

“Speaking as a Heterosexual”: (How) Does Sexuality Matter for Talk-in-Interaction?

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This article focuses on the ways in which heterosexuality is routinely deployed as a taken-for-granted resource in ordinary interactions. Using the foundational data sets of conversation analysis (CA), this article analyzes the conversational practices through which cointeractants, in the course of accomplishing other activities, routinely produce themselves and each other as heterosexual. These practices include heterosexual topic talk and person reference terms: *husband* and *wife*; *in-law* terminology; identification of the other with reference to their spouse; the production of heterosexual “couples”; and the use of locally initial proterms. Finally, this article discusses the implications both for CA and for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender studies of the ways in which a normative taken-for-granted heterosexual world is produced and reproduced in everyday talk-in-interaction and suggests that the research reported here further opens up the analytic possibilities of CA for studying culture, understood as constructed through and by particular practices for managing interaction.

Compared with the accumulation of research on the speech and language of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) people (e.g., Chesbro, 1981; Jacobs, 1996; Kulick, 1998, 2000; Leap, 1996; Livia & Hall, 1997), the talk of heterosexuals *qua* heterosexuals has been much less studied. As Cameron and Kulick (2003) pointed out, “One of the privileges enjoyed by dominant groups in general is that their identities and modes of

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behaviour are rarely scrutinized in the same way as the identities and behaviours of subordinated groups” (p. 153). Animated in part by the analytic interest in how dominant groups construct the social world (see also Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1993, 1996), this article draws on a series of conversations accumulated by conversation analysts over the course of a couple of decades of data collection and inspects them for the varying ways in which the co-conversationists display their heterosexuality to one another and, thereby, to us as analysts.

As I show, virtually all the talk on which the classic findings of conversation analysis (CA) are based is produced by heterosexuals, who reproduce in their talk a normative taken-for-granted heterosexual world. Whatever their *internal* sexual desires and fantasies, and however they might *privately* describe their own sexual orientations, the *public* identities they display in interaction are insistently heterosexual—and over the course of the interactions in which they are engaged, these co-conversationists reflect and reproduce a profoundly heteronormative social order. Nowhere in the data sets on which CA is founded does anyone announce that they (or anyone else they know) is heterosexual or preface a turn with, “Speaking as a heterosexual . . . ,” yet the heterosexuality of the interactants is continually made apparent.

In drawing attention to the displayed heterosexuality of the speakers in the classic CA data sets, it is not my intention either to advance the claim that nonheterosexuals speak differently from heterosexuals, or to mount a challenge to the general applicability of classic CA findings.¹ Rather, by analyzing these data sets for what they reveal about how heterosexuality is produced in talk, my intention is to further open up the analytic opportunities within CA for studying the taken for granted. These classic data sets may well reflect the social worlds of many ordinary heterosexual British and American people in the 1960s to 1980s at the times these data were collected. It was—and maybe still is—possible to treat heterosexuality as universal, to display one’s own and other people’s heterosexuality without being heard thereby as doing anything special, and to display an assumption of living in a world apparently almost entirely devoid of LGBT people. These data sets offer, then, an intriguing anthropological insight into the ordinary lives of heterosexual people and the local moment-by-moment social construction of their heterosexual worlds.

In researching the production of normative heterosexuality in the quotidian interaction of heterosexual speakers, this article makes an important contribution to LGBT studies. As research on race and gender has targeted

the dominant identities of Whiteness and maleness, so LGBT studies has increasingly targeted the dominant identity of heterosexuality for deconstruction. “Like whiteness in a white supremacist society, heterosexuality is not only socially produced as dominant but is also taken-for-granted and universalizing” (Ingraham, 2001, p. 73). Writing from the perspective of “queer sociology,” Seidman (1996) argued that, given the history of sociology as a “de-naturalizing force,” heterosexuality should be inspected for the ways in which it is produced as a *natural* or *normal* way to be; and from the (contested) field of “queer linguistics,” Cameron and Kulick (2003) insisted that “more attention should be given to the language in which heterosexual identities and desires are made manifest” (p. 153). As I show, a distinctive feature of these “displays” of heterosexuality is that they are not usually oriented to as such by either speaker or recipient. Rather, heterosexuality is taken for granted as an unquestioned and unnoticed part of their life worlds. Unlike those performances of gendered or racialized identities that are actively “worked up”—such as Agnes’s self-presentation as female (Garfinkel, 1967) or telephone sex workers’ constructions of varying racial identities in conformity with the sexual preferences of their clients (Hall, 1995)—these cointeractants are generally “giving off” rather than actively displaying their heterosexual identities. They are simply allowing their heterosexuality to be inferred in the course of some activity in which they are otherwise engaged. I suggest that this very inattentiveness to heterosexuality as a possible identity category, and the ease with which interactants make heterosexuality apparent without being heard as “talking about” heterosexuality, both reflects and constructs heteronormativity.

In analyzing the construction of normative heterosexuality in ordinary talk, I am also contributing to CA in two ways. First, a recurrent concern of CA is with the deployment of “membership categories” (e.g., Sacks, 1995a, Lecture 6) and “person reference forms” (e.g., Schegloff, 1996) in ordinary conversation. Family and kinship terms are among the categories whose use Sacks began to explore—most famously in “the baby cried, the mommy picked it up” discussion (Sacks, 1972b) but also at various locations scattered throughout his work, including an interrogation of the use of inferences attached to *wife*, *sister*, and *child* in a counselling call (Sacks, 1995a, p. 116) and the (hypothetical) deployment of (heterosexual) “couple” inferences to disguise otherwise stigmatized identities (Sacks, 1995a, p. 593). The analysis presented here builds on that work and adds to it an exploration of the way in which person reference forms (such as “my hus-

band/wife” or “her mother-in-law”) also make available—at least to a recipient for whom such things matter—the inference of that person’s heterosexuality; an inference not usually overtly oriented to as such by speakers or recipients in the data set under consideration, but that nonetheless shows us, as analysts, the production of normative heterosexuality as an ongoing, situated, practical accomplishment.

Second, in focusing on an interactional feature not oriented to as such by the participants themselves, I adopt an unusual analytic strategy (however, see Sacks, 1995b, pp. 175–187)—and one I would advocate for those interested in uncovering the kinds of social worlds on which (as I show) the practices and actions of speakers depend, and that they reproduce in their talk. As I have suggested elsewhere (Kitzinger, 2000, in press-a, in press-b; Land & Kitzinger, 2005), it is precisely the fact that sexist, heterosexist, and racist assumptions are routinely incorporated into everyday conversations without anyone noticing or responding to them as such that constitutes a culture. How is it, for example, that an unquestioned set of mundane heterosexual assumptions regularly surface in talk in which participants do not notice (or orient to) their own heterosexual privilege; and precisely, how does this failure to orient constitute and reconstitute a heterosexist culture? These questions “uncover the practical reasoning through which the taken-for-granted world is accomplished (and resisted)—the resources members have for sustaining a social world in which there are ‘women’ and ‘men,’ ‘heterosexuals’ and ‘homosexuals,’ ‘normal people’ and the rest of us” (Kitzinger, 2000, p. 173). As conversation analysts, we can avoid “going native”—that is, rather than taking for granted the heterosexual kinship system displayed and deployed by social members, we can treat the language through which heterosexuality is displayed with the same “outsiders’” curiosity that has animated the analysis of the subcultural argot of pickpockets (Maurer, 1964), drug addicts (Agar, 1973), or dance musicians (Becker, 1963). We can interrogate it for what it shows us about the local production of a culture.

Finally, the normative heterosexuality analyzed in this article constitutes a backdrop against which to analyze the strategies of LGBT people both in concealing their identities and in making them—or allowing them to become—apparent (see Kitzinger, 2000; Land & Kitzinger, in press; Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2003). More generally, the approach adopted here advances a method for researching the production and reproduction of culture through mundane interaction. As such, it is a contribution to the long tradition of sociological research that aims to explicate the “seen-but-unnoticed” or tacit presuppositions of everyday life.

THE DATA

In this article, I draw on data sets collected and analyzed by the founders of CA (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson) and by other leading conversation analysts (notably Drew, Goodwin, Heritage, Lerner, Maynard, Pomerantz, and Zimmerman) to show how co-conversationalists routinely produce themselves (and each other) as heterosexual. Data sets widely used in CA publications include conversations between friends and colleagues (e.g., HGII, TG, SN-4, Upholstery Shop); telephone calls to and from private homes (e.g., the Rahman, Heritage, Holt, SBL, and NB corpora); dinnertime conversations (Virginia, Automobile Discussion, Chicken Dinner); and institutional data such as the group therapy session (Sacks, 1995a, 1995b), suicide prevention center calls (Sacks, 1972a, 1995a, 1995b), and 911 emergency calls (Zimmerman, 1992). In researching this article, I have drawn on the original recordings and existing transcripts of these data when I have had access, and on the published versions of the data when I did not. Most of these data sets are in the form of audio rather than video recordings, and most are telephone conversations: Hence, my analysis focuses on audible rather than visually accessible heterosexual displays—on how people talk heterosexuality into being rather than on how heterosexuality is displayed through visual or body deployment. In most of these data, the members of heterosexual couples are neither jointly present nor in interaction with each other. This means that individuals are presenting themselves as heterosexual without the assistance of a co-present heterosexual partner—and I have limited my analysis in this article to such displays.²

In presenting this analysis, I also speculate as to how interactions do—or might—run off differently when speakers display not *hetero-* but *homosexual*ity, and what this tells us about the social world. In so doing, I draw on published self-report data from LGBT people, from the rare instances in which an LGBT identity is made available or discussed in the classic CA corpora, and on a limited amount of my own data featuring lesbians in interaction with heterosexuals (see also Land & Kitzinger, in press).

HETEROSEXUAL AND OTHER IDENTITY CATEGORIES

As Schegloff (1997a)—and others—argued, the fact that someone can be categorized with reference to a particular identity category does not

make that identity automatically relevant in any particular interaction. The interactants in these data sets are not, of course, describable *only* as members of the heterosexual category: They could also be labelled using other conventional sociological categories such as those indexing their gender, class, ethnicity, age, nationality, and so on; and such categories are sometimes more clearly relevant, even for those people who are, at other times, hearably heterosexual. In Fragment 1, for example, Emma (whose talk I later analyze as displaying her heterosexuality) is not talking “as a heterosexual” but “as a White person.” She has called her sister with some “hot-off-the-press” news about the marines who have just arrived in her street—one of her neighbors (Larry) having charitably collected them from the local navy base to join his family for Thanksgiving dinner. The importance Emma attaches to telling her news is displayed through her production of it as the reason for the call—and because Lottie has company (her “no” at 07 is designed as a “go ahead” despite this and not as a denial of it), the telling and receipt of this news turns out to be the *only* business of this call:

Fragment 1

[NB:IV:12:R]

((Earl answered the call and has passed the phone to his wife, Lottie))

- 01 Lot: Ye:ah.
 02 Emm: Lottie?y[ih
 03 Lot: [Yeh
 04 (.)
 05 Emm: Yihknow Larry went down'n got those guys f'm
 06 Pen'lt'n I didn't know yih had ↓comp'ny..hh [h h]
 07 Lot: [No:.]
 08 (.)
 09 Emm: An:d uh (.) th- ↑two of'm'r goin acro:ss sstreet
 10 th'tooiss (.) kyoo and ↑one of'm (.) u-dow:n
 12 the street goin with Larry is £da::rk.hf
 13 (.)
 14 Emm: .hh.hh There's uhv u-there's four of'm 'n £↓one
 15 of'm's colored,£

These co-interactants of course already know each other to be White: Their shared ethnicity is here made relevant by Emma's invocation of an alternative ethnicity, labelled “dark” (Line 12) and “colored” (Line 15)—and later in this call, “Black.” Although, on evidence I show from her conversations

elsewhere, Emma *is* heterosexual, it is her ethnicity and not her heterosexuality that is relevant in this fragment (see also Sacks, 1995b, pp. 175–187, on the construction of ethnicity in a call in the SBL corpus).

It is not just that these speakers are sometimes speaking in terms that produce them as being of particular ethnicities and at other times in terms that produce them as heterosexuals: The two can be done at one and at the same time. Toward the beginning of the conversation in Fragment 2, Hyla and Nancy have been talking about the plot of the play they are to attend that evening, which revolves around the conflict between a young woman with a Jewish boyfriend and her aunt who is a “real bigot” and “hates anyone who isn’t a Catholic.” The subsequent conversation ranges over a variety of topics, including Hyla’s thwarted desires for a “nice Jewish boy” called Richard, who promised, but has so far failed, to contact her: The two young women have collaborated in enacting a fantasy phone call in which Richard asks Hyla to marry him. Now, in response to Nancy’s question about clothing for that evening, Hyla says she is “not gonna get dressed up”:

Fragment 2

[HGII]

- 01 Hyl: Yihknow who do I aftih look nice for.
 02 (.)
 03 Hyl: hh [h-h h- h h h]
 03 Nan: [Well you nev]er know who’s g’nna be
 04 in the pla:y I mean we are
 05 si [tting close t’the(steh-]heh)]
 06 Hyl: [k h h-.h h-h h-hhh-hh-hh(eh heh)] eh eh e=
 07 Nan: =hhe:hh=
 08 Hyl: =hhh[Maybe the Jewish [gu:]y, hunh=
 09 Nan: [He’ll look out en [go,]
 10 Nan: =He’ll go, Jhuliet Juliet- Nancy. Hy[la.]
 11 Hyl: [uhh]=
 12 uh.uh[.uh
 13 Nan: [.hhe:hhh hhhh
 14 (.)
 15 Hyl: .hhhhh er maybe the Jewish guy thet’s:
 16 [hh[henh [henh [hnh [heh
 17 Nan: [A: [right [Maybe [he’s [really Jewi(h)sh
 18 [hhhhh [w’l go back stage en gitiz autograph

Here, in response to Hyla’s renewed complaint about her lack of a boyfriend who it is worth “looking nice for” (her girlfriend to whom she is

speaking is clearly *not* worth looking nice for), Nancy invokes the romantic possibilities of the leading actor: He might look out of the play and call their names as Romeo did to Juliet—and he might be *really* Jewish, and thereby, a suitable romantic partner for her friend. In this conversation, Hyla’s Jewishness and her heterosexuality are co-produced through the fantasy of romance with the “really Jewish” guy—although only the Jewish category is named, whereas her (and his) heterosexuality are simply assumed.³

In brief, other categorical identities (not just ethnicity but also class, age, sex, nationality, etc.) may be invoked such that a single speaker may be heard to be speaking as a member of one of these other categories in addition to, and even at the same time as, producing himself or herself as heterosexual.

SPEAKING AS HETEROSEXUALS: CO-CONSTITUTING A HETERONORMATIVE WORLD

The question I am using the data sets to address, then, is how people produce themselves and others as heterosexual and—in so doing—co-constitute a normative heterosexual world. I begin by considering those occasions on which heterosexuality is displayed through talk that is explicitly oriented to (hetero)sex or to (hetero)relationships (as in Fragment 2, shown earlier).

The most explicit (hetero)sexual references in these conversations are in the form of sexual joking, banter, reports of (hetero)sexual activity, and innuendo. Paul Drew’s (1987) classic analysis of “po-faced receipts of teases” includes data in which a sister teases her brother by alleging (in the presence of their parents) that he spent the night with his girlfriend (p. 228); a young woman being teased about her supposed sexual interest in a (male) member of a rock band (p. 228); and a newly married heterosexual couple whose complaint about the apparent structural deterioration of their new home is met with a teasing suggestion that this is attributable to their “bumping around” (“that is, in bed”; p. 229). The “dirty joke” that forms the centrepiece of one of Sacks’s (1995b, Lecture 9) most celebrated lecture begins, “there was these three girls and they just got married?” (p. 470), and employs the taken-for-granted cultural commonplace of a honeymoon—with all its sexual implications—in developing a joke about fellatio between the bride and her new husband (also see Sacks, 1974). Overall, the

data support the (previously undocumented) claim that “talk about sexuality is often about heterosexual desires and activities, again reinforcing the presumption of universal heterosexuality” (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p. 207).

A second fairly explicit way in which heterosexuality is displayed in these conversations is through topic talk about heterosexual relationships—typically marriage or marriage-related topics such as engagements, weddings, marital troubles, and so forth. The civil institution of marriage is available in England and the United States to two persons over the age of consent irrespective of their race or ethnicity, religion, nationality, or class—subject only to the constraint that they must be of different sexes. In both countries there was—and in some social contexts still is—social disapproval of interracial marriages or of marriages between couples of (say) different religious backgrounds or social classes (Romano, 2003), but in neither country—during the years in which these data were collected—was that social opprobrium formally encoded in laws banning such marriages as was then (and still is) the case for same-sex couples.⁴ No country in the modern history of the world permitted same-sex marriage until 2001; hence, all references in the data sets to marriage (and to associated institutions such as engagements, weddings, honeymoons, divorces, etc.) index different-sex couples and, thereby, heterosexuality. In indexing heterosexuality in this way, speakers treat it as the taken-for-granted normative default way to be—and do so independently of whether they approve of the particular heterosexual relationship they are talking about.

Therefore, in the course of the activities in which they are otherwise engaged, Shelley displays her own heterosexuality with talk about plans for her forthcoming wedding (SN-4; Schegloff, 1995, pp. 225–227), and Kevin displays his own heterosexuality in telling a friend about plans for his wedding anniversary (Holt: U.88-2-2). Speakers display the heterosexuality of other (nonpresent) parties when, for example, a family friend attempts to diffuse a mother–daughter argument by launching a funny story about a wedding (“Well why don’t I change the subject an’ tell ya about thuh wedding,” Virginia 17: 25), thereby displaying the heterosexuality of the bride and groom; and when, in updating Mom on recent events, Lesley reports the news of Janet’s engagement (Holt 1.8); and when two friends, Ava and Bee, discuss whether a mutual acquaintance is married yet (TG); and when Ann tells her friend Jenny about the manager of a department store who “married this mother who already had a little boy” (Rahman B.1.13). In Fragment 3 (which follows), Ron tells family news, displaying

the heterosexuality of his two sons, each of whom is located with reference to his place of residence; his marriage; and (at least by implication in Shawn's case) his job. The news about Shawn is his geographical relocation, to which mention of his wife is subordinated; the news about Michael is his 1-year-old marriage:

Fragment 3

[Holt SO88(II)-2-2]

- 01 Ron: .hhh Just to bring you up to date with our
 02 family uh:m: .t.hh our eldest son u: Shawn
 03 u-who lives with iz wife in Taunton, ih he
 04 now practices in Bridgewa↑ter?
 05 (.)
 06 Les: eeYe:s,?
 07 Ron: .t He transferred from Newt'n Abbott to r-.hhh=
 08 Les: =[Oh lovely.]
 09 Ron: =[Tauntonn)]so th [(at he c'n be)]=
 10 Les: [Nice an' handy for you.]=
 11 Les: =[↑ Y e : s ?]
 12 Ron: =[So that's very]u-That's very [good,?
 13 Les: [hhhheeyah
 14 Ron: Uh:m: Michael is still: soldiering on very
 15 happily as uh::um (.) policeman (.) in:
 16 ee[Yeovil.]
 17 Les: [Yeo↑vil?]
 18 (0.2)
 19 Les: Good,?
 20 (.)
 21 Ron: And has: uhm: uh seems to be quite happy
 22 [an-n(.)d he'n Ginny've just been married=
 23 Les: [p.t.khhhhh
 24 Ron: twelve ↑months =
 25 (.)
 26 Les: eeYes,
 27 (0.2)

Across the data sets, there is a fair amount of talk that takes a negative or critical stance toward particular (past, current, or possible future) marriages: Nancy berates her estranged husband (NB.II calls; see Drew, 1987, pp. 238–239; Jefferson, 1984, p. 195); Emma—whose husband has just left her—confides her marital problems to her daughter and sister (NB.IV.4; see Drew & Holt, 1988, pp. 408–410); Billy and his girlfriend Gail are

“definitely not married” (“They have a prob’m [...] Definite pro:b’m,” TG); the early warning signs that might have led to the separation of Jean Claude’s parents are reported (“you know the mum did an awful lot independently,” Holt: J86:1:4); and a complaint about a mother-in-law criticizes her as a wife (she “nagged- (1.0) uhr ‘er own husband’,” Holt: 2.9). In Fragment 4, Nancy is reporting her aunt’s account of the marriage of a (now divorced) man:

Fragment 4

[NB.II.4]

- 01 Nan: =She knew im w’n’e ↑wz ↓merr↑ied?h
 02 (0.2)
 03 Emm: [M m :]hm?
 04 Nan: [A::n’] to iz first wi:fe:? who she said
 05 was en *absolute bitch how a ni:ce guy *ever
 06 merried a woman like that she’d never know.
 07 They never had inny children?
 08 Emm: °M[m :] hm:,°]
 09 Nan: [.hh] .hhh] A:n’ she said she wz so:
 10 re↓lie:ved en so was: her friend Helen (0.2)
 11 Rob’s a:nt .hhhhh wen::: Ro:b js decided duh
 12 call a halt tih the whole thi:ng?

Clearly, it is not the case that all heterosexual relationships are treated as acceptable, good, or desirable ones: Negative representations derive from considerations of recipient design and local interactional concerns, such as building a complaint about a mother-in-law (Holt 2.9) or explaining the failed first marriage of a man in whom the speaker herself has a romantic interest (Fragment 4). However, nowhere in the data is heterosexuality itself treated as problematic: Instead, even in the course of complaining about it, the different-sex definition of marriage is underwritten and reinscribed simply through being treated as taken-for-granted.

Although sexually explicit jokes and topic talk about heterosexual relationships and rituals constitute the most overt ways in which these people reveal their own (and others’) heterosexuality, these are perhaps the least analytically interesting, precisely because of their explicitness. As Schegloff (2000) said, the relevances that shape the formulated experience exhibited in talk-in-interaction are made apparent “not only in what persons choose overtly to talk about; perhaps there least of all” (p. 718). In the remainder of this article, I move from talk about heterosexual sex and hetero-

sexual relationships to show the extent to which heterosexuality forms a taken-for-granted backdrop that shapes talk in which people are explicitly oriented to other topics and actions entirely. I consider ways in which speakers make apparent their own or others' heterosexuality (or, more precisely, their own or others' location within heterosexual relationships) in contexts in which neither the (hetero)sex nor the (hetero)relationship constitute the topic of the talk. In the examples that follow, heterosexuality is deployed, indexed, alluded to, or relied on as a taken-for-granted commonplace in the course of some action other than topic talk in which the speakers are engaged. I suggest that it is in and through this talk, far more than in talk about (hetero)sex and (hetero)relations, that we can gain an analytic purchase on the mundane ways through which heteronormativity is produced and reproduced in ordinary talk-in-interaction.

It is common for speakers to mention their heterosexual involvements (dates, engagements, weddings, marriages) without being thereby engaged in topic talk about them. In Fragment 5, the caller is clearly making available a hearing of herself as heterosexual: She has a date with a man and is concerned about whether he really wants her. She is not, however, announcing her heterosexuality, nor is the information about her date tonight conveyed as simply news or topic talk. Rather, she makes available the information that she is heterosexual as part of the main action she is engaged in—describing her feelings of being “nothing” and (despite her date tonight) like someone “no man” would want. Her heterosexuality is a taken-for-granted background resource she draws on in displaying the suicidal feelings that have led her to make this call:

Fragment 5

[From Sacks, 1995a, p. 66]

- 01 Cal: I'm a grown woman an attractive woman I have a
 02 Clt: [Do you have any]
 03 Cal: [real nice date] good looking guy for a date
 04 tonight and and I somehow I'm feeling that
 05 I'm nothing ((smiling sigh))
 06 Cal: And I know nobody's a nothing But I am. It's
 07 like everybody else is somebody and somewhere
 08 along the line I muffed up.
 // ((possible break))
 09 Cal: And I do think what man wants a neurotic
 10 childless forty year old woman. No man.

In Fragment 6, Robbie refers to her marriage in the course of a conversation about Kent—an area of England where her co-conversationalist Lesley grew up, and coincidentally, which it turns out, was also where Robbie herself was “born and bred.” She invokes her marriage by way of giving an account for having left Kent. (The towns of Sevenoaks and Chipstead are both in Kent.) Just as the previous fragment was not talk about a date but a display of the speaker’s suicidal feelings, so this fragment is not talk about a marriage, but a display of Kentish credentials:

Fragment 6

[Holt: 5.88.1.5]

- 01 Rob: An’ then um .p.hhh (0.3) u-u- We moved to
 02 Sevenoaks: t’be nearer an’ ↑al:ways round Seven-
 03 well no Sevenoaks ’n then we went t’Chipstead f’r
 04 awhi: [le ()]=
 05 Les: [hYe:s.:
 06 Rob: =outs:de Sevenoaks (ever hea[rd’v it)
 07 Les: [Ye:s.
 08 Les: Yes ye:s.
 09 Rob: But um ↑Oh no: born ’n br- twenty one yea:rs.
 10 (0.2)
 11 Les: Ah:
 12 (0.2)
 13 Rob: Yes ’n then: well I- I moved w’n I married
 14 (0.3)
 15 Les: Ah:
 16 (.)
 17 Rob: Lovely place
 18 (.)
 19 Les: Ye:s.:. Y[e]:s.
 20 Rob: [()] I suffer from (.) severe
 21 Kentitis when we come ↓back. he[re,

In these instances, the display of heterosexuality (of the suicide caller, of Robbie) is done in the service of some other action (presenting oneself as a potential suicide or as Kentish) to which it is merely incidental.

One interactional problem for LGBT people in heteronormative contexts may be a difficulty in making apparent their homosexuality in the service of some action in which they are engaged without having the revelation of their sexual identity treated by the recipient as the main action. It

may well be harder for someone with a same-sex date to deploy it, as the speaker does in Fragment 5, as evidence for the depth of her depression without having the thereby-revealed fact of her homosexuality topicalized as possibly related to her suicidal feelings. It may harder for someone with a same-sex partner to refer to events (such as a geographical relocation) with reference to her relationship with that partner, not just because she lacks a straightforward term (*married*) to describe the role of that relationship in her life, but also because she runs the risk of being heard to have made a gratuitous reference to her counternormative sexuality. Fragment 7 comes not from the main data corpus but from a field observation of my own: It is a conversation (as it turns out, the *entire* conversation) between two women encountering each other for the first time during lunch at an academic conference:

Fragment 7

[Author: FN: 2003]

- 01 Ali: How long have you been vegetarian?
 02 May: Since I met my partner. She's vegetarian.
 03 Ali: Oh. ((turns to person seated other side of her and does not address May again over the course of nearly 1 hr))

Ali's question to May was prompted by Ali's request to the serving person for the vegetarian option and is hearable as a topic proffer. May's response answers the question first with a formulation of duration that makes her couple relationship available, and then with an account for the relevance of that formulation that (via the proterm) makes her lesbianism available. Ali receives the answer as news—but that is *all* she does: Having initiated the interaction and launched vegetarianism as a topic for discussion with May, she now abandons it, and the conversation with May, altogether without providing any account for her withdrawal from the conversation (compare the account analyzed in Goodwin, 1987). The absence of any rationale from Ali for failing to follow up on her question (e.g., “let me just say hi to X ...”) leaves May to surmise the likely reason for the shift in attention—and that may be sufficient to convey to May that the reason lies in her having incidentally made available her lesbian identity.⁵

The singlemost common way in which speakers display both their own and others' heterosexuality is (as May displays her lesbianism in Fragment 7) via person reference forms—especially nonrecognitional ones. How to refer to a person unknown to another (i.e., the deployment of

nonrecognitional person reference forms) has been described as “a central problem of sociology” (Sacks, 1995a, p. 41). According to Schegloff (1996) it is

... an immense territory, and one of deep importance for sociology [...] Most significant in this regard is its inclusion of all the category terms for types of persons in a culture’s inventory, by reference to which are composed a society’s understanding(s) of “the sorts of people” there are, what they are like, how the society and the world works—in short, its culture. (p. 465)

In the rest of this section I show how nonrecognitional person reference often deploys terms from the heterosexual kinship system (e.g., husband, mother-in-law), thereby locating the speaker, or those about whom she or he is speaking, as heterosexual (also see Kitzinger, in press-a). Widespread use of heterosexual kinship terminology displays the extent to which “how the society and the world works” is organized with reference to heterosexual marriage.

Husband and Wife

By referring to their husbands, female callers position themselves as wives; by referring to their wives, male callers position themselves as husbands,⁶ thereby displaying, incidentally, in the course of the action in which they are otherwise engaged, their location within heterosexual marital units. Whether these people are really heterosexual (whatever that means exactly), the speakers’ selection of person reference terms like husband or wife makes that inference available to their recipient—and people who identify themselves as lesbian or gay (or who have same-sex sexual partners) are commonly described as “passing for straight” if they remain within heterosexual marriages.

The data set includes many instances of people referring to their husband or wife without being oriented thereby to “speaking as a heterosexual”—especially (but far from exclusively) in interactions with strangers. In data from suicide counselling calls reported by Sacks (1972a, 1995a), the terms husband and wife are frequently used, as in Fragment 8 (which follows), in which the loss of a wife is provided as an instance of a “personal problem” that has caused the caller to feel suicidal. The reference term here (wife) evokes the culturally understood inferences of an intimate

and caring relationship, such that the loss of such a category member renders understandable the caller's depression:

Fragment 8

[From Sacks, 1972a, p. 50]

- 01 A: Has there been some personal problem or difficulty
 02 that you're experiencing?
 03 B: Yes. I just lost my wife and I feel awfully
 04 depressed.

In Fragments 9 (also from the suicide prevention calls) and 10 (to emergency police), the callers refer to their husband—thereby rendering *ordinary* and *natural* the action they are performing, as callers, in contacting the call takers for help on behalf of this other person. (See the parallel analysis on the use of wife and husband terms in out-of-hours doctor's calls; Kitzinger, in press-a):

Fragment 9

[From Sacks, 1995a, p. 73]

- 01 A: Hello this is Mr Smith
 02 B: Say, my husband is suicidal and, I mean,
 03 he's attempted it about half a dozen times.

Fragment 10

[IND PD 59, in Schegloff, 1997a, p. 525)

- 01 Pol: What's the trouble lady,
 02 Cal: I don't know my husband's sitting in his chair
 03 I don't know what's wrong with him he can't talk
 04 or move or anything.

The use of the kinship categories *husband* and *wife* mobilizes the inferences that attach to such relationships, obviating the need for the caller to account for the other's depression, or her concern on behalf of the other. Whatever other interactional hurdles these speakers encounter, their invocation of a different-sex spouse is not problematic. Rather, the sheer ordinariness of one spouse calling on behalf of another makes the use of these kinship terms a powerful resource for "doing being ordinary" (Sacks, 1984) with all the interactional benefits (of not having to provide accounts, explanations, justifications, etc.) that attach to being an ordinary person do-

ing a natural activity. By contrast, in Fragment 11, someone calling for help on behalf of a friend presents an epistemically downgraded version of the history of the person she calls about (“I believe ...,” Line 02) and finds herself giving an account as to why it is she, rather than a family member, who is calling:

Fragment 11

[From Sacks, 1972a, p. 69]

- 01 Cal: ... I'm calling for a friend who's had a history of
 02 mental disturbance; I believe attempted suicides
 03 were involved at that time ...
 04 Clt: ... What is your relationship to her?
 05 Cal: Just a friend.
 06 Clt: Just a friend. I see.
 07 Cal: Her family moved out about a year ago.
 08 Clt: No family. I see.
 09 Cal: Not in this part of the country.

Relational categories (e.g., husband–wife, neighbor–neighbor, friend–friend) “constitute loci for rights and obligations” (Sacks, 1972a, p. 40), with spouses (and parents–children) treated as preeminent among these (also see Kitzinger, in press-a). For lesbians and gay men calling about a suicidal partner or depressed by a partner’s death, there is no readily available and taken-for-granted term comparable to *my husband* or *my wife* on which to draw. Lesbians and gay men do not have easy access to a person reference term like husband or wife, which no longer renders appropriate the need for an account (Sacks, 1995a, pp. 23–24) as to why they are the person calling or why that, in itself, constitutes an unremarkable account as to why they might be depressed.

Spousal references are deployed as offering nonaccountable reasons for a range of emotions (e.g., depression, Fragment 8) and decisions (e.g., geographical relocation, Fragment 6). In Fragment 12, the patient deploys the person reference term *husband* as a resource in managing the issue of “doctorability” (Heritage & Robinson, 2005):

Fragment 12

- 01 Pat: (I'm here on fal[se pre- pretenses.]<I think
 02 Doc: [hh
 03 Doc: [<Yes.

- 04 Pat: [ehh! hih heh heh heh!
 // ((five lines omitted))
 05 Pat: I asked my husband yesterday 'cause I could feel:
 06 (0.8) (cause) I: could feel this li'l mo:le coming.
 07 An:d: uh (0.5) (he) (.) I: hh thought I better
 08 letchya know-<uh well I asked my husband 'f it was
 09 in the same place you took off thuh (0.5) thee (mm)
 10 thee: °([)
 11 Doc: [That's why you've come in be[cause of the
 12 mo:le

In Fragment 13, Mrs. Mears has telephoned the owner of a house she would like to rent: The house has been advertised in the newspaper and the owner is unknown to her. When the owner asks for her name (Line 03), she gives both her own name—using the title “Mrs.,” which identifies her as a married woman—and the name of her husband, whose title implies his membership in the medical profession. In this instance, her heterosexual marital status provides her with a resource to lay claim to “a possible extra qualifier for renting a house” (Sacks, 1995a, p. 758):

Fragment 13

[SBL 1.3; see Sacks, 1995a, p. 757⁷]

- 01 Own: I'll continue to try to get the: tenant: and see:
 02 'n let her know that someone wants to see it.
 03 .hhh Do you mind giving me you:r na:me.
 04 Mea: mm We:ll my na:me is Missus Mears. My husband
 05 is Doctor Mears
 06 Own: Uh tha- How do you spell that.

References to husbands and wives have the effect (neither intended nor oriented to in any of these calls) of displaying the caller's heterosexuality and their location within the legitimate and socially sanctioned legal status of marriage. These invocations of spouses are designed to achieve interactional goals related to the immediate sequential contexts in which they occur. There is no sense that these are contrived self-presentations of heterosexuality: What the speakers are working up is an account for depression, a reason for relocation, the doctorability of their complaint, or their eligibility as tenants; their production of themselves as heterosexual is guileless. Their conformity with heteronormative expectations makes available to them resources for engaging in these other activities—resources not available to LGBT interactants.⁸ Any attempt to deploy parallel

terms invoking a same-sex partner is (even in the 21st century) likely to derail the interaction by displaying the speaker’s counternormative lesbian or gay identity (see Land & Kitzinger, in press).

Finally, it is worth noticing that there are very few instances in these data corpora in which one spouse refers to the other using a person reference form other than one of the following four: my husband/wife; the person’s name; “Mum,” “Dad,” or variants thereof when talking to their children (e.g., Schegloff, 1992, p. 1323, Excerpt 22); or the relevant proterm (he or she). The massive numerical predominance of these four reference forms reflects a socially normative practice, such that when reference forms other than these are deployed, something special is being done interactionally—as, for example, when the nonnormative formulation is employed in the service of a request to the co-interactant. Therefore, a truck driver produces a locally initial reference to his wife as “the lady that answers the door”—a formulation that is recipient designed for the police dispatcher in the service of the request he is making for a message to be delivered (IPD ND 1); and a caller to an out-of-hours doctor’s office produces a locally initial formulation of her husband as “a patient of Doctor [name]’s,” thereby recipient designing her talk to display her husband’s entitlement to medical care from this doctor’s practice in the service of her request for a home visit (DEC 2-1-15 FOOD POISONING; Kitzinger, in press-a). However, the “unmarked,” nonrecognitional reference form for married different-sex partners is wife or husband—meaning that the (legally imposed) absence of these terms for same-sex partners often presents a significant interactional hurdle in terms of forwarding the actions in which they are engaged.

In-Law Terminology

American and European kinship terminology includes the concept of *in-law* in consideration of family composition, and its use constitutes either the speaker, or one of the speaker’s relatives, as located within a marital heterosexual relationship. In Fragment 14, Lesley has called a plumber and, having made contact with someone she takes to be his wife, she formulates her request so as to display both her recipient’s presumed heterosexual marital status and her own via her selection of *mother-in-law* as a person reference form for the person subsequently referred to as “Mrs. Nan Field” (a husband is a prerequisite for a mother-in-law). The person refer-

ence form is not, of course, selected to display Lesley's marital status, but to render unnecessary an account as to why it is she who is calling on behalf of this person:

Fragment 14

[Holt:l:6]

- 01 Les: Could you:r hsband call on my mother in law please
 02 (0.4)
 03 Les: a:nd uh have a look at he:r um: (1.0) .h uh her
 04 bathroo:m,

In Fragment 15, Emma is offering an account as to why her daughter may not be able to visit her for Thanksgiving:

Fragment 15

[NB.4.9]

- 01 Emm: .hh Her hu- u-her fater in la:w's in the ho:spit'l

Emma launches her turn with what sounds as though it is probably headed for “her husband's father” and repairs it to “her father in law”—thereby perhaps rendering the relationship between the sick man and her daughter more personal and immediate (and hence, more compelling a reason for her daughter not to visit her). In any event, either version refers to the same role-occupant in a kinship system that is organized around marriage. Without having designed her turn to achieve this, Emma is displaying that she has a married heterosexual daughter.

Likewise, in the course of a reporting designed as a prelude to inviting the recipient to co-participate in the event (see Drew, 1984, pp. 139–140), Guy displays that he has a heterosexual daughter (married to his son-in-law):

Fragment 16

[NB:1:1:2]

- 01 G: .hhhhhh Hey uh, hh My son'n law's down,
 02 'nd uh thought w'might play a little golf
 03 either this afternoon er tomorrow. Wouldju
 04 like tuh (0.9) hh get out? hh

In designing a turn as a challenge (Schegloff, 1997a, p. 523) to Curt's claim that one particular racer (the “he” in Curt's first turn) is “the only good reg-

ular out there” (in the races), Gary incidentally displays that he has a heterosexual sister (married to his brother-in-law):

Fragment 17

[AutoDiscussion (transcript simplified), from Schegloff, 1997a, p. 523]

- 01 Cur: He- he’s about the only regular <he’s about the only
 02 good regular out there’z, Keegan still go out?
 03 Mik: Keegan’s out there, he’s he run,
 04 (0.5)
 05 Gar: [Whaddayah mean my brother in law’s out there]

People in same-sex couples (and unmarried different-sex partners) do not have unproblematic access to terminology that would locate their partner’s parents and siblings in relationship to them (as mother- or father-in-law and brother- or sister-in-law do for married heterosexuals). Nor, of course, do the parents and siblings of people in same-sex couples have access to the terminology of son- or daughter-in-law or brother- or sister-in-law to refer to their relative’s same-sex partner. Creative solutions may include using these terms anyway despite their factual inaccuracy; deploying various circumlocutions (e.g., “my daughter’s friend/partner/girlfriend” for the person who might otherwise be a daughter-in-law) and inventing variants that signal same-sex couples’ exclusion from equal marriage rights (e.g., my own parents used *daughter-out-of-law* as a nonrecognitional referent for my partner; a lesbian author refers to her lover’s brother as “my brother-if-there-were-a-law”; MacLean 1995).

Identification of Other With Reference to Their Spouse

In Fragments 18 and 19, speakers use a person reference form that identifies the person they are speaking about as some other person’s spouse: “Mr. Quinn’s wife” and “Mittie’s husband.” The speakers are recipient designing the turns with reference to how they figure their interactant knows this person, and they display an analysis that Mr. Quinn and Mittie are the people clearly known to recipient, such that the talked-about people can be located with reference to them:

Fragment 18

[H:088:1:8:5]

- 01 Leslie: Well a’course um:: Mister Quinn’s wife has had lumps
 02 removed fr’ m ’er neck hasn’t she

Fragment 19

[Schenkein, in Schegloff, 1997a, p. 519]

- 01 Joe: Oh you know, Mittie- Gordon, eh- Gordon,
 02 Mittie's husban' died.

In Fragment 20 the speaker is engaged in a search for the name of “that guy” and is producing “clues” for his recipients: He first attempts an identification of him with reference to his workplace and then with reference to his wife:

Fragment 20

[AutoDiscussion (transcription simplified)]

- 01 Cur: Didju know that guy up there et-oh. What the'hell
 02 is's name usetuh work up't (Steeldinner) garage did
 03 their body work. for 'em.
 04 (2.0)
 05 Cur: Oh:: he meh- uh,
 06 (0.5)
 07 Cur: His wife ra[n off] with Bill McCa:nn.

Schegloff (1996) pointed out that person reference provides “the terms through which people are observed, noticed and experienced” (p. 438)—and what we see in each of Fragments 18 through 20 is that those terms are formulated with reference to the heterosexual marital relationship and, hence, reproduce heteronormativity. There is no reason, in principle, why people in same-sex (or unmarried) couples should not also be located with reference to whichever member of the couple is presumed best known to the recipient of the talk (e.g., “Jenny’s girlfriend” or “Bob’s partner”), and data from LGBT speakers would presumably reveal this to be the case. When such formulations run off smoothly and without interactional trouble, they reflect and reproduce a world in which same-sex and unmarried coupledness is accepted and taken for granted. The absence of such same-sex formulations in the data set on which CA has relied reflects the insistent conventional (married) heterosexuality of the speakers from whom the data are collected.

The Production of (Heterosexual) Couples

When speakers refer to two persons in a couple relationship, such references are generally done so as to display the couple relationship. This is

most explicit when terms like *boyfriend* or *husband* are used, as in Fragments 21 and 22:

Fragment 21

[Terasaki, 1976, p. 53, as cited in Levinson, 1983, p. 351]

- 01 D: Y’wanna know who I got stoned with a
 02 few w(hh)eeks ago? hh!
 03 R: Who.
 04 D: Mary Carter’n her boy(hh)fr^{ie}(hhh)nd.hh

Fragment 22

[Rahman.B.2.14]

- 01 Ver: .h ’R yih[go]in yih won’t be goin t’th’town
 02 tomorrow will you.
 03 Jen: .h Well ah hahftih go ah:’m ah’v got s’m::
 04 eh:: Liz en uhr husb’n coming foh:: (0.7)
 05 e s- uh s- lsupper

The use of two first names conjoined by an “and” may convey heterosexual coupledness when one name is male and the other female, and when the activities in which these two people are engaged (e.g., visiting or eating out with friends) is culturally understood to be a coupled activity:

Fragment 23

[NB.II.5]

- 01 Emm: .t.hh Uh Kay en Errol w’r s’pozetuh come ↓DO:WN
 02 uh: la:s’ ni:ght,

Fragment 24

[NB.IV.4]

- 01 Emm: .hhh ↑We were spoze tih gone ou’tuh dinner with
 02 Bill’n Gladys

List formulations typically use prosody and tempo to produce people in pairs of (heterosexual) couples as in Fragment 25:

Fragment 25

[Holt X(C)-2-1-4]

- 01 Kat: I [thought maybe we c’d g- have a get together of,=
 02 Les: [.hh

- 03 Kat: =Melissa 'n Brian: 'n (0.5) Sarah 'n that bloke,
 04 (.) oh; uh Cli[ve?]

By pairing together the (identifiably different sex) names of the four people (with a pause between the two pairings), Katherine's talk produces them as two heterosexual couples. (An LGBT version might have been, "Melissa 'n Sarah 'n (0.5) Brian 'n that bloke, (.) oh; uh Clive".)

Heterosexual couples are also produced by referring to them by a shared surname:

Fragment 26
 [SBL.3.2]

- 01 Cla: So anywa:y she: cancelled'er cla:ss out but (.)
 02 a:n: (.) the Gra:hams c'dn come on Tue:sdee
 03 [so:]it's [too ba::d,

Fragment 27
 [NB.II.3]

- 01 Emm: .t.hh (.) So we jis: (.) le:ft 'n .hh .hh .hh
 02 Cliff Brow:n wz there remember he usetih be ar
 03 nei:ghbor?
 04 Lot: ↑Ye::[a h :.]
 05 Emm: [The Br]o::wns 'n[:
 06 Lot: [Ye:ah,

As with pairs of male–female first names, pluralized shared surnames are used to produce lists of people as couples—as in “the Havershams and the Coles” in Fragment 28:

Fragment 28
 [Holt X(C)-1-1-1]

- 01 Les: .tk.hhhh –Anyway we had a very good evening o:n
 02 Saturda:y
 03 (.)
 04 Mum: ↑Ye:s?
 05 Les: We went to North Cadbury: an' Gordon came too an:d
 06 Kenneth Haverssham and the Haversshams 'n the Coles were
 07 there

Although the children of heterosexual married couples often have the same surname as their parents (and in the worlds in which these co-interactants

live, married couples and their children *always* it seems, have the same surname), these children are not apparently necessarily or automatically understood as included in a reference to the Grahams; the Browns; or, as in the earlier instance, the Havershams. Kenneth (whom, as is evident from conversation elsewhere in this corpus, is their son) is named separately from the Havershams, his parents.

Many of these methods of producing the heterosexual couple are surely also available to and about same-sex couples (and, as Fragment 21 illustrates, to unmarried couples): References to “Jenny and her girlfriend,” to visiting “Maria and Alice,” or to a guest list including “Margaret and Sophie, and Bill and Mark” must be commonplace in the nonheteronormative contexts they reflect and constitute. Thus far, at least, I am not suggesting that the practices available to do person reference are distinctively different for same-sex and different-sex couples—only that they may be deployed differently in the heterosexist contexts they thereby reveal themselves to be oriented to.

Pronominal Heterosexuality: The Use of Locally Initial Proterms

Another method through which (heterosexual) couples are produced in the classic CA data sets is through speakers’ use of pronouns—in particular, first-person plural proterms (*we*, *us*, *our*). Across the (noninstitutional) data sets, use of a locally initial and unspecified *we* is normatively treated by co-interactants as meaning the speaker and his or her spouse. The *we* (Line 01) in Fragment 28 (shown earlier) is one such instance. Lesley’s “Anyway” (Line 01) marks a disjuncture from the previous talk (about the death of a mutual acquaintance) to a new topic. Therefore, her *we* is a locally initial person reference invoking an unspecified collectivity. The fact that she is using it to mean “my husband and I” is apparent from her subsequent addition of Gordon (the couple’s son)—thereby displaying that he was not initially understood as one of the *we* (a move that is paralleled—in Line 06—by the separate naming of Kenneth Haversham, their son, from the Havershams).

In Fragment 29, Lesley moves from the first-person singular (“I’m teaching tomorrow,” Line 01) to the first-person plural (“we’ll be up . . . ” and “we’ll be able to lie in . . . ”) without specifically naming who else is included in her *we*—although this person (Mark, who is, of course, known by Mum to be Lesley’s husband) is finally named at Line 19:

Fragment 29

[Holt X(C)1-1-1]

- 01 Les: Well I'm teaching tomorrow so:,
 02 Mum: Oh: goody:.. [hee!
 03 Les: [we:'ll be up[e- aa-
 04 Mum: [heh heh eh-eh h=
 05 Les: We'll be able to LIE: I:N:.. Becuz U:SUALLY WE'RE UP
 06 at SIX 'n toMORROW is eh we'll be able t' I get up at
 07 six thirty.
 08 (0.6)
 09 Mum: Oh. u-Why:;,
 10 (.)
 11 Mum: he he hn-[Why are]you why: six thirty.
 12 Les: [Becuz]
 13 Les: Becuz I always ↑do when I'm teaching.
 14 (0.3)
 15 Mum: Oh I see:.,
 16 (0.4)
 17 Mum: An' you usually get up at si:x.
 18 (0.7)
 19 Les: Well ye:s, cz Mark has: (.) does 'n (.) hour's overtime
 20 befo:re sk- work starts.
 21 (1.0)
 22 Mum: Oh:-:.

In Fragments 30 and 31, a locally initial *we* is used by Emma (Fragment 30, Line 08) and Jo (Fragment 31, Lines 04, 14, 17), respectively. In both of these instances, however, the other person who constitutes the speaker's *we* is never named. This causes no apparent difficulty for the co-interactants who seem to be assuming that *we* invokes the husbands with whom—it is evident from other calls in the corpora—Emma and Jo are co-constituted as couples:

Fragment 30

[NB.II.3]

- 01 Lot: ...lo:.,
 02 Emm: £G'morning Letitia£=
 03 Lot: =u.-hHow'r YOU:.=
 04 Emm: =FI:NE HOW'R [YOU:.
 05 Lot: [eh he:h heh WUDIYIH kno:w.=
 06 Emm: =.hhh Jis got down last -ni:ght.eh
 07 Lot: OH YOU DI[:D?

ples they already know themselves to be. The same sort of *we* is presumably routinely used by heterosexual unmarried couples and same-sex couples who are open about their status as couples and is treated with caution by closeted same-sex couples or different-sex couples *not* wanting to reveal their relationships. This analysis of *we* in normative situations offers analytic purchase on the deployment (or avoidance) of it in relation to nonnormative arrangements.

It is also common practice for speakers to use the pronouns *he* or *she* as a method for referring to just one member of a couple and for distinguishing the one from the other—a practice that is, of course, possible only when the members of the couple can be differentiated by sex. In deploying a proterm as an unproblematic person reference for one member of a couple unknown to the cointeractant, a speaker also thereby conveys that the couple is composed of people of different sexes. In Fragment 32, Lesley is offering some assistance to someone whose husband—encountered recently at a party political meeting—has apparently lost his job, and whom she knows vaguely but has not seen (as transpires later in the call) for many months. She gives as the reason for the call the offer of possible help from “friends in Bristol” (clearly treated as unknown to her recipient—both through her use of a nonrecognitional reference and, of course, because the purpose of her call is to put the recipient and her husband in touch with them). It is worth looking in some detail at how these friends in Bristol are produced as a couple, and as a heterosexual couple:

Fragment 32: Three heterosexual couples

[Holt:2:3]

- 01 Mar: One three five?
 02 (.)
 03 Les: Oh hello, it's um: Leslie Field he:re,
 04 Mar: Oh ↑hello:,
 05 Les: Hello, .tch.h I ↑hope you don't mind me getting
 06 in touch but uh- we metchor husband little while
 07 ago at a Liberal meeting.
 08 (0.3)
 09 Mar: Ye: [s?
 10 Les: [.hh And he wz: (0.3) i-he told us something of
 11 what'd happen:ed,
 12 (0.5)
 13 Les: to him .hh An: ' I wondered haa- (0.2) i-he said he

- 14 m::ight have another position in vie:[w,
 15 Mar: [Mmhm,
 16 Les: .hh (.) Uhm (0.3) .tch Well I don't know how that
 17 went, .h uh (.) It's just that I wondered if he
 18 hasn't (0.3) uh we have friends in: Bristol
 19 Mar: Ye:s?
 20 Les: who:-(.) uh: that u-had the same experience.
 21 Mar: Oh↑:::
 22 Les: And they uhm: .t (0.2) .hh He worked f'r a printing
 23 an:' paper (0.9) uh firm [u-
 24 Mar: [Ye:s,
 25 Les: uh[: - which ih puh- uh: part'v the Paige Group.
 26 Mar: [Yeh,
 27 (.)
 28 Les: .hh And he now has: u-a:: um (1.1) I don't think you'd
 29 call it a consultancy (0.2) They find positions for
 30 people: in the printing'n paper (0.4) indus[try:,
 31 Mar: [Oh I see: [:.
 32 Les: [hh
 33 An:d if: i-your husband would li:ke their addre[ss.
 34 Mar: [Y e :[: s,
 35 Les: [<As
 36 they're specialists,
 37 Mar: Ye::s?
 38 (.)
 39 Les: Uhm: my husband w'd gladly give it [t o h i m .]

First, the relevance of hearing the friends in Bristol as a couple is supplied by a local context in which couples (specifically, married heterosexual couples) are indexed in the preceding talk. At Line 06, Lesley's *we* (rather than, say, *I*) produces her as a member of some unspecified collectivity on whose behalf she is “getting in touch” (likewise, see her *us*, Line 10; and *we*, Line 18)—and hence, as proposed in my analysis of *we* mentioned earlier, is likely to be heard as invoking her marital unit. Lesley also references the marital relationship of her co-interactant (“your husband,” Line 06)—such that the relevant interactional units are constituted as two married couples. The friends in Bristol are first hearable as a married couple, then, in the context of the two other married couple relationships already indexed in this talk. The subsequent pronoun repair from *they* to *he* (at Line 22) extracts one member of the couple from the collectivity and is performed because, although the “experience” (Line 20) of unemployment and its consequences on their lives was presumably a shared event for both members

of the couple already indexed in the plural (with “friends,” Line 18), it was only one member of the couple who lost a job—the one who “worked for a printing and paper firm” (Lines 22–23), and for whom the proterm *he* is appropriate. Notice that *he* is treated as serving to differentiate the member of the couple who was employed (and subsequently lost employment) from the other, and hence produces the other as female. If both members had been male, *he* would not have been usable in differentiating the two members of the couple from one another, and a different formulation—for example, “one of them,” “the employed one,” and so forth—would have been necessary to do so.

In Fragment 33, Ros and Bea are two nurses talking about a case that Bea is working on and about which it turns out Ros has independent information. In Line 01, she is checking this information with Bea:

Fragment 33

[SBL 1.1.10]

- 01 Ros: =Isn't she the one: who- hh I ↑think
 02 ah hheahrd about ?it.? Th'daughter in law
 03 told me wasn't she playing
 04 go: [lf out et th]e V a l l e]y Clu:b?=
 05 Bea: [Y e : s] thet's ↑i t]
 06 Bea: =Thet's ↑the o:ne,
 07 Ros: En had'n aneurism.
 08 Bea: Yhe:s;,
 09 Ros: Sudden*y.
 10 Bea: Mm hm,
 11 Ros: nThey tbought et first she wz hit witha
 12 golf: (0.5) ball uhr bat er something but
 13 it wasn't that i[t w'ss:]uh-
 14 Bea: [Uh-hah.]
 15 Ros: a ruptured aneurism hhh And i-*u-*u-th*i-
 16 (0.3) they didn't wan' Doctor Reeves'n Saint
 17 Joh:n they took'er dow:n tih U.C.L.A*:.
 18 Bea: Yhe:s:.
 19 (0.3)
 20 Bea: Ah-hah.
 21 Ros: An'it (0.3) Ah'it left'er (0.4) quite
 22 permanently daamaged ?I s[u]ppose?
 23 Bea: [tk
 24 Bea: Uh:pparently,
 25 (.)
 26 Bea: Uh ↑he is still hopef*ul.

- 27 (.)
 28 Ros: The husb*’n.
 29 Bea: Ah hah end yih never jus’ (.) eh yih js’
 30 never saw such devotion in yer l*’i:fe.

At Line 26, Bea treats a locally initial *he* as adequate reference for a husband who has so far not been introduced into the conversation. And indeed, Ros correctly identifies this proterm as referring to the husband (Line 28)—of whose existence she presumably has prior knowledge (via the daughter-in-law, Line 02), but who is indexed here only by a proterm with no clear prior referent. Like the locally initial use of *we* to mean the (heterosexual, married) couple as a collectivity, the locally initial use of *he* in Fragment 33, combined with a range of contextual knowledge, relies on (and reproduces) a category-bound activity (here hopefulness for a spouse’s recovery) to index a spouse and (thereby) the centrality of the husband–wife relationship.

Fragment 34 is quoted by Sacks (1995a, pp. 762–763) and (with reference to Sacks’s, 1995a, earlier argument) by Schegloff (1996, p. 475, Footnote 19)—both of whom point to the use of a locally initial *he* at Line 06, which “it appears clear” (Schegloff), is “obviously” (Sacks) a reference to Mr. Hooper:

Fragment 34

[From Sacks, 1995a, pp. 762–763]

- 01 A: How is Missuz Hooper.
 02 B: Uh oh, about the same.
 03 A: mm, mm mm mm. Have they uh th-uh
 04 Then she’s still continuing in the same way.
 05 B: Yes, mm hm.
 06 A: Well I hope uh he can con- uh can, carry on
 07 that way, be [cause-
 08 B: [Well he wants to make a chay- a change,

Sacks (1995a) said,

Focussing on “I hope he can carry on,” there’s no “he” being talked about; no person that could be referred to via “he” has been introduced. Who’s “he”? Obviously in this case “he” is Mr Hooper. The topic is Mrs Hooper’s illness. The introduction of him in such a way as requires the use of Mrs Hooper to find who “he” is, may be one way that, that Mr Hooper is being talked of subtopically is done. (p. 763)

As in Fragments 32 and 33, a locally initial *he* (Line 06; i.e., a locally subsequent reference form in a locally initial position) is understood and treated by the co-interactants as referring to a husband. What makes it “obviously” (Sacks, 1995a, p. 763) the case that *he* indexes the husband? First, the use of the title Mrs. (Line 01) indexes the existence of a husband (at least at some point), whereas the use of a first and last name would not, and Miss would be counterindicative—but in any event, the interactants seem to share some information about Mrs. Hooper and presumably both know of the husband’s existence (part of what Schegloff, 1996, p. 457, perhaps meant when he said that the *he* reference “invoke[es] recipient’s (B’s) knowledge of the matters being talked about to solve what—that is relevant to this topic—this person reference could be referring to”). The plural proterm *they* at Line 03 (also used in Fragment 32, Line 22) is hearable as possibly inviting the recipient to understand Mrs. Hooper as part of an (unspecified) collectivity. The invocation of another as part of a collective *they* may, like the invocation of oneself as part of a collective *we*, produce the heterosexual (married) unit as the collectivity generally understood as thereby referenced.⁹ The subsequent production of a locally initial *he* (Line 06) (possibly hearable as extracting a male from the *they* at Line 03) produces a male person as needing to carry on in the context of Mrs. Hooper’s illness. The apparent ease with which the speakers produce and understand this locally initial *he* as Mrs. Hooper’s husband displays (for us as analysts) the extent to which coping with a wife’s illness is an activity category bound to husband, and that this category boundedness is a *resource* that is relied on by the speaker who deploys—and the recipient who makes sense of—the locally initial proterm. The “knowledge of the matters being talked about” (Schegloff, 1996, p. 457) is not merely knowledge specific to the individual circumstances of Mrs. Hooper (in Fragment 34) or the friends in Bristol (in Fragment 32, about whom the recipient in fact has no prior knowledge): It rests also on cultural knowledge about what categories of people care about and for each other, and possibly share a single family income—categories produced here in terms of the heterosexual married couple. Through the invocation of husbands and wives with locally initial proterms (*we*, *he*, *she*), speakers treat the existence of such persons as a taken-for-granted feature of their social worlds.

Across these conversations, then, a couple is understood as composed not just of two people, but specifically of two people of different sexes. This assumption that is most flagrantly apparent in Fragment 35, in which Lesley tells her friend, Joyce, that she has ordered roses as a present for her

ruby wedding anniversary—and that, in recognition of that specific occasion, she has ordered “a couple, a male and a female.” (Line 02 is the final assessment of someone they have been discussing in the sequence that Lesley treats as finished when she launches Line 01.):

Fragment 35

[Holt 10_88–1-08]

- 01 Les: The other thing [i s I]
 02 Joy: [°She's dr]ead, fu [l.°
 03 Les: [I wz g'nna mention
 04 to you, .hhhh is I've ordered th- (.) the roses, I've
 05 ordered as it wz your- (0.2) k- your ruby wedding I (.)
 06 ordered a cou:ple. a ma:le 'nd a £ fema:le hhuh heh
 07 he[h hn
 08 Joy: [Oh: he-how l:o:[v e]ly. oh:-:-:
 09 Les: [.hh]E:dward Mo:rse an' Eena
 10 Harkn[ess.
 11 Joy: [Oh::: Edward Morse is one I l::o:::ve.=

Through her selection of different-sex roses, Lesley displays the extent to which heterosexuality is displayed as integral to her understanding of a marriage.¹⁰ The couple whose anniversary is being celebrated are specifically produced, through the gift she has selected for them, as a male and a female. Of course, they happen to be categorizable as male and female—but that is not the only way of categorizing them, and it is the selection of this particular (sex-based) category system that constitutes Lesley's report of her gift as specifically heterosexual. Alternative categories she might have used—that sound implausible only because of the primacy of the male–female distinction in our taken-for-granted understanding of married coupledom—might have been a climbing rose and a bush rose (producing the couple as composed of a tall and a short member); or a red rose and a white rose (producing them as originating respectively from the English counties of Lancashire and Yorkshire, of which these flowers are emblems). Any actual marriage is (almost) as likely to be between two people of different heights and geographical regions as between two people of different sexes: However, the former two category systems are treated as incidental to the Euro-American definition of marriage, whereas the latter category system is central to it. The dominant cultural understanding of marriage—reflected and reconstituted in Lesley's formulation of her gift—is (as the marriage amendments in 17 U.S. states now instantiate¹¹) the un-

ion of one man and one woman. It is not likely that Lesley, living in rural England in the mid-1980s, was defending marriage against the incursions of equal marriage activists; her selection of different-sex roses simply reflects and reconstitutes the taken-for-granted heteronormativity of her culture.

SPEAKING AS A HOMOSEXUAL

There is only one identifiably homosexual speaker in the data sets reviewed here: a caller to the suicide prevention center in the data collected by Sacks (1972a, 1995a, 1995b). Although many of the suicide calls involve problems in heterosexual relationships (spousal deaths, divorces or abandonments; see Sacks, 1972a, pp. 52, 56), and although many callers make apparent that they *are* heterosexual (e.g., calls 9, 14, 16, 17, 19, 23, and 24 in Sacks, 1972a), nobody calls the suicide line *because* they are heterosexual. Rather, heterosexuality in these calls, as elsewhere in the data corpora collectively, is a taken-for-granted backdrop. By contrast with these suicidal heterosexuals, the one suicidal homosexual caller presents his sexual orientation as the reason for the call (Sacks, 1972a, pp. 65–66; 1995a, pp. 46–47). This speaker is alone in these data corpora in orienting to his talk as conveying information about his sexual orientation (i.e., he is speaking as a homosexual in a way that no heterosexual in these data is ever speaking as a heterosexual:¹²

Fragment 36

[From Sacks, 1995a, p. 46]

- 01 Clt: Is there anything you can stay interested in?
 02 Cal: No, not really.
 03 Clt: What interests did you have before?
 04 Cal: I was a hair stylist at one time, I did some
 05 fashions now and then, things like that.
 // ((lines omitted))
 70 Clt: Have you been having some sexual problems?
 71 Cal: All my life.
 72 Clt: Uh huh. Yeah.
 73 Cal: Naturally. You probably suspect, as far as the
 74 hair stylist and, uh, either one way or the
 75 other, they're straight or homosexual, something
 76 like that.

Sacks (1995a) commented,

In this case, although it might not be proper for this man to say about himself that he’s troubled by possible homosexual tendencies, he finds a way to invoke a subset of occupational categories, “hair stylist ... fashions ... and things like that,” which constitutes an adequate basis for inferring homosexuality. And in his subsequent talk he proposes that such an inference has “probably” been made by the other. (p. 47)

By contrast, the inference of heterosexuality (made on the basis of different-sex partners and spouses) is never oriented to as such by interactants. These casual and unoriented to displays of heterosexuality in the service of local interactional goals constitute a mundane instance of heterosexual privilege by those who take for granted, as others cannot, their access to the culture’s kinship terminology and their own conformity with a heteronormative social order.

CONCLUSION

The field sometimes known as “queer linguistics” (Kulick, 2002) has overwhelmingly focused on deviant groups: for example, gay men (Chesbro, 1981; Leap, 1996), lesbians (Moonwomon-Baird, 1997), *travesti* (Kulick, 1998), *hijras* (Hall & O’Donovan, 1996), and sex workers (Hall, 1995). As Cameron and Kulick (2003) pointed out, “understanding the processes that maintain the hegemony of heterosexuality requires attention to be given not only to the cases in which bodies/relations/desires ‘deviate’ from the norm, but also to those cases in which they do not” (p. 149). In this article, I have focused on instances in which apparently nondeviant heterosexuals produce themselves as such, and I have drawn attention to the utterly banal and commonplace nature of these heterosexual performances. I have shown various ways in which, without any orientation to so doing, speakers “give off” their heterosexuality, and I have argued that the co-interactants in these data sets are not actively “doing being heterosexual” or flaunting their heterosexuality—but are simply getting on with the business of their lives, treating their own and others’ heterosexuality as entirely unremarkable, ordinary, taken-for-granted and displaying it incidentally in the course of some other action in which they are engaged. For the “normal” heterosexual participant, nothing special is happening. For any deviant LGBT participant in (or eavesdropping on) the conversations in the data

corpora from which these fragments have been extracted, a clamorous heterosexuality is everywhere apparent.

In pointing to the pervasive heterosexuality of the speakers on whose talk the foundational findings of CA are based, I am drawing attention to a feature of these data corpora not previously noted in the literature. The fragments I have cited have been used by other conversation analysts as instances of a reporting as a prelude to an invitation (Fragment 16, Drew, 1984); an insertion repair (Fragment 17, Schegloff, 1997a); a pre-announcement (Fragment 21, Levinson, 1983), among other technical features. Look, for example, at Fragments 37 through 39 (which follow), which exemplify (as argued in this article) instances of heteronormativity—but each of which is used elsewhere in the CA literature to illustrate some technical feature of talk-in-interaction: an upgraded second assessment (Fragment 37, Pomerantz, 1984, p. 60), a try-marked sequence (Fragment 38, Sacks & Schegloff, 1979, p. 19), and the use of “oh” as a successful outcome of a search (Fragment 39, Heritage, 1984, pp. 299–300), respectively:

Fragment 37

[NB:VII.13] (From Pomerantz, 1984, p. 60)

- 01 E: ... yihknow he's a goodlooking fel'n
 02 eez got a beautiful wi:fe.=
 03 M: =Ye:s:.. Go:rgeous girl-

Fragment 38

(From Sacks & Schegloff, 1979, p. 19)

- 01 A: ... well I was the only one other than
 02 than the uhm tch Fords? Uh Mrs. Holmes Ford?
 03 You know [the the cellist?
 04 B: [Oh yes. She's she's the cellist.
 05 A: Yes.
 06 B: Ye[s
 07 A: [Well she and her husband were there...

Fragment 39

[Goodwin: G91:250] (From Heritage, 1984, pp. 299–300)

- 01 A: ... This girlfr- er Jeff's gi:rlfriend,
 02 the one he's gettin' married to, (0.9) s
 03 brother.=he use'to uh,
 // ((13 lines of data omitted. During this

- // period the setting is disrupted by the
 // leaving of some of the participants))
 17 A: What was I gonna say.= Oh:: anyway.=
 18 She use`ta, (0.4) come over.....

The observation that these data instances display the heterosexuality of the “good looking fella” and his wife (Fragment 37), the Fords (Fragment 38), and Jeff and his girlfriend (Fragment 39) is entirely irrelevant to and inconsequential for the technical findings of upgraded second assessment, try-marked sequences, and the deployment of *oh*. I am emphatically *not* suggesting that other analysts’ failure to comment on the heterosexuality of the talk compromises their technical analyses in any way. This point is worth emphasizing in the light of previous criticisms of CA for having allegedly made invalid generalizations about interactional practices on the basis of the restricted categories of speakers whose talk constitutes its data (e.g., Coates, 2002; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p. 111). The displayed heterosexuality of the speakers in CA’s classic data corpora is utterly irrelevant to the overwhelming majority of the analyses on which the foundational discoveries of conversational practices (such as turn taking, sequence organization, preference, repair, etc.) are based.

In conclusion, I consider further the implications of my findings for LGBT studies, CA, and future work connecting the two. First, for LGBT studies, this analysis offers evidence to counter a common criticism of LGBT activists: The charge that we flaunt our sexuality (e.g., “... do you have to let everyone know? Why flaunt it?”; Manahan, 1982, p. 68). One response is to draw attention to the many ways in which heterosexuals display their heterosexuality in ordinary everyday interaction. This study documents some of those displays and shows how, in the everyday talk analyzed here, heterosexuality is “naturalized”—constructed as an invisible (unoriented to) category. Parallel claims have been made about Whiteness: “In daily interaction white people view and experience whiteness as a ‘neutral,’ that is, a ‘normal’ state of being, an empty racial category” (Moore, 2002, p. 63); and the method employed here could also be used to study this, and—and, indeed any other—hegemonic identity. This study, then, contributes to LGBT research on “coming out” and “passing” by revealing the pervasive backdrop of taken-for-granted heterosexuality against which such activities are conducted. As Goffman (1963) said, those who must strategize whether and how to disclose potentially discrediting information in mixed contexts “will have to be alive to aspects of the social situation that others treat as uncalculated and unattended. What are unthinking rou-

tines for normals can become management problems for the discreditable” (p. 88).

As the analysis presented in this article shows, the range of interactional activities from which closeted same-sex couples are excluded, or that they must actively monitor and manage if they are not to reveal their homosexuality, is vast—ranging from the appropriate receipt of explicit talk about heterosexual sex and relationships (while not being able to reciprocate without fabrication), through to the management of pronouns. Given the pervasiveness of heterosexual self-display as revealed in these data, the *failure* to display oneself as heterosexual must also be an indicator of possible homosexuality—and presumably constitutes one element of the so-called “gaydar” (the ability of lesbians and gays to spot each other as such from clues missed by most heterosexuals). Given the frequency with which heterosexual speakers reveal other people’s heterosexuality through mundane references to their partners, this analysis also indicates the kinds of problems faced by parents of lesbians and gays when (like Ron in Fragment 3) conveying family news: “families of lesbians and gays must also decide whether or not to come out about their own queer family members” (Bernstein & Reimann, 2001, p. 7). This research, then, lays some empirical groundwork for using CA to explore the relation between the casual disclosure of sexual identity by heterosexual people who are doing “nothing special” and the management issues attendant on disclosing a lesbian or gay identity—“the love that is famous for not daring to speak its name” (Sedgwick, 1993, p. 45). We can use the foundational discoveries of CA (turn taking, sequence organization, repair, etc.) to explore how sexual identities are interactionally managed, displayed, negotiated, and concealed (see Kitzinger, 2000; Land & Kitzinger, in press). Most fundamentally, this analysis has begun to explore the ways in which a mundane taken-for-granted world is produced through everyday talk in interaction.

The implications of this analysis for CA are also far reaching. Conversation analysts (e.g., Schegloff, 1996) have noted the importance of person reference terms as a central component of our understanding of culture. The analyses presented here have contributed to CA a closer examination of practices of person reference in relation to the production of the (heterosexual) marital relationship. I have shown how categorical references to husband and wife are deployed with reference to culturally understood inferences (which they thereby reproduce) of the intimacy, care, co-residence, and single economic unit constituted by the married couple; and the activities in which they are understood to be jointly engaged (co-visiting,

co-vacationing, co-hosting, sleeping in the same bed). I have shown how heterosexual couples are produced as such through practices of naming and how nonrecognitional person references reflect and reproduce a kinship system that positions individuals in terms of heterosexual relationships either through their own marriages or those of others and how these reference forms are deployed in the interests of local interactional goals. My analysis also displays what may turn out to be a routine (rather than exceptional) use of locally subsequent reference forms in locally initial positions (Schegloff, 1996) as a device for displaying (at least heterosexual) coupledness.

Inspection of the data based on which the field of CA has relied does seem to show that heterosexual displays are a commonplace and taken-for-granted feature of social interaction. As analysts, we might want not to take a member's perspective on this but rather to treat the interactant's everyday world as problematic and to explore how, and in the service of what other actions, their heterosexuality is assumed and deployed. We might notice that heterosexuality is available to them as a resource; we might consider what kind of world they are reflecting and reproducing in their talk. More broadly, we might ask what is happening when nothing special is happening: when the second is in a preferred relation to the first; when the yes–no question is followed by a yes–no answer; when the recognitional referent is recognized or the nonrecognitional referent is treated as adequate; when the punchline of the story is promptly and properly received and the second story is treated as fitted to the first; when presumed ordinary experiences are treated as ordinary—what is happening *then*, how is *that* done, and what kind of world must we be living in that these things run off smoothly? This kind of analysis may enable us better to understand (as activists and as conversation analysts) the routine achievement of a taken-for-granted world (Schegloff, 1986).

NOTES

- 1 Other researchers have pointed to the allegedly male (e.g., Coates, 2002) or “white, middle-class Anglo-American” (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p. 111) nature of the data sets on which conversation analysis (CA) is based and have suggested that key findings of CA (e.g., turn taking) may be limited to those categories of speakers whose talk constituted the data. It should be noted, in considering these critiques, that some of the most frequently cited and painstakingly analyzed data in early CA come from talk involving people who are African American (e.g., the Upholstery Shop data) and identifiably working class (e.g., the Automobile Discussion data), and that the classic data

sets overwhelmingly involve talk between women (e.g., the SBL, Trio, NB, Rahman, and Holt corpora).

- 2 There is some foundational conversation analysis data involving both members of heterosexual couples in interaction, generally over meals or drinks in one couple's home (e.g., Automobile Discussion, Chicken Dinner). Lerner (1992) specifically analyzed such data with reference to how collectivities (such as the couple) become consequential social units in ordinary conversation.
- 3 Also see also the following:

[MC:I:15] (From Jefferson, 1978, p. 233)

01 Har: I said "And-and-and-" "What ih-" "Is her
 02 boyfriend a nice ma:n Joey?" He sz "Oh
 03 he's very nice, he's a colored man." hhhhhhh
 04 [HAH hah!]

This produces the woman under discussion, Joey, and the interactants, Harmony and Lil, as White in the course of topic talk. It also treats women having boyfriends *per se* as unremarkable—what is remarked on is the ethnicity of this particular boyfriend and not the fact of his existence (although, in fact, it turns out that the point of the telling is Joey's misunderstanding in that the colored man is some sort of paid employee and not a boyfriend at all).

- 4 The right to marry and found a family is a fundamental human right (Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>), advanced in the face of Nazi bans on marriage between Jews and Aryans, the U.S. antimiscegenation laws, and the South African apartheid regime's prohibition of mixed marriages between races. Campaigns for equal marriage rights today include the following: in the United Arab Emirates, the right to marry for different-sex Muslims and Christians (banned by *Shari'a* law; <http://web.amnesty.org/library>); in Israel, equal marriage rights for different-sex Palestinians and Israelis (subject to apartheid marriage laws by Israel's new law on marriage and citizenship; Mariner, 2003); and, across most of the world, the right to marry a same-sex partner. There are currently only two national governments in the world that permit same-sex marriage: the Netherlands (since 2001) and Belgium (since 2003). Since 2003, most of the Canadian provinces and territories have enacted equal marriage legislation, and this is likely to be reflected at the federal level in 2005. In the United States, only the state of Massachusetts has equal marriage legislation, and this is very unlikely to become federal policy. (For more information on the equal marriage debates, see Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 2004a, 2004b).
- 5 I am grateful to Geoff Raymond for drawing my attention to the relevance of Goodwin's (1987) analysis to this data fragment.
- 6 In telephone conversations, the maleness or femaleness of the caller is attributed on the basis of voice quality (only two gender misidentifications are apparent in the hundreds of calls in these data sets) and in co-present interactions, on the basis of the appearance

of the speaker. Recipients’ confidence in their ability to make correct gender attributions on the basis of voice quality is such that, in the small amount of telephone data we have so far collected in which lesbians refer to their partners in ways that identify them as female (e.g., as girlfriend, partner, wife, or using a female proterm or identifiably female name), there is no instance in which they are subsequently treated as male (see Land & Kitzinger, in press). Clearly, this confidence may be misplaced (and exploited; see Hall, 1995).

- 7 I have access to the original audiodata and have retranscribed this fragment, which is why it departs somewhat (especially Line 03) from the version given by Sacks (1995a, p. 757).
- 8 In a survey of language use among gay men, Harvey (1997) found that 4 of the 53 respondents reported referring to their same-sex partner as their wife or husband—a usage he described as “parodic appropriation” (p. 68). I have no recorded naturalistic data in which someone in a same-sex couple can be heard as referring to a same-sex partner using the terminology appropriate to a different-sex spouse (i.e., wife from a gay man or husband from a lesbian). Those instances in which a woman refers to her same-sex partner as her wife (see Land & Kitzinger, in press) result in major interactional difficulties.
- 9 Of course *we* and *they* are also used as locally initial proterms by speakers who thereby index that they are speaking in some institutional capacity, or about persons acting in an institutional capacity (Schegloff, 1996, p. 477, Footnote 25)—and the speaker at Line 03 is also hearable as possibly launching a question about the medical professionals involved in Mrs. Hooper’s treatment.
- 10 And to sexual relationships in general—elsewhere, in discussing her teenage son’s plans to attend an all night party, she relies on the notion that sex segregation means no possibility of sexual activity:

[Holt X(C) 2-1-2]

Les: [Well ↑I don’t mind i- I mean (.) I don’t mind ’im
 taking the sleep ing bag. an’ staying the night.
 providing they’re a::ll (.) u-bo[y]:s.

- 11 As of November 2004.
- 12 The only talk *about* non-heterosexual people I have found in the data corpora are the following: talk about actors who play “fags” in the movies, including what is apparently a quote from some such movie (“Tell them I’m not a fag”; Chicken Dinner); a news report about “fags” in Detroit (“Isn’t that the place they say where if two fags split up one’s got to pay the other one alimony?”; “Too way ahead out there”; Chicken Dinner); and what Drew (1987) described as “three teasing attributions to Vic of homosexuality” (p. 224; Upholstery Shop)—to which Vic’s retort is that he would rather be a “faggot” than marry the female prostitute with whom he reports having been sexually involved.

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