# Introduction: acts of alterity

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### Abstract

Many contemporary analyses of language and identity focus on the acts of speakers expressing or voicing some self. Such an approach reductively aligns speakers, performances, voices, and selves. This introductory essay argues that identity has become an unanalyzed first principle of linguistic analysis that has occluded or absorbed other equally important aspects of linguistic practice, including performances of alterity. The essay relativizes performances of identity by placing them along a broader continuum between performances of identity and performances of alterity, focusing concretely on how the notions of voice and exemplary figures lay the ground for a linguistic anthropological analysis of language and difference.
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> But as with vacuums, nature abhors a performative utterance. – E. Goffman (1974, p. 547).

## 1. Identity/alterity: same difference?

Identity has become an ever more salient topic of interest across the social sciences and humanities in the last twenty odd years. Linguistic anthropology is certainly no

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exception here, where recent work has focused on the linguistic construction of membership in various social groups or categories.[1] Much of this work, which we include under the broad rubric of "acts of identity," exhibits a marked tendency to focus ultimately on the acts of speakers *expressing* or *voicing* some self. While this approach has, infact, been fruitful for the analysis of many linguistic practices in many different speech communities, we believe that, more often than not, it tends to obscure several important issues – namely, that self-identity is always developed in relation to some alter; that focus on expressive acts reductively aligns speech, speakers, and selves, eliding other configurations and functional dimensions of speech; and finally that particular ways of voicing others can be just as important – and in some communities, *more* important – than voicing selves. As a way of introducing this special issue, we would like to explore briefly the notion of alterity in linguistic practice. In so doing, we hope to draw attention to the ways in which the papers collected herein offer multiple alternatives to construals of language and linguistic practice which privilege the authentic expression of self-identity.[2]

Rather than being the product of any single event of speaking that we wished to memorialize in print, each paper in this volume was solicited separately and independently of each other by the editors, purely on the basis of interest and quality. No theme or topic was suggested a priori. However, reading them in tandem has prompted us to reflect on the various ways that these disparate papers all, to a great extent, thematize *alterity* and *difference* – rather than self-identity – as the salient element in their analysis. For example, in the papers by Alaina Lemon and Bernard Bate, insofar as identity is involved, it is involved for persuasive (conative) purposes rather than expressive ones, to affect an audience either dramaturgically or oratorically. In both cases, we see examples where difference and alterity are mobilized as rhetorical resources. In Lemon's essay on the Russian theater academy, it is in order to overcome indifference and elicit authentic

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[1] For trenchant and timely critiques, however, see Cameron and Kulick (2003, *passim*); see Silverstein (2003a) for an excellent discussion of the category of ethnolinguistic identity.

[2] Since we are trying to move the discussion *beyond* questions of identity (Cameron and Kulick, 2003), we do not want to focus on whether identity is thought to be something one *has* (essence) or something one *does* (performance), or on questions of authenticity and of the moral dimension of performances in general (on which Erving Goffman's work remains the most sensitive and plausible of any we have read (*pace* Abu-Lughod, 1986, p. 237)). We note, however, that questions of whether something is to count as an imposture or as a performance of one's authentic self would seem to be an ethnographic question. So, for example, Bucholtz (2003, p. 399) correctly notes some of the Romantic antecedents for the sociolinguistic obsession with "authenticity," but neglects, for example, that our current obsession with "identity" (*whatever* approach one takes to it) is equally well-trammeled with the footprints of Romantic predecessors. We agree with Bucholtz when she observes that sociolinguistics has been pervaded with notions of authenticity (what Adorno (1973) called with reference to Heidegger a "jargon of authenticity"), calling authenticity an "implicit theory of identity." Verily. But we also think any approach that examines why we would be obsessed with authenticity that does not, in the same breath, wonder out loud the same thing about identity is a half-measure. Identity is as much an "unexamined first principle" of sociolinguistics as authenticity. "Why authenticity?" should lead to "Why identity?" In the collocation "authentic identity," we follow the medieval scholastics: one looks for the *essence* in the *substantive*.

emotions from a theatrical audience or a broader public. In Bate's meditation on "democratic eloquence" in modern South India and revolutionary America, it is to enact different models of political relationships between orator and multitude. In Christopher Ball's article, we find an interesting study of Japanese dialectal forms which are used to encode what Ball calls "stances of alterity" between in-group and out-group orientations, rather than regional identities. Again, Steve Coleman's paper shows how an Irish-language discourse of *personalism*, which involves a range of comparable practices of performative imitation of others in all their distinctiveness, opposes this token-specific heterogeneity to homogenizing models of the Irish language and its speakers at the level of the State and the Nation. Wataru Koyama's work reveals the ways in which the alterity of Japanese linguistic practices has been constructed with respect to "Standard Average European" as an exemplary other at the theoretical level, and simultaneously how highlighting honorifics as an index of Japanese linguistic and cultural difference elides a great deal of regional and dialectal variation.

Clearly, everyone *knows* that identity is always constructed in relation to alterity. After all, it takes two to differ. It has long been an anthropological truism that the construction of (ethnolinguistic) identity cannot be studied except at its boundaries, beginning with alterity or otherness (Barth, 1969; Abbott, 1995; Irvine and Gal, 2000; Silverstein, 2003a).[3] So we all know that it is impossible to talk about identities except by explicit reference to alterity, and yet it is remarkable how often we talk of identity as if it were absolute and not relational.[4] Perhaps here we are simply following the impetus of certain (particularly nationalist) forms of identity politics, which positively *cringe* at the notion that identity is relational. When we talk of identity as

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[3] Not everyone *does* know this, by the way. Some theorists arrange different kinds of identity in a stadial progression related to different epochal conditions, opposing, for example, a "traditional" identity which is "fixed, solid, and stable" to a "modern" identity which is "more mobile, multiple, personal, self-reflexive, and subject to change and innovation" and yet is still "relatively substantial and fixed." The former "traditional" identity seems not only to rest on an essentializing native theory of identity, but identity is, in fact, essential in this account (in that identity is neither constructed reflexively – it is "given" – nor does it require an "Other," for reasons we do not understand). Conversely, modern identities are both constructed *and* self-aware of their very constructedness. Therefore, modern identity is associated with reflexivity and anxiety (Kellner, 1992, pp. 141–142). Since these stadial narratives (see also, for example, Hall (1989) for a similar sort of thing) seem to have been rather "in" late in the last century at the same time as the word "post-modern" was applied to things other than architecture, we then add perhaps a "post-modern" identity in which the subject itself "has disintegrated into a flux of euphoric intensities, fragmented and disconnected, and . . . the decentred postmodern self no longer experiences anxiety" (Kellner, 1992, p. 144). Obviously, the positioning of "given, essential" versus "reflexive, constructed," or "durable, authentic" versus "fluid, superficial" identities in a stadialist framework is debatable. But for our purposes, the *most* curious idea here is the just-so anthropology which assumes that "traditional" identities are just "given" and never constructed, and especially that "modern" identities are not only characterized by reflexivity but also by being oriented to others (hence "recognition" is a crucial part of a politics of identity (cf. Taylor, 1992)). We certainly agree that "the Other is a constituent of identity in modernity" (Kellner, 1992, p. 143) but we can't think of any period or time or place where that wasn't so.

[4] So a recent collection of "keywords" in linguistic anthropology (Duranti, 1999) has a heading for *identity* (Kroskrity, 1999) but not for *alterity*.

if it neither was constructed nor involved necessary reference to another, we usually say that this is "essentialist."[5] Recent "constructivist" approaches to identity, however, have laid the emphasis on showing that identity is something one *does* (performance or construction) rather than something one *has* (essence or attribute). But this focus often neglects the fact that identity performances are *relational* with respect to different dimensions of alterity, involving objectification of subjectivity, delineating stances both with respect to others against whom one defines oneself, the audiences before which performance occurs, as well as the relationship between this performance and others one might engage in. And one does all these things for reasons which may have nothing to do with identity per se (see Ball's paper in this volume on "stances of alterity").[6]

Not only does identity conceptually elide or somehow absorb its opposite, alterity, but, continuing with this "Attack of the Blob" metaphor, it also has a tendency to spread disquietingly and amorphously and end up absorbing *all* the familiar "independent variables" of sociolinguistics we would ever want to talk about (Krosrity, 1999, pp. 111–112). The result is, ironically, the radical homogenization of heterogeneity.[7]

A recent review of the literature on language and sexuality underlines how distorting such an approach can be in eliding, for example, the specificities of groups formed on the basis of "desire" rather than "identity" (Cameron and Kulick, 2003). The same could be said of a lot of familiar sociolinguistic variables: Is "class,"

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[5] Or, specifically with reference to identity politics, some might employ the term "strategically essentialist" – a category which grudgingly admits that people have motives as well as express identities, and that these two things are related.

[6] Herzfeld's discussion of *disemia* – a context-dependent, segmentary logic of identity construction – is relevant here (Herzfeld, 1987, pp. 95–122). Disemic identity is a *shifter*, as Herzfeld argues, a context-dependent duality of which puristic, essentializing identity politics (in this case nationalism) represent a simplifying essentialization or a "public" face of an identity with two distinct faces. These two distinct faces are associated with distinct semiotic displays: public and private, exterior and interior, honor and shame, self-display (before others) and intimate self-recognition (introspectively). The classic example here is the Greek house with the Neo-classical exterior (European) and comfortable "Turkish" interior (Oriental). As Herzfeld (1987, p. 47)) notes, disemic identity contains alterity (relation of European identity to Oriental alterity, relationship of performing self to audience) as an internal relation (on internal relations see, for example, Ollman, 1976) or dialogically (on Bakhtinian dialogism as something like an internal relation, see Morson and Emerson, 1990, pp. 130–145). The identity essentialized by nationalist identity politics is the "public" face of identity, a one-sided puristic identity. Analogous here, but framed within a less specific semiotic vocabulary, is Partha Chatterjee's (1993) discussion of nationalist discourse in colonial India. Indian nationalists sought to challenge British domination by carving out a uniquely Indian national space over which they could exercise sovereignty. They did this through the appropriation and reformulation of distinctions between private and public, the inner and the outer, the home and the world, the spiritual and material, which were recursively inscribed upon one another as a set of non-commensurable, yet mutually-entailing oppositions – a set of oppositions which found their ultimate expression in the opposition between the Orient and the Occident.

[7] We think it is important to point out that that a Star Trek "Attack of the Borg" reference would have also been perfect here in so many ways, especially that Borg line (no, not "Resistance is futile," though that is also obviously quotable in sundry academic contexts) about how the "diversity" of the victims will be added to the collective.

however one theorizes it, primarily a matter of identity or identity politics, or something else (see, for example, Heyes, 2002)? What about gender (see, for example, Eckert, 1989)? Surely it makes a big difference to either of these variables if one tries to collapse them into a purely expressive politics of authentic expression of identity (Heyes, 2002). These variables are not *homogeneous* vectors of difference to be fed into a single process of identity formation, rather, the way these variables differ, differs. Constructivist critiques of the essentialization of ''identities'' should begin with the word ''identity'' itself.

A single ludicrous example of this sort of bending, folding, and mutilating all manner of motivations into a single language of identity will suffice. Recently, on CBC radio, there was a call-in show discussing how healthcare was becoming a key issue in the then-upcoming federal elections. A woman phoned in saying that ''Our healthcare system is key to our identity as Canadians.'' So people's actual access to healthcare, and the quality of that care, is subsumed under the issue of identity, as if the most important function of Canadian healthcare is to differentiate our distinctive identity from that of Americans. At the time, both Liberal party leader and current Prime Minister Paul Martin and Conservative party leader Stephen Harper were actually engaging in the debate on these terms, too.[8]

This anecdote brings us to the final frontiers of an omnivorous identity concept: here, life and death matters of ''interests'' – health-care provisions – become subordinated to enacting identity – Canadianness. It's funny, and, if you live in Canada, sad, even alarming. But this is not just a Canadian problem: analogous things happen, or threaten to happen, in anthropological theory as well. In the sixties, Barthian transactionalism created a rationalizing *homo economicus* underlying ethnic processes and reduced ethnic identity to a set of diacritics strategically deployable as means to ends that were better described in terms of ''interests.'' By the nineties, we had come full circle: identity had dislodged interests as the fundamental motivational category to become, everywhere, at all times, a self-evident ''end in itself.'' As transactionalism populated the universe with interest-bearing rationalizing agents, so both folk and some analytical approaches to performance of identities substitutes ''identities'' for ''interests,'' and even identifies them. Our point is that even if indexing identity is ubiquitous, it is not always obvious that indexing it is an *end* in itself.

Once it has absorbed all the ''independent variables'' of sociolinguistic analysis, identity comes to be coterminous with all that is meaningful, sort of a shorthand for all meaningful practices. At this point identity reaches its logical limit and leaves as a meaningless residue all those things that cannot be absorbed under its mode of analysis, reproducing an opposition between locally meaningful identity formation processes (cultures) and fundamentally meaningless globalizing processes of the ''economy'' which cannot be subsumed in semiotic terms constitutive of identities. Indeed, in many such narratives, such anomic processes of globalization represent a threat to, and are resisted by, emphatically local linguistic or cultural processes

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[8] One editor would point out that for the other to work in an explicit reference to Canada is *so* Canadian.

of identity formation (Keane, 2003; Lee and LiPuma, unpublished). In linguistic anthropology, of course, "local" often means something like "situational" (Manning, 2001). Thus in some formulations, identity-making becomes an authentic expression of bottom-up agency and emergent, negotiated "communicative freedom" at the micro-situational level, which is subjected to top-down structural and political economic constraints and determinations at the macro-social level (Kroskrity, 1999, p. 113).

For all our concern in the literature on language ideologies to emphasize not only how sign systems differ, but that the ways that they differ *differ*, so to speak, we still seem to be talking primarily about ends rather than means: at some level, we either end up talking in terms of imputed rational motivations (interests), or we end up talking about the expression of absolute particularity (identity). To be sure, these are good approximations of our own motivational repertoires. We moderns have a mixed heritage, tracing descent bilaterally from both (expressive) Romantics and (means-ends maximizing) Utilitarians. The point is that identity is an abstract noun denoting an infinitude of specificities, a King-size Procrustean bed, so little seems to be lost when every form of social variation that is indexed in language is read as another form of identity. After all, identity is, at the end of the day, simply another name for the principle of individuation itself, a general term for infinite particularity. What could it possibly *not* include?

Part of the problem is not all of this identity talk itself, but an underlying tendency to assimilate linguistic anthropological analyses to a general subjective expressivist revolt against the Enlightenment. Of course, linguistic anthropology, if it has had one bugbear from its inception that haunts it, it is the referential bias of non-anthropological (especially linguistic and philosophical) treatments of language. Showing all the ways in which the bulk of linguistic activity was not purely cognitive, semantic, propositional, truth-conditional, etc., but also social, pragmatic, interactional, indexical, used to be our stock-in-trade (Silverstein, 1977). In such a simple exercise, it hardly matters which of the several Jakobsonian functions (phatic, expressive, conative, poetic) one uses as a foil for this referentialist bias.

However, our students (the ones who are interested in authentic expression; the other ones all take biology or chemistry) are often rather attached to notions of individual self-expression. Perhaps that explains why those of us who work in the retail end of the enlightenment business often find it easiest to trade heavily on their own romantic folk notions of identity, individuality, authenticity, and so on, as we banish the demon of referentialism. This catering is not too surprising. After all, as students come to resemble self-obsessed customers in their outlook, celebrating their cherished notions of authentic subjective expression or, equivalently, transgressive performativity, is just good business (Urciuoli, 2003). Plus, if you do otherwise, they tend to look at you like you just kicked a puppy or admitted to drowning the last kitten in a litter. That has been our experience, anyway. All this does lead, however, to a reductive tendency to read all that is not *referential* in linguistic function as being *expressive* of traits of the speaker, that is, *identity*. Privileging identity expression or the performative transgression thereof, however, produces a serious narrowing of the purview of linguistic

anthropology, reducing all of the Jakobsonian functions (Jakobson, 1960) of language to just two, the *referential* set towards the object and the *expressive* set toward the speaking subject.[9] These are often treated as if they were in some kind of uneasy truce, a kind of complementarity, so that in linguistics it is common to divide the grammatical competence of a single speaker between "expressive" and "cognitive" components, the one being a site of unruly subjective expression, the other being the calm workaday orderliness of grammar proper (Manning, 2002, and references therein).[10] And here linguistics and linguistic anthropology would just be reproducing the antinomies that characterize the whole society, as Charles Taylor has quipped, "Modern society, we might say, is Romantic in its private and imaginative life and utilitarian or instrumentalist in its public, effective life" (Taylor, 1975, p. 541). And of course this basic antinomic divide that sets off subjective "romantic" expression to objective "utilitarian" reference as authentic private life to alienated public life is realized recursively within the latter. We see this, for example, in different ways of constructing public authority in language: divisions between an authority of anonymity that downplays the speaker to produce an objective "view from nowhere," and a frankly expressivist view of language as subjective expression of speakers either as individuals or a *Volk*ish collectivity (an "authority of authenticity") (Gal and Woolard, 2001, p. 7). Within a single subject, these two perspectives produce the opposition between the subject as public citizen, abstract possessor of universal determinations of a "rights"-based discourse, and as a concrete, private person, possessing particular determinations of an "identity"-based one (Postone, 1980, p. 113). The "authority of authenticity" associated with identity politics simply seeks to break down the complementarity between these two forms of subjectivity, making the concrete, private person a position of authentic critique of the decentered authority of anonymity of the "rights"-based discourse. The same divide implicitly informs the complementarity between the objective "view from nowhere" of seemingly abstract and universal economic processes driving "globalization" as opposed to the very local concrete and particular expressive resistance to these processes that we locate at the level of culture, language, and most of all a "politics of identity" (Lee and LiPuma, unpublished).[11]

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[9] A tendency noted early on by Bakhtin, for example (1986, pp. 67–68). Interestingly, both of these perspectives evaluate the semiotic adequacy of the sign to subjects and objects in homologous terms: the criterion for referential adequacy obviously being truth or falsity, the criterion for expressive adequacy being *authenticity* or *sincerity* (Keane, 2002), or their opposite.

[10] This opposition lies at the heart of modernist conceptions of language. Witness, for example, the many attempts to create and promote simplified international auxiliary languages in the first half of the twentieth century which depended wholly or in part on eliminating the "emotive" aspects of language, leaving behind a "rationalist" base as a vehicle for universal communication. The BASIC English of Ogden and Richards is exemplary in this regard (Silverstein, 2001).

[11] See also Michael Warner's (1992, pp. 399–400) observations on the novel tensions generated by the contradictions between what he calls the discourses of self-abstraction (anonymity) and self-realization (particularity) in contemporary identity politics.

In a nutshell, we are no further than the conflict between Enlightenment and Romantic theories of language, referentialism versus expressivism, as if all the different Jakobsonian functions of language could be jammed into the opposition between the speaker's subjective self-expression and the drive for reference to objects. While linguistic anthropology appears to have very much banished the ghost of referentialism, we still seem haunted in our less careful moments by assuming that self-expression of subjective identity (authentic or not) is what pragmatics is ultimately all about, since semantics is all about reference to objects.

The tendency to read all forms of sociolinguistic variation as being "about identity" has been pointed out before, recently and very persuasively by Cameron and Kulick (2003, pp. x–xv). They insist that reading "sexuality" as being primarily a matter of identity is necessarily distorting, and that, a fortiori, this might be true of a lot of other places where identity serves as the key social variable. Moreover, the underlying logic privileging authentic self-expression in identity-related approaches to language is that they amount to little more than rehashed Romantic expressivism.[12] As Cameron and Kulick note, the first problem with the reduction of linguistic pragmatics to expressivism is that we are automatically concerned, on the subjective side, with "authentic" expression of identity. And since subjects constitute themselves by outward objectification in (linguistic) expression, this authentic expression must embody itself in a "distinctive way of speaking and/or writing" which can then be claimed as a "language of one's own," the study of which becomes a central theme for analysis (Cameron and Kulick, 2003, p. xiii). This, they add, is clearly related to the frankly affirmative, advocative standpoint for the analyst with respect to the object of analysis that is entailed, an affirmative stance indexed by the frequent use of the verb "celebrate" in performative utterances of the "I hereby celebrate x" variety. But lastly, as a form of politics that seeks, perhaps, to end the complementarity between expression of meaning and formulation of purposes, between private and public identities, this treatment of subjective expression as a form of pol-

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[12] This is probably unfair to expressivism. We have been using expressivism in a sense only partially indebted to Taylor to refer to a jargon of authenticity revolving around subjective expression (constructed or essentialist, authentic or not) including terms like identity (the thing to be expressed, among others). But expressivism as used by Taylor (for example, Taylor, 1975, pp. 13–29) described a complex dialectical tendency typified by some developments of Romanticism focusing on the notion of a self-defining, self-unfolding subject. While such a tendency does indeed privilege authentic expressions over inauthentic ones, this is in part because of the way that it involves mutual constitution of subject and object, appearance and essence. Therefore, it is neither constructivism (you are what you do, identity-wise) nor essentialism (you are what you are no matter what you do) per se, since expression has both an external, objective, purposive, orientation (expression involves the realization of purposes other than expression itself, similar to "interests") and at the same time expression has a subjective, meaningful, tendency, expression clarifies or makes determinate the subject, it clarifies these purposes. Existing modern positions with respect to identity are typically extremely one-sided – therefore untenable – versions of this formulation: outer performance *or* inner essence, "Utilitarian" fulfillment of purposes (interests) *or* "Expressivist" embodiment of meaning (identity).

itics in itself – as an end in itself rather than a means to some other end – actually downplays power, reducing the political to ''cultivating and celebrating authentic selves'' at the expense of formulating and enacting collective purposes (Cameron and Kulick, 2003, p. xiv).[13]

In some ways, then, we have been so wary of Enlightenment theories of language as being necessarily about epistemic claims of truth that we have ignored a vulgar tendency to reduce the interactional order to the expressive order. And part of this comes from reducing the multiplicity of dimensions of pragmatics (for which we have been using Jakobson's six point list as a foil) to a binary distinction between subjects and objects or self and other. Thus, concretely, the problem has to do with the expressivist stereotypic alignment of speech with speakers with selves. It is therefore worth looking at ways in which this particular set of alignments does not work.

## 2. Voices: talking selves or talking to oneself?

Studies of identity and language always seem to be about speakers (Hall, 2003). Speakers ''produce'' or ''perform'' selves. Even when no one else is around, apparently. This sort of expressivist paradigm of ''speakers producing/performing selves'' even while it explodes other normative perspectives by repositioning ''exceptional speakers'' at the core of their own normativities, remains tied to the Humboldtian model of speaker-centered expression that was the point of departure for Bakhtinian dialogism:[14]

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[13] This approach has recently been roundly criticized for jettisoning the category of ''identity'' altogether as a vector of analysis (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004). As we read it, Bucholtz and Hall seem to believe that Cameron and Kulick want to replace one idol for another, replacing ''identity'' with ''desire.'' We think that this is far too narrow a reading of the import of Cameron and Kulick's argument. While with specific reference to the study of language and sexuality, yes, Cameron and Kulick propose looking at the ways ''desire'' may be an important heuristic for analysis. But as we argue above, this is true of a whole host of other instances where ''identity'' serves as a giant black hole into which we can stuff just about anything we please. While Bucholtz and Hall's ''tactics of the subjectivity'' are a welcome addition to interendeavor of explanatory adequacy, holding on to the notion that, at root, it's all about identity is ultimately counterproductive, for reasons we argue here. In any case, no one is contending that ''identity'' needs to be stricken entirely from our vocabulary, but there may be reason to, as Cameron and Kulick (2003, p. 105) say, ''bracket identity and forget about it for a while.''

[14] Like many Bakhtinian terms, such as polyphony, which is frequently used incorrectly as if it were something like heteroglossia (Morson and Emerson, 1990, pp. 231–268), dialogism really indicates sets of something like internal relations between utterances (rather than ''external, compositional, relations''). This sort of internalization of external dialogic relations (internal dialogism) can happen on many levels (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 275–300; Morson and Emerson, 1990, pp. 130–145). In later work Bakhtin explicitly nods to the theory of internal relations by comparing an utterance's internal relations to its context to Leibniz's monad (on the internal relations of which, for example, see Ollman, 1976, pp. 30–31):

> Each individual utterance ... has clear cut boundaries that are determined by the change of speech subjects (speakers), but within these boundaries the utterance, like Leibniz's monad, reflects the speech process, others' utterances, and, above all, preceding links in the chain (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 93).

> Language is regarded from the speaker's standpoint as if there were
> only *one* speaker who does not have any *necessary* relation to *other*
> participants in speech communication ... The utterance is adequate
> to its object [referentially] ... and to the person who is pronounc-
> ing the utterance [expressively]. Language essentially needs only a
> speaker – one speaker – and an object for his speech (Bakhtin,
> 1986, p. 67).

And what defines speakers as speakers, concretely, is voice. As Keane (1999) notes, "voice" is treated both in ordinary parlance as well as in social science discourse as being virtually synonymous with individual self-expression, whether politically ("can the subaltern speak," "having a voice") or lyrically expressive (an "inner voice," "finding one's voice" is nearly the same as discovering one's true self). Both of these focus on the lyric voice, a voice that needs no addressee to be complete. But voice is precisely an area where anthropological linguistics has shown clearly that a category seemingly transparently related to expressive identity is instead shot through with alterity. Keane's characterization is worth quoting at length:

> Voices not only construct identities but also play them off against one
> another... Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia entails a world of stylistic
> and social differences in which voices play against one another or jostle
> for dominance even within the discourse of a single speaker... Relations
> among voices are also worked out at the level of interaction, especially
> in the ways in which responsibility for words is distributed among partic-
> ipants in a speech event or text. Participation roles are the parts one may
> play in what Goffman called the "production format." Different roles can
> be overtly expressed even within a single turn of talk, as in the embed-
> ding of one person's words (the author) in the discourse of another
> (the animator) by means of reported speech... Notice that whereas
> heteroglossia refers to multiple voices within a single speaker, participation
> roles entail aspects of a single voice distributed across several speakers. In
> either case, voice is not a personal attribute, but involves shared assump-
> tions about recognizable types of character and their attributes (Keane,
> 1999, p. 272).

The point is that even those linguistic resources that people may eventually em-
ploy in marking "acts of identity" have their origins in the mouths of others.
Style-marking in language, for example, is routinely part of a single complex semi-
otic process with status-marking in language (Irvine, 1985). This is in part because
of the concrete ways in which dialectal or status-marking variation is drawn into sty-
listic variation constitutive of registers.

Repertoires, then, are assembled out of a social heteroglossia that consists of a
number of distinct "voices" of others that have been appropriated into a single

speaker's repertoire or into the "dialogized heteroglossia" of a system of stylistic registers.[15] The anchoring points of a stylistic continuum along which speakers position themselves sociocentrically with respect to their conversational partners are the often the voices of *exemplary others*: stereotyped, essentialized voices of exemplary others are crucial to anchoring the linguistic system by which speakers index their own situational and social positions (Irvine, 1990; Agha, 2003; Inoue, 2003; Silverstein, 2003b):

> Images of persons considered typical of [social] groups. . . are rationalized and organized in a cultural system, and become available as a frame of reference for one's own performance and for interpreting the performances of others. This system informs the style switching that all speakers engage in. Thus our verbal performances do not simply represent our own social identity, our own feelings, and the social occasion here and now. They are full of allusions to the behavior of others and to other times and places. To put this another way: One of the many methods people have for differentiating situations and marking their moods is to draw on (or carefully avoid) the "voices" of others, or what they assume those "voices" to be. The concept of register, then, although initially defined in terms of situation rather than person or group, in fact draws on images of persons as well as situations and activities (Irvine, 1990, p. 130).

The organization of social heteroglossia into stylistic registers and individual repertoires represent a way in which the voice of the "other" finds its way into the mouth of the "self."

Essentialism is a prerequisite for all performance. This is because social heteroglossia is organized into stylistic registers by virtue of essentialized linkings of topologies of social and semiotic difference – *figures* (Goffman, 1974) that link

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[15] For Voloshinov, the difference between a "sign" and a "signal" is the degree to which the former contains moments both of its prior life on the lips of others, both redolent of their personas as well as their distinct ideological positions, as well as its future active orientation to a response, while a mere "signal" is a sign that dictates a passive recognition rather than active response, and has been "signalized," denuded of any memory of its prior contextual associations. The construction of a repertoire involves the appropriation of voices of others:

> For a person speaking his native tongue, a word presents itself not as an item of vocabulary but as a word that has been used in a wide variety of utterances by co-speaker A, co-speaker B, co-speaker C and so on, and has been variously used in the speaker's own utterances (Voloshinov, 1973, p. 70).

"Signalization" is in effect the decontextualization of individual signs, so that the sign's relation to other speakers is removed, elided. For Voloshinov, signalization at the level of an individual sign parallels the classicizing entextualization of texts characteristic of philological method. For Voloshinov, here clearly following his mentor, the notorious, self-admitted "madman," Georgian linguist Nikolaj Marr (on whom see Slezkine, 1996; Smith, 1998), the signalized word, shorn of its internal relations to living historical contexts of use, has its paradigmatic source in the "dead alien word" of the philological text and "the cadavers of written languages." If enregisterment of the voices of others (the "dialogizing" of heteroglossia for Bakhtin) involves an act of identification or appropriation, "signalizing" both erases the register-like qualities, emphasizing the decontextualized, semantic quality of words – in effect, an act of "alienation" rather than appropriation.

the two series and organize the space of a stylistic continuum by serving as exemplary endpoints. Figures "anchor" styles as model to imitation. Therefore, it seems warranted to take another look at Goffman's elaboration of the category of "figure" in some detail. In Goffman's (1974, pp. 496–559) exposition of the frame analysis of talk, he decomposes the speaker role into a production format of *animator* (the actual performer of the utterance), *author* (the one responsible for the text that is performed), *principal* (the one whose position is expressed), and *figure*. This final component – a kind of "embodied voice" which condenses a whole series of semiotic and social characterological features – is at once the least used and perhaps most useful for the analysis of the kind of realignments of voice, speaker, and speech that we are interested in. "Normal" speakers are conflations of all four of these components. Looking in more detail at the typology of figures will give us the vocabulary needed to locate voice in relation to both identity and alterity.

Goffman divides the category of figure into five subcategories: natural figures, staged figures, printed figures, cited figures, and mockeries or say-fors. The first figure type is closest to the expressive ideal of a person "playing themself" – a "figure of identity" – and the last delineates a position furthest from this – a "figure of alterity." A *natural figure* is found in "live, physical, flesh and blood bodies – animal or human – each with an ongoing personal identity" (Goffman, 1974, p. 524). In the typical case this corresponds to all performances where someone is "being themselves," that is, engaging in what appears to be or is experienced as an authentic identity performance, with the speaker sustaining "a single personal, that is, biographical identity, typically visibly so" (Goffman, 1974, p. 524). Showing that this sort of performance, and therefore identity, is constructed has been a major thrust in performance studies, beginning with Goffman himself. Because this sort of performance is consequential – it has a moral dimension lacking in some of the other forms of performance – the relation of principal is seemingly always present. In terms of categories of "voice" discussed above, social heteroglossia becomes a property of natural figures, insofar as it has been appropriated into their repertoire as being their "authentic" voice.

Where there are laminations and decompositions of this unity of speaker and embodied self, we can have first of all *staged figures* – embodied performances of figures (natural or unnatural) by natural figures or by some other substitute (puppets, cartoons), who serve as the animators. Natural figures stand for themselves, but someone or something else must stand for a staged figure (Goffman, 1974, pp. 523–524). Both are ultimately performances (isn't everything?), but if natural figures are to work, they must not be apprehended as such, while with staged figures, the performativity of the figure becomes a central focus. If the figure is animated textually rather than in performance, Goffman speaks of a *printed figure* (a character in a novel, for example).

The first three types are united in that there is only one figure on the stage at a time, while in the next two, two figures occupy the stage simultaneously. The first is the figure in reported speech, a *cited figure* (Goffman, 1974, pp. 529–534). Like a staged figure and unlike a natural figure, two figures are typically involved here (it doesn't matter what kind they are in themselves). Unlike a staged figure, where

the distinctness of the performing figure from the performed is effaced, in citations the distinctness of the two voices is maintained throughout the performance (Goffman, 1974, p. 533).

This "double-voicedness" is also typical of the last category, *mockeries* or *say-fors*, consisting of acts of performative mimicry or ventriloquism with respect to individual persons or objects, but also including certain kinds of stereotyped "voices" or "registers" of social categories such as "baby talk, ethnic and racial accents, national accents, and gender role expressions" (Goffman, 1974, p. 536). This is a figure created when "an individual acts out…someone not himself, someone who may or may not be present. He puts words and gestures in another's mouth" (Goffman, 1974, p. 534). This is distinct from both staged and cited figures, though it resembles both because it involves apparently performative imitation as well as apparent citation (partially because there are often taboos and limits on actual mimicry in citation which are flouted here, partially because in a say-for one is not even implicitly making the claim that the performance is a re-enactment of a strip of experience):

> Serious impersonation is not involved, since no effort is made to take anyone in, nor is theatre involved… At the center is the process of projecting an image of someone not oneself while preventing viewers from forgetting even for a moment that an alien animator is at work. (Goffman, 1974, p. 534)

If the performance of a natural figure creates a figure that can be identified as the "self," this kind of figure Goffman calls the "not-self" (Goffman, 1974, p. 535). Goffman's typology of figures creates a stepwise transition of types of figural stances from identity to alterity. Direct quotation differs from performative mimicry (mockeries, say-fors) as indirect quotation differs from direct quotation (cited figures). Both direct and indirect quotation purport to represent *what* was said, but direct quotation also enables some degree of performative mimicry as to *how* it was said. Performative mimicry, as Coleman notes in his contribution to this volume, in turn differs from direct quotation in that it focuses only on *how*, the qualitative dimension, and in so doing allows mimicry to move beyond the limits of propriety often imposed with normal quotation. As Coleman further observes, this kind of figuration is at once extremely common in the ethnographic record, and yet is strangely neglected in our research. Indeed, our pervasive concern for "acts of identity" may have blinded us to the fact that, "In some linguistic cultures, imitations of out-group social types seem to predominate." That is, some linguistic cultures seem to be "about identity" (indexing different types of natural figures), whiles others seem to be "about alterity" (indexing different types of mockeries or say-fors).

Taking our inspiration from Ball's idea of "stances of alterity" in this volume, we want to draw attention to this last figural form: voices attributed to "others," but which are never found concretely "animated" by those others. Rather, they are always laminated or layered (Goffman, 1974, p. 82) at one degree of remove from an integral speaker who is both principal, author, animator, and natural figure. "Normal" register phenomena anchor the various enregistered voices within

the boundaries of fields delineated by exemplary voices – figures – which are asymptotically imitated or appropriated, creating a field of inhabitable positions associated with constructing or performing natural figures in particular – what we could call *figures of identity*. For example, among the Wolof, the ''Noble'' and ''Griot'' voices both code *absolute* status if one happens to be exemplary members of these opposed groups, but are recursively applied to code *relative* status within interactional dyads in most situations: in this interaction, here and now, one person will be the Noble and the other the Griot (Irvine, 1985, p. 576; see Agha, 2003 for the use of figures in defining registers). Speakers align themselves with respect to other interactants by *identifying* themselves with the features of exemplary figures, by adopting their ''voice,'' for example. This is what register is about, typically.

In sharp contrast, these voices attributed to others – ''anti-registers'' – create monstrous or deviant figures of alterity, with respect to which the (normal) identity of the speaker emerges as a sort of unmarked ground to the figure of abnormal alterity. Where registers involve the asymptotic imitation, adoption, or appropriation of a figural voice, mockeries and say-fors involve sharp demarcations between one's own voice and the voice imitated: in the typical case, a stance of alterity is constructed between the interactants and some other(s), who may be present but are usually not. This sort of figural voice is therefore to be classed with a wide variety of mocking imitations of foreigners and others (''Mock Spanish,'' for example (Hill, 1998, 2001)), stage and comic dialects, characterological speech defects (Mel Blanc's renditions of the voices of Warner Brothers' cartoon figures (Brody, 2001)), and so on. Obviously the tendency for such figures to appear in character speech in narrative and theatrical genres points to a common way in which they typically presuppose a production format other than an integral speaker who is at once principal, author and animator.

## 3. Mimicry and alterity: speech without speakers

If the ''acts of identity'' literature is speaker-centered, as we have argued, a corollary assumption seems to be that for every form of exceptional speech there will be a ''native speaker,'' that is, ideally, someone who originates and ''owns'' that form of exceptional speech, and actually does speak that way. This is sort of a hidden Herderian imperative that inhabits the ''acts of identity'' literature: all forms of speech must have ''their own'' ideal ''native speaker.''[16] However, as we maintain, there are many forms of speech which violate this assumption.

An early and seminal piece of linguistic anthropology, Sapir's *Abnormal Types of Speech in Nootka* (1915), deals with specifically such a set of registers – Goffmanian ''mockeries'' – in a Native American language of the Northwest Coast. These speech

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[16] On other problems inherent in the notion of ''native speaker'' in sociolinguistics, see Singh (1994, 1996).

types represent exceptional speech without exceptional "native speakers," even though they have been interpreted in precisely this way – that is, as being actual "ways of speaking" by and for (socially constructed) deviants (Hall, 2003, p. 361, being only the most recent). Since it illustrates our points about "figures of alterity" quite nicely, we try to sketch out here what an analysis along these lines of these "abnormal speech types" might look like.

What interest this work has attracted over the years has mostly had to do with the manifest exoticism of the data presented. We think, however, that the essay was revolutionary in its attempt to link this data to more general considerations in linguistic anthropology, in Sapir's comparative analysis of "person-implication" in language. By "person-implication," Sapir intends to collect together a formally diverse array of phenomena (ranging from phonological to morphosyntactic and lexical (Sapir, 1915, p. 1)), which we would now call (non-referential) indexicals (Silverstein, 1976, pp. 30–33; explicitly so for this data in Foley, 1997, pp. 25–26), indexing anything at all about any of the participants in the speech situation:

> the use in speech of various devices implying something in regard to the status, sex, age, or other characteristics of the speaker, person addressed, or person spoken of, without direct statement as to such characteristics (Sapir, 1915, p. 1).

In order that his Nootka examples will not serve as simply a freak show of "glaringly bizarre" linguistic phenomena, Sapir devotes a few short pages to listing the sorts of social categories implied of persons in this way, including sex-discrimination (gender indexicals) as well as rank-discrimination (indexicals of deference-entitlements), coded by a wide range of formal means across a diverse array of languages. Writ large in these short pages is much of what the project of linguistic anthropology has concerned itself with for some time, explicitly so since Silverstein (1976). And yet, for all that, this little article has seemingly been treated simply as a charming analysis of some rather "glaringly bizarre" data, and little more.

The "abnormal speech types" form a special class within these diverse forms of person implication, for these forms are, like Coleman's study of Irish *personation* in this volume, putatively acts of performative imitation; yet they are imitations of speakers who typically, themselves, never speak in this way. In fact, a good number of them are "imitative" in speech, not of *speech*, but rather of other forms of alterity. Sapir's analysis shows how Nootka "abnormal types of speech" create "normal" identity through exemplifying figures of "abnormal" *alterity*, in reference to which normal *identity* can emerge as a presupposed ground.

Sapir identifies four general abnormal speech types for Nootka. These can grouped in several different ways. Most basically, they represent classes of abnormal speech types based on either (1) abnormalities of speech which are used to index individuals and groups that differ from normal persons, not by their speech abnormality per se, but by other forms of *physical alterity* (mythic people-animals and their present-day analogues, left-handed people, etc.) or (2) replications of iconized and metapragmatically transparent *speech abnormalities* of a group or individual, a replication in speech of speech alterity (people with cleft palates, other linguistic groups, etc.).

The contexts for using each type vary in subtle ways, but all share an implicit contrast to a "normal" reference group.

In all cases, the abnormal speech types are marked by iconic abnormality. This can take a variety of forms, which Sapir details, from mocking imitation of exemplary stereotyped speech abnormalities, to abnormal morphology and phonology indexing *formal* alterity (i.e., the formal nature of their coding is itself *other* to the grammatical system of the language). Space prevents us from undertaking a full exposition, but such an analysis would demonstrate the systematic and highly interdependent structural and ideological coherence of these speech forms. It would discuss how, in terms of a pragmatics of alterity, these forms are, for the most part, the words of another that are never found in the mouth of another. The pragmatic contexts for use of these forms are each parallel in that they are never forms found indexing speaker identity, unless in quoted speech (as exemplarily in myth recitation).[17] Such an account would also lay out the metapragmatics of these forms – the understandings and rationalizations of the proper use and meaning of the forms and the entire system itself – examining, for example, the strong formal parallelisms between the voices used for mythical figures (and their present-day analogues) and specific *physical* abnormality types.

Ultimately, what is truly striking about the entire set of "abnormal types of speech" which Sapir describes are the ways in which it employs language-structural, pragmatic, and metapragmatic means to bring together different figures into a highly complex, interlocking system for indexing alterity. These speech types make available a crosscutting system of figures of alterity for constructing difference from a variety of vectors, whether they be mythical time vs. present-day, foreign vs. local language community, physical abnormality vs. physical normality, non-human vs. human, etc. The tight parallelisms and interconnections between the various components have the effect of rendering different indexical systems comparable – similar ways of indexing alterity are given the same metapragmatic logic. Thus, in many ways, different systems of indexing different forms of alterity are brought into alignment, through a sort of metapragmatic calibration of these indexical systems (see Inoue, 2003 for a parallel case of what she calls "inter-indexicality").

Sapir's description of the Nootka "abnormal types of speech" illustrates a system dedicated to indexing mimicry and mockery in speech – model figures of alterity, since (especially in the case of the types indicating physical abnormalities) they operate through the conscious mechanism of voicing another's speech without necessarily an other exemplary speaker. These speech types represent a classic case where we can see a complete disruption of the alignment of speaker, speech, and some self. As a means of marking alterity, rather than expressing self-identity, these speech types and related phenomena deserve our renewed attention. So do the various phenomena and issues elaborated in the papers collected in this issue, which all in one

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[17] The quoted forms used in myth of course differ from all the others, since they are "cited figures" rather than "mockeries." Because the mythic characters are often humorous objects of mockery, there is a way here in which the "cited figure" of myth fades into a kind of performative mimicry characteristic of a "mockery."

way or another highlight again for us the importance of attending to alterity and difference in language and linguistic practice.

## 4. The individual papers

Alaina Lemon's contribution emerges from two chance encounters between art and life, so to speak: an act of terrorism that took place on a Russian stage at the same time as Lemon was herself studying a theatrical "boot camp" in Moscow. More than a mere chance intersection of events, Lemon discovered in her fieldwork that metaphors of violence (dealing emotional blows) informed metadiscourse at the Russian Academy of Theatrical Arts as much as theatrical metaphors informed discussion of "real" acts of terrorism that happened to occur on stages, arguing that "readings of phenomena termed 'theatrical realism' and 'terrorism' seem to share expectations about ways representations or signs performatively induce 'real' feelings and thereby catalyze change – be it to shift perspectives or to upset political structures." In this view intersubjectivity – authentic affect – arises from the performative violence of theatrical act and terrorist act which emphasizes, ironically, that affective *indifference* can be overcome by social *difference*. This was expressly advocated in the theatrical pedagogy: "in order to stimulate genuine emotion, communicative acts must represent and organize particular social differences." Indeed, ever more detailed differentiation of social types and identities here is deployed not *expressively*, but *conatively*. In theory, the greater the difference, the greater the authenticity of affect, where maximally differentiated social types deal the most "authentic" emotional blows from the stage. That is, the object of the delineation of difference is to elicit, violently, authentic affect by breaking down barriers of indifference from the audience. But the irony here is that in so doing, the pedagogy in effect reinforces perduring essentialized notions of national and racial difference, promoting authoritative understandings over unmediated "realist" observation – precisely opposed to what both theatrical realism and terrorist acts are intended to accomplish.

Bernard Bate's paper comparing forms of political discourse in modern Tamilnadu and the revolutionary United States is also primarily concerned with the relationship between speakers and their audiences – in this case not dramaturgy but oratory. Bate draws on a comparison between two shifting models of "democratic" discourse, and changing models of the relationship between the orator and the audience, between speaker and multitude. In such models, whether a speaker presents themself as being "everyman," a voice from the crowd, or as being differentiated from the crowd, is as much a fact about the notion of the "people" as it is of the person who addresses them. Bate charts the inversely-related shifts in America from a highly marked oratorical mode to one more emblematic of prosaic "everyday" speech, and in Tamilnadu from a oratorical register modeled on spoken language to one modeled on structurally and rhetorically ornate written discourse. Each development, he argues, points to radically different mappings of positive and negative attributes for oratorical style and democratic power. Ultimately these notions rest on

culturally-specific ideologies and aesthetics of language which inform the means by which the individual speaker must frame their performance, either as a "natural theatricality" which speaks to the heart of the common man or as the refined and beautiful speech of an elite political class.

Steve Coleman's paper locates the Irish language within three intersecting discourses about language – three different totalities which use the Irish language as an emblematic term, "the nation, the state, and the neighbors." Coleman focuses on Irish metadiscursive practices of *personation*, which he defines as "metapragmatic practice featuring the creation of utterance (or other communicative action such as dance and musical style) explicitly or implicitly voiced as that of another." He shows how a cluster of different heterogeneous practices of *personation* in Irish language discourse stand in contrast to rather more homogenizing tendencies of the discourse of Irish as the language of the nation (relying on a kind of "authority of authenticity" in which authentic Irish language discourse refers to a homogenized set of practices of the folk in general but no one in particular). On the other hand, Irish as the language of state, like Irish as the language of the nation, is homogenized, but anonymously – a modernized language evaluated not so much in terms of its authenticity in relation to its folk antecedents, but rather its adequacy to the requirements of modernity. Within these two broader discourses of Irishness, Coleman locates the practices of personation which always see individual utterances as belonging not to whole imaginaries (the folk, the public) but to specific individuals whose words are constantly recalled by different genres of performative imitation.

The essay by Christopher Ball reflects on Japanese dialect markers not as expressive of absolute categories of identity, but rather as encoding "stances of alterity" between interactants. Just as Agha (1993) showed that honorific forms do not encode social status as a kind of absolute category of identity, but rather relative deference entitlements in dyadic or polyadic interactions, Ball similarly shows how certain Japanese dialectal forms do not encode absolute "monadic" regional identifications, but rather encode "stances (on a scale of) alterity." Alterity, like deference entitlement, defines a relationship between an individual and some others, but in the case of alterity, the scale is one of difference. Indeed, as Ball argues, deference entitlement can itself be viewed as a more specific example of alterity. This relationship of alterity is construed in Ball's example by a local ideology of opposition between identity and alterity, the opposition between *uchi* "in group" and *socho* "out group," which he suggests informs the deployment of dialectical terms as markers of stances of alterity.

Wataru Koyama's paper also deals with Japanese language and linguistic practice, this time focusing explicitly on the system of honorifics and deference-entitlement, as well as the ideologies which underwrite both the system itself and its expert analysis. Koyama charts the development of honorifics as a linguistic emblem of emergent Japanese national culture in the early twentieth century, occurring at the same time as the Japanese state's increasing engagement with and adoption of the project of modernity and modernist ideology. Entailed in this is the standardizing project (addressed briefly in Ball's paper, as well) which

promoted the Tokyo regional variety to the level of *the* Japanese language. In all of this, Koyama documents the process by which the languages of Europe become the alter compared to which Japanese grammarians are able to affirm the unique superiority of the Japanese language. The mark of this superior difference are the honorific behaviors which are emblematically Japanese. Of course, as he points out, framing honorifics and the Tokyo standard as the entirety of Japanese difference in turn has the effect of eliding the whole panoply of sociohistorical and linguistic variation, not the least of which is the fact that many regional varieties have no formalized set of honorifics. The projection of outward difference effectively elides internal heterogeneity, a process which is fundamental to the creation of alterity and, yes, identity.

## Acknowledgements

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