Language in Society **37**, 311–317. Printed in the United States of America

BOOK NOTES

Language in Society **37** (2008). Printed in the United States of America
doi: 10.1017/S0047404508080457

RHIANNON BURY, *Cyberspaces of their own: Female fandoms online*. New York: Peter Lang, 2005. Pp. x, 242. Pb $29.95.

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This is an ethnographic study of two all-female online communities, ostensibly founded to discuss certain television series and the male actors they feature. One of Rhiannon Bury's aims was to make her book accessible to the participants in her research, but although it is written in an accessible style, this is decidedly an academic monograph rather than a popular science book. Bury begins by giving an overview of her object of research, her participants, and her own involvement in the research process as an ethnographer. She goes on to outline her theoretical frameworks. She places herself at the nexus of four interconnected theoretical traditions: poststructuralism, post-Marxism, feminism, and queer theory (p. 5). She then describes in more detail some of the theoretical underpinnings of her work. Judith Butler's Performativity Theory features prominently, as does Stuart Hall's "articulation." A number of linguists and sociologists are also mentioned: Norman Fairclough, Deborah Cameron, Pierre Bourdieu, and Michel Foucault, among others. Thus, although Bury considers her work to be (broadly) within the field of cultural studies, there is much of interest for readers who identify more with other disciplines.

Following the introduction, there are five main chapters and a conclusion. In chapter 1, Bury discusses the "normative feminine" versus "feminist" (34) discourses found in the "David Duchovny Estrogen Brigade Research Project," in the discussion of a TV series (*The X-Files*) and in related texts. Chapter 2 contains an overview of "slash," a genre of fiction written by fans that involves putting the characters from a TV series into sexual and/or romantic homosexual relationships. It then discusses how the "Militant RayK Seperatists" not only conceptualize slash, but create it and derive pleasure from reading and writing it. Chapter 3 describes the online group members' conscious awareness of issues of linguistic prestige and "correctness."

However, in my view, Bury somewhat misapplies Bourdieu's theory of symbolic (specifically, linguistic) capital. First, she conflates the notion of a language market with that of *habitus* (compare Bourdieu 1993:79). Second, she misses Bourdieu"s point that linguistic capital is greatest in markets where there are power inequalities (Bourdieu 1993:80). Finally, she assumes that Bourdieu's metaphor of a market, designed principally for spoken discourse in public situations, translates unproblematically to the context of computer-mediated communication; this may well be the case, but it deserves further investigation. In chapter 4, Bury applies Brown & Levinson's politeness framework to her data. This works very well, although the framework is starting to look a little dated. The fifth chapter discusses the online communities as "alternative spatial orderings" (166), tracing the genesis of "women-only spaces" in the physical world and their extension to the online world. It goes on to place these online communities in the context of a media-rich, international world. Finally, in her conclusion Bury proposes a set of common guidelines for the study of fan communities across disciplines. Overall, one of the greatest strengths of this book is that the participants' voices come through clearly and are not "over-analyzed."

REFERENCE

Bourdieu, Pierre (1993). *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge, MA: Polity.

(Received 31 January 2007)

