, Manami, and Moeko concur that domestic work is the shared responsibility of husband and wife, thus they redefine hegemonic femininity as not only located in both domestic and non-domestic roles, but also domestic work is shared between spouses. These accounts illustrate how individuals do have agency to contest the hegemonic gender order articulated by a 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoire and construct gender subjectivities outside of hegemonic femininity.

In this second part of Chapter 6, I have attempted to address research question number one, i.e. 'What *interpretative repertoires* do participants draw on as they discursively construct (a) *hegemonic femininity*?' 'Women as eventually domestic' is an interpretative repertoire participants use to discursively construct hegemonic femininity.

Research question 1(a) asks, 'What discursive features are associated with *interpretative repertoires* constituting (a) *hegemonic femininity*?' Participants' use of the explicit category references, '*onna no hito dakara*' ('because you're a woman') and

category-bound activity of domestic work, suggest that membership categories are a discursive feature associated with ‘Women as eventually domestic’. The use of ‘*yappari*’ to construct gender ‘appropriate’ category-bound activities as ‘commonsense’ (see section 5.4.2) is another discursive feature associated with the construction of hegemonic femininity. Most noticeably, the participants heavily draw on ‘reported speech’ (see section 5.2); therefore, we can conceptualize this device as a main discursive feature associated with the construction of hegemonic femininity. In section 6.4, I discuss in more detail the role reported speech plays in the construction of hegemonic femininity.

Regarding research question 1(b), ‘What *subject positions* (self and other) do participants take up in relation to *interpretative repertoires* constituting (a) *hegemonic femininity*’, the participants demonstrate their agency by assuming different positions. Akiko (see extracts 5-8) takes up a ‘superwoman’ subject position which involves juggling the responsibilities of home and work. Yurika and Yuka (see extract 9) accept women’s performance of domestic work as ‘commonsense’ (see section 5.4.2); however, it is unclear from their interview whether they align with a ‘professional homemaker’ or ‘superwoman’ subject position. Reiko, Moeko, and Manami (see extracts 10-11) assume resistant subject positions in relation to the repertoire, reformulating ‘Women as

eventually domestic' to what we can call 'Domestic work as shared between spouses'.

My findings illustrate how hegemonic femininity is discursively constructed by drawing on and assuming subject positions in relation to a gendered 'Women as natural caregivers' and 'Women as eventually domestic' IR. I am not proposing that these findings are either unique to Japan or characteristic of all contexts in Japan. Making such a claim would run the risk of proposing an 'essentialist' conceptualization of Japanese hegemonic femininity as inherently different from other societies. In fact, other research has determined that women are positioned as responsible for domestic work irrespective of their career-related responsibilities (e.g., Hochschild & Machung, 2003; Lazar, 2000). The subjectivities of homemaker and superwoman can be viewed as subordinate to the 'masculine' 'full-time employee' who automatically receives domestic support which places him in an advantageous position over the 'superwoman' who struggles with the 'double-burden'. My findings exemplify the discursive construction of hegemonic femininity in the accounts of women of different ages. Hegemonic femininity quite conceivably materializes in different forms both inside Japan and within other CofPs (see section 2.1.2).

#### **6.4 The main discursive functions of reported speech and reported thought in the interpretative repertoires used to construct hegemonic femininity**

In this section, I focus on how my participants use reported speech and thought and hypothetical reported speech and thought to achieve various discursive functions and construct or resist hegemonic femininity (see section 2.5.3). I also discuss the rhetorical strengths and weaknesses of these.

#### **6.4.1 The discursive functions of reported speech and thought**

Reported speech is used as evidence to support a speaker's claim (see section 5.2.3). For example, Mayumi (extract 3) claims that the dual pursuits of motherhood and work are incompatible. In order to corroborate this claim, she voices her friend who attests to the unfeasibility of combining these twin pursuits (e.g., 'it's no good').

Reported speech is rhetorically stronger than reported thought because speech was ostensibly uttered by someone else while thought represents a speaker's construction and thus interpretation of another's thought since thought itself is not always verbally articulated. Accordingly, a claim produced within reported thought can be undermined on the grounds that it is impossible to know someone's thoughts. For instance, Reiko's (extract 10) claim that men think women should do housework could be discredited on the grounds that it is impossible for Reiko to know thoughts. However, Reiko rhetorically protects the authenticity of her claim by also using reported speech to explicitly evidence her father's views about housework, which she claims are

representative of most men's thinking. Since Reiko's interpretation of her father's purported views (reported thought) about housework is supported by reported speech, Reiko can conceivably make a claim about her father's thoughts about housework without it being undermined. Therefore, reported speech and thought can be deployed together to further corroborate a speaker's overall account (see also section 7.4.3)

A speaker can use reported speech to criticize someone else. For instance, Reiko (extract 11) presents her father as offering to help her mother with dinner preparations within reported speech. Reiko repeats her father's reported utterance, 'can I help out', which she uses as the basis of her criticism of his 'sexist' view that domestic work is women's responsibility. In this case, reported speech is rhetorically stronger than reported thought because speech explicitly evidences her father's purported views about housework. Reiko's criticism of her father would have been less rhetorically effective had she used reported thought, e.g. 'he thinks housework is women's responsibility', because thought represents Reiko's interpretation of her father's views. By utilizing reported speech, she reconstructs the 'actual' words which her father presumably uttered and then criticized them.

The reported thought of an aggregate is a more rhetorically effective form of support for a claim than the thought of an individual. For example, Reiko (extracts

10-11) claims that men think housework is women's responsibility. The reported speech of an aggregate (e.g. 'men say X') could be used to achieve a similar rhetorical purpose but would not have had the same rhetorical force. Whereas reported speech is provisional and uttered in a specific conversational setting, reported thought represents something deeper and more enduring (i.e. a belief system) and for this reason is an appropriate device to formulate a criticism. In Reiko's case, men do not simply comment that housework is women's responsibility, but instead this view is formulated as constituting part of their belief system. Accordingly, reporting the thoughts of an aggregate is a way to construct 'normativity' because a certain way of thinking is presented as representative of a group, which the speaker can then take issue with.

I suggested that reported thought is less rhetorically effective than reported speech from the standpoint that thought can be discredited. One way to rhetorically insulate against a claim being undermined is to use mitigated reported thought. For example, Reiko (extract 11), presents her father's offer to assist her mother with dinner within reported speech ('can I help out'), which she then interprets within mitigated reported thought ('he thought something like'). Mitigated reported thought allows Reiko to interpret her father's reported utterance and concurrently avoid claiming direct knowledge of his thoughts. While reported speech evidences her father's purported

views about domestic work, Reiko is able to provide an interpretation of those views through mitigated reported thought which corroborates her overall claim that men regard domestic work as women's responsibility.

#### **6.4.2 The discursive functions of hypothetical reported speech and thought**

Hypothetical reported speech is a rhetorically effective device to construct a hypothetical situation which illustrates the central point of a narrative (see section 5.2.8). For example, Akiko (extract 8) constructs a hypothetical scenario where she says to her colleague, 'let's hit the next bar' and he suggests that she go home. Akiko uses hypothetical reported speech to convey the main point of her narrative which is that her colleague positions women in domestic roles. Hypothetical reported speech is more rhetorically effective than hypothetical reported thought because Akiko can demonstrate her colleague's potential response to her suggestion to 'hit another bar', which illustrates his positioning of women in domestic roles. In this case, hypothetical reported thought (e.g., 'He thought I should go home) is less rhetorically effective because it conveys Akiko's interpretation of his thoughts versus hypothetical speech which 'stands alone' or 'speaks for itself' (e.g., 'Someone would say, "Your husband's waiting, so why don't you go home)').

A speaker can also use hypothetical reported speech to construct a hypothetical

situation which he or she then criticizes. For example, Akiko (extract 6) takes issue with the notion that women should make tea, which she presents within hypothetical reported speech ('if someone says, "Because you're a woman, if you don't make the tea..." I hate it'). In this case, hypothetical reported speech is more rhetorically effective than hypothetical reported thought because speech allows Akiko to criticize an utterance which could be uttered whereas she could not conceivably criticize thoughts which are not explicitly articulated, but reside within individuals (e.g., 'If someone thinks...').

A speaker can use hypothetical reported thought to support a claim. For instance, Mayumi (extract 4) claims that people who wait too long to get married will remain single. In this case, hypothetical reported speech could also have been used (e.g. 'you won't say, "I want to marry this person"'); however, as I mentioned in 6.4.1, thought indexes a speaker's belief system and is a more effective device to strengthen a speaker's account. Hypothetical reported thought allows Mayumi to present this person as having decided not to get married whereas hypothetical reported speech still allows for the possibility that the person may at some point change his or her mind and want to marry this person.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed how hegemonic femininity was discursively



constructed by different Japanese women (two individuals, a pair, and a group) who assumed heterogeneous subject positions in relation to ‘Women as natural caregivers’ and ‘Women as eventually domestic’ IRs. These subject positions included a professional homemaker, superwoman, and shifting between these positions. The repertoires were identified through the occurrence in respondents’ interview discourse of different discourse analytic devices: reported speech, membership categorization devices, and *yappari*, and particular uses of these which functioned to evidence claims, ‘naturalize’ gendered category-bound activities, and construct ‘commonsense’ (see sections 5.2-5.4) These repertoires reflect and arguably construct commonplace assumptions about Japanese hegemonic femininity within which women are positioned as ‘devoted’ wives and ‘dutiful’ mothers.

We also saw the emergence of ideological dilemmas generated from contradictions between interpretative repertoires (see section 6.2.1). Participants struggled with ideological dilemmas due to contradictions between ‘Women as natural caregivers’ and ‘Women as eventually domestic’, and repertoires which do not position women as making their social contribution in the domestic realm as expressed within the same interview. In extract four, Mayumi constructs an account where her friend faces a dilemma involving balancing her domestic roles with a career, which Mayumi

constructs as next to impossible. Thus, ‘Women as natural caregivers’ and ‘Women as eventually domestic’ can be seen as not providing women with much discursive space to construct subjectivities outside of hegemonic femininity in contexts where these repertoires are dominant.

This chapter also highlights the symbolic dimension of gender relations (see section 2.2.4). A gender differences IR (see section 6.2), I argue, is largely about the widespread practice of attaching social significance to women’s reproductive capacity. However, the consequences of this IR are far-reaching in that it positions women’s social contribution within the domestic realm or certain ‘pastoral occupations’, and bodily differences between men and women become the rhetorical rationale for legitimizing social inequalities (Weedon 1997).

The focus of Chapter 7 is also on the discursive construction of hegemonic femininity and presents discursive evidence of a ‘Privileged femininity’ and ‘Bounded femininity’ repertoire which participants drew on and assumed positions in relation to.

## **Chapter 7: Hegemonic Femininity Part II: ‘Privileged Femininity’**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This is the second of two chapters concerning the discursive construction of

hegemonic femininity (see section 2.5.3). Specifically, this chapter discusses a ‘Privileged femininity’ and a ‘Bounded femininity’ interpretative repertoire (IR) which participants draw on as they constructed subjectivities in line with hegemonic femininity. In this chapter I attempt to address research questions 1, 1(a), 1(b), and 2 (see section 6.1). ‘

In order to answer research questions 1, 1(a) and 1(b), I was attempting to identify interpretative repertoires that participants draw on, and position self and others in relation to, as they construct hegemonic femininity subjectivities. In the course of data analysis and categorization (see section 4.7), I noticed that participants discussed how ‘being a woman’ was advantageous in some situations while disadvantageous in others. In the course of my reading, I came across reference to a ‘Privileged femininity’ discourse (Kitetu & Sunderland, 2000), which seemed to apply to parts of my data. Through further reading, I discovered the related concept of ‘Bounded masculinity/unbounded femininity’ (Sunderland, 1995), which I also thought was applicable to my data and the concept could be further extended in my study. In this chapter, I extend the work of Kitetu and Sunderland (2000) and Sunderland (1995) in my identification, discussion and exemplification of a ‘Privileged femininity’ repertoire and ‘Bounded femininity’ repertoire.

‘Privileged femininity’ (Kitetu & Sunderland, 2000) was originally named in reference to discourse which maintains that female students deserve preferential treatment within classroom contexts in Kenya to compensate for past discrimination. A teacher who devotes more attention to female rather than male students during a science experiment is an example of this discourse in action (Kitetu & Sunderland, 2000).

Stemming from my own data analysis, I am defining ‘Privileged femininity’ as giving women preferential treatment which does not ultimately benefit them. Opening doors for women and related ‘chivalrous’ behavior, which exemplify ‘Privileged femininity’ are not necessarily meant to rectify past instances of gender discrimination as in the case of Kenya, but are often commonly accepted as ‘social etiquette’. Although such practices are preferred over misogyny or ‘negative’ gender discrimination, they are far from ideal since they presuppose women and men are inherently different and warrant differential treatment. Indeed, an action such as opening the door for women positions men in a protective and arguably superior position vis-à-vis women, thus disempowering them.

In my sample of relatively economically privileged participants, I show how ‘Privileged femininity’ manifests in two slightly different, but interrelated, forms. First, femininity can be seen as privileged when participants position themselves as fortunate

to be released from the pressure to excel academically and professionally compared to their male counterparts who face these pressures because of social expectation that they become family breadwinners.

‘Privileged femininity’ also manifests in another form. As an example, women are channeled into jobs such as receptionists or OLs (see section 1.3) where their youth and femininity are seen as resources which enhance their ability to work in customer relations (Gottfried, 2003). In this case, emphasizing one’s femininity ‘qualifies’ women for certain jobs within the service industry, i.e. in supermarkets and department stores (Kimoto, 2005). The other side of the coin of ‘Privileged femininity’ is that women are routinely excluded from managerial positions which incur more responsibilities, higher salaries, and arguably greater social prestige.

In her identification and naming of a ‘Bounded masculinity/unbounded femininity’ discourse, Sunderland (1995) proposes that in some ‘communities of practice’ (see section 2.1.2) the boundaries of femininity may be more fluid than those of masculinity. In these CofPs, girls can more easily engage in ‘gender crossing’ (Thorne, 1993) or participate in ‘boys activities’, while boys are not afforded the same luxury. Nevertheless, Sunderland is careful to point out that ‘Bounded masculinity/unbounded femininity’ is highly situated and in many communities of

practice femininity is much more 'bounded' or restrictive than masculinity, greater punishment for women who commit adultery in such contexts being a prime example.

Building on Sunderland's (1995) work, 'Bounded femininity' can be defined as situations where 'being female' somehow inhibits women's opportunities. In my sample, 'Bounded femininity' manifests in two slightly different, but interrelated, forms. First, femininity can be conceptualized as bounded when employers position women as 'temporary employees' because they will eventually resign and pursue full-time motherhood (see extract 17). Such employers can be seen as drawing on a 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoire and positioning women as 'wives/mothers' and working professions might be 'mutually exclusive' categories. The existence of a 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoire 'binds' women to domestic roles and prevents them from constructing other subjectivities.

Another form of 'Bounded femininity' is the relegation of women to 'feminine' duties within the workplace. For instance, Keiko and Michi (extract 18) draw on a 'Bounded femininity' repertoire in their claim that men position their women colleagues within 'motherly' roles as men reportedly expect women to serve the food at work-related social events. This reported expectation can be interdiscursively related to a 'Women as natural caregivers' repertoire (see section 6.2) because women are

expected to perform the ‘maternal’ function of serving food to others.

‘Privileged femininity’ and ‘Bounded’ femininity are ‘highly occasioned’ repertoires which are situated within specific communities of practice which need to be viewed with a critical eye. Women’s ‘privileges’ such as the ‘freedom’ to quit their jobs may initially appear as though ‘women have it better’; however, the ‘privileges’ associated with femininity are insignificant compared to the greater privileges associated with masculinity (e.g. material wealth and social prestige). The limits of ‘Privileged femininity’ become even more apparent when we consider how women are ‘bound’ to domestic roles or ‘feminine’ roles within the workplace. Significantly, ‘Privileged femininity’ and ‘Bounded femininity’ both position women in domestic-type and arguably subordinate roles, which indicate that these are not pro-female repertoires but in fact detrimental to women.

## **7.2 The role of ‘Privileged femininity’ in the construction of HF**

In Chapter 6 I characterized hegemonic femininity as being discursively supported by a ‘Women as natural caregivers’ repertoire and ‘Women as eventually domestic’ IR. ‘Privileged femininity’ is another manifestation of hegemonic femininity which is related to these. The ‘freedom’ women reportedly receive to resign from work can be rationalized on the basis that women, not men, are ‘natural caregivers’ who are

‘suited’ for domestic roles, which are not coincidentally unpaid and undervalued. ‘Privileged femininity’ more closely resembles the original definition of gender hegemony which is compliance through consent not coercion (see section 2.5.1) than ‘Women as natural caregivers’ and ‘Women as eventually domestic’ which more explicitly position women in a subordinate role. ‘Privileged femininity’ positions women as possessing agency to choose not to work; however, the only access route to this ‘privilege’ is through a domestic partnership where women remain financially dependent on their husbands. ‘Privileged femininity’ illustrates how gender hegemony can operate subtly through a repertoire which appears to empower women when in fact it disempowers them.

### **7.2.1 ‘Privileged femininity’ at high school and university**

In this section I present extracts from interviews which illustrate how participants draw on and take up subject positions in relation to ‘Privileged femininity’ in their discussions about high school and university. Not surprisingly, interviews with university students often focused on their educational experiences, so I have selected two extracts from separate interviews with university students which illustrate how femininity can be ‘liberating’ within the context of school. I first present an extract which describes how boys are reportedly pressured to excel in school while girls are not.



Then I present an extract with a student who takes up a resistant position to this lack of pressure and arguably to ‘Privileged femininity’.

In this first extract, Ai and Ayaka were university sophomores who were nineteen at the time of the interview:

*Extract 12*

129 Justin: Do you think that men and women are different?

128 Ayaka: Men have a stronger desire [than women] to face challenges.

129 Ai: Getting into college is a perfect example. There’s the way of thinking that since  
130 you’re a woman if you go to a university in Aichi prefecture, you can get a job. It’s  
131 unnecessary for a woman to go to the extent of becoming a *ronin* in order to enter a  
132 competitive university. *Yappari* there are women who have a university in mind that  
133 they want to go to. They’ll keep studying even if it means becoming *ronin*. I think  
134 that’s great. *Yappari* the ratio of men who think that way is greater. You hear about  
135 making a fresh start. Women have a stronger tendency to do the things they want to  
136 for the time being.

137 Ayaka: Men are thinking *yappari* that they have to support [their families]. For  
138 example, if they graduate from a university such as Nanzan the chances of landing a  
139 good job are higher. Many people are thinking that *yappari* women don’t need to  
140 exert themselves to that extent. Many people are thinking that if men don’t get a  
141 good job *yappari* that’s no good.

Ai draws on a ‘Privileged femininity’ repertoire when she positions women as free from the pressure to enter competitive universities and able to pursue the ‘things they want’—unlike men, who are default breadwinners. ‘Traces’ (Talbot, 1998) of the repertoire are first evident when Ai makes a reference to the category ‘*onna dattara*’ (since you’re a woman’; ll. 129-130) and category-bound activities (see section 5.3) of attending a local (versus a distant, more competitive) university (l. 130). Ai continues,

‘it’s unnecessary for a woman to go to the extent of becoming a *ronin* in order to enter a competitive university’ (ll. 130-132). ‘*Ronin*’ are high school students who fail a university entrance examination and spend a year or more preparing to resit the exam (Sugimoto, 2003). The ‘inference-rich’ nature of categories allows us to conclude that becoming a *ronin* and entering a competitive university are category-bound activities which apply to men and not women.

Ai next uses ‘particularization’ (Billig, 1987) as a rhetorical strategy by incorporating into her account women who desire admittance to competitive universities (132-133), but then constructs them as not representative of the masses, ‘*yappari* the ratio of men who think that way is greater’ (l. 134). *Yappari* formulates men’s but not women’s purported desire to enter prestigious universities as commonsense (see section 5.4.2). Ai also constructs ‘Men as breadwinners’ as commonsense through the use of *yappari* (‘Men are thinking *yappari* that they have to support [their families]; l. 137). *Yappari* and the discursive absence of a ‘Women as breadwinners’ repertoire position entering a competitive university and securing a good job as men’s category-bound activities. Men who fail to secure a decent job are reportedly viewed in the following way, ‘Many people are thinking that if men don’t get a good job *yappari* that’s no good; ll. 140-141). Women, by contrast, are reportedly ‘released’ from this expectation,

indicating that Ai is at least indirectly drawing on a ‘Privileged femininity’ repertoire, ‘Many people are thinking that *yappari* women don’t need to exert themselves to that extent’ (ll. 139-140). These reported category-bound activities reference a conventional domestic division of labor where women ‘care’ and men ‘provide’.

In the course of constructing her account, Ai discursively manages her own accountability to the claim that men and women are reportedly held to different expectations by positioning the claim as originating from ‘society’. She references a ‘*kangaekata*’ (‘way of thinking; ll. 129-130), which frames the claim that it is unnecessary for women to attend far-off, competitive universities as coming from society and is not simply representative of (or even necessarily) her own opinion. Ai further corroborates this claim by acknowledging exceptions, i.e. women with high educational aspirations (ll. 132-133). These women are formulated as ‘exceptions’ because ‘*yappari* the ratio of men who think that way is greater’ (l. 134). By making a more direct claim about ‘what men think’, Ai opens herself up to the charge of having a personal investment in this claim, i.e. she claims to know what is going on in men’s minds; she avoids this by positioning it as commonsense. Having acknowledged exceptions and articulated men’s views about educational success, she can then make a direct claim about women without being seen as having a stake or interest (see section

3.2.3) in the claim, ‘women have a strong tendency to do the things they want for the time being’ (ll. 135-136).

In the latter part of her account, Ai draws on reported thought of men as a group to further corroborate her claim that men and women face different expectations regarding their futures (see section 5.2.7). She first makes a direct claim, ‘men are thinking *yappari* that they have to support [their families]’ (l. 137). Making a direct claim about how men think is rhetorically risky because it could be argued that it is impossible for Ai to possess knowledge about men’s or indeed anyone’s thoughts. However, Ai draws on what could be named a ‘Men as breadwinners’ repertoire when she states that men think, ‘*yappari* that they have to support their families’ (l. 137). The repertoire is suggested by ‘*yappari*’ and the category-bound activity of supporting a family. The rhetorical ‘force’ of this repertoire supports her claim about men’s reported thinking and makes her account rhetorically stronger. She next claims that women are not reportedly expected to enter competitive universities: ‘many people are thinking that *yappari* women don’t need to exert themselves to that extent’ (ll. 139-140). Ai attributes this claim to ‘many people’ which functions rhetorically to position the claim as pertaining to most members of Japanese society, thus corroborating it. ‘Many people’ also functions to bolster her earlier claim that women with high expectations are

exceptions to the norm (ll. 132-133). Finally, Ai claims that ‘men as breadwinners’ is a repertoire that is not only available to men, but circulates in Japanese society, ‘many people are thinking that if men don’t get a good job *yappari* that’s no good’ (l. 140-141).

I next present an extract from an interview with Hiromi and Mariko who were university sophomores and nineteen at the time of the interview. In contrast to Ai and Ayaka, who did not explicitly resist ‘Privileged femininity’, Hiromi problematizes the ‘commonsense’ constructed by this repertoire:

*Extract 13*

139 Justin: What are the good points about being a woman?

140 Mariko: *Yappari* being cherished by others.

141 Hiromi: One more thing that I can think of is that my parents say to my older  
142 brother “study hard,” but they’ve never said that to me even once. They’ve said to  
143 me for a long time, “Because you’re a girl, it’s okay not to study.”

144 Mariko: Really?

145 Hiromi: When I was choosing a college they said, “Because you’re a girl, really,  
146 even a private college is fine. Anyplace is fine.”

147 Justin: Did they tell your brother to study hard?

148 Hiromi: They didn’t say, “study hard” but “if you don’t study, you won’t be able to  
149 land a good job in the future.” I was always told, “just do what you like. Women  
150 don’t need to worry about anything.” Everyone probably says that, but I wasn’t  
151 very happy when I heard it. You won’t do anything without some pressure.

152 Mariko: That’s true, but Hiromi you turned out all right.

153 Justin: You even studied abroad.

154 Hiromi: My parents let me do whatever I wanted. In a good way, I had a lot of  
155 freedom. On the other hand they never said, “Do such and such”. If my brother had  
156 asked to study abroad, there’s no way they would have let him.

157 Justin: Why do you think that is?

158 Hiromi: Because it might affect his future.

159 Justin: Do you think that women have more freedom than men?

160 Hiromi: People say that but I wonder really.

In this account, we can see the reported repercussions of privileged femininity in school. Mariko initially cites *'kawaiatteiru'* ('being cherished by others'; 1.140) as a positive aspect of being a woman, which is framed as 'commonsense' by *yappari*. While 'love' can semantically convey a couple's egalitarian relationship, *'kawaiatteiru'* may imply an unequal relationship, i.e. a father who cherishes his daughter. Likewise, if a woman is cherished by others, a further connotation may be that she is 'fragile' and requires protection by someone stronger than her. It is interesting that Mariko constructs being cherished by others, presumably men, as a positive aspect of femininity.

Hiromi next formulates an account where her parents' reportedly position her brother and her differently in terms of their expectations for their futures. Notably, Hiromi positively constructs a certain degree of pressure. She draws extensively on the reported speech of her parents coupled with membership categorization devices as evidence for her claim that providing children with too much freedom is not necessarily good (see sections 5.2-5.3). Gender-based category-bound activities are evident when Hiromi's parents reportedly tell her brother to "study hard", yet 'they've never said that to me even once' (line 142). By negating hypothetical reported speech (see section 5.2.7), Hiromi is arguably making a negative assessment of her parents' low expectations for her; that is, she is explicitly flagging what her parents have reportedly

never said to her but could and perhaps ‘should’ have. Hiromi’s parents reportedly tell her, ‘because you’re a girl, it’s okay not to study’ (l. 143). ‘*Onna no ko dakara*’ (‘because you’re a girl’) is an explicit reference to the category ‘girl’ and category-bound activity of not studying, which Hiromi expands upon further, ‘when I was choosing a college they said, “because you’re a girl, really, even a private college is fine. Anyplace is fine”’ (ll. 145-146). ‘*Doko demo* (‘anyplace’) is an ‘extreme case formulation’ (Pomerantz, 1986) which ‘upgrades’ her claim that she was not only reportedly ‘released’ from the pressure to enter a very competitive public university or less competitive private university, but told that any university is fine—implying where she studies and what she achieves academically is relatively unimportant.

Hiromi’s parents’ reported different expectations for their male and female children become even more apparent when she discusses her brother. Hiromi draws on a category contrast (see section 5.3) when she states the following concerning her parents’ expectations of her brother, “if you don’t study, you won’t be able to land a good job in the future” (ll. 148-149). These reported expectations stand in sharp contrast to those related to Hiromi, “just do what you like. Women don’t need to worry about anything.” (ll. 149-150). Through a category contrast Hiromi is able to explicate her parents’ disparate expectations of her and her brother. Within reported speech, Hiromi’s parents

position her brother as a future ‘breadwinner’ while she is positioned as supported by someone, presumably a husband. Within the category contrast, there is a further extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986), ‘anything’ (l. 150), which ‘upgrades’ her claim regarding her parents’ low expectations of her, in addition to the evidence provided by formulating their expectations within reported speech. Hiromi constructs their expectations of her as representative of the populace, ‘everyone probably says that, but I wasn’t very happy when I heard it. You won’t do anything without some pressure’ (ll. 150-151). ‘Everyone’ functions to support her claim because now her claim is formulated as not simply representative of her parents’ view of women but as an interpretative repertoire, which Hiromi negatively evaluates (‘I wasn’t very happy).

In the next part of the account, the reported repercussions of privileged femininity become even more apparent. While Hiromi positively evaluates her reported ‘freedom’ (‘In a good way, I had a lot of freedom’; ll. 154-155), at the same time she comments on the consequences of that freedom (‘they never said, “Do such and such” ’; l. 155). Hiromi arguably reconstructs what her parents reportedly never said in order to problematize their lack of expectations for her (see section 5.2.7). Her reported ‘freedom’ is extended even further to studying abroad; however, the reason why she was granted this freedom once again relates back to her parents’ different expectations of



their children. Hiromi's brother would not be allowed to study abroad for the following reason: 'because it might affect his future' (l. 158). This second reference to Hiromi's brother's future (also in l. 149) suggests that her parents are drawing on a 'Men as breadwinners' repertoire which positions her brother as a future provider. In the parents' reported account, there is no mention of Hiromi and the category-bound activities of entering a university or getting a job, which suggests that they are drawing on a 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoire (see section 6.2.2) in this reported positioning of Hiromi.

Similar to extracts 10 and 11, Hiromi's account illustrates how reported speech and membership categorization devices are discursive resources which individuals can draw on to resist the subject positions offered up by certain interpretative repertoires. I suggested that contrastive categorical references to Hiromi's brother versus 'girls', coupled with disparate category-bound activities, suggests that Hiromi is drawing on a 'Privileged femininity' repertoire. Hiromi uses reported speech in order to provide evidence of their reported disparate expectations of her and her brother. She resists their reported positioning of her by 'voicing' (see section 5.2.1) what they do not say; that is, she took issue with the discursive absence of a 'Women as breadwinners' repertoire which would have positioned her as entering a competitive university and securing a

decent job in the future.

## 7.2.2 'Privileged femininity' at work

Having discussed 'Privileged femininity' in relation to university, I now present extracts from interviews which demonstrate how participants draw on and take up subject positions in relation to 'Privileged femininity' in their discussions about work. I have selected three extracts which illustrate the workings of 'Privileged femininity'. In the first extract the participants discuss how their employers apparently overlook their mistakes, even going as far as reportedly constructing women as 'hopeless' due to the high frequency of these errors. The second participant discusses how women are free from the responsibility to support a family and thus at liberty to resign from their jobs, in contrast to their male counterparts who are 'bound' to a breadwinning role. The third extract illustrates how a woman's 'feminine' characteristics purportedly 'qualify' her for her job.

The first extract is from an interview with Ai and Ayaka (see also extract 12)

who were university sophomores and nineteen at the time of the interview:

### *Extract 14*

239 Justin: What are the good points about being a woman?

240 Ayaka: "Because you're a woman *shikataganai*" [you're hopeless].

241 Ai: The margin of error given to men is different. *Shikataganai* for women. On the  
242 other hand, men have to succeed at work.

243 Ayaka: Women don't have the same sense of responsibility that men do. Like

244 related to the future, we don't have to exert ourselves to the extent men do. Women  
245 are protected.

246 Ai: The escape route is different when you're in trouble.

247 Ayaka: Men don't have an escape route. It's fine though.

248 Ai: That's right.

249 Ayaka: I've also thought that I'd like things to be equal, but *yappari* we have an  
250 escape route.

Aya and Ai articulate different social expectations of men and women, however, they do not problematize 'Privileged femininity', which suggests that they are assuming 'complicit' subject positions in relation to the repertoire. 'Privileged femininity' is suggested when Ayaka makes a category contrast between men's and women's reported category-bound activities (see section 5.3). She draws on reported speech to evidence her claim that while women are allowed a certain margin of error ("because you're a woman *shikataganai*"; l. 240), this 'freedom' is not extended to men ('men have to succeed at work'; l. 242; see section 5.2.3). '*Shikataganai*' functions to construct women's mistakes as expected and inevitable and notably it is only applied to women (l. 241), which further highlights the different standards that men and women are reportedly held to. Reasons for this reported discrepancy are suggested when Ayaka elaborates on the different category-bound activities for men and women (ll. 243-245).

The social actor who 'protects' women is suggested in the next turn when Ai makes reference to the metaphor 'marriage is an escape route for women' (l. 246). Ayaka builds on Ai's turn: 'Men don't have an escape route' (l. 247). Both Ayaka ('it's

fine though'; l. 247) and Ai ('That's right'; l. 248) positively evaluate this 'escape route', which suggests that they position themselves as complicit with both subject positions offered by 'Privileged femininity'—'peripheral' employees who eventually 'retire' and who then prioritize their domestic roles. Ayaka's acceptance is further suggested when she concedes that while gender equality could be viewed as desirable, the benefits procured from a reported 'escape route' (i.e. lack of pressure to perform at work and 'freedom' to resign) apparently outweigh any advantages gained from 'equal employment opportunities' (ll. 249-250). Ayaka's use of a contrastive structure 'but' indicates a preference for an escape route over 'equal opportunities' ('I've also thought that I'd like things to be equal, but *yappari* we have an escape route'; ll. 249-250).

In Extract 15, Nayu, is a 30-year-old, single, art museum curator who also draws on a 'Privileged femininity' repertoire as she positions women as uninhibited to serve in a breadwinning role:

*Extract 15*

363 Justin: What are your thoughts on women's choices today?

364 Nayu: Women might even have more choices than men do today. Men can't really  
365 say, "I'll become a househusband". I think that probably as women are able to work  
366 more, men won't be able to work less in society today. I don't know who faces  
367 more pressure. For example, from what I've heard from my friend who's a  
368 researcher, there's a woman who he wants to marry, but because he doesn't earn  
369 that much money, he can't get married.

370 Justin: Do you think that women expect their partners to earn a lot?

371 Nayu: Probably. If she's working, then it's fine. If she wants to become a housewife,

372 then *yappari* the only option is for the man to work. Women can say, “I’ll quit my  
373 job” but men can’t say, “I’ll quit my job.” *Yappari* the stress and various problems  
374 resulting from working outside the home are extremely big. That’s the external  
375 stress that men receive. But there’s probably also stress inside the home. Just  
376 because you become a housewife doesn’t mean that your life is stress free. But you  
377 don’t have to associate with people whom you don’t want to, so some people may  
378 wish to quit their jobs.

In this sequence, Nayu constructs the boundaries of femininity as looser than those of masculinity, using negated hypothetical reported speech (see section 5.2.8) to support her claim that non-domestic work is a gender-based category-bound activity: ‘men can’t really say, “I’ll become a househusband”’ (ll. 364-365). The presence of hypothetical reported speech suggests that Nayu is conveying a critical subtext regarding men’s reported inability to become househusbands and constructing masculinity as ‘bounded’. That is, Nayu’s remark suggests the discursive absence of a ‘Privileged masculinity’ repertoire which offers men the subject positions of ‘homemaker’ and ‘family breadwinner’ (see section 5.2.3). Further evidence which suggests a ‘Privileged femininity’ repertoire is suggested in Nayu’s, ‘I think that probably as women are able to work more, men won’t be able to work less in society today. I don’t know who faces more pressure’ (ll. 365-366). Nayu constructs women’s opportunities as increasing, while men remain ‘bound’ to the workplace. Although this could be seen as a positive development for women’s social advancement, Nayu does not voice an interpretative repertoire in which women are positioned in a domestic role

(a 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoire) and thus does not address the 'double burden' issue.

In the next part of the extract, Nayu constructs an account reportedly articulated by a friend which bolsters her claim that men are positioned as family breadwinners, 'from what I've heard from my friend who's a researcher, there's a woman who he wants to marry, but because he doesn't earn that much money, he can't get married' (ll. 367-369). This reported account supports Nayu's previous claim that while women's opportunities may be increasing, men are still expected to perform in a breadwinning role and assume responsibility for the bulk of living expenses (ll. 365-366).

Further evidence of a 'Privileged femininity' repertoire is indicated in Nayu's response to my question, 'do you think that women expect their partners to earn a lot' (l. 370). She draws on a category contrast (see section 5.3) and hypothetical reported speech (see section 5.2.7): 'women can say, "I'll quit my job" but men can't say, "I'll quit my job."' (ll. 372-373), which depicts a homemaker subject position as unavailable to men. Similar to earlier in the account (ll. 354-365), we also see the discursive absence of a 'Privileged masculinity' repertoire offering men subjectivities outside of 'family breadwinner' (ll. 364-365).

In the final part of her account, Nayu contrasts stress induced from domestic versus non-domestic labor. '*Yappari*' formulates work-related stress as 'commonsense' (ll. 373-374; see section 5.4.2), but at the same time stress generated from the home is also acknowledged (ll. 375-376). Constructing both domestic and non-domestic roles as stressful boosts Nayu's account of 'Privileged femininity' because it appears to incorporate multiple views of the situation. Nevertheless, Nayu positions femininity as less bounded than masculinity, 'you don't have to associate with people whom you don't want to,' (ll. 376-377). Nayu thus again constructs women's ability to quit their jobs as a category-bound 'alternative' which suggests the existence of a 'Privileged femininity' repertoire.

In her account, Nayu positively presents a homemaker subject position as an option exclusively available to women. She accomplishes this discursively through hypothetical reported speech (e.g., 'men can't say', 'women can say') in order to support her claim that women and men have different options. Notably, she omits any mention of how while women may have the option to assume the subject positions of 'working professional' or 'homemaker', combining both positions is difficult due to the presence of a dominant 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoire.

The final extract in this chapter is from an interview with Akiko, a forty-two

year old married university lecturer with one child (see also extracts 5-8). Akiko constructs a ‘relativist’ account in the sense that she defines ‘gender inequality’ as highly situated:

*Extract 16*

98 Justin: I often hear that things are pretty equal at schools. But a friend of mine said  
99 even though she’s a teacher, when people come to visit the school, she’s had to serve  
100 tea before.

101 Akiko: Now I’m on the open campus committee. A male professor does the initial  
102 explanation when high school students come to campus. *Yappari* that professor  
103 faced a lot of resistance when he proposed that a young woman from the  
104 academic affairs office, or at least a young female professor should do the  
105 explanation. “There’s no need for that person to be a woman or young.” But in  
106 terms of the social image, *yappari* he knows that a young, pretty ‘older sister’ from  
107 the academic affairs office more than an older male professor coming out first  
108 creates a better atmosphere and results in people relaxing more. If you say that  
109 people relaxing more is a form of social pressure toward women, then I don’t think  
110 there’s anything more to say about it. But if that person’s voice, beauty, and so on  
111 are helping her and she’s enjoying her job; if she thinks that it’s all part of her job,  
112 then it doesn’t become a form of social pressure.

Akiko constructs an account where a male professor faces resistance from members of a committee when he makes a suggestion which could be considered sexist. Akiko does not take issue with his comment, but instead uses it as the basis for constructing a ‘relativist’ account of gender equity. The committee’s resistance is conveyed as ‘commonsense’ through the use of *yappari* (ll. 102-105). To further evidence this apparent resistance, Akiko ‘voices’ the committee’s strong resistance to his comment (l. 105; see section 5.2.3). In contrast to the committee, Akiko apparently



does not take a critical view of his comment, but instead presents him as ‘astute’ to the fact that a woman would convey a positive image to the public, ‘but in terms of the social image, *yappari* he knows that a young, pretty ‘older sister’ from the academic affairs office more than an older male professor coming out first creates a better atmosphere and results in people relaxing more’ (ll. 106-108). Semantically we can infer a family-like relationship based upon caring from the membership category ‘older sister’, while ‘male professor’ conveys a sense of ‘authority’ (see section 5.3). *Yappari* conveys his astuteness to the image a woman would convey as ‘commonsense’ (see section 5.4.2) which further illustrates that Akiko does not categorize this professor’s purported comment as ‘sexist’ but as ‘savvy’. Her account can be considered ‘relativist’ and individualistic because she claims that gender discrimination can only be negatively defined by the parties concerned. Therefore, we cannot consider a woman who enjoys performing a ‘feminine’ task such as serving tea as a victim of gender discrimination because the woman does not define the task as discriminatory. Akiko’s ‘relativist’ account of gender equality is conveyed in her next comment, “If you say that an outcome where people relax more is a form of social pressure toward women, then there’s nothing more to say about it.’ (ll. 108-110). Notably, Akiko contrasts the positive outcome of ‘people relaxing more’ with the negative ‘social pressure toward women’ to

convey the ‘short-sighted’ and ‘misguided’ nature of this feminist perspective. Akiko uses hypothetical reported speech (‘if you say’) to ‘voice’ the ‘limited’ view, which she constructs as inflexible with the idiomatic ‘*sore made da*’ (‘there’re nothing more to say about it’). I am suggesting that ‘*sore made da*’ functions to construct the ‘limited’ view as inflexible because idiomatic phrases such as this often function to close down topics from further discussion (Drew, 1998; Drew & Holt, 1989, 1998). Akiko then provides her ‘relativist’ account of gender equality where femininity is a resource a woman can draw on as she performs her job, ‘if that person’s voice, beauty, and so on are helping her and she’s enjoying her job; if she thinks that it’s all part of her job, then it doesn’t become a form of social pressure’ (ll. 110-112). In the ‘relativist’ account, feminine features such as voice and beauty become welcome credentials which enhance a woman’s job performance. Akiko’s ‘relativist’ account is rhetorically effective in part because her use of hypothetical reported speech (‘if she thinks it’s all part of her job’) constructs this hypothetical woman as content to use her femininity to her own advantage when performing her job, thus making it difficult to argue that she is a victim of sexism.

I would like to suggest that we can see Akiko’s account of a woman happily performing her job in this way as complying with hegemonic femininity (see section

2.5.3). The cornerstone of hegemony is power achieved through obtaining the populace's consent versus coercive force (see section 2.5.1). The hypothetical woman in Akiko's account is one who accepts that her voice and beauty are 'skills' which enhance her job performance (despite these 'skills' being arguably different from those which qualify male employees to perform work-related tasks, i.e. leadership ability and the ability to multi-task; further, women's skills do not develop with experience but in fact decline with age). While the woman may see her 'femininity' as an 'asset' when she is young, the 'asset' will rapidly decline in value in a patriarchal market-place. The woman performs a primarily symbolic function of cultivating a 'nice' ambience which sets the stage for someone else to explain the more 'important' information about the university. Since Akiko is reportedly unaware of the woman's 'peripheral' function, I am suggesting that Akiko is positioning the woman as complicit with hegemonic femininity because the woman's 'peripheral' role is subordinate in status to the more 'central' role played by her male counterparts, thus representing the relationship of dominance and submission between masculinity and femininity.

In this extract, Akiko does not take up a resistant subject position in relation to 'Privileged femininity'. Instead, she subject positions the 'office flower', who 'relaxes' people, as a potential positive form of femininity. In Akiko's 'relativist' account there is

nothing inherently 'sexist' about assigning a task to a woman on the basis of her gender as long as she gives her 'consent', which notably is a defining feature of hegemony.

In other points of Akiko's interview, her discursive self-positioning fluctuates (Baxter, 2003), suggesting that she is struggling with an ideological dilemma (see section 3.4.2). In extract six (see section 6.2.1), I suggested that Akiko took up a resistant subject position in relation to 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoire when she states, 'if someone says, "Because you're a woman, if you don't make the tea..." I hate it' (ll. 158-159). This 'resistant' subject position stands in sharp contrast to the 'relativist' perspective she adopts in extract 16 where gender discrimination can only be defined as negative by the parties concerned. Given the highly situated nature of 'Privileged femininity', it is not surprising that Akiko is struggling to resolve the apparent contradiction between constructing 'Privileged femininity' as a discursive resource which positions women as qualified for certain occupations, and as an obstacle which inhibits gender equality because membership in the category 'woman' is the essential and only prerequisite for the job. Some may cast 'Privileged femininity' in a favorable light by saying that it empowers women by qualifying them over men for certain jobs and represents a positive step in the march toward gender equality and is better than being compulsively excluded. Nevertheless, I do not think that we can

overstate the ways in which ‘Privileged femininity’ is a historically and culturally situated repertoire (Kitetu & Sunderland, 2000) and that the purported ‘privileges’ of femininity are needed to be viewed against all its entailed disadvantages, e.g., here the short ‘shelf-life’ of youth and hence OLS’ (see section 1.3) lack of opportunities for promotion.

In Sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2 I have discussed ‘Privileged femininity’ within the contexts of school and work. In drawing on ‘Privileged femininity’ to discursively construct their subjectivities, participants again utilize the discursive devices of reported speech, categorical references, category contrasts, and *yappari*. By drawing on these devices, participants assume various subject positions in relation to ‘Privileged femininity’; while some participants positively construct ‘Privileged femininity’ as a resource exclusively available to women, others construct it as a constraint which hinders future success. It is through this process of discursively positioning self and others in relation to ‘Privileged femininity’ that participants construct their gendered subjectivities.

In the next section I illustrate how the purported ‘advantages’ women gain from ‘Privileged femininity’, i.e. the freedom from pressures to excel at school or work, need to be viewed vis-à-vis the costs incurred from those ‘advantages’, i.e. women are unable

to achieve financial independence and thus ultimately 'bound' to men in 'heteronormative' domestic partnerships. 'Privileged femininity' is also binding in that women are reportedly restricted to domestic roles even within the workplace.

### **7.3 The role of 'Bounded femininity' in the construction of HF**

'Women as natural caregivers' and 'Women as eventually domestic' IRs position women as 'good wives, wise mothers' (see section 1.3) whose ultimate responsibility is to their children which constitutes Japanese hegemonic femininity. 'Privileged femininity' positions this domestic role as a choice which is potentially even more desirable than the breadwinning role men are expected to play. 'Bounded femininity' is another manifestation of hegemonic femininity because working women are not positioned as 'professionals' but within 'feminine' roles in the workplace. Thus, in the workplace, the hierarchical and complementary relationship definitive of hegemonic masculinity and femininity (see section 2.5.3) is reflected in the discursive positioning of women within 'domestic' roles such as serving their male colleagues during social events. Significantly, practices associated with hegemonic femininity (e.g. supporting others) are deemed subordinate compared to those associated with hegemonic masculinity (e.g. leadership skills) and for this reason women and not men are expected to perform them.

### 7.3.1 'Bounded femininity' at work

The next section presents extracts which illustrate how femininity can be discursively constructed as 'bounded' at the workplace. Participants construct accounts where women are positioned as 'risky investments' from an employer's perspective because they may eventually quit their jobs and are positioned within 'feminine' roles both at work and during after-hours social events. Resembling the findings presented in section 6.3, women are positioned as 'peripheral' employees whose ultimate responsibilities are domestic, not professional.

I have selected extracts from interviews with a 'non-traditional' student and 'traditional' students (entered university directly after high school) to demonstrate how demographically very different participants draw on a 'Bounded femininity' repertoire when discussing different work-related topics: job interviews, after-hours socializing, and work-related responsibilities.

The first extract is from an interview with Yukari who was forty-two, married without children, and a university senior at the time of the interview. Yukari is a 'non-traditional' student who entered university after caring for her husband's elderly parents:

*Extract 17*

207 Justin: Many of the students who I'm interviewed have said that they haven't

208 really felt many gender differences. Why do you think that is?  
209 Yukari: Things are basically the same except for grades and so on when you're in  
210 school. There's a tremendous amount of pressure on the employment exam. The  
211 first thing to do when you think you want to find a job is request brochures from  
212 companies. Out of 100 brochures requested about 30 are sent to you. From those,  
213 you can get an interview in about one company. Then at that time, at the time of the  
214 interview you're asked, "How long do you plan to continue this job?," "Do you  
215 want to get married?," "What are you going to do with your kids?," "Are you  
216 commuting from home?." At that moment you choose what you have to do from  
217 that point on. When men request brochures, they receive them and get interviews.  
218 At the interview you're asked, "What do you want to do at this job?" That kind of  
219 question, you see? You're not asked, "Do you want to get married?," "If you have  
220 kids, what are you going to do?" It's entirely different. All throughout school things  
221 were the same. Women were in leadership positions in clubs. When you enter a  
222 company it's like, "You can't do the same job [as men] because you're a woman."

Yukari works up a category contrast to present women and men as engaging in different category-bound activities (see section 5.3). She presents school as 'basically the same' (l. 209), thus the first time that students reportedly 'encounter' gender inequalities is at the site of job interviews. Yukari claims that women face inequalities from the time they request job applications (ll. 212-213). She supports this claim by presenting a series of questions that female students reportedly encounter at the time of job interviews, which position them in domestic roles (ll. 214-216). Jefferson (1990) notes that individuals often construct 'three-part lists' when they are constructing actions or events as normative. Although Yukari cites four examples, we can apply this principle to her reported questions and assert that she is not simply citing examples but constructing the positioning of women in domestic roles as a normative phenomenon. In



addition, the reported speech of the interviewers serves as evidence to support Yukari's claim that gender inequalities exist from the time of the initial job seeking (see section 5.2.3).

The questions which women are reportedly asked stand in sharp contrast to those asked of men, which suggests that Yukari is constructing a category contrast (see section 5.3). Men are reportedly asked, "what do you want to do at this job?" (l. 218). This question positions men as 'permanent' versus 'peripheral' employees who will make a meaningful and uninterrupted contribution to the workplace. Constructing the question within reported speech supports Yukari's claim that men and women are differently positioned at the time of the interview (see section 5.2.3). The different expectations that women and men are reportedly held to become even more apparent when Yukari constructs the type of questions which men are reportedly not asked through negated hypothetical reported speech (see section 5.2.8), "do you want to get married?" "If you have kids, what are you going to do?" (ll. 219-220). Yukari's evaluative comment, '*zenzen chiagau*' ('entirely different'; l. 220) implies that she is taking issue with these alleged questions because '*zenzen*' is an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1989) that 'upgrades' her claim that men and women are treated differently. Furthermore, Yukari's use of hypothetical reported speech implies

that she is taking issue with the discursive absence of a 'Men as domestic' repertoire because the questions suggest that men and women should be held to different standards. In the final part of the sequence, Yukari once again invokes hypothetical reported speech to support her claim that women and men are positioned differently during job interviews "you can't do the same job [as men] because you're a woman" (l. 222).

One reading of this extract is that Yukari assumes a resistant subject position in relation to 'Bounded femininity'. She constructs male interviewers as reportedly positioning women as 'temporary' employees, which she cites as an example of gender inequality. Yukari's 'resistant' subject position is suggested by her extensive use of reported speech, hypothetical reported speech, and membership categories in order to contrast the different category-bound activities which men and women are held to.

The next extract is from an interview with Michi, Keiko, and Yayoi, all university juniors and twenty years old at the time of the interview. These participants critically evaluate the positioning of women in 'motherly' roles at work and during work-related socializing:

*Extract 18*

192 Justin: Can you give me an example of how images about femininity affect women?

193 Michi: Take the example of a woman who is a boss. *Yappari* she is still seen as a

194 a woman.

195 Keiko: Like serving food [at a social outing].  
196 Michi: Since male managers won't do it, women have to do those kinds of motherly  
197 duties even after work.  
198 Justin: Is that a source of pressure?  
199 Yayoi: Pressure? How do I describe it?  
199 Michi: Men won't do it. If they do, it's like "what are the women doing?"  
200 So naturally women end up doing it.  
201 Keiko: Like the year-end party at my part-time job, or even when we just go out to  
202 eat, if I don't pour alcohol for the other employees...  
203 Michi: Yeah there's that too  
204 Keiko: Just when I think the drinking is finished, they ask me "do you want  
205 something else to drink?" I have to [pour their alcohol].  
206 Michi: I feel like we're hostesses.

Michi constructs the claim that women are positioned as 'women' before 'bosses' as 'commonsense' through the use of *yappari*: 'take the example of a woman who is a boss', which she later problematizes: '*Yappari* she is still seen as a woman' (ll. 193-194). Keiko then bolsters Michi's claim with a concrete example (l. 195). Keiko is referring to a Japanese-style drinking establishment where food is typically served family style, so the customers distribute it onto individual plates. With Keiko's example as rhetorical support, Michi extends her example by making a categorical reference to 'women' which she links to the 'motherly' category-bound activity of serving food (see section 5.3) (ll. 196-197).

I next ask them if the expectation that women serve at social events is a source of pressure (l.198). After Yayoi considers how to answer my question, Michi asserts for the second time that men refuse to serve food during social events (ll. 199-200). Michi

draws on hypothetical reported speech to convey the subtext that if women do not serve the food, they are seen as ‘reneging’ on their ‘duty’ (see section 5.2.8), which supports her overall argument that women are positioned in ‘motherly’ roles at work. Keiko then supports Michi’s claim by sharing examples from her own experience, ‘like the year-end party at my part-time job, or even when we just go out to eat, if I don’t pour alcohol for the other employees...’ (ll. 201-202). In Japan, when socializing with co-workers, the person who you pour alcohol for depends upon your place within the organizational hierarchy which is based upon age, gender, and employment position. Both pouring your own drink and a higher status individual pouring the drink of a lower status individual are social faux pas that are almost always avoided. Keiko’s claim that her co-workers will see her as somehow not fulfilling her ‘duty’ if she neglects to pour their drinks supports Michi’s earlier contribution that people ask, ‘what are the women doing’ (l. 199). Keiko then draws on reported speech to further support this claim, ‘just when I think the drinking is finished, they ask me “do you want something else to drink?” I have to [pour their alcohol]’ (ll. 204-205). The reported speech of Keiko’s colleague provides evidence for her assertion that she ‘has to’ pour their drinks (see section 5.2.3). Michi ends the sequence with a categorical reference to ‘hostess’, i.e. women who work in clubs where they serve alcohol and converse with male patrons

(see Allison, 1994). We can infer from the categorical reference to ‘hostess’ that working women are expected to ‘serve’ their male colleagues by pouring their drinks. Michi’s final contribution supports her overall point that working women are reportedly seen as ‘women’ in lieu of their work-based identities (ll. 193-194).

One reading of this extract is that Michi and Keiko assumed a resistant subject position in relation to a ‘Bounded femininity’ repertoire. This position is suggested by Michi’s claim that women in high positions are viewed as ‘women’ and not ‘bosses’ (ll. 193-194). Michi constructs men as refusing to serve food at social events, necessitating that women become default ‘mothers’ during these events (ll. 196-197). Her resistant position was also evident when she reports a hypothetical response to men serving food (“what are the women doing”; l. 199). Hypothetical reported speech allowed Michi to negatively evaluate men’s expectation that women serve food, yet the evaluation was framed as originating from the men, which allowed Michi to assume the position of ‘neutral’ animator (see section 5.2.6-5.2.7). Keiko’s resistant subject position was suggested by the unfinished clause, ‘if I don’t pour alcohol for the other employees’ (l. 202), which conveyed her co-worker’s reported expectation that Keiko pour their drinks because she is a woman. Keiko’s resistant subject position becomes even more apparent in her direct claim, ‘I have to [pour their alcohol]’ (l. 205). Finally, we can infer a

resistant subject position from the categorical reference to ‘hostess’, a woman whose ‘job success’ depends upon entertaining men, because this category is not typically associated with skills we might associate with a successful professional employee, i.e. specialized knowledge, leadership skills, and the ability to multi-task.

Chapter 7 has addressed research question one: ‘What *interpretative repertoires* do participants draw on as they discursively construct (a) *hegemonic femininity*?’ Both ‘privileged’ and ‘bounded’ femininity are IRs which constitute hegemonic femininity because they position women in domestic roles (see section 6.3).

Research question 1(a) asks: ‘What discursive features are associated with *interpretative repertoires* constituting (a) *hegemonic femininity*?’ Participants use explicit category references such as ‘*onna dattara*’ (since you’re a woman’), ‘*onna no ko dakara*’ (‘because you’re a girl’), and category-bound activities to construct women as either free from the pressure to excel academically or professionally and thus ‘privileged’ or ‘bound’ to a subordinate role at work, thus membership categories (see section 5.3) are a discursive feature associated with the construction of hegemonic femininity. Participants noticeably deployed reported speech (see section 5.2), which can therefore be conceptualized as another discursive feature associated with the construction of hegemonic femininity. In section 7.4, I discuss in more detail the role

reported speech plays in the construction of hegemonic femininity.

Research question 1(b) asks: ‘What *subject positions* (self and other) do participants take up in relation to *interpretative repertoires* constituting (a) *hegemonic femininity*?’ Participants take up a range of subject positions which range from complicit to resistant and in the process constructed hegemonic femininity. Ai and Ayaka (see extracts 12, 14) discursively position women as ‘released’ from the pressure to excel at work and school, thus assuming a complicit position in relation to ‘Privileged femininity. Similarly, Nayu (extract 15) takes up a complicit subject position when she claims that women have *more* choices than men. Hiromi (see extract 13), by contrast, takes up a resistant position in relation to ‘Privileged femininity’ when she claims that individuals benefit from a certain degree of pressure. Akiko (see extract 16) constructs ‘feminine’ features such as youth and beauty as resources which enhance a woman’s job performance, thus she assumes a complicit subject position *vis-à-vis* ‘Privileged femininity’. Yukari (extract 17) assumes a resistant subject position in relation to ‘Bounded femininity’ when she claims that job interviewers treat male and female applicants *differently* by asking women questions such as how long they intend to work. Michi, Keiko, and Yayoi, (see extract 18) resist being ‘bound’ to a ‘feminine’ role at work-related social when they criticize men’s expectation that women serve food and

beverages. Although some participants did discursively resist ‘Bounded’ and ‘Privileged’ femininity, they ultimately complied with hegemonic femininity by positioning themselves or others’ actions as in line with social norms. For example, although Michi, Keiko, and Yayoi criticize their colleagues’ assumption that women serve refreshments, they still position themselves as complying with the request.

My second research question asks: ‘Is there evidence of *ideological dilemmas* generated from contradictions between different *interpretative repertoires* in participants’ discourse?’ Akiko attempts to resolve an ideological dilemma of presenting traces of privileged femininity as a discursive resource which qualifies women for certain jobs but at the same time is a discursive constraint because those ‘qualifications’, i.e. youth and beauty, do not accumulate with experience but deteriorate over time. Akiko takes up a resistant subject position in relation to a ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoire when she articulates resistance to being asked to serve tea because she is a woman (see chapter 6; extract 6), but Akiko also constructs a ‘relativist’ account of ‘Privileged femininity’ where a woman reportedly views aspects of her femininity, i.e. her voice and beauty, as enhancing her job performance, and thus is not a ‘victim’ of gender oppression (extract 16). Akiko does not in fact resolve the tension between presenting ‘Privileged femininity’ as a source of empowerment or disempowerment for



women, but instead constructs ‘femininity’ differently in order to suit her shifting rhetorical needs. That is, while Akiko would apparently oppose being asked to perform a task due to her gender, she also allows for the possibility that this would not be an issue for some women. In effect, Akiko discursively presents herself as taking a ‘comprehensive’ or ‘eclectic’ view of gender relations where ‘equality’ is highly situated in contrast to the more ‘simplistic’ view of gender relations where assigning a task to an individual because she is a woman is an example of gender oppression.

The findings presented in Chapter 7 have some important implications for the discursive construction of hegemonic femininity (see section 2.5.3). In this chapter, I showed how participants construct subjectivities in line with hegemonic femininity by assuming complicit subject positions in relation to ‘Privileged’ and ‘Bounded’ femininity repertoires. Since masculinities and femininities vary by and within communities of practice (see section 2.1.2) and change over time, including moment to moment (see section 2.5), the possibility exists that my findings are context-specific and inapplicable more widely; nevertheless, as I stated in section 6.5, to claim that Japanese hegemonic femininity is by definition inherently different from femininities constructed elsewhere runs the risk of ‘essentializing’ it. ‘Privileged’ and ‘Bounded’ femininity are arguably repertoires which exist across many sociocultural contexts, albeit taking

different material and linguistic forms. For example, Kitetu and Sunderland, (2000) found that that a teacher's preferential treatment of girls in the classroom is one example of 'Privileged femininity' that needs to be viewed against the various other contexts where femininity is not at all privileged, e.g. where girls do not go to school at all and thus are domestically 'bound' because they are 'needed' for domestic chores. In my study, femininity was 'privileged' in that women were 'released' from the pressure to excel academically and professionally, but ultimately bound to men in 'heteronormative' domestic partnerships and a domestic role. Similarly, 'feminine' skills (e.g. 'youth', 'beauty') which provide women with an advantage in certain professions have a limited shelf life compared with 'work experience' which develops over time. In order to avoid 'essentializing' Japanese hegemonic femininity, I argue that my study is one example of 'Privileged femininity'. Further research on other CofPs (see section 2.1.2) may also show privileged femininity as a 'double-edged sword' for women, empowering them in some ways but disempowering them in others.

## **7.4 The main discursive features used to construct hegemonic femininity: reported speech and thought**

### **7.4.1 The discursive functions of reported speech and thought**

This chapter has demonstrated (inter alia) how the reported thought of a group

is a rhetorically effective device used to support a claim. In extract 12, Ayaka and Ai make references to ‘the way of thinking’ and ‘men are thinking that they have to support their families’ to convey that women are reportedly given more leniency than men regarding their futures. Specifically, Ayaka and Ai construct this line of thinking as group-based, which has a different rhetorical function than individually-based reported thought.

The reported thought of a group allows a speaker to construct ‘normativity’, which the reported speech of a group (e.g. ‘men say’) also does, but not to the same extent. As I discussed (see section 6.4.1), speech is temporary and provisional, while thought indexes something more permanent, a group’s ‘normative’ ‘belief system’. Furthermore, unlike the reported thought of an individual, the reported thought of a group cannot be undermined on that basis that it only represents one individual’s thought which is not representative of the group. Group-based reported thought is a rhetorically effective discursive device that a speaker can use to criticize a group’s ‘normative’ thinking or ‘belief system’.

The reported thought of a group can be seen as a linguistic ‘trace’ (Talbot, 1998) of an IR. When Ai and Ayaka invoke group-based reported thought to position women as ‘freer’ than men, they can be seen as drawing on a ‘Privileged femininity’

repertoire. The repertoire becomes even more apparent in extract fifteen when they claim that women possess the ‘escape route’ of marriage which liberates them from the paid labor force. The reported thought of a group is an example of a discursive device which indicates the presence of an interpretative repertoire because it indexes the ‘normative’ thinking of the members of a particular community of practice (see section 2.1.2).

#### **7.4.2 The discursive functions of hypothetical reported speech and thought**

This chapter has demonstrated how hypothetical reported speech can be used to convey the central point of a narrative. For example, Nayu (extract 15) frames her claim that women and not men are able to quit their jobs within hypothetical reported speech (e.g., ‘women can say, “I’ll quit my job”’). Through hypothetical reported speech, Nayu can construct speech which women can and may purportedly utter due to the existence of a ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoire (see section 6.3). Nayu could have framed her claim that men are unable to quit their jobs and become househusbands within hypothetical reported thought (e.g., ‘men can’t think, I’ll become a househusband’); however, men’s inability to say, ‘I’ll quit my job’ supports her claim more than thought would. Presumably, people may think all sorts of things; however, a man’s inability to make this utterance conveys that such a statement is reprehensible,

perhaps involving ‘gender transgression’.

Hypothetical reported speech also has an evidential function which bolsters a speaker’s claim. For instance, Akiko (extract 16) draws on hypothetical reported speech to claim that categorizing a woman whose physical appearance enhances her job performance as a victim of gender discrimination is ‘short-sighted’ if the woman enjoys her job and she creates a pleasant workplace atmosphere (e.g., ‘If you say that people relaxing more is a form of social pressure toward women...’). Akiko could have constructed and criticized a ‘short-sighted’ view of gender discrimination within hypothetical reported thought (e.g., ‘If you think that someone relaxing more...’); however, hypothetical speech provides stronger evidence than thought because thought resides within individuals and is not always articulated (see also section 6.4.2).

### **7.4.3 The discursive functions of deploying hypothetical and reported speech together**

This chapter also illustrated how hypothetical reported speech and reported speech can be used together to perform a criticism. Hiromi (extract 13) draws on reported speech when she asserts that her parents tell her brother to ‘study hard’ and hypothetical reported speech when she claims that they never say ‘do such and such’ to her. Reported speech provides evidence that Hiromi’s parents position her brother as a

‘future breadwinner’, while hypothetical reported speech conveys the low expectations they reportedly have of her which she arguably takes issue with. Reported speech evidences what her parents say to her brother, while hypothetical reported speech allows Hiromi to convey the critical subtext that they should have higher expectations of her.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed how hegemonic femininity (see section 2.5.3) was discursively constructed by a diverse sample of women who assume heterogeneous subject positions in relation to ‘Privileged’ and ‘Bounded’ femininity repertoires. These subject positions range from accepting the ‘freedom’ gained from experiencing little pressure to excel at school or work to resisting this ‘freedom’ by constructing a certain degree of pressure as an essential component of personal and academic development. The repertoires were identified through the occurrence in respondents’ interview discourse of different discourse analytic devices: reported speech, membership categorization devices, and *yappari*, and particular uses of these which functioned to evidence claims, manage accountability, contrast gender-based category-bound activities, and construct ‘commonsense’ (see sections 5.2-5.4). These repertoires reflect and arguably construct commonplace assumptions about Japanese hegemonic femininity which position women not as ‘high-achieving students’ or ‘working

professionals’, but as ‘devoted’ wives and ‘dutiful’ mothers (see section 1.3).

In this chapter, we also saw the emergence of an ideological dilemma in Akiko’s account. Although ‘femininity’ can be a privilege which qualifies women for certain jobs, even professional women may be asked to perform certain ‘feminine’ jobs such as serving tea. Akiko positions ‘femininity’ as a resource which qualifies women for certain jobs, but at other points in her account criticizes gender category membership as the sole criteria for assigning women tasks such as serving tea. Although femininity can ‘privilege’ women for certain jobs, the influence of ‘Women as eventually domestic’ positions women either within ‘peripheral’ roles at work or ‘binds’ them to the domestic realm. Significantly, these subjectivities do not empower women, but do represent subjectivities in line with hegemonic femininity.

This chapter also highlights the subtle workings of gender hegemony; that is, hegemony operates in part through ‘heteronormative’ repertoires which ‘privilege’ femininity. *Prima facie*, ‘Privileged femininity’ repertoire appears to be a discursive resource which ‘frees’ women from the pressure to enter competitive universities or secure high positions in contrast to their male counterparts who are materially and discursively ‘bound’ to these social practices because of their assumed future breadwinning role. These ‘freedoms’, however, must be weighed against their

limitations, i.e. women are ultimately ‘bound’ to the domestic realm because they resign from their jobs. Participants Ai and Ayaka (extract 14) positively construct ‘Privileged femininity’ by articulating the ‘escape route’ of marriage and a fulltime domestic role, the latter role being apparently unavailable to men. Similarly, Nayu (extract 15) constructs the subject position of ‘homemaker’ as a positive option only available to women. Both accounts are built upon the assumption of a ‘heteronormative’ domestic partnership and financial support of a man. Akiko’s account (extract 16) is built on the ‘essentialist’ assumption that women are more verbally skilled at facilitating rapport (see Cameron, 2007 for a critique). In all three cases, the participants unequivocally construct femininity as ‘privileged’ without acknowledging the limits associated with those privileges including that women are discouraged from pursuing professional careers. In this way, I propose that gender hegemony operates subtly, through ‘Privileged’ and ‘Bounded’ femininity repertoires.

I am not suggesting a one-to-one correspondence between discourse and material practices (see section 3.3.1). Nevertheless, I am arguing that discourse is one dimension of gender relations (the symbolic) which can and does operate with the mutual support of other, material dimensions, e.g. power, production, and emotional relations (see section 2.2). A ‘Gender differences’ discourse (see section 6.1) is a prime



example of how symbolic gender constructions can influence material practices, i.e. a discourse surrounding women's 'natural' caregiving ability may be seen as befitting them for jobs in the service sector or 'pastoral' occupations. Similarly, 'Privileged femininity' repertoires can also influence material practices, e.g. if women are not encouraged to excel in school or pursue careers and if young women (and their parents) incontestably accept these 'privileges' without taking into account more subtle ways in which masculinity is normatively 'privileged' over femininity, i.e. in terms of social practices and institutional power.

In Chapter 8 I shift the focus from hegemonic femininity to non-hegemonic, i.e. pariah femininity (see section 2.5.4). Pariah femininity refers to women who embody aspects of hegemonic masculinity, e.g. authority, competitive individualism, and aggressiveness (Messerschmidt, 2000) and by doing so refuses to occupy a subordinate position vis-à-vis hegemonic masculinity. For example, lesbians, 'sexually promiscuous' women, women gang members and women working in traditionally 'masculine' professions such as academia, criminal justice, law, and the priesthood (Bagilhole, 2002; Martin & Jurik, 2007). Gender is constructed not only through relations between men and women but also among women (as among men) (see section 2.5), so our understanding of hegemonic femininity will benefit from the analysis of non-hegemonic

femininity. Through the study of pariah femininities I provide insights into how women are ‘stigmatized’ for enacting the discursive practices associated with hegemonic masculinity, such practices ‘troubling’ (Butler, 1999) the hierarchical and complementary relationship between hegemonic masculinity and femininity (see sections 2.5.3-4). The investigation of hegemonic femininity has provided insight into relationships between men and women. In contrast, the study of pariah femininities focuses on the relationship between women and thus provides insight into another aspect of ‘gender relations’ (see section 2.2).

## **Chapter 8: Alternatives to ‘Hegemonic Femininity’: ‘Pariah**

## **Femininities'**

### **8.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I attempt to address research question one: 'What *interpretative repertoires* do participants draw on as they discursively construct (b) *pariah femininity*?'

In addition, I address research question 1(a): 'What discursive features are associated with *interpretative repertoires* constituting (b) *pariah femininity*?' The chapter also addresses research question 1(b): 'What *subject positions* (self and other) do participants take up in relation to *interpretative repertoires* constituting (b) *pariah femininity*?' I address research question two: 'Is there evidence of *ideological dilemmas* generated from contradictions between different *interpretative repertoires* in participants' discourse?' More than in Chapters 6-7, the participants' struggles to resolve ideological dilemmas were explicitly articulated; therefore, I could also answer research question three: 'What discursive features are associated with *ideological dilemmas* generated from contradictions between different *interpretative repertoires* in their discourse?'

### **8.2 'Troubled' identity**

Although I take it as given that gender and other identities are fluid and individuals possess agency to 'perform' gender in multifarious ways (see sections

2.1.3-2.1.4), identities which challenge dominant sociocultural norms can be seen as ‘troubling’ for society or particular communities of practice (see section 2.1.2) and thus require a an account in talk. As Wetherell and Edley (1998) state, “people are accountable to each other in interaction and thus departures from ‘what everybody knows to be appropriate’ require explanation and create ‘trouble’ in the interaction which will need repair” (p. 161). Wetherell and Edley exemplify this with a ‘negatively’ valued identity, a young man, Aaron, who, when describing his heterosexual prowess, is positioned by a friend Paul as ‘out on the pull’ which Aaron disavows and reformulates as ‘just out’. Aaron then produces an account which constructs his sexual encounters as happenstance and consensual versus actively pursuing a sexual encounter with women which suggests that he regards ‘out on the pull’ as a troubled identity, i.e. difficult to align with (see Wetherell, 1998). Clearly what constitutes ‘troubled’ is inseparable from the larger sociocultural context and CofP (see section 2.1.2) where the interaction occurs. Being ‘out on the pull’ is a troubled subject position in a discursive context where monogamy and long-term relationships are privileged over reckless promiscuity. In another discursive context, such as one where ‘permissive male heterosexuality’ (Hollway, 1998) is extolled, e.g. some college fraternities, ‘out on the pull’ is conceivably not a ‘troubled’ but instead celebrated identity.

In my data, two subject positions which were ‘troubled’, thus requiring ‘repair’ when articulated in talk, were the unmarried ‘career woman’ and married ‘superwoman’. Both of these subject positions are ‘gendered’ (Sunderland, 2004), i.e. single men are labeled ‘eligible bachelors’ whereas single women are ‘lonely spinsters’ or ‘old-maids’ (Reynolds, 2008). In Japan, while working men do not face discursive sanctioning with a term such as ‘career man’, career-oriented women are denigrated with labels such as ‘career women’ or ‘*make inu*’ (loser).

The long-lived influence of ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ (Rich, 1980; see section 2.5) still constructs normative femininity as involving a long-term, heterosexual relationship, so married women are not usually asked, ‘how come you’re (still) married’ whereas singleness is by definition and in contrast a ‘marked’ social category (Reynolds, 2008). In Japan, cultural expectations are still that marriage and motherhood are part of a woman’s ‘normal’ life cycle and a source of women’s happiness (Nemoto, 2008). Single women can be ‘troubling’ to the notion of hegemonic femininity (and, as I will show, hegemonic masculinity).

Single career women further challenge hegemonic femininity because they are empowered by their financial independence. Not needing to look for a man to financially support them can become another source of ‘trouble’ in terms of securing a

heterosexual relationship. While professional ambition, high education, and high income can enhance middle-class men's marriage 'marketability', they can detract from women's because men apparently view these capable women as 'unfeminine' (Ehara, 2008b; Nemoto, 2008). This was reflected in my data when Kayoko claims that she was told that her independence might 'scare men off' (extract 19). Kayoko can be seen as facing a dilemma where her category membership as a 'highly ambitious woman' may prevent her from getting married.

Similar to a single 'career woman', a married 'superwoman' is a troubled subject position and also contests hegemonic femininity. This category also challenges the assumption that women are financially supported by men. Taylor and Littleton (2006) relatively point out that the 'professionally successful married woman' identity can be seen as 'troubled' because 'professional success' is not typically associated with 'married woman' due to a presupposition that if men are breadwinners, only they should be professionally successful. In Japan, where the institutions of marriage and motherhood are largely deemed 'lifetime employment' (Iwao, 1993), Taylor and Littleton's comments ring true. Negotiating the demands of full-time work outside the home with those of parenting can thus be materially dilemmatic for many women, but these also dilemmas emerge discursively when women construct their careers as a

source of personal fulfillment and construct ‘guilty thoughts’ for not fulfilling their ‘motherly duties’ (see extract 21).

In addition to being ‘troubled’ subject positions at the level of conversational interaction, ‘career woman’ and ‘superwoman’ also challenge and thus ‘trouble’ the gendered assumption that men do paid work and women manage the home, which is the cornerstone of hegemonic femininity (see chapter 6). Women who take on the practices associated with hegemonic masculinity can be seen as ‘pariah femininities’ because they refuse to assume a subordinate position vis-à-vis hegemonic masculinity and ultimately threaten to remove hegemonic masculinity from its extolled position (see section 2.5.4). My analysis will demonstrate, however, that there are consequences of engaging with these subject positions: the single career woman in my data articulates a fear of ‘scaring men off’, and the ‘superwoman’ express a struggle to balance the domestic with a career. These points will be discussed further throughout the chapter.

I now present data which illustrates how a ‘career woman’ subject position can be troubling for successful single women who desire marriage and for this reason can be seen as a ‘pariah femininity’ identity. I have chosen to present two extracts from my interview with Kayoko in chronological order to trace the ‘cumulative’ effect of this troubling subject position. These extracts illustrate how Kayoko shifts between

positions ranging from those which celebrate her many professional abilities to those that construct those abilities as detrimental to a potential heterosexual relationship.

### **8.2.1 ‘Career woman’ as a ‘troubled’ identity and ‘pariah femininity’**

Kayoko was a twenty-six year old, single, junior high school teacher at the time of the interview. Prior to this extract, Kayoko articulates a desire for marriage and a family; however, she also indicates that her self-described independence may threaten men and thus prevent her from achieving that goal:

#### *Extract 19*

258 Kayoko: I’m relatively independent like my mother. There are times when I’ve  
259 been told, “it’s better to depend more on men”. There are people who think this  
260 way.

261 Justin: Does that become a form of pressure for you?

262 Kayoko: Is it a form of pressure? There are many different things that I want to do,  
263 so I’m doing many different things. I want to go abroad for graduate school. I’m  
264 doing pilates everyday. When I say, “I want to do such and such” I’ve been told, “If  
265 you are too perfect, you’ll scare men away”. I hate that. But maybe it’s true. I’m not  
266 really sure. A male friend of mine said, “Men just are that way”. “Ah really”. A  
267 [female] friend of mine who’s married said “*yappari* men seem to want to be in a  
268 higher position [than women]”.

In this first extract we see how Kayoko’s status as a ‘Renaissance woman’ could potentially threaten her ability to secure a heterosexual relationship and for this reason is ‘troubling’. In Kayoko’s account, membership in the category ‘independent woman’ inhibits women who desire a heterosexual partnership. Kayoko first articulates how independence can work against women seeking a relationship when she reports



advice that she was apparently given in reference to her self-proclaimed independence, ‘it’s better to depend more on men’ (l. 259). Kayoko frames the potentially negative effects of independence within reported speech to construct this claim as ‘factual’ or at least external to her (see section 5.2.3). Kayoko then claims that her individual experience of being told to be less independent actually represents a line of thinking that ‘women should be less independent’ which she formulates as ‘there are people who think this way’ (ll. 259-260). Thus, the advice is recontextualized from a potentially isolated incident to a general way of thinking, which further corroborates her claim that independence is frequently seen as an undesirable characteristic in women.

Occupying the subject position of ‘independent career woman’, which is a pariah femininity identity, can contribute to the formation of an ideological dilemma for women seeking marriage because hegemonic femininity is associated with financial and emotional dependence on men (see section 2.5.3). Kayoko may be struggling with an ideological dilemma when she rhetorically reformulates my question (‘is it a form of pressure’; l. 262), and describes how her multiple interests might ‘scare men away’ (l. 265), resulting in ‘not being chosen’. Kayoko draws on reported speech to evidence her claim that her various interests may threaten men: ‘When I say, “I want to do such and such” I’ve been told, “If you are too perfect, you’ll scare men away” (ll. 264-265).

Kayoko initially resists the troubled subject position of ‘not being chosen’ (‘I hate [being told] that’; l. 265), but immediately concedes, ‘maybe it’s true’ (l. 265). Further evidence which suggests that Kayoko is struggling with a dilemma stemming from her status as an ‘independent woman’ who says she is also ‘seeking marriage’, is indicated when she ‘voices’ her male friend, ‘men just are that way’ (l. 266), which she reportedly accepts, ‘Ah really’ (l. 266). Although this is a very essentialist claim, her friend’s gender provides him with a ‘category entitlement’, enabling him to comment on men’s thinking with a certain, if limited, level of authority (see section 5.3). His analysis of men’s thinking is then confirmed by another of Kayoko’s friends, ‘A [female] friend of mine who’s married said “*yappari* men seem to want to be in a higher position” [than women]’ (ll. 267-268). This second friend’s category membership as a ‘married woman’ also provides her with the category entitlement to comment on how men think with a certain degree of authority. Notably, the friend reportedly constructed men’s devaluation of independent women as ‘commonsense’ through the use of *yappari* (see section 5.4.2). Kayoko’s original struggle to directly answer my question (‘is it a form of pressure’; l. 262), and subsequent voices of her friends together suggest that category membership as an ‘independent career woman’ is indeed a source of pressure for her. As such, it can form the basis of an ideological dilemma because ‘independent woman’ and ‘career

woman' are categories which directly challenge notions about hegemonic femininity which position women as dependent, emotional caretakers of others (see section 2.5.3), which are thus by definition pariah femininities.

The presence of an ideological dilemma becomes more explicit in the continuation of the extract, where Kayoko attempts to discursively resolve the double-standard which operates against highly ambitious women:

*Extract 20*

269 Justin: So are you saying that men like to be in a higher position than their partners?

270 Kayoko: Yeah. My friend Peter was like that. Being in a lower position is no good.

271 How do I put this? It seems as though *yappari* men want to earn more [than their  
272 partners]. That's why I have the feeling that men think about money more than  
273 women.

274 Justin: And position, right?

275 Kayoko: Yeah, that's right. I don't care about things like educational background at  
276 all. I see people for who they are. Men seem to care much more about these kinds  
277 of things than women do. For example, my [female] friend who got her doctorate  
278 from Tsukuba University said, "Men think that if they are not in a higher position  
279 than their partners, things probably won't work out between them".

280 Justin: Does your friend want to get married?

281 Kayoko: She did at one point but not anymore.

282 Justin: Why is that?

283 She told me about a couple of previous relationships where the guy wanted her to  
284 give up her career, which she didn't want to do.

285 Justin: I see.

286 Kayoko: When she told me that I began to think about something. You *isshokenmei*  
287 [put your whole heart and soul] into something that you really want to do, but  
288 from the perspective of people around you, how do I put this? they compare  
289 themselves with you and don't want to get close to you. I'm not really sure.

Kayoko directly answers my question (l. 269) affirmatively, and then

immediately cites her friend Peter as evidence which supports her answer (l. 270; see section 5.2.3). The example of Peter is rhetorically effective because again his gender-based category membership provides him with a category entitlement (see section 5.3) to ‘speak for’ men, which, in turn, bolsters Kayoko’s claim that men desire to earn a high salary. Following this, Kayoko articulates her own, carefully mitigated opinion, ‘It seems as though *yappari* men want to earn more [than their partners]. That’s why I have the feeling that men think about money more than women’ (ll. 271-273). A mitigated response such as this is rhetorically effective because it allows Kayoko to make the general claim that ‘men care more about money more than women’, but the claim is formulated as applying only to most men and thus could allow exceptions, i.e. men who are unconcerned about money. This thus results in a rhetorically ‘comprehensive’ account. *Yappari* further corroborates Kayoko’s claim by formulating it as ‘commonsense’ and not simply her own opinion (see section 5.4.2).

I then attempt to reconfirm that Kayoko is claiming that men value not only a higher salary than women but also a higher position (‘And position, right’; l. 274). Kayoko answers in the affirmative, but then notably produces the next formulation, ‘*watashi ha gakureki toka zenzen ki ni shinai*’ (I don’t care about things like educational background at all’; ll. 275-276). It is notable that Kayoko offers her own opinion even

though I never asked for it. I suggest that she does so in order to construct a category contrast (see section 5.3) between most men and at least some women; that is, men's concern with educational background and status stands in sharp contrast to Kayoko's disregard for these things. Kayoko's category contrast is upgraded by the extreme case formulation '*zenzen*' ('at all'; ll. 275-276), allowing her lack of concern with educational background to drastically contrast with men's apparent concern with it (see Pomerantz, 1986). Kayoko then claims for the second time, 'Men seem to care much more about these kinds of things than women do' (ll. 276-277), which is also carefully mitigated by 'seem'. Just as she offered Peter's opinion as evidence (l. 270), this time Kayoko reports a female friend's words as further evidence: "Men think that if they are not in a higher position than their partners, things probably won't work out between them" (l. 278-279). Kayoko's friend has a category entitlement as a 'career woman' to make this claim due to her apparent previous experience with men who were concerned with status: 'She told me about a couple of previous relationships where the guy wanted her to give up her career, which she didn't want to do' (ll. 283-284).

The dilemmatic nature of membership in the category 'career woman' is most apparent at the end of the extract. Kayoko struggles to resolve the contradictions between gendered repertoires which position men's and women's social contributions

differently, i.e. 'Women as eventually domestic' and 'Men as breadwinners' (see sections 6.2.1-6.2.2). Kayoko invokes the lexis '*issokenmei*' (your whole heart and soul)', an acclaimed value in Japanese society (Davies & Ikeno, 2002; Sugimoto, 2003), to describe her diligence, yet apparently this perseverance is not celebrated, but condemned by others, 'You *isshokenmei* into something that you really want to do, but from the perspective of people around you, how do I put this? They compare themselves with you and don't want to get close to you. I'm not really sure' (ll. 286-289). The troubled nature of the 'career woman' subject position is suggested by '*nantte iu darou*' ('how do I put this'; l. 288) and '*wakaranai*' ('I'm not really sure'; l. 289) because Kayoko appears to struggle to articulate the notion that people, presumably men, may not want to get close to her. I am suggesting that 'people' refers to 'men' because Kayoko's whole account has focused on how men attach importance to salary, educational background, and social status, while women do not. The last part of the account indicates that a 'working professional' subject position is easily taken up by men because they are not sanctioned for working hard, hence a gendered 'career man' equivalent does not exist, yet women who take up this position face the dilemma of decreasing their eligibility for marriage and are positioned as embracing a form of 'pariah femininity' subjectivity.

A 'career woman' subject position can be seen as a pariah femininity identity because it challenges the asymmetrical relationship between hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity and threatens hegemonic masculinity's place of ascendancy (see sections 2.5.2-2.5.4). A 'career woman' does not accommodate the interests of men, i.e. as a professional homemaker arguably does, but instead works full-time which challenges the hegemonic assumption that women are responsible for domestic work and financially dependent on men. A career woman's professional ambition and financial independence are characteristics associated with hegemonic masculinity that when taken on by women are an example of 'gender deviance' (Messerschmidt, 2007), i.e. they are subverting traditional gendered practices. The consequences of this deviance are reflected discursively when women hesitate to express membership in the category, illustrating that the traditional practices associated with marriage are still venerated and the fear of 'not being chosen' very real (see Reynolds, 2008).

Another example of a pariah femininity subject position is that of a 'superwoman'.

### **8.2.2 'Superwoman' as a 'troubled' identity and 'pariah femininity'**

Another example is arguably a 'hybrid' subject position because it integrates aspects of hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity that of 'superwoman'.

Similar to a single career woman, a superwoman works alongside men in a non-domestic role, yet assumes as well the ‘double-burden’ of household labor. Managing these dual roles can develop into an ideological dilemma as women attempt to represent themselves as ‘good wives and wise mothers’ (see section 1.3) who also work, which is displayed discursively by articulating a conflict between performing these domestic and non-domestic roles.

I now present data which demonstrates how a ‘superwoman’ subject position can be troubling (difficult to align with) for women as they attempt to represent themselves as ‘good wives and wise mothers’ who also work outside the home. The following two extracts from an interview with Akiko (see also extracts 5-8; 16) illustrate how ‘trouble’ emerges discursively in the process of constructing an account.

At the time of the interview, Akiko was forty-two, married with a four-year old, and a university lecturer. In the extract below she considers whether or not working women face social pressure:

*Extract 21*

129 Justin: So do you think that women today face social pressure?

130 Akiko: That’s a difficult one. It’s not that someone specifically said something to  
131 me. But *yappari* when you’re working. *Yappari* I think “it’s my fault” when the  
132 house needs cleaning. Since my husband and I both work, it’s fine. *Yappari* I think  
133 “I was the only one not there” when I’m late picking up my child. When I can’t  
134 make the lunch boxes after deciding [in advance] to make them, I think that I had to  
135 make the lunch boxes. Is it social pressure (laugh)? Probably nobody said



136 anything to me. But society probably thinks in this way given that I feel like this.

This extract illustrates the first traces of the ‘troubled’ nature of ‘superwoman’ category membership. Rather than directly answering my question, Akiko produces an ambiguous response ‘*muzukashii na*’ (That’s a difficult one’; l. 130) and then goes on to describe what could be considered ‘covert’ pressure (‘It’s not that someone specifically said something to me’; ll. 130-131). The first reference to the troubled nature of the social category ‘working woman’ is Akiko’s direct reference to ‘work’ and use of ‘*yappari*’ to construct her conflict as a ‘working mother’ as ‘commonsense’ (‘But *yappari* when you’re working’; l. 131; see section 5.4.2). She then constructs her ‘internal conflict’ within self-reported habitual thought (see section 5.2.7) to ‘evidence’ her apparent struggle to manage her role as a ‘working mother’ (I think “it’s my fault”; l. 131). Habitual thoughts are invoked to account for *hic-et-nunc* actions or lack thereof (Couper-Kuhlen, 2007). Akiko’s use of this device suggests that she is expected to clean the house and her failure to do so necessitates an account. Akiko’s articulation of self-reported habitual thought to account for her failure to clean the house can be read as an attempt to manage a positive self-presentation (see section 2.1.4) as a ‘devoted’ wife and ‘dutiful’ mother, and also as a reflection of the troubled nature of superwoman category membership.

Akiko constructs the failure to clean the house as understandable given her

work-related responsibilities ('Since my husband and I both work, it's fine'; l. 132). If this 'negligence' truly was fine, then arguably it would have been unnecessary for Akiko to produce two additional examples of 'neglected duties' and her 'guilty feelings' concerning that negligence, which she constructs within self-reported habitual thoughts ('*Yappari* I think "I was the only one not there" when I'm late picking up my child. When I can't make the lunch boxes after deciding [in advance] to make them, I think that I had to make the lunch boxes'; ll. 132-135). The two examples of picking up the child late and not making the lunch boxes can be read as forming part of a 'three part list' (Jefferson, 1990) (along with 'house needs cleaning'; l. 132), which together suggest that Akiko is referring to a larger phenomenon, i.e. 'failed motherhood'. The second example of 'guilty feelings' ('I was the only one not there'; l. 133) and reference to lunch boxes both bolster her self-presentation as a 'concerned mother'. Elaborately-crafted lunch boxes are not only expected by nursery school officials, but have also been conceptualized as a social sign that a woman has successfully performed her motherhood role (Allison, 1991, 2000). Akiko's reference to lunch boxes, then, is significant because a failure to perform this duty could be interpreted by others as a sign of 'failed' or 'neglected' motherhood.

In the last part of this extract Akiko finally produces a response to my question

(‘So do you think that women today face social pressure?’; l. 129) when she says, ‘Is it social pressure (laugh)? Probably nobody said anything to me. But society probably thinks in this way given that I feel like this’ (ll. 135-136). I suggest that the implicit form of pressure to which Akiko refers could stem from a ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoire (see section 6.3), in relation to which Akiko attempted to produce an account of herself as a ‘devoted’ wife and ‘dutiful’ mother.

Akiko’s account illustrates the troubled nature of ‘superwoman’ category membership. The trouble arises from the tension between membership in the apparently polarized categories of ‘career woman’ and ‘wife/mother’ categories, which can contribute to the formation of an ideological dilemma (see section 3.4.2). In a culture where marriage and motherhood are considered ‘lifetime employment’ (Iwao, 1993; see section 8.2), Akiko risks being seen by others as a ‘failed mother’ because she also works outside the home. In order to resolve this dilemma, Akiko works up a self-presentation as a ‘working mother’ who is very concerned about adequately performing her domestic duties by drawing on a language of ‘guilty feelings’.

In the next extract, Akiko also draws on ‘guilty feelings’ and presents her husband as lacking those feelings or at least a sense of responsibility. This (in relative terms) bolsters her self-presentation as a ‘good’ mother:

*Extract 22*

138 Justin: How do you and your husband balance things at home?

139 Akiko: My husband and I decided long ago to do everything together (laugh). It's a  
140 good idea for the one who's free to jump in since these are household matters,  
141 which both of us can do. It's a good idea for the one who's not tired to make  
142 breakfast. This is how we do things, but it seems as though I'm the one who feels  
143 more of the responsibility when we're both busy and something doesn't get done.  
144 When we decide not to make lunch boxes [for the family] since we're both busy, I  
145 think "oh we don't have lunch boxes today because I didn't *ganbaranakatta* [work  
146 hard]," but my husband doesn't think anything of it.

147 Justin: But your husband doesn't think that you didn't work hard enough, does he?

148 Akiko: He doesn't think that way. Because we're both busy in this situation he  
149 thinks, "*Shikataganai*" [Oh well]. But about half of my friends' husbands think that  
150 women should make the lunch boxes.

151 Justin: Are these friends the same age as you?

152 Akiko: They're the same age but *yappari* many women are asked to do it because  
153 women have [traditionally] done housework.

At the beginning of the account it appears as though domestic work is equally shared with her husband, thus Akiko's category membership (see section 5.3) as a working mother is not troubled (l. 139). However, despite this purported equal distribution of domestic labor, Akiko constructs herself as feeling the greater burden of guilt when something is neglected (ll. 142-143). Similar to extract 21, Akiko draws on habitual thoughts in order to account for neglecting to perform some aspect of domestic work. Also similar to extract 21 is Akiko's reference to lunch boxes in order to illustrate her 'negligence', which, as discussed, are a symbol of a mother's devotion to her child ('When we decide not to make lunch boxes [for the family] since we're both busy; l. 144), which is immediately followed with, 'I think "oh we don't have lunch boxes today

because I didn't *ganbaranakatta* [work hard]”, but my husband doesn't think anything of it' (ll. 144-146). Akiko notably invokes her own reported thoughts in concert with the lexicalization '*ganbaranakatta*' in order to present herself as very much attuned to her domestic duties. The verb *ganbaru* ('work hard') indexes the high value placed on perseverance in Japanese society (Davies & Ikeno, 2002; Sugimoto, 2003) and Akiko's usage of the term also indicates that it is gendered here, i.e. women 'work hard' as mothers. Given that domestic work is women's 'responsibility', her husband 'thinks nothing of' (l. 146) his failure to perform some aspect of domestic work.

Akiko's response to my question ('But your husband doesn't think that you didn't work hard enough, does he?'; l. 147) is a further indication of the gendered nature of *ganbaru*. In contrast to Akiko, he apparently views the situation where work interfering with household-related matters is inevitable, conveyed by '*shikataganai*' (oh well). Akiko then makes a gender-based category reference when discussing her friends' husbands ('But about half of my friends' husbands think that women should make the lunch boxes'; ll. 149-150). This suggests that domestic work is still viewed as women's responsibility and supports Akiko's construction of her own husband's thoughts. Finally, Akiko emphasizes the connection between women and the category-bound activity of domestic work ('They're the same age but *yappari* many women are asked to do it

because women have [traditionally] done housework'; ll. 152-153).

A notable aspect of this exchange is Akiko's positioning of her husband, which supports her self-presentation as a 'dutiful' wife and 'devoted' mother. As I showed above, Akiko invokes the lexis of '*ganbaru*' and 'guilty feelings' to present herself as fulfilling her domestic duties but positions her husband as unconcerned when some aspect of domestic work is left unfinished due to their jobs. Akiko accomplishes this positioning through a category contrast (see section 5.3): her struggle to manage the domestic with the non-domestic stands in stark contrast to her husband's apparent 'laissez-faire' attitude (indicated by '*shikataganai*') and could reflect the troubled nature of a 'superwoman' subject position.

Akiko's account in fact nicely illustrates the troubled nature of a superwoman subject position: she 'accounts' for her membership in this category by carefully managing a self-presentation as a 'devoted' wife and 'dutiful' mother who also works. Akiko's construction of 'guilty feelings' and positioning of her husband are examples of how she attempts to discursively manage this trouble. Due to the absence of interpretative repertoires which position men and women as equally responsible for domestic duties, women such as Akiko face an ideological dilemma stemming from their membership in the stigmatized category of 'working wife/mother'. One way to

discursively manage this dilemma is to present oneself as very much *attuned* to domestic work in an attempt to distance oneself from the negative connotations associated with ‘working woman’ category membership.

Like the ‘career woman’, a ‘superwoman’ subject position can be seen as a ‘pariah femininity’ because it challenges the ascendant position of hegemonic masculinity (see sections 2.5.2-2.5.4). Although the superwoman position incorporates aspects of hegemonic femininity, i.e. performing domestic labor, it also challenges the traditional assumption that non-domestic work is entirely ‘men’s territory’. Due to this nonconformity, women who align themselves with the superwoman position may need to produce an account where they are also ‘good’ wives and ‘wise’ mothers lest they be regarded as ‘gender deviants’ (Messerschmidt, 2007), i.e. individuals whose sex and gender misalign. The consequences of this ‘deviance’ are reflected discursively when, despite an equal division of domestic labor with their husbands, working women hesitate to disavow responsibility for domestic work, and instead construct ‘guilty feelings’ for failing to adequately attend to that work, while making it clear that they know about the work.

In Chapter 8, I have addressed research question one: ‘What *interpretative repertoires* do participants draw on as they discursively construct (b) *pariah femininity*?’

Kayoko did not draw on a ‘Women as natural caregivers’ or ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoire but instead on what we might call a ‘Working professional’ repertoire when she discusses her professional ambitions. Akiko draws on a ‘Working professional’ repertoire and a ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoire when she positions herself as responsible for domestic work.

I have also addressed research question 1(a): ‘What discursive features are associated with *interpretative repertoires* constituting (b) *pariah femininity*? Both Kayoko and Akiko draw on membership categories and category bound activities (see section 5.3). Significantly, they invoke a lexis of *issokenmei* (‘your whole heart and soul’) and ‘*ganbaru*’ (‘work hard’) which indicates that ‘working hard’ or ‘putting your whole heart and soul into an endeavor’ is gendered in Japanese society. Men are expected to serve as family breadwinners while women act as family caregivers. Kayoko uses ‘*yappari*’ (see section 5.4) to emphasize that ambition may prevent heterosexual women from ‘being chosen’ and construct this as ‘commonsense’. Akiko draws on ‘*yappari*’ to assert that her ‘guilty feelings’ for neglecting her parental duties are natural. Both Kayoko and Akiko’s accounts are replete with reported speech; however, Akiko also draws on ‘self-reported habitual thought’ (see section 5.2.7) which is a notable difference from the previously analyzed accounts. In section 8.3, I discuss



the role of reported speech in the construction of hegemonic femininity.

Research question 1(b) asks: ‘What *subject positions* (self and other) do participants take up in relation to *interpretative repertoires* constituting (b) *pariah femininity*?’ Kayoko takes up a ‘career woman’ subject position and Akiko a ‘superwoman’ subject position; however, neither wholeheartedly embraces these subjectivities which indicates they may be struggling with ideological dilemmas posed by category membership.

Therefore, this chapter also addresses research question two: ‘Is there evidence of *ideological dilemmas* generated from contradictions between different *interpretative repertoires* in participants’ discourse?’ Kayoko can be seen as facing a dilemma where her category membership as an ‘independent career woman’ may prevent her from securing a long-term heterosexual relationship because hegemonic femininity is associated with dependence on men (see section 2.5.3). Akiko faces a dilemma where her category membership as a ‘career woman’ challenges the normative assumption that women’s subjectivity is entirely domestically-based (e.g., full-time homemaker). Despite a purported equal division of domestic labor with her husband, a ‘Women as eventually domestic’ repertoire positions Akiko in a domestic role in addition to her non-domestic one, so she faced the dilemma of being viewed as an ‘incompetent’ wife

and mother, perhaps even ‘unfeminine’, which she manages by presenting herself as a ‘diligent’ wife and mother through the construction of ‘guilty thoughts’, i.e. at least an awareness of what she ‘should’ do.

Finally, extending chapters 6-7, this chapter also addresses research question three: ‘What discursive features are associated with *ideological dilemmas* generated from contradictions between *interpretative repertoires* in participants’ discourse?’ Ideological dilemmas are suggested when speakers hesitate to directly answer my question and instead produce ambiguous responses such as ‘that’s a difficult one’. In addition, Kayoko uses gendered category membership to contrast how independence and ambition are undesirable characteristics for women seeking marriage, which she supports with ‘*yappari*’. Akiko notably invokes a category contrast to position herself as concerned and her husband as unconcerned when aspects of domestic life are neglected. Ideological dilemmas are also suggested by both speakers’ extensive use of reported speech, which I discuss in 8.3.

### **8.3 The main discursive features used to construct ‘pariah femininities’**

#### **8.3.1 The discursive functions of reported speech and thought**

Reported speech and thought is used as evidence which supports a speaker’s claim. For example, Kayoko (extract 19) claims that emotional independence can work

against women who want to enter into long-term heterosexual relationships because men reportedly prefer to be in a higher position than their partners. Kayoko constructs what she was apparently told, ‘it’s better to depend on men’, as representative of a common way of thinking through reported thought (see section 5.2.7), ‘there are people who think this way’. Kayoko’s possibly isolated experience of being told to depend more on men she now reconstructs as representative of a common line of thought, which supports her claim that men are threatened by independent women.

Regarding the rhetorical effectiveness of reported speech versus thought, speech is rhetorically stronger than thought because speech was ostensibly uttered by someone else while thought represents a speaker’s construction and thus interpretation of another’s usually unarticulated thought. Therefore, a claim produced within reported thought can be undermined on the grounds that it is impossible to know someone’s thoughts. Speakers can, however, rhetorically protect against reported thought being undermined, through the use of mitigation. Here, Kayoko first draws on reported speech to evidence her claim that men want to be in a higher social position than their female partner (e.g., ‘men want to earn more [than their partners]’), and later suggests (extract 20) that this comment is representative of men’s normative thinking (e.g., ‘that’s why I have the feeling that men think about money more than women’). ‘That’s why I have

the feeling' is mitigated and thus less direct than 'I think'. The use of reported speech combined with mitigated reported thought allows Kayoko to formulate a claim about men's thinking which was rhetorically strong and difficult to undermine.

Another way to rhetorically bolster a claim made within reported thought is to construct thought as originating with another speaker. Kayoko (extract 20) provides an example of her friend whose academic credentials 'disqualify' her from a successful non-platonic relationship, which supports Kayoko's claim that men are uncomfortable dating successful women. Kayoko constructs her friend's assessment of men's thought within reported speech, 'men think that if they are not in a higher position than their partners, things probably won't work out between them'. Notably, the reported thought of men is embedded within reported speech, so the friend's individual experience with men is constructed as part of a larger phenomenon—the 'normative' thinking of men as an aggregate. Therefore, Kayoko's claim has the support of both her friend's reported speech and friend's construction of the reported thought of men.

Reported speech is more 'authentic' than reported thought in that speech was purportedly uttered, whereas reported thought represents a speaker's interpretation of another's unarticulated thought and is thus more mediated. Nevertheless, reported speech is transient, being uttered in a particular conversational setting, while reported

thought may represent something deeper and more enduring, i.e. a belief system. Although reported thought was never ‘uttered’, its rhetorical strength stems from its representing the normative thinking or belief system of an entire group.

The above discussion has I hope demonstrated that the rhetorical effectiveness of reported speech and thought is contextually dependent. While reported speech is ‘authentic’ in that it (or something like it) was presumably uttered, it can be discredited as an isolated experience, not representative of the ‘norm’, e.g. other men are not threatened by independent women. However, reported speech is rarely an accurate rendition of previously uttered speech but is modified to serve a speaker’s rhetorical needs in the current interactional context (e.g., Holt & Clift, 2007; Tannen 2007). Although reported thought may be rhetorically effective because it may be used to represent the ‘normative’ thinking of a group (i.e., ‘men think’), it can be undermined on the basis that it is impossible to know what others are thinking. Speakers can rhetorically insulate their claims from being undermined through the use of mitigated reported thought or constructing the reported thought as originating with another speaker. Reported speech and thought are discursive devices which speakers deploy in order to increase the credibility of their claims.

### **8.3.2 The discursive functions of ‘self’ versus ‘other’ reported thought**

As previously discussed, the participants in this study tended to construct the reported thought of ‘another’ versus ‘self’ (see section 5.2.7). An exception to this general pattern is Akiko who uses self-reported thought to construct her domestic obligations which she apparently fails to perform due to her work-related responsibilities (see section 8.2.2).

Akiko (extract 21) claims that housework is divided equally between herself and her husband; however, despite this purported equal division of labor, she also claims that she feels more guilt than her husband when domestic work is neglected. Akiko invokes self-reported thought to construct her internal struggle to manage the competing demands of her job and domestic responsibilities. She claims that when the house is not properly cleaned, ‘I think it’s my fault’. She also claims that she feels guilty for not picking her child up on time, ‘I think I was the only one not there.’ Finally, when she is unable to make the family’s lunch boxes, she states, ‘I think that I had to make them.’

These three examples are formulated within self-reported thought, which indicate that Akiko is accounting for the absence of socially expected practices. Notably, cleaning the house, picking up her child, and making lunch boxes are all domestically-based practices which suggests that Akiko is drawing on a ‘Women as

eventually domestic' repertoire (see section 6.2.2) as she attempts to construct her own subjectivity in line with hegemonic femininity (see section 2.5.3). However, her own reported inability to perform these domestic tasks prevents her from constructing her subjectivity in line with hegemonic femininity (and, as indicated, for this reason 'career woman' can be seen as a pariah femininity subjectivity).

Self-reported thought performs an important rhetorical function in Akiko's account. I indicated that reported thought of another person or group may be self-undermining from the perspective that it is impossible to know what someone else is thinking; however, this does not apply to self-reported thought. Whereas the rhetorical effectiveness of reported thought of an aggregate lies in its ability to construct 'normativity' (e.g., 'men think that women should do housework'), self-reported thought is rhetorically effective because a speaker can account for some 'neglected' practice and present oneself in a positive manner. Although Akiko's involvement in professional employment locates her outside hegemonic femininity, which is domestically-based (see sections 6.2; 6.3), she invokes self-reported thought to present herself as still very much attuned to 'appropriately' performing a domestic role.

This section has illustrated how two participants drew on reported speech and reported thought and in the process constructed 'pariah femininity' subjectivity.

Reported speech and thought can be used as evidence to support speakers' claims and bolster their overall account. We also saw how self-reported thought can be used to account for some 'neglected' practice and in the process to positively present oneself.

#### **8.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the discursive construction of two 'pariah femininities' within the interviews of two Japanese women (see section 2.5.4). Category membership as a 'career woman' and 'superwoman' can be seen as pariah femininity subjectivities because they contest a 'Women as natural caregivers' and 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoire (see sections 6.2.1-6.2.2). These subjectivities can be 'troubling' for participants, i.e. difficult to align with (see section 8.2) and indeed troubling for the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity.

I traced the construction of 'trouble' over the course of the participants' discourse through the occurrence of different discourse analytic devices: reported speech, membership categorization devices, and *yappari*, and particular uses of these which functioned to evidence claims, contrast gender-based category-bound activities, and construct a positive self-presentation (see sections 5.2-5.4). 'Career woman' and 'superwoman' subject positions reflect and arguably construct pariah femininities which



challenge the dominant discourse that women's primary role is a domestic one.

Akiko and Kayoko struggle with ideological dilemmas which emerge from contradictions between 'Women as natural caregivers' and 'Women as eventually domestic' and what we might call a 'Working professional' repertoire. Kayoko's dilemma results from her category membership as a career woman and woman who is seeking marriage. These women's discursive struggles illustrate the hegemony of domestic subjectivity and the difficulty of constructing alternative subjectivities.

This chapter has illustrated how pariah femininities pose a challenge to a heteronormative gender order which positions men as breadwinners and women as caretakers. 'In other words, 'career woman' and 'superwoman' subject positions threaten to disassemble the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1999; see section 2.5) where hegemonic masculinity and femininity exist in a hierarchical relationship built on domination and subordination respectively because these subject positions challenge the exalted status of hegemonic masculinity (see sections 2.5.2-2.5.3). Kayoko discursively presents a prime example of the sexual double-standard that operates against women who embody aspects of hegemonic masculinity. Kayoko's characteristics, i.e. being independent, ambitious, and successful, would make a single man an attractive marriage candidate, but in Kayoko's case they reportedly count against her. Similarly, the long

hours that Akiko spends at work resulting in a lack of time to perform domestic work would in 'Women as eventually domestic' not be constructed as 'failed fatherhood' in a man, but dedication to his job, which paradoxically makes him appear a responsible family man. These two examples illustrate how when aspects of hegemonic masculinity are associated with women, they shift from 'strengths' to 'shortcomings'.

The two 'pariah femininity' subjectivities discussed in this chapter thus illustrate the sexual double-standard which women can face. Women who embody characteristics associated with hegemonic masculinity are not rewarded as men arguably are but instead become 'undesirable marriage candidates' or 'bad mothers' because they challenge hegemonic masculinity. Whereas a professionally ambitious man is a 'good catch', the professionally ambitious Kayoko articulated a fear of 'scaring men away'. In Japan, where masculinity is associated with paid labor, men can pursue their careers with the domestic support provided by a wife, while working women such as Akiko express 'guilty thoughts' in order to present themselves as 'good wives and wise mothers' (see section 1.3). However, although constructing pariah femininity subjectivity may be 'troubling' both for women and for the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and femininity, this subjectivity may also provide women with a politics of resistance. I further discuss this point in the final chapter, Chapter 9.

In Chapter 9, in addition to bringing together the ‘answers’ to my research questions, I also discuss this study’s contributions to gender theory and critical discursive psychology. In addition, I identify its limitations and propose directions for further research.

## **Chapter 9: Conclusion**

### **9.1 Introduction**

In this final chapter I discuss the relationship between the results of my findings and studies discussed in the literature review, thus locating my research in the fields of gender studies and critical discursive psychology. The purpose of this study was two-fold: (1) to critically examine the discursive construction of ‘hegemonic’ and ‘pariah’ femininities within the context of interviews; and (2) to relate the concept of interpretative repertoires from discursive psychology to specific discursive devices which characterize these repertoires (see section 2.6). My goal was to make an original contribution to gender studies through the empirical investigation of the theoretically operationalized constructs of ‘hegemonic’ and ‘pariah’ femininity (see section 2.5.3-2.5.4) and to critical discursive psychology by further attempting to blur the distinction between ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ levels of analysis and move toward more synthetic discourse analysis, as proposed by Edley and Wetherell (2008) and Wetherell (1998, 2007). In this chapter I also discuss the contributions of my study, its limitations, and outline areas for further research.

### **9.2 Revisiting the research questions**

Research question one asks, ‘What *interpretative repertoires* do participants

draw on as they discursively construct (a) *hegemonic femininity*?' Significantly, the results of this study indicate that even in an era of post equal opportunities discourse, interpretative repertoires which constitute hegemonic femininity still offer women a 'professional homemaker' subjectivity, e.g. what has been called 'Women as natural caregivers' and 'Women as eventually domestic'. This suggests that a 'good wives, wise mothers' ideology (see section 1.3) continues to exert an influence on hegemonic femininity.

Recent research has indicated that 'Shared parenting' repertoires are beginning to circulate in Japan. A 'new homemaker' (Taga, 2006) expects a certain level of domestic involvement from her husband; however, she is typically still a full-time, stay-at-home mother who may engage in work resembling a hobby once her children enter school (e.g., private tutoring from her home). Women's desire for greater domestic involvement from their husbands can be seen as a positive development for Japanese families. However, significantly, we do not see the emergence of repertoires which position women as 'career professionals'. As Ogasawara (1998) (see section 1.3) has indicated, a possible reason why 'office flowers' are uncommitted to their work and willing to resign is that the work is unstimulating and lacks opportunities for advancement. Similarly, Kimoto (2005) found that while male employees are 'fast

tracked' into managerial positions, women are relegated to shift work with few opportunities for advancement. The de facto discriminatory and gendered nature of Japanese employment practices may be one reason why there is an absence of repertoires which position women as 'career professionals'. Conceivably, many women may regard a full-time domestic role as more appealing than a 'dead-end' job in a company.

In support of the emergence of the 'new homemaker', many of my participants construct femininity as women's exclusive 'privilege' (see Chapter 7). Ai and Ayaka (extract 14) construct marriage as an 'escape route' and Nayu (extract 15) suggests that women have more choices than men. In these accounts, women do not resign from work with reluctance, but are empowered by their agency to relinquish their positions. Ogasawara (1998) observed a similar phenomenon where women viewed themselves as free to resign while men "are tied down to the company" (p. 64). Participants' positive construction of 'Privileged femininity' is highly problematic because it binds women to heteronormative partnerships. Although men may be 'bound' to their workplaces, they receive a paid wage and social prestige. Women, on the other hand, engage in an unpaid and arguably undervalued labor of love.

Yamada (2001) makes the important point that certain conditions must exist in

order for a woman to become a ‘professional housewife’. A woman can become and remain as a full-time housewife as long as she is able to get married, remain married, her husband’s salary continually increases, and he does not die or lose his job (Yamada 2001). Therefore, the decision to become a full-time housewife does incur risks. These become somewhat elevated in a society which has been plagued by a long-term economic recession and work-induced health-problems such as *karoshi* (‘death by overwork’) which are making single-income families financially unfeasible, thus the responsibility to serve as the primary breadwinner becomes a source of pressure for men (Mouer & Kawanishi, 2005; Roberson & Suzuki, 2003; Sugimoto, 2003). When viewed in light of these risks, the ‘privileges’ associated with a full-time domestic role require re-evaluation.

Research question 1(a) asks: ‘What discursive features are associated with *interpretative repertoires* constituting (a) *hegemonic femininity*? Reported speech, gendered categorical references (e.g., ‘because you’re a woman’) and category-bound activities combined with ‘*yappari*’ to mark these activities as ‘commonsense’ (see sections 5.2-5.4) are discursive features associated with the construction of hegemonic femininity.

Concerning research question 1(b), ‘What *subject positions* (self and other) do

participants take up in relation to *interpretative repertoires* constituting (a) *hegemonic femininity?*, participants assumed subject positions which range from complicit to resistant. The multifarious positions that participants assumed in relation to ‘Privileged’ and ‘Bounded femininity’ (see chapter 10) are noteworthy because they illustrates how some participants took up resistant subject positions in relation to repertoires which constitute hegemonic femininity. For instance, Hiromi (extract 13) negatively evaluates her parents’ low expectations concerning her academic success, and for this reason can be seen as taking up a resistant subject position in relation to ‘Privileged femininity’ at school. Her resistance is suggested when she uses reported speech in reference to her parents’ expectations of her brother (e.g. ‘study hard’) and then negated hypothetical reported speech (see section 5.2.8) to convey their lack of expectations for her (‘they’ve never said that to me’). Similarly, Michi, Keiko and Yayoi (extract 18), criticize men’s purported assumption that women serve the food at work-related socials, and thus can be seen as assuming resistant subject positions in relation to ‘Bounded femininity’. By assuming resistant subject positions, these women are attempting to draw on other repertoires which position both men and women as career professionals. We can conceptualize women who take up resistant subject positions in relation to hegemonic femininity as contributing to changing the status quo.



However, the complicit positions which a majority of the participants assume in relation to ‘Privileged’ and ‘Bounded’ femininity repertoires illustrate how gender hegemony can operate subtly through these repertoires. That is, participants do not position themselves as disempowered by these repertoires but in fact empowered. For instance, a lack of pressure to excel in school and work could be constructed as a ‘freedom’ associated with gender-category membership. In this line of thinking, women are empowered by their agency to select a course of study or job of their preference, unlike their male counterparts who are pressured to enter competitive universities and secure stable employment. Nevertheless, this ‘freedom’ must be viewed in light of its implications about the heterosexual gender order (see section 2.3) of Japanese society where men are normatively positioned as ‘providers’ and women ‘caregivers’. In the end, women are not free but remain financially dependent on men in domestic partnerships.

The second research question asks: ‘Is there evidence of *ideological dilemmas* generated from contradictions between different *interpretative repertoires* in participants’ discourse?’ Women who attempt to construct subjectivities outside the domestic realm can face ideological dilemmas due to contradictions between ‘Women as natural caregivers’, ‘Women as eventually domestic’ (see chapter 6) and alternative

repertoires (e.g., 'Working professional). An ideological dilemma is also suggested when Akiko (see section 7.2.2) draws on 'Privileged femininity' and presents femininity as a resource which qualifies women for certain occupations, but at other points in her interview expressed resistance to gender category membership being the sole reason for asking women to perform a task such as serving tea.

Also concerning research question one, i.e. 'What *interpretative repertoires* do participants draw on as they discursively construct (b) *pariah femininity*?', category membership as a single 'career woman' or married 'superwoman' can be seen as 'pariah' femininities because they 'trouble' the asymmetrical relationship between hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity and for this reason can be psychologically difficult positions for participants to align with. Kayoko (extracts 19-20) does not draw on a 'Women as eventually domestic' or 'Women as natural caregivers' repertoire but instead on what we might call a 'Working professional' repertoire, constructing her subjectivity accordingly. Akiko (extracts 21-22) draws on a 'Working professional' repertoire but also a 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoire when she positions herself as responsible for domestic work. The fact that 'career woman' and 'superwoman' subjectivities contest the assumption that men are 'providers' and women 'provided for' results in a situation where participants are unable to enthusiastically

embrace these subject positions in any straightforward way.

Research question 1(a) asks: ‘What discursive features are associated with *interpretative repertoires* constituting (b) *pariah femininity*?’ A lexis of ‘*ganbaru*’ (‘work hard’) and ‘*issokenmei*’ (‘your whole heart and soul’) and associated gendered category-bound activities are discursive features associated with the construction of pariah femininity. Notably, *ganbaru* and *issokenmei* are gendered; therefore, women who attempt to devote themselves to their careers can face ideological dilemmas because they draw on alternative repertoires which contest ‘Women as natural caregivers’ and ‘Women as eventually domestic’. Reported speech, particularly ‘self-reported thought’ to construct ‘guilty feelings’ over neglected aspects of domestic life is another discursive feature associated with the construction of pariah femininity. Kayoko and Akiko both use ‘*yappari*’ to construct their stigmatized status as either an ‘ambitious woman’ who is seeking marriage or ‘guilty thoughts’ over ‘neglected’ maternal duties as ‘commonsense’, thus ‘*yappari*’ is another discursive feature associated with the construction of pariah femininity.

Regarding research question 1(b), i.e. ‘What *subject positions* (self and other) do participants take up in relation to *interpretative repertoires* constituting (b) *pariah femininity*?’ Results of this study indicate that pariah femininities are by definition

difficult to embrace. For example, Kayoko positively constructs her independence and ambition; however, she also articulates concern that these same qualities may ‘scare men off’ and thus result in her ‘not being chosen’ (see Reynolds, 2008). Similarly, Akiko does not embrace a ‘superwoman’ position but instead uses the language of ‘guilty thoughts’ to present herself as a ‘good wife and wise mother’ (see section 1.3). The participants’ inability to wholeheartedly embrace ‘career woman’ and ‘superwoman’ subject positions can stem from ideological dilemmas which emerge in their discourse.

Research question two asks: ‘Is there evidence of *ideological dilemmas* generated from contradictions between different *interpretative repertoires* in participants’ discourse?’ A pervasive dilemma across these accounts was the participants’ inability to position paid work and family responsibilities as complementary pursuits. A hegemonic ‘Women as natural caregivers’ and ‘Women as domestic’ still position domestic work as women’s responsibility, thus women who attempt to construct non-domestic subjectivities can face dilemmas. This is exemplified in the accounts of Kayoko and Akiko who struggle with ideological dilemmas which stem from their respective category membership as a ‘career woman’ and ‘superwoman’. Kayoko (extracts 19-20) cannot wholeheartedly celebrate her independence and ambitions because these same characteristics potentially prevent her from securing a long-term

heterosexual partnership, which is associated with hegemonic femininity. Similarly, Akiko (extracts 21-22) cannot wholeheartedly embrace a ‘working professional’ subject position without risking being seen as a ‘negligent mother’; therefore, she resolves this dilemma by drawing on the language of ‘guilty thoughts’ and presenting herself as struggling to juggle the dual pursuits of work and motherhood.

The final research question asks: ‘What discursive features are associated with *ideological dilemmas* generated from contradictions between *interpretative repertoires* in participants’ discourse?’ Kayoko uses gendered category membership to contrast how independence and ambition are undesirable characteristics for women seeking marriage, which she supports with ‘*yappari*’. Akiko notably invokes a category contrast to position herself as concerned and her husband as unconcerned when aspects of domestic life are neglected. Ideological dilemmas are also suggested by both speakers’ extensive use of reported speech. Diverging from previous chapters, Akiko invokes self-reported thought which is therefore a discursive feature specifically associated with pariah femininity. In sum, membership categories, ‘*yappari*’, and reported speech are discursive features associated with the construction of pariah femininity.

The contributions of this study are located within the discursive and thus symbolic realm of gender relations or contextually dependent meanings assigned to

masculinity and femininity (see section 2.2.4). Gender relations however also have material causes and consequences such as disparate wage structures and unequal divisions of domestic labor, manifestations of which are symbolically reflected in my participants' discourse. For instance, disparate power relations (see section 2.2.1) are reflected in the asymmetrical relationship between hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity which play out discursively when my participants draw on a 'Women as natural caregivers' and 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoires to construct hegemonic femininity. These two repertoires discursively position individuals in a conventional division of domestic labor where men engage in non-domestic work and women in unpaid and arguably undervalued domestic work, i.e. a gender division of labor (see section 2.2.2). Emotional relations (see section 2.2.3) are suggested by my participants' discursive construction of heterosexual relations as normative, e.g. women's ability to 'resign' from work rests on the assumption they wish to and will marry, and by 'Women as natural caregivers' and 'Privileged femininity' which positions women in caregiving roles, either within the home or workplace. Symbolic relations, then, are inextricably linked to material aspects of gender relations; therefore, the significance of discursive constructions of hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity is that they notably reflect but conceivably also exert an influence on aspects

of the material world, i.e. they are constitutive.

Although I am not suggesting that there is a direct connection between the discursive accounts analyzed here and the material consequences of gender relations, e.g. unequal wages, the relationship of dominance and submission constitutive of hegemonic masculinity and femininity is nevertheless symbolically reflected in my participants' discourse. 'Women as natural caregivers' and 'Women as eventually domestic' repertoires equate 'gender differences' not with 'equality' ('different but equal'), but instead attach social significance to women's reproductive capacity and position women in domestic roles or in underpaid 'pastoral occupations'. Similarly, women's 'privilege' to resign from work or perform certain jobs must be viewed in light of women being ultimately 'bound' to men in domestic partnerships or to performing only supportive roles within the workplace.

### **9.3 Contributions of the study**

This study has contributed to the study of gender in a non-Western context and hence to the field of Japanese studies. Japanese language and gender studies has traditionally focused on the study of distinct, gendered speech styles, i.e. 'women's language' and 'men's language' (see Okamoto & Smith, 2004). More recently, research has challenged the essentialist assumption of sex-based speech styles by demonstrating

that a multitude of factors such as age, gender, sexuality, and regional affiliation potentially influence individuals' linguistic practices (see Okamoto & Smith, 2004). For example, Sunaoshi (2004) found minimal gender differences between the speech of men and women in a rural farming community, which thereby challenges the assumption that gender category membership determines speech style. Similarly, Miyazaki (2004) demonstrated how junior high school girls and boys both use masculine and feminine personal pronouns. This research demonstrates how social identities are not static but fluid; therefore, a claim that 'women' or 'men' speak a distinct repertoire ignores variation based upon age, gender, sexuality, and specific communities of practice (see section 2.1.2) and thus runs the risk of being seen as essentialist.

This study has uniquely contributed to the field of Japanese studies by increasing our understanding of hegemonic and pariah femininities. Whereas the contributors in Okamoto and Smith (2004) investigated individuals' language use and what that indexes about social identities (e.g., gender, sexuality, age), I focused on how femininity is constructed through discourse. Unlike these contributors, I was not interested in destabilizing the relationship between gender and a distinct linguistic register, but on how a group of women construct femininity through discourse. In addition to contributing to the field of Japanese gender and language research, I have



also made a contribution to gender theory and critical discursive psychology.

### **9.3.1 Gender theory**

‘Hegemonic’ and ‘pariah’ femininities are relatively new theoretical concepts which have yet to be empirically investigated (see section 2.7). I have contributed to gender research by empirically investigating these underdeveloped theoretical constructs in the underexplored context of Japan.

Wetherell and Edley (1999) argue that the concept ‘hegemonic masculinity’ is theoretically vague and therefore “not sufficient for understanding the nitty gritty of negotiating masculine identities and men’s identity strategies” (p. 336). In an attempt to clarify this concept, they define hegemonic masculinity as a set of subject positions (e.g., ‘heroic’, ‘ordinary’, and ‘rebellious’ positions) which speakers take up or resist within discourse (see also section 3.3.2). Therefore, one way to ‘accomplish’ hegemonic masculinity is to take up a heroic position by expressing confidence at work.

Similarly, although Schippers has theoretically conceptualized both hegemonic and pariah femininity, research has yet to empirically investigate these concepts; therefore, it remains unclear how individuals construct feminine subjectivities. Following Wetherell and Edley (1999), I propose that hegemonic and pariah femininity can be defined in terms of interpretative repertoires and subject positions which

speakers assume in relation to these IRs. Therefore, ‘Women as natural caregivers’ and ‘Women as eventually domestic’ IRs and a ‘Professional homemaker’ subject position constitute hegemonic femininity for this group of participants. This finding suggests that a ‘good wives and wise mothers’ ideology (see section 1.3) continues to exert a hegemonic influence on the construction of femininity.

This study has also demonstrated a fundamental difference between hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity. In notable contrast to hegemonic masculinity, the ‘celebrated’ characteristics associated with hegemonic femininity (e.g., caregiving) actually disempower women; thus, embodying hegemonic femininity is a paradoxical privilege for them. On the one hand, women may receive a certain degree of comfort from constructing a socially sanctioned subjectivity or ‘doing’ (West and Zimmerman, 1987) gender ‘appropriately’. However, and significantly, this same ‘legitimized’ subjectivity is not a position of power, but subordinate to hegemonic masculinity. Since gender hegemony depends upon naturalizing an unequal social order, women’s consent is essential for this to occur (see section 2.5.1). We see then that hegemonic femininity serves as a handmaiden which supports hegemonic masculinity’s ascendance to power through occupying a subordinate position. Accordingly, subordinating hegemonic and non-hegemonic (pariah) femininities is a key mechanism through which hegemonic

masculinity sustains its extolled position.

This study shows that pariah femininity represents a subjectivity which may provide women with a politics of resistance. ‘career women’ and ‘superwomen’ challenge the ‘normative’ assumption that the paid labor market is exclusively ‘men’s territory’ but can be psychology troubling for individuals to claim membership in, as illustrated by Kayoko and Akiko’s accounts. More importantly, pariah femininity may subvert a patriarchal gender order where men ‘work’ and women ‘care’. Pariah femininity ‘troubles’ the hierarchical and complementary relationship definitive of hegemonic masculinity and femininity (see section 2.5.3) and challenges the ascendant position of hegemonic masculinity and herein lies both its subversive potential and conceivably a source of empowerment for women.

The study of different femininities is important because it illustrates the role femininity plays in supporting or challenging the ascendant position of hegemonic masculinity. However, in contrast to the plethora of research which has investigated ‘hegemonic masculinity’, research has neglected to investigate the *relationship* between masculinities and femininities. In order to redress this imbalance, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) call for more femininities research. Schippers’ (2007) concepts of hegemonic and pariah femininities are useful theoretical constructs which can be

used to empirically investigate the subordination or resistance of women. This study represents one attempt to refocus attention on femininities.

### **9.3.2 Critical Discursive Psychology**

#### **9.3.2.1 Identifying Interpretative Repertoires**

In section 3.4.5 I discussed how ‘interpretative repertoire’ would be an analytically stronger theoretical concept if it was utilized in terms of specific discursive features. In addition to clichés, metaphors, lexical items, and tropes (see section 3.4.5), I propose that analysts can use discursive devices such as ‘reported speech’, ‘membership categories’, and ‘*yappari*’ as tools for identifying and analyzing interpretative repertoires (see sections 5.2-5.4). By characterizing given interpretative repertoires in terms of specific discursive features in specific contexts, analysts’ claims about the workings of gender hegemony, racism, and so on are then identifiable in participants’ discourse and therefore analytically stronger. This would place critical discursive psychologists in a more advantageous position to discredit the accusation that their research is a form of content analysis (Mills, 2007).

Reported speech (see section 5.2) can be seen as a linguistic ‘trace’ (Talbot, 1998) of an interpretative repertoire. For instance, Hiromi (extract 13) claims she was told ‘just do what you like’ regarding her future while her parents pressured her brother

to study hard. She then claims that ‘everyone probably says that’, which suggests that ‘Women as eventually domestic’ and ‘Men as eventual breadwinners’ may be repertoires which circulate in Japanese society.

The reported thought of a group (see section 5.2.7) can also be seen as a discursive manifestation of an interpretative repertoire. When Ai and Ayaka (extract 12) invoke group-based reported thought (‘there’s the way of thinking’; see section 5.2.7) to position women as free to select their university of choice while men are expected to enter prestigious universities, they can be seen as drawing on ‘Women as eventually domestic’ and ‘Men as eventual breadwinners’ IRs. Ai and Ayaka’s complicit subject position in relation to this repertoire is suggested by their claim that women possess an ‘escape route’ of marriage which liberates them from the paid labor force. The reported thought of a group is an example of a discursive device which suggests the presence of an interpretative repertoire because it indexes the ‘normative’ thinking of the members of a particular community of practice (see section 2.1.2).

Membership categories (see section 5.3) are a further example of a discursive device which suggests participants are drawing on particular IRs. For example, we can infer that Yurika and Yuka (extract 9) are drawing on ‘Women as eventually domestic’ through their use of the membership category ‘*onna no hito dakara*’ (‘because you’re a

woman’) to categorize childcare as a gendered category bound activity.

However, categories are not always explicitly invoked, yet they can still be relevant to participants (see section 5.3). For instance, Kayoko (see extract 20) discusses how professional ambition is an undesirable characteristic for women seeking marriage. Specifically, she claims that individuals who devote themselves to personal pursuits are negatively viewed by members of society. Although she does not explicitly reference the category ‘woman’ when she discusses the stigmatization facing individuals who ardently pursue their dreams, we can infer gender category membership from her earlier claim that men want to be in a higher position than their girlfriends or wives. Therefore, women face social stigmatization for pursuing their careers. My study has confirmed the membership categorization analysis claim that we can infer category membership from category-bound activities.

‘*Yappari*’ (see section 5.4) is another discursive device which suggests that participants are drawing on particular IRs. Participants’ frequent use of ‘*yappari*’ constructs a claim as ‘commonsense’ or ‘taken-for granted’. Since the use of ‘*yappari*’ constructs information as commonly accepted knowledge for members of a particular CofP, I suggest that speakers’ use of this device can indicate they are drawing on an interpretative repertoire (see section 5.4.2). For example, we can infer from Mayumi’s

(extract 2) use of *yappari* in conjunction with her claim that women possess a ‘maternal instinct’ that she is drawing on a ‘Women as natural caregivers’ repertoire. Similarly, Akiko (extract 7) constructs the expectation that women perform housework as ‘commonsense’ through the use of *yappari*, which indicates she is drawing on ‘Women as eventually domestic’. Participants’ frequent use of *yappari* to construct gendered category bound activities (see section 5.3) as ‘commonsense’ suggests that ‘Women as natural caregivers’ and ‘Women as eventually domestic’ are repertoires which are ‘naturalized’ and thus circulate in Japanese society.

In the next section I discuss how ideological dilemmas (see section 3.4.2) are also traceable to speakers’ discourse.

### **9.3.2.2 Identifying Ideological dilemmas**

Ideological Dilemmas (see section 3.4.2) are apparent in the accounts of women who take up ‘pariah femininity’ subjectivities (see section 2.5.4). ‘Career woman’ and ‘superwoman’ pariah femininity subjectivities are by definition psychologically troubling for individuals to claim membership in because they trouble the asymmetrical relationship between masculinity and femininity (see sections 2.5.3-2.5.4). Therefore, Kayoko and Akiko struggle with ideological dilemmas which stem from their respective category membership as a ‘career woman’ and

‘superwoman’.

The ideological dilemmas which Kayoko and Akiko struggle with are traceable to specific utterances. For example, when I ask Kayoko (extract 19) if her independence is a source of pressure, she reformulates my question (‘is it a form of pressure’) in lieu of providing an answer. Typically, an answer is the ‘unmarked’ response to a question, thus Kayoko’s inability to formulate a normative response may be because her independence is problematic and complex and indeed a source of pressure for her. Further support for this interpretation of her ‘marked’ response is the fact that she later formulates men’s reported desire to be in a higher professional position than their partners as ‘commonsense’ with *‘yappari’*. In a similar manner, Akiko (extract 21) hesitates to answer my question, ‘do you think that women face social pressure’, and instead produces an ambiguous response, *‘muzukashii na’* (that’s a difficult one). One reading of Kayoko’s and Akiko’s reluctance is that since category membership as a ‘career woman’ or ‘superwoman’ challenge hegemonic femininity, these subjectivities can be ‘troubling’ or difficult to align with.

Akiko’s (see extracts 21-22) use of self-reported habitual thought (see section 5.2.8) to resolve her ideological dilemma involving category membership as a ‘working mother’ represents an important development from other chapters. For example, she



draws on a discourse of ‘guilty feelings’ in order to present herself as struggling to balance the sometimes conflicting demands posed by her career and domestic ‘responsibilities’. Therefore, self-reported habitual thought can be seen as a discursive device which speakers use to construct a positive self-presentation (see section 2.1.4) and thus resolve ideological dilemmas.

I have attempted to demonstrate how interpretative repertoires and ideological dilemmas are traceable to specific places in speakers’ discourse and therefore that critical discursive psychology is not simply a form of content analysis, but can be a legitimate and rigorous form of discourse analysis.

My expanded utilization of IRs to incorporate reported speech, membership categories, and ‘*yappari*’ is an example of a more ‘synthetic’ form of discourse analysis, as suggested by Edley and Wetherell (2008) and Wetherell (1998, 2007). As I discussed (see section 3.3.4), Edley and Wetherell suggest combining fine-grained textual analysis with theories from post-structuralism to produce more rigorous discourse analysis. According to Edley and Wetherell, this is best accomplished using ‘interpretative repertoires’, ‘subject positions’, and ‘ideological dilemmas’ as analytical concepts. I concur with Edley and Wetherell and also suggest that we can further bridge the gap between ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ levels of analysis by tracing our claims about the workings

of particular interpretative repertoires, subject positioning, and emergent ideological dilemmas to specific discursive features. In this study, reported speech, membership categories, and *'yappari'* (see sections 5.2-5.4) strengthen my analytical claims about the insidious workings of gender hegemony.

### **9.3.2.3 Discursive Trouble**

This study has also extended the concept of 'troubled' identity, or an identity which is difficult to embrace at the level of conversational interaction (see section 8.2). Supporting and extending Reynolds' (2008) finding that 'single woman' is a troubled subject position, a single 'career woman' who is seeking marriage and married 'superwoman' can both be seen as troubled subjectivities at two interrelated levels. First, the categories are psychologically troubling for individuals and thus difficult to express membership in. Therefore, Kayoko (see extracts 19-20) faces an ideological dilemma of celebrating her status as a goal-driven single woman who is also seeking marriage because those goals may in fact hinder her marriage prospects. Similarly, Akiko (see extracts 21-22) is unable to wholeheartedly embrace a subject position of 'working professional' without running the risk of others viewing her as a 'negligent' mother.

In her study of single women, Reynolds (2008) (see also section 3.4.3) found a pattern where some women experienced difficulty celebrating 'single' category

membership and expressing desire for a heterosexual relationship because if category membership as a single woman is positively constructed, then the need for a relationship is rendered obsolete. Thus, women tended to frame their desire for a relationship as an admission, e.g., 'in all honesty'. Reynolds' study indicates that 'self-fulfilled single woman' and 'woman who is looking for a relationship' are apparently 'polarized' categories and women face difficulty articulating membership in both categories.

Kayoko and Akiko's 'trouble' also emerges from the apparent 'incompatibility' of membership in two polarized categories. Kayoko's trouble results from category membership as a 'career woman' who also seeks marriage because her multiple goals and ambitions may 'scare men away' and disqualify her from the marriage market. Therefore, she cannot wholeheartedly embrace a 'career woman' subject position because it may result in 'not being chosen' and thus movement into the denigrated category of 'single woman'. In Akiko's case, trouble arises from category membership as a 'working professional' and 'mother' because motherhood is considered a full-time endeavor in Japan (see section 1.3), thus self-positioning as 'professionally successful' may prevent category membership as a 'good wife, wise mother' (see section 1.3), which is the cornerstone of Japanese hegemonic femininity. Participants' trouble

articulating membership in apparently polarized categories reflects a discursive climate where professional ambition is incompatible with securing a heterosexual relationship or motherhood with pursuing a career.

Second, ‘career woman’ and ‘superwoman’ trouble the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity. Because these women threaten to ‘contaminate’ the complimentary but asymmetrical relationship between hegemonic masculinity and femininity (see section 2.5.3), they can also be seen as pariah femininity subjectivities (see section 2.5.4). Therefore, Kayoko articulated ‘concern’ that her ambitions may decrease her chances of getting married and Akiko articulated the language of ‘guilty thoughts’ to construct a self-presentation (see section 2.1.4) as a ‘good wife and wise mother’ (see section 1.3). Therefore, an identity which is ‘troubling’ for individuals to embrace at the level of conversational interaction can also ‘trouble’ the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity and can result in stigmatization or potential subversion of a hegemonic gender order (see section 2.3).

#### **9.4 Limitations of the Study**

Because of my attempts to maintain reflexivity throughout the course of this study, I realize that this thesis has some limitations. These include the sample size and

the interviewer's potential influence on the data, which can be addressed by further research.

First of all, the issue of sample size could be broadened by interviewing a more diverse pool of participants. The participants that I interviewed were heterogeneous in terms of age, education, occupation, and marital status, and the fact that all these economically-privileged, middle-class women are drawing on repertoires which position women in domestic roles (see sections 6.2-6.3) suggests that these repertoires are circulating in Japanese society. Nevertheless, my sample is relatively homogenous in terms of social class (middle class), sexuality (heterosexual), and place of residence (a major city in central Japan). Therefore, the scope of the study could be extended by interviewing women with more diverse backgrounds to see if they draw on similar repertoires.

The strength of my findings presented in Chapter 8 based upon two speakers is also a potential limitation. It could be argued that the strength of my claims would increase if I had interviewed more participants; however, I contend that since IRs are socially-available and not individually-based (see section 3.4.1), Akiko and Kayoko are drawing on IRs which circulate in Japanese society. Therefore, I do not regard basing my claims on two participants as a weakness, but do acknowledge that interviewing

women with different backgrounds would further contribute to our understanding of pariah femininity.

Regarding the interviewer's influence on the data, I acknowledge that personally conducting the interviews influenced the data collection and analysis processes (see section 3.1.1; 4.3). My age, ethnicity, and gender may have all impacted the interviews and different data may have resulted had another researcher conducted the interviews. Personally conducting the interviews provided me with 'insider' status when categorizing and analyzing the data; however, I also needed to distance myself from the data in order to conduct 'objective' analysis. Despite the potential risk of 'reading into the data' by interpreting what speakers meant by a particular utterance, I concur with Edley (2001a) that personally conducting the interviews assists the researcher in identifying the workings of interpretative repertoires, and for this reason I do not regret conducting them myself. I acknowledge that although my interpretation of this data is "constructed, provisional, perspectival, and context-driven" (Baxter 2003, p. 59), I have attempted to remain self-reflexive throughout the entire research process.

While I thus acknowledge that despite my best efforts, my study has limitations; nevertheless, I do not view these limitations so much as 'weaknesses' which undermine my findings but instead as points of departure for further research.

## **9.5 Further research directions**

There are a number of areas future research can pursue in order to further our understanding of femininities which would also contribute to performing more multi-perspectival discourse analysis.

Future research, I argue, should attempt to further blur the distinction between ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ levels of analysis through investigating theoretical constructs such as ‘hegemonic’ and ‘pariah’ femininities utilizing ‘interpretative repertoires’, ‘subject positions’, and ‘ideological dilemmas’ as analytical tools. My attempt to link the concept of interpretative repertoires to specific discursive analytical devices is part of a growing body of research that is transcending the micro-macro distinction and resulting in more synthetic critical discursive psychological analysis (Edley & Wetherell, 2008; Kamada, 2008, 2009; Reynolds, 2008). For example, research could focus on identifying interpretative repertoires in terms of other discursive features such as metaphors or proverbs. I cite these examples because they surfaced twice in my participants’ discourse and therefore may provide direction for further research.

Given that ‘hegemonic femininity’ is a relatively new theoretical construct, more empirical research needs to investigate this construct with other participants and in other, including non-western, contexts. For example, research could investigate the

interplay between social class and gender in the discursive construction of hegemonic and pariah femininity to provide a more comprehensive picture of how these constructs intersect with gender. Messerschmidt's (2004) (see section 2.5.4) study of 'badass' and 'preppy' femininity for example illustrates how hegemonic femininity varies according to class.

Further empirical research investigating pariah femininities is also in order. I found that 'career woman' and 'superwoman' are pariah femininities because they 'trouble' the asymmetrical relationship between masculinity and femininity. Additional research could investigate other provisionally identified 'troubled' identities which have yet to be empirically investigated (e.g., nuns, transgendered individuals). The study of pariah femininities allows us to see how, when aspects of hegemonic masculinity are embodied by women, they result in discursive and non-discursive sanctions, which are crucial for hegemonic masculinity to maintain its provisionally ascendant position.

## **9.6 Conclusion**

My initial hypothesis based upon informal observations that Japan is in many ways still a very patriarchal society was the catalyst which prompted this study (see section 1.1). I had observed a traditional gendered division of labor within a workplace where men held authoritative positions and women supportive ones, such as serving tea.



The segregation of work duties by gender is an explicit form of gender discrimination which is still largely observed in practice; however, the findings of this study suggest a more insidious and arguably even more pervasive form of gender oppression—gender hegemony.

Hegemony, as shown, means that an ideology gains ‘commonsense’ status not through coercive force, but by obtaining the populace’s consent (see section 2.5.1). One interpretation of hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity is then that women are powerless victims of an implicit force that infiltrates their everyday lives which they cannot easily recognize or resist. However, this interpretation ignores the possibility of individual agency to contest hegemony. Post-structuralist research and thinking reminds us that a view of power as one-dimensional and oppressive is oversimplistic and deterministic because individuals fluctuate between positions of relative power and powerlessness (Baxter, 2003) which vary with specific ‘communities of practice’ (see section 2.1.2), e.g. the workplace. Individuals also possess agency to resist gender hegemony by contesting or even reformulating interpretative repertoires.

My study has demonstrated that although some women articulate interpretative repertoires which position them in domestic roles, or ‘buy into’ the notion of femininity as ‘privileged’ due to its strong association with marriage, others resist these repertoires

(e.g., pariah femininities). Individuals who contest the commonsense espoused by interpretative repertoires or even attempt to reformulate those repertoires (pariah femininity) can contribute to gradually changing the gender order in Japanese society. Due to the strength of the association between marriage and Japanese hegemonic femininity (see section 1.3), I am not confident that the connection between marriage and hegemonic femininity will dissipate anytime soon; nevertheless, women who embody and enact 'pariah femininities' are arguably the agents of social change who contest the ascendancy of hegemonic masculinity and contribute to the transformation of the current patriarchal gender order.

## **Appendix A: Interview Schedule**

1. What do you usually do everyday?
2. What do you think are traditional men's roles? What sort of things do you think men do in the past?
3. What do you think are traditional women's roles? What do you think women did in the past?
4. How about men's roles today? Do men do different sorts of things today?
5. How about women's roles today? Do women do different sorts of things today?
6. What are life choices that women have today? What sort of choices do women have to make today? Do you have examples from your own life?
7. Do you think that men and women are different? In what ways?
8. If you work and have a family, how do you think you will balance the two?
9. If you get married, what role do you envision your husband playing?
10. Do you think that women face social pressure today to do certain things? What sort? Do you have examples?
11. Have you ever felt social pressure as a woman?
12. Do you think women can resist this social pressure? How? Do you have examples? What happens if they do resist it?
13. Have you ever attempted to resist this social pressure? How? What happened?

### **Appendix B: Consent Form**

The interview conducted today was audio-recorded and may be used as part of my doctoral research. This means that a portion of or the entire interview transcript may appear in an academic paper or in a public forum such as an academic conference. If I use extracts from our interview as part of my research, a pseudonym will be used to protect your anonymity. When the research is complete, copies of the findings will be made available to you. Your signature below indicates that you give consent to the terms I have outlined.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Justin Charlebois

### **Appendix C: Profile of Participants**

1. Mayumi: 60, married with two adult children, runs a floral shop with her husband.
2. Akiko: 42, married with a four-year old child, university lecturer.
3. Yurika & Yuka: 18, university freshman.
4. Reiko, Moeko, Manami: 22, university seniors.
5. Ayaka, Ai: 19, university sophomores.
6. Nayu: 30, single, art curator.
7. Yukari: 42, married with no children, student.
8. Michi, Keiko, Yayoi: 20, university juniors.
9. Kayoko: 26, single, junior high school teacher.

## **Appendix D: Transcription Conventions**

(laughs) laughter

[text] clarificatory information.

“quote marks” words enclosed in quotation marks indicate quoted speech or the inferred voice of another.

Punctuation is provided for increased readability rather than to indicate speech patterns.

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