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FROM PHENOMENOLOGY OF LANGUAGE TO A THEORY OF SOCIOLOGICAL PRAXIS: PERCEPTION, IDEOLOGY, AND MEANING IN MULTIMODAL LINGUISTIC DISCOURSE

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FROM PHENOMENOLOGY OF LANGUAGE TO A THEORY OF SOCIOLOGICAL PRAXIS: PERCEPTION, IDEOLOGY, AND MEANING IN MULTIMODAL LINGUISTIC DISCOURSE

A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

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Abstract

Linguistics has prioritized the auditory mode of transmission in language at the expense of written forms and their relevance to the social construction of meaning and identity. Due to the privilege of spoken language as the least-mediated form of symbolic expression, the significant role non-verbal linguistic communication plays in social life is often overlooked. Through the perspectives of cognitive and perceptual forms of epistemology, written forms of language can and do influence reception to non-verbal utterance in a socially significant manner. Ideologies of language predispose linguistic and anthropological research against considerations of written linguistic artifacts and their roles in constituting ascribed social meaning. Signed forms of utterance are constrained by standardization and grammaticality, which in turn iconize and erase written language variation. When written variation is intentionally produced, it creates perceptually derived, ideologically charged responses that affect social attitudes and discourses. I address the methods and foci of sociolinguistic research for their pertinence to non-spoken language. I then analyze variation in written language in the domains of audiovisual animated media and African American dialect literature to show how socially significant responses to written variation create stratification by constructing fictive speech classes which are indexed to real speech communities. This investigation aims to clarify how modes of language transmission share properties assumed to be domain-specific, as well as to warrant a reexamination of the phonocentric concept of language in linguistic anthropology. As written forms of language are central to digital media, traditional sociolinguistic research must account for the written word just as it does the spoken.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2009, just before his inauguration as President of the United States, Barack Obama visited Ben's Chili Bowl, a Washington landmark restaurant. He handed the cashier a $20 bill and when offered change remarked, "Nah, we straight" (Samy Alim & Smitherman 2012). Obama, the first black President, has been repeatedly praised for his articulation and poise, yet his divergence from standard American grammar in this instance is indexical of an African American vernacular that he chooses to perform on rare occasion in professional discourse. This selective presentation of identity has not escaped the public eye, most notably in an assertion by former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, who said that Mr. Obama speaks "with no Negro dialect, unless he wanted to have one" (Samy Alim & Smitherman 2012).

The social conveyance of language is often absent from descriptive linguistics. Documentation of languages tends to focus on cataloging phonological, morphological, and syntactic elements with the aim of devising a grammatical rubric that posits the structural accuracy to the target tongue. Generative grammar studies how these elements combine to create an encoded message, the character of which can be reduced and replicated in any other code of choosing. I argue that such approaches to the study of language omit viable and necessary information not inherent in utterance, but rather in social signification. Furthermore, "language" in academic study is frequently dichotomized as scientific in the domain of linguistics and stylistic in the domain of humanities. This equivocation of the concept of communicative language creates an imbalance in the functions, intents, and usages of speakers when the goals of research involve merely an ascription of what is or is not permitted in such a fluid field of

inquiry. Furthermore, it erects a barrier between speech and writing, depriving authors of linguistic authority in cases where language transmission is not firmly located within face-to-face interlocution.

The following exploration into the differences in method and focus, empiricality and exclusion, and multimodal transmission of utterance aims to differentiate between forms of "language" so often considered only vocal. I espouse a perceptual, cognitive perspective that involves not only that which is uttered, but how utterances create and are created by social meanings. I do not assert that this or that type of speech is more "true" than others, but merely that the social implications of language exceed the denotation of bounded phrases and grammatical rules. Beyond the mode of transmission, I examine a survey of cases both historical and current to expose how language shapes social praxis as it is not only constructed but received by auditors. To meet these ends, I examine methodological practices of language research, theories of meaning and conceptualization, the relationship between speech and speaker, and forms through which language creates a discourse space that transcends what is said in favor of what is meant. This multidisciplinary approach combines linguistics, cultural anthropology, philosophy, literary studies, and media discourse analysis in a holistic interpretation of hermeneutical import. I examine the concept of language not as a shared set of mechanical practices of interpretation, nor as a property of a specific cultural community, but rather as the heuristic device through which we experience shared social reality—the engine that drives systems of meaning. As such I rely on linguistic examples as evidence of signification within social practice. Fragments of

language thus serve as the trail of bread crumbs (always located in a specific time and place) that lead to the abstract meanings shared in exchange.

When language is spoken, hearers notice and accommodate accent and dialect variation as they perceive differences in pronunciation and grammatical forms. Sensory observation mediates perception and associations between speaker, speech, and semantic content form cognitive frames in the minds of interlocutors. These frames can establish correlations between speech forms and categorical classes of speakers based on the variant features they display, iconizing speech forms as essential properties of speech communities. However, written language is filtered from displaying variation by ideologies of standardization. Variation in the written language has the same potential to correlate perceived utterance forms to speech communities (both real and imagined), but standardization erases variation, favoring unmarked forms in adherence to grammaticality. When variation surfaces in written forms, it is often dismissed as either ungrammatical or as an idiosyncratic stylistic device employed by the author. Because non-standard language in the written form produces associative judgments in the auditor that index real or perceived speakers and speech communities, linguistic anthropology should recognize that written language variation is both a symbolic representation of populations and ideologically charged.

In the second section I analyze sociolinguistic approaches to language research. The emphasis on plotting and dividing speech variation reveals a strong preference for assumptions of uniformity, geographically-bound categorization, and selective attention to social factors considered non-linguistic. I contrast these approaches with folk linguistic surveys of perceptual dialectology that analyze a listener-oriented, affective

account of response to utterance (instead of production alone). Examples of non-linguistic interference in the form of sensory observation demonstrate how what is seen augments what is said. This tradition established the 20th century dominant view of language as an encoding of universally translatable statements parsed into specific grammars. Because phonological research exclusively studies oral usage and syntactic research centers on structural forms, logocentric views of utterance overlook the significance of form in written variation in favor of its semantic content.

In the third section, I detour to trace the history of philosophical models of thought. As my argument centers on the transmission of meaning and not merely language, I survey how various systems of knowledge have been defined and described. Unlike the sources examined, I am not to discover objective truth, but rather to provide a framework for positing how socially accepted meanings can come to be considered real. The bridge from phenomenology to cognitive grammar combines perception, production, intention, and response in discourse interpretation. This foray involves observation of features, category construction, and the derivation of knowledge by empirical analysis. It pertains to my argument in that cognitive frame generation is perceived at the individual level and conventionalized at the social level, establishing socially normative views of natural phenomena (including speech forms) as perceived rational truth.

In the fourth section, I examine documentary linguistic studies of indigenous North American cultures. The cases cited demonstrate the association between speech forms and speakers as well as speakers' intentional usage and awareness of variant forms. The distribution of speech forms attached to loaded features creates a space in

which characteristics of individuals and relationships between community members are indexed through that variation. This socially meaningful practice is evidenced through language and enculturation. Because variation in spoken forms indexes real or perceived speech communities, enculturated views of speech practices create stratification through ideology. The association between speech forms and classes of speakers become normative as culturally endorsed belief, iconizing speakers of variant forms.

In the fifth section, I investigate representation of speech and accent in media. This includes some discussion of narrative, performance, and adaptation with regard to narrative authority. It also involves the perception of symbolic content and the mitigation of affective features inherent in spoken language as they appear in written form. This challenges the seeming uniformity of language as a concept by means of its modality. The focus on animated media demonstrates how perception constructs ideology through symbolic representation of imagined speech communities. The focus on written forms arises in subtitling in cases that present an audio track in one language and subtitles written in a different language. Herein the semantic content of dialog that accompanies the visual display is transmitted through the written form instead of the spoken.

In the sixth section, I trace the treatment of dialect in African American literature as indicative of ideological practice. A history of the tradition is compared to the social and political concerns of race relations in the United States through the mid-20th century. This pairing of history and entertainment demonstrates how fictive works negotiate social realities and (rein)force social stratification through representative

modeling. Dialect representation in the written form indexes perceived speech communities, iconizing the reader's view of extant community members whether or not they truly produce the essentialized features. Associations between speech forms and communities create ideologically charged frameworks in written language, further iconizing indexed social groups as associations of spoken forms are recursively transferred to written forms. As written standardization erases variation, when variation arises in written forms, it socially marks the indexed speech community members as others.

In the seventh section, I return to linguistic scholarship as it tends to differences between the empirical and the subjective, especially as those differences pertain to the divide between written and spoken language. I engage once again with how language is both meaningful without denotation and meaningless without connotation. This includes the treatment of academic research in language and theories of grammar as well as representation in texts of both fact and fiction. Discussion of grammaticality and logocentrism demonstrates how 20th century linguistic research is inherently biased in favor of language structure over communicative competence. This bias erases variation in written forms, emphasizing the grammatically correct and reducible content of written utterance over its surface form.

Chapter 2: From Sociolinguistics to Perceptual Dialectology

Linguistic research in the past century has largely focused on deciphering the components of grammatical structure, including sounds and their combinations (phonology), the composition of words (morphology), and the order in which words take meaning in phrases (syntax). Sociolinguistic research purported to take these linguistic features and establish meaningful correlations between grammatical structure and populations that adhered to those structures. Yet without a greater regard for context and respondent attitudes, studies that correlated speech variation to populations failed to document the pertinence of variation in favor of mapping where delineations between dialect barriers exist. Language attitude surveys, folk linguistics, and emphasis on perception reveal socially perceived meanings indicative of the role of language in interaction as opposed to merely serving as a codified transmission of thought. This chapter illustrates ways in which documentary studies in variation fail to consider the social import of constructing meaning from utterance, and how some of the mediating factors of communication and comprehension provide greater insight into language as a psychosocial exchange.

William Labov's "Social Stratification of (r) in New York City Department Stores" (1972) introduces the "rapid and anonymous" survey method for acquiring linguistic field data. In an attempt to discern whether previously researched social stratification in New York's Lower East Side would be reflected by speech patterns, Labov cataloged the locations, advertisements, and prices of various sales items in three venues representative of different socioeconomic classes. Then he would approach employees at each site and inquire as to the location of some item or department that he

had previously determined to be located on the fourth floor. Feigning difficulty hearing, he would solicit a more emphatic repetition of the response before sneaking away to transcribe the interaction. The focus of the study was the postvocalic retroflex liquid sonorant /r/, a known feature of the New York accent believed the local speech community shared.

With attention to methodology, Labov notes the observer effect in face-to-face speech interviews, anticipating that the method of data collection influences the data collected. The appeal of the rapid and anonymous survey is such that it diminishes the attention to speech and thus presumably negates performative aspects of speech augmentation. Further manipulation of the data and the experimental variables show Labov's considerations for his vaguely defined "class" as they intersect with race, age, occupation as filter for customer accessibility, and the longitudinal prestige of /r/-deletion in New York.

Labov concludes that /r/-deletion in the postvocalic position (pronouncing *car* as [kaˑ] instead of [kaɪ]) indicates association with a lower socioeconomic class, though this is mitigated through a variety of factors. The elicitation method he used provides very little background about the speaker other than visual observations. Thus, approximation of age among informants supports a hypothesis of shifting prestige in the dialect feature, wherein the older generation considered /r/-deletion more favorable. Regarding the race of speakers, Labov (who has contributed greatly to the academic corpus of African American Vernacular English, or AAVE) notes the greater number of black employees at S. Klein than at Macy's, with fewer still at Saks, and posits that "the presence of many black informants will contribute to the lower use of (r-1)" (Labov

1972:54). Job title and duties further complicate who speaks to whom in this study; while managers, stockers, and cashiers directly interact with customers at S. Klein, cashiers and stockers are entirely removed from customers at Saks. Labov compares the data from these elicitations (recorded in 1962) with interviews and field research from the Lower East Side in the years following to establish consistent patterns of the New York dialect.

Elements of this study remain unclear. While Labov points to the speech community of native New York speakers of American English, residents primarily of the Lower East Side of New York City, whom exactly does this data represent? Labov himself attests to the difficulty in answering this question, rebutting that "our population is well defined as the sales people (or more generally, any employee whose speech might be heard by a customer)…" resulting in "the overall social imprint of the employees upon the customer" (Labov 1972:49). This is vague. The "Occupation" subchapter reveals the most homogenous demographic group of the study: 141 native New York, white sales-only women of 264 informants (Labov 1972:55). Though clearly attuned to interference from variables he hopes to exclude, Labov does not construct his target speech community identity in much greater detail. This is misleading both in the study and my critique. Labov's conclusions assume an indexical referent of the average New York speaker, one whose dialect reveals some status stratification based on an observable feature. Without devolving into the minutia of non-existent dialects versus common co-occurrence of idiolect features, it seems certain that while "the New York accent" seems straightforward as an index, there is no distinct referent that we could call a "community" in the ethnographic sense (nor do I consider

this remotely ethnographic—I use the term in contrast). If there were a direct referent, Labov's exclusions (those with distinct regional or foreign accents) show the majority as native New York, white sales-only women. Regarding the background of his informants, he confesses that context like "birthplace, language history, education, participation in New York culture, and so on" (Labov 1972:57) remains unknown, which raises the question of how he can accurately label them "native New Yorkers," let alone posit whether this speech is natural and indicative of a New Yorker.

This study seems so neatly to define the correlation between /r/-deletion and class in New York, but privileges certain biases in method at the expense of clarity in attaching the perception to a referent. The distribution of the phenomenon is clear, but the interpretation of the phenomenon regarding identity is lacking. Labov does not insinuate that employees are specifically coached to perform these linguistic features, though he entertains notions of limitations regarding which individuals can occupy which roles in each instance. He describes himself as a participant (Labov 1972:49) but considers himself a constant in the experiment, dressed as a middle-class, white male from New Jersey, and /r/-pronouncing. He notes that French and western European accents appear in Saks, that Jewish and eastern European accents appear in S. Klein, and that four Puerto Rican employees participated: one from Macy's and three from S. Klein. Informants with heavy accents are excluded from the study (as they are not representative of the New York accent), yet the social stratification of the excluded speakers hints at other disparities. In addition, Labov's conclusions assume divisions of upper-middle class, lower-middle class, and working class in New York as a microcosm. Labov assigns social classes to the stores based on the newspapers in which

each advertised and how much they advertised, both in quantity and price. He points to the conjunction of Saks Fifth Avenue with both New York's fashion district and the fashion industry as factors increasing their prestige without considering if that prestige has any relevance to the New York accent. Moreover, the data from the department stores was elicited 10 years prior to the article's publication, during which time Labov more deeply researched and elucidated the intricacies of establishing a shared speech community identity.

While considered canonical for methodology of sociolinguistic elicitation, this study (and the method itself) does not reveal much social context. There is no concern for the state of civil rights at the time and how that affected potential employment. There is no analysis of how the interviewer's own signifiers affect the responses; how might his identity as a middle-aged white male have affected the speech patterns of the sales clerks with whom he interacted. Labov does not posit a "crafted image," although he seems to move toward that. Labov's theories about what the customer perceives are of great interest, but raise a question of deixis. Who is evaluating prestige, and how is that person situated within that domain? Do these stores cater specifically to New Yorkers or persons who share the presumed New Yorker ideologies of social stratification based on class? Are any of these participants aware of the phenomenon at all, and if so, to what extent have they evaluated it for themselves? Is the "prestige" that Labov claims even prestigious, or just expensive?

The point here is not to disparage Labov's study, but to note that the variables that he correlates do not provide a distinct association between a group of people, a social value, and a linguistic feature. That Saks is the most expensive of the three stores

is evident from Labov's introduction. That Saks has the highest frequency of (r-1) of the three stores is evident from the data. But attaching that correlation of price and frequency to the store itself does not entail that it is a source of prestige for the New York accent. Ironically, it may even signify that the New York accent, considered prestigious by some, would be seen as provincial and commonplace for an international business such as Saks. Perhaps it is more informative that western European accents appear only in Saks while Jewish and eastern European accents appear more commonly in S. Klein. Perhaps this is due to the political spectrum of the world at the time, when Eastern Europe was still girded by the Iron Curtain of the USSR. Similarly, the field data collection occurred in November 1962 (Labov 1972:44), five months before the publication of Dr. Martin Luther King's *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*. The more in-depth interviews with residents of New York City's Lower East Side transpired in 1966, while Labov's study printed in 1972, almost half a decade after President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968. The brief attention given to race does not pretend to account for the social configuration of race at the time, though his later research emphasizes its significance in speech practices. Labov excuses himself from further interpretation on this front by exhorting the rapid and anonymous style as incompatible with such an analysis. While generative linguists content themselves with the empiricality of language because an extant speaker uttered some phrase (or the linguist imagined a phrase they deem acceptable as a native speaker), the attachment of that utterance to the speaker and its associative social values disappears from view. This case in particular begins with certain assumptions about what the New York accent is, who speaks it, and who authorizes those determinations. The distribution of /r/ in New

York City department stores is not about New Yorkers. It is about those persons perceived as the embodiment of New Yorkers based on a single feature of speech bound to the history of a geographic place, one that distinctly deviates from the 20th century epitome of speech variation authority: non-mobile, older, rural males (NORMs).

The primary variable in sociolinguistic studies of the 20th century was geography. Accents are labeled for place, not for gender, religion, or education. The hypothetical phrase "Wow, I just love your female accent!" is nonsensical in the English language, despite the correctness of its syntax. Replace "female" here with "Christian" or "college" to receive the same result, though Labov distinguishes a Jewish accent among participants from S. Klein. Labov does not clarify whether that represents a linguistic, religious, or ethnic identity. In so doing, he has left us with little knowledge about what the New York accent is with regard to who speaks it. It also remains unclear whether New Yorkers have any knowledge of or attitudes towards speech, whether the department stores surveyed have policies and preferences regarding speech practices, or, for that matter, whether these department stores have a corporate view of New York-ness that they must uphold through representative means. Even if corporate policies existed for the stores in question, the attitudes regarding community inclusion, exclusion, and representation are relinquished to the periphery of the speech event. Labov makes no mention of intentionality among the informants, whether they actively model their speech patterns to promote a certain persona or whether they have been selected for employment because of compliance with such a persona, or even whether or not the speech behavior of the employees in each store actually does contribute to the "overall social imprint of the employees upon the customer" (Labov 1972:49). Instead,

he claims that Saks has the highest prices and most controlled avenues of access to non-interactive personnel, and where prices are the highest, you hear the postvocalic (r-1) more consistently than in the lower-price venues. If sales price alone is enough to warrant value and justify the "overall social imprint" experienced by the customer, where are the testimonies of customers who have experienced this social imprint? Labov, as the sole investigator, accounts for 100% of the "customers" in the study.

The emphasis in mid-20th century sociolinguistic studies centered on boundaries of accent and dialect variation. Attempts to divide geographic territory by salient phonological and lexical variation aimed at grouping similar features to the places in which those features were unmarked in common speech. This perspective retains an inherent speaker-oriented bias and does not sufficiently explore whether any significance to variation exists, either for speakers or their addressees. Furthermore, it assumes a spatially-dominated categorization of speech communities, literally mapped by predominant dialect features. Beyond the delineation of dialect regions, little is revealed about the impact and import of speech variation, especially within diverse, national-level languages.

That dialect variation exists is evident, and while there is a strong correlation between linguistic diffusion and geographic distribution, those factors are continuously challenged as mass communication and mobility expand horizons for linguistic transmission beyond spatial constraints. Given the multifaceted concept of identity, locating a speech feature to a geographically bound population reveals little about the presumed speech community if the uniting factor is residential proximity alone. If speech communities are limited to being residents of locales identified by linguistic

quirks, such investigations serve few purposes beyond a cartography of othering, and speech forms that break from a standardized normative without further elucidation on why they arise and the significance they bear to members and non-members remain shrouded in mystery. Sociolinguistics clearly correlates variant speech forms to populations, but does not necessarily impute the significance of variation and the configurations of speech patterns as they influence social life beyond oral transmission.

In contrast to speaker-oriented methods of quantification, perceptual dialectology asks listeners about their subjective responses to samples of dialect speech. The divide is one of positivistic objectivity versus social psychology; by taking into account the opinions and attitudes of listeners as speech is perceived, we gain insight into the social conceptualization of dialect speakers. This "folk linguistics" tactic demonstrates that speech as it is perceived can have more potent social salience than documentation simpliciter and clinical elicitation studies. By highlighting listeners' responses to speech and their conjecture about speakers, the differentiation of social norms and evaluation of deictically standard speech practices inform relationships between speech communities as they appear to each other because of contrasting dialect features. Linguist Henry Hoenigswald called for such an approach in 1966:

> We should be interested not only in (a) what goes on (language), but also in (b) how people react to what goes on (they are persuaded, they are put off, etc.) and in (c) what people say goes on (talk concerning language). It will not do to dismiss these secondary and tertiary modes of conduct merely as sources of error. (Preston 2006:521)

While folk perceptions may not be admissible for grammatical concerns, they are significant in the social configurations that arise between communities and speakers who clearly differentiate between marked features. The point is not whether the attitudes constructed and derived from perceived speech reflect the assumed speakers,

but rather the observance of the constellations of social divergence drawn from and attributed to speech variation.

Language attitude studies—one branch of perceptual dialectology—focus specifically on listeners' responses and ideas about the speech they hear. In attitude surveys about American dialects, Dennis Preston has found that perceptions of American accents are largely influenced by the listener's background as the basis for their presumed standard of speech. In a 1986 survey, participants were given blank maps of the United States and asked to identify regions based on their understanding of speech practices. Participants were then asked to rate correctness and pleasantness of speech variation to determine which dialect features are bound to evaluative social judgments. Respondents (in this study, predominantly white first- and second-year undergraduates from Indiana) routinely identified the Midwest accent as the most correct and the Southern accent as the worst English in America (Preston 1986:237). In contrast, the same respondents posited that their native accent was far less pleasant than that of Southern speakers (Preston 1986:238). He notes:

> It is clear that the informants took this geographical task to be an evaluative rather than descriptive one. A glance at the labels makes this clear -words such as twang, slang, normal, standard, pidgin, drawl, proper, snob, regular, perfect, stuffy, and slurred abound. This prescriptive orientation offers a better explanation for which areas were recognized and the intensity of the recognition than any other single feature. (Preston 1986:238)

Preston's surveys reveal affective judgments about the types of speech found in dialect distribution throughout the United States, which are thus necessarily projected onto the persons associated with speaking those forms.

To isolate a single feature of perceived speech, Preston and Bartlomiej Plichta conducted surveys (2005) that resynthesized a single word ("guide") with a single male

and single female speaker. The sample was augmented over seven stages to take the diphthong /ay/ to a reduced monophthong /a/, a commonly-known feature of the Southern drawl. Participants were then asked to guess at the geographical base of the speaker on a Northern/Southern axis as the samples were played in random order. The results of the experiment, even over a single word and its central vowel, showed remarkable attribution to diphthongized speech posited as Northern and monophthong speech as Southern (Plichta and Preston 2005:121). What this shows is that associations between perceived speech and assumptions about speakers (as well as aspects of their identity) can be drawn from socially-ingrained ideas about speech forms and features, even at the monosyllable level. A single vowel pronounced with gradated marked difference proves enough to alter the listener's perception of the speaker. The concepts explored by Preston and other perceptual dialectologists build on the effects of language variation as they influence social configurations of presumed speech communities.

Oral differences are not the only mediating factors with regard to language attitudes and perceptual dialectology. To test sensory interference, Donald Rubin (1992) conducted an experiment as an optional credit assignment for undergraduate participants. The students listened to a single audio recording of a female native English speaker delivering a four minute mini-lecture. While the recording was played, an image of the presumed instructor was projected. Two photographs were used to test perceived ethnicity of the speaker, one with a Caucasian woman and one with an Asian (Chinese) woman, while the same recording was played. Rubin found:

> When they were faced with an ethnically Asian instructor, participants responded in the direction one would expect had they been listening to nonstandard speech. Evidence from the discriminant analysis suggests that participants stereotypically attributed accent differences - differences that did

> not exist in truth - to the instructors' speech. Yet more serious, listening comprehension appeared to be undermined simply by identifying (visually) the instructor as Asian. (Rubin 1992:519)

In this study, a purely non-linguistic factor (a still image of the attributed speaker) compromised the participants' reactions to the same audio recording, demonstrating a visual interference with auditory perception with regard to ethnic cues not found in the uniform speech sample. The perceived differences were thus attributed to the speaker despite that those differences existed only in the minds of the audience. Visual sensory observation heightens associations between perceived speech variation and the individual speakers. This association extends to speech communities as individual speakers display (or are perceived to display) marked features in language use, potentially iconizing the social or speech communities of which they are members.

In a study by Harry McGurk and John MacDonald (1976), multimodal sensory interference compromised received speech in an audiovisual illusion that today bears the name the McGurk effect. McGurk and MacDonald recorded a video image of a woman whose articulatory anatomy (lips, etc.) produced the syllable [ga] in English. The video was dubbed with audio of the same woman pronouncing the syllable [ba] in English. Auditors of the video heard the syllable as [da] when the image was paired with the sound. The visual presentation of the voiced velar plosive [g] is mediated by the audio presentation of the voiced bilabial plosive [b], resulting in comprehension of the voiced alveolar plosive [d]. Participants would correctly identify the lip movements as [ga] when the video was muted and would also correctly identify the audio clip as [ba] with their eyes closed. This study demonstrates how perception of speakers and speech is not uniformly linked to the production of speech alone as it occurs in nature, but how it is mediated through visual sensory input. Furthermore, it raises questions

regarding the accuracy of language reception on the part of the observer. If the senses can obfuscate reception through multisensory interference, interlocution relies heavily on the ability of the hearer to grasp the speaker's encoded message.

Whether cognition is influenced by sensory perception in the physical sense (as with the McGurk effect) or in the social sense (as with perceptual dialectology), language usage clearly transcends the dimensions of computational meaning alone. Distinctions between dialects, accents, and languages utilized in social exchange retain observably marked features, but these features are contingent upon an ascribed standard form of speech which varies between both individual speakers and more broadly their speech communities. While sociolinguistic research creates a map of sorts for demarcating salient boundaries between forms of variation, perceptual studies generate a legend for the map, exploring why and how those variations influence interaction between speakers. Furthermore, perceptual emphases reveal socialized conceptions of the populations who display marked features, conceptions that are deictically grounded in the vantage point of the observer. Sensory perception permits and negotiates our understanding of any uttered message, but also includes socialized connotations of variation as archetypal representations of speech community members. These archetypal representations in turn influence psychosocial response in interlocution and develop characterizations of speakers derived from features associated with their speech forms.

Chapter 3: Philosophical Bases for the Cognitive Construction of Meaning

The psychological relationship between a class of persons or characters and the sensory observation of features is that of association, which in turn attributes membership in that categorical class as justified by the production of the presumed features. To understand how this phenomenon occurs, we must be able to reason why it occurs. Herein we venture beyond the observation of an event into the rationale for both its possibility and interpretation. To explain the conceptualization of the event and its social import, we must examine the nature of both concept (in the mental sense) and event (in the physical sense). The cases examined further explore not how language is transmitted, but how it is processed by the auditor to formulate conclusions about categorization, causation, inductive reasoning, and rational justifications regarding the natural and social world.

This section will rely heavily on philosophy as a discipline. Whereas documentary linguistics aims to determine an abstract grammatical structure through the observation of spoken interlocution, my argument relies on a phenomenological approach to how we experience language usage. As such, the distinctions between forms of speech serve as evidence for perceived understanding—it is not the speech markers themselves that are important, but rather the conceptualization of the identity and properties of linguistic referents (be they people, events, or ideas), both as they are used by speakers and as they are received and processed by addressees. Ethnography shares this goal, though not always with the same terms or foci. While participant observation is the key to determining the social organization of a community and the

nature of its practices, ethnography succeeds when it reveals why the elements of social behavior have significance for community members, especially when that significance displays contrast or concordance with other communities. These "webs of significance," as Clifford Geertz called them, illustrate the philosophy of communities as it applies to social praxis.

While philosophy has myriad themes, traditions, and perspectives, it is worthwhile to disentangle the threads so commonly clustered under this umbrella term. The ontological vein focuses on being; it can be called the study of things and existence. The epistemological vein focuses on knowledge; it deals with how we know what we know. The field of logic applies to reason and what manners of reasoning are sound. The branch of ethics deals with how to act—which practices should be supported and performed (NB: Philosophical ethics can be moral, but do not entail morality). Phenomenology differs from the four common fields of philosophy listed here in that it does not prescribe behavioral ethics, it does not restructure logical reasoning, and it does not directly investigate things that exist in the ontological sense. Instead, it deals with the perception of extant things and events as they are experienced by an individual or a community, and how that experiential perception yields a socially cohesive understanding of the natural world and how we engage that world as humans (Smith 2013).

For the purposes of this inquiry, I involve elements of western philosophy in the fields of empirical and rational metaphysics. Though Aristotle had much to say regarding the presentation of experience through linguistic means, his *Poetics* set the precedent for the still-predominant view of language use via narrative in the domain of

the humanities. Countless scholars should be cited in tracing the history discourse analysis, but I begin with Descartes.

Rene Descartes (1596-1650) was the first major philosopher of the Enlightenment in the rationalist tradition. His *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641) sought to prove the existence of the Judeo-Christian God as the basis for interpreting the natural world that we experience in daily life. Descartes began by rejecting all prior philosophical theory and even his own senses in the *Meditations*, hoping to find some principle upon which his deductions could be ascertained. The famous phrase "cogito ergo sum" is his conclusion in the first meditation: He posited his existence as a being in the world on the basis of his own thought. In essence, the action of thinking requires an actor to execute it; he must therefore exist. In the second meditation, Descartes examines a piece of wax, listing its odor, flavor, size, shape, color, and other observable characteristics. Then he draws the wax near to a fire and notes how its taste and smell vanish, it melts from an extended mass to a liquid, and it loses its color and its form. The piece of wax represents a concept that bears distinctly observable features when perceived by the senses. But the transformation of the wax in heat calls the validity of those sensory observations into question once the presumed features change. Descartes concludes that while we can perceive wax through the senses, it is not the wax that we perceive, but rather our mental "imaginings"—imaging or ideation, a mental representation—of it. Note that Descartes began his investigations in the darkness of solipsism; he still does not trust his senses, only that he is a thinking being who is capable of sensing.

> But I need to realize that the perception of the wax is neither a seeing, nor a touching, nor an imagining. Nor has it ever been, even though it previously

> seemed so; rather it is an inspection on the part of the mind alone. This inspection can be imperfect and confused, as it was before, or clear and distinct, as it is now, depending on how closely I pay attention to the things in which the piece of wax consists. (Descartes 2009:46)

In this passage Descartes distinguishes between the concept ("imagining") of the wax and the specific physical piece of wax. He therefore challenges the identification of a concept with the primary and secondary properties displayed by that conceptual category, relegating the truth of the nature of the concept to the mind of the perceiver. "Thus what I thought I had seen with my eyes, I actually grasped solely with the faculty of judgment, which is in my mind" (Descartes 2009:46).

Descartes' second meditation is significant in that it not only differentiates a category or set from a member or unique element of the set, but also by distinguishing ubiquitous or inherent features associated with category sets as mutable. While ultimately Descartes finds reason to trust his senses in the following meditations, he notes that the error of attribution in perception is one that transpires cognitively in reasoning based on sensory experience. He calls the mind "the faculty of judgment" by which knowledge about the world is obtained, noting its potential for fallacy. While there are flaws with Descartes' theories and conclusions, the so-called Father of Modern Philosophy was aware that reality is not always as it appears to us, nor as we recall it within our mental faculties.

I include Descartes' *Meditations* because his analysis of categorization regarding observable features pertains directly to how interlocutors perceive speech features and derive imagined categories of speech classes and communities. The piece of wax demonstrates a variety of shifting features, all of which are properties of wax. Just as variation in language is present from one speaker to the next, we recognize

seemingly essentialized features of language through observation of contextually bound samples of utterance. The observed features are not necessarily omnipresent in speech or evenly displayed among speakers, yet we form categorical conclusions about real or imagined speech communities because of distinctly marked features.

Following the rationalist tradition, which had based natural philosophy in innate reasoning as unwavering principles for true thought, the empiricist tradition came to prominence. Empiricists argued against rationalists by positing the existence of the world as proved by sensory experience, or that which could be empirically observed. In essence, if we as humans perceive it, things are real to the extent that our faculties for perception can discover their reality. This does not preclude innate reasoning, but rather differentiates between knowledge gleaned from reason alone and knowledge gleaned from experience.

David Hume (1711-1776) tackles the divide between reason and experience in the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748). While he discusses many topics, including free will, causation, probability, and miracles, Hume is perhaps most remembered for his appeals to "custom and habit" in the natural world. For the purposes of my argument, the chapters of the *Enquiry* that involve the origin of ideas, connections of ideas, and problems of induction are most pertinent. Hume relies on two key terms to express our engagement with thought: impressions and ideas. Impressions are those emotional and sensory experiences that are impressed upon us through our faculties of observation and feeling; they are strong, vivid, and real as we participate in them. Ideas are our memories, rational thoughts, and conceptualizations of things; they are weaker and more flexible than impressions, and are not guaranteed to be real. This

lack of "reality" in ideas can mean several things: that factual memories are distended in recollection or truth; that innate reasoning such as mathematical theory is valid but non-existent in the physical world; or that we take for granted associations seemingly connected in folk life for which we have no true basis to assert. Hume holds that impressions provide us the wealth of knowledge which we then reconfigure in the form of ideas through the mechanisms of compounding, transposing, augmenting, and diminishing.

Though his attention to language is limited to disentangling the jargon of his predecessors and the appellations of categories, Hume wrestles with matters of cognition and perception. He calls into question the freedom of the mind to attribute characteristics it has never empirically encountered through an example of a missing shade of blue. Hume suggests that if a continuum of swatches of blue, running from darkest to lightest, were presented to an observer missing one gradation element in the series that the observer would be able to recognize the relative difference in saturation and conceive of the shade not included in the sequence, even if she had no prior impression with which to form the idea of the missing shade. While seemingly contrary to his prior claim that ideas are residually derived from impressions, this counterexample flows into Hume's distinctions between true philosophy and the governing of laymen's thoughts, which are governed by custom and habit as a result of generalized ideas. He claims:

> All ideas, especially abstract ones, are naturally faint and obscure. The mind has but slender hold of them. They are apt to be confounded with other resembling ideas, and when we have employed any term, though without a distinct meaning, we are apt to imagine that it has a determinate idea annexed to it. On the contrary, all impressions, that is, all sensations either outward or inward, are strong and vivid. (Hume 2009:540)

Hume continues to discuss the connection of ideas, which he claims arise from three principles of association: resemblance, contiguity, and cause and effect. He notes that similar objects or sequential events will be recognized as sets or patterns through lived experience. These associations he labels “relations of ideas” and “matters of fact,” the former including non-existent rational truths (such as mathematical operations) and the latter derived from experienced phenomena. Matters of fact, in his view, are both contingent on real existence and ultimately fallible because the contrary of any matter of fact cannot entail a contradiction. His example is that the sun rises every morning. Just because it has done so repeatedly up until this point does not exclude the possibility that it will not tomorrow; this can only be verified after the presumed sunrise tomorrow. As such, he posits that matters of fact are based in perceived relations of cause and effect, which are sequentially bound in perception, and not warranted as true despite reoccurrence.

However, the underlying typology of these two associations deals with innate knowledge (a priori) and observed knowledge (a posteriori). Hume held that relations of ideas (analytical knowledge, like mathematics) are true by means of reason without necessary existence; matters of fact (synthetic knowledge, like the sun rising) which we obtain through rationalizing experience, cannot be proven by nature of conceptual entailment and must be observed to be verified. Hume then applies the lens of relations of ideas and matters of fact to the problem of induction, observing that we assume through inductive logic (and not by pure reason) that elements of sets necessarily bear similarity to each other by means of shared features, or that future events in sequence will play out the way they have in the past. He appeals to the common expectation of

patterned behavior as the nature of custom and habit—generalizations that tend to obtain in the real world despite no physically predictable proof that they will come to pass. As such, Hume holds that synthetic a priori arguments are impossible. Because they must be confirmed through observation, they must be classified as a posteriori. True reason, in his view, must be analytic (as relations of ideas), while induction is synthetic (as matters of fact).

While Hume does not discuss language in explicit detail, he builds on the psychological associations between perceived events and their social expectations. Correlation between observable events and their causes applies to perceived language variation as the expectations Hume asserts (custom and habit) extend recursively to the behaviors of real or imagined social groups and their members. Impressions in the minds of auditors form ideas about features of speakers and their speech communities, leading to expectations of similar behaviors by other members of the same perceived communities. Thus observation of variation through experience reinforces the presumed categories of persons bearing marked features whether or not all members of that category exhibit those features.

In his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1783), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) argues for the existence and necessity of synthetic a priori propositions if any scientific certainty is to be merited. This nomenclature is derived from two pairs of binary oppositions: that of the analytic/synthetic divide, and that of the a priori/a posteriori divide. The former deals with conceptual entailment while the latter deals with experiential observation. Any proposition can be classified as one of four potential types when the two binaries are defined for that proposition. A proposition is any statement that contains a subject

and a predicate; while this is, on one level, equivalent to the grammatical concept of a sentence, it more broadly involves a concept (the subject) and an attribution that applies to that concept (the predicate).

According to Kant, any knowledge that we as humans come to understand must be one of either two types: a priori or a posteriori. Kant holds that for each individual, experience is the progenitor of knowledge, which we retain as mental impressions. He questions:

> …whether there is any knowledge that is thus independent of experience and even of all impressions of the senses. Such knowledge is entitled *a priori*, and distinguished from the *empirical*, which has its sources *a posteriori*, that is, in experience. (Kant 1965:42-3)

Kant's aim here is to posit genuine rational thought that is not derived specifically from lived experience. For example, mathematic knowledge would fall under the domain of a priori, as it exists before and exclusive of physical experience, although experience can illustrate its truths. While significant for philosophy, Kant's distinction of types of knowledge separates the rational from the empirical and is less critical for disciplines that assume systems of logic (whatever parameters they may observe) as granted faculties of human thought.

A proposition in which the predicate is contained in the subject is said to be analytic. Kant writes: "If I say, for instance, 'All bodies are extended', this is an analytic judgment. For I do not require to go beyond the concept which I connect with 'body' in order to find extension as bound up with it" (Kant 1965:48). In Kant's terms, "extension" refers to placement in extended physical space; thus for any object to have body, that body must be located in extended physical space. Because the concept of

having body entails a prerequisite of the concept of physical extension, the analytic judgment is considered an entailment.

Synthetic arguments, in contrast, include a predicate that is not entailed by the subject. Kant writes: “But when I say, ‘All bodies are heavy’, the predicate is something quite different from anything that I think in the mere concept of ‘body’ in general; and the addition of such a predicate therefore yields a synthetic judgment” (Kant 1965:49). This seems contrary to expectation given contemporary use of the term “body,” but for Kant’s argument, this includes non-existent and unobservable concepts such as geometric figures. Even when we learn geometry on a Cartesian plane in a mathematics course, we study and diagram representational images (icons) of non-existent entities that are defined by coordinate systems and measurements. Thus it is perhaps confusing, but not impossible for Kant to speak of a body that has no mass. Note also that Kant uses the term “heavy” to describe an object that has mass, as opposed to an object that is comparatively difficult to lift or move. An imaginary geometric figure cannot be heavy in the definitions of physical science—it has no mass. Therefore, in the proposition “All bodies are heavy,” the predicate “heavy” modifies the subject phrase “all bodies” with a concept that is not originally entailed within that subject. This is the meaning of a synthetic judgment.

Kant’s propositions regarding inductive reasoning build on Descartes’ feature observations and Hume’s impressions and ideas by demonstrating how we can formulate knowledge even without direct experience. Synthetic a priori judgments do not require lived experience to be proven rationally true. Thus properties not distinctly entailed in concepts (as is the case with analytical concepts) can yield logical

conclusions without a posteriori experience. This relates to linguistic profiling and the expectation that members of speech communities will produce features that they may or may not truly produce. It is not unreasonable to believe that a speaker born and raised in the state of Georgia would likely speak with a Southern drawl, even if one has never directly encountered a speaker from Georgia. Inductive reasoning leads to logical assumptions about categories (and thus communities and their members) which influence the processing of knowledge and events in social life.

What follows from these abstract theories of knowledge with regard to cognition? Descartes' conceptions of units, sets of units, and their relationships provides a structural framework for categorizing things and events. Through his reasoning, the arbitrary nature of groupings, as conducted by the mind (the faculty of judgment), is contextually dependent on the spatiotemporal progression of events. His piece of wax shows how a concept (wax) can remain unified despite its mutable characteristics (how it changes in heat). This illustrates how, in Hume's terms, the idea of wax (as a concept) remains in the mind and the memory while undergoing distinct alterations in impression (sensory and perceptual experience). The expectation that wax will retain its physical properties at a stable temperature and that those properties will change under variable temperature is generalized as a "matter of fact," therein establishing a shared folk theory of cause and effect: When room temperature wax is exposed to heat, it will melt. This is a synthetic a posteriori judgment; without repeated, lived experience observing that wax melts, there is no basis for positing that that effect will be obtained. Kant's discussion of synthetic a priori arguments overturns Hume's folk conception, noting that regular,

systematic behavior in the physical world establishes “relations of ideas” (in Hume’s terms) as scientific fact (or pure reason).

This model of cognition yields inductive reasoning, the process through which we reach conclusions about unknown things and events through previous experience. I suggest that the result of induction combined with the presumption of cause-and-effect relationships creates a liminal conceptual space wherein we challenge, reinforce, or modify our category and item descriptions based on experiences with them. By augmenting ideal concepts, we imbue them (truthfully or not) with features that then become associated with items and categories. Note that “experience” in this sense does not necessitate exposure; through the process of socialization, we become predisposed to normative behaviors, categories, and affective judgments. Socialization, be it conscious or not on the part of the socialized, is experienced as an impression from which ideas are either actively formed or passively received. The value judgments of ideas are necessarily conveyed through communication.

Examining how we process thoughts and acquire real or supposed knowledge provides the structure through which we can understand framing and the process through which we can generate frames. Cognitive scientist Zoltán Kövecses defines frames as “structured mental representations of an area of human experience (i.e., objects or events). As such, they amount to representations of prototypes. […] Frames have roles that can be instantiated by particular values” (Kövecses 2006:369). Frames are thus refined or subjective ideas in Hume’s terms, though Hume considered his viewpoint objective and was not concerned with social context or affect regarding the processing and transmission of ideas. As Kövecses notes, frames are representative of

category prototypes—we generate frames through experience with an individual object or event that serves as the basis for impression for their categories—and have a direct association with value judgments dependent on situational context. The cognitive, perceptual approach to understanding meaning demands that context and perspective mediate signification in social exchange. This is especially significant in language research as marked features are clearly contingent on time, place, and situation. Language variation necessarily involves contrast; variation can only occur when multiple expressive forms are possible.

The phenomenological aspect of framing requires attention to the divide between the real and the perceived. It would seem logical that frames derived from lived experience would relate to the things or events experienced, but upon closer scrutiny, this turns out to be false. To explore this distinction, we turn to Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), today considered the founder of phenomenology. Husserl labels the perception of a target object "noema" from the Greek word "nous" (νοῦς), or mind, in distinction against the object itself as it exists. Ironically, his definition is itself rather convoluted, though he illustrates the concept with this example:

> Let us suppose that in a garden we regard with pleasure a blossoming apple tree, the freshly green grass of the lawn, etc. It is obvious that the perception and the accompanying liking are not, at the same time, what is perceived and what is liked. In the natural attitude, the apple tree is for us something existing in the transcendent realm of spatial actuality, and the perception, as well as the liking, is for us a psychical state belonging to real people. Between the one and the other real things, between the real person or the real perception, and the real apple tree, there exist real relations. In such situations characterizing mental processes, it may be in certain cases that such perception is 'mere hallucination,' the perceived, this apple tree before us, does not exist in 'actual' reality. Now the real relation, previously meant as actually existing, is destroyed. Only the perception remains, but there is nothing actually there to which it is related." (Husserl 1983:216-7)

What Husserl intends to convey in this passage is that the objects of our perceptions, as they exist in the world, do not entail the features and associated connotations (the noetic content) we assign them by means of our experiential perception. These features are elements of the psychical state aroused in the mind of the perceiver, and thus attributed to the real object by means of experiential impression, which leads to frame generation. The resultant frames, resident to the mental domain of the perceiver, are derived from the ideal response to actual impressions, and consequently instantiated with affective value judgments.

Husserl overlooks an important distinction arises between types of frames, however. Erving Goffman terms these two branches natural and social. For Goffman, "Natural frameworks identify occurrences seen as undirected, unoriented, unanimated, unguided, 'purely physical'," (Goffman 1974:22) or those free from the interference of the willful agency of sentient beings. These include physical sciences, mathematics, and unmediated sensory exposure to nature. He defines the counterpart to natural frames:

> Social frameworks, on the other hand, provide background understanding for events that incorporate the will, aim, and controlling effort of an intelligence, a live agency, the chief one being the human being. Such an agency is anything but implacable; it can be coaxed, flattered, affronted, and threatened. What it does can be described as 'guided doings.' These doings subject the doer to 'standards,' to social appraisal of his action based on its honesty, efficiency, economy, safety, elegance, tactfulness, good taste, and so forth. (Goffman 1974:22)

Goffman holds that social frameworks are not those immutable truths of analytic nature, but those concepts of behaviors, predispositions, and judgments derived from affective relationships between humans and other things—especially other humans. He asserts that multiple frameworks can arise simultaneously in response to an event, and that those frameworks may operate in conjunction with or in opposition to each other.

Beyond the generation and mediation of frames, Goffman describes the manipulation of frames to enhance communicative competence, convey motive and emotion, and reinforce socially normative behaviors and perspectives.

While the rationalist perspective embraced by Descartes privileges the certainty of the mind, that certainty serves to quantify the extended world and the reality it contains. The importance of Descartes' views for my argument reside in the mental determinations of categories, features, and properties of objects and persons we encounter in lived experience. His empiricist successors, including Hume and Kant, further Descartes' categorical and taxonomical views by exploring how the faculty of judgment operates through lived experience and analysis. Descartes describes the various features of the piece of wax, assuming the socially ascribed nomenclature with which it is labeled and recognized; Hume examines the nature of how we reason those mental conclusions (ideas) based on physical interaction (impressions) with the object itself to reach a meaningful conception of the category and its primary features. Kant, though in some disagreement with Hume's conclusions about the nature of knowledge, reveals how concepts taken as complete (analytic) are mediated through experience (a posteriori).

I argue that to advance Kant's conclusions, we must account for shifts in conceptualization over time. Thus an analytic concept imbued with distinct features serves as a basic idea, yet lived experience through impressions can yield a modification of that analytic; if the experience is sufficient to warrant a contestation of the analytic category through synthetic means, the category or class in contest will take on new characteristics derived from the force of a posteriori reflection.

Building on this, Husserl draws a divide between the reality of an object and the impressions we individually receive from them, demonstrating a distance between objective truth (which he holds cannot be obtained) and perceived truth. Thus the social import of Husserl's view is that perceived reality, whether or not perceived truthfully, constitutes the conceptualization of analytic and synthetic observation. Goffman's frames combine all of these experiential responses as the cognitive templates that inform our recognition of things and events, which in turn prescribe a perspective and prospective course of action for negotiating experience. I argue that through these means we process received information and lived experience to conceptualize things and events. When these conceptualizations are socialized through communication, they become social matters of fact that enter the culture and made normative. This view accounts for both community/collective endorsement and idiosyncratic interpretation, demonstrating how seemingly prevalent views can become socially sound while they are subject to change over time.

Chapter 4: The Intellectual Roots of Language as Perception

In this section I analyze how documentary linguistic research of the early 20th century derived social meaning from language variation given a context observed but not native to the researcher. The establishment of speech alternation in both perception and referentiality demonstrate how variance in language usage reflects variance in social categories. The intentional and systematic distribution of appropriateness for non-standard speech forms reveals how categorical stratification is both socialized through linguistic practice and applied with ingrained affective judgments. I refer to several case studies that show how a socially significant taxonomy of both speech and speakers is evident in deviation from the presumed standard. In this way, the established collective meanings constructed from the processes of cognition are imputed through interaction in the medium of speech production, institutionalizing the ascribed differences between persons and classes via observation.

Performative variation in written language mirrors variation in spoken language. The cases presented in this section clearly demonstrate not only how perception mediates received meaning, but also how variation is intentionally employed in spoken language to create meaning. Speakers can and do actively augment speech to perform social signification in discourse. This shows how intentionally modified language directly indexes socially pertinent categories, including speech communities. This signification extends recursively to real or perceived members of the indexed communities, and thus the use of marked features operationalizes the referential force of variant speech forms.

Franz Boas' "On Alternating Sounds" (1889) investigates the breadth of phonemic distinction in language, but approaches the concept through what he calls "sound-blindness." The name, derived from the ocular phenomenon of color-blindness, implies an inability for the hearer to distinguish between different phones (sound units). Boas notes that this obfuscation arises with unfamiliar terms, whether they are unlearned elements of one's native language or elements of a foreign language. A brief discussion of research in children's audio perception reinforces the possibility for even simple terms to be misunderstood by young learners with limited lexicons; Boas does not speculate heavily in this article about how these experiences with novel lexical items configures the interpretation of phonemic distinction in the mind. Of greater significance is his turn toward indigenous language documentation, wherein he reveals difficulty in systematizing and designating phonetic and phonological constellations in languages foreign to that of the documenter. Drawn from his own fieldworks, Boas recognizes the inconsistency of transcribing words in the same manner while establishing a preliminary translation. He provides a list of several "Eskimo" words which he recorded as distinctly different between tokens, explaining that despite clearly recognizing the terms to be equivalent, the transcriptions vary from one to the next due to the uncertainty of their character in the ears of the recorder. He notes:

> It is found that the vocabularies of collectors, although they may apply diacritical marks or special alphabets, bear evidence of the phonetics of their own languages. This can be explained only by the fact that each apperceives the unknown sounds by the means of the sounds of his own language. (Boas 1889:51)

Thus, Boas (whose college education revolved around physics and perception, including psycho-acoustics) attributes phonetic distinctions not only to the peculiarities of the contexts in which they arise, but also through the filter of the documenter's native

repertoire. He further explains that alternating sounds ought not exist; when they do occur it is due to the misperception of the hearer as opposed to the supposed "free variation" of the unfamiliar ear, which he asserts adequate training can neutralize.

On one hand, Boas' analysis rests on the presumption of a solid, differentiated phonemic inventory—a clear taxonomy of phonemes and their allophones. Though the term never arises in this work, it is clear that allophonic variation is central to this phenomenon. For example, the alveolar flap [ɾ] is an allophone of both the voiced and unvoiced alveolar plosives [d] and [t] respectively. The words "bitter" and "bidder" are minimal pairs in that they differ only in voicing of the central consonant, yet while the former is understood to be pronounced [bɪtɻ] and the latter [bɪdɻ], they are both capable of being correctly pronounced with the shared allophone, [bɪɾɻ]. To this extent, the two words are homophones, especially if Betty bought a bit of butter for the batter at an auction—making her the better bidder. Perhaps even more so if she lost the auction with any degree of envy or frustration, making her a bitter bidder. That fluency of speech and accommodation in hearing permit us to recognize the quickened flap [ɾ] as a substitute for either [d] or [t] denotes the flap as an allophone.

If allophones arise without systematic environmental constraints, linguists of the 20th century would label the alternation as "free variation," meaning the substitution is recognized and endorsed as grammatical without discrete phonological rules. In recent decades, the concept of "free variation" has become controversial to the point of being disavowed entirely; an orderly, empirical discipline must account for variation in some way. This is at times handled as a dialect difference or attributed to a speech community by means of some social variable such as class, race, or gender. Traditionally,

allophonic variation involves accepted substitution when the divergence is minimal. Take for instance the English words “pen” and “pin.” The vocalic difference between these minimal pairs is orthographically clear, yet regional dialects like the Southern accent in American English make no phonological distinction: both can be pronounced [pɪn]. The referent (and indeed grammatical category) are clarified by the utterance and situational context.

Examples of alternating, but not allophonic sounds discussed in Chapter 6 of this thesis, taken from the poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar, include the perceived equivalence of “dat” and “that” as well as “mouf” and “mouth.” That “dat” [dæt] is not lexically recognized as its own item, but can be recognized as an allophonic mispronunciation of “that” [ðæt] does not impede the hearer’s ability to interpret the speech. However, this marked variation coincides with social assignation of speaker identity and affective evaluations of the speaker. Thus, communicative competence is not impeded as the hearer can accommodate the speaker’s meaning despite the mispronunciation, yet the utterance retains a distinct character that may or may not provoke a social judgment of the speaker. In Dunbar’s works, the difference indicated that the poem’s persona was racially marked as African American, as suggested by the speaker’s reference to himself as the little brown baby’s “pappy.” In the 21st century, the use of [dæt] may not specifically indicate race, but perhaps an urban identity, an intentionally stylized production, or an unintentional pronunciation stemming from lack of education. I’m suggesting that multiple connotations can and do exist, the extent and evaluation of which are determined by the perception of the hearer regardless of the speaker’s status, situation, or intent.

Edward Sapir discusses the implied assignation of social judgments through speech in his 1915 article "Abnormal Types of Speech in Nootka." Though he distinctly analyzes the use of direct conversational speech, his assertions regarding the social contract that recognizes aberrant speech forms as playful, yet ideologically accepted derogation inform parallel interpretations in recorded utterance, both spoken and written. Sapir's work with indigenous languages of North America involve phonological and morphosyntactic structures that designate grammatical variation through conversational deixis; the context of who said what in what way to whom is necessary to interpret and distinguish variations in speech forms. In a broad context, he asserts that the decoration of speech through stylistic means accords with perceived characteristics of the addressee (in interlocution) or persona (in narrative). His examples detail observable physical traits, perceived mental character, and traditional mythological figures as targets for ascribed "abnormal" speech patterns. Sapir writes:

> An interesting linguistic and cultural problem is 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 any direct statement as to such characteristics. […] A more specialized type of these person-implications is comprised by all cases in which the reference is brought about not by the use of special words or locutions, that is, by lexical, stylistic, or syntactic means, but by the employment of special grammatical elements, consonant or vocalic changes, or addition of meaningless sounds, that is, by morphologic or phonetic means. (Sapir 1985:179)

Sapir holds that the presentation of speech, as opposed to its direct content, creates a socially-endorsed view of the target, whether that target is the speaker, the addressee, or a third party.

In the case of direct conversation, Sapir notes how physical characteristics of the addressee can influence the speaker's choice of presentation. The majority of field data included comes from ethnographic study of the Nootka Indians of the Alberni canal

area of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. Sapir lists many disparate targeted traits in addressees that can warrant augmented speech. Gender restrictions and diminutives are not uncommon for prescriptive speech practices in cultures the world over; taboos regarding what topics and grammatical forms can be used between sexes, kin relations, and adult/children interlocutors are often to be found in linguistic ethnography. However, Sapir's discoveries a century ago seem both incendiary and downright odd by today's paradigms: "The physical classes indicated by these methods are children, unusually fat or heavy people, unusually short adults, those suffering from some defect of the eye, hunchbacks, those that are lame, left-handed persons, and circumcised males" (Sapir 1985:181). He posits that suffixation and "consonantal play" attribute irregularity to the addressee when utilized by the speaker to mark the addressee's character. Beyond the morphological and phonetic alterations themselves, Sapir discusses the etiquette involved with these usages. When showing affection to a friend or family member displaying the trait, such as a wizened grandparent, these forms are endorsed and accepted. However, when addressing or referring to an adult of the same social status, use of these forms "might be intended to convey contempt when addressed to a young man, and would be promptly resented as an insult" (Sapir 1985:184). He continues to note that these qualities appear to do with inherent conditions (aside from circumcision); in the case of blindness, Sapir notes that it is most commonly acquired later in life (as opposed to congenitally) and is considered "too grave an affliction to be treated light-heartedly" with these forms of "speech-mockery" (Sapir 1985:185).

Sapir's discussion of speech-mockery does not end in direct conversational discourse. Moving from the domain of interlocution to performance-event discourse, Sapir posits how similar forms of morphological and consonantal variation are employed in mythological narrative. His transition from conversation analysis to performance events, while lengthy, draws attention to attitudes about language use.

> This matter of consonantal play to express modalities of attitude is doubtless a fruitful field for investigation in American linguistics and should receive more attention than has hitherto been accorded it. It may be expected to turn up particularly in connexion [sic] with notions of smallness, largeness, contempt, affection, respect, and sex-differences.
>
> Such consonantal changes and increments as have been considered are evidently of a rhetorical or stylistic as much as of a purely grammatical sort. This is borne out by the fact that quite analogous processes are found employed as literary devices in American myths and songs. I have already drawn attention to the fact, that in American mythology certain beings are apt to be definitely characterized by speech peculiarities. The employment of consonantal play or of similar devices in such cases seems always to have a decidedly humorous effect. (Sapir 1985:186)

Having established the existence of normative patterns of speech that deviate from grammatical standards when used in discourse with or about certain social categories, Sapir delineates the bases for these systematic deviations. His exploration of conversational speech forms includes categories borne of spatial proportion (the unusually large- or small-bodied), of physical maturity (the young and the elderly), those with impaired faculties (the sight-challenged and the "lame" (Sapir 1985:183)), and also "classes of individuals characterized by some mental quality," (Sapir 1985:184) explicitly citing examples for greed and cowardice. He also mentions a pertinent distinction in forms of speech for the left-handed. All of these usages are bound by some evaluative judgment, the most common of which is comedic effect, though Sapir notes the importance of deictic analysis in interpretation. Whether or not the employment of a deviant speech form will be considered a social affront depends on

the relationship between the speaker and the referent, determined in conversational situation and context. Affection, contempt, and respect are determined by not only the use of speech forms, but also by the reception of that use, as is posited by the capacity for insult when deviant speech forms are employed for a non-prototypical member of the referent category.

Beyond the conversational level, Sapir reinforces the equation of non-standard speech forms with referent groups in narrative. The examples listed primarily tend to animal types, including the deer and mink in Nootka, the mink in Kwakiutl, and the mantis and baboon in African tales. Sapir does not comment on the prevalence of animal characters as representative protagonists on North American mythologies, but does link them to archetypal roles given their engagements in narrative. He notes similarities between the mink and the mantis as prototype trickster figures across continents for their narrative characters and establishes links between deviant speech forms that are repeatedly attributed to characters. Furthermore, he points to the linguistic othering of foreign speech phones and patterns in narrative and song recitation as well as the similarities between deviant speech forms attributed to classes of extant individuals and myth figures:

> The Nootka mocking-forms, with their use of the diminutive affix and of consonant play, represent a combination, both linguistically and psychologically, of the pity and affection symbolized by the use of the diminutive element and of the contempt or jesting attitude implied by the imitation of the speech defect. A myth character whom it is desired to treat humorously may, among other possibilities, be relegated either to the class of poor talkers or to that of nature's step-children. Hence the consonant play of such characters is in part traceable either to speech defects or to mocking-forms. (Sapir 1985:191)

The oblique references Sapir makes towards disciplinary divisions in the transitional passage are of great interest. Why should these representational qualities be relegated to

mere rhetorical or stylistic literary devices when they display grammatical deviation from standardized speech forms? Sapir does not tackle the issue of whether or not these spoken trends arise in written narrative discourse; the domain of writing is not explicitly mentioned in this examination at all. Yet the association of a character (or character type) with non-standard speech entails a relationship of identity in which that character is perceived as a distinct other. This distinction is empirically observed through linguistic means; the character's language overtly identifies the character as a member of a socially endorsed category. Evaluative judgments about category members are deictically bound and more fully informed by the context of the performance event. As such, one cannot assert that any specific kind of affective judgment will be universally applied to *x*-type characters or categories due to *y*-type speech forms, but I would argue that some affective judgment is certain, even if the quality of that judgment can only be determined given the context of a specific instance.

The notion of a standardized grammar with generally average speech forms is at the heart of Sapir's exploration. Even with socially-ascribed nonsensical variation in the form of consonantal play, established alternations appear to have corresponding connotations. This is in accord with Boas' treatment of alternating sounds, as well as with a theory of standardization in itself. While alternations exist in abnormal forms of Nootka, they are not without engrained meaning. Each of the alternating affixes and consonant variants yields a recognizable purpose that is socialized among speakers through social norms, mores, and representational narrative. That such behavior in utterance is commonly understood to entail emotional nuance and especially when the deictic constraints of interactions further inform acceptability of employing non-

standard forms suggests that affective semantic content is bound to any non-standard utterance in discourse. I do not see this as indicative of polarity or amplitude with regard to affect, but rather that the use of non-standard forms opens a door for perceptual judgment. This judgment takes place in the reception of the utterance; it is the addressee, and not the speaker, who determines the degree of markedness and its significance in linguistic exchange.

This addressee-oriented approach to discourse interpretation is itself non-standard as it locates agency in the discourse patient. Discourse analysis frequently centers on the speaker as the agent; in a conversational exchange, one interlocutor initiates and another responds, each alternating as the agent with her utterance to the addressee. This is not how we experience conversations as individuals in lived experience. While we may attend to those who speak to us with varying degrees of self-restraint, we cannot remove ourselves from passive synchronic response to stimulus. Even as observers removed from the exchange, we respond to the flow of the exchange and its *mise en scene* both as it unfolds in experienced time and later through recollection of the focal points. Furthermore, the concept of standardized language is bound by lived experience. What is and is not standard in speech forms, even for native speakers, is bound by dialect and accent. Successful communicative interaction demands some degree of mutual intelligibility, but distinctions are omnipresent from one speaker to the next, even if only in pitch, rate of speech, and other aspects of production. In an extreme view of speech variation, this can be attributed to the non-existence of dialect; those who subscribe to this belief maintain that what we refer to as

dialect in a speech community is actually just a strong tendency towards similar idiolect features (speech forms distinct to individuals).

Herein lies a category distinction that disavows the existence of speech communities. If we consider a speech community a set of elements that share some common feature (or series of features), the extreme view recognizes the individual elements but not the set of individuals. While technically true of all persons given distinctions in physical situation, genetic and bodily composition, socialization, etc., this is neither productive for analysis nor aligned with categorical frame generation in cognition. Even with inanimate, mass-produced objects, there is little benefit in distinguishing between similar elements without some purpose external to the object. For example, the flatware in one's kitchen includes various forks, knives, spoons, and other utensils. The distinction between teaspoons and tablespoons is clear even though they are all spoons; yet only when serving tea or soup does one pay attention to which spoon is "hers" to use at the table as opposed to her guest's. This example also serves as an analogy for degree of specificity. While the umbrella term "spoon" may include numerous spoons of varying shapes, sizes, volumes, materials, and appearances, I do not often need to specify a certain subset category of spoon without a specific purpose. In essence, category groupings and the necessary degree of specificity for conveying a proposition or completing a task are subject to the Gricean maxims with the goal of communicative competence.

Beyond category distinctions and degree of specificity, an addressee-oriented perspective also calls into question the success of communicative competence regarding the content of an utterance. Discourse exchanges assume some degree of focus shared

by interlocutors. In a perfect scenario, all participants would be attentive to the exchange, be free of sensory impediments and distractions, and share grammatical understanding such that they comprehend each other's conveyances clearly. This is Noam Chomsky's ideal speaker-listener theory of linguistic competence (Chomsky 1965). This theory contrasts with approaches to discourse that center on linguistic performance (taken here to mean production as opposed to stylized presentation). William Labov argues against the vacuum of Chomsky's proposed system of competence, accounting for contextual elements in the situation of the exchange that influence how interlocutors perceive and attend to it:

> It is now evident to many linguists that the primary purpose of the distinction [between performance and competence] has been to help the linguist exclude data which he finds inconvenient to handle. [...] If performance involves limitations of memory, attention, and articulation, then we must consider the entire English grammar to be a matter of performance. (Labov 1971:468)

Labov argues that it is necessary to include the site and context of an exchange in the interpretation of its content, as well as factors that influence the transmission of linguistic exchange, especially in field elicitation. Perhaps the most critical element of Labov's methodology is attention to speech, or the degree that a speaker modifies their "natural" speech. Yet Labov's explorations maintain the speaker-oriented perspective, relegating the addressee to a position of passive reception beyond the happenstance of her person and the details of the setting's exchange. He centers the heuristics of conveyance in what the speaker implies without regard to how that conveyance is received and inferred by the addressee.

Sapir alludes to the likelihood of addressee inference with regard to non-standard forms, but only insofar as to note that when abnormal speech forms are employed at the expense and justification of the referent's or addressee's character or

corpus that those forms could have injurious or insulting consequences. He notes that in Nootkan exchanges about or with persons who demonstrate non-standard physical or character traits the speaker is warranted to use non-standard forms of speech, but that warrant is determined by the deictic relationship between the speaker and addressee. That a social affront is possible without a predetermined consent indicates that non-standard speech forms entail categorical distinctions understood by the community—that the addressee, referent, and overhearers will recognize the affective content of the altered form. Sapir inherently endorses that the speech community will infer such non-standard forms, regardless of whether or not the speaker intends and affective implication. This assumes that when the speaker performs a non-standard speech form, she does so voluntarily with the intent to imply that form's affective social convention. While Sapir investigates several potential origins for abnormal speech forms stemming from speech impediments ("defects" and "mutilations" in his terms), he does not comment on how those who naturally perform these abnormal speech types reflect on the treatment of speech mockery—merely that they are imitated on account of perceived differences.

Sapir extends this mockery outside the speech community level, noting that forms of mockery exhibit similarities to the situations in which speakers of foreign languages or alternate dialects are represented and performed, both within the community as well as in exchanges between communities:

> The Nootka Indians of one tribe frequently imitate the real or supposed speech peculiarities of those belonging to other Nootka tribes, the stress primarily laid not so much on peculiarities of vocabulary and grammatical form as on general traits of intonation or sound articulation (cf. our New England 'nasal twang' and Southern 'drawl'). (Sapir 1985:193)

In this passage, Sapir also notes that his arguments in this paper assume that the dialect of the tribes "of Barkley sound and the head of Alberni canal may be taken as the normal form of Nootka speech; this, of course, is purely arbitrary, but so would any other point of departure be" (Sapir 1985:193). While standardized or normal forms provide the basis for distinction against the abnormal forms he investigates, such is the privilege of documenting understudied languages: There is no overtly recognized standard form without grounding the analysis with a vantage point designated by a single dialect. Thus Sapir's investigation is free from the hegemonic constraints that would be inherent in national- or global-level languages like English. Despite the existence of many forms of differentiated English the world over, we perceive (in part, because of umbrella category labels) that all speakers of English employ the same grammatical and phonemic means. This could not be farther from the truth, as is clear to any speaker of any substrate of English who has encountered a dialect unfamiliar to her own experience. This occurs on a large scale at the international level—for instance, as in American English versus British English—and on much smaller scales at the intraregional level—for instance, as in east-central Pennsylvania, at the intersection of four distinct regional dialect areas, based on a 2005 telephone survey (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2005:131).

Sapir's connection between non-standard speech forms and affective judgments against those who either truly speak them or are perceived to speak them is limited to oral data obtained in ethnographic study. Given that speech performance is empirical insofar as it is produced by a speaker, how would his assertions regarding socialized judgment of non-standard speakers apply to written utterance? He has established that

within a community, performative trends indicate an extant class of persons to whom those trends are attributed, specifying that production of the exact linguistic features need not obtain to warrant the endorsed association. Sapir has taken an observable linguistic phenomenon (a non-standard form) and connected it to a subset of a speech community (the members of the sub-community who produce or are supposed to produce that form). That the association between real persons and assumed features is socialized through both conversational and narrative means indicates the ideological stratification imposed upon the marked-form producers, even if they do not physically produce those marked features. It is not inconceivable that the intentional use of non-standard forms in other media of linguistic transmission (i.e., writing) would imply the same socially recognized distinction against a category of persons.

If Sapir's argument were limited only to extant individuals with irregular speech, it would not provide such systematic and intercultural similarities as demonstrated by the variety of languages and communities he compares. That these regular similarities do occur across cultures and languages suggests that these associations are native to cognition and categorization as opposed to mere facets of a single community's social outlook. Instead, Sapir demonstrates that othering on the basis of non-standard speech forms, regardless of the content of the utterance, is determined by the presented form of linguistic conveyance. The patterns of non-standard usage signify and index sub-classes of speakers in such a manner that the affective implication of the form of utterance is attributed to both real and imaginary members of those sub-classes. Yet this does not necessitate that members of those sub-classes produce and perform those linguistic features; it only necessitates that the

association between feature and sub-class member be socially recognizable. Why then would the use of that feature in written discourse be any less sufficient to connote the social implication? Non-standard forms in writing are not audibly noticeable as accents and speech impediments are, but are just as clearly marked in the eyes of a literate reader, even if the mode of sensory observation has shifted from the audio to the visual. Moreover, attention to non-standard forms of writing bears a greater degree of markedness given that the faculty of reading is an active pursuit; one does not have to pay attention to hear and interpret even a non-standard form of their native language. Literacy requires the active participation of the reader, who becomes the addressee of the text. Perhaps it is literacy itself that has created such an emphasis on standardization in languages that supersede a local distribution.

The selection and implementation of orthography in indigenous language revitalization begins in many cases with the question of whether or not oral languages should be written at all. Descriptive linguists like Boas and Sapir used systematized graphic representations to record oral sounds in written form, but did not actively engender orthographies in the communities they studied. Colonial efforts to instantiate written forms of language in indigenous communities frequently arose from the impetus of governmental or religious proselytizing in the 19th century and later turned towards conversion to the colonial language and its practices. Attention to language revitalization in the past 25 years has prompted renewed vigor for spoken language transmission with intergenerational mother-tongue transfer in the home, but has been less successful in recognizing the value of written language forms beyond their pedagogical utility. Written representations in learning spaces more frequently serve to

reinforce pronunciation and vocabulary-building exercises than as legitimate forms of expression in their own rights. In some cases, such as with the Cherokee syllabary, a single writing system exists and empowers language users; the Osage nation's communally-constructed writing system was created with the motto "Orthography is Sovereignty." In other cases, a multitude of orthographic systems have been attempted in complementary spatial and temporal distribution, leading to several distinct orthographies taught and used in different places and times.

Neely and Palmer (2009) explore the phenomenon of heterographia in the Kiowa language. They define heterographia as "a situation in which one language is approached via multiple writing systems" (Neely and Palmer 2009:272), citing several diachronic and synchronic iterations of orthographic representation of Kiowa. Neely and Palmer discuss the origins of several systems, including among others John Harrington's approach from the 1920s, to the Summer Institute of Linguistics' Christian missionary scripts, and the Parker McKenzie and Alecia Gonzales methods, independently developed by Kiowa citizens. Neely and Palmer direct significant attention to the domains in which Kiowa is spoken, the intellectual property of what is spoken in the language, accessibility and authority to partake and perform traditional content, and the use of orthography as a means of preserving and teaching culture. They contrast Kiowa instruction to that of Cherokee, Creek, and Choctaw at the University of Oklahoma, noting that tribally-endorsed standardization in the latter three languages relieves instructors of challenges faced by their Kiowa counterparts. For the purpose of language teaching, they hold that "Native American language instructors at the University of Oklahoma support standardization of writing method or orthography, as it

has been their experience that without literacy use, second language instruction is nil" (Neely and Palmer 2009:275). This is in part derived from the structure of university academics which aim for maximum transfer of literacy skills from the language of instruction to the target language. This constraint does not apply in religious or ceremonial domains, where emphasis on adherence to traditional practices trumps the goals of instruction in favor of cultural maintenance. Neely and Palmer explore Kiowa citizens' views of language as symbolic capital, both as an essentializing factor in the construction of tribal identity and authority as well as whether or not it is culturally appropriate or prudent to write the language at all. They explain:

> A standard orthography is not just a practical representation of a language but also an intrinsically political manifestation of group relations. The emphasis in recent decades on the importance of Native American languages as symbolic tools and badges of identity that encode and embody important cultural information has the potential for both empowerment and disenfranchisement. (Neely and Palmer 2009:286)

Whether or not the medium of language (oral, written, etc.) permits or amplifies the association between perceived forms of speech and the speakers presumed to bear them, Sapir shows that social evaluations transpire on account of non-standard usage. Neely and Palmer provide a contrasting example of heterographia with the Kiowa language. Because it has no standardized written form, variation in writing is free from marked constraints the way that national level languages like English are. Neely and Palmer note that variation in written form emphasizes communicative competence, especially in the domain of pedagogy. The form of written utterance signifies the word and its relative concept in usage, not a prescriptively defined orthographic convention. This phenomenon is cognitive; it assigns a value judgment to a class of persons and binds that value judgment to the concept of the class. Sapir notes that this happens on both the

grammatical and the aesthetic levels, i.e. that stylistic representation as a narrative or performative device does in fact engender a socialized belief that the referent class displays those marked attributes, even if that belief is patently false. This is the very essence of iconization, fractal recursivity, and erasure.

Judith Irvine and Susan Gal (2000) describe iconization, fractal recursivity, and erasure as three semiotic processes through which ideologies are formed, noting that "[these processes] concern the way people conceive of links between linguistic forms and social phenomena" (Irvine and Gal 2000:37). Iconization, by their definition, involves the attribution of one or more distinct social features of a specific community as an essential element to that community's identity, which then serves as indexical of that community in a reduced conceptualization. Through simplification, that contingent feature becomes affixed to the image of the community as a seemingly necessary characteristic, despite the complexity of social practices displayed by the community and the contexts in which that feature arises. Having been "iconized," the association between the presumed necessary feature and its productive community is not only socially endorsed, but transposed via fractal recursivity. This process involves the projection of a distinction, salient within one domain, to another domain in which that salience is assumed but not necessarily warranted. Irvine and Gal posit that "the dichomotizing and partitioning process that was involved in some understood opposition (between groups or linguistic varieties, for example) recurs at other levels, creating either subcategories at either side of a contrast or supercategories that include both sides but oppose them to something else" (Irvine and Gal 2000:38). Fractal recursivity thus yields supposedly rational ideas about classification and categorization;

in essence, it modifies the conceptualization of a community or relationship via domain transfer, extending that feature as a metaphor representative of the iconized community and the behaviors of its members. Erasure, the third process, either overlooks or silences elements or features that contradict the iconized attribute. This solidifies a conceptualization, reinforcing the totalizing pertinence of the feature in question by neglecting, dismissing, or explaining away features in contrast to the holistic perception of the concept.

These processes follow the explication of philosophy as demonstrated in the previous chapter. Iconization deals with base observations about the features or behavior of a thing or event, much like Descartes' piece of wax. The task of defining and categorizing the object of inquiry notes its salient features, privileging those which are seemingly unique to the item type and ubiquitous to elements of that class. Observation (as impression) yields iconized concepts (as idea), which then are applied as matters of fact in Hume's terms via a seemingly necessary and pertinent projection of essentialism into other associated domains. Erasure solidifies those conclusions by reinforcing the elements in accord with the totalizing vision of the concept at the expense of silencing or overlooking the contrasting elements. Though not expressly Kant's discussion of synthetic a posteriori reasoning, this reflects my interpretation of (re)generating analytic conceptualizations through experience.

Mikhail Bakhtin posits narrative as ideologically charged not for its content, but for its role in social interaction. His Marxist theoretical grounding dispels idealistic philosophy as centered in the individual or in the mind, locations of no social collective value. He claims:

> The ideological environment is the realized, materialized, externally expressed social consciousness of a given collective. It is determined by the collective's economic existence and, in turn, determines the individual consciousness of each member of the collective. In fact, the individual consciousness can only become a consciousness by being realized in the forms of the ideological environment proper to it: in language, in conventionalized gesture, in artistic image, in myth, and so on. (Bakhtin 1994:127)

Bakhtin's assessment locates constellations of communal belief structures outside of individuals, but does not account for how the collective consciousness is embraced, performed, or challenged by those members of the communities in question. To disavow the agency of individual community members who respond to collective stimulus neglects the affective and psychological humanity of those persons, relegating them to mere roles within a social mechanism. This cannot be the case. Bakhtin's emphasis on configurations of interaction relies on individuals both in role and in person when analyzing sites of interaction. In his discussion of creative art, he claims:

> 'The artistic' in its total integrity is not located in the artifact and not located in the separately considered psyches of creator and contemplator; it encompasses all three of these factors. It is a special form of interrelationship between creator and contemplator fixed in a work of art. (Bakhtin 1994:161)

In his analysis, Bakhtin finds significance not in the minds or actions of individuals as they engage in discourse actively or passively, but rather how the situational and cultural context of the engagement forms and is formed by a socially shared system of meaning adopted by all parties. He holds that subjective thoughts, feelings, and psychical acts are not the bases of the construction of meaning, but rather that "the individual and the subjective are backgrounded here by *the social and the objective*" (Bakhtin 1994:164). This moves the locus of significance from the signifier to the signified, elevating the ends of interaction above the participants and their means. Herein Bakhtin empowers social recognition over the individual who actively

recognizes socially established values. However, Bakhtin cannot fully erase the individual:

> Assumed value judgments are, therefore, not individual emotions but regular and essential social acts. Individual emotions can come into play only as overtones accompanying the basic tone of social evaluation. 'I' can realize itself verbally only on the basis of 'we'. (Bakhtin 1994:164)

This dialectic exchange places primacy on the collective yet relies on the individual to perform and conform to social functions. Thus an examination of how an individual perceives and engages with social discourse is required to fully authorize collective value judgments. Furthermore, Bakhtin's analysis does not account for shifts in social evaluations over time; events and experiences that alter collective judgments must transpire first at the individual level before they can be adopted by communities at large.

It is clear that social configurations are revealed by linguistic utterance. I hold that these configurations are observable in variation in written utterance as well as spoken. This moves beyond the realm of whether or not speech communities exhibit variation; it deals with the meanings attributed to language use both in form and content. It is not sufficient to merely catalog the inventory of phones, lexical items, and syntactic arrangements that seem to comprise a language; while these elements are necessary to discover the significance of utterance, they are but material evidence that reveal the meanings of conveyance and communication. Furthermore, to posit meaning without situational context leaves a transliteration bereft of the connotative suggestion embedded within. While those connotations are unique to each speaker and addressee, they become systematized through exposure, repetition, and socialization throughout an individual's lived experience. Socially endorsed frameworks, such as the abnormal

speech forms Sapir illustrates in Nootka, create meaning through perceived signification and attach that meaning to their conceptual referents. Although this transpires at an individual level, the practice of recognizing and performing this signification creates a shared conceptual association—a phenomenon entirely separate, but derived from linguistic practice. As Benjamin Whorf describes it:

> The investigator of culture should hold an ideal of linguistics as that of a heuristic approach to problems of psychology which hitherto he may have shrunk from considering—a glass through which, when correctly focused, will appear the true shapes of many of those forces which hitherto have been to him but the inscrutable blank of invisible and bodiless thought. (Whorf 1956:73)

Chapter 5: Accent Representation in Animated Media

In this section I address how phonocentrism (the primacy of spoken language over other forms of linguistic utterance) devalues the authenticity of written forms of language. I do so by questioning assumptions about focal aspects of speech as they pertain to non-vocal communication. The mainstay of my original analysis comes from audiovisual media, particularly animated media, in translation and subtitles. By discussing the representation of content through written form, I explore how written language breaks standardized norms to provide context inherent in spoken language per speech variation. This includes relationships between the speaker and listener (or in these cases, original audio and visual tracks and audiences), with emphasis on the necessary linguistic translation of spoken content to reflect non-spoken content for unintended audiences.

Several strands of theory are considered here in brief, which I hope to develop more fully in the future. They include the primary focus of dialect representation in written language, referential specificity for intended audiences (as with electronic media, the site of a performance event is more frequently transferred to individual exposure as opposed to physical gathering), cultural and ideological modeling in narrative, and polyglossia in the form of simultaneous dual-language transmission (one language spoken and one language written as with subtitles).

The selection of cases presented here follow Sapir's discussion of performative speech variation in myth and song narrative and Bakhtin's analysis of the ideological character of literature. Furthermore, the role of accent in animated Disney feature films has been extensively researched by linguist Rosina Lippi-Green (2012). Lippi-Green

strategically analyzed the spoken content of animated Disney feature films to show how accent is correlated with race, gender, and character in narrative. Her analysis notes that protagonists in Disney films almost exclusively bear standard American English accents while antagonists often display markedly non-standard accents. Humorous characters, much like Sapir's analysis of Nootka storytelling, often feature contrived and unrealistic accents that hyperbolize their marked features for comedic effect. The distribution of quantity of speech between genders further suggests prescriptive social norms regarding modeled speech behaviors for audiences. The pairing of exaggerated visual display in animation and exaggerated speech forms of animated characters iconizes racial and ethnic groups in contrast to the American audience, the home nation and demographic target of the Disney Corporation.

Lippi-Green does not analyze written language in animated films. Her analysis does not involve the translations of this films into languages other than English, despite Disney's global domination of animated media. While Lippi-Green notes the narrative settings of films in her analysis of nomenclature, expected accent portrayal, and the social symbols conveyed, I analyze Japanese animation series for American audiences. I do so to emphasize the use of written language in subtitles for non-standard usage. If the audio track is presented in a language unknown to the audience, the written form of language in subtitles must pair with the visual imagery to convey semantic meaning. The cases I present involve non-standard usage in subtitles as well as ideologically charged narrative elements.

The primacy granted to spoken language as means for social science investigation should be extended to non-spoken language modes. Non-spoken language,

I hold, can convey ideologically charged affective judgments, though it is often assumed that such judgments are the result of the content of language artifacts rather than of the form. This assumption is derived from the sterilizing practice of standardization in literacy and the dismissal of social praxis regarding written language as either "correct" in its conformity to the standard or "stylistic" on the part of an idiosyncratic author, a result of theories of grammaticality as opposed to theories of communicative competence.

Standardized written language is a unique entity, different from spoken language, yet people in general all-too-often equate the two. This is because our treatment of learning to read and write in compulsory education focuses on correct and incorrect. There is no room for variation in the forms of written language, at least not as it commonly occurs in our daily lives. Take this hypothetical example of a classroom correction:

STUDENT: Me and Sean are going to meet tomorrow about my writing!

TEACHER: That's "Sean and I," Student. Would you say "Me going to the store?"

It wouldn't matter if the student pronounced "Sean" as [ʃɔn] or [ʃan], "going" as [goɪŋ] or [gənʌ], or "my" as [mai] or [mɐ]. The object of the teacher's correction is the improper selection of the first person *object* pronoun instead of the first person *subject* pronoun, targeting lexical choice instead of pronunciation. The only way we can quantify this through pedagogy involves testing for correctness, usually through written means. We have grade school classes separately designated for reading, writing, and literature, but no such class exists for pronunciation. Perhaps the closest language test

method that uses oral means is the spelling bee, which once again emphasizes only correctness. How could pronunciation factor into a competition where the word you are given to spell is pronounced for you as it is revealed?

Language standardization influences attention to speech as well as with writing. Anything written is written with a distinct purpose. However, speech is considered unconstrained by comparison. Speech is immediate, though it can be premeditated. It is worth noting that speech being "premeditated" retains intentional ambiguity between the tone, register, and delivery (such as registers of newscasters, game show hosts, or preachers) and the content (a prepared speech such as the State of the Union address). This ambiguity is lessened to some extent, however, as prepared speeches of the latter sort are generally formalized within a specific context. The intrinsic elements of that context have some bearing on the anticipated tone, register, and delivery—transforming the utterance into a performance event.

A news reporter's ability to meet the standard expectation of performing his professional role is essential both to his employer and for his employment. This supersedes proficiency in language production; one must first be a speaker before one can be a specialized speaker. The reporter thus refines (deliberately, with attention and intention) his natural speech to match the standard of his specialized role as a speaker on a public news broadcast.

Both the performative and natural speech occur in everyday life. When documented and juxtaposed, any analysis of speech styles that privileges one over the other demands further context. Consider these mutually exclusive speech types as a continuum. The graded scale distances the two types as distinct from each other, which

we can readily observe. Interpreting a speech event demands some form of rubric. While the graded scale designates a relation between its two poles, it does not entail a perspectival basis, which the analysis then informs by its area of focus. The popular conception of the newscast voice as a standard register privileges the expected presentation over the reporter's natural voice. The public expectation of the reporter's professional tenor is considered more authentic than the underlying speech of the reporter's private persona.

While linguists recognize attention to speech as a factor in elicitation, what exactly is its function? When speakers attend to presentation, they measure themselves against the standardized form and aim for correctness. Correctness is relative to the specifics of the speech community in question. Speakers of national-level languages often uphold ideologies of standardization, despite confusion and misbelief regarding standard features. Ethnologue defines standardization as "the development of a norm that overrides regional and social dialects." How does this definition apply to a language such English, listed as a national language in 52 countries and spoken (differently) the world over? Furthermore, regardless of academic debate over what constitutes a language and a dialect, and how to classify those distinctions, what effect (if any) does this have on the perception of language by the general populace of international speech communities (such as "English speakers")?

In Netflix's presentation of the anime series *My Bride Is a Mermaid*, the closed captions displayed deviance from standard American English from one character to the next, but with a distinct pattern of consistency for each character. This necessarily intentional representation of accent in written form clearly marks certain characters as

members of separate speech communities. Perhaps this demarcation is just a literary trope employed to make fictional characters more dynamic—merely an element of narrative technique with only aesthetic implications. However, when analyzed as artifacts of language, these systematized depictions of character identity reveal deeper implications.

It is worth noting that the speech from this source is not empirical linguistic data for phonological analysis. I do not speak Japanese, and this examination will not include any attempt to parse the Japanese speech of the voice actors in the show. Neither will I address whether or not this series is an accurate depiction of Japanese culture in reality. It is explicitly fictitious. Instead, I focus on whether or not the deliberate manipulation of standard American English via subtitles in *My Bride Is a Mermaid* demonstrates ideological valence in intercultural transmission. When subtitles appear, they are necessarily created by some person in the course of video production. This does not entail a specific degree of attention to cultural themes in translation, but is reflective of transferring grammatically encoded meaning to disparate audiences. Does the marked use of non-standard language in subtitles influence our perceptions of character and culture when the audience is not attuned to the information embedded in the original language track? And if it does influence perception, to what extent and why?

The manga 瀬戸の花嫁 (Seto no Hanayome, "The Inland Sea Bride") and its serial television adaptation, *My Bride Is a Mermaid*, unfolds an imaginative story of young love between protagonists Nagasumi and his wife, Sun. Written by Tahiko Kimura, the original manga (the American equivalent of manga being comic books)

comprises 16 volumes published by Square Enix Holdings from 2002 to 2010. The anime series (an animated television adaptation), released in 2007 by production studios Gonzo K.K. and Anime International, contains 26 episodes, each 24minutes long, directed by Seiji Kishi. The anime reached the United States in 2010 through distributor Funimation Entertainment with an American English audio language track. The Association of Japanese Animations' 2014 Report on the Japanese Animation Industry notes that in 2013 "the estimated amount spent in the animation and animation related market" was approximately ¥1,491 billion ($12.6 billion), with North America accounting for 18.9% of licensed distribution contracts.

The Inland Sea Bride is a shonen manga/anime (**少年漫画**,"Boys' comic") intended for male audiences approximately ages 8 to 18. It is the most popular genre of manga and the counterpart of the shojo (**少女漫画**, "Young woman's comic"). These "genres" are umbrella terms for the intended audience, not systematized narrative structures. Much like the Young Adult category of books in American publishing, manga labeled shonen is unlimited in scope regarding content. Themes include real human experiences with relationships, emotions, and personal growth, but these themes are frequently set in impossible and fantastic situations. The Inland Sea Bride's television serialization *My Bride Is a Mermaid* takes place in modern day Japan with a cast of both humans and sentient, anthropomorphic sea creatures.

The plot of *My Bride Is a Mermaid* revolves around Michishio Nagasumi, a junior-high school student who travels from his home in Saitama, Saitama Prefecture, Japan, to an unspecified town on the Seto Inland Sea (which spans much of the southern coast of Honshu) for a family vacation. Nagasumi nearly drowns while swimming, but

is saved by Seto Sun, a mermaid. Nagasumi discovers that Sun's family is Yakuza (Japanese gangsters) and that in order to avoid a merfolk-gangster death sentence, he must marry into the family. Wacky antics ensue as a chivalric bride, her overprotective mob father, and his band of thug henchmen splash into Nagasumi's life.

The first instance of non-standard American English in subtitles occurs in the pilot episode when Nagasumi and his family arrive at his grandmother's house.

NAGASUMI: (Kneeling at the family altar beside his grandmother) Did I do it right, Grandma?

GRANDMA: Yep! That made yer grampa happy.

Only four characters have spoken at this point in the show: Nagasumi, his father, his mother, and his grandmother. But while Nagasumi and his parents are consistently represented with standard English, Grandma's subtitles indicate a marked difference in her speech with the substitution of "yer" for "your." While Grandma only appears in the first three episodes, during her screentime she exhibits only one token of "you" while making introductions with Sun. Grandma is prone to ending progressives with –in' instead of –ing. This substitution is common phonologically in American English, and is notated as /-ɪŋ/ => /-ɪn/. Yet this is not phonologically represented in the anime, but orthographically represented.

The most common occurrences of variation involve second-person pronouns ("ya") and progressive suffixation (-in'), but several other approximations appear. In the first episode, when Nagasumi meets his future father-in-law, Seto Gozaburo, the leader of Seto Fish Commission and Yakuza boss of the Inland Sea, Gozaburo threatens that to

protect his family's mermaid identities, "…we'll hafta kill every last human that knows about us".

In *My Bride Is a Mermaid*, systematic dialect distribution in English subtitles informs the audience of social stratification. The fictional content of the narrative is set in the real locations of contemporary Japan in the city of Saitama and the coastal region along the Seto Inland Sea. The original Japanese audience would be as familiar with the customs and locations of the story as an American would be with, say, New York City and the generic Midwest; even without having experienced those places firsthand, one is predisposed to have a cultural concept of what life is like there by media presentation. When *My Bride Is a Mermaid* is viewed by an American audience, these national-level familiarities disappear, leaving the viewer without cultural context at a localized level. This does not indicate that all narrative elements are devoid of context, but rather that while only residents and participants will be familiar with localized context. While each U.S. state has its own local festivals, residents of all states generally recognize similar features of festivals despite their unique locations. However, nuances of regional dialects and cultural traditions are more common and more identifiable to persons native to or familiar with the national-level community. The use of non-standard subtitle forms in *My Bride Is a Mermaid* show how Sapir's variation as a performance technique can extend from the spoken domain to the written.

Not all anime exist within a national or linguistic vacuum. In contrast to stories like *My Bride Is a Mermaid* that incorporate fantasy elements in a presumably real setting, series like *Gosick* and *Black Butler* negotiate cultural, national, and linguistic boundaries through the presentation of narrative content in language.

Gosick (ゴシック), published as a light novel (the American equivalent being the graphic novel) and manga series by author Kazuki Sakuraba, was adapted as anime in 2011. The story takes place in 1924 in a fictitious European monarchy, Sauville, depicted as between France and Italy. The protagonist Kazuya Kojo is a Japanese transfer student who befriends the isolated but brilliant Victorique de Blois. The original audio track features Japanese speech for all characters, yet several instances throughout the series challenge story-space transmission of language. Visual depictions of writing reveal French as the dominant language despite the Japanese dialogue, understandably selected for the purposes of authorship and distribution as media entertainment in Japan. However, in the fifth episode, when Victorique counts numbers as she ascends 13 steps of a staircase, she does so with the French "un, deux, trois…" as opposed to "ichi, ni, san..." in Japanese. A handful of French colloquialisms emerge throughout the series, most notably "la vie en rose" during a musical performance (no relation to the 1946 Edith Piaf song of that name).

The most puzzling linguistic interaction occurs in the *Gosick* series finale. As the narrative progresses, an impending war forces Kazuya back to Japan to serve in the military, and Victorique attempts to find him there. When they are at last reunited, Kazuya finds Victorique awaiting him in the company of his sister. The two women separate from each other at the dock where discharged soldiers are met by loved ones, and Kazuya approaches Victorique with a few sentences in Japanese. Moments later, Kazuya's sister appears and asks Kazuya, in Japanese, what Victorique is saying as "the English and French I learned at the girls' school wasn't enough to get through to her" (*Gosick* 24, 22:39). Clearly the use of Japanese for conversation throughout the show is

due to the demographic audience, not the narrative realm itself or the characters who inhabit it. Yet the juxtaposition of Japanese speech and the semantic meaning of the exchanges between Kazuya, his sister, and Victorique demonstrate this quirk of linguistic identity portrayal. That Kazuya's sister cannot understand the language Victorique speaks is conveyed by non-linguistic cues, as with gesture and the unilateral flow of spoken discourse—the two cannot linguistically interact, and thus when one speaks the other is unable to answer verbally, despite the presentation of each as homogenous in the favored language of the audience. This is a speech act in a tiered narrative discourse. The broad discourse of the series is to convey the story to the audience, which prescribes the Japanese vocal track that accompanies the visual depiction. Yet within the story narrative itself, the locutionary acts of characters create an illocutionary offering to the audience, the perlocution of which is for the audience to dismiss the inherent contradiction of the linguistic content (that Victorique and Kazuya's sister do not share a common tongue) in favor of the implication directly contrasted by their mutual, yet non-interlocutive Japanese speech. The event of the sister's speech is a narrative device deployed through linguistic means that defines the relationship of linguistic boundaries that cannot be perceived linguistically in the audiovisual medium.

Another period series, *Black Butler* (黒執事)(2008-2010), takes place in Victorian-era London. The manga, penned by Yana Toboso, was first published in 2006 and continues today. Its anime adaptations have endured multiple discontinuous runs, the first airing in 2008 by director Toshiya Shinohara. The original vocal track is Japanese, though frequent snippets of gratuitous English appear. The premise of the

series involves Lord Ciel Phantomhive, an adolescent boy who inherits his family's title after a tragedy that claims his parents' lives—and presumably his own. Hell-bent on revenge and unwilling to succumb to his mortality, Ciel literally makes a deal with the devil, procuring the services and protection of a demon butler, Sebastian, who will obey his every command in exchange for Ciel's soul upon completion of his vengeance.

Numerous other-worldly characters appear in *Black Butler*, including Grell Sutcliff. Grell is a grim reaper (*shinigami*, or "lord/god of death"), an androgynous, flamboyant character whose job as a collector of souls allows her/him to accompany—and argue with—Ciel and Sebastian on numerous occasions. There is no definitive claim to Grell's sex or gender; while voiced by male voice actors in both the Japanese original (Jun Fukuyama) and English dub (Daniel Fredrick), Grell fluctuates in presenting as both male and female within exchanges, episodes, and the entire series. She/He is infatuated with Sebastian, demonstrating her/his affections most notably through wordplay with Sebastian's name.

In English, "Sebastian" is most often pronounced [səˈbæʂʃən] or [səˈbæstiən]. In *Black Butler*, Ciel addresses his butler as [ˈsebastian], a phonetic realization of the name's spelling. Grell, however, calls him [ˈsebasˌʧan], which surfaces in English subtitles as "Sebas-chan." From a purely auditory perspective, the differences between these tokens only involve Grell's heightened secondary stress and the substitution of the voiceless postalveolar affricate [ʧ] for Ciel's maximal syllable [ti], the voiceless alveolar plosive onset and front, high, unrounded sonorant vowel. These differences reflect the alternation between [ʧ] and [ti] in English variants, making them entirely recognizable without written cues. But the suffix *–chan* is a diminutive morphological

marker, deictically binding the speaker to the referent as a term of endearment permissible only in certain social relationships. To address someone with *–chan* indicates familiarity, emotional closeness, or affection, and is often bound by age and gender constraints. For a younger person to address their senior with *–chan* is considered rude and disrespectful (with the exception of a grandchild to grandparents); for a female to address a male with *–chan* implies either her acceptance of him as a dear younger friend or as her intended romantic partner. It is generally more acceptable to address females with *–chan* than it is to address males; the divide on junior/senior honorifics among males who are not emotionally tight-knit favors a senior addressing his junior with *–kun* and the reverse with *–san* (respectful), *-sama* (highly respectful), or a designated title, such as *sensei* (teacher) or *senpai* (literally "upperclassman"). Thus, Grell's clever pun on Sebastian's name involves a cultural phenomenon of Japanese honorifics that would pass unnoticed by English audiences as English does not necessarily mark honorific relationships morphologically by affixation. Instead, English utilizes title particles, like "Mrs." or standalone lexifiers like "sir" to denote deictic deference.

Black Butler treats cultural differences between characters in interesting ways. While Sebastian performs his household duties with superhuman prowess, it is clear that some of the narrative events are educational in purpose. Each episode includes at least one instance of tea service—a staple of British culture recognized the world over. Sebastian explains the type of tea being served for both its geographic origins and characteristics as well as food pairings that complement the tea of the day that a British lord might be expected to enjoy. In the first episode, the incompetent household

servants (chef, maid, and groundskeeper) destroy the garden, tableware, and dinner prepared for an honored guest in their zeal to exceed Sebastian's expectations of them. Sebastian saves the day by converting the toxified yard (overdosed with weed killer) into a Japanese rock garden with sand and gravel, carves away the scorched prime rib crust to obtain strips of rare beef from within, and serves the dish as the classic Japanese donburi bowl in the porcelain dishes that survived the maid's cataclysm with the matching plates. The guest is astonished at Sebastian's aptitude (as are the servants), and praises the perceived authenticity of the cultural theme his host has prepared; Sebastian responds with his trademark pun: "I am merely one hell of a butler."

Throughout *Black Butler*, Chinese and Indian characters are introduced, each of whom play to cultural stereotypes in their character design and behaviors. Given the expanse of the British Empire in the late 19th century, the addition of characters Lau and Prince Soma are not surprising, yet the portrayal of their cultures is primarily pejorative. Lau is the representative of a Chinese trading company and incidentally runs an opium den, one of many illegal operations he oversees as the head of the Qing Bang mafia. Prince Soma is a childish son of the Raja of Bengal, oblivious to the emotions and motives of others and an entirely self-absorbed caricature of wealthy, privileged royalty. During a national curry competition, Sebastian produces the "curry bun," a delectable beef curry enclosed in dough and fried. Queen Victoria praises his dish for its kindness in that it requires no silverware, no place setting, and can be enjoyed equally by the rich and poor, the old and young, the busy and the bored. The choice of "kindness" as a characteristic is fascinating; it would clearly have been labeled "convenience" in the United States. This depiction of (presumably) Japanese values in a

historic British setting (albeit fiction), juxtaposed with the backstabbing and divisive characters of Indian citizens and the nonchalantly murderous Chinese criminal/businessman seemed propagandized in more ways than one. Especially in animated form, the exaggerated differences in dress, appearance, and behavior socially mark Agni, Soma, Lau, and Mao-Ren (Lau's doll-like, mostly-silent female companion) as exotified others.

All cartoons distort the human form to some extent. Unlike live-action films which directly record living individuals, animated media necessarily index humans but are not iconic of humans in the way that a photograph would be. The most advanced attempts to recreate humans in animated form enter the "uncanny valley," a visual depiction so similar yet so markedly different from reality that the image itself becomes aesthetically repulsive. Control over the visual representation of narrative in cartoon films entails a directorial intention. The images that create the video sensory output are necessarily manufactured, both in symbolic content and material production, for the purposes of narrative continuity and marketable appeal. Illustrations are especially liberal with representational manipulation, as is the case with political cartoons that exaggerate physical characteristics of popular or influential persons. Yet the degree of hyperbole present in animation ranges across a stylistic scale that varies widely among genres and individual artists. Illustrations emphasize characteristics by simplifying and exaggerating imagery, controlling the spatiotemporal progression of both experienced time-of-narrative (the audience duration) and narrative-time (mimetic story duration), and being unbound by external spatial constraints (as are photographic images).

Through these means, the sculpted progression of paired image and aural content creates semantic frames for audience sensory interpretation via sight and sound.

Aesthetic representations of narrative discourse in animated media create cognitive frames in the minds of audiences—frames that may or may not accurately index reality (and may or may not be recognized as doing so) and frames that have categorical (and potentially prototypical) referential quality. In the event of lived experience, individuals construct frames as reference markers for transpired events. In cases where no experiential frames exist as direct or approximate pattern similarity, animated media presents an experiential event that can construct cognitive frames for future interpretation. These constructed frames are mediated by enculturation (both teller/presentation and audience perspectives) and by factors of the event of storytelling (teller/audience situation), yet are linked to narrative as the focal story event.

Whether or not the frames derived from animated media are believed to be accurate representations of reality is contingent upon experiential variables, both idiosyncratic and communal. Animated narrative media are exclusively perceived as fiction, and their creators embrace that freedom to explore the unfamiliar and the impossible, generating iconographic frames that have no extant indexical referent. That a potential indexical referent does not exist does not prevent the frame from mediating further association with categorically similar icons. For example, if one has never seen a ghost (no visual icon) and does not believe that ghosts exist (no indexical referent in reality), that does not stop her from recognizing ghosts and retaining some fictional prototypical frame that the mind accesses when thinking about ghosts. Animated

narrative media provides illusory representational frames that modify categorical meaning, both in audio and video transmission.

NB: These fictional frames are available, not determined, for mediating cognition—a soft relativity that does not entail—but can permit—referential access. Furthermore, awareness of accessing illusory frames is a psychological factor (not an anthropological one) in establishing idiosyncratic event interpretation; it is beyond the scope of this investigation. That film narrative, and in particular animated film narrative, creates event-based experiential frames in auditors—frames that serve as source domains for the understanding of target domains—makes semantic frames inherently metaphoric in nature. This irrational and unreal presentation of narrative-event content through multisensory storytelling-event observation (visual, audio, textual) influences and creates templates for negotiating social experience (socialization) through metaphor and ideology.

Ideology is necessarily evaluative and arguably metaphoric. Metaphor is understanding one thing or event (the target domain) in terms of another (the source domain) by comparing and projecting the latter, previously-experienced frame against the former, newly-experienced event. Ideology is constructed through the processes of iconization, fractal recursivity, and erasure. Iconization creates a mental snapshot of an experiential event and derives from this icon-image a cognitive frame. Fractal recursivity extends the pertinent or symbolic aspects of that icon-image to semantic categories associated with the icon's content. Erasure reifies the recursive simplification, rendering invisible the elements that contradict the icon's indexical referent and strengthening its associative or symbolic meaning. The prescription of

social stratification inherent in this frame-constructing process is the basis for social markedness; the unmarked element is favored because it is invisible, and marked elements are considered deviant or aberrant against the common/natural/standard unmarked variant. Given that unmarked features are invisible and require no domain transfer (standards represent source domains, not target domains, and thus do not project), instances of marked feature recognition entail an evaluation of an event against a previously constructed frame—a referential domain transfer comparing frame-based expectation with experiential events.

Chapter 6: Dialect in African American Literature

This chapter examines the linguistic artifacts of African American literature as means of negotiating racial stratification throughout American history. The origins of literary dialect involve realistic portrayals of speech forms, though literature is not an empirically valid source for historical linguistics. However, the use of literacy itself was a form of social protest, as was the manipulation of speech representation in written form. Once the binary of possible literacy was established, literary style and depictions of social groups served to iconize and constrain the social mobility of minorities. These representational means, alongside legal and political events of the 19th century, reveal how written language served not only to differentiate races but also as supposed justification of racial inequality.

Literature, as a written form of media, relies on the printed word to convey the its content. African American literature both adheres to and breaks from literary conventions of American English as a language and as a tradition in prose. The earliest African American authors adhered to conventional norms to demonstrate a biological capacity for literacy—a radical proposition during the late 18th century—to protest the perceived inequality of racism during the era of slavery in the United States. Having established the capacity for literacy, stylistic innovation on the part of both black and white authors iconized perceived speech forms of African Americans to reinforce ideological stratification after the aboltion of slavery. The use of non-standard language in dialect literature and other entertainment sustained racially oppressive beliefs through performative media by iconizing marked speech forms of African Americans as a justification of the post-Reconstruction status quo of race relations.

The deep and multi-faceted history of African American literature proves especially fascinating within the social constellations contemporary to prominent publications. The written record, historical and fictive, necessarily entails language as the conveyance of semantic and semiotic information, and as such is an artifact of social construction. By examining the deployment of language in written form as it pertains both to structural configuration and meaningful content, the author's representation of social reality is revealed. The overt use of phonetic dialect representation of African American speech in literature from Reconstruction to the mid-20th century was an ideologically formative technique that altered of the perception of "blackness" in American social reality. While not an empirical reflection of true speech patterns as linguistic enquiry, the literary depiction of African American speech was prescriptive of racial stratification among extant individuals and communities in the United States.

African American literature began before America was a country. Phillis Wheatley published *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral by Phillis Wheatley, Negro Servant to Mr. John Wheatley, of Boston, in New England* in 1773, before American independence was declared. Wheatley had published individual pieces as early as a decade prior in newspapers, but *Poems* was revolutionary as the first complete volume to be published by a black author, especially as that author was a black slave girl, born in West Africa, writing in her second language. This was so unheard of at the time that John Wheatley, who had cultivated Phillis' writing, arranged not only to provide a biographical outline but a testimony of her achieved literacy, and endorsements from more than a dozen authorities including judges, clergy, and gentlemen of political power such as Massachusetts Governor Thomas Hutchinson,

Lieutenant-Governor Andrew Oliver, and John Hancock. This endorsement preceded the first book of African American literature, and so too was the requirement for authentication and sanction from the dominant power group. "On Being Brought from Africa to America," perhaps the most well-known of the 38 pieces in *Poems*, demonstrates the negotiation of power both morally and politically, as the book's title promises.

> Some view our sable race with scornful eye;
> 'Their colour is a diabolic die.'
> Remember, *Christians, Negros*, black as *Cain*,
> May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train. (Wheatley 2004:219-220)

The final couplets appeal to Christianity as a political authority in the argument for black humanity. While her lines are evidence for the capacity of blacks to master linguistic expression through poetic form, they simultaneously attest to the existence of the black soul in the religious sense—a forceful proposition blacks are equal in both mind and spirit.

The year 1789 saw the rise of the "slave narrative" with the publication of *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavas Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*. The slave narrative soon became a specialized form of autobiography, incorporating a direct testimony against the oppression of blacks, a call for the abolition of slavery, and a heuristic mechanism for the establishment of agency through lived experience. The genre dominated early 19th century African American literature. Equiano's text was published for 17 editions between 1789 and 1827 and achieved success in Europe, where it was distributed in its original English as well as German and Dutch translations (Andrews and Foster 2004:187). While Equiano affirmed Wheatley's controversial declaration of black intellectual capacity, he did so

through prose instead of poetry. With a dual appeal to Christianity and abolition as the conjunction of social and spiritual imperatives, he defines humanity itself, and his membership therein, in the image of the dominant Euro-American civilization:

> By the horrors of that [slave] trade was I first torn away from all the tender connexions [sic] that were naturally dear to my heart; but these, through the mysterious ways of Providence, I ought to regard as infinitely more than compensated by the introduction I have thence obtained to the knowledge of the Christian religion, and of a nation which, by its liberal sentiments, its humanity, the glorious freedom of its government, and its proficiency in the arts and sciences, has exalted the dignity of human nature. (Equiano 2004:189)

He notes the etymology of his own name, "Olaudah, which, in English, signifies vicissitude or fortune also, one favored, and having a loud voice and well spoken" (Equiano 2004:197). Though several of Equiano's claims (particularly regarding his analytical, yet idyllic ethnography of his native culture of the Ibo in West Africa) have been contested through historical documentation (or lack thereof), his political assertions regarding the brutal oppression of slavery create a symbolic argument for his cause. Equiano had successfully educated himself, worked to buy his freedom, traveled, and succeeded as an entrepreneur.

Wheatley and Equiano challenged hegemonic beliefs through operating within the standardized frameworks of contemporary grammar (a feat considered radical at the time). Forty years later, proficiency alone was no longer the frontier for challenging racial oppression through linguistic expression. Published in 1829, David Walker's *Appeal in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World* invokes both in title and form the political force of the United States Constitution, ratified 40 years prior. The *Appeal* espouses an exhortative style, unlike the poetic and narrative techniques of the cases above, but maintains the strong Christian rhetoric of moral compulsion against tyranny shared by Walker's

predecessors. Responding not only to the Constitution, Walker addresses a posthumous Thomas Jefferson throughout the *Appeal* as direct response to and commentary of the latter's classification of Blacks in *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Noting Jefferson's claims that "we are inferior to the whites, both in endowments of our bodies and our minds," (Walker 2004:233) Walker quips his surprise "that a man of such great learning … should speak so of a set of men in chains" (Walker 2004:233).

The trend continues. In 1853, poet James M. Whitfield deployed structural irony in "America"; the poem inverts the popular patriotic anthem "America the Beautiful" and decries the oppression of Blacks:

> America, it is to thee,
> Thou boasted land of liberty,--
> It is to thee I raise my song,
> Thou land of blood, and crime, and wrong. (Whitfield 2004:484)

"America", as literary critics William Andrews and Frances Foster note, unfolds as a "sardonic parody of a nationalistic hymn familiar to all Whitfield's countrymen and evolves into a systematic and trenchant analysis of the hypocrisies and lies that undergirded 'slavery's accursed plan'" (Andrews and Foster 2004:484). The violent imagery that follows in Whitfield's articulate lines emulates the symbolic power of its referent's patriotic affect. By channeling the contemporary anthem and its uplifting connotations, Whitfield juxtaposes American patriotism with the abuse of slaves, in a disconcerting revelation of national hypocrisy.

These selections are representative of precedents and portrayals among a rich corpus of sociolinguistic artifacts cataloguing the perception of race and race relations in antebellum American history. The primary challenge for Wheatley was perceived impossibility. To overcome the dominant social belief of racial inferiority, Wheatley

had to operate correctly within the standard grammar and conventions of English at the time and ensure sponsorship of authority to prove (or at very least promote) that a black slave girl was biologically capable of doing so. Equiano's success with the narrative style garnished tremendous sales, international distribution, and social interest in his *Narrative*, drawing moral and political attention to the institution of slavery. These two voices had to struggle simply to reach their audience, a privilege that black authors could increasingly enjoy in the 19th century. Walker and Whitfield continue to operate within standard grammar and literary styles, but strengthen the content of their language through the manipulation of genre and extant cognitive schema of patriotism and nationality. The former frames his protest under the same design as the fundamental legal document of the United States while the latter models his resistance in the form of a stirring ode of national allegiance. Both genres are politically and ideologically charged, yet through the adoption of those forms and their particular referents the authors index the symbolic capital of the very institutions they criticize. In the words of Prospero's "abhorred slave" Caliban, "You taught me language, and my profit on't is, I know how to curse" (Shakespeare 1997:1666). Without the context of the allusions employed in these pieces, readers of these works would likely have found them less powerful and engaging. As time passed, black authors began to use context to couch their arguments even more subtly within the dominant culture of the time, using original representations of speech itself.

After Reconstruction, African American literature entered a trend of dialect representation wherein authors would attempt to distinguish accented speech phonetically in script. The trend had perhaps begun with white author John Pendleton

Kennedy' *Swallow Barn* (1832), which depicted black characters with markedly different speech patterns and spelling. Dialect representation as such developed alongside the "plantation tradition" of American literature, which became increasingly popular following the Civil War. Works of this genre were "penned … primarily by white Southerners seeking, through romanticized images of plantation life, to recover for the nation the forms of power and racial order that the war and Reconstruction had dismantled" (MacKethan 1997:579). This genre and style mediated the public perception of the cultural, racial, and political grounds of its time, fumbling with the structural remnants of slavery and fresh wounds of social disorder.

While transcription practices for language documentation necessitate phonological detail using a phonetic alphabet, the print literature of the late 1800s retained use of the English orthographic alphabet, displaying wide variation in spelling and syntax. The literary history of the "eye dialect" attends to this phenomenon in both stylistic and critical analysis. Linguistics, as a discipline, disavows the empiricism of literary representation for phonological study, rightfully so—that print narrative cannot be observed through auditory means precludes it from being considered original source audio material. Scripts, word pairs, and narrative recitation are standard elicitation procedures, but the speaker's recorded voice, not the semantic content of the written passage, is the core of phonological concern. While phonetic realization in literature is constructed, dialect representation generates a cognitive response in recognition of marked lexical forms. The association between the aberrant marked forms with their character or event referents in narrative in turn iconize those characters or events in frame generation, fictive though they may be. Symbolic representations of social groups

can thus influence the definitions of social categories or the interpretation of events, both real and mimetic.

The Oxford Companion to African American Literature defines "dialect poetry":

> A style that flourished between the 1890s and World War I; its chief characteristics are usually identified as a sentimentalization of antebellum southern culture, a regularized phonetic orthography designed to reflect common conceptions about African American vernacular speech, and an accommodationist viewpoint designed to gain acceptance with a white readership. (Nash 1997:213)

Addressing the social stratification and political turmoil regarding race relations of the era, this definition focuses on the extant racial stratification as reflected by the form and content of literary discourse. An interpretation of this sort requires differentiation of both semiotic and hermeneutic import; the self-contained narrative and poetic events along with their orthographic representation comprise the domain of the work's semantic content while the work's existence in a historically-determined real setting further inform the auditors of the author's social vantage point and message.

One direct challenge to the authority of literary depiction in social sciences is the idiosyncracy of writing and reading. Because a single author writes a piece of fiction that is in turn read individually, the act of reading literature is divorced from social activity. The internal processing of the semantic content experienced by the reader is not an objective, shared phenomenon, but a subjective, personal one. The events of that semantic content as well do not pertain directly to the real world, but are fictive constructions that mime reality to some extent. However, the symbolic representations found in literature generate event-frames that challenge and model social responses nonetheless. Note in the definition that phonetic representation aims at "common *conceptions* of African American vernacular" (emphasis added). These

conceptions about characteristics of extant social groups highlight the dialect literary portrayal as the sign-symbol associated with the African American speech community, whether or not that phonetic behavior is truly characteristic of the extant group. The marking of dialect literature as grammatically aberrant stigmatizes the assigned social groups perceived to produce marked forms, whether or not they truly do produce marked forms. This process involves frame generation that establishes a psychological association between a feature (accent) and its bearer/producer (speaker) in which the deviance (symbolic representation of marked speech) becomes iconized as a categorical element of the social group to which that bearer/producer belongs. Systematic iconization leads to fractal recursivity. The domain of the associated feature supersedes the individual bearer/producer and becomes associated with the category instead of the element, a metonymic function that indexes a whole (the speech community) through a component part (an individual speaker of the community).

Paul Laurence Dunbar's (1872-1906) poetry has been repeatedly criticized for its dialect style. Recognized as the first African American professional author, Dunbar made his living selling poetry to publishers and challenged the social presentation of African American identity and social politics in his works. In some ways similar to the persuasive rhetoric employed by his literary predecessors, Dunbar's works addressed racism and perceived identity in classical poetic form however, he is also criticized for strengthening the stratification of blacks from whites with use of the eye dialect, contributing to the marked forms of racial perception in both grammar and content. Compare these excerpts from "Little Brown Baby" (1897) and "We Wear the Mask" (1895):

"Little Brown Baby"
Little brown baby wif spa'klin' eyes,
Come to yo' pappy an' set on his knee,
What you been doin', suh—makin' san' pies?
Look at dat bib—you's es du'ty es me.
Look at dat mouf—dat's merlasses, I bet;
Come hyeah, Maria, an' wipe off his han's.
Bees gwine to ketch you en' eat you up yit,
Bein' so sticky an' sweet—goodness lan's! (Dunbar 2004:918)

"We Wear the Mask"
We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,--
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.
Why should the world be overwise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
We wear the mask. (Dunbar 2004:918)

Between these two passages, demonstrable variation in lexical form appears. Beyond the mere elision of coda syllables, as is the case with "an'" and "and" and the unreleased [ŋ] surfacing as [n] in the progressive, phonetic slurring obscures the interdental voiceless fricative [θ] into the labiodental voiceless fricative [f] in "mouth" and "mouf." In the onset position, the voiced interdental fricative [ð] surfaces as the voiced alveolar plosive [d], changing both manner and place or articulation in "dat" (that, lines 4 and 5). Modified verb forms display disagreement in absence of past participle "have" (line 3) and "set" (sit, line 2) as a command to the implied second person subject. Exaggerated mispronunciation is insinuated by the spelling of "merlasses" (molasses), "hyeah" (here), and "gwine" (going). . Similar to Jane Hill's (2008) discussion of "Mock Spanish," the denigration of minorities via the tactic of "bold mispronunciation" (Hill 2008:140) exudes covert racism in discourse by

representing the other through means of linguistic caricature. While Hill focuses on differences between languages, dialect representation of African Americans recursively differentiates between speakers within a language, even one as broad and varied as American English.

The content of "Little Brown Baby" involves direct speech from a "pappy" to the titular child. The child is heavily objectified; two lines of the eight shown here begin overtly with "Look at dat," and the child's appearance is conveyed to be dirty, smothered in sand pies and molasses, as presumably the pappy is as well—"you's es du'ty es me" (line 4). The third party Maria is voiceless as is the child, yet Maria is subordinate to the pappy's command to wipe the child's hands. The child, being sticky and sweet from smeared molasses, is threatened with being caught and eaten by bees—a not uncommon trope in the late 19th century presentation of the "pickaninny" who careless eats and wanders, only to be devoured by naturally occurring predators.

In contrast, "We Wear the Mask" laments the necessity of racial segregation, ironically mirroring Dunbar's career as a professional poet. The standardized grammar and orthography conform to a general poetic scheme of iambic tetrameter. Dunbar's phrasal positioning retains a rhythmic and rhyming structure while suggesting equivocation in diction. The mask itself is duplicitous, a metaphor not for a physical mask but for the appearance of African Americans under the hegemonic gaze of whites. Further ambiguity arises in the nature of the mask's "grins and lies" (line 1); the stereotypical Sambo figure literally grins and lies while Dunbar's tone reveals that the external appearance of smiling belies a self-crippling complacency with the expectations of the dominant social group. Dunbar labels this burden a "debt [blacks]

pay to human guile" (line 3), suggesting a blame-the-victim mentality that subjugates African Americans as inferior and penalizes them for that assigned inferiority. The "torn and bleeding hearts" (line 4) can be envisioned figuratively as underlying emotions, but also hint at the literal treatment of the physical black body, referring to predatory attacks, lynchings, and hate crimes of the era. Despite the eminent spirit of social protest in this poem, Dunbar concedes that the plight of African Americans is not worthy of the world's attention, favoring the complicit "safety" of the mask over instigating conflict. The break in both meter and margin in line nine distinguishes "We wear the mask" as both the prepositional phrase constituent to "while" (line 8) and a standalone assertion of agency. This subversive tactic draws focus to the phenomenon itself (the wearing of the mask), but alludes to the persona's power of invisibility behind the mask. This two-fold response shows both how objectified African Americans are powerless to be seen as human, but deprived of that liberty instead choose not to reveal their true selves at all. Lines eight and nine frame this grammatically by distancing the subjects—an implied nonentity for the verb "let" (line 8) and "We" (line 9)--from the objects "them" and "us" (line 8) and the aligned left margin (line 9). By breaking the meter, displacing the text, and keeping in active voice, the persona's limited agency comes to fruition.

The differences in tone and subject paired with the grammatical and orthographic representation of speech in these two excerpts almost makes them categorically incomparable. Yet "Little Brown Baby" is rife with caricature, stereotype, and dehumanization, while "We Wear the Mask" is political, poignant, and rhetorically engaging. Without the context of date and author, the two bear almost no similarity.

Furthermore, “We Wear the Mask” makes no overt reference to race while “Little Brown Baby” does in its title as well as its lines. It remains unclear to what extent Dunbar and other dialect poets embraced the dialect style of their own volition, though author and critic James Weldon Johnson recalls Dunbar’s claim “I've got to write dialect poetry; it's the only way I can get them to listen to me” (Johnson 2004:899). Whites controlled the majority of publication avenues in that era, and the dialect trend had been established as a literary novelty for economic purposes as well as reasons. Authors like Dunbar may well have chosen to wear the mask for the sake of employment instead of as an expression of personal and aesthetic choice. Nonetheless, Dunbar’s career was prolific, even more so following his death at age 33 in 1906. He had published hundreds of poems, four novels, and seven collections of short stories, making his literary corpus the most laudable and widely distributed of African American authors of the early 20th century. Dunbar’s works prefaced the next generation of African American artistic representation, at times serving as the only commonly available example of African American literary achievement in rural and parochial education.

The marked portrayal of dialect in literature was merely one facet of social stratification in entertainment. The minstrel shows of the 19th century depicted blacks as comedic objects, including the infamous characters of the Sambo and Zip Coon. The Sambo was a lackadaisical black man, childish, lazy, and irresponsible, whose simple mind did not stretch beyond food and frolic. The origins of the term are derived from African cultures: “Samba in Bantu; Samb and Samba in Wolof; Sambu in Mandingo; and Sambo in Hausa, Mende, and Vai” (Turner 1997:641). Though it had been

established throughout the 19th century in colloquial use as indexical of any black male slave, the presentation of the Sambo figure in entertainment peaked in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as an infantilized, helpless wastrel, thus reinforcing the negative portrayal of black men as incompetent good-for-nothings. The other side of the Sambo coin was the Zip Coon, an urban dandy whose admiration of prestige in appearance belied his utter buffoonery. Dressed in fine clothing and striving to demonstrate his intellectual achievements, the Zip Coon was a caricature of a black man masquerading in civilized society; despite his attire, his posture and movements revealed his animalistic base, while attempts to converse in educated prose resulted in nonsensical utterances, mispronounced words, and gibberish. The minstrel theater tradition "parodied black dress, dance, speech, and song; and developed such enduring stereotypes as the wily but witless rustic slave Jim Crow" (Lott 1997:503), whence the name of the Jim Crow era found its origin. The venue was one of few available to African American performers (almost always wearing black greasepaint or burnt cork to hyperbolize their native blackness) and writers (who, if credited, were seen as endorsing the divisive representations) despite the racist veins that carried the lifeblood of the genre.

Though minstrelsy persisted throughout the early 20th century, a special tangent emerged. The "Coon Show" included both comedic content and the portrayal of blacks as malicious animals, "featuring razor-toting hustlers and chicken-stealing loafers" (Lott 1997:503). Authors like Dunbar and Will Marion Cook, as well as artists Ma Rainey and W. C. Handy, wittingly contributed to the genre out of professional need. While "white men lampooned African Americans for sport or profit" (Lott 1997:502) in these

ventures, black performers did so for subsistence and employment in the commercially successful venture of minstrelsy. This exploitation carried into film with the dawn of motion pictures. The 1915 film *Birth of a Nation*, directed by D. W. Griffith, featured white actors in blackface makeup pursuing white women, one of whom leapt to her death from a mountaintop to flee being captured by the bestial black character. A black male character had but two choices for artistic representation: the harmless and incapable fool or the malicious predator. Black females were even further restricted to characterization as hapless objects for sexual pleasure (with the added patriarchal benefit of reproducing successive generations of laborers and providers) or as the asexualized, obedient Mammy. The Mammy character, most recognizable in films with Hattie McDaniel cast in that role, was loyal to her white masters, kind and nurturing to his children, and simultaneously the subjugator of the impudent or troublesome black male characters. McDaniel, the first African American—and first African American woman—to win an Academy Award for the role of Mammy in 1940 for *Gone With the Wind*, was barred from attending the award ceremony to receive her Oscar simply because she was black.

Following the Civil War and Reconstruction, the freedoms "guaranteed" by the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution were legally protected, yet vulnerable to social interpretation. The symbolic capital afforded by media in the forms of theater, film, and literature created systemic ideological biases that denigrated African Americans, largely through the portrayal of their speech (fictitious or otherwise). This is clear in instances of minstrelsy, motion picture, and illustration that provided a visually indexical referent of blackness conjoined to exaggerated and non-

standard speech stereotypes, but remains identifiable in socially conscious literature. In a mode of communication such as printed prose, only the words on the page could instill an image in the mind; dialogue in literature contributed definitively to the reader's association between character, context, and race.

The prominent authors of the Harlem Renaissance recognized the challenges established by the dialect tradition. Among the more notable literary exchanges regarding poetic art and race is the contestation of Negro poetry between Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes. In his autobiography *The Big Sea* (1940), Hughes, born in 1902, acknowledges Dunbar as a significant influence on his early education and literary aspirations. Though less is known about Cullen's early life, he was born in 1903 and also regarded Dunbar as a prominent literary figure for his own authorial development. A 1924 interview quotes Cullen as saying "if I am going to be a poet at all, I am going to be POET and not NEGRO POET" (Smethurst 2007:112; emphasis retained). He further explores this categorical distinction in the foreword to his anthology *Caroling Dusk* (1927):

> Negro poetry, it seems to me, in the sense that we speak of Russian, French, or Chinese poetry, must emanate from some country other than this in some language other than our own. Moreover, the attempt to corral the outbursts of the ebony muse into some definite mold to which all poetry by Negroes will conform seems altogether futile and aside from the facts. This country's Negro writers may here and there turn some singular facet toward the literary sun, but in the main, since theirs is also the heritage of the English language, their work will not present any serious aberration from the poetic tendencies of their times. (Cullen, 1927:p. xi)

Clearly Cullen distinguishes the representation of cultural boundaries by contrasting the category of "Negro" with national foreign states. His perspective, established in the interview three years prior, is that while a popular conception of African American poetry (and by extension, African American identity) exists in social consciousness, the

division between authors born in the same nation who share the same native tongue creates a subalternate category in which "Negroes" are disempowered.

Hughes diminished Cullen's statement in his 1926 essay "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain":

> But this is the mountain standing in the way of any true Negro art in America—this urge within the race towards whiteness, the desire to pour racial individuality into the mold of American standardization, and to be as little Negro and as much American as possible. (Hughes 2000:27)

Hughes argues against conforming to the established hegemony of aesthetics controlled by white authors and publishers, and against the denial of racial self-recognition and the traditions of lived experience he so famously captured in his blues poetry. Instead of mimicking the preferred forms of the high art of the era, he asserts that masking the life and lifestyle experience a poet has lived makes hollow her words by abandoning the "common people'—the poet's roots.

> ['Common' African Americans] furnish a wealth of colorful, distinctive material for any artist because they still hold their individuality in the face of American standardizations. And perhaps these common people will give to the world its truly great Negro artist, the one who is not afraid to be himself. (Hughes 2000:28)

The distinction between Hughes' and Cullen's vantage points is that of social perception and the proverbial eye of the beholder. As both were successful professional poets, Hughes' advocacy of art for self-expression counters Cullen's desire to be seen as equal to his white contemporaries. Hughes reclaimed agency through his depiction of African American culture while Cullen remained passive to the whims of the predominant social authority.

Cullen's resentment for racial category distinction was mirrored by many of his contemporary literary and social critics. George Schuyler's essay "The Negro-Art Hokum" (1926) reflects this perceptual divide:

> Because a few writers with a paucity of themes have seized upon imbecilities of the Negro behavior, the common notion that the black American is so 'different' from his white neighbor has gained wide currency. The mere mention of the word 'Negro' conjures up in the average white American's mind a composite stereotype … [of] the monstrosities scrawled by the cartoonists. (Schuyler 2000:25).

Schuyler reveals the indistinguishable similarities between the environments, activities, and subsistence necessities shared by Americans regardless of race with snippets of daily life routines. He attacks the presentation of blacks as "othering" by an appeal to subsistence and leisure behaviors among the socioeconomic class equivalencies between whites and blacks. They both work the same types of jobs, smoke the same tobacco, read the same newspapers, etc. Though Schuyler does not explicitly invoke class as the mitigating factor in his comparison, he aims to dismantle the depiction of African Americans provided via entertainment and print media in favor of an ethnographic example of daily life

Interestingly, the span of 150 years from Wheatley's publication to the Harlem Renaissance shows an inversion of social tenets. Wheatley and Equiano struggled to prove to the world the capability of non-whites to produce coherent, eloquent language, fighting against the prevalent notion that this was biologically impossible. Throughout the 19th century, that impossibility was uprooted. In its place, the evaluative scale shifted from a binary of can/cannot opposition to a graduated scale in which African Americans were cemented in the public eye as capable of, yet inferior to, the maximal artistic achievements of whites. The development of this gradient evaluation was

reflected in (and perhaps borne of) the political and military cataclysm of the Civil War and the ensuing legislation that served as politico-economic leveraging tools. Though the legal determination for black inferiority had been set by the Three-Fifths Compromise of 1787, the legislature officiated after 1865 (and circumvented by poll taxes, literacy tests, and grandfather clauses) provided a façade of equality. That façade withered to a mere mask in 1896 with the Supreme Court ruling of Plessy v. Ferguson, which upheld the constitutionality of "separate but equal" facilities and services—legally endorsed segregation. The perception of blackness as an identity, in part constructed by print and entertainment media of the 19th century, encouraged and supported the systemic conditions in which social stratification was endorsed, both ideologically and hegemonically. In the words of W. E. B. DuBois, "the white public today demands from its artists, literary and pictorial, racial pre-judgment which deliberately distorts Truth and Justice, as far as colored races are concerned, and it will pay for no other" (DuBois 2000:22-23).

Although far from exhaustive, this brief survey of African American literary protest shows how black authors increasingly embraced literary styles and used them to combat oppression. The progenitors of the African American literary canon struggled to overturn the enculturated view of incapability for literacy; their successors adopted stylistic means within that mode of communication to rhetorically argue for civil rights. Simultaneously, the popular media of the 19th century depicted African Americans as inferior and incapable. When legal dicta guaranteed freedoms to blacks, representations of blacks served to reinforce the stratification engrained in American culture. These iconizing depictions, formerly engrained by legally-endorsed social structures,

reinforced the culture of stratification in opposition to new legislative mandates, justifying ideologies of dominant/minority relations. Under the guise of accurately representing marked speech forms, dialect representation in literature served as one form of erasure in that it hyperbolized the otherness of non-whites and challenged the capacity for literacy in favor of "playing at" literacy.

These perspectives of otherness as they pertain to dialect representation continue today, as evidenced by the controversy of "Ebonics" in the 1990s, and even to the extent of President Obama's selective performance of African American dialect. The concept of blackness in American culture continues to entail some expectation of speech deformity, just as assumed speech types are attributed to narrative characters and the disabled and different in Nootka speech. That others are perceived as speaking language differently borders on speaking different languages. The use of symbolic representation contributes to erasing and silencing the heteronomy of African American speech varieties, strengthening the iconized conception of black speech as uniformly inferior.

Chapter 7: Grammaticality, Empiricism, and Focus in Language Research

In this section I show how the trends in linguistic research over the 20th century have evolved both in method and direction to favor the collection and study of grammatical structures. The empiricality of produced speech as primary source material reflects increasing standardization and logocentrism. Within this logocentrism, the emphasis of phonetic observation is given primacy because it is empirically observable. Fluidity of speech forms is reconfigured through assumptions about language and cognition as reducible to an encoded utterance, which in turn favors a model of standardization that surfaced as a byproduct of uniform written literacy.

Bronislav Malinowski's *Problem of Meaning in Primitive Language* (1948) addresses the social functions of language, what he calls phatic communication. Malinowski espoused a theory of psychological functionalism throughout his anthropological studies, placing heavy emphasis on the mechanisms of interaction. This sort of purposefulness pervades his work, as does an evolutionary prejudice against cultures he perceived to be less civilized than those of Europe. While his treatment of "primitives" and "savages" is quite telling of the accepted degree of stratification between cultures at the time, it reveals more than just negative biases. Malinowski's interest in language throughout this piece centers on what is labeled today as discourse analysis. Much like his psychological functionalism, Malinowski's forays into the social meaning of language describe those of social processes of affirmation that reinforce extant beliefs and power structures within communities. Malinowski's assertions regarding comparative inequalities between races demand certain assumptions about

vectored cultural development and the capabilities of community members, yet the disavowal of these biases, used as an interpretive tool applied to Malinowski's work, reveal surprising insights into the concept of language and interaction.

Discussing the premise that words intrinsically contain their meanings independent of context, Malinowski differentiates three types of language study based on their modes of transmission:

> But when we pass from a modern civilized language, of which we think mostly in terms of written records, or from a dead one which survives only in inscription, to a primitive language, never used in writing, where all the material lives only in winged words, passing from man to man—there it should be clear at once that the conception of meaning as contained in an utterance is false and futile. A statement, spoken in real life, is never detached from the situation in which it has been uttered. […] Without some imperative stimulus of the moment, there can be no spoken statement. (Malinowski 1948:240)

Malinowski builds his comparison between philologists and ethnographers from a vein similar to Lewis Henry Morgan's theory of social evolution, though with somewhat skewed temporality. Note that in Malinowski's estimation, "modern civilized" languages are defined by written records (though it is implied that they must be spoken as well). This assumption reflects the presiding ethnocentric western view of cultures as competing in a linear race from savagery to civilization. In contrast, "primitive" languages are those that have yet to develop orthography and written records, favoring orality over literacy, while "dead" languages (the source material for philological investigation for translating documents from antiquity) are those that succeeded in developing literacy, yet failed to sustain as cultural and linguistic communities.

It is evident from his poetic description alone that Malinowski favors primitive language for the purposes of research. He lambasts philologists and their documentation-based research as they must "reconstruct the general situations—*i.e.*, the

culture of a past people—from the extant statements" (Malinowski 1948:240) of historical record, while ethnographers have those cultural resources at their disposal for analysis and interpretation. He clearly hopes to avoid making unverifiable assertions about a culture. Thus primitive language research is, in his eyes, more accurate than research conducted by philologists on dead languages for two reasons: 1) It can presumably be confirmed as true by contemporaries, and 2) ethnographies accompanying translations of linguistic discourse "contain the meanings" of culturally significant practices, situating the event in its indigenous context.

What is fascinating about the third section of Malinowski's *Problems* is the simultaneous appeal to and disregard for the authority of texts as source material for linguists and anthropologists. What he hopes to establish is the importance of truthfulness in translation by means of ethnographic clarity. Clearly, then, as now, some elements of communication were "lost in translation" when utterances of one language are given equivalents in another language. As Malinowski describes in the second section, a simple denotative substitution is not informative enough to convey the same significance between languages: "The verbatim translation … sounds at first like a riddle or a meaningless jumble of words" (Malinowski 1948:232). Only through a cultural understanding of performative aspects of narrative and sign-symbol reference could he interpret the boasting aspect of the utterance, which he describes as "characteristic of the Trobrianders' culture in general and of their ceremonial barter in particular" (Malinowski 1948:233). Through this example, he posits that "to the meaning of such words is added a specific emotional tinge, comprehensible only against the background of their tribal psychology in ceremonial life, commerce and enterprise"

(Malinowski 1948:233). The meaning of the utterance as a prideful boast is not self-contained; the requirement of external familiarity with the Trobrianders' practices mediates the significance of the utterance from its denotative sequence of events to its affective pride in relating the sequence of events in that structural form.

The concept of meaning as "self-contained" is problematic here as well. Malinowski describes this as context of situation, primarily to distinguish between the scholarly methods of philologists and ethnographers. However, he does so by differentiating between written and spoken language events. He writes:

> [Written statements are] naturally isolated, torn out of any *context of situation*. In fact, written statements are set down with the purpose of being self-contained and self-explanatory … [they are] composed with the purpose of bringing their message to posterity unaided, and they had to contain this message within their own bounds. (Malinowski 1948:239)

He claims the "clearest case" of self-contained meaning as "the modern scientific book". He notes that readers must not only read the book but also have "the necessary scientific training" (Malinowski 1948:239) to understand it. The propositions that the book is "sufficient to direct the reader's mind to the meaning" and that "the meaning is wholly contained in or carried by the book" (Malinowski 1948:240) entail a number of assumptions that generally undercut the modern scientific book's exemplary status. Can one who lacks the necessary scientific training obtain the meaning wholly contained in the book, or does some percentage of that meaning rely on the prerequisite training that informs the sign-symbols of the book's content of those symbols' external referents? Obviously by his own example, the context of the situation comes into play if we simply consider the "necessary scientific training" equivalent to the ethnographic description that accompanies the boasting narrative. And perhaps this is truly

Malinowski's goal—to buffer the scientific credibility of the social sciences he had come to admire and to which he had dedicated his life's work.

Malinowski then casts his discussion of self-contained meaning aside as "false and futile" (Malinowski 1948:240), but it is not clear whether he has made a straw man of his own arguments intentionally or accidentally. What Malinowski rejects from the philological method is the reconstruction of culture ex post facto from texts alone, yet his constant equivocation between language as speech or as writing leaves a significant degree of confusion.

Leonard Bloomfield takes a different stance with regard to the divide between oral and written language. He claims that "'spoken language' fleetingly renders the forms that have their basic and permanent existence in the 'written language'. The latter 'fixes' and 'preserves' linguistic tradition" (Bloomfield 1944:46). The discussion surrounding Bloomfield's assertions here relate to the then-current proposal for the Cherokee syllabary, or "Sequoyah's alphabet," to be taught in Oklahoma public education. Bloomfield notes that the preserved traditions mentioned refer to standardized forms of language, and that dialects are "described as corruptions of the standard forms ('mistakes', 'bad grammar') or branded as entirely out of bounds, on par with the solecisms of a foreign speaker" (Bloomfield 1944:45). He continues to label dialect features as "mistakes," or asserts such features are "attributed to usage… interfering with more legitimate [grammatical] controls" (Bloomfield 1944:45).

While Bloomfield appears a staunch supporter of written language, it is not so much the mode of conveyance as the consistency provided by writing as a material semi-permanent form that he applauds:

> Statements about the relation of standard and non-standard forms are likely to be interpreted as 'defense' or 'advocacy' of the latter. Especially, linguistic statements about the relation of writing to language conflict so violently with self-evident truth that they can be interpreted only as a perverse refusal to consider certain facts. (Bloomfield 1944:49)

His footnote to this statement insinuates that the 'self-evident truth' he upholds is "To say that writing is not the central and basic form of language is simply to ignore writing altogether" (Bloomfield 1944:49). Despite his confidence in these claims, they remain tainted with colonialist ideologies of privilege and superiority of western society over the underdeveloped cultures and practices of "savages." It would appear on some levels that the fulcrum of evolutionary progression, in Bloomfield's view, is directly related to the implementation of a distinct orthography and body of literature, similar to Lewis Henry Morgan's requirement of literacy to move from barbarism into civilization.

The academic tradition of linguistic science in Bloomfield's wake carried this viewpoint into abstraction, emphasizing not the material existence of written language, but the ethereal structure of grammar as the primary concern. Bloomfield's arguments in philosophy of language revere the underlying forms of grammatical structure and the academic's attunement to those forms at the expense of "tertiary responses," the very defense of practices by speakers that he discards in the passage above. He holds that speakers who deviate from the standard will attempt to assert their authority as speakers to negotiate the marked difference between the standard and a dialect, a layman's attitude that is easily dismissed in favor of the academic's deeper, more profound understanding of language. This is partly a theoretical extension of the concurrently prevalent philosophical theory of behaviorism, a widely accepted and varied concept that aimed to explain action as causally-imputed by thought. Scholars such as Ivan Pavlov and B. F. Skinner supported variations of this theory, which they demonstrated

through conditioning behaviors of animals. This vein of scholarship, following the empiricist traditions of philosophy and the push in social sciences toward objective hard sciences, rejects interpretation of meaning and process in favor of observable causation. In Bloomfield's words, "a linguist who refuses to speak of mental things comes to be viewed as refusing to speak of anything which lies outside the borders of physics and biology" (Bloomfield 1944:52). He further explains that by dismissing mental causation of human affairs in favor of espousing behavior as representative of mental states, scholars seek to liberate linguistics from the solipsism of the mental domain.

The next step in the dominant theories of linguistic science arrived in 1957 with Noam Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures*, a direct assault on Skinner's radical behaviorism and a reinforcement of Bloomfield's emphasis on underlying forms of grammar as the "true" nature of language. Chomsky would become (and today remains) the champion linguist of the latter 20th century through his manifold explorations of how grammatical structures are processed in thought and represented through speech. Each step toward objectivity in the empiricist tradition of linguistics has, in fact, achieved a greater degree of objectification of the source material, denying the inherent authority, opinions, and attitudes of speakers in favor of the lauded wisdom of those who study them, however removed from relative cultural context those academic authorities may be.

This bid for the power of authority, the adherence to a solid standard in both grammatical structure itself and the research that reveals structure, and the emphasis on processual mechanics in linguistic science leads to the conception of language as a mental phenomenon that surfaces in speech, yet is mediated through literacy. By

privileging the underlying grammatical structures of languages as the program through which communicative meaning is decoded, linguists assert the standards of grammatical structure as the best rubric by which to measure correctness. This is evident through the analysis of utterances marked by an asterisk as ungrammatical. Logic dictates that if there are phrases that are grammatically correct within a language, there must as well be phrases that are grammatically incorrect at the structural level. Spatiotemporal considerations apply as well, specifying a chronotopic dimension that realizes the felicity conditions of the argument in question; i.e., qualifying an utterance as grammatical is necessarily directed from the perspective of a certain time and place. Take, for example, some differences between British and American English in spelling. "Color" and "colour," among many other pairings in which American words drop the vowel "u," are equivalent in concept, pronunciation, and referent, yet are written differently as per the standards and traditions of these two forms of English. While "colo(u)r" displays variance in the spelling, it is not considered a heterograph because the meaning remains equivalent. Heteronyms are lexical items that contrast meaning but share pronunciation and spelling. "Pants" in American English refers to outerwear that covers the waist and legs, while "pants" in British English refer to underwear that covers the waist and crotch. Here the concept and pronunciation are the same, yet the referents are different. Lexical items that share spellings but differ in pronunciation and meaning are called homographs, such as "wind" (a breeze that blows) and "wind" (coiling or twisting as with an analog clock).

The very concept of distinctions between homo- and hetero-nyms, -phones, and –graphs depends on allegiance to a standardized version of the language in use and its

orthographic conventions. Phonological production requires no concept of an orthography, merely the recognition that a distinct sound pattern has an intended, socially-recognizable referent. Thus the phonetic [tu] can have several meanings—a directional preposition, the quantity of a pair, or something in addition—without being three separate lexical forms in speech. These lexical forms are differentiated in written English in the forms "to," "two," and "too" respectively, although the meaning in use can be determined by grammatical structure. However, grammatical structure is not always sufficient to indicate a coherent meaning. Chomsky's famous example of this is the sentence "colorless green ideas sleep furiously" (Chomsky 1957). This phrase is syntactically sound, yet nonsensical in meaning. Anything colorless cannot be green, and color is a secondary property of concrete objects that cannot be applied to abstract, non-corporeal things like ideas. While each of these words exist in English, the same phenomenon can occur with neologisms and nonexistent lexical items. Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky* (1871) serves as a fine example:

> 'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
> Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
> All mimsy were the borogoves,
> And the mome raths outgrabe. (Carroll 1999:10)

Of the 23 (24 contracted) words in the first verse of this poem, 11 are not words of the English language. None of these novel terms are phonologically impossible with the pronunciation of sound-patterns in English; the lines can be spoken without much difficulty. Furthermore, the syntactic arrangement indicates to the reader (or auditor) some nature of grammatical categories. The familiar "'twas" indicates a clause describing state of being, necessitating that "brillig" take the category of an adjective that describes that state of being. "The slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe" is

grammatically sound in form, but that form dictates the categories of the novel lexical items contained. The linking verb "did" indicates a past tense modal of "gyre," which can only be interpreted as an active verb. "Gimble" as well must be a verb of some sort as it is conjoined with "gyre," and that verb phrase is modified with a prepositional phrase "in the wabe," which denotes "wabe" as a noun given that the preposition "in" requires a spatial location. In this way, Carroll toys with grammar and meaning, adhering to the structure of English at the expense of denotation in his novel terminology.

Grammaticality as a theory permits aberrations in meaning while restricting aberrations in form, thus privileging the code of language over its content. This premise goes hand in hand with the concepts of underlying and surface forms in generative grammar. The surface form represents the phenotype of the utterance—its appearance at face value. The underlying form represents the genotype of the utterance—the structure that conforms to the standardized rules of mechanics in a language. In Bloomfield's terms, the underlying form is the linguistic tradition fixed and preserved through the act of writing. Malinowski's arguments for the study of indigenous languages reflect the decoding of grammatical structure through the observation and analysis of the surface forms, quite literally the utterances of individuals as they are spoken. This should not imply that the surface form and the underlying form of an utterance cannot be equivalent; they certainly can be. But what it does imply is that while speakers can display variation from one to the next, which we dismiss as unmediated speech, accent, or dialect, writing is in turn mediated by thought before it can be created. The fact that one must actively inscribe written language by some means (stylus, chisel, pen, brush,

typewriter, word processor, etc.) necessitates a degree of forethought, including not only the medium of recording written language but also the mitigation of an orthographic system intended to represent that encoded language for comprehensibility to others.

The physical act of recording a written artifact of language is not the only constraint that differentiates speech and writing. Donald Rubin (1984) identifies six constituents of communicative situations: a) medium of communication (oral, written, signed), b) discourse function, c) audience-communicator role relations, d) topic domain, e) setting, and f) interactive structure. While each of these constituent elements is influential in its own right, the medium of communication precedes the transmission of content as a communicative event and thus refines the domains in which the latter constituents operate. Rubin notes that "writing is commonly regarded as wholly individualistic (as in literary theory) or else monolithic and of a single standard (as in prescriptive teaching)" (Rubin 1984:216). His analysis addresses not only the physical aspects of creating a written text, but also the spatiotemporal elements absent from written communication that are associated with face-to-face speech. Paralinguistic cues, gestures, the setting of interlocution, and common ground assumptions are among these elements, which contribute to the conception of writing as context-independent and autonomous. Beyond the event-associated data withdrawn from written communication, Rubin examines the cognitive interpretation of medium-derived conveyance. "At issue here are frames, or schemata, for what is to count as written language. At the most atomistic level, these conventions include expectations of what is more or less standard capitalization, punctuation, and spelling" (Rubin 1984:217). He continues to denote

how syntactic structures common to speech are excluded from writing (such as the passive "got + past tense verb"), while other constructions arise only in written form (such as direct quotation followed by the narrative tag "said John"). Though these constructions are feasible in their converse domains, the divergence from standardized forms of usage signals an authorial intention that calls attention to the discourse. Rubin reiterates that "writing is not absolutely context-independent, but is more or less independent of context depending on the degree of socio-psychological distance between writer and reader" (Rubin 1984:218). He clarifies that conceptions of language could be more accurately seen as existing along a "continuous spectrum ranging from interactive, spontaneous, and immediately expressive (oral) to monologic, planned, and reflective (written) language" (Rubin 1984:218).

The notion that language is ultimately reducible to specific, encoded referent objects and events is the basis of logocentrism. Logocentrism conjoins the product of the word with its concept. In oral speech, the logos is produced phonetically; in written language, the logos is produced graphically. Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) notes the inherent difference between speech and language: The former is individually produced while the latter is a shared, passively obtained system of meaning. His attempts to provide a rigorous methodology of linguistic science posit the singular importance of spoken language, noting that writing is at best a means to record representations of speech for temporal preservation.

> In language, on the contrary, there is only the sound-image, and the latter can be translated into a fixed visual image. […] The very possibility of putting the things that relate to language into graphic form allows dictionaries and grammars to represent it accurately, for language is a storehouse of sound-images, and writing is the tangible form of those images. (Saussure 2011:15)

For Saussure, written language itself only serves as a representation of the spoken word, which is the pure form of language. Through this conceptualization, speech is interpreted as a vocal action produced by the individual yet social in the sense of a shared system of practices that encrypt the thought conveyed in a systematic manner. This encoded message, in turn, can be realized and understood only insofar as it adheres to the standard mechanics of the grammar in which it is uttered. Saussure believed that grammar was a choice, posited for each individual by the socialization of grammatical standards, through which thought could be conveyed regardless of in which language that thought was encoded.

Jacques Derrida's (1991) analysis of Saussure's arguments challenged the reducibility of the spoken word to the written form. Derrida held that exact meanings, as they exist in the social functions of language, cannot be entailed by the words that represent them alone. His method of deconstruction argues signification by contrast, the meaning of a term being determined by its opposition.

> In both expression and indicative communication the difference between reality and representation, between the true and the imaginary, and between simple presence and repetition has always already begun to be effaced. Does not the maintaining of this difference—in the history of metaphysics and for Husserl as well—answer to the obstinate desire to save presence and to reduce or derive the sign, and with it all powers of repetition? […] To assert, as we have been doing, that with the sign the difference does not take place between reality and representation, etc., amounts to saying that the gesture confirms this difference is the very effacement of the sign. (Derrida 1991:11)

Derrida holds that the written sign exists external of signification because of its existence, which he describes as a "trace" of presence-absence. The spoken word, fleeting and bound by time, exists in written form only in its non-existence in spoken form. Yet the concept of written forms as representative of spoken forms, held by

Saussure, falsely attributes speech to a speaker who may or may not exist or have existed.

> There has to be a transcendental signified for the difference between signifier and signified to be somewhere absolute and irreducible. It is not chance that the thought of being, as the thought of this transcendental signified, is manifested above all in the voice: in a language of words. (Derrida 1991:36)

Therein Derrida points to the primacy of the spoken word as the empirical, fundamental aim of western linguistic inquiry. Existence in production, observable at the time of its creation, indexes the truth of the spoken word over the trace of presence-absence characteristic of the written word. This phonocentric privilege of spoken language, dominates 20th century linguistic research at the expense of written communication.

Linguistic research has favored speech over other forms of communication, a preference constructed by the conceptualization of language as a communicative medium, with subcategories of spoken and signed conveyance. Thus the focus on documenting and deciphering language as a vocally produced system of encoding a reducible thought only specifies the mechanisms of communication at the expense of recognizing social meanings and the influence of linguistic artifacts not expressly verbal. This conceptualization of language, predominant in linguistic and social science, creates signification through contrast in variation without necessarily conjoining the contrasting elements to how those differences operate outside of grammar itself. This is a categorical error that segregates language as a concept from language usage as a heuristic device of communication. Furthermore, it imbues the concept of language with a structural framework that negates the agency of non-vocal forms of expression; in so doing it establishes spokenness as an essential, iconized feature of language. Through

this empowerment of the voice, the very nature of language is subject to ideological biases.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

The primary goal of this exploration into language is differentiating empirical language use from its symbolic representation to demonstrate how variation in non-spoken forms of utterance are erased by standardization. Language is conceived as a structured system that communicates thought through various modes of transmission—oral, written, signed, etc. Each mode displays unique characteristic features that can influence and create meaning. The premise that language, once accurately decoded, is reducible to referential thought creates an imbalance in the uniformity of language as a conceptual category. In western science, the assignation of the spoken form of language as the prototype for communication diminishes the potency of non-spoken forms of language and simultaneously creates a recursive divide in the social reception of spoken variants of language. Through the assumption of standardized normative linguistic behaviors, non-standard speech is recognized and stigmatized in social practice. Similarly, non-spoken language—such as gesture and writing—is stigmatized as a derivative byproduct of the prototype spoken form; this iconized view of language as primarily a spoken medium recursively extends to modes of linguistic artifacts, selectively erasing the authority and effect of mode of transmission and any communicative nuances that are properties of the mode and not language itself. By devaluing and in many cases erasing this context, linguistic scientists limit the scope and authenticity of their investigations into the true nature of the communications they are studying.

Language is socially significant in non-linguistic means that retain traces of evidence in usage. These traces are observable through sensory perception, yet are

mediated by the cognitive processes through which we retain memories of impressions and reason our knowledge of the world through experience. I argue that associations between speakers and speech practices carry social significance beyond the definition of terms and the delineation of communities. Variation occurs between speakers, between dialects, and between languages; yet its significance is often lost simply in positing that variation occurs. Language communicates thought as a symbolic representation, yet language is never merely suggestive of denotation. Language is produced individually and thus bound to perspectival constraints; these constraints include productive agency in both form and content. Content of utterance is granted the freedoms of topic and purpose, yet form is constrained by adherence to standards. Some of these standards are situationally determined, as is the case with register and genre, yet form itself is conceived as subordinate to the operating structure of language standardization. Thus manipulations in form contribute social meaning through contrasting variation, and variation is necessarily marked as aberrant to the normative use of language.

The aberration of non-standard forms retains an affective character of markedness, which is readily observable through sensory perception (whether spoken, visual, or tactile). The situations in which marked forms of speech arise are retained as experiential impressions as they are perceived. Impressions are thus conjoined to the content and context of the linguistic exchange, which we then process through cognition to serve as frames for recognizing and understanding things and events. Perspectival biases and affective judgments are coupled to the experiences and the participants in experience, influencing the assignation of emotional and categorical importance to marked forms. This yields a connotative element of social stratification to perceived

difference in forms of speech, which are in turn beholden to the mode of transmission. Accent and dialect distinction in oral speech serve as the prototype for variation in social science, yet the existence of accent and dialect in non-spoken modes of language are erased through adherence to standardization. When non-standard forms of written language are observed, they are stigmatized more fervently than the mere observation of auditory variation.

Through the manipulation of non-standard forms of non-spoken language, socially implied judgments can be conveyed at the expense of grammaticality. These judgments are often directed toward the character of the producer (analog of the speaker). When exhibited in non-quotative contexts, the author is the index; when exhibited in quotative contexts, the assumed speaker is the index. Thus judgments against the producer of non-standard written forms creates an indexical association of markedness, often relegated to a pedagogic correct/incorrect judgment or an idiosyncratic style. However, the affective judgment in either case becomes associated with the producer. The producer, whether real or otherwise, bears the stigmatized feature, which in turn is associated with a speech community or class of speakers. These associations, derived from perception and presumed standards, extend beyond extant reality and are attached to the producing class via recursive attribution. The recursivity iconizes the speech class and projects the affective judgment of markedness (positive or negative) to the presumed speech community. The projection of affective judgments to speech classes, once socialized, creates a stratification between speech community members based on the perception, be it real or fictive, of a presumed feature of

language. This stratification in turn displaces speech community members in imbalances of social power via symbolic capital of linguistic performance.

The systems of cognition create and substantiate associations of perceived markedness with speech forms and their bearers. These forms occur through narrative discourse just as they do through direct interlocution. When narrative discourse transpires in non-auditory means, the use of non-standard language displays the markedness of the indexed producer's speech form, creating a space in which observation of a vocal phenomenon can be obtained through non-vocal means. Whether through subtitles in audiovisual media or through printed literature, the observation of markedness becomes associated through the sensory experience of utterance. This transpires in the observer (addressee, audience, reader) and is quantified through the observer's frameworks of perspectival bias. The associations thus generated create in the observer's mind a frame of categorical differentiation which can (but does not always) result in conceptual classes. The use of dialect in African American literature serves as an example of how perceptions of written forms of language imbue social significance and affective judgments against extant classes that do not necessarily produce the iconized features associated with the class.

My final goal in this exploration of language use is to demonstrate how artifacts of language contain greater significance than simple grammaticality. Grammaticality itself does not permit the fluidity of language change, a naturally occurring phenomenon that no linguist can deny despite the rigorous attempts at quantifying languages by means of grammatical-ungrammatical binaries. The use of language to express social thoughts involves much more than mere denotation. To understand how

language shifts social perspective, we must understand how we process language as representative of thought, including *all* the forms through which we use language—not speech alone. Even as I write this thesis, my capacity for academic performance is being judged by the production of written language, not spoken. To categorize modes of linguistic transmission under the umbrella term "language" while disavowing those forms of linguistic expression not originally vocal ignores the significance of non-spoken representation and its role in social praxis.

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