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**WRESTING AND ARRESTING SENSE IN ACADEME:
THE COMPLICATED DISCURSIVE STRUCTURES OF
FEMALE ASSISTANT PROFESSORS**

by

ALANA M. NICASTRO

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education
University of San Diego

May 2004

Dissertation Committee

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ABSTRACT

Women in academe often become entangled in an intricate equation of sensemaking as they work to balance the professional demands of teaching, research, and service, while at the same time learning the political and moral meanings of being a scholar. Structuration theory offers avenues for closely examining communicative strategies women utilize to navigate their roles as assistant professors. Through intensive interviews with seven female assistant professors this research investigates their process of wresting and arresting sense of the complicated roles, rules, and structures in academe. Analysis of interview data reveals the multiple discourses that frame organizational practices that facilitate and constrain these women's lives. Focusing on their patterned discourse led to the discovery and generation of three discursive structures women utilize in their sensemaking practices: the involute, refractor, and translate. The stories presented show how the involute, refractor, and translate function as opportunities for beneficial, detrimental, knowledgeable, unacknowledged, transforming, conscious, and even, unconscious communication practices. The movement of each discursive structure indicates the women's struggle to word their worlds as defensive resistances to communication that marginalizes, undermines, and dismisses their contributions. At the same time, each discursive structure represents the ways the women construct discourse to celebrate, reform, and rediscover who they can become and want to become in their academic work. The theoretical and practical implications of this research offer opportunity for mindfulness, restoration, and transformation.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Professor Patricia Geist-Martin,
teacher, mentor, and friend.

The first to say, “I’m here with you until the end.”

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The interlocking of talent, wisdom, and generosity has inspired this work. I would like to acknowledge those individuals responsible for making a meaningful contribution.

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I am grateful for the professional guidance of three healers who helped center my mind, body, and soul. I am spiritually conscious thanks to Violet Stark, Tricia Ledgewood, and Kelly Harrington.

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Last, I thank God for the privilege of my education.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION:

WRESTING AND ARRESTING SENSE IN ACADEME

"Was there ever a life more riddled with self-doubt than that of a female professor?"

Sarton's book, *The Small Room*, p. 29

Each day I understand this quote a little better.

It has been somewhat of a brainteaser like my life in academe,

both as an adjunct professor and as a doctoral student.

Perhaps this is why I write the dissertation,

to resolve this riddle and to determine my fate in academe.

Introduction

The academy is often seen as a place where people learn and grow, as well as a vital intellectual community where passion and integrity instigate truth and knowledge. This community usually is characterized by tolerance and openness and is considered a place where identities can be explored in collaborative and interdependent ways. However, slowly and with difficulty over the last decade, I have discovered the discomfort of the political and moral meanings of being a feminist scholar, the contradictory demands of teaching and learning, and the unhealthy identities often lived in university life. My understanding of these matters led me to design a study that investigates the lived experiences of female assistant professors.

I wanted to know how assistant professors described their lives in the academy and the work they do to compose a meaningful life.

*Women's relationships are often painful,
in part because we expect so much of each other,
and in part because even when we are with women, we are also in the larger world
which is heavily controlled by men
interested in heavy control of women (Foss, Foss, Griffin, 1999, p. 48).*

I am a feminist. Sharing this information publicly has not always benefited me. In fact, it proved to be somewhat discouraging and detrimental while I was a doctoral student. I was told not to call myself a feminist – that this label would “hurt me.” This label did indeed “hurt me” by the same individuals who told me not to call myself a feminist. The following interaction highlights my experience in my final dissertation seminar class. This course was taught by two men. I was expressing my research ideas to the class.

“I have philosophical concerns about your research,” one of the professor’s says.

“Yes! And I have methodological concerns as well,” the other professor replies as he looks over to his colleague, folding his arms over his chest.

It seems as if my feminism along with my interests in ethnographic writing and reflexivity is making some waves. It was well over a half-hour before these two men completed their public ridicule and shot down my dissertation research ideas. I

felt all alone. My eyes were wide open and I was sitting stiff in my chair. I was mortified; however, I know the mortification came more from being confused. What did I do wrong? I looked around the classroom. The desks were arranged in a large square. The professors were at the head of this arrangement. There were approximately 20 other students in class. They sat diligently, nodding their heads and smiling at the two professors. For some reason, I felt forced to smile, although sad and confused, I imitated the expressions on my classmates' faces. I wandered off and thought to myself, "I'm so stupid. Look at what just happened. Just be quiet." I was the youngest woman in the room and I felt like a child who was just reprimanded, not by one, but by two, fathers. Why? What did I do that was so wrong?"

The final remark came from the professor who had methodological concerns with my research. He said, "And you shouldn't call yourself a feminist either."

After what seemed like a four month debate and a senseless effort on my part, I ended the semester unchallenged, unchanged, and without a dissertation proposal. I no longer wore a smile.

Women Academics

Historically, academe has been an inhospitable place for women. Many women have found the halls of academe closed to them (Kite, 2001). Today, however, women are more active participants in the academy. Women have joined together with their institutions to help themselves and others develop and contribute to their fullest potential. Nonetheless, inequities persist (see Aguirre, 2000; Kite, 2001; Luna & Cullen, 1995). The waste of intellectual talents and resources that has characterized the discriminatory legacy of academic institutions is less tolerable these days. There is a hope for a cadre of innovative scholars who can generate and

apply new knowledge with passion, courage, and a global vision. But this need will not be met until the culture of academe is changed and the barriers to the full participation of women are altered and/or removed (Kite).

Like other employment settings in society, academe is not yet a level playing field. Gender discrimination is sometimes delivered as a knockout blow to professional development (Kite, 2001). Furthermore, uneven playing fields often result in a long series of “microinequities” (Rowe, 1990, p. 153) or “unintended slights” (AAMC, 1996, p. 804) that create a more stressful, less rewarding system for women that can undermine their mental health (Landrine, Klonoff, Gibbs, Manning, & Lund, 1995). For most women, it is the disadvantage that accrues over time that is most harmful to their professional achievement and their quality of life at work (Bickel, 1995; Valian, 1998) and at home (Caplan, 1994).

Although, unlike other employment settings in society, ideally, academe should be the playing field where inequities, along with professional achievement and mental health, are addressed and understood, as well as restored and renewed. Academe is the place where both the professional academic and the student better prepare themselves for the increasingly complex world in which they live and work. There is a real opportunity to shape our academic institutions to reflect a broader and more inclusive vision and to be more responsive to the challenges facing women and men. Today’s women are not content with leveling the male-designed playing field – they want to reshape it to reflect their values and concerns (Astin & Cress, 1998).

If the academic environment is indeed a “chilly” (Caplan, 1994; Park, 1996) and “alienating” (Aguirre, 2000) one for women, the challenges become expressed (or depressed) in the academic context in a variety of ways that, taken together,

result in an institutional climate that can have chilling effects on women's aspirations, performance, and how they feel about themselves (Fouad, Brehm, Hall, Kite, Hyde, & Russo, 2000). It becomes even chillier for those women in academe who label themselves as feminist scholars. When a woman identifies herself as a feminist, she becomes a lightning rod. This might be due to the negative attitudes people hold toward feminists (Fouad et al., 2000) primarily out of confusion (Bate & Bowker, 1997). According to MacDonald and Zanna (1998), feminists are admired and are generally rated high on qualities like competence, but are not necessarily "liked." MacDonald and Zanna's study was conducted with undergraduates and not faculty members. Feminist scholars present a threat to the status and privilege of white male faculty (Bronstein, 1993). Women faculty are advised, especially by men faculty, to limit their involvement in feminist research until they have received tenure:

Some young women are advised to postpone childbearing and feminist research until after they have tenure. They're told to write on subjects to which they are not committed, to wait in silence and cunning until the tenure decision is made. (Toth, 1995, p. 45)

Furthermore, there is a disparity between research productivity among women and men. Women have heavier teaching loads, bear greater responsibility for undergraduate education, and have more service commitments (Park, 1996). Women also have less access to graduate teaching assistants, travel funds, research monies, laboratory equipment, and release time for research (Wunsch & Johnsrud, 1992). Often research is valued as the primary criterion for tenure and promotion.

These unfortunate disgraces place an exacerbated, double-bind on young female faculty members who have little control over their teaching loads, class sizes,

or course assignments; who need to prove to their colleagues that they are team players; and who find it difficult to say “no” to service assignments given to them by their superiors who could deny their tenure (Park, 1996). Young female faculty members are expected to hit the ground running and often experience high levels of stress and low levels of occupational satisfaction (Whitt, 1991). Newcomers are likely to experience reality shocks or conflicts between what they expected and what they believe they have found (Whitt). This period of organizational entry is where an individual is most susceptible to organizational socialization efforts (Van Maanen, 1976) and is the period where a woman develops the core of her organizational identity (Berlew & Hall, 1966). Therefore, feminist scholars face questions about whether to pursue a feminist research agenda, what courses to teach, and how to integrate their feminist ideologies into those courses at every turn during this newcomer, organizational entry phrase (Cooper, 2002).

By discrediting feminist research, the academic workplace reinforces the peripheral position of women and questions the legitimacy of their presence in academe (Chepyator-Thomson & King, 1996). In discrediting their research, academia also contradicts the professional socialization of women, especially their membership in a community of scholars (Ayer, 1984). That is, women faculty receive the message that “their research is not worthy of merit and, as a result, does not legitimate their inclusion in the academic community” (Aguirre, 2000, p. 71).

It is through feminist discourse that new modes of communication can be developed and where communicative practices can be examined to facilitate new language and new spaces for women to feel at home. How assistant professors describe their lives in the academy and the work they do to compose a meaningful life is an area of needed research. The study of women's communication begins with

asking questions that allow for the discovery of the characteristics and qualities of women's experiences. Placing women at the center of analysis may lead to enactment. Enactment is the process of creating new words and redefining words as a means to redefine and reconceptualize controlling norms, languages, and structures. Enactment, ultimately, has the potential to generate new ways of looking at our worlds through new language that, for purposes of this review, features and values women's experiences and perspectives.

Failing to hear the voices of female feminist scholars, reinforces the current literature on educators' careers that actually silences them. Women's personal and practical stories are encouraged at a time though, when an educator's work seems to be more technical and narrow (Goodson, 1998). Feminist research and collaborative conversations have voiced the many struggles women have endured as they make their careers in higher education. Research would benefit greatly if it could provide a framework of renewal and healing for women in academe. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986 wrote, "To learn to speak in an authentic voice, woman must 'jump outside' the frames and systems authorities provide and create their own framework" (p. 134). If existing frameworks can be broken down, we can then begin to re-frame in ways which allow us to potentially compose the ideals we dreamed of that drew us into the academy in first place.

In feminist scholarship, personal experiences provide insight and resonance that enrich research inquiry. I write from a place of desire to self-express for purposes of both clarity and growth. When I reflect on my initial doctoral experiences, I find my own talk debilitating and unproductive. While I can appreciate the challenges and hard work graduate studies has to offer, these challenges and hard work often left me feeling confused, silenced, and stuck. I have recently learned

that the ways in which I communicate these experiences also leaves me feeling confused, silenced, and stuck.

I want to use this dissertation work as a vehicle to help me claim my experiences and determine whether or not the academy is where I belong. When I think about leaving the academy, I am reminded of Susan Estrich's words, "Are women today ambitious enough individually and collectively to get what they want?" I would like to think I am (we are), but I wonder if being "ambitious enough" is "enough" in academe? It never seems as though I am enough in this line of work. Am I the only one that feels this way?

Finding the necessary frameworks, recognition and rewards, compensation, and support systems for young women like myself to excel in are hard to come by, making it difficult, if not impossible, to take responsibility for creating an ambitious self and, more importantly, a healthy academic self. When I then think about long-term work in academe I am even more unsettled when I hear feminist scholars like Jennifer Gore (1999) say, "Now, post Ph.D., tenure, promotion, research grants, publications, and baby, there seems to be no time. Instead, my life, like that of my colleagues, feels taut, almost to breaking point" (p. 17) and it is all too easy, as Liz Ellsworth (1993) puts it, "to kill oneself" in academe. The more I talk to other women in my position, the more sense I make of academe. Therefore, an understanding of these matters has led me to design a study that investigates the lived experiences of female assistant professors, leading to the two following research questions:

RQ₁: What discourses shape a woman's experience in academe?

RQ₂: In what ways do the discursive structures facilitate or constrain a woman's life/work?

The dissertation proceeds as follows.

Overview

Chapter Two outlines the relevant review of literature helpful in framing this study. There has been a great deal of literature produced in feminist theory. This chapter will briefly define and highlight the goals of feminism. Furthermore, feminist standpoint theory along with feminist pedagogy will also be examined. Ways to restructure academe can be accomplished by looking at the literature provided in feminist discourse, and specifically, theories offered by Weedon's (1987) use of feminist poststructuralism and Giddens' (1984) use of structuration.

Chapter Three explores the methods employed in this study. This dissertation takes an ethnographic approach to examine women's lives in the academic culture. Goodall (2000) defines new ethnographies as "creative narratives shaped out of a writer's personal experiences within a culture" (p. 9), pointing out that these stories should be addressed to academic and non-academic audiences. Ethnographic texts create the possibility for reclamation of voices that have been either absent from traditional social sciences or misrepresented as ways to understand whole schemas of cultures. Ethnography confronts dominant forms of representation and power. Here, I explain how I will interpret and represent data gathered by interacting and engaging with female assistant professors. The research journey is documented in three sections: going there; being there; and being here. In the end, this chapter serves as an entryway into the three mathematical structures as well as foreshadows what is to come in terms of the "findings" later. The words of each woman in this study reveal how they have become entangled in an intricate equation of sensemaking in academe.

Chapter Four provides the results of the data collected and analyzed. Here, the voices of the women are foregrounded to illustrate the complicated

communicative practices often lived in academic life. It is organized by three leading structures – involute, refractor, and translate. These three structures represent formation, organization, and composition of organizational life by revealing the patterns found in the women's discourse.

Finally, Chapter Five provides the tentative and always partial conclusions to this study. Specifically, I answer my research questions by exploring the implications of how women's lives in academe are discursively constituted through the three central structures. Limitations and future research suggestions are made as well. The chapter closes with my final thoughts on my educational and research journey.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW:

RE-STRUCTURING ACADEME THROUGH FEMINIST DISCOURSE

The enslavement of the female to the species and the limitations of her various powers are extremely important facts; the body of a woman is one of the essential elements in her situation in the world. But that body is not enough to define her as woman; there is no true living reality except as manifested by the conscious individual through activities and in the bosom of a society (De Beauvoir, 1953, pp. 36-37)

Introduction

Women's articulations of their own experiences and ideas and their claims to the right to determine how their lives will proceed are key aspects of feminism. There are a variety of kinds of feminists and feminisms yet Foss, Foss, and Griffin (1999) believe that this variety opens up choices and possibilities and speaks to the very nature of feminism:

Feminism is rooted in choice and self-determination and does not prescribe one official position that feminists must hold. Feminism is also an evolving process that necessarily changes as conditions in the world change and as feminists develop new understandings. (p. 3)

Feminism is not an abstract philosophy but a way of living our lives. Feminism engages in shared knowledge, experiences, and practical strategies that promote women, people of color, and others who are less favorably positioned. Feminists learn to assist themselves and others in negotiating and changing dominance and oppression in places where people live and work. Feminism is an important perspective for investigating the experiences of women in the academy for the following five reasons: (a) it works from a women's centered approach; (b) it applies ourselves with marginalized groups; (c) it enables democratic access that fit the lives of the people; (d) it engages in a collective decision-making process; and (e) it identifies, makes visible, and replaces the subjugating structures of present systems. Feminism offers a model for different ways of living in the world. It allows women to speak their truths.

Five sections are presented in this chapter. First, I introduce feminist standpoint theory to help frame the concept of personal experience and knowledge. Second, I define feminist pedagogy to highlight the value feminists place on self-reflexivity. Then, I talk about feminist discourse and the impact of language. After that, I discuss poststructuralist theory as an analytical tool to reframe our understanding of the dominant discourses and power. Finally, I introduce structuration theory to provide a framework for the exploration of the discursive construction of people in organizations.

Feminist Standpoint Theory

Feminist standpoint theory assumes that by starting with the experiences and knowledge of the subordinated, we can better understand how dominations occur. Wood (1992) has advocated the use of standpoint feminism in communication to encourage questions that start from women's standpoints. Standpoint feminism

advocates an understanding of marginalization and dominance for the purpose of revealing relationships that need to be transformed (Bullis & Rohrbauck Stout, 2000). Standpoints include experiences and locations, conditions, relationships, and processes that produce those experiences. They also embody a reflexive awareness that results in a political consciousness (Bullis & Rohrbauck Stout), and a mind body and spirit consciousness. Feminist standpoint theory thoughtfully considers that we not only understand our position but the system in which we will be positioning ourselves. Standpoint theory lends itself to feminist teaching practices.

Feminist Pedagogy

Defining what feminist pedagogy means in practice is a difficult task (Fisher, 2001, Weiler, 1998). The pedagogy of feminist teachers is based on certain assumptions about knowledge, power, and political action. Feminist pedagogy is “grounded in a vision of social change” and “rests on truth claims of the primacy of experience and consciousness” (Weiler, p. 125). In the practice of feminist teaching, conscious raising, an emphasis on feeling, experience, and sharing, and an understanding of hierarchy and authority, continues to influence feminist pedagogy (see Fisher; Overall, 1998; Weiler). Feminist theorists remind us of the constant creation and negotiation of selves within structures of ideology and constraints.

One way to explore the meaning of feminism is to ask what it says or implies about how people ought to treat one another. Some feminists are committed to valuing women’s experiences and genuinely listening to their views (hooks, 1994, Overall, 1998). In the classroom, feminist scholars try to model honesty, thoroughness, commitment to learning, inclusiveness, tolerance, and sensitivity to inequality. Modeling involves sharing doubts and uncertainties:

This sense of humility can lead to more accurate modeling of what I hope and want my students to be – honest thinkers – and to do – reflect carefully and creatively on the issues, while being cautious about going beyond the evidence they possess. (Overall, 1998, p. 145)

Feminist teaching encourages both the students and the instructor to be self-reflective in ways that are uncomfortable and liberating (Fisher, 2001). In this way, feminist teaching assumes that self-reflection, and perhaps, honesty, may deepen classroom conversations. Feminist pedagogy within academic classrooms often addresses heterogeneous groups of students within a competitive and individualistic culture where the teacher holds the power and responsibility (Weiler, 1998). As bell hooks mentions, the academic setting is not a known site for truth-telling (1994).

Creativity is seen as the feminist hallmark (Buzzanell, 1994), therefore, we can understand the diverse intentions of feminist pedagogical practices. Some feminists write about pedagogy as if they believe that the classroom is a universal and a historical space (Finke, 1993) perhaps with intentions of becoming more open, allowing for honest communication, to develop caring relationships with kin and community in our classrooms. By cultivating a classroom culture that embodies feminist values, we can create a space where students can “speak with authority about their own lives both within contexts that feel like home and those that feel more alienating” (Jenefsky, 1996, p. 352). Perhaps feminist should hold the discovery Plato himself came to realize, that knowledge requires a form of love.

The work of Maher and Thompson Tetreault (1994) provides an intimate view of how 17 feminist teachers are revolutionizing higher education. They highlighted the following four analytic themes; mastery, voice, authority, and positionality. These analytic themes derived from concerns raised in the review of literature and those

shared by their participants. Maher and Thompson Tetreault concluded their book by voicing thoughts on the future of pedagogy:

Understanding pedagogy as the comprehensive process of constructing classroom knowledge, we envision less individualistic and more communal models of learning, bringing together different groups of people within classroom and beyond. Such models need to be built on the exploration and acceptance of people's commonalities and differences within an increasingly complex and fragmented social order. (p. 250)

Furthermore, their study "fanned out" a variety of ways to explore issues previously repressed in academe discourse, including racism, class inequality, homophobia, and sexual abuse. Their work has shown the central role a teacher plays in uncovering "voices from the bywaters" and "unspeakable things unspoken." Their efforts reveal the limitations of single classroom settings in transcending the dominant epistemologies of the larger institution. They believe there is a need for collective work on pedagogy because "we are all facing similar challenges" (p. 251).

Women who plan to enter the academy should keep in mind that their students, along with their colleagues, are not free of the same biases and perspectives that pervade much of the academic enterprise and the society as a whole (Cooper, 2002; Lewis, 1999). This awareness can give women an advantage in the classroom. First, they can use personal experiences, theirs and their students, as a learning instrument, based on the pleasures and problems they are pursuing. This is modeled by hooks' following words:

if my knowledge is limited, and if someone else brings a combination of facts and experience, then I humble myself and respectfully learn from those who bring this great gift. I can do this without negating the position of authority

professors have, since fundamentally I believe that combining the analytical and experiential is a richer way of knowing. (hooks, 1994, p.89)

Second, Freire (1970) says if we abandon the banking model in favor of the problem-posing model, we will “undermine the power of oppression” (p. 62). If we replace the separate with a connected model, we can spare women the “alienation, repression, and division” they experience in education. Education that can facilitate “the development of women’s minds and spirits” rather than, “retarding, arresting, or even reversing their growth” (Belenky, et al., 1986, p. 228) is needed. Education should help women toward community, productivity, and integrity.

While female and male faculty emphasize the importance of a student’s ability to think clearly, female faculty are more likely to consider the personal, professional, moral, emotional, and social development of their students as essential goals of their teaching (Park, 1996). Difference in pedagogical goals may account for the difference in teaching styles between women and men. For example, women are more likely to include collaborative learning techniques (Park, 1996). Furthermore, they also define their classrooms as a place where students can interrogate their own accepted beliefs and identities (Weiler, 1988). In this way, the educational process can engage students so they are able to learn about ‘self’ by coming to terms with the ‘other’ (Tierney, 1993).

According to Fisher (2001), creating a feminist pedagogy requires sources of hope that this process is indeed worth the effort. She feels this can be accomplished through feminist discourse. Feminist discourse draws on experiences and feelings in a way that acknowledges and challenges the differing perspectives that participants bring to the discussion. Fisher’s work reveals how we can continue to communicate when “conflicting points of view threaten to destroy the often insecure bonds that

support our talk” (p. 3). Looking at language allows us to examine the imposed structures that affect our thinking and interactions.

Feminist Discourse

We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy (Foucault, 1980, p. 101).

Language constructs the world according to the words and syntax available, imposing a structure on people’s thinking and on their interaction. The labels and descriptions we use help determine what we experience. They constrain how individuals within a particular linguistic structure think about the world and construct the meanings of that world in particular ways. Foucault (1980) argues that it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together because of their articulation in discourse. According to Foucault, “Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it” (p. 101). Discourse is ambiguous, therefore, becoming an arena of struggle, often a struggle over power. There are no inherent, liberating, or repressive communication practices. Communication practices are freeing yet capable of becoming a source of resistance.

Feminism is the practice of challenging the linguistic system as well as all of the structures and institutions it produces, including education, politics, religion, and the economic system. With its focus on disrupting mainstream linguistic structures, feminism is characterized by rethinking and restructuring in a process Chervis

Kramarae summarizes as “equilibrium busting” (as cited in Foss, Foss, & Griffin, 1999) in an email sent to the authors. Feminism, then, is not “a single fixed state” but an ongoing process of disruption of the linguistic and other structures that create a hostile environment for women. “Men have often put women in very constraining boxes” Kramarae explains, “and one of the goals of feminism is not to replace these boxes with others but to encourage more free roaming, including encouraging more linguistic innovations and movement” (p. 53). Feminist discourse attempts to disrupt the systems and processes, including the language system, that are responsible for establishing concepts and values that are hostile to women. There is a need for a “more comfortable world/word structure” for women, a world in which women gather together, learn from one another, work cooperatively and creatively, and play together in spaces they create themselves according to their own needs and wishes. Women are the ones who are more than likely to be socialized into and committed to nonmainstream communicating practices (Foss, et al., 1999).

Working to disrupt linguistic structures need to occur inside and outside of the academy. Kramarae and Jenkins (1987) see feminists who work within the academy as “brave people ... who have a variety of research and analytical techniques to contribute to an explosion of inquiry on and magnificent writing about women and language (p. 150). Feminists, therefore, are activists who challenge patriarchal linguistic structures through their talk, research, writing, teaching, and advocacy work within the university system. hooks (1989) calls systems that promote domination and subjugation “white supremacist capitalist patriarchy” a label that suggests the interlocking structures of sexism, racism, class elitism, capitalism, and heterosexism. She feels that these systems share the ideology in the belief of domination and in the notion of superior and inferior. hooks believes, in these

ideologies values are assigned to differences. Differences are ranked hierarchically, fostering hatred, vicious competition, alienation from others, elitism based on position in the hierarchy, and individualism (hooks, 1989). Feminist poststructuralism is often seen as a tool for reframing our understanding of these matters, allowing gender to be the central feature in academic and other organizational settings.

Poststructuralist Theory

In poststructuralist theory, the common feature in the analysis of social organization, social meanings, power, and individual consciousness is language. In poststructuralist theory, Weedon (1987) tells us that “Language is the place where actual forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested” (p. 21). Weedon also says that language is the place where our sense of ourselves is constructed, therefore, language is not the expression of unique individuality; it is constructed by the individual's experiences in ways which are socially specific.

A feminist poststructuralism is concerned with the social and institutional context of textuality in order to address the power relations of everyday life. Social meanings are produced within social institutions and practices. Individuals who are shaped by these institutions and practices are agents of change. They change to serve the hegemonic interests or challenge existing power relations. How we live our lives as “conscious thinking” people, and how we give meaning to the social relations under which we live and structure our everyday lives, depends on the range and social power of existing discourses, our access to them, and the political strength of the interests which they represent.

Feminist poststructuralist theory suggests that experience has no inherent essential meaning. It may be given meaning in language through a range of

discursive systems of meaning which are often contradictory and constitute conflicting stories of social reality, thereby, serving conflicting interests. This range of discourses and their supports in social institutions and practices are integral to the “maintenance” and “contestation” of forms of social power, since reality has no meaning except in language. Attending to these conflicting stories and conflicting interests in universities generate how the academic culture and ideology affect knowledge production processes, roles, and structures.

Overall, feminist poststructuralism recognizes that individual subjectivity and the collective culture are socially (and historically) constructed, that power relations are embedded in those constructions, and that these power relations are created and recreated through discourse and institutional structures. Change and shifts can occur through perhaps resistant discourses that disrupt the taken for granted assumptions. Alternatives are needed. For this study, Giddens’ (1984) theory on structuration provides a helpful framework to understand dominant discourses lived in organization by considering how people talk about their experiences and the structures that create and sustain the talk.

Structuration Theory

Giddens’ (1984) theory of structuration presents insight into the problems of action and structure experienced by individuals as they navigate their professional work. Giddens believes that people are neither purely free, creative co-constructors of social reality nor pawns whose moves are determined by social structural forces. Rather, people produce and reproduce the social system and its structure through social interaction. “Structure” is reinterpreted in structuration theory to mean the gathering of rules and resources that people draw on that simultaneously enable and

constrain social interaction. “Structure” is thus produced, reproduced, retained, or transformed over time as a condition of future action.

Structuration theory claims to apply to all social processes and at all levels of analysis, but organizational processes and patterns have proven to be especially appealing sites for the application and elaboration of the theory. An individual’s experience is produced and reproduced through discourse (i.e., talk creates structures creates talk). Individuals’ experience within organizations are also a product of discourse among members of the organization, so the perception emerges as “structure” and “reality” through stories and descriptions, talked by the insiders, of the organization’s systems and processes.

Structuration theory provides a compelling framework for the exploration of the discursive construction of people in organizations. We see structuration theory at work in how people describe their experiences. It is important to understand how people talk about their experiences and thus raise issues about their concerns discovered in the patterning of their discourse. Furthermore, we can see how the dual performance of structuration theory and the discursive construction of people in organizations may reveal facilitating and constraining experiences often lived at work. The next chapter will describe the methods employed for this study. It is hoped that the interview-based research and the dissemination of the “findings” in the public sphere can provide a platform for these women’s voices. Ethnographic research is seen as providing a space where people can talk about their “real lives” and “be heard.” Ethnographers often use voice empirically.

CHAPTER III

METHODS:

ETHNOGRAPHY OF WOMEN'S LIVES IN 'ACADEME'

"People aren't accustomed to examining their lives," Amber says, smiling as we end the interview. My colleague, Amber, was kind enough to interview me before I met with my participants.

"Yeah, I think you're right," I respond. "What a gift we have here" I say as we get up from our seats. I thank her for helping me with my work.

Amber says, "This was important for me too, you know. You have given voice to experiences that I had no way of expressing."

These excerpts were taken from my practice interview. Amber interviewed me in order to help me practice interviewing techniques and question generation prior to my fieldwork. Her very last words in the interview were significant in my opinion, "You have given voice to experiences that I had no way of expressing," is a liberating characteristic of ethnographic research.

Introduction

Qualitative inquiry is an interactive and transformational process in which the researcher ventures to learn about and interpret life experiences. The qualitative researcher reproduces experiences that embody cultural meaning and cultural understanding as they function in the "real world" (Denzin, 1997). Often, the researcher acts as the instrument by which the social phenomenon under study are

identified, interpreted, and analyzed. Consequently, the researcher is inescapably a participant observer (Banister, 1999). This has led ethnographers to write more about “how we make sense of and reflect on our own experiences, interactions, and positions in the field” (Coffey, 1999, p. 115). Because of the shift of attention to the “self” of the ethnographer, personal narratives have become more and more accepted as means of revealing identity negotiations of field researchers and participants (Coffey). It was this attention to self where my work began. I wanted to make sense of my own experiences in academe and I wanted to learn more about the assistant professor role I was thinking of entering. I belonged to this culture already in many ways, through my professional opportunities and experiences, my education, and my social networks.

Ethnography is a qualitative method of inquiry that allows researchers to study the meanings of behaviors and interactions of a “culture-sharing group” (Creswell, 1998, p. 58). Additionally, Goodall (2000) defines new ethnographies as “creative narratives shaped out of a writer’s personal experiences within a culture” (p. 9), pointing out that these stories should be addressed to academic and non-academic audiences. Ethnographic texts create the possibility for reclamation of voices that have been either absent from traditional social sciences or misrepresented as ways to understand whole schemas of cultures.

By representing reality in our own ways and with our own categories, ethnography confronts dominant forms of representation and power. In this study, I will interpret and re-present data gathered by interacting and engaging with female assistant professors. The results will present ethnographic accounts that “help provide definition and scope to individuals, so that readers are able to locate the text within larger representational practices” (Tierney, 1998, p. 56). In this sense,

ethnography is more than a telling of one's experience, it critically looks outward at power relations in cultural spaces that often constrain the meanings available for understanding. In this way, this ethnographic research allows readers, participants, and myself to better understand the complicated discourses that shape a woman's experience in academe. This chapter explains my rationale for using ethnographic methods and describes my research journey at great lengths.

Ethnographic Methods

There are many reasons ethnography is a desirable methodology for this research. First, accounts of life experiences are extremely important in human studies because they portray and tell us about the people who generate them (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). The stories told by my participants capture different discourses that provide understanding to how women talk about their experiences in academe. My role as an ethnographer is to reveal these life experiences. Every story gathered in the interviews is a collaboration of potential meaning and understanding.

Second, personal stories in ethnographic research can serve as a vehicle toward change among participants and readers. As Goodall (2000) suggests, "good writing, like conversation, is transformational" (p. 41). The goal is for participants, researchers, and readers to learn something and grow in understanding about the discursive construction of people in organizations, specifically, the discourses that shape a woman's experience in academe. These stories inspire critical reflection on one's own personal experiences. Often, the participant materializes from the researcher's own experience (Bochner, 2000; Geist-Martin, 2003) as was the case when Amber interviewed me. As Goodall explains, "descriptions of the outward world come from deep inside us" (p. 95) which has led me to reflect on my own

experiences and the way I communicate my experiences of academe in my everyday life.

Finally, ethnographic research encourages researchers to reflect and include their own thoughts, experiences, and feelings in the stories. This is an essential part of doing ethnography because I am in the “culture-sharing group” (Creswell, 1998, p. 58). Ellis and Bochner (1999) wrote that reflexive ethnographers “use all their senses, their bodies, movement, feeling and their whole being- they use the “self” to learn about the other” (p. 741). While self-reflexivity is not demonstrated in the text of the next chapter, it was indeed part of this methodological process. Introspection and writing about personal experiences allows me to explore the ways in which my own discourses may be facilitating and constraining. As Goodall (2000) suggests, these stories told by my participants should be addressed to academic and non-academic audiences to generate awareness. Furthermore, we must keep in mind that the ethnographer’s perception is the key warrant for the knowledge produced. Ethnography is a writing practice in which the participants are inscribed within, and explained by, the power of the ethnographer’s language. My research journey can be clearly identified in a web of relationships that I navigated to research this mystery.

The Research Journey

I tell of my journey in the research process using Birch’s (1998) concepts of *going there*, *being there*, and *being here*. *Going there* is the theoretical exploration before the field that places the researcher in a particular position when entering, defining, and gaining access into the field of inquiry. *Being there* in the field is the actual participation, involvement, and formed relationships. *Being here* is the final stages of analysis and writing up. Birch (1998) believes that this final stage of ‘being

here' becomes a personal, private space even though ethnographer's often seek to create a more publicly accepted story for their audiences.

Going There

I wanted to know more about myself in my academic life. I was seeking satisfaction and happiness from a series of upsetting experiences in my doctoral program. I hoped my research endeavors would provide a framework of renewal and healing for women like myself in academe. I began this exploration from where I was. Most ethnographies are inspired by where the researcher stands. My interpretations of my experiences were no longer just a result of circumstances but became an active creation of my hearts desire to move to a productive and better place. I had already had access to this field as I had been a part of the academic culture for some time, however, I never had any formal education on women's lived experiences or feminist theory. I began to research feminist methods and it was here where I found a plethora of literature. It was in lived experiences where I found feminist scholars maintaining a critical attitude toward many of our culture's stories of personal experiences "to help create new and better stories that direct us toward healthier bodies and more contented hearts" (Tillmann-Healy, 1996, p. 105). I wanted a contented heart. I knew at this point I wanted to interview women whose position I may soon enter. I started to generate interview questions based on what I wanted to know and what I felt was missing in the literature.

Interview guide. My interview guide was designed to learn about the lived experiences of female scholars in the assistant professor role. The questions evolved after months of research and three pilot interviews. Once the interview guide was in the final stages, I had my colleague, Amber, interview me. This guide was

intended to be flexible and ever changing with each interview if need be. Once the interview guide was created, I noticed there were several important questions that I wanted to ask so I decided to break down the questions in two different interviews (see Appendix A).

In the first interview, I wanted to hear more about the women's academic experiences as both a graduate student and as an assistant professor. The second interview was designed to learn more about their teaching practices. In the first interview, the first four questions were designed to have the participants talk about their graduate experiences. After looking at the literature on women academics and reflecting on my own experiences in the doctoral program, I thought that while in graduate school their stories might give me some additional insight into their current experiences. I also wanted to know what led these women to become a professor and live the academic life.

In the next five questions, I wanted the women to talk more about their identity, specifically, their feminist identity. After reviewing the literature on feminist standpoint theory, I learned that many female scholars are concerned about reflexive awareness and political consciousness. I thought their talk on their identity, perhaps, feminist identity, may help me better understand how they frame their experiences based on their standpoints.

The last three questions, in the first interview, were intended to learn about the women's experiences as assistant professors. I wanted to know what these women do to compose a meaningful life in academe. Mary Catherine Bateson's (1989) book called, *Composing a Life*, inspired me to write ethnographically and to further think about how woman's lives "are composed" in academe. Her work convinced me that academic work is not only done in our institutions but in our

homes and in our bodies. Seeing patterns as a whole captures the essence of Bateson's ethnographic goal. She says:

Current research on women often focuses on a single aspect or stage of life. Dissection is an essential part of scientific methods, and it is particularly tempting to dissemble a life composed of odds and ends, to describe the pieces separately. Unfortunately, when this is done the pattern and loving labor in the patchwork is lost. (p. 10)

In the second interview, I asked the women eight questions about their teaching practices. These questions derived from my own teaching experiences and the additional reading on feminist pedagogy. I asked them what are they trying to achieve in the classroom to how is their feminist philosophy reflected in their teaching to having them tell me about a time when they experienced an interaction in teaching that caused them to question who they are and what they do. The very last question, and perhaps the most insightful question of all, asked them if they had anything else they would like to add that I did not ask.

My voice. In the early stages of the research journey, I was defining my own place as the researcher. My understanding of ethnography gave me a methodology of how to record my own experiences in the field, and then to consider how I might place the story of my research process alongside my observational stories and the stories told to me by my participants. Gonzalez (2000) tells us that it is through her experiences – physically, socioemotionally, rationally, and spiritually – an awareness and understanding of one's own identity and personal experience is "critical to being an effective 'human instrument'" (p. 635).

Being There

Back in November of 2003, I attended the National Communication Association (NCA) Conference in San Diego. At that time, my research interests were just developing. However, I talked with a few assistant professors who were more than willing to listen to my story. I was excited by their sincere interests and their desires to tell their own stories. I left the conference with three women wanting to be a part of my future dissertation study. In fact, all three of these women asked me if they could be included in the study.

Later, in that same year, I decided to audit Professor Patricia Geist-Martin's ethnography class at San Diego State University. It was here where I developed my dissertation proposal and my interview guide. Once I successfully defended my dissertation proposal and upon approval from the university's Institutional Review Board (see Appendix B), I contacted the women I had spoken to at the conference. This work had taken several months to evolve and I was eager to let the women know I was ready to begin interviewing.

Participants. I was able to connect via email with the three women that I spoke to back at NCA. All of them were still eager to participate in the study. A friend of mine, Amy, who is in the academic circle, told me that she knew of two women who wanted to "tell their stories." I contacted these women as well. Most of the women asked if I "needed referrals." Thus, there was a snowball effect (Patton, 1990) as most of the women gave me names of other, assistant professors, in a variety of disciplinary fields. I also had two people in mind who I wanted to interview, one woman I knew well, and the other woman, not well at all. I wanted to include women who were seen as or who self-identified as feminists, and those who were willing to share experiences of exhilaration and debilitation in academe. For the most

part, I wanted women that resembled my self and those who would have “the real conversation” with me.

Within two days, I had made written agreement, via email, the participation of all seven women in this study. Within five days, five other women contacted me via email. Each of them had been communicating with one of my participants. They too, wanted to share their stories. I thanked these women and told them I already scheduled the interviews. I mentioned I would keep their names and numbers for future reference. I was taken back by the ease of finding participants. I will briefly introduce the seven women. I have sequenced them in the order I conducted the interviews.

Jolie is an assistant professor in a business school located on the west coast. Her university caters primarily to working adults. She has been in her position for only six months. Jolie is the oldest participant in this study. She is in her fifties, married, and has four grown children. Jolie is a white, financially well-off, and started her educational career in her forties.

Loren has been an assistant professor for five years. She teaches in a communication department at a private university on the west coast. Loren is Asian-American. She is single and in her late thirties.

Tillie has been an assistant professor for two years. She also teaches in a communication department at a state university on the west coast. Tillie is white, single, and in her early thirties.

Rachel has completed her first year as an assistant professor in a communication department. She teaches at a research one university in the east coast. Rachel is white, single, and in her mid-thirties.

Adele has been an assistant professor for one year and has decided to resign her tenure contract. She will be moving back to New York within a few days of our interview. Adele teaches in a counseling department at a state university. She is Asian-American. Adele is single and is in her late thirties.

Renee has been an assistant professor for four years at a state university. She teaches in a political science department on the west coast. Renee is married with a six-year old daughter. She is white and in her early forties.

Finally, Kristy has been an assistant professor for three years. She teaches in an education department at a private university on the west coast. Kristy is white, single, and in her early thirties.

Procedures. All initial arrangements made with the seven women occurred through email exchanges. I had each of the women select where they wanted to meet. Jolie and Renee wanted me to come to their homes. I flew out to see Rachel and she invited me to stay at her place for the weekend. I met Loren at a local coffee shop, and Tillie, Adele, and Kristy at their offices on campus. I asked the women if they preferred two, shorter interviews, or one, longer interview. All of the women, except for Jolie, asked to have one, longer interview. I sent each of them the interview guide and consent form ahead of time so they could feel prepared. Furthermore, I asked the women for a copy of their current academic vita. Interestingly, all of the women had their consent forms (see Appendix B) signed in advance, Loren actually began our interview by saying, “I’m prepared to jump right in and talk.”

Interviewing. Interviews are the main source from which I studied the discourses that shape a woman’s experience in academe. According to Goodall, “Voice is the sound of the ethnographic world being called into being” (2000, p. 140).

I used interactive interviewing techniques as an interpretive practice to get in-depth, and an intimate understanding, of these women's experiences emotionally invested and sensitive topics (see Ellis, Kiesinger, & Tillman-Healy, 1997). My approach was flexible and continually guided by ongoing interaction within the interview context. I made myself vulnerable just like the women did. I believe it was from this vulnerable-space where authentic and meaningful dialogues surfaced. These interviews felt protected by mutual care, sincerity, and respect for the research. In the re-telling of their experiences, and therefore, re-experiencing their experiences, I hoped that my participants may move toward a better understanding of their story.

The interviews ranged from two to three hours in length. All interviews were audio-taped and later transcribed verbatim. Pseudonyms have replaced their real names. Each woman received her transcript online. I was communicating with four of my participants for several weeks after our interviews. These four women told me that the interview process and the transcription generated and influenced new writing for them. Two women are currently working on journal articles as a result.

Being a part of these women's lives and having them entrust me with their stories has been a gift. I do not feel as though I am at the center of this research journey any longer. These women have changed my life and have altered my way of interpreting and talking about my experiences in academe. It is through reflexivity that I continue to understand this experience. Goodall states, "to be reflexive means to turn back on our self the lens through which we are interpreting the world" (p. 137). However, I feel that the women in this study sit beside me, and together, we are pushed and pulled, working collaboratively to find new interpretations, representations, and applications of the data. Moreover, as I write, I simultaneously think about the discourses I use to participate in, observe, and reflect on my own

research experience while I analyze and discover ways to represent the data. I hope to reveal some important truths.

Being Here

My goal in analyzing and representing the data is to provide a narrative that allows us to see the discourses that facilitate or constrain a woman's life/work. I hope collectively, these narratives reflect the interactions and communication practices that are of concern to female assistant professors, and furthermore, illustrate the complexity of their lives. I want my narratives to reflect the ever-changing, continuing negotiation that people make in their everyday interactions. The writing process has become a method of inquiry.

According to Richardson (2000), "Although we usually think of writing as a mode of 'telling' about the social world, writing is not just a mopping-up activity at the end of a research project. Writing is also a way of 'knowing' – a method of discovery and analysis" (p. 923). When writing is viewed as a method, we experience "language-in-use" and how we "word the world" into existence (Rose, 1992). It was through writing and rewriting that I was able to get the final stages of representation for the goal of this study. This work feels like it is still in its beginning stages. After one month of data collection, one month of transcribing, and five months of analysis-through-writing, the process of analyzing and representing this data occur through five stages.

Stage one – Writing stories. As contradictory as this may sound, I wrote stories as a way of determining what data to leave out. I read each woman's respective transcript five times. I had approximately twenty hours of interview time and 350 single-spaced pages of transcripts to analyze. I narrowed each transcript into a story that was used solely for understanding the content, context, and

communication processes. This stage involved reading and listening to the stories until I could create open coding (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). These stories helped me to see the beginning of emerging themes and patterns, in addition to knowing their respective words more intimately.

Stage two – Open coding. I began by pulling out quotes and classifying them into several communication patterns that I found throughout each participant interview. As Lindlof and Taylor (2002) note, “analysis is the process of labeling and breaking down (or decontextualizing) raw data and reconstituting them into patterns, themes, concepts, and propositions” (p. 210). I was more familiar with the content and further connected to their individual discourses and communication practices. In order to understand these communication practices, I used a structure to represent all of their patterned communication practices. Structures can help us examine the language people use that enable and constrain social interactions (Giddens, 1984). This approach was far too complex though, and not that significant. However, when I began to look at each woman’s discourses within the context of their own stories, this led to new discovery. I had so much information that I became overwhelmed with the data. It was at this point I had to choose what path to take. I revisited my two research questions, and then, looked at the transcripts and the writing stories and began highlighting the words that appeared to facilitate and constrain these women’s lives and work.

I recall meeting with Professor Geist-Martin. I called her and asked if we could meet. I wanted to let her know I was feeling overwhelmed and disenchanted by the writing process. I remember her asking me, “Alana, what do you see here that we would not normally see?” I was thinking, what is beginning to take shape in these patterns? I then looked at Professor Geist-Martin and said, “You know, when they

talk, the way they talk appears to be patterned too. For example, Rachel keeps saying she's at a 'Research One' over and over again. All of the women have their own patterned talk, it's like their words move along an involute – tightening and expanding their communication.”

I then, carefully examined the patterns in the discourse. I wrote and rewrote those patterns for each woman, and soon thereafter, I began to see the women's words giving shape to the emerging structures.

Stage three – Emerging schemes of interpretation. Once I named the involute, I attempted to name more structures. I thought about the patterns within each woman's story, not only did I recognize each woman's unique patterned talk in her story, I recognized that each woman had some sort of medium that helped them to stay focused and centered to retain shape and identity. Furthermore, they had communicated in their stories an ability to reframe an experience, and in many ways, perform a transformation. The refractor and translate structures were then developed. The involute, refractor, and translate are structures that represent the communication practices and the words of each woman invoked these structures. Stories were generated around the three structures.

Stage four – Narratives take shape. I then generated narratives around the structures to demonstrate how the structures played out for each woman. A total of 21 narratives were created. Each narrative was approximately two to three pages in length. The narratives reflect the women's communication practices. I then labeled each of these communication practices while keeping in mind the respective structure they fell under. The structures appeared in the discourse the women would use to describe their lives. I pulled out segments of their stories to demonstrate this discovery. Even though the women were not necessarily conscious of this dynamic,

their words invoke the structures and the structures affect their lives. This is when I went back to the literature on Giddens' use of structuration theory and the concept of talk creates structure creates talk. At this time, I contacted a graphic artist to develop a visual representation of each structure.

Stage five – Interpreting the narratives. The three mathematical structures discovered through analysis of the interview data reveal the complexities of academic life voiced by the women in this study. The women's stories are as difficult to navigate as the mysterious complexities of mathematics. Mathematics is a useful vehicle for understanding the symbolic language of relationships. In this study, three mathematical structures formulate, organize, and compose the "findings" of this research. The words of each woman in this study reveal how they have become entangled in an intricate equation of sensemaking in academe.

The three mathematical structures represent formation, organization, and composition of organizational life by revealing the patterns found in the women's discourse. Throughout their stories we see how the involute, refractor, and translate function as a constant opportunity to represent beneficial, detrimental, knowledgeable, unacknowledged, transforming, conscious, and perhaps, unconscious practices. Several short stories serve as "the practices" and expose what the mathematical structures tell us about their communication.

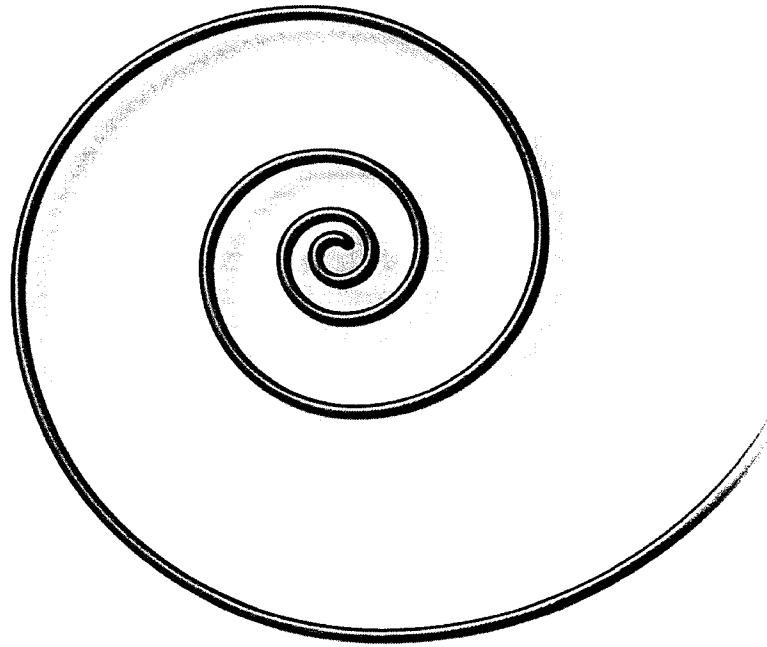


Figure 1. Involute.

The involute – Wound up. In mathematics, an involute is a *method* to derive a new curve based on a directional curve and a point on the curve. It is the roulette of a selected point on a line that rolls (as a tangent) upon the curve. The involute resembles a nautilus shell that is fluid in form. Its margins curl inward, creating what looks like a spiral, to return to a normal or formal condition. The structure is complicated and contorted yet simultaneously offers shape and proportion. In this study, the involute represents the dominant discursive practices that often wind us up and impinge upon our ability to make choices and thus affects the ways that we communicate. This structure has the potential to use recycled dominant discursive practices as extracted cues to generate new thoughts and action.

The wide-ranging features of the involute can be discovered in a variety of communicative contexts and social interactions such as family history to social identity to managing expectations and pressures within academe. The unique features of the involute are revealed in the women's stories as a way of tightening and expanding their communication practices. Tightening discourses *confine* communication practices and narrow the opportunity for other, possible practices, while expanding discourses *protect* communication practices and defend the need for other, possible practices. The involute appears to confirm their dominant discursive practices. It seems the women have no control of the structure yet they simultaneously take advantage of the structure, thus, giving them the sense that the structure is influencing their lives in manageable and productive ways.

The involute represents what these women are consciously (or unconsciously) focused on at the time they tell their stories. The women move along the involute in complicated and contorted ways and, at times, move along paradoxically showing how they manage these dominant discursive practices. We see the women moving along the involute, appearing to move outward, away from the normal or formal condition, or inward, back to the normal or formal condition. The normal or formal condition is the center of the involute. Adjectives are used to describe the complex nature of each woman's involute. The quote following the involute captures the phrase or idea they repeat over and over.

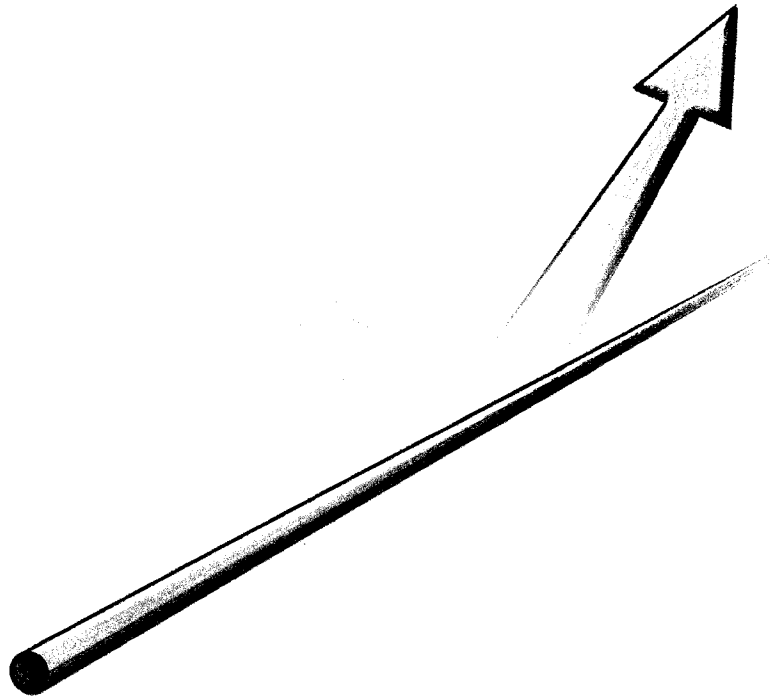


Figure 2. Refractor.

The refractor – Shape and identity. A refractor is an *action* of altering an image by viewing it through a medium. It is anything that refracts, bends sharply, and/or breaks off. It is the change in the apparent position of an object and *is* the correction to be applied to the apparent position of an object because of this bending. The refractor has the ability to retain shape and identity. The refractor operates like a refractor telescope, using a lens to magnify and focus an image for gathering and amplifying light. The medium's "bending power" can be measured by a refractive index. In this study, the refractor represents the mediums that change our views and help us retain shape and identity and thus affects the ways that we communicate. The refractor functions to refract, deflect, suppress, remove, ignore,

and/or resist those troubling communication practices and interactions that leave us feeling hurt, stuck, fearful, stupid, ashamed, and/or voiceless. This structure has the potential to index the medium's effectiveness to determine its resilience and value.

The wide-ranging features of the refractor are discovered in a variety of communicative contexts and social interactions such as classroom experiences to identity development to physical abuse. The unique features of the refractor are revealed through the women's stories as a way of enlightening and enabling their communication practices. Enlightening and enabling communication practices provide strength and renewal. The refractor appears to refract obstructing and disabling communication practices through the use of a medium that changes a view and corrects the course of action. A medium can be a person, idea, belief, behavior, and/or activity. Likewise, obstructing and disabling communication practices can be people, ideas, beliefs, behaviors, and/or activities.

The refractor represents a woman's source of strength and renewal to move her forward in meaningful and productive ways. Her source of strength and renewal (the medium) and the obstructing and disabling communication practices are revealed through the woman's language. The narratives show the women accessing their refractors. The structure is secure and inspiring. In each woman's story, her refractor along with what she is refracting are named.

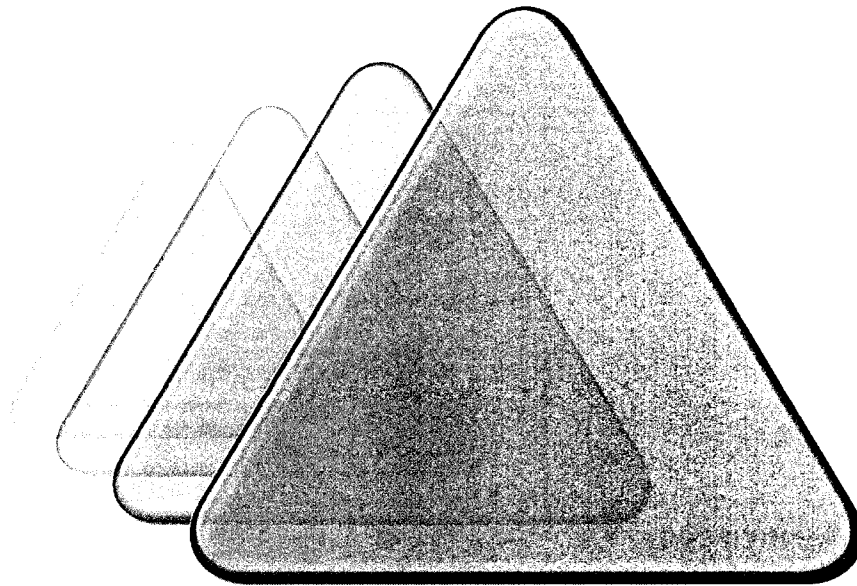


Figure 3. Translate.

The translate – Shift in perspective. In mathematics, to translate an object means to *perform a transformation*. A translate of a mathematical object means a shifted (i.e., translated) version of the object. The translate changes a position of the object without rotation or distortion. The object can change from one form, function, or state to another, thereby, performing a transformation. In this study, the translate represents a shift in perspective from a current position or situation and thus affects the ways that we communicate. The translate performs a transformation of thought and action. This structure has the potential to function as an interpretive vehicle and reframe those dominant discourses that possibly undermine our lives. In this way,

we might learn how to see our place in the bigger picture and become our own observers.

The wide-ranging features of the translate are discovered in academe and can be expressed as authenticity to sexuality to boundaries. The unique features of the translate can be seen in the women's stories as a way of shifting them into, out of, or beyond their current struggles. The translate appears to function as an interpreter or translator. This alters the ways in which these women talk about their current situations. Their struggles are connected to the very issues they care about. It seems only natural to want these issues clarified.

The translate represents the movement of a transformation. In the next chapter, we see the translate evolving as the women talk about their current struggles in academe. By the end of each woman's story we can see the performance of transformation as revealed by their discourse and the sequencing of events within the story. The translate is different for each woman. The outcome of each story varies as to whether or not their transformation is productive, undermining, or paradoxical. In each woman's story, her translate along with her performed transformation are named.

Lastly, I hope these structures provide additional insight and practical application into the ways we examine discourse, whether our own or someone else's. According to Berger (2001), readers must feel they have choices about what positions to take in a story, that what they read may speak to their experiences (or, if not, that there are reasonable explanations as to why not) and that they come to know the characters. Furthermore, a story's generalizability is constantly being tested as readers determine if it speaks to them or speaks to the lives of others they know. This study may provide the inspiration, along with the insight, for others to

learn more about the academy. The next chapter provides the heart of this project – the communication practices and the discourses that shape a woman's experience in academe.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS:

COMPLICATED STRUCTURES AND COMMUNICATION PRACTICES FACILITATING AND CONSTRAINING THE LIVES OF SEVEN WOMEN

Alana: Is there anything else you would like to say?

Rachel: I would like to know what other women are struggling with. I know individually we all have our struggles. I know that some of the married couples and some of the other people in my department have their own struggles too. I'm not suggesting that I'm the only one who's negotiating life. But I feel there are some particulars to my struggles that are associated with being a feminist in academe, single, wanting more, expecting more. Slowly but surely I'm becoming less ideal and more like, "okay, whatever" [big sigh]. So, I'd like to know how other women are coping with these decisions. Do they want to make tenure? Yeah, and being the smart career woman at the expense of a family or a relationship. God, I never thought that was going to happen.

Introduction

Slowly but surely this chapter has evolved to expose the facilitating and constraining discursive practices found in seven female assistant professors lives. The words of each woman reveal how they have become entangled in an intricate equation of sensemaking in academe. This chapter examines Rachel's talk about her concerns as she tries to make sense of her own experiences and current struggles. Her reaction, "okay, whatever" is shared by other women in this study. I hope these stories enable Rachel, and others, to further negotiate life struggles consciously, productively, and fulfilling.

The women's stories are presented and interpreted by the three developed structures. First, I present the women's language moving along the involute,

tightening and expanding communication. Then, I show their language accessing the refractors and the very things they refract. Last, the translate reveals how the women shift perspectives, moving them in and out of frames of meaning. Throughout their stories we see how the involute, refractor, and translate function as a constant opportunity to represent beneficial, detrimental, knowledgeable, unacknowledged, transforming, conscious, and perhaps, unconscious practices. Several short stories serve as “the practices” and expose what the mathematical structures tell us about their communication. Chapter Four is organized to present the complexities of academic life found in the discursive practices of these women.

The Involute

Disparaging-Encouraging Involute: “Going to the Stupid Place”

The involute for Jolie appears to have taken root as the discourse reveals that she carries this structure with her at all times. We see it moving through her communication with her mother and in her classroom and teaching experiences. Jolie moves along the involute in disparaging and encouraging ways, impacting her communication in seemingly unproductive and productive ways. The involute for Jolie is unique in that it shows us how her family history, specifically, the relationship she has with her mother, affects the way she views her own intelligence. During our two interviews, Jolie talked about “going to the stupid place” numerous times. Her involute reoccurs most often in comparison to the other women I interviewed. Jolie’s involute winds up like something fierce, tightening her communication. When this happens, she reverts back in time and hears the voice of her mother calling her “stupid.”

The involute appears to be disparaging in that it is based on projections, old patterns, and fallacies causing her to question her self-confidence. In high school

Jolie found out she would not be taking any college prep courses because the results of her “tracking test” indicated she was “not college material.” Jolie was *tracked* to take shorthand, bookkeeping, and typing while her friends were taking algebra and foreign languages. “I wasn’t smart enough. The school decided I wasn’t smart enough,” she says. That same year, her brother received a four-year college scholarship to Stanford.

Unfortunately, Jolie’s mother exploited her own daughter’s other-imposed, and now self-imposed, feelings of stupidity. Jolie’s mom would often tell her, “Your brother is so smart and you’re so stupid. How could you be so stupid?” Even today, when Jolie makes a mistake while she and her mom are playing cards, her mom will say, “How can you be so stupid?” Jolie then looks up at me and says, “I would never say this to my own children.” Jolie tells me that whenever something feels highly complex to her, she will hear the voice that says, “You’re so stupid!”

You can see the hurt and frustration in Jolie’s eyes. “Even now with a doctoral degree, I’m not smart enough,” she says.

It is clear from these words that Jolie’s involute tightens, winding her back to “the stupid place,” a formal condition she learned as a child. This disparaging involute leaves her feeling sad and doubtful.

Although I get a sense that Jolie is not always left paralyzed by her disparaging involute so I ask her, “Does this ‘going stupid’ give you an edge when you teach?”

“Oh, absolutely. Absolutely!” Jolie says.

“Sometimes I think I should sit here and shut up but then I think ‘No, no. Jolie be the teacher and take on your responsibility.’ If I don’t understand it other people won’t understand it either,” she explains. “I battle my own demons at times while I’m

in the classroom, the stupid demon. So yeah, it's really encouraging for me as well," she says. In this way, we see the involute as encouraging, moving her outward, away from the formal, restrictive condition. The structure expands protectively here, moving Jolie away from the confining spot yet still, she is moving along "the going stupid" involute.

Jolie believes a large percentage of students feel the exact same way she does at the beginning of a class. Jolie's intuition tells her that she is not the only one who goes to a stupid place. In her view, many of her female and minority students "get this" concept of the stupid place and "even the big white guys, when we move beyond the surface and dig deep down, they too feel stupid." Jolie believes this dynamic is present in every classroom, I don't know to what extent but I always assume it's there," she says.

"It's a really nice segue, she says. "It comes up in every single class. I don't plan it ahead of time, it just comes out. It's part of the spirit leading my teaching," she says. "I have a funny story I'm going to share with you. I'm going to tell you about high school and being tracked, not seen as college material, my smarter brother, and mom calling me stupid." Jolie combats the structure by communicating to her students that they do not have to adopt the same "stupid place" practice, perhaps even done so unconsciously, as a way of protecting her students. Maybe this is how Jolie communicates encouragement to her students and to herself.

Jolie then tells me about an experience she had as a doctoral student. It was her last class in the doctoral program. "I walked into the first night of class and said to myself – I mean it's the voice that you can't control, well you can, but not initially – and the voice was, 'You're too stupid. You're never gonna figure this out. You're gonna fail this class.' I teach ethics and I think I'm going to fail this ETHICS class!"

“I still carry this around with me wherever I go,” Jolie says.

We can see from these words just how big and powerful Jolie’s involute is for her. The discourse reveals that Jolie carries this structure with her at all times, suggesting that she is always in a vulnerable place, as she can move inward, back to the stupid place. This exposes Jolie unconsciously to be pulled into the tightening involute at any time, battling the voice of her mother and feeling stupid.

The involute for Jolie appears to have taken root. What we see in Jolie’s narrative is her moving along the “going to the stupid place” involute in disparaging and encouraging ways. This impacts her communication in seemingly unproductive and productive ways yet always reinforcing the structure. Next, we see the unique features of the involute in Loren’s narrative, tightening and expanding as she struggles with her identity on her college campus and in her community. Loren’s involute may be preventing her from getting the very thing she says she wants, a feeling of belonging, at her place of work and in her community.

Concealing-Revealing Involute: “People Don’t Know Where to Place Me”

We see Loren’s involute moving forcefully through her communication about her identity at work and the community that she lives in. Loren moves along the involute in concealing and revealing ways to help her better understand and manage her identity. The involute for Loren is unique in that it shows us how her identity, specifically, her appearance and social identity, affects the way other people may “place” her. Loren also tells me she does not feel as though she has a “sense of belonging.” During our interview, Loren tells me that she has “a complicated style of interaction” and “a spiral way of being.” Loren tells me about her difficult experiences with people “having to place” and “make sense of” her.

Loren says over and over, “People don’t know where to place me.”

“Here you have a tall Chinese woman, a tall Chinese woman who knows about power distance yet can lower that power distance at the drop of a hat.” Loren is five-foot-seven Chinese American. She is very lean and very attractive. She tells me that she believes this dynamic to be the most compelling part of her teaching and her personality. Loren respects that power distance in the classroom and sees her behavior in and out of the classroom as “very low power.” There is a similar dynamic among the interaction that she has with her colleagues. She says, “That’s how it plays out in the department. They don’t know where to place me because I look challenging and I look intimidating. I don’t know if it’s my height or my personality. I have no idea?” Here we can see Loren moving along her involute as she tries to understand why her students and colleagues do not know where to place her.

As Loren “seeks to learn about [her]self” and find a “sense of belonging” in a predominantly white, private university, she experiences what she calls “damaging places.” It is clear from these words that Loren’s involute is tightening, moving inward, back to “people don’t know where to place me.” This might be bearing down on her ability to “learn about self” and find a “sense of belonging.” Loren could be resisting the very thing she wants by naming her experiences as “places” where “damage” occurred. This might help us understand why Loren’s involute is wound tight through interaction regarding her identity yet she communicates in ways to manage or change that identity, and thus, the movement of the involute.

On the forefront of Loren’s social identity has been the fight for ethnic studies and diversity, not the fight for feminism she tells me. She is a feminist yet does not announce it publicly. Loren assumes that people do in fact see her as a feminist, “It’s the natural fit. Oh, give that one to Loren.” It would simply fall into the work she was hired to do for the department she tells me. In other words, “It wouldn’t be okay for

me to say that I'm not a feminist." However, Loren does not want her feminist identity to be the vanguard. "I don't think I want to place that there. It waters down the fight. Yes, it waters down the fight and I'm not as prepared to voice my activism for feminism," she says. Here we can see the involute in process, expanding to organize her public positions of identity. Even though Loren believes that people do not know where to place her, she can "place" her feminist identity and assume what other people might consider to be a "natural fit" for her. It appears Loren is moving outward, away from the center of her involute, managing the structure by "placing" her public positions. Loren may actively communicate her positions as a way of revealing to other people how she wants to be placed, thereby, protecting her interests.

Loren repeats, "Then what are you fighting for?"

The words "fighting for" may tell us that Loren battles with her involute, therefore, suggesting that she is often struggling. Perhaps managing the structure is not enough here.

I ask Loren, "Do you feel it's your place here at University Pacific?"

She responds, "I just don't, I don't know. It's not my place. The university hired me to do X,Y, and Z. It has taken me well over five years to prove myself. If I'm not doing my job, then I'm not doing my job. That's how I frame it. If I don't get tenure, then WHATEVER!" she says. "I've been overworked and underpaid and I'm very, very tired," she says. From these words we can see Loren's involute wound tight as she talks about tenure. It appears that her communication practice is confined as she possibly disregards the tenure process by saying "whatever," and that she is "overworked," "underpaid," and "very, very tired."

Loren then voices, "I've taken some hard knocks." It appears that Loren's involute moves forcefully. Her involute may leave her feeling bruised.

Loren also tells me she does not feel as though she fits into the larger community, "I don't feel like this is a place where I really fit. This has nothing to do with the campus community." She says, "It doesn't seem like it's fitting, you know? Like I still don't know who I really am." Loren tells me, "As an Asian American I feel like the one of many and I do not have a sense of a Chinese community." Here we can see Loren moving along her involute. It is expanding and perhaps in process of revealing new information. Loren then tells me, "I don't feel like I have a sense of home," she says.

Loren then pauses for a moment, "Yeah, it's back. This is healthy for me to realize. It might be the community that's not giving me a place. While I'm fighting for diversity, and dah, dah, dah, there's still this need that I want to have met, and that is being Chinese." Here we can see Loren discovering new information about her situation. This might help us see how Loren's involute can loosen through conversation. However, it appears as though the involute has just widened to cover more territory.

In Loren's narrative we see her moving along the involute in concealing and revealing ways as she tries to manage her identity at the university and in the community. Loren's involute may be preventing her from having a sense of belonging and a feeling of home. Furthermore, her involute appears to move forcefully as the discourse reveals her taking some hard knocks. In the next narrative, we see how Tillie's involute tightens and expands as she talks about productivity in academe. Tillie's moves along the involute in intensifying and

eradicating ways, impacting her ability to achieve balance and good health. Tillie wonders when she will be able to stop buckling down and focusing.

Intensifying-Eradicating Involute: “Stop Buckling Down and Focusing”

The involute for Tillie appears to affect her health. Within the first few minutes of our interview, Tillie tells me she is overweight and not very healthy. We see Tillie’s involute moving as she talks about her productivity in academe. She appears to move along the involute in intensifying and eradicating ways as she struggles to achieve a sense of balance and good health. The involute for Tillie is unique in that it allows us to see her how she tries to “stop buckling down and focusing.” Tillie’s involute works in reverse. As her involute expands, she engages in the very behavior she wants to change.

Tillie tells me she is an “overachiever.” As she mentions in the interview, she is an “approval seeker.” This is Tillie’s third year as an assistant professor and she is still telling herself how important it is for her to live a balanced life. She also refers to “living more balanced” over a dozen times in our interview. The way in which Tillie describes herself, as an overachiever and approval seeker, probably intensifies her movement along the involute.

During graduate school it was all about “overload” she says, “There was no balance, it was school all the time.” She also tells me she was a “super nerd student” and that she did not realize, until much later, just how imbalanced she was. Tillie had no hobbies. She would read and talk, always reading and always talking she tells me. As Tillie put it, she was in “sponge mode” and “still is in sponge mode” for the most part. Here we can see how the involute has been in place for quite some time. It is clear from these words that Tillie’s involute is affecting the way she views herself and absorbs information as a student and as an assistant professor. Here we can

see Tillie reinforcing the involute by naming that she is “still in sponge mode” and, as mentioned in the above paragraph, that she is an “approval seeker.” This might help us understand why Tillie’s involute expanding, moving her outward, away from “stop buckling down and focusing.”

Tillie knew she was going to get the highest degree she could earn. She tells me she did not consider what life would be like otherwise. This was her one ambition. She tells me, “I worked way more than a person should, but it’s fun. It didn’t bother me at all. My first year here at University of Tampa my mom said to me that it would be okay for me to start having a life, and I was like, ‘Oh, yeah!’” Tillie says, “I’d been saying those things to myself in my head the whole time – you just gotta buckle down and focus and get through this. Buckle down and focus and get through this. I’ve been doing this for ten years. At what point do you stop buckling down and focusing?” Here we can see Tillie moving along the involute in intensifying yet simultaneously, eradicating ways.

Tillie is 32 years old and appears to have an endless amount of energy yet she keeps telling me she is “imbalanced” and “not so healthy right now.” Hearing this makes me sad. Tillie is a beautiful young woman. Tillie tells me she has been struggling with her weight since she arrived at the university. She also tells me that during the month of October she feels additional pressure as review materials are expected from her. Tillie tells me she measures her performance based on what she accomplished last year, “I want to be able to prove to them that I’ve doubled my productivity. I want to demonstrate to them just how much better I am now.” We can see from these words how Tillie’s involute is expanding, moving her away from her center, and perhaps bearing down on her ability to achieve balance and good health. This might help us understand why Tillie’s involute unwinds, and she loses her

center, when she talks about her productivity. Tillie reinforces the structure by communicating that she needs to “prove” to others “just how much better” she is now. She may do this unconsciously as a way of protecting her “overload” work ethic. Perhaps Tillie fears that “stop buckling down and focusing” means stopping productivity.

Tillie’s involute becomes even more complicated as she talks to me about having children. She tells me, “There’s no time in children.” She says, “Children are a huge thing, but there’s no, there’s no, if I’d taken time to have a child, I couldn’t have finished a Ph.D. program in three years. It wouldn’t have worked,” she says. Tillie also tells me that most of her dating relationships have been meaningless up until now. It is clear from these words that Tillie clearly protects her overload mentality.

Tillie then tells me about a women’s symposium she attended during her second year at University of Tampa. The attendees were mostly female faculty members and administrators. The speakers presented research on child bearing during the first seven years of your new academic position. Tillie says to me, “The point of it was to tell us that if you have a child in your first seven years of a new position, pre-tenured years, you won’t get tenured. Like even if it stops your clock, you’re never going to be able to maintain the sort of regularity of publications that you need to get tenure, whereas if you’re a man and your wife or partner has a child during those seven years, you’re almost guaranteed tenure! I mean you walked away from this meeting thinking you shouldn’t have a child. I don’t want to have kids, but even if I did, I’m still angry about it.” Here we can see how Tillie’s involute was influenced by this women’s symposium, reinforcing the already in place structure.

The talk at the women's symposium also widened the breadth of her involute, affecting her communication about childbearing and motherhood.

Tillie says, "So we're saying you should counsel your graduate students to have their children in graduate school because you can handle having children then." Tillie and I have a longer conversation about the idea of childbearing and motherhood in academe. "It's interesting," she says, "It's like this happens at the same time you're being bombarded with fertility. You know backlash stuff. And if I wait seven years, I'll be like 37."

"I have a lot of empathy for the women that want children in this profession. My friend has chosen to have a baby in September. She's a faculty member here and she didn't get tenure. She didn't get tenure!" Getting tenure was not the most important thing in her friend's life. Tillie says, "I need to be around people like that. I need to hear that because I'm in approval seeking mode ... MUST GET TENURE! This is the expectation. I'll meet your expectations. So hearing people say things like, I don't want tenure or it's no big deal if I don't get tenure, is really healthy for me." I wonder why this is healthy for Tillie when clearly her intentions are to obtain tenure. However, we can see the process of Tillie's involute winding inward, back to "stop buckling down and focusing."

"I want tenure and I also want to live my life more healthy!" says Tillie.

Tillie does not feel her position is as tenuous as it once was so she has become more politically active with her upcoming review. She says, "I'm becoming more aware of the politics, like who's on your committee. So I asked people to be on my committee who weren't on it before and who might have a more balanced view of what it means to be productive at this particular point in my career." We can see how Tillie's involute tightens as she finds strategic ways to get her back to center. Tillie's

involute tightens by confining other, possible unconscious communication practices that may deter her from achieving balance and good health.

In Tillie's narrative we see the involute moving as she talks about productivity in academe. Tillie moves along the involute in contorted ways that affect both her personal and professional lives. The structure reveals that Tillie's "approval seeking" discourse moves her further away from balance and good health. Next, we see the involute in Rachel's narrative tightening and expanding as she struggles with her experiences at research one institutions. She moves along the involute in troubling and gratifying ways. We see this impacting how Rachel communicates what she thinks it takes to make it at research ones.

Troubling-Gratifying Involute: "This is a Research One"

Rachel's involute tightens and expands as she talks about her experiences at research one institutions. The ways in which Rachel talks about her research ones is both troubling and gratifying. The discourse reveals that Rachel's involute is wound tight when it comes to her communicating what it takes to make it at a research one institution. Rachel's involute leaves her feeling depressed and unhappy. Throughout the interview Rachel does not call her university by its name, simply "a research one." This expression is complicated and contorted and appears to operate paradoxically.

Rachel tells me about an experience she had while she was a doctoral student. She says, "I was kicked out of the Goddess Group, a club where women met to talk about and cry about their experiences." One of the Goddess' husbands had asked out Rachel. This got back to Rachel's close friend, Tara, the wife of the husband who had asked out Rachel. This news soon became the gossip of the Goddess Group and their university's department. People were asking, "Why are

Tara and Rachel not talking anymore? They must be competing because they're the two smart ones." Rachel tells me it has taken a lot of "housework" to repair their friendship due to "all the damage" and the politics of graduate school. Recall that Loren also uses the same word, "damage." To continue, Rachel says, "It was a very competitive scene. Many of the professors either didn't know what was going on or they helped reproduce it." She then says, "This is a research one, you know, and you have to have your publications yada, yada, yada [sing-song voice]." We can see from these words how Rachel may perceive her troubling experiences in graduate school as a circumstance of research one institutions. This discourse allows us to see how she moves along her involute, back to "this is a research one." Based on Rachel's discourse we can see that research ones foster competition and rewards intelligence.

Rachel tells me about one afternoon when she and her advisor were on campus, sitting on a park bench. Her advisor asked, "What are you going to do after the dissertation?" Rachel replied, "Well, I want to get a job as an assistant professor."

Her advisor then asked, "No! Do you want to teach? Do you want to research? Where do you want to be?"

Rachel told her advisor about a recent job posting she had read (this happens to be where Rachel is at now). "Well, I saw this job advertisement for the University of Torrance that had gender at the center. They want a gender scholar," she said.

"I'm glad to hear it. I didn't know if you wanted to do the research one gig or not?" the advisor responded. Here we can see how communication with Rachel's advisor may influence the involute. Even though the involute has already been

created, the advisor's talk reinforces the structure by communicating to Rachel her approval for choosing a research one.

Rachel tells me as soon as she read the job description she knew that she would be perfect for the position. Rachel believes her advisor wanted to hear her say that she was "up for the challenge." She says, "I was scared to say that that's what I wanted. I was scared that people would think I couldn't do it. Does that make sense?" Rachel tells me as soon as she heard her advisor say, "I'm glad to hear it" she thought, "Wow, I can do this! I want to try this research one thing. I want to see if I can research." Here we can see Rachel's involute both tightening and expanding. It tightens when she hears her advisor's voice and thinks that she wants to try this research one thing, yet at the same time, it expands as she hears her advisor's voice as encouraging and this provides her with the space to consider, "I can do this." Rachel's involute appears to hold on to the pressures and challenges of a research one as well as the rewards and satisfaction. Perhaps unconsciously, this is how Rachel communicates gratification to herself.

Rachel tells me that her first year as an assistant professor was extremely difficult. She says, "The first six months were isolating. I just moved here. I left all my friends, and my family is far away. I'm at this research one and I'm in an office and I'm not sure really what to do [giggle]." she continues, "Okay, here we go! Part of me is lovin' it. But for the most part I'm really sad. I'm really alone. I find myself growing more and more depressed." She tells me, "And I'm doing the work. I wrote an article. I wrote a bunch of conference papers. I was productive but I'd never been so unhappy." Here we can see the complicated and contorted ways in which Rachel's involute operates. It is clear from these words, that this narrative tightens Rachel's involute, moving her inward, back to "this is a research one." Rachel may be

reinforcing her feelings of sadness, loneliness, depression, and unhappiness.

However, she may be combating the structure by communicating that she is meeting the expectations of a research one, revealing that something else more powerful is going on here. Perhaps unconsciously, Rachel feels the need to protect the research one image, thereby protecting her own self image.

Rachel proceeds to tell me that she has a problem with one of my research questions. She says, "I think there's an expectation when you ask if one can live a healthy and balanced academic life. That academe is immune from any other work context. It's work, you know!" She continues, "To expect that we can have this meaningful idea within politic-free space, just because we have knowledge of politics [giggle], is naïve. Or at least it has become naïve to me because I didn't think that was the case a couple years ago. Academe is just as politically charged, if not more, than some business organizations." She asks me, "How do you do meaningful work and be a bunch of humans organizing? We're no different than other people in other places except that we should be more reflective of it. But not everyone practices reflexivity in academe," Rachel says smiling. She feels that some people do indeed spend the time practicing reflexivity, "like the feminists and then they end up doing extra work because they're reflecting on their work and life conditions and then spending time having these types of conversations." She believes the individuals that "get celebrated" are the ones who do not spend time reflecting because "they're busy writing, they're just doing."

Rachel and I are talking about healthy identities and meaningful lives in academe and all of a sudden she says, "In some ways, living the meaningful life, in the sense that we're able to incorporate social relationships and work that creates

some sort of social change means you might not make it at a research one,” Rachel says. “Isn’t this paradoxical?” she remarks.

Here we can see Rachel’s involute wound tight, perhaps bearing down on her ability to live a meaningful life and making it at a research one. For the most part, it appears that Rachel’s words put her at the center of her involute. This might help us understand why Rachel communicates in ways that confirm her research one involute. Like Jolie, the discourse reveals that Rachel carries this structure with her at all times, suggesting that she is always in a vulnerable place. This exposes Rachel to be unconsciously pulled into the tightening involute at any time.

Rachel’s involute play outs in complicated and contorted ways. Her words reveal her movement along the involute appears to be both troubling and gratifying. Rachel’s involute may be locking her in a vulnerable place, thereby constricting her view on what it takes to make it at a research one, and preventing her from achieving happiness and that balance between social relationships and the type of work that generates change. While Rachel’s involute may keep her stuck, in the next narrative, we see how Adele’s involute drives her out of academe. Adele has resigned from her position only after one year. Adele tells me she has lost her passion.

Rejecting-Accepting Involute: “There’s no Passion Left”

Adele has resigned from her tenure-track position. She is leaving shortly after her first year. Adele agreed to meet with me days before her flight back home. I was especially nervous for this interview. When I entered her office I shook her hand and thanked her in advance for spending time with me. Our greeting was short and I began the interview by asking, “So why are you leaving?” Her response appears effortless. “There’s no passion left,” she says. We see Adele’s involute moving

through her communication about the academic environment. Adele moves along her involute in rejecting and accepting ways. Adele's involute is unique in that it reveals those situations that leave her feeling disimpassioned. Adele's involute appears to be cut and dry.

"I never planned on staying to tell you the truth," she says. Adele spoke about her past experiences in academe. She had some "damaging experiences" (Loren and Rachel also used the word damage to describe their academic experiences) while she was a doctoral student she says. Adele ran the undergraduate program in Applied Psychology. She was on a full scholarship. The scholarship involved teaching, mentoring, advising, and running the entire undergraduate program. She was supposed to be mentored by one particular professor. She would be advised on teaching and getting started in academe. "I hated it so much," she said. "This professor left me with all of the responsibility. You know, I couldn't make any of the decisions yet I had all of the responsibility." Adele tells me that she is the first person to have ever quit the scholarship. We can see here that Adele has no problem leaving coveted positions. At that time, she went back to work in the field as a guidance counselor. "Ever since then," she says, "I haven't really wanted to be in academia even though I love aspects of it." Adele came to California assuming she would stay for two years. Unfortunately, she fell ill and required two major operations in the past year.

"There was nothing," she tells me.

"I lost my passion for the job," Adele says.

She tells me it was a combination of being away from home, getting sick, and disliking the academic environment. "I've become much more firm. I don't want to be in academia. I don't want to be in this kind of environment. It pisses me off – the

whole tenure system – and the fact that many professors have no integrity,” she says. Adele feels that the people in her department do not work collaboratively. She tells me that while she was in the hospital no one from the department “bothered to send” a card. “Here, we don’t have competition, there’s just no care. There’s just no care!” Adele says. We can see Adele’s involute winding up as she talks about her experiences in the academic environment. The discourse reveals that these circumstances influence her structure and leaves her feeling disimpassioned. Ironically, one would assume that in Adele’s field, integrity, collaboration, and care would be modeled most of the time. In this way, Adele may be combating her structure by communicating the importance of these issues in her discipline, even done so unconsciously, as a way of protecting her health and her decision to leave the academy.

When Adele was told that she would have to have a second operation she was devastated. She tells me, “It blew my mind. I kind of lost it. I kind of lost my ability to focus on my work.” It was very easy for her to fall into the trap she saw her colleagues in, that of complacency and mediocrity. “I slipped into this just be more like my colleagues and not have that passion in your work.” Adele believes that passion is a valuable lifeline in this profession. “I do bring my passion to my work. Funny, I have the highest teacher evaluations, or professor evaluations, and I didn’t feel that was the external reality. I don’t feel I’m doing the job right. I don’t have that passion anymore.” Based on the discourse we can see how Adele’s involute is also influenced by her idea of doing the job right.

Adele is the type of person who “constantly changes things up” every semester. “I don’t want to teach the same thing over and over again,” she says. She

also tells me that a professor's life is very much like a student's life, "having to go home, grade, and write papers."

"I'm not doing what I really want to do," she says.

Adele tells me she grew "more and more disappointed." She came in with reservations about academia and they were exacerbated. As she puts it, "Stick it out for another year, what for? You know, there's no passion left." This might help us understand why Adele's involute is wound tight as she talks about losing her passion. It is clear from the discourse that Adele has accepted the fact that she is not doing what she really wants to do even though she loves aspects of teaching.

"If I don't have the passion, I'm not going to do it," Adele tells me. Here we can see the rejecting yet accepting movement of Adele's involute.

Adele describes her job at Pierce State University as a "cushy" one. "Here at Pierce State we get paid more, and we teach, we're not forced to publish as much," she says. Adele tells me that this cushy lifestyle would probably change as time went on. She knows she would become more involved. "I don't have a shortage of ideas," she says. We see Adele's involute moving through her communication about the academic environment. Adele's involute reveals situations that leave her feeling disimpassioned. The rejecting nature of Adele's involute reflects her decision to resign from her position. In the next narrative though, resigning from motherhood is not an option for Renee. However, we see Renee's involute moving through her communication about parenting and her "junior faculty" position. Renee moves along her involute in adjusting and preserving ways to achieve happiness and her career goals.

Adjusting-Preserving Involute: “Because I Had a Kid”

Renee’s daughter is six years old. Renee’s involute tightens and expands as she talks about her experiences as a parent and as an academic. The involute for Renee is unique in that it allows us to see how having a kid changes her life and alters her priorities. Renee does not let this stand in her way of achieving her own happiness and career goals. She sees tenure as a “beautiful thing.” Renee’s language moves her along her involute in adjusting and preserving ways, leaving her feeling tired and always guilty.

Renee tells me, “I had a child while I was dissertating.”

“I was on bed rest while I was pregnant so the dissertation took longer than I had hoped for,” Renee says. At that time, Renee and her husband were both working on their doctorates. As doctoral students, they were both experiencing financial hardships, and with a baby on the way, they were both motivated to complete their dissertations and look for full-time faculty positions.

Renee went back to graduate school in her 30’s. She tells me she was a bit older than most of her peers. She says, “Many of my friends did not have kids, except for one that is, and we spent a lot of time together and shared a babysitter.” One of Renee’s advisors had children. She says, “At first my advisor was telling me not to have kids. She kept telling me don’t have kids until you’re done.” Renee is happy that she did not take her advisor’s advice. “It wasn’t that hard to be honest with you. We had a supportive network. I mean it was more challenging – it definitely changes your life. But what can you do?” Renee says shrugging her shoulders. Renee finished her doctorate well before many of her cohorts who did not have children. “So it can be done! After all that investment I had made in changing my career and becoming poor for seven years, I was determined to get done!” she says.

As a “junior faculty” member Renee tells me she struggles with being a parent. “Once you have children, you no longer have the luxury of working late at night and on the weekends,” she says. Many of her junior faculty colleagues do not have kids and she tells me that they are “doing stuff on the weekends and at night.” Here we can see how the involute tightens, winding Renee’s words back to “because I had a kid” that she does not have “the luxury” like her childless colleagues to work on the weekends and in the evenings. This perspective could be unconsciously affecting her interactions with her childless colleagues.

She says, “You just don’t do it, or you can’t do it, or you do do it and then you’re burnt out and you don’t spend the time with your kid.” Renee continues, “I mean I don’t regret having a kid at all. I love it. I’m not whining about it. It’s a choice I made.” Here, in her words, we can see the involute in process, adjusting and preserving her choice to be a parent and to work. Renee then tells me, “Having a child puts you in a different kind of category as a professional.” Based on these words we can see how her involute tightens even more as the discourse reveals that she is placed in a different kind of professional category because she had a child.

Renee’s tells me that her daughter is at the age where she has to organize her entire social life as well as her own. “It adds a whole new dimension to things. It’s also nice because it grounds you a little too. You realize that it grounds you and this gives you a break.” Again, here we see Renee’s involute tightening, winding back to “because I had a kid.”

Renee loves the academic life, the quest for knowledge, research, and most of all, job autonomy. This autonomy is what keeps her in academe. She says, “There are moments when I think the pay isn’t that great, it’s a little frustrating, it’s totally overwhelming, but I have an incredible amount of autonomy.” Renee and her

husband “like the flexibility while they’re parenting.” She has those moments when she thinks she rather stay at home and power walk with all of the stay at home moms in her neighborhood. She says, “You know, I drop off my kid like they do in the mornings. They go off on their power walks and go to Starbuck’s, and I go to work. And sometimes I think, boy I’d rather spend the day power walking and drinking Starbuck’s. It’s relaxing.” She says, “The house would not be in a state of disarray, we could grocery shop at normal hours, dinner would be made, and the bills and errands would get paid and run on time.” The involute tightens as Renee talks about specific interactions that have altered as a result of having a kid.

Renee knows that she and her husband would not be happy if they gave up their careers. Renee tells me that her department is “family friendly.” “However,” she says, “You have to produce things to get tenure. So it’s too bad if I didn’t publish enough because I had a kid. ‘Well, you had a kid and that was your priority, and so now you don’t get tenure.’ Okay, they’re family friendly to a point.” Renee says, “You have to abide by all of the university standards just like everyone else.” Here we can see how Renee’s involute takes a toll on her parenting and desire for tenure, as she reinforces the structure by saying “too bad if I didn’t publish enough” and “... that was your priority, and so now you don’t get tenure” all because she “had a kid.”

Renee tells me that she and her husband split up the parenting responsibilities equally. Renee says, “It’s doable but it’s also tiring and you have guilt all the time.” “Either you’re not working hard enough or you’re not spending enough time with your kid.

Renee tells me, “You’re always going to be pulled in some direction so why not do what’s best for you?” Renee and her daughter have a saying, “A good mommy is a happy mommy.” Based on these words we can see Renee’s involute

expanding, appearing to move outward, away from “because I had a kid” to “a good mommy is a happy mommy.” Renee may be combating her structure by communicating to her daughter both the importance of her happiness and her career. Perhaps this is how Renee communicates preservation to her daughter and to herself.

We see Renee’s involute moving through her communication about parenting and her working status. This impacts how Renee views her childless colleagues and her stay at home neighbor moms. Renee moves along her involute in adjusting and preserving ways to achieve both happiness and her career goals. Next, in Kristy’s narrative we see how being a professor is not as glamorous as some would think. Kristy’s language moves her along the involute in tenuous and vigorous ways as she struggles with making it financially.

Tenuous-Vigorous Involute: “You’re a Professor? You should be Set!”

The involute for Kristy tightens and expands as she talks about her financial challenges and low pay in academe. Kristy moves along her involute in tenuous and vigorous ways, impacting the ways she manages her dilemma in both seemingly unproductive and productive ways. Kristy’s involute is unique in that it helps us see how a high level of academic status does not necessarily mean you have a high level of financial security. Kristy struggles to make ends meet every month. She tells me, “I still feel like a student.” Kristy spoke a great deal on money and finances. She was my last interviewee and I had already heard most of the women (all but Jolie) talk about their financial struggles – their large student loans, high rent, increasing debt, and very low pay. Kristy tells me, “I was shopping for a car, and that’s a whole other gender thing, but people think, ‘Oh, you’re a professor? You should be set,’ and I think, well no.”

Kristy tells me, "Your salary is not that high unless you go looking for consulting opportunities." Most of the men in her department have outside consulting jobs, "I mean that seems to be what people do around here." Here we can see how the structure is already in place. The fact the most of the men in her department have outside consulting work probably reinforces the movement of Kristy's involute. This may influence her structure by tightening it some more. It may also bring in some additional pressures, whether she's conscious of this or not, to perform as a man and be the professor that is set.

Kristy is currently looking for work outside of the university. "Something that will dovetail with my research," she tells me. She shares with me an interesting story that just took place. "I sometimes can't make the choices that I want to," she says. Kristy was asked to do a three half-day workshop at a major educational facility. She was delighted. When she asked them about her compensation, she says, "They were like, 'Oh, you want to get paid?' I have to wonder, would they do that to a man? I don't think so." Kristy says, "I really believe in the program, and if I weren't so financially strapped, I'd do the consulting as a part of my service work." Here we can see the tenuousness of the involute in process, as Kristy considers her position and knows she cannot afford to volunteer this much time and energy.

Kristy and I talk about the cost of living here in our community. She tells me, "Our salary is competitive nationally, but our cost of living is not." Kristy's good friend, a young woman who has the same rank as she does, moved to the Midwest to teach at the University of Mainland. In the Midwest, her friend was able to purchase a "beautiful six bedroom home." Kristy's friend has two children and they were able to finance their new home on her salary alone as her husband was unemployed when they made the move. Kristy tells me that she was trying to recruit

her friend but the friend declined because the cost of living here was too high. Kristy tells me that the high cost of living is problematic and something her department continually runs up against when recruiting new faculty.

Kristy would like the university to take a good look at the cost of living here. Right now, she is in the position where she has to look for supplemental income, “particularly as a beginning assistant professor.” She tells me her first year was “very, very hard.” She continues, “Making ends meet when you have debt from school, you’ve just moved here, you’re single, and you have to rent” is quite stressful and discouraging.” These words help us to understand why Kristy’s involute is wound tight through interactions regarding her finances yet she communicates in ways to resist this movement of the involute to manage or change this situation.

Kristy then tells me, “I don’t want to sound like I’m complaining. I’m very well off compared to a lot of other people so I don’t want to overemphasize that. I’m grateful for what I have.” It appears as though Kristy’s involute is expanding, yet she reinforces the structure by communicating that she does not want to sound as though she is complaining and knows how much better off she is than most people, perhaps even done so unconsciously, as a way protecting the vigorous and tenuous movement of the involute.

Kristy then says, “You know, my car is twelve years old and I’ve gotta get myself to these places. I’ve gotta account for it in some way – that’s the kind of position that it puts you in.” Kristy believes this is the culture of education. She says, “There is a history of service associated with teacher-education and this happens to be a predominantly female field.” As we approach the end of our interview, Kristy tells me to make sure that I choose a university that will support my growth as a scholar. “Remember, you’re interviewing them too,” she says. “It’s important to talk

about salary, grants, and funding, as well as release time,” and more important than money she says, “Will the work you’ll be doing be valued? You want your work to be valued.” Here we can see Kristy’s involute expanding as she moves, outward, away from her involute. Based on her discourse it appears that her feeling of being valued has more value than the money itself.

As I leave Kristy’s office I ask her, “Do you think this is your place?”

She responds, “That remains to be seen. In the long term, I think it’s really related to whether or not I can build a whole life here.” Kristy continues, “The biggest question, you know besides having a relationship, the biggest question is can I afford it? I don’t want to rent for the rest of my life.” Kristy tells me that this is the place for her at this time as she is “growing in the right directions and is challenged in positive ways.”

“Maybe for the next five years, we’ll see. I don’t know,” she says.

What we see in Kristy’s narrative is the involute tightening and expanding as she talks about her financial challenges and low pay in academe. Kristy’s words move her along the involute in tenuous and vigorous ways as she struggles to make ends meet. The discourse reveals that this structure is influenced by already in place department practices. Furthermore, the discourse reveals that Kristy assumes her long term stay at the university is incumbent on whether or not she can “afford it.”

The Refractor

Spiritual Refractor: Refracting Jealousy, Gossip, and Unforeseen Forces

In Jolie’s narrative, her enlightening and enabling communication practices are divine. Her refractor is called the spiritual refractor and she accesses the structure when she is confronted with jealousy, gossip, and unforeseen forces. Every

morning when Jolie wakes up she reads the Bible. She reads the Bible from cover to cover once a year. She tells me she can hear the voice of tenderness and love and that this tenderness and love weaves in and out of her day, throughout her teachings and throughout her relationships. Jolie says, “The person who made me loves me, knows me, cares for me. I don’t need to go elsewhere to get it.” Here we can see how Jolie fortifies her refractor on a daily basis. She is committed to her structure.

Jolie tells me, “The daily lessons are printed on my heart. It’s the most important thing I do. I want to get with the one who loves me and understands me.” Jolie says, “I seek God’s knowledge, leadership, and authenticity.”

Jolie’s refractor refracts the two things she fears the most, jealousy and gossip. She says, “There’s no defense against jealousy and there’s no defense against gossip.” She feels there is nothing you can do when these two things come at you. She says, “You’re completely vulnerable.” When Jolie is dealing “in God’s way” these two issues are not prevalent in her life. “I don’t need to waste my time, energy, and emotion it takes to deal with them,” she says. Based on Jolie’s words, we can assume that vulnerability, time, energy, and emotion in the face of jealousy and gossip can be obstructing and disabling for her.

When Jolie experiences jealousy and gossip, may it be in her teachings or in other relationships, she asks God two things, “Let me know what I can do and relieve me from what I can’t do. And if there’s a student that I need to call because I screwed up, then let me go back and apologize.” Here we can see how Jolie accesses her structure and then how she might change the course of her action as a result of the structures’ influence.

At age fifty-four, Jolie is less confrontational than she was at age thirty-five. “There were more jealousy issues surrounding me at 35,” she says. She is aware of

these jealousy issues now she says. “Back then,” she tells me, “I would often engage in seduction to get what I wanted.” “It’s ridiculous to use seduction at 54. I try to find more authentic ways of communicating. I don’t need to work, not all people do. It’s only because I love it, so the stakes are different” she says.

Jolie tells me that her students bring her closer to her work. The very first night of a class, she looks out “at the sea of faces” and thinks, “Do they know how much I’m going to love them?” When Jolie enters a classroom she walks around to all of the chairs, lays her hands on them, and prays when these seats are filled that her students will feel encouraged. She says, “I want to have their best interests in my heart at all times.” Here we can see how Jolie’s refractor influences her practices in the classroom and the “love” feelings she has for her students.

Jolie uses her body and prayer energy when she teaches. Her prayer is that her students will be in her heart. She will not use an example of rape if she feels it will make a young woman “go crazy” she tells me. However, if she needs to use an example of rape to get a young woman’s attention then, “Let’s go!” Jolie tells me she stands in intuition. “I’m a very intuitive person. My intuition is valuable,” she says. Jolie prays that heavy issues like rape are discussed at the “right time.” Jolie does not mind raising the anxiety in the room. “I don’t mind if I make them feel uncomfortable, however, I don’t want to make them not speak,” she says. Here we can see Jolie accessing her refractor to deflect potential hurtful outcomes like silencing her students. Jolie tells me there are times when she will start to say something and she will hear, “No!” and so, “I keep quiet.” She says, “Sometimes I’ll be teaching and I’ll be beating the same drum for a half hour and I think, ‘Why am I doing this?’ It’s like God is taking my hand and pounding stop.”

Jolie tells me about a funeral she attended yesterday for a dear friend of hers. This person taught her the most important lesson she has ever learned. The lesson was from the two old prophets in the Bible, Elisha, and Elijah. Elisha was the older of the two prophets. He was training the new young man, Elijah. The Lord sent them into battle. Jolie says, "And the younger prophet is like, 'Oh my gosh! We're so outnumbered here. We're gonna die!' And the older prophet prays to God, 'God show him your forces and your angels.'" She then tells me that the Bible reveals how the younger prophets' eyes were opened up. The younger prophet saw not only all of the enemies but he also saw all of the forces and angels of God. "These are the unforeseen forces I work with while I teach," she says. "I stand ready for battle," Jolie tells me smiling. Based on Jolie's words, we can see how her refractor is always on guard, ready for possible battles and unseen forces in her classrooms.

"It's wonderful," Jolie says. "On most days I will journal and write down God's lesson. I also write down the names of the people that I want God to protect and inspire that day. I write down my dreams. I love the days when I take the extra fifteen minutes and write in my journal." This is carried throughout her day. "So at ten o'clock at night when I'm teaching and standing on my feet in my red high heels," she says giggling, "and I'm working with some white guy with his arms crossed, leaning back in his chair, the lesson that I read at 5:30 in the morning, that lesson is still printed on my heart and in my voice."

At the end of our interview, I ask Jolie if there is anything else she would like to say. To my surprise, she says, "I don't feel like I have a place I can truly call home. I'm a Christian and a Democrat. I'm a rich person and a teacher. I feel my home is with God's people. I bring feminism to the Bible and I bring the Bible to feminism. Teaching is my life's work. I don't know if I'll stay at the University. I don't

know if I'm doing a good job. No! That's not what I'm trying to say here. This *is* what I'm here to do. This *is* the gift God has given me." Here we can see Jolie's refractor removing uncertainty and doubt.

In Jolie's narrative, we see her finding strength and renewal in her spiritual refractor. Her refractor deflects jealousy, gossip, and unforeseen forces that leave her, and perhaps others, from feeling hurt and fearful. Jolie's refractor has been in place for quite some time. It stands strong and sturdy as well as tender and lovingly. In the next narrative, we see how Loren's refractor retains her shape and identity in the face of classroom management and interactions. Loren's refractor has been able to deflect criticism from students.

Complexity Refractor: Refracting Student Complaints and Tiredness

In Loren's narrative her enlightening and enabling communication practices are revealed by the way she describes her straightforward yet complicated interaction styles. She unassumingly appreciates her bold and direct ways of communicating, however, she also tells me she has a "spiral way" of behaving and that often leaves her students feeling confused and unhappy. Loren's refractor is called the complexity refractor and she accesses the structure when she is confronted by students criticizing her communication style and expended energy.

I ask Loren how she thinks her style of interaction affects her teaching and she says, "Here I come in. Unlearn what you've learned! Okay! Challenge me too. Open up your mouths and let's have a dialogue!" Loren tells me this is how she "places" herself and what she communicates to her classes. She continues, "And we're gonna talk about gay issues, so let's go! We'll talk about abortion, do you want to? Let's go!" Loren is wide-eyed and very passionate. "And then," she says, "there's dead silence." Loren continues, "Or it's the one guy in class who comes in late and

asks if we can leave early. 'You can,' I say. And he goes in the back of the room and says, 'What a fucking bitch!' That's debilitating to me. It's like if you want to start shit with me, go ahead, I'll start it right back with you. If you can't take it and if you're gonna complain to your Dean, why did you start it? Why did you start with me?" We can see here that the very thing Loren values in herself is often the very thing that is disliked by a few students. As with some of her students, these interactions leave her feeling confused and unhappy too.

Loren tells me her complex style of interaction, as well as her Chinese identity, may produce misunderstanding. She says, "How can a Chinese woman pick on me and be very explicating because aren't you all ugly?"

"There were plenty of red flags," Loren tells me. She says, "There was a core group. You know, the groupies who followed me from class to class. And they thought, 'Oh, she's so cool, she's so great, blah, blah, blah.' But then there was also a core group who went to the Dean and to the Chair, and then this triggered it! Instead of just doing a regular evaluation they wanted me to put together a file. You usually don't put together a file until your third year."

She talks as if she was her Dean speaking, "So in order for us to rehire you, Dr. Chan, you'll need to put together a file and make amends for the kinds of claims that you were getting on your evaluations." Loren says, And that's why I felt if I was somebody else, maybe African American or a man, I would have been treated a little differently. I stood out the most. I'm Chinese and there's not very many of us, [so they think] let's be very clear about who we're getting and who we want to stick with."

Loren tells me, "This is tiring work, constant defending and proving of yourself." Here we can see the need for Loren's refractor, although it appears her

refractor may instigate some of these obstructing and disabling communication practices it is also preserves what she likes most about herself.

Loren also talks about the tiredness she feels from the classroom. She defines the classroom interaction and management as draining. She tells me her classes are very intense. “I go home knowing many people resist the subjects I bring up in the classroom. Who the hell wants to talk about transgender people, and then, having to understand it, you know? Who wants to talk about racism, and then, having them admit that they’re racist? So that’s the tiredness from the classroom and then, of course, there’s the tiredness in dealing with the people who are always misunderstanding me in the university community.” Here we can see Loren’s refractor resisting tiredness.

She says, “You know, if I can’t go home and feel good about what I do, then why bother?” Loren’s refractor also deflects those who misunderstand her. As she explains, “And I think that goes back to my personality. Maybe I’m getting a little too self-assured. I have worked my ass off for the past five years to the point where I’m so tired and if I can’t do what I want to and feel good about it, fuck it!” She looks at me and laughs, “So I might as well turn it up a notch! Let’s see how much you can take from this, you know! If you want to get into the 21st Century, let’s go! If you’ve got a problem with my style, leave.”

Loren’s refractor continues to move her forward in the work she wholeheartedly believes in. Loren uses past experiences in dealing with student criticism as a way to position herself in a classroom. She tells her classes, “We’re gonna talk about these issues and if you’ve got a problem with it, then leave. Okay, I’m telling you now and I’m saying it to your face – I’m telling you right now and up front – that’s exactly how I like it. Some of you may not like my style, I’m very spiral

and I'll be delayed at certain points. I'll make you work. I'm tough. And yes, you'll write." Here we can see how Loren's language enlightens and enables her, while reinforcing the structure and providing her with strength and renewal.

"Do people bitch about this? Absolutely," she says.

Loren tells me her students know where she stands. They know they can leave and take another class. She says, "I tell them they can leave. I get really into this conversation with them. Yeah, and it's pretty funny and also really intense. It's like you're breaking up with a boyfriend." We both laugh.

"It has to come from within you," she says.

I nod agreeing with her.

In Loren's narrative, we see her finding strength and renewal in her complexity refractor. Her refractor deflects student criticism. This structure gives her strength and renews her expended energy to move past her tiredness and confront the work she believes in passionately and honestly. Loren makes it clear that her structure comes from within her (not a student or a boyfriend!). In the next narrative, we see how Tillie's refractor retains her shape and identity as she defends contradiction and ambiguity in third wave feminism. Tillie's refractor helps her redefine personal responsibility.

Third Wave Feminism Refractor: Refracting Contradiction and Ambiguity

In Tillie's narrative, her enlightening and enabling communication practices are revealed in her field of research and feminist spirit. Her refractor is called third wave feminism as we see her accessing this structure when she is defending contradiction and ambiguity. Tillie feels contradiction and ambiguity are of great value. She tells me her research work often explores contradiction and ambiguity. "Of course I would defend the notions of contradiction and ambiguity," she says, "I

feel like I'm a walking contradiction." Tillie then tells me, "The way I live my life reflects my work."

Tillie says, "I definitely call myself a feminist. I just sent off a paper on feminism and my research is on third way feminist theory."

I ask her, "What is third way feminist theory?"

"Okay, let me tell you a bit about the waves," she says, "First wave is about women getting the right to vote. Second wave is in the 60's, and the ERA, and the women's liberation movement, and there are some people out there who think there's not a third wave but I think they're wrong. There is a new feminism emerging and we see it in our students. The people who are part of the second wave can see it but they don't know what it is because they don't call themselves feminists. Some of them do once they figure it out but, you know, they're wearing combat boots and lipstick and they're doing their own thing and they're the children of the feminist generation. In our lifetime we've been able to have an abortion. We have access to contraception. We can play sports. We have choices. We're not fighting oppression in the same way that our foremothers did, and oppression now, doesn't even look the same. We are critical media consumers. We watch things like "The Bachelor" and at the same time we can say we think that the show is sexist, but we also enjoy it. There's this very contradictory element to it."

According to Tillie, third wave feminists do not feel limited by the artificial dichotomy as dictated by society. She says, "We're able to do things that appear contradictory to others or maybe even contradictory to ourselves but we think of them as choices." I can tell from Tillie's sincerity and enthusiasm that this speaks to her core. Here we can see Tillie's refractor enlightening and enabling her communication practices. Based on Tillie's language, we can see that contradiction

and choice free her from societal expectations. She says, "So I choose not to get married and to be single. Maybe I'll just live with my boyfriend and it won't be anything more serious." Tillie then says, "We're just making it up as we go along!"

Tillie feels this fluid and contradictory dynamic appears paradoxical to many people. She says, "People may think we're indecisive or that we're waffling or that we're shirking responsibility. I'm not shirking responsibility. I'm redefining responsibility for myself." Here we can see how Tillie's refractor gives her strength and renewal to redefine her responsibility. It brings in understanding. It appears that her structure aligns with her overall ideals and values.

She says, "I think one of the things that we need to do is reinterpret contradiction as something positive. Ambiguity and contradiction are not only out there, but those are the places that allow new ideas to emerge rather than sticking to the old dichotomies. It's when you realize that the old choices were made by somebody else to simplify your decisions."

"I'll take the complexity any day!" Tillie says excitedly.

She continues, "I would rather figure it out for myself and not have to abide by some standards and so I feel pretty confident in talking about this in these ways. Tillie tells me, "I've experienced times in my life when I can point to something and say that was sexist or discriminatory, however, there's nothing real big or bad that I can say was a defining moment when I felt oppressed. Like I'm pretty much not oppressed. I have lots of privilege. I may have a whole bunch of debt but I'm white, I'm attractive, I'm smart, I have a family that cares about me, and I've got a car. I have a pretty big safety net. I really don't know what oppression is like but I know that it happens to other people and I don't like it."

Tillie tells me, "In the newest feminist generation there's an outwardness."

She continues, “Like I hate it because I got such a good public school education. I was tracked and then sent to gifted classes. I had an outstanding public school education yet this meant that others in my district got an inferior one at my expense. And you need to know that. You need to know that just because you benefited from it doesn’t mean that everybody else benefits from it as well. We have a much bigger awareness than the previous generations did about oppression. And not just of ourselves but of other people.” Based on these words we can see how Tillie’s third wave feminist refractor not only defends contradiction and ambiguity it also gives her an explanation for “the way she lives her life.” In the next narrative, we see how feminism plays an important role in Rachel’s life too. Rachel’s feminist refractor is a powerful one as she has had to overcome years of physical abuse.

Feminist Refractor: Refracting Violent Relationships

Rachel is a feminist scholar who often teaches gender communication. Rachel tells me that her life has been full of “ups and downs.” She says, “I’m amazed where I stand now.” It was an excerpt from Rachel’s transcript that began this chapter, giving voice to some of the struggles she is currently facing, however, these struggles seem small compared to the challenges she has endured with domestic violence. Rachel’s refractor is called the feminist refractor and we see her accessing this structure when she is refracting violence and her past abusive relationships.

I ask Rachel, “What does it mean to be a feminist?”

Rachel sighs, “That’s a really hard question. The meaning of the word feminist has evolved for me, and it’s still evolving. And I really don’t know what it means anymore to be a feminist. I held on to that marker so much in graduate school because I wanted people to know that I was angry. I was angry that people

didn't see male privilege. I was angry that men denounced their privileges. I was still angry that people didn't believe in domestic violence."

Rachel then pauses, "When I was a teenager my parents divorced. My mom had a series of boyfriends who came in and out of the house. And one of them was around for several years. He was an alcoholic and he would beat my mother up. I remember coming home from school in broad daylight and when I got inside the house and locked the door behind me I found my mom shutting all the windows. He was outside with a shotgun." She tells me that she had no words to describe what was happening to her and her mother. She remembers the police officers not taking the scene seriously at the time. Rachel recalls being "scared to death." She worried about her safety and her mother's safety.

Rachel says, "I was also on track at that time, but I remember giving it up because I didn't want to leave my mom alone. I didn't know if a bottle would be broken over her head or another bruise, right, whatever would happen while I was gone. And so I gave up running during those times just to be around the house." Here we can see how Rachel taught herself how to refract abuse, although it probably came at the expense of enjoying her teenage years.

Unfortunately, when Rachel left home for college the cycle of violence stayed with her. "I went to school for two years back east and I wasn't ready for it. I met a man and we moved to California." Rachel was 18 years old at the time. Once they made the move, Rachel found herself in isolation. She had no money, no car, and was completely dependent upon her boyfriend.

"Long story short," she says, "I lived with him for four years and he beat me up, right."

Rachel goes on, "I didn't understand what was going on but I remember that other people knew I'd been beaten because I'd come in with a bruise or a broken nose." She recalls people telling her, "Why don't you just leave? Why don't you just leave? And then I do remember leaving and him finding me and beating me up worse because I'd left."

Rachel tells me that she did not know about the cycle of violence at that time. "I thought I had left him, and I started to see someone else. No, I hadn't *really* left. You know, *really* left," she says. "I met a man at work and went home with him. And my ex broke into his home at three in the morning and started to beat up on the both of us. I was naked and it was just an ugly scene," she says. She tells me, "I waited for him to go to work the next day and I bought a truck. I moved my clothes and the bed that was in my bedroom out, and I left. I never saw him again. I hid for a couple months. Yeah, I never saw him again."

Rachel then folds her arms and says softly, "I still haven't learned what love looks like." She goes on, "I mean, I still thought it meant that if they showed me attention that was good enough. What I wanted wasn't even a question. Right? What do I want?" Rachel shrugs her shoulders, "I thought if you can attract a man then that's good enough. So I've spent years and years and years just, you know," Rachel sighs once again, "not eating to be thin and dressing right in certain ways to attract men, yada, yada, yada." Here we can see the progression of how Rachel refracts abuse. Her refractor at this time was displaced in attention from men and in her appearance. This has affected her self-worth and self-love. Furthermore, it is clear from her language that she still has not learned what love looks like.

Rachel continues with her story. "Shortly after I left my ex-boyfriend I met another man," she laughs unwittingly and in a soft voice she says, "Yeah, and it was

also a violent relationship. He drank. It took me one more time to learn that this was wrong.” She then says to me, “Hardly anyone knows this and it’s even hard to say. I got married when I was 25 to this man because I thought that he would finally redeem me. It seemed as if this person had his financial stuff together. I later learned that he lied about everything. He lied about his job. He lied about his money. I didn’t know that at the time because I was too naive, right? Yeah, the man takes care of it. That doesn’t sound like me, huh?” Rachel says looking at me. “So we have this grand wedding and he shows up drunk. The night before the wedding he hit me. And my boss at work knew,” she says.

I ask her, “Your boss knew about what?”

“About the hitting,” Rachel responds.

“I worked as a waiter and a bartender and my boss knew the scene. He said, ‘Rachel, all I have to do is make a phone call to the hotel and they can get your money back. Just say the word.’ And I looked at this sea of family that had flown from all over the country and I couldn’t, I couldn’t do it. I couldn’t say no because I thought that I didn’t have anything else going for me,” she says. Based on these words we can clearly see the obstructing and disabling communication practices that were a part of Rachel’s life.

Rachel tells me, “It’s a fiasco of a wedding.” “It was just ugly. And that night we go to a hotel on the beach and he pulled a gun to my head. I remember walking in my wedding dress on the beach just crying. He had finally passed out,” she tells me. “We both went to a family member’s home the next day to open up gifts,” she says. As soon as Rachel’s family left town she went out and purchased a revolver.

Rachel asked her husband for an annulment. He said, “No!” and he threatened to sue her. “And it ended up that he died two months later in a drunk

driving accident,” Rachel says looking up at the ceiling. “That’s why I don’t tell people I was ever married, because in my mind it didn’t happen and he’s not here. It was just a nightmare that happened and now it’s gone.”

Rachel says, “It was these series of violent episodes that led me back to school.” She wanted to take a flight attendant class. She tells me, “I still didn’t see myself as being anything other than the stereotypical, you know, the stereotypical woman who serves.”

Rachel tells me about an interpersonal communication class she had taken at a community college. “In the interpersonal course they started talking about gender. That’s all it took! That’s all it took!” Rachel remembers going to the local university and getting positive encouragement from an advisor. The advisor suggested that she take a gender course at the university. Rachel says, “I couldn’t get enough after that.” Here we see Rachel finding a refractor that aligned with her heart, head, and body. She tells me, “Finally, I had something that spoke to my spirit!” When Rachel finally understood what she was refracting her refractor appeared in true form.

Rachel says, “I learned that I wasn’t a bad person, that I didn’t ask for it, and that a lot of women don’t ask for it. And so that’s how I became a feminist.” In Rachel’s narrative we see how combating domestic violence may take years of understanding. Rachel’s feminist refractor has enlightened and enabled her communication practices. She accesses her refractor when she is confronted by potential abuse and the concept of violent relationships. Her personal experiences, education, and activism, strengthen her refractor daily. It appears that Rachel’s past experiences with abuse should help her overcome her seemingly smaller, yet important struggles in academe. In the next narrative, we see how Adele’s refractor helps to retain shape and identity as she discovers how to dissociate herself from

academia. Adele's refractor helps her to keep one foot in and one foot out of the academy.

Disassociation Refractor: Refracting Academe

We learned in Adele's involute that she has experienced some hard times in academe. Her story continues. Adele's refractor is called the disassociation refractor and we see her accessing this structure when she is refracting anger and confusion in academe. Her refractor allows her to "keep one foot in and one foot out." Adele tells me that one of the reasons why she feels "so negatively" towards academia is because of her "horrible" graduate experience. As we read in her involute, Adele terminated the scholarship she received during the course of her doctoral studies. "I became so angry at that point," she tells me.

"What did you do about the anger?" I ask her.

She says, "You know so I tried many different things to combat my anger. To understand my anger and not to hold onto it, but to let other people (who should) take responsibility for it. Yes, take responsibility." She continues, "But ultimately, the way I had to deal with it was to disassociate and not have anything to do with them." Here we can see the initiation of Adele's refractor. Based on her language we can see that her refractor removed certain people at this point in her career. She then tells me, "I had a friend who helped me with my dissertation. This friend acted like my advisor. She helped with all of the statistical analysis, answered her questions, and helped organize the discussion section." I ask Adele if she wrote about these "horrible" experiences in her dissertation. She laughed, "No! My dissertation was a quantitative dissertation. It's based on the students I've worked with over the many years. It's on career self-efficacy and GED students."

Adele then tells me how she was accused of not handing in a dissertation proposal. She says, "I wrote a proposal. They signed off on it, they had seen me a month prior and hugged me, and never did they say, 'Oh, where's your proposal.'" She continues, "You asked to see my dissertation, why didn't you mention it to me then? If you hadn't seen it, well, this is three years later. Why didn't you say something then? And how come there's a piece of paper in the Dean's office that says the committee signed off on it?" This situation left Adele baffled.

"You know, I wrote them a memo with all the points on it, and I said, 'I don't like to be accused of this. I want to have a straight up relationship. I want to have open communication so I'm sending you this email.' Two committee members never responded, and one of them, he's a gay male on my committee, said, 'Lets move on.' But two others never responded?" she says. Adele tells me that she had confronted her advisor in person, "Did you get my email?" Her advisor said "Yes" and "It appeared as though you needed to get some things off your chest." Adele tells me she told her advisor, "No! No, I don't. I sent that because I don't like to be accused of things I didn't do. I don't want to have bad feelings with my committee members. I didn't need to get anything off my chest." Based on these words, we could presume that Adele's association with being accused of something she did not do led her to the disassociation refractor. In other words, she does not want to be associated with certain things so she learns how to disassociate.

Adele tells me it is hard to find the balance. When she first came to Pierce State University she had some "damaging experiences." She says, "I had to be assertive and that's the role I take on in institutions. I become the one who speaks out about the injustices. I've tried to stop taking that on for other people. I do fight my own battles, sometimes too many." Perhaps Adele experiences obstructing and

disabling communication practices when she speaks about injustices. “When I came here,” she tells me, “I was told I would be teaching a course that I can’t teach. I told them that this was not what we agreed on. We went back and forth. They made me feel bad, and finally I said, ‘You know, I’m thinking of leaving.’ This was right when I first arrived here. I was thinking about going home back east. ‘You’re telling me you brought me out here for another reason? It’s totally out of my area. What’s the point of this?’ They changed their minds a few days later.” Here we can see how effective Adele’s disassociation refractor can be in the face of standing up for what she believes in. Telling her department she was “thinking of leaving,” a clear disassociation by removing herself out of the picture, proved to work in her favor.

Adele tells me that she usually carries the burden of her own assertiveness. She says, “I have a direct personality obviously. I remember they asked me to switch a room and I said no, and the secretary said, ‘Are you upset?’ She told me that no one has ever said no to her before. I say no to things, and now, no one says anything to me anymore.” Adele laughs. After Adele said this I could not help but wonder, when we say, “No,” do people think that we are disassociating ourselves from our work and do they perceive us as also being angry?

Adele tells me she would have never have thought to apply for this current position (the one she is resigning from). She did not do a job search. The university pursued her. Adele was working as an intern and one of the professors called her. This professor knew about her from professional conferences. “At first I told them, ‘No.’ I’m not going to apply for the position, and they said, ‘Yes, yes, yes.’ I never wanted to go into academia. I talked about it with my own therapist and she said, ‘Well, you’re doing something again you don’t really want to.’ There was so much I did that I didn’t want to do in my Ph.D. program. I was doing it to get the end result

that I wanted. I took this job because I wanted a specific end result. I wanted time to finish my dissertation, I wanted money, and I wanted to get out of the Board of Education.” Adele continues, “You know, they offered it to me. They flew me out here and they moved me out here. I didn’t do anything. I didn’t have to lift a finger, except emotionally. I didn’t even move out my stuff. I still have my apartment back east. I just brought out some suitcases and some boxes filled with books. You don’t give up an apartment in New York unless you never want to go back.” We laugh. Apparently Adele’s refractor had some back up in New York.

“Mentally, I’ve always had one foot in and one foot out,” Adele tells me. In her narrative, we see how the dissociation refractor refracts academe. Many of Adele’s experiences in higher education have left her feeling angry and confused. Based on Adele’s language, it is clear that her refractor influenced her decision to resign from the university. Interestingly, in the next narrative, we see how Renee’s refractor helps her to retain shape and identity when it comes to achieving her tenure goals. Renee wants tenure and she will let nothing stand in her way. Renee’s political refractor refracts structural factors.

Political Refractor: Refracting Structural Factors

Renee’s refractor is called the political refractor and we see her accessing this structure when she thinks about structural factors. Renee says, “Being tenured is a beautiful thing!” She can take the summers off and she looks forward to the job security. Renee’s refractor supports her position on tenure and influences her in positive ways. Renee is committed to politics and political activism.

Renee tells me that there are mostly men in her department. She tells me, “This isn’t unusual in political science. The profession is only twenty-five percent female.” She continues, “I mean it certainly made me determined to want to become

a tenured faculty member because there aren't as many women as men. I feel like it's an important statement to make." Based on Renee's language we can see that her talk on tenure is enlightening and enabling. The political refractor moves her forward in meaningful and productive ways to achieve her tenure goals. When Renee obtains tenure it will not only benefit her but other women (and men) in the field as well.

"I think that it's important to have as many women as possible moving up through the ranks," Renee says.

"So it makes me not want to quit!" she tells me.

Based on Renee's language we can see her political refractor refracting structural factors. Renee thinks it is important that she and other women move up the ranks.

Renee then tells me that some of her students begin to think about politics for the first time while in her class. They are forced to articulate opinions and positions. She tells me, "When I was teaching at UCMA I had a student who I called my favorite libertarian and we'd have great conversations about things. I actually convinced him that there were actual structural factors that limited some women's ability to do things. After reading a book about women and reproductive issues, he was convinced. You know, it's been a fun field." Renee tells me that it is sometimes hard for her students to take on and learn new positions but "What's the point of education if it's easy?" she says. Here we can see Renee accessing her political refractor as she is in class. Based on her words we can see that Renee teaches what she refracts.

Before Renee decided to go back to school, she was working as a lobbyist in Washington, DC. When her colleagues found out she was leaving her lobbying

position they were unhappy. She tells me they thought, “Oh, you’re just going to the ivory tower, and you’re going to be an academic and you’re not going to be involved in politics.” Renee reminds them that the reason why she became involved in politics was because of her women’s studies classes. She says, “Education has a lot to do with political activity and identity.”

I ask Renee if her feminism has any effect on or political implications for her assistant professor role. “Just like in graduate school” Renee tells me, “I have found a department full of wonderful people and a junior faculty staff that is both progressive and supportive. I just lucked out,” Renee says smiling. “You know, there are those days where I feel kind of overwhelmed by brownies and soccer practice and whatever else we have to do. I would never quit. I love my job so much.” In Renee’s narrative, we can see how her political refractor affects her position on tenure. Renee thinks tenure is “a beautiful thing.” She is motivated by the low percentage of women in her field so moving up the ranks and refracting structural factors are important to her. In the next narrative, we see Kristy going up for tenure early. Kristy’s refractor is called the tenure refractor and we see her accessing this structure when she is refracting criticism and rules. Kristy’s refractor has to work hard at overcoming her feelings of “looking too cocky.”

Tenure Refractor: Refracting Criticism and Rules

Kristy is very much a forward thinker, looking ahead and evaluating her position now and what she wants it to be in the future. Like Renee, she is determined to get tenure. In fact, she has decided to go up for tenure early. She believes there are a small number of individuals in her department who reject this decision. Kristy’s refractor is called the tenure refractor and we see her accessing this structure when she is refracting criticism and rules. Without her refractor in mind,

Kristy sees herself as silenced, vulnerable, and even, a target for criticism. During the interview, Kristy repeatedly tells me that she does not want to look like the young cocky one. Her decision to go up for tenure has been an informed one as she has spoken to her Dean, her mentor from graduate school, and her father, who is also a university professor. Kristy tells me, “I have these networks that I can bounce my ideas off of.”

Kristy tells me that for the most part she feels free to speak her mind. She wonders if this would be case at a “research one institution.” She says, “I don’t want to sound cocky. I feel like I have met the criteria though. There are always people that will critique what you do, but I don’t feel like it’s going to affect the ultimate decision on my tenure case.”

I ask Kristy, “Were there other reasons to go up for tenure early?”

“Yes,” she says. “Besides feeling as though I’ve met the criteria, there are social issues behind my decision. Although my main dilemma is that I do not want to seem like the “cocky young person or something.” Based on these words, we can see how Kristy’s refractor will be refracting her own critique of self. Refracting obstructive and disabling critique of self is probably the most challenging dynamic for the refractor. Kristy says, “I’m in a lot of leadership roles and I’m increasingly realizing how vulnerable I am. I have to speak out about things that people don’t really like. And so I need to have the security of tenure before I can really move forward. I feel like I’ve gone as far as I can in making institutional change without having tenure.” Here we can see the potential change Kristy feels she can make once she has a secure position that is not as tenuous. Kristy’s language reveals to us that without her refractor she is left feeling vulnerable.

Kristy says, “Interestingly, I’m serving on the committee that’s evaluating the whole tenure process. I don’t have too much of a voice. I’m on it as an untenured member, but I don’t get to vote or anything.” She continues, “And the way that the norms of an institution really get established is by precedent. So you have policy and then you have how that policy is enacted through the people that are interpreting it. Until you’re one of those interpreters you can only go so far. And there are people who will try to put you in your place, who will remind you that you don’t have tenure.” Kristy tells me that some of her colleagues were asking why she was placed on this committee, “And that got back to me!” Kristy shook her head in disappointment. Based on Kristy’s words we can see how she feels that without her refractor she has a small voice that does not carry any decision making power because she is unable to vote. We can see that Kristy wants to be an interpreter. We can assume that without this structure, Kristy feels she is unable to move forward in meaningful and productive ways.

Kristy says, “Along with clout you also get security. You don’t have to worry that somebody is going to sabotage you later on,” she says. Kristy tells me there are moments when she ignores the fact that she does not have tenure, “You know, I speak out when I think we’re making an incorrect decision in terms of designing a program, in terms of exams, in terms of curriculum, or whatever. Even if my ideas are unpopular I voice them. I think this makes me appear cranky. Here we can see that the tenure refractor will not only give her the sense of security she may desire, her language reveals that this security may be needed from potential individuals who will try to sabotage her career. Perhaps Kristy thinks that people may try to sabotage her because she carries the “cocky young person” and the “appearing cranky” belief. Even though Kristy’s tenure refractor is not yet established, her structure is

combating her obstructing and disabling communication practices, like thinking that others see her as cocky and cranky.

“Like I’ve had to be firmer,” she says. “Yeah, I think people perceive me as being crankier because I’m more critical.” She continues, “Where as I see myself as holding a certain boundary around a level of quality that I want us to pursue.” Based on these words, we can see how the change in her communication about appearing cranky enlightens and enables her to move forward and secure her refractor.

Getting back to Kristy going up for tenure early, she tells me that the criticism is voiced by a few individuals. “At first I thought it was more of a widespread sentiment but the longer I’ve been here I think it’s narrowed down to just a few people. They think that the rules say you should go up at this particular year – that you should wait – and you know essentially, ‘Who do you think you are to go up early?’” Kristy says. She puts this into context though. Here we can see Kristy’s refractor in process as she places this idea into perspective. She says, “I came in having done more writing, more writing than many of the people in my department. I’ve done more writing than most in my program and that’s threatening. I didn’t realize when I came here how threatening that would be!”

Kristy continues, “I came along at the same time a lot of other changes were happening. So it’s all of the changes, it’s not just me. But people felt dethroned. Destabilized. You know? I mean life changed for them. And the way they once did their work, which was valued and honored and rewarded, shifted. Intellectually, I understand why that would be threatening. Kristy’s ability to hold her tenure refractor deters her experiences of perceived threat. Deterring threat retains her shape and identity as we can see from her next comment, “And I don’t think my youth should stop me from doing anything. I think I’ve earned it. I’ve tried very hard to hold myself

to a standard that I would be happy with wherever I was. Because I didn't also want to be locked in, you know I wanted to be able to go wherever I wanted to go." Kristy tells me if she was at the research one institution where she got her doctorate she would not be going up early. But here I've earned it. I should move forward in a responsible manner and get on with it," she says smiling. In Kristy's narrative we can see how important it is for her to secure her tenure refractor, however, this structure is currently in place. We see the tenure refractor influencing Kristy's communication practices in meaningful and productive ways. It appears as though Kristy's refractor will overcome her own self-criticism along with criticism from others and the implied institutional rules.

The Translate

Translate Authenticity: Performing the Right Thing

In Jolie's narrative, we see her struggling with not doing "what comes naturally" and feeling she has to "second guess herself." Her translate is called authenticity translate, and this structure influences her ability to perform what she believes is the right thing to do. We can see Jolie shifting into, out of, and beyond her current situation. It is evident based on Jolie's discourse that authenticity is important to her and she encourages "real conversations." By the end of her story we can see how this structure affects the ways she models her behavior in the classroom, especially for young women.

Jolie says, "Most of the men I work with are in their fifties and sixties. They move slow and they're constantly hiking up their pants and wiping the dandruff from their shirts." Some of these men are in Jolie's department, and at times, when she comes "barrelin' out of the office" she practically "knocks some of them on their

butts,” she says. “That’s not good,” she tells me, “I move twice as fast as anybody else. I don’t need to come out of my office like a rocket all the time!”

Jolie tells me, “I can’t do what comes naturally. I’ve got to constantly second guess myself and say, ‘Okay Jolie, is this the right thing to do? Is this what you want to become?’” Managing the interactions that occur with her colleagues is exhausting Jolie says, “Completely and utterly exhausting.” Second guessing might be a shade of the translate, and exhaustion, a symptom of the structure.

Jolie tells me that her Dean is a little more playful with her than with others. His voice even changes when he speaks to her. She believes that he does not treat her like a child. “He’s just more playful,” she says, “that’s all.” But his playfulness is the springboard for jealousy among her colleagues she tells me. The Dean has said to Jolie, “The other guys are jealous of you.” Jolie tells me that everybody wants attention from the boss. She tells me about a time when it was his birthday and she baked him his favorite kind of cake, a coconut cake. Her Dean went around to each person in the department, to all forty men (and four women) and said, “This is why I hired a woman. She brought me a cake for my birthday!” Jolie tells me that she wanted to strangle him, “Can’t I just bring you a cake?”

Jolie then talks to me about a meeting she had last week. There were six people in the room and she was the “lowest ranking person.” The meeting was being run by the vice president. The vice president is a woman. Half the room was men and the other half women. Jolie explains that every person in this meeting handed in their work thirty days prior to the meeting and everyone’s work was discussed but hers. “Nobody talked about the work I submitted. Why didn’t it come up?” she cries out. “Like it never happened, my work was completely ignored.” She then says, “I’m still on this committee and part of me feels it would be terribly wrong to say, ‘How

come my stuff got ignored?” I ask Jolie why she feels it would be terribly wrong for her to say something. “I think it’s best if I hold steady and wait and see how things play out. The next meeting is two weeks from now. I have an assignment and I’ll do my assignment once again. If they take me off the committee, then they take me off the committee.” She goes on, “If I’m not going to be contributing, I have other work to do. I’m not going to put my ego in this. This is the right thing to do, hold steady and leave the ego out.” Here we can see Jolie shift her perspective, moving her in out and of frames of meaning when it comes to performing the right thing.

Jolie then says, “I do wonder though. How did I miss the boat? What am I not seeing here? Maybe I’m not as smart as these people. Maybe I’m stupid.” Yet she tells me she brought up some very important questions. Being ignored is a difficult thing she says. “There’s an old saying, beat me blind, but don’t ignore me. I don’t want to be ignored – that’s the hardest thing!” Jolie says. Here we see Jolie going back to the “stupid place.” She tells me, “I guess you can say I feel stupid when my ideas are ignored and when other people don’t give me encouragement (which is the very thing I enjoy giving). I need some encouragement back too. I’d like some encouragement back!” Again, here we see yet another frame of interpretation or shift in perspective.

I ask Jolie to reflect on a time in academe where she questioned who she was and what she was doing. She says, “I do have a landmark experience.” Jolie was talking about ethics and the subtlety of evil in an Ethics class. She begins to explain, as if she was in front of her class, “Evil is generally a snake-like experience. It comes in from underneath the door. It’s quiet. It moves in without you even noticing it. And it’s deadly; small but deadly.” Jolie tells me that many of her students who take ethics don’t really believe that evil exists. “I believe evil exists,” she says.

She goes on to tell me that most of us have a capacity to do something wrong and there are times when evil things happen.

It's not just Hitler," she says. "It's me in the grocery store, pushing somebody outside of a lane because I'm too important to wait," she explains. She tells me she is not afraid to talk about evil in her ethics classes. Jolie says her younger students often question her as to whether or not evil exists. And this topic was the argument of the evening. There was an older male student in her classroom. He was equal in her age and a foot taller than her. "This is unusual," Jolie tells me, "I'm a very tall woman."

"He's a big white man!" she says. The majority of her students were twenty-five years of age except for Tom, the big white male, and Jolie. She says, "So we've got Tom and me at fifty, another woman who's forty-five, and then everyone else in their mid-twenties. It's a master's level class. It's probably the third class and I'm wearing a red dress. I often wear red while teaching. I'm wearing a red dress and I'm talking about evil and I say, 'Do you think the devil's going to come in wearing a red dress?'" She tells me that Tom throws himself back in his chair, rocks back on his chair, crosses his arms, and in a loud booming voice says, 'How self-serving can you be?'

Jolie heard this as a personal attack. The first thing she thought of was, "He's right. How self-serving can I be? How can I make myself be so important that I even have to be evil?" Jolie tells me, "I was reminded of Teddy Roosevelt's daughter, Alice. She would say that Roosevelt had to be the bride at every wedding and the corpse at every funeral." Jolie says, "Oh Jolie, you're being petty. You're being the bride in this classroom." She went home that night and did not sleep. She was

completely undone. This happened over two years ago Jolie tells me and it is still something that she “bites on” regularly.

How can the one voice of dissention drown out all others? She tells me if this were to happen again she would handle it differently. “I would walk over to Tom, which is what I usually do when someone confronts me and ask, ‘Why is that self-serving? Do you think it’s self-serving of me to associate myself and my red dress with the devil?’ I may not understand the depth or the complexity of your comment.” Jolie says, “It’s usually at this point in an intense conversation that students have fabulous insights into what is happening right then. Confrontation like this is healthy,” she says. “I like to go there! I like the real conversation! This feels authentic to me.” “During these times, Jolie says, “I often learn what might be the right thing to do.” She says, “I want to be able to model for the young women in my classes how they can handle a bully. What chance do these young women have when dealing with the Tom’s in the world, whether as their equal or as their superior?” Here we can see how Jolie does not want communication to be lost in translation as she carefully reflects on a way to reframe the situation and confront the “bully.”

In Jolie’s narrative, we can see how authentic behavior is played out in her communication practices. By the end of her story we can see how she performs “the right thing” transformation. It is evident based on Jolie’s discourse that authenticity is important to her and her transformation encourages the “real conversations.” In the next narrative, we see Loren feeling “misunderstood.” Her translate is called translate identity, and this structure influences her ability to perform Chinese American.

Translate Identity: Performing Chinese American

Loren tells me that she often struggles with having “multiple layers of identity.” She says that we often have to choose the one identity that speaks to the complexity of our lives, and her own life I imagine. Loren’s translate is called translate identity, and this structure influences her ability to perform her Chinese identity. We can see Loren shifting into, out of, and beyond her current situation. Based on Loren’s discourse, we can see that identity is an important issue to her and has helped her to sort through the multiple layers of her own identity. By the end of her story we can see how this structure affects the ways she communicates her difference, she wants to be clear and not misunderstood. As Loren says, “I don’t want any bullshit.”

Loren tells me she has a complex personality and that many people find her to be unpredictable. “At times,” she says, “People might see me as confusing and intimidating.” Loren embodies different layers of identity and she gives voice to these different layers during our interview. She tells me, “Sometimes you have to choose the one identity that speaks to the complexity of your life.” Here we can see Loren’s translate in negotiation as she tries to frame which picture speaks most powerfully in her life.

She tells me, “It speaks to placement. It’s clear to me that I don’t associate with those kinds of boundaries. If I know that someone is intimidated then I’ll probably up the power distance. I’ll probably up the space between us. If I’m uncomfortable and I know I’ve intimidated them, I’ll be sure it remains that way. The thing that’s so funny is some people just keep this. You know? For me it’s like sexuality, it’s so fluid. One minute I’m your equal and the next minute I’ve already set up a boundary. And you can tell they’re like fucked up in the head now, ‘What’s going on?’ I’ll be very personal, and then the next time they see me, very

professional. See, I've gotten where, yeah, now that I think about it, it's hard for others to work with this fluidity and flexibility."

She then says, "You've hired me because I'm Asian American and you're putting me on these committees that I can't stand and I'm raising my voice and I'm telling you how I feel. YEAH! OKAY! Let's go!"

Loren tells me she has learned how to negotiate the classroom but that committee work is another story. She has been elected to serve, or the Chair has placed her to serve on several different committees. She tells me that recently she was in a committee meeting, "And we're talking to the Dean. Everyone was there and here I am, the young, Chinese woman on the committee! If I voice my opinion, which I did, I'm seen as becoming angry. And I'm not angry!" Here we can see the complexity of Loren's translate as she successfully communicates her position to self yet misunderstood by others. Also, the performance of being Chinese is then followed by attention, because more often than not she is the only Chinese American on these committees.

"I feel like the misunderstood black man, you know, not angry just passionate," Loren says. "That's how I am. I like to argue. I like to discuss. I like to raise my voice. I get really excited. And all of a sudden it's, I'm so sorry if you were angry. I'm like what the fuck? What did I do? Can't I say how I feel without having all of you come down on me?" Loren says shaking her head and laughing. Loren should not be surprised then, that her Chinese performance is often followed by confusion.

"Now it's the university culture that is starting to say, 'Okay, you're different. Where do we box you? Where do we put you? Because you're not white, but you're not acting Chinese.' That's hard. This is tiring me out, this part is really tiring me out. So what do I do?" Loren tells me that she goes back to the advice her mom gives

her, “If you can’t win them with your intelligence then knock them down with your charm.” She says, “And I’m like, okay. Thanks mom.” Here we can see Loren shifting in and out of frames of meaning. Loren is definitely working in the shades of translate as she tries to negotiate her identity publicly. Similar to Jolie’s translate, a symptom of Loren’s structure is also tiredness.

Loren says she “takes no prisoners” in the classroom. Her class syllabi are now ten pages in length. She is very clear about her expectations. She tells me that she has “a reputation.” “People get freaked out. There is a verbal onslaught and it’s also a dare. I challenge them, ‘If you don’t like this right now, then leave. I don’t care. You don’t know me.’ And that’s the façade. I don’t want any bullshit,” she says.

Here we can see in Loren’s narrative how identity is played out in her communication practices. By the end of her story we can see how she performs “Chinese American” transformation. It is evident by Loren’s discourse that identity is important to her and that her transformation influences her ability to sort through her own multiple layers of identity and to communicate her differences and expectations as a result her experiences with confusion and intimidation. In the next narrative, we see Tillie struggling with financial compensation. Her translate is called translate dollars (and sense), and this structure influences her to look for work elsewhere to give her that competitive edge. Tillie considers the performance of taking financial advantage of her situation. She tells me that she does not like playing this game.

Translate Dollars (and Sense): Performing Advantage

Tillie has given voice to her financial struggles as a young, single woman in academe. In her narrative, we see her struggling with “having to go on the market” and “positioning herself carefully.” Tillie’s translate is called the dollars (and sense) translate, and this structure influences her ability to perform taking financial

advantage. We can see Tillie shifting into, out of, and beyond her current situation. We can see from Tillie's discourse that she is uncomfortable with marketing and positioning herself for pay raises. She does not care for the idea of interviewing elsewhere right now. By the end of her story we can see how this structure affects the way she looks at the problem. We see her shifting into the idea of making it a choice and staying for good reasons, not just because she is there.

Tillie tells me that many of her colleagues purchased homes several years ago. Tillie says, "I can barely afford my rent. The cost of living here is very high." She tells me that her university does not offer faculty housing. Tillie is also becoming more aware of the politics and says, "And the only way for me to get a big raise is to interview someplace else." She says, "It only makes sense that I position myself carefully." Tillie tells me, "I need to get an offer and then go to the Dean and say, 'I want more. This is what they're willing to pay me. Do you want to keep me?'" Tillie hates the thought of this idea. Here we can see Tillie moving in and out of different frames of meaning. Her structure appears to function strategically.

Tillie then wonders if they will tell her to leave. She says, "I don't want to have to play those games. I wish they would give us a raise because we're doing good work, but that's not how it goes." Tillie tells me, "It's this masculine model. You have to pay me to keep me. I think that disadvantages women uniquely because we're not comfortable in that position. I'm not comfortable selling myself to another school if I don't really want to go there." She continues, "I'm just, you know, using their time to further my own career. You know, the men that I talk to have no problem with that. They're like, 'Yeah, that's what you do!' and I'm like, 'Ugh!' it's so dishonest and it's such rigmarole. Why do I have to do that?"

She wonders, "Why can't I just be? They got rid of merit raises because they felt they were discriminatory. They were saying it was advantaging men. I'm one of the people who would've gotten that raise so I disagree. You're like yeah, whatever. It's about people who do good work, but I'm so not compelled by the union people. In your quest for equality, you've crushed any hope of putting in incentives to do better work." Tillie then leans forward and says, "Here's the other big problem with the union. The contract has been negotiated across the state so I make the same as somebody who is in Fresno, the same as somebody who is in Long Beach, the same as somebody who is in Sacramento. Your money goes a lot further in Sacramento than it does here. The union is problematic."

Tillie tells me that she does not get a big pay raise even when she does get tenure. "I'll receive job security!" she says laughing. Tillie then tells me, "It's one of those, ugh, I'm gonna be poor forever. But I've been poor for so long it doesn't really bother me. It's not like I lust after a bigger car. Even if I got a huge raise my quality of life wouldn't change very much. I don't want things my sister has. I don't want expensive towels. I don't want stuff. I've been scraping for so long now that it's become habitual."

Tillie tells me that she has some difficult decisions to make in the future. She believes she needs to seriously consider "going somewhere else." As she puts it, "In my 6th year I have to go on the market. I mean you would be a fool to go up for tenure and not go on the market at the same time." She says, "You need a safety net in case you don't get tenure. You need to have a job somewhere else. And then you need to go to your Dean and say, 'This is how much I'm worth. This is my fair market value.'" Tillie realizes during our interview, "I guess I need to think about doing it this year because if you wait until your 6th year people may think you're not going to get

tenure and that's why you're doing it instead of recognizing. Oh! You know, whatever!" she says rolling her eyes and looking away.

"Yeah, it's all very complicated," Tillie says. "I need to seriously think about interviewing and I don't want to. I don't really want to go anywhere. I like being here. I have to give myself every advantage or I need to decide that the money just doesn't matter." Deciding that money does not matter is absurd for Tillie, "How can that not matter?" She says, "It's a silly conclusion that sort of smacks us in the face. Like we said before you should be happy with what you have. I just need it to be a choice." Tillie then says, "I need to be here for good reasons not because I'm still here. I shouldn't stay just because I'm here." Here we can see Tillie allowing a few frames go by so she can get a better idea of the bigger picture. I wonder if she is reacting to the structures contrail (in between the phases) when she says, "I shouldn't stay here just because I'm here." During the interview, she told she loves where she is at.

Here we can see in Tillie's narrative how her financial struggles are played out in her communication practices. By the end of her story, we can see how she considers performing the financial advantage game as her discourse reveals that she should give herself every advantage. In the next narrative, we see Rachel struggling with her sexuality. Rachel is young, smart, and attractive. Her translate is called translate sexuality, and this structure influences her desire to perform professionally and collaboratively. In the past, this meant that Rachel had to be the "star." This perspective is now changing for her. Often being the "star" meant being in situations where sex and power were present.

Translate Sexuality: Performing Professionalism and Collaboration

Rachel tells me she has had a number of experiences where her sexuality overrides anything that she produces. Rachel's sexuality has been "highlighted" many times while in academe. Rachel's translate is called the translate sexuality, and this structure influences her desire to perform professionally and collaboratively. In Rachel's narrative, we can see her shifting into, out of, and beyond her current situation. Rachel's discourse reveals that being the star in the field is not necessarily the attention that she wants anymore, especially the attention from men. By the end of her story we can see how this structure affects the way she looks at the problem.

As a feminist scholar I ask Rachel, "Have you experienced any backlash because you are *the feminist* in the department?"

She replies, "You can think whatever the hell you want. I'm still gonna do it! Rachel then smiles. "However," she says, "There is one senior faculty member who already told me that he can't support me if my feminism is the type of feminism that hates men." She continues, "It isn't, but that is his perception. I think he's just still scared – scared of what I could identify, scared of what I could write about, scared of what I could reveal – the things that he would like to believe don't exist."

"Are you afraid of that?" I ask Rachel.

She says, "No," softly, raises her eyebrow, and again smiles.

I respond, "Why do you think the senior faculty member might be afraid?"

"Because then he'd have to take responsibility!" Rachel tells me. "And instead, he walks around blaming women for fucking up his life. And they get their choice of men and they manipulate men. You know the classic 'They have all the power because they have all the pussy.' Please! Get over it! That's just ridiculous.

It's the classic myth that women have the power. It's a false sense of power. And in the end, the looks disappear."

There is an interesting twist to this story. This same senior faculty member, the one that told her he could not support her type of feminism, has asked Rachel out on several different occasions. Rachel tells me, "There are 13 faculty members in our department and three of the men have hit on me. And one is a senior faculty member, another is married, and another has a partner. This has happened over a span of three months. It was as if, one of them noticed that the other was attracted to me, and so I was sort of becoming a pawn in who can get Rachel." Rachel then shakes her head, "No, that's a lie! I forgot about the other one. In the past seven months, I've had two senior scholars, one in my department and the other where I was conducting my research, hit on me. Both of these senior scholars invited me to work on projects with them, and then ended the project when I said, "No" to their sexual advances.

Rachel then pauses for a moment and sighs, "I have a female peer in the department who made a comment when we went out to dinner when the visiting scholar was in town. Both senior scholars were hitting on me at the same time." Rachel sighs again. "God, that was just really sick. And then the waiter apparently was flirting with me. I didn't notice it but my female colleague did, and then right at the table in front of all of the faculty, she made a joke about it, 'God, Rachel, didn't you see he was flirting with you? Everyone flirts with you.' And she said it in such a way that I should be appreciative of that or that it should make me feel good. Her highlighting my sexuality at that table of men, because we were the only two women, was a perfect example of how my sexuality seems to override anything I produce."

Rachel looks at me and says, "I'm sure you can relate Alana."

"Yes," I respond.

"The reality is I'm a sexual being. And another reality is that one of the men, who is an assistant, well, we came in at the same time and we did have a fling. I wanted to be with him but he lied about the status of his partnership. He lied!" she tells me.

Rachel says, "So, the whole thing is really fucked up because now that I've turned down these men, I've been cut off of projects."

She continues, "You know, I have to walk through the halls and three of the faculty barely talk to me. And these are people that I need to talk to. Ideally, we should work together professionally and collaboratively."

"Well, here's the irony," Rachel says. "When I was a doctoral student, I dated the top scholar there. It was a secretive relationship for the first year. It became public two years later. But one of the limitations that I put on this relationship was to get no extra benefits. But in reality, I got less than that because I didn't take classes from him. He didn't read my work. I didn't seek any personal advice from him."

"I didn't want to appear as if I was getting special favors. And in the end, I got nothing," Rachel tells me as she places her hand over her mouth.

Rachel shakes her head, "I've got to do some stuff for myself and if it's at the risk of not getting tenure, it's at the risk of not getting tenure."

"Do you think these men would like to see you get tenure?" I ask Rachel.

She responds, "Well, that's a good question. I've never thought of that. I'd be less competition then, huh? And then they *could come* and pull the father, "let me take care of you." Rachel then says, "I used to like receiving the attention for being the smart one." I would add here also being the "attractive one." She tells me this

was once of great importance to her but, “Quite frankly, being a star in the field is what I thought I wanted. I don’t give a shit anymore. I really don’t. I really don’t.”

In Rachel’s narrative, we can see how being young, smart, and attractive are played out in her communication practices. Rachel’s discourse reveals that her sexuality seems to override anything that she produces. We can see how this structure influences her desire to perform professionally and collaboratively. In the past, Rachel wanted to be the “star.” This perspective is now changing for her. In the next narrative, we see how Adele struggles with professional integrity. She feels as though she has to hold the standards of education alone at times. Adele’s translate is called translate integrity, and this structure influences her to ability to perform standards.

Translate Integrity: Performing Standards

Adele tells me that she has noticed a lack of accountability in academe. In terms of professional integrity, Adele believes there should be a high standard in academia. Adele’s translate is called translate integrity, and we see this structure influencing her ability to perform academic standards. In Adele’s narrative, she shifts into, out of, and beyond her current situation. Adele’s discourse reveals that she feels alone in upholding the standards of education. Her story allows us to see how the structure influences her communication practices.

Adele says, “What truly disgusts me about academia is the lack of accountability. In private industry, if you don’t do your job then you’re out of there. I think the pretense that we have, that it’s for academic freedom is bullshit!”

She says, “In this department professors do not meet their office hours, they do the minimum, they don’t care, their notes are as old as the hills, and they’re not working together. We’re not working together as a department with a vision at all.

People aren't happy with the way classes have been taught yet no one wants to work together to change it because this is the easier way."

Adele tells me, "In terms of professional integrity, I think everyone should have it. I believe in that wholeheartedly. But because I work in this industry, we're the ones educating the students who are taking care of thousands of other students. We're certifying guidance counselors and school psychologists. We have to have, I mean, we're responsible for thousands of people's lives and if we're sending out students who are unprepared, I mean yeah, they may eventually get prepared because of the learning curve, but if they still don't have the writing skills, you know, they're not writing in complete sentences, that's a problem. I just finished correcting a batch of papers and there are grammar errors all over the place. I think we're doing a disservice to our students and to the students they'll be serving."

At Adele's university they are not pressured to publish as much. She tells me that many of her colleagues also consult. The professorship is just a way to make "extra money" she says. "They think of this as the little job they do for job security and retirement. And they're really working it! I saw this back east when I had the scholarship. The reason why I wasn't being mentored was because my mentor was too busy trying to publish. You know it's like the narcissistic complex. They want to look good, they want to be beautiful, they want to present papers in their field, and they want to look good to other people. It's all about the ego and the grandiosity of it. And I think that's a big thing here. People who aren't publishing are doing a lot of other work on the side."

During graduate school, Adele tells me that she felt more like a full-time worker than a graduate student. Her doctoral level courses were "poor," "I learned more as a master student," she says. Some of her professors in her doctoral

program did not have syllabi. Adele says, “So, I didn’t put my heart into any of the work. It was just something I had to do to get the degree. I was even thinking about quitting but luckily I got an internship as a rehab psychologist with this woman who was just incredible. And she mentored me. I saw her integrity and I was rejuvenated. I was ready to quit until I met her. I started to get more.” Adele tells me, “If I didn’t have professional integrity, I could just stay here forever and work two days a week, three days a week, during the fall and winter quarter, and then have one quarter off. It’s a very cushy job.”

Adele says, “Ever since I came here, even at the orientation, we’re told this is a special population, first generation, you know. Out of one side of their mouth they’re saying, ‘This is great. These students are coming here getting their education and advancing themselves,’ but on the other side of their mouth they’re saying, ‘These are first generation, you know it’s a special population.’ What? Okay, they have to learn about the culture of education. We can provide that within our classroom! What does it mean to study? How should we study? How do we approach study? I mean that can be incorporated into our education.”

“But I can’t do that alone!” she says. “I get reviews all the time saying I give too much work. I’m told I should give everyone B’s and I don’t deal with the fact that they have children and they work. I mean we’ve sort of indoctrinated the students with, ‘Oh, you have children. Oh, you have work. Oh, you poor things.’ Well, you’re still going to be responsible for those skills when you get out in the field,” she says. Adele tells me that it involves a choice. She says, “Maybe it means cutting back and taking one course. You want to go quickly but you can’t do everything at the same time. You can’t have passion for ten different things at the same time and do them all successfully. How do you negotiate that, you know? I also say to students maybe

now isn't the time to take on three classes. I've has students who've had babies and come to school the next week. It's not my decision to make. They have to make the decisions."

"But I have to hold the standards of education," Adele says sighing, "I can't do it alone."

In Adele's narrative we can see how professional integrity is played out in her communication practices. Adele's discourse reveals that integrity means upholding the standards of education. It appears that her translate often results in a solo performance. In the next narrative, we see how Renee manages being the progressive academic at a time where living in a conservative neighborhood has impacted her identity. Renee's translate is called translate feminist, and this structures affects her ability to perform parenting and conservatism.

Translate Feminism: Performing Parenting and Conservatism

Renee is a feminist. When I ask about her feminist identity, she smiles and says, "Oh, yes! Hear us roar." Renee is also a mother and very politically minded. Renee believes her perspectives are welcomed in her department, however, she finds living in her conservative neighborhood somewhat challenging. Renee's translate is called translate feminist, and this structures influences her ability to perform parenting and conservatism. Interestingly, Renee has a great deal of research interests in conservatism, specifically, with conservative women. In Renee's narrative, we can see her shifting into, out of, and beyond her current situation.

Renee believes that not enough people embrace feminism, "Even the feminists themselves," she says.

"Why is that?" I ask.

She responds, "I don't know. When I teach my women in politics classes I use this fantastic, old data that I saw, which says something like 75% of women support the goal of the women's movement and something like 25% of those women call themselves feminists." Renee tells me feminism is publicly touted as a negative thing. "You know, I always talk to my students about it and they say, 'Ahhh,' because they think of big hairy women who are lesbians," Renee says laughing. I tell her that all of the women I have interviewed have shared the same experience with their students. She says, "Rush Limbaugh calls us Feminazi's, so we don't have a good image. I think it's just a lot of misconception."

Renee says, "You can tell the term makes people uncomfortable or you just have a political conversation with them. I mean I've had that experience here. I don't use the term as frequently in my neighborhood but people know where I stand politically. This is a very conservative neighborhood politically. It's the first time I really felt strange about where I was living. It's been an adjustment for me and my husband to be here in this place." She says laughing, "Where finding our niche, but it's a particularly bizarre group of people that live here from my point of view."

"What do you do to support feminism?" I ask Renee.

She responds, "That's a good question! One very base thing I do is send money to Planned Parenthood. My husband and I used to be on the board of Planned Parenthood back east. So that was kind of a political thing, you know." She continues, "I think the way I raise my daughter is another way I support feminism. The things I tell her stem from that idea. We'll have conversations about politics and I'm sure some of what I'm talking about she doesn't understand but eventually it'll sink in I think." Renee's daughter is six years old. "Yeah, I talk a lot about body

image with her because she's a girl. God forbid I'm tainted by the body image culture so I try to leave unscathed in that way," Renee says.

She continues, "When I teach my American Institutions class, right now I'm teaching an Introduction to American Politics, I put all sorts of feminist stuff out there. I talk about Abigail Adams. So I do that kind of stuff. I integrate my curriculum with feminist academics. Yeah, it's funny because I think it depends on what you're talking about. Yesterday when I spoke of Abigail Adams, I didn't use the term feminist so much. I wanted to point out that the women's movement didn't start in the 1960's. There were women who were fighting for women's rights three hundred years ago. I talked about how the constitution is flexible enough in that it has given women some rights but it's still rigid enough where we don't."

Renee tells me that her area of research began in the doctoral program. "I decided to write a dissertation on a topic that I really loved and it motivated to do it and it was fine. It was a topic that people didn't think I could do. I did a project on studying conservative women's organizations at the national level and so I would interview all these lobbyists and heads of organizations and nobody thought I could do it, but I did," Renee says laughing. "So I got all these interviews with people. Yeah, they were a little skeptical that a graduate student was going to be able to actually speak with conservative women and here I come from this feminist academic background. But in fact the conservative women were happy to talk so it wasn't that hard."

Renee tells me that studying conservative women turns her writing into a bit of a critique of women in political literature and so there is a tendency to connect feminism with women's interests. She says, "So I'm a little critical in some ways that a lot of the feminist research and writing assumes that all women think the same.

There's some challenge out there on that, like women of color, there are lesbians, working class women, disabled women, and so on and so forth. And so that's where we see this sort of a broadening of feminism, but throw in a conservative woman and it just screws the whole thing up!"

"There are a lot of feminists who dismiss conservative women as having some false sense of consciousness or not being educated and that's really problematic," she says. She shares with me her experiences at professional conferences. When Renee presents her material they immediately want to attack her research subjects and criticize her for not being critical enough. "As opposed to wanting to accept the fact that I'm trying to explain and describe strategies that these women use," she says. "They just get so incensed by the research material that they can't get beyond that. And I understand that as some of the things these women do are infuriating. I try and explain that in my writing I'm not saying why I think they're wrong. I don't think that gets us very far. We've been doing that for years. I think it's more important for us as feminists to understand the other side and to see how feminism has actually influenced these women. And accept the fact that they're challenging feminism in a very significant way, and it's a challenge that we need to take on head on and not dismiss just because they're conservative women."

Renee tells me to think about Margaret Thatcher. "So when you have people saying Margaret Thatcher's really not a feminist because she's so conservative, that's really problematic. I mean she's a woman and she's conservative so we have to deal with that you know?"

Renee then goes back to tell me about her challenges though living in this conservative neighborhood. She says, "I think more about my identity now because of where I live. I live in the suburbs, it's fairly conservative here, and yet I teach in a

progressive academic environment. Here I feel more like suburban mom, a slight bit of an outcast in this neighborhood, and at my university I think of myself as the progressive academic.”

This narrative shows us how feminism is played out in Renee’s communication practices. By the end of her story we can see how she performs “parenting and conservatism” transformation. Renee’s discourse reveals that feminism is important to her and that her transformation influences her perspective on living in a conservative neighborhood and examining the lives of conservative women in her research endeavors. In the next narrative, we see Kristy learning how to manage boundaries. Her translate is called translate boundaries, and this structure influences her ability to perform positioning theory. Kristy tells me that she often thinks about the life she wants to craft for herself.

Translate Boundaries: Performing Positional Theory

Kristy tells me that she recognizes that her department is in a “healing phase.” Kristy experienced some personal backlash from departmental changes. Kristy’s translate is called translate boundaries, and her structure gives her the ability to perform positional theory. In Kristy’s narrative, she shifts into, out of, and beyond her current situation. Kristy’s discourse reveals that she is currently creating boundaries and learning how to navigate them. Her story allows us to see how the structure influences her communication practices.

Kristy says, “I think we’ve had a lot of shakeups. There’s been a lot of tough decisions and a lot of tough upsets ending in turmoil.” Kristy feels that her department is now in a place where people really want to work together. We have a critical mass of energetic people that are willing to put the time and the energy into the institutional level of things and not just their own work, although, we still have

some lone rangers.” She continues, “We have a critical mass in terms of moving forward, it feels like we have more of a shared vision of where the school is going. So when I say a healing phase, I think that people are realizing, including myself, that perhaps some relationships were ruptured. There was an unnecessary degree of harshness or conflict as we tried to enact change. But now it’s time to make sure that everybody feels welcome and a part of the new place that we’re trying to be.”

Kristy tells me she is constantly learning about politics and ways to handle herself when she is wrapped up in these politics. “I think I’m intense and I react and I want change to happen now,” she says. Kristy tells me about the death of one of her committee members. She says, “They thought she had the flu and found out she had stomach cancer and within two months passed away. She was only 47. She was an assistant professor in her third or fourth year in anthropology and was also a single mother. She spent all of her time working.”

Her committee member’s death happened the year before Kristy came to this university. Because of this tragedy, Kristy often asks herself, “What kind of life am I going to craft? I don’t want that. I want to work intensely and also take time off to visit my niece or go walk and do something renewing.” Kristy tells me that people had mixed feelings about her accepting this assistant professor position. “My advisor, who was completely supportive, said to me and I’ll never forget this, ‘If I had to do it over again I wouldn’t make the same decision.’ This is someone who’s like internationally famous, right? So certainly it’s taken a toll on her, and her personal life, and her balance. Another professor stopped me in the bathroom and told me I was throwing my education away to come to this kind of a place and not a research one. So I think it is really interesting in terms of what we value about ourselves as people and what the larger community values. It’s a lesson in making a decision for

yourself. It's how you want to spend your time. I was very aware that whatever institution I joined was going to shape my identity."

Kristy says, "It's the dialectic between institutional expectations and the habits of how your life at the institution is organized."

Most of Kristy's stress comes from being placed in leadership positions. She says, "I've tried to enact authority that was assigned to me, okay? And a couple of individuals have reacted to that by saying that's not the way it's done. So navigating this gets very wearing, and there are just a couple of people who will constantly do that to you and just wear you out. You're trying to be in a leadership role and push things forward. I've gotten a little bit sneakier I think. I'm not always pleased with this but you catch more bees with honey." This sneakiness may speak to the shades of the translate.

Kristy tells me it is important that she is less antagonistic and more strategic about recognizing the expertise that other people have so they do not feel threatened or questioned. "It is exhausting work," she says. She tells me that there has been a great deal of backlash in her department because of structural changes. She tells me that she has been a little naïve and a little trusting – too trusting about "people's professionalism." She often gets upset about these sorts of things. She says, "I don't have to work with those folks if I don't want to on committees or anything like that, I mean obviously they're still faculty. But I can choose the boundaries or the relationship, and yeah, that puts me more in control. When you look at the bigger picture I won't have to be in that position again. "

Kristy says laughing, "Unfortunately, in the academy you have people who need to let you know how much they know. Okay? So they're threatened by various

things, and they need to let you know they're an expert on this." She then asks me, "Have you read any positioning theory?"

"A little bit," I say.

"Yeah. Yeah. That's what helps me keep my sanity around these things. I think okay this person is enacting a particular discourse and attempting to position me in certain ways. How am I going to respond?"

She says, "I handle myself differently now. "Part of what's happening is that I'm going up for tenure early and I feel confident about it. Other people are going up as well and they don't feel so confident."

"I think the power relations have shifted," she says. Kristy believes that the shift in power relationships has shifted individual's allegiance or public support, but she has not. "You can be polite, and that's what I mean by navigating the boundary," she says. "But I'll never trust again like that. I'll never make myself vulnerable in certain ways again." In other words she says, "All of the tools that I've learned from positioning theory, the analysis, and the choices about how to react or interact, come to the foreground of my mind because the trust barriers have been broken. With a person that I trust I'm not analyzing interactions as I'm in them. With a person that I don't trust I'm like, 'Okay, you're trying to put me in this role.' It's exhausting work."

In Kristy's narrative, we can see how boundary talk is played out in her communication practices. By the end of her story we see how she performs positioning theory transformation. Kristy's discourse reveals that boundaries, along with barriers, are important to her and that her transformation influences her perspective on navigating the boundary margins. However, this type of interaction leaves Kristy exhausted.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION:

WORDING OUR WORLDS: LOCATING THE DISCURSIVE STRUCTURES IN OUR EVERYDAY PRACTICES

Introduction

This is just the beginning of something new. I have to remind myself this as I try to “make sense” of the material I have gathered, analyzed, and presented. Three structures represent formation, organization, and composition of organizational life by revealing the patterns found in the discourse of seven female assistant professors. Their patterns of discourse led to the discovery and generation of the ways the women word their worlds into the discursive structures. The stories in the previous chapter show us how the involute, refractor, and translate function as a constant opportunity to represent beneficial, detrimental, knowledgeable, unacknowledged, transforming, conscious, and even, unconscious communication practices. The three discursive structures emerge in this study as both a medium and an outcome. In fact, these discursive structures continue to evolve with each written word in this final chapter.

By identifying the discursive structures it is possible to become conscious of the ways these structures function in our everyday lives. Placing discourse at the center of study and discovery creates the space for opportunity and growth. My research experience tells me there is a great deal of complexity and pain with the process of making conscious what was unconscious. Through this research, I have

come to learn that language and meanings are sites of constant struggle and the defensive resistances that people create are often habitual, routine, and unexamined.

Six sections will compose this chapter. First, I present the conclusions drawn from the stories in Chapter Four. Second, the theoretical implications of the study will be discussed. Then, I offer methodological insights. Next, I talk about the practical applications of this work. After that, the limitations of this study and directions for future research are described. Finally, I close with some final reflections on this research journey.

Discursive Structures

Analyzing the stories offered by these women about their lived experiences in academe has enabled me to address my research questions with greater depth. Looking at what discourses shape a woman's experience and in what ways the discursive structures facilitate or constrain a woman's life and work is an ever-evolving puzzle. While the research questions may appear straight forward, they are actually quite complex. Each discursive structure, the involute, refractor, and translate, along with their interrelatedness, provide some answers to the mystery of the wording of women's worlds in their everyday interactions. The conclusions are presented in four notions; world of tension, world of opposition, world of choice, and interrelated worlds.

World of Tension

The wide-ranging features of the involute can be discovered in a variety of communicative contexts and social interactions such as family history to social identity to managing expectations and pressures within academe. The unique features of the involute are revealed in the women's stories as a way of tightening

and expanding their communication practices. **Tightening discourses** *confine* communication practices and narrow the opportunity for other, possible practices, while **expanding discourses** *protect* communication practices and defend the need for other, possible practices. Juxtaposing each woman's involute we begin to see the direction the involute takes. The following titles and excerpts are taken from the women's stories.

Disparaging-Encouraging Involute: "Going to the stupid place"

"I walked into the first night of class and said to myself – I mean it's the voice that you can't control, well you can, but not initially – and the voice was, 'You're too stupid. You're never gonna figure this out. You're gonna fail this class.' I teach ethics and I think I'm going to fail this ETHICS class!"

"I still carry this around with me wherever I go,"

Concealing-Revealing Involute: "People don't know where to place me"

"That's how it plays out in the department. They don't know where to place me because I look challenging and I look intimidating. I don't know if it's my height or my personality. I have no idea?"

Intensifying-Eradicating Involute: "Stop buckling down and focusing"

"I want to be able to prove to them that I've doubled my productivity. I want to demonstrate to them just how much better I am now."

"I need to be around people like that. I need to hear that because I'm in approval seeking mode ... MUST GET TENURE! This is the expectation. I'll meet your expectations. So hearing people say things like, I don't want tenure or it's no big deal if I don't get tenure, is really healthy for me."

Troubling-Gratifying Involute: "This is a research one"

"In some ways, living the meaningful life, in the sense that we're able to incorporate social relationships and work that creates some sort of social change means you might not make it at a research one," Rachel says. "Isn't this paradoxical?"

Rejecting-Accepting Involute: "There's no passion left"

"Here, we don't have competition, there's just no care. There's just no care!"

Adjusting-Preserving Involute: “Because I had a kid”

“You just don’t do it, or you can’t do it, or you do do it and then you’re burnt out and you don’t spend the time with your kid.” Renee continues, “I mean I don’t regret having a kid at all. I love it. I’m not whining about it. It’s a choice I made.”

Tenuous-Vigorous Involute: “You’re a professor. You should be set!”

“Your salary is not that high unless you go looking for consulting opportunities. I mean that seems to be what people do around here.”

The involute exposes the dialectical tensions in the excerpts above. The involute appears to confirm the dominant discursive practices. It seems the women have no control of the structure yet they simultaneously take advantage of the structure, thus, giving them the sense that the structure is influencing their lives in manageable and productive ways. The involute appears to be the most powerfully constraining structure, while the refractor and translate appear to help move this constraining structure.

World of Opposition

The wide-ranging features of the refractor are discovered in a variety of communicative contexts and social interactions from classroom experiences to identity development to physical abuse. The unique features of the **refractor** are revealed through the women’s stories as a way of **enlightening** and **enabling** their communication practices. Enlightening and enabling communication practices provide strength and renewal. The refractor appears to **refract obstructing** and **disabling** communication practices through the use of a medium that changes a view and corrects the course of action. A medium can be a person, idea, belief, behavior, and/or activity. Likewise, obstructing and disabling communication practices can be people, ideas, beliefs, behaviors, and/or activities. Juxtaposing

each woman's refractor we begin to see the direction the refractor takes. The following titles and excerpts are taken from the women's stories.

Spiritual Refractor: "Refracting jealousy, gossip and unforeseen forces"

"I want to get with the one who loves me and understands me. I seek God's knowledge, leadership, and authenticity. There's no defense against jealousy and there's no defense against gossip. You're completely vulnerable."

Complexity Refractor: "Refracting students complaints and tiredness"

"How can a Chinese woman pick on me and be very explicating because aren't you all ugly?" "There were plenty of red flags," Loren tells me.

Third Wave Feminism: "Refracting contradiction and ambiguity"

"People may think we're indecisive or that we're waffling or that we're shirking responsibility. I'm not shirking responsibility. I'm redefining responsibility for myself."

Feminist Refractor: "Refracting violent relationships"

"Long story short," she says, "I lived with him for four years and he beat me up, right." "In the interpersonal course they started talking about gender. That's all it took! That's all it took!" She tells me, "Finally, I had something that spoke to my spirit!"

Disassociation Refractor: "Refracting academe"

"But ultimately, the way I had to deal with it was to disassociate and not have anything to do with them." "Mentally, I've always had one foot in and one foot out."

Political Refractor: "Refracting structural factors"

"I think that it's important to have as many women as possible moving up through the ranks," Renee says. "So it makes me not want to quit!" she tells me.

Tenure Refractor: "Refracting criticism and rules"

"I'm in a lot of leadership roles and I'm increasingly realizing how vulnerable I am. I have to speak out about things that people don't really like. And so I need to have the security of tenure before I can really move forward. I feel like I've gone as far as I can in making institutional change without having tenure."

The refractor materializes as personal power, assuming responsibility for the “forces” that need refracting to stay committed to goals and objectives. The refractor is stable, secure, and accessible. The refractor appears to be the most powerfully facilitating structure as the assistant professors make sense of their personal and professional lives as they experience role ambiguity, preoccupation with tenure, and job performance pressures.

World of Choice

The wide-ranging features of the translate are discovered in academe and can be expressed in authenticity, sexuality, and boundaries. The unique features of the translate can be seen in the women’s stories as a way of performing a transformation of thought and/or action, **shifting them into, out of, or beyond their current struggles**. The translate appears to function as an interpreter or translator and has retrospective sensemaking capabilities. Juxtaposing each woman’s translate we begin to see the phases the translate takes. The following titles and excerpts are taken from the women’s stories.

Translate Authenticity: “Performing the right thing”

I’m not going to put my ego in this. This is the right thing to do, hold steady and leave the ego out.”

Translate Identity: “Performing Chinese American”

“Now it’s the university culture that is starting to say, ‘Okay, you’re different. Where do we box you? Where do we put you? Because you’re not white, but you’re not acting Chinese.’ That’s hard. This is tiring me out, this part is really tiring me out. So what do I do?”

Translate Dollars (and Sense): “Performing advantage”

“I don’t want to have to play those games. I wish they would give us a raise because we’re doing good work, but that’s not how it goes.” Tillie tells me, “It’s this masculine model. You have to pay me to keep me. I think that disadvantages women uniquely because we’re not comfortable in that

position. I'm not comfortable selling myself to another school if I don't really want to go there."

Translate Sexuality: "Performing professionalism and collaboration"

"The reality is I'm a sexual being. And another reality is that one of the men, who is an assistant, well, we came in at the same time and we did have a fling. I wanted to be with him but he lied about the status of his partnership. He lied!" she tells me.

Rachel says, "So, the whole thing is really fucked up because now that I've turned down these men, I've been cut off of projects."

Translate Integrity: "Performing standards"

"But I have to hold the standards of education," Adele says sighing, "I can't do it alone."

Translate Feminist: "Performing parenting and conservatism"

"And so that's where we see this sort of a broadening of feminism, but throw in a conservative woman and it just screws the whole thing up!"

Translate Boundaries: "Performing positional theory"

"I don't have to work with those folks if I don't want to on committees or anything like that, I mean obviously they're still faculty. But I can choose the boundaries or the relationship, and yeah, that puts me more in control. When you look at the bigger picture I won't have to be in that position again. "

The translate introduces frames of meaning and the translation is the shifting in and out of those frames of meaning. We see the picture shift. Often, things do not immediately translate. The translate is different from the involute and refractor in that it moves in phases, rather than changes in direction. Furthermore, the translate appears to be both a constraining and facilitating structure, holding simultaneously the incongruities, contradictions, imbalances, and paradoxes found in our everyday practices.

Interrelated Worlds

The interrelatedness and three dimensional characteristics of the discursive structures offer tremendous promise for both women and men, in and out of

academe. As discovered in this study, the involute is practiced either consciously or unconsciously. It is the most confining of the structures. The involute confirms dominant discursive practices or world view. It often impinges on the lives of the participants. The refractor is the most enabling structure. The women were conscious of their refractors, and furthermore, able to name what it was they were refracting. This discursive structure allows the women to assume personal power and responsibility for the things that happen in their lives. It provides a sense of strength and renewal along with productivity and goal obtainment. Finally, in this study, the translate showed us how the women shifted in and out of meaning. To me, it most resembled practical consciousness.

In the future, however, the translate can be used to recognize dominant discursive practices or world views and reframe or reflect on our situations and the choices we have made. It also entertains additional perspective opportunities. Often, things do not immediately translate. The women expressed a need to let a few frames go by first so they learn not to immediately react to and get caught in the structure's contrail. Seeing the bigger picture is possible when they become their own discursive observers.

This study has demonstrated the importance of investigating our everyday discursive practices in efforts to change the talk that undermine our lives. I believe some of our existing theories may be enlightened by the contribution of this work. It appears that discursive practices need to be worked at continually by those who sustain these practices on a day-to-day basis. There are several theories that sustain the application and relevance of this potentially contributable theoretical work.

Theoretical Implications

When I first began my research endeavors, I turned to the literature on feminism and women in academe. During the data analysis and the shaping of the discursive structures, I looked at structuration theory and revisited feminist discourse and poststructuralist theory. It was Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration that provided an insightful framework for understanding the discourses that shape women's life in academe. However, the web of theories including structuration, feminist, and poststructuralist present insight into the problems of action and structure experienced by these women as they navigate their professional work.

"Structure" is reinterpreted in structuration theory to mean the gathering of rules and resources that people draw on that simultaneously facilitate and constrain social interaction. "Structure" is thus produced, reproduced, retained, or transformed over time as a condition of future action. For this work, the gathering of rules and resources was translated as the gathering of language. This study looks at patterns of discourse. The women's words evoke the shapes of the discursive structures and I watched (and storied) these structures into understandings of how they play out in their lives. In essence, I developed structures to examine the loosely theorized concept of "structure" that enable or constrain the women's daily practices. In this way, Giddens (1984) theory became much more tangible and accessible.

Giddens (1984) structuration of institutions is understood as social activities that become "stretched" across wide spans of time and space. My work extends this notion. We can see how this study reframed (translated) the structuration of institutions to include the discursive practices that become "stretched" across wide spans of time and space. We saw this "stretching" in the women's narratives. The

discursive structures were used as the interpretive vehicles to analyze the talk and take us to the ways they engage in this stretching.

The feminist practice of consciousness-raising (Weedon, 1987) is the goal of feminism. It is important to discuss women's lives collectively and in a shared setting to achieve this consciousness. When doing so, however, it is helpful to recall Giddens' (1984) understanding of the conscious and unconscious. Giddens believes that the skillful knowledgeability (or consciousness) of individuals is always bounded by the unconscious and the unacknowledged conditions or unintended consequences of action. Furthermore, poststructuralist theory (like structuration theory) exposes the power relations of everyday life. In this study, the dominant discursive structures have power over the women's lives. It is important to expose talk practiced unconsciously, and even, those practiced consciously.

How we live our lives as "conscious thinking" people, and how we give meaning to the social relations, depends on the range of existing discourses, our access to them, and the political strength of the interests in which they represent. I believe this study has raised discursive consciousness through the development and application of the three discursive structures. I understand that feminist discourse disrupts the systems, processes, and languages that are responsible for establishing concepts and values hostile to women. In many ways, this work has disrupted the flow of language used by the women in this study. In doing so, this work has captured a bit of reality, and perhaps, the things these women do and say unconsciously. The women's discourse may serve to reify structures and thus constrain the women. By identifying these patterned constraints, this research offers

opportunity to disengage from the reification and find possibilities for freedom and renewal.

Methodological Insights

In a broad sense, ethnographic research is descriptive, serving to clarify puzzles by providing thick description of a particular cultural setting. In this study, I saw my research as an invitation to enter the lives of female assistant professors and to make sense of it by creating interpretive categories. I thought my interviews would reflect a self-consciously reflexive process of interactive interviewing (Ellis, Kiesinger, & Tillmann-Healy, 1997). Interestingly, the interviews appeared to be controlled by the participants, and not me. I located an article by Alvesson (2003), who developed eight metaphors and developed a framework for thinking about the research interview. The article offered an alternative strategy for conducting interviews and analyzing data.

According to Alvesson (2003), “the interview is – or can be mobilized as – an integrated source of meaning, knowledge, and intentionality” (p. 27). Herein lies true or authentic answers. The interview becomes localized and the metaphors then provide a “counterview” to negate this understanding in light of a different kind of theorizing (i.e., *Tuning in the Subject: The Interview as Identity Work*). Alvesson sees these metaphors as theoretical inputs in stretching “the imagination, openness, and theoretical-methodological vocabulary so that some mistakes in using interviews are avoided and possibilities utilized better” (p. 27). His notion of “careful methodological reflection” of what interviews can do inspired me to write about my interviewing experiences. I began to see the interview as safeguard and method as improvised sculpting.

The first methodological insight I offer is the concept of interview as safeguard. Alvesson's (2003) concept of localized interviewing techniques gave me the space to consider the "study" sort-of-speak taking place during the interview. When I review my fieldnotes and engage in memory work, I recall the protective stance assumed by most of the women during the interviewing process. Furthermore, I felt, at times, the women were interviewing me. Each of them knew I was a doctoral student. I suspect they thought, I too, would go on to become an assistant professor. This might explain the protective stance. As mentioned in Chapter Three, I was even invited to stay at Rachel's home while I traveled out of state to interview her. Additionally, many of the women offered me unsolicited advice, which I was happy to take. The women gave me more than their stories, and I believe, each of them knew they held a piece of my life.

The second insight I offer is to see method as improvisational sculpting. As mentioned earlier in this section, ethnographic research is often descriptive, yet it can be explanatory. I had additional interpretive insights when I discovered and generated the three "artistic" discursive structures. Creating a visual representation of the structures also expanded my writing. I was writing about the experiences of the women in the study as well as writing about the structures, and then, writing about both the women and the structures. In portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997) data representation seeks to join science and art. I believe the blending of aesthetics and empiricism capture the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of lived experience and organizational life. Highlighting then, the practical applications of this research work is pertinent.

Practical Applications

I think the uniqueness and pragmatics of this work comes in through the presentation of the data. I wanted to give the women in this study a clear voice and I also make room for the newly generated discursive structures to take life. I have learned that there is a great deal of complexity in communicating people's lives simply. This was my aim, to make simple and conscious the complex. In attempting to do so, I see the transference of this work to both academic and corporate settings. However, I take an advocacy stance for those audiences I feel most need the knowledge from this research, academia.

The interests and concerns of female assistant professors are plenty. Their talks of interests and concerns range from feminism to mothering to identity to expectations to not being able to afford a home, to being single or married, and to being exhausted. Advocates for female doctoral students and assistant professors are the people, the women themselves, colleagues, mentors, and department chairs and deans. These advocates can benefit from this practical and profound knowledge. Individuals and programs involved in the lives of doctoral students and assistant professors should communicate to protect, encourage, and promote women's healthy academic identities. Their words can provide support, or not, by negating the discouraging discursive structures. Rather than being a bystander to debilitating discursive structures, mentors, administrators, and colleagues can construct discursive structures that word assistant professors' worlds in ways that support, inspire, and transform them. These individuals also can learn to word their own worlds in productive and opportunistic ways. In any organization context, reward is longer lasting than coercion.

There is room for renewal and transformation when language becomes self-conscious. I would like to think that consciousness is somehow elevated when we consider how our present moment experiences impact our communication practices, thereby, affecting our lives. Liberation and freedom are the ultimate outcomes I desire. If you believe, like me, there is power and pleasure in the knowledge gained from being conscious, perhaps then, the application of these discursive structures will pave a path into liberation; freeing us from our undermining and constraining talk. I now wonder if “everything is discourse” and “discourse means everything?” I say this not to create a paralyzing effect on, for example, female academics, but to widen our possibilities.

Limitations Leads to Future Research

Researching women in academe is full of constraints and opportunities. This research has demonstrated many of the constraints, including the small number of participants, lack of racial diversity, age, marital status, and sexual orientation, only women and women who are feminists, and assistant professors in an academic field. Furthermore, the study was geographically limited to the west coast of the United States. Perhaps the greatest limitation of this study arises from the very contribution it makes. It is important to know the emphasis on discourse may have limited other, possible ways of representing the data.

One of the greatest challenges experiencing ethnography involves the careful consideration of data representation. The abundance of data including transcripts, observations, fieldnotes, and emails that are not included in this writing is a source of frustration for me, as is often the case for qualitative researchers.

Another limitation of this study is the time I spent with my participants. Talking with the women once or twice seems sparse now that the discursive structures have been developed and the writing almost complete. I have already notified the women and most of them want to participate in a longer term study. It would be interesting to compare how these women talk about their experiences in academe a few years from now or once they receive tenure, if indeed, they receive tenure. The comparison would be phenomenal and would begin to reveal more of the complexities and movements of these three interrelated discursive structures.

What remains unanswered is how communication over time might change the discursive structures developed in this study. It is important to understand how the involute, refractor, and translate evolve and impact the communication process. Like Giddens (1984), I believe the study of practical consciousness must be incorporated into research work. This work may help us in doing so. Further analyses may also lead to the development of additional discursive structures that will hopefully, enlarge our emancipatory discourses (Brown, 1987) through dialectical irony. We may become more conscious of the constraints that limit our abilities and see alternatives through discursive possibilities.

Future research may want to combine these research efforts along side the reconceptualization of Alvesson and Hugh's (1992) notion of microemancipation. The idea of microemancipation here is that the processes of emancipation are understood to be uncertain, contradictory, and precarious. Emancipation should encourage thinking and action that go beyond a single focus and labeling of communication as "inappropriate." According to Alvesson and Hugh the space in between is what we are seeking to open up. Discourses and communication

practices that are valued for their assumed ability to support goals and objectives may be interrogated by emancipatory efforts that shake up personal or institutional values that often prioritize, and perhaps, paralyze our lives.

Wording My World

Watching the way people deal with long term puzzles and the ways in which the women in this study word their experiences has been an eye opening endeavor. I believe this research has provided a platform for these women's voices. The discursive structures represent this platform. In my research proposal, I hoped that my work would provide a framework of renewal and healing for women in academe. As I review my writing at that time, I can see the pain and sadness in my words as I read, "I was once a passionate academic." This research journey has moved me. I now stand in a different place, still unsure if academe is where I belong, yet more confident in my ability to make choices and consider how it is I make decisions. I now have more options as I continually reflect on the stories of these women and go forth consciously, wording my world. The sacred company of women and the creation of the discursive structures and how they apply to my life has forever changed me.

My work has just begun.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me. As I stated in my introductory electronic mail message, for my doctoral dissertation study, I would like to learn more about the exhilarating and debilitating experiences women face in practice – in the lived experiences of being female scholars. Your participation in this inquiry is essential to this study and I would greatly appreciate your input and help. I would like to ask you several questions, but before starting, I would like to request your informed consent

Informed Consent

Your participation is voluntary, and the conversations will take approximately one hour. I am interviewing six to eight women who are assistant professors. I will then collectively interpret the responses through qualitative data analysis.

Participation may involve minimal risk, because of the re-telling of sensitive or secretive issues. However, I believe that you engage in informal conversations about this work in your everyday life. I will aggregate the data to protect confidentiality as much as possible, but anonymity is not guaranteed. Whenever you like, you may refuse to answer a question or make off-the-record statements that will not become part of the data set.

Participating in this study will provide you with a chance to reflect on your own academic role and practices. Further, I will provide you with a thorough summary of my findings, once the dissertation has been completed; nevertheless, no financial compensation will be provided.

I will carry out the data collection and analysis under the supervision of Dr. Johanna Hunsaker and my doctoral committee members, Dr. Cheryl Getz and Dr. Patricia Geist-Martin.

To capture your verbatim language, I would like to audio-tape this conversation. Audio-taping is voluntary and if you do not agree to this audio-taping, I will make detailed field notes. Whenever you want to make an off-the-record statement, I will stop the tape. The tape or transcript will be identified by date and participant pseudonym. Your name will never be placed on any tape or transcript. The tape or transcript will not be made available to anyone other than me and Dr. Johanna Hunsaker and will be safely stored in a locked file cabinet in my home.

This statement serves as partial consent. There will be an informed consent form for you to sign.

If you have any questions, please contact me at my home: 2244 2nd Avenue #23, San Diego, CA 92101, (home) 619-239-8389. Electronic mail: AlanaNicas@aol.com. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Johanna Hunsaker. Her contact information is: University of San Diego, 5998 Alcala Park, San Diego, CA 92110. Telephone: 619-260-4858 (office). Electronic mail: hunsaker@sandiego.edu.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board, Human Subjects in Research, University of San Diego. For research related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, the Institutional Review Board may be contacted through Dr. Donald McGraw, Administrator of the Institutional Review Board, Provost Office. Electronic mail: mcgraw@sandiego.edu.

Interview Questions

IQ.1.1 In this first interview, I would like to hear about your academic experiences as a graduate student and as an assistant professor. The second interview will focus on your teaching practice. First, let us talk about your graduate career.

- I. Generally, how would you describe your graduate school experience.
 - a. What about your graduate school experience was good/fulfilling?
 - b. What about your graduate school experience was bad/unfulfilling?
2. Describe your identity as a graduate student.
3. When you think back to graduate school, who had the greatest influence on you?
4. When you were in graduate school, what convinced you to be a professor and live the academic life?

IQ.1.2 Now, I would like for us to talk about your identity as a feminist.

1. Do you consider yourself a feminist? Why or why not?
 - a. Can you describe the moment or the point in your life when you first called yourself a feminist?
 - b. Did you ever have an experience in which someone told you not to call yourself a feminist?
2. Do you think others see you as a feminist?
 - a. Can you describe a time when someone responded positively to you because they thought you were a feminist?
 - b. Can you describe a time when someone responded negatively to you because they thought you were a feminist?
3. If you were to make a list of things that you do because you are a feminist, what would you put on that list?

4. Describe one interaction that demonstrates your dedication to feminism.
5. Do you think your feminist identity has any affect on your role as an assistant professor?

IQ.1.3 Next, I would like to talk about your experiences as an assistant professor. Furthermore, I want to know what it is you do to compose a meaningful life in academe.

1. Tell me about a time that represents exhilaration in your work as an assistant professor.
2. Tell me about a time that represents debilitation in your work as an assistant professor.
3. What strategies do you use to preserve a healthy identity in academe?
4. Do you think your identity as an assistant professor is different from the identity you had as a graduate student?

IQ.2 In this next interview, I would like to hear more about your teaching practices.

1. What are you trying to achieve in the classroom?
2. If you were to make a list of the things you hope students walk away from your class with, what would be included on that list? (philosophies and/or behaviors that may be embraced)
3. How is your feminist philosophy reflected in the way that you teach? (What philosophy guides your approach to teaching?)
4. Have you experienced a time when a student resisted the way that you teach? Please describe this as specifically as possible, remembering as much as you can about the conversation.
5. Have you experienced a time when a student embraced the way that you teach? Please describe this as specifically as possible, remembering as much as you can about the conversation.
6. Have you experienced interactions in teaching that caused you to question who you are and what you are trying to do?
7. Do you feel graduate school prepared you for what you now believe is important to achieve in teaching?
8. How could we better prepare graduate students to teach in the spirit of feminism?
9. Is there anything you would like to add that I have not asked?

Conclusion

Thank you most kindly for taking the time and energy to answer these questions. Without your participation, this study could not be successful. I appreciate your input and help wholeheartedly.

Appendix B

INFORMED CONSENT

Alana M. Nicastro, a doctoral student in the Leadership Studies Program in the School of Education at the University of San Diego, is conducting a dissertation study on women's lives in the academy. The title of the study is, "The exhilarating and debilitating experiences we face in our practice: Examining the lived experience of female feminist scholars." Below are the conditions under which participants in this study will work:

1. You will be asked to share your experiences as a feminist scholar in an assistant professor role.
2. Participation in the study is completely voluntary. You can withdraw from the study at any time; data collected prior to withdrawal will not be used unless you agree to let it be used.
3. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality (i.e. pseudonyms will be used; data will be stored in locked cabinets in the researcher's home; and consent forms will be stored separately from the transcript data). It is possible that some readers may be able to attribute stories to particular individuals. Anonymity, in other words, cannot be guaranteed.
4. Interviews will be conducted at a place and time convenient to you.
5. Interviews will be recorded and the recordings will be transcribed; tapes and transcriptions will be destroyed after five years.
6. You will be able to review and, if desired, alter interview transcripts before the data are used in written documents resulting from the study.
7. The data collected will be used in Alana's M. Nicastro's doctoral dissertation and any additional publications emerging from the dissertation.
8. There is no agreement, written or verbal, beyond that which is expressed on this consent form.
9. If you have any questions or concerns at any point, you are free to contact Alana M. Nicastro (619-239-8389 / AlanaNicas@aol.com) or her advisor, Dr. Johanna Hunsaker (619-260-4858 / Hunsaker@sandiego.edu).

I, the undersigned, understand the above conditions and give consent to my voluntary participation in the research that has been described.

Signature of Interviewee: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

(Retain two copies of this form; one for the researcher and one for the participant)

Appendix C

Figure Captions

Figure 1A. Involute.

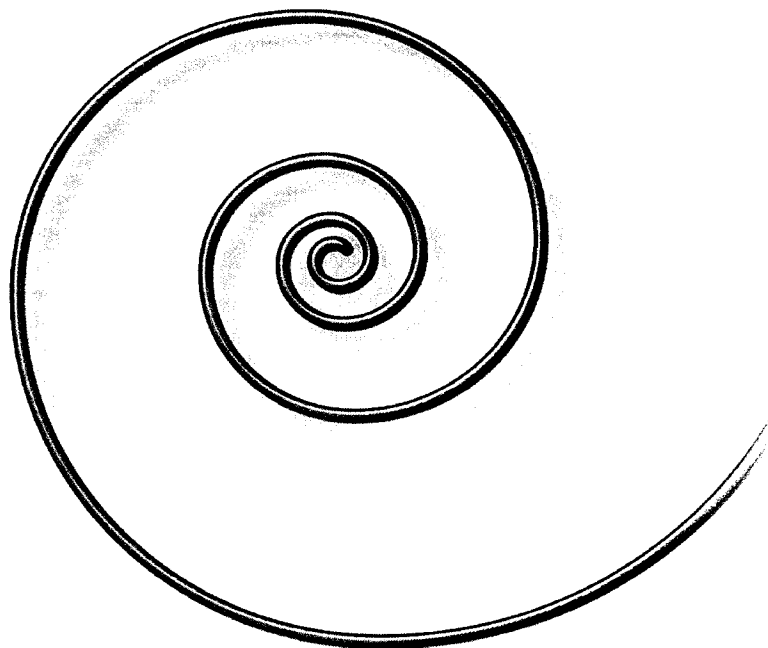


Figure Captions

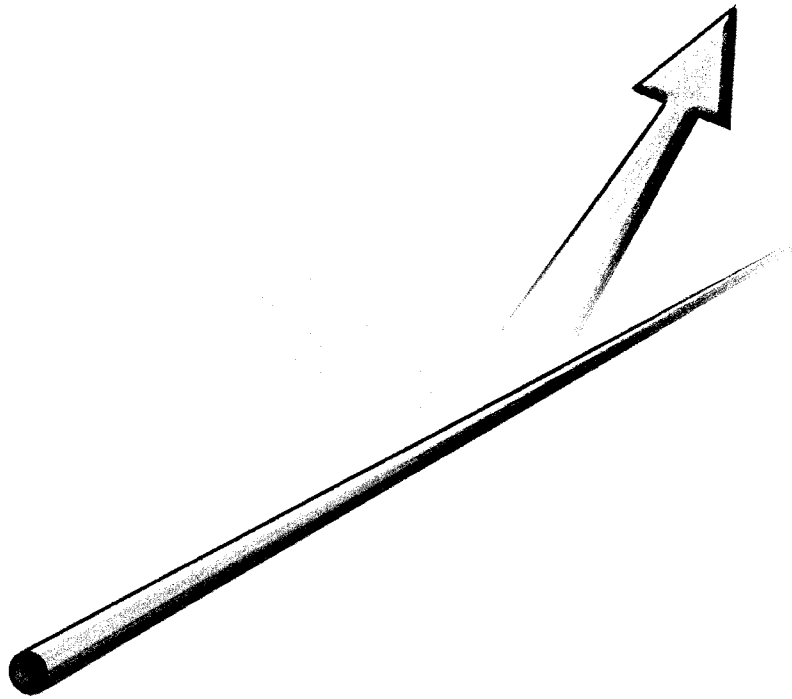
Figure 2. Refractor.

Figure Captions

Figure 3. Translate.

