

Deena's Story: The Discourse of the Other

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In her recent study of the history of Western literacy and rhetoric, Jan Swearingen tells us that "Otherness is not incomprehensible, not a strange dark continent, except in a poetics, epistemology, and psychology preoccupied with order, coherence, and form defined in narrowly binarist and linear exclusivities" (223).¹ But preoccupied thus, people in the West with economic, political, and intellectual power have historically described their own language with such adjectives as "rational," "philosophic," "scientific," and "literate" and the discourse of the Other—that is, the language practices of those less powerful—in terms of what it lacks, what it doesn't or can't do, how it limits (or reveals the limitations of) its users. Setting up such "narrowly binarist . . . exclusivities" about language persists despite sociolinguistic studies that have demonstrated time and again that what renders the discourse of the Other unacceptable is its identification with the powerlessness of the Other rather than anything inherent in the language itself.²

In descriptions of the discourse practices of the Other—apparently no matter who the Other happens to be—a group of common stylistic features regularly shows up. Among these features, according to Susan Jarratt, are an associative or paratactic principle of organization, loose connections, foregrounded figures, abundant personal references, emotion, and play in "serious" contexts (2). These qualities appear on the devalORIZED side of such binary oppositions as oral/literate, female/male, Black/White. In this paper I meditate on the purported paratactic narrative style of the marginalized Other by looking closely at the first-grade sharing time story of a child whom researcher Sarah Michaels calls Deena. As I do so, I pay attention not only to race, gender, class, and age but also to the dichotomous thinking that gives potency to these categories. Also squarely in mind are these words from Alice Walker:

For it is language more than anything else that reveals and validates one's existence, and if the language we actually speak is denied us, then it is inevitable that the form we are permitted to assume historically will be one of caricature, reflecting someone else's literary or social fantasy. (58)

The text of Deena's story appears in "Narrative Presentations: An Oral Preparation of Literacy with First Graders" in Jenny Cook-Gumperz's 1986

volume *The Social Construction of Literacy*. This article reports on Michaels' study of language and literacy in the multi-ethnic Berkeley, California, schools. In addition, Deena's sharing time story as well as others by both her and other students appears in "The Dismantling of Narrative" in Alyssa McCabe and Carole Peterson's 1991 *Developing Narrative Structure*, where Michaels gives more detail and seems more aware of the political ramifications than in the earlier piece. The names of the children and of the teacher are, of course, pseudonyms. I have chosen this particular example because in our culture Deena is the powerless Other: she is female, Black, young, and poor.

As a middle-class White woman, I do not presume to speak as an insider or as an authority on African-American discourse practices. But as I've said and intend to discuss further, descriptions of the language of the Other are amazingly similar, whether the specific Other is Black, or female, or from some other ethnic or regional group. As a woman and as a Southerner, I have a personal stake in issues of language, identity, and power. As a teacher, I hope that twenty-five years of observing and thinking and reading about issues of language in the classroom and elsewhere can give me some ground from which to speak. This is not the first time I have written about language issues as they pertain to an African-American child. Southern guilt, perhaps. At this particular time, there's at least one other motive for writing about these issues: I am disturbed by the silence that often prevails these days when issues that touch on race arise. This silence, I believe, widens the polarized positions that now seem to be the norm, even among academics, and I think we are better off talking to each other than not talking at all.

Michaels, along with other researchers into the language practices of African-Americans, identifies the paratactic narrative style with race. In these contexts it is commonly called the associative style, or, more specifically, the topic-associating style to set it apart from the topic-centered style of White language. Geneva Smitherman describes the topic-associating narrative style in *Talkin and Testifyin*:

This meandering away from the "point" takes the listener on episodic journeys and over tributary rhetorical routes, but like the flow of nature's rivers and streams, it all eventually leads back to the source. Though highly applauded by blacks, this narrative linguistic style is exasperating to whites who wish you'd be direct and hurry up and get to the point. (148; see also 161)

But parataxis is not necessarily linked to race. As a grammatical term, parataxis means co-ordination, that is, simple juxtaposition, while its binary opposite, hypotaxis, means subordination, putting elements together in ways that clearly show or create relationships. According to linguist Jennifer Coates, parataxis has been historically linked to emotionality, speech, Bernstein's restricted code, and women's language, whereas hypotaxis has been associated with the classic Latin sentence, logic, writing, Bernstein's elaborated code, and men's language (25-26). Walter Ong and his disciple Thomas J. Farrell make

much of parataxis as characteristic of “oral” thought and language and hypotaxis as a feature of “literate” thought and language (Ong does not distinguish between cognitive properties and language).

A paratactic or topic-associating narrative style, then, lacks explicit lexical or syntactic connectives and shift markers that are assumed to be a part of the hypotactic style that Ron and Suzanne Scollon have called “essayist literacy.” As Michaels explains, in narratives told in the paratactic or topic-associating style, “a series of segments or episodes . . . are implicitly linked in highlighting some person or theme” (“Narrative” 108). Conversely, the hypotactic or topic-centered narrative is linear, explicitly and logically connected, closer to the expository prose that has been, according to Swearingen, “the norm for formal truth-bearing discourse” since Aristotle (36).

Sharing Time

During sharing time, Deena’s White middle-class teacher tried to guide the children toward a simplified version of the topic-centered narrative style—in Michaels’ words, the “canonical” “Western story form model” (“Narrative” 101). Identified by scholars like Smitherman, Tannen (“Myth”), and Heath as characteristic of White middle-class mainstream discourse, the topic-centered style includes an announced theme foregrounded throughout the rest of the narrative, the linear ordering of events, a clear resolution, and, of course, explicit lexical and syntactic markers for shifts in time, space, and topic (Michaels, “Narrative” 102-103). Mindy’s story is an example of a topic-centered first-grade narrative:

Mindy: When I was in day camp / we made these / um candles /

T: You made them?

Mindy: And uh / I tried it with different colors / with both of them but / one just came out/ this one just came out blue / and I don’t know what this color is //

T: That’s neat-o // Tell the kids how you do it from the very start // Pretend we don’t know a thing about candles// . . . OK// What did you do first? // What did you use? // Flour?//

Mindy: Um . . . here’s some / hot wax / some real hot wax / that you / just take a string / and tie a knot in it // and dip the string in the um wax //

T: What makes it uh have a shape? //

Mindy: Um / you just shape it //

T: Oh you shaped it with your hand // mmm //

Mindy: But you have/ first you have to stick it into the wax/ and then water / and then keep doing that until it gets to the size you want it //

T: OK //Who knows what the string is for? //

(Michaels, “Narrative” 105)

As you can see, the teacher is, as Michaels says, “highly successful at picking up on Mindy’s topic and using her offering as a scaffold on which to build” (“Narrative” 105). But Deena’s story, labeled topic-associating, lacks explicit lexical or syntactic markers to indicate shifts in topic, chronology, or perspective. The paratactic, topic-associating narrative is likely to seem rambling, incoherent, and illogical to someone unfamiliar with paratactic narrative modes and steeped in the conventions of the language of schooling. It is clear that to her teacher Deena’s story appears to be the stitching together of unrelated pieces of information:

Deena: Um . . . I went to the beach / . . . Sunday /
 and / to MacDonald’s /
 and to the park /
 . . . and / I got this for my / . . . birthday // [holds up a small purse]
 . . . My mother bought it for me /
 . . . and um / . . . I had / . . . um / . . . two dollars for my birthday
 and I put it in here /
 . . . and I went to where my friend /
 . . . named Gi Gi /
 . . . I went over to my grandmother’s house with her/
 . . . and um / . . . she was on my back /
 and I / . . . and we was walkin’ around /
 . . . by my house /
 . . . and um / . . . she was hea-vy /
 She was in the sixth or seventh grade //

T: Ok I’m going to stop you. I want to talk about things that are really really very important. That’s important to you but tell us things that are sort of different. Can you do that? And tell what beach you went to. (“Narrative” 108-109)

The teacher was less successful in helping Deena and, according to Michaels, other African-American children to structure and clarify their narratives. Indeed this is Michaels’ main point. She tells us that the teacher “seemed to have difficulty discerning the topic” in the narratives of the Black children who used the topic-associating style (“Narrative” 108): “[S]he interpreted Deena’s ‘shifts’ as free associations from one topic to another, thought up on the spur of the moment so that Deena could continue talking” (“Dismantling” 321). Consequently, the teacher asked questions at inappropriate times, often causing these children to lose their train of thought (“Narrative” 108), or she cut them off just as they got to the main point, as she does with Deena. Michaels argues that these “mismatches” (“Narrative” 113) between teacher and student negatively affect the literacy instruction these children receive, if for no other reason than that these misunderstandings negatively affect the teacher-student relationship, a crucial factor in learning.

When, several months later, Michaels questioned Deena about sharing time, Deena was still understandably annoyed about the interruptions to her sharing time stories: “Sharing time got on my nerves. She was always interruptin’ me saying ‘That’s not important enough’ and I hadn’t hardly started talkin’!” (“Narrative” 110). Nonetheless, Deena clearly knew the topic-centered style:

she could articulate and paraphrase the rules for a topic-centered story and even reproduce its prosody, mimicking precisely its sounds and rhythms: “She just wanted us to say like/ well/ well yesterday / blah blah blah /blah blah blah” (“Narrative” 111). If Deena knew the rules for school stories, then why didn’t she use topic-centered form?

One answer is psychological. To Deena, her teacher has appeared rejecting and disapproving; for all of us, remember, criticism of our language feels like criticism of us. Perhaps maintaining her own discourse style in the face of this disapproval is Deena’s way of rejecting her teacher. Interestingly, however, unlike many children who rebel against a teacher, Deena doesn’t carry her anger so far as to refuse to learn anything in this teacher’s classroom. According to Michaels, Deena was “the very best reader in her class and the only Black child (in a class that was half white and half Black) who was in the high ability group for reading and math” (“Dismantling” 313).

Another explanation is cultural. According to Michaels, Deena was from a working-class African-American neighborhood, and her ability group cohorts were from middle- and upper-middle-class areas (“Dismantling” 313). Perhaps in this multi-ethnic school, Deena needs to hold on to her ethnic and racial identity, to maintain the cultural practices that she brought with her: As any linguist—or Southerner—will tell you, “[I]t is one of language’s functions to act as a symbol of group identity” (Coates 76). Deena’s way of telling stories feels not only natural to her but also, in this context, distinctly her own.

Deena is, in fact, in good company; even highly literate adults hold on to ethnic and regional narrative patterns, according to Deborah Tannen (“Oral/Literate Continuum”). In one study, Tannen found that highly literate New Yorkers of East European Jewish background resisted pressure to explain explicitly the point of their stories to equally literate native Californians, whose own narratives typically included explicit comment on the message. Instead, Tannen reports, the New Yorkers continued to use the content of the narrative as well as prosodic features, intonation, and facial expressions to indicate their attitude toward the point or principle of the stories they told.

Both Keith Gilyard and June Jordan have written eloquently of how powerful Black English is in the identity of African-Americans and how on-going attempts to eradicate it threaten to deprive Black children and adolescents of knowledge of and pride in their cultural history. Gilyard says that the attitude toward African-American language and identity that Black students find in school causes too many of them to reject formal education before they can discover its power (165). In his recent *Voices of the Self*, Gilyard alternates research from sociolinguistics and education with autobiography to argue eloquently that “a pedagogy is successful only if it makes knowledge or skill achievable while at the same time allowing students to maintain their own sense of identity” (11). Jordan makes a similar point in her essay “Nobody Mean More to Me Than You and the Future Life of Willie Jordan.” Weaving together narratives of an undergraduate class on Black English and the murder of a

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student's unarmed brother by Brooklyn police, Jordan explains that "compulsory education in America compels accommodation to exclusively White forms of 'English'" (364). For these writers—as well as for James Baldwin—Black English represents survival in a hostile culture.

The Critique

If Deena holds on to her way of telling a story as a way of maintaining her identity and unconsciously resisting "foreign" school practices, then perhaps we can use Deena's story to critique topic-centered school language. For instance, Deena's story about her birthday—her topic—allows her to share and to celebrate her self (cf. Heath 184-186), a self that cannot be separated from her activities, her gifts, her accomplishments. Deena's story is more than a catalog of activities: comprised of personal experience resting on unnamed, unexplained but recognizable positive emotions, it is full of other people—her mother, her grandmother, her friend Gi Gi. The structure of Deena's story allows us to see Deena at the center of these relationships in a way that the approved linear narrative of sharing time cannot. In Deena's story there is no objective truth out there to be observed neutrally and reported anonymously to an unknown disinterested public audience. The rules of sharing time belie the actual situation where children who know each other gather each day to share their experiences.

If Deena's story is a critique of White English, then, again, this child is in good company. Jordan says that "the presence of life" is a distinctive feature not only of Black discourse but of Black values as well: "[O]ur language is a system constructed by people constantly needing to insist that we exist, that we are present. Our language devolves from a culture that abhors all abstraction, or anything tending to obscure or delete the fact of the human being who is here and now . . ." (367). Similar critiques of White English exist. One of my personal favorites occurs in Ntozake Shange's "no more love poems #3":

so why don't we go on ahead & be white then/
& make everythin dry & abstract wit no rhythm & no
reeling for sheer sensual pleasure . . .
. . . lets think our way outta feeling . . .

But not all such critiques come from African-American writers. Listen to German feminist Dorothee Soelle on mainstream theology:

[T]heological language has been stripped of all the holistic, emphatic, and integrative qualities we are familiar with from the Gospels. So-called "scientific" theology usually expresses itself in language void of consciousness. This language reflects no consciousness because it is empty of emotion, insensitive to human experience, ghostlike, neutral. . . . It admits of no doubt. (83-84)

Explicitly associating "scholarly ideals like neutrality, disinterestedness, and the absence of emotion" with the "language of domination," Soelle argues that universities teach students to give up "I" in serious discourse as a way of training

them to “give up their subjectivity, their emotionality, their range of experience, their partisanship” (85).

Studying the discourse of the Other permits those of us who are White, or male, or academic, or middle-class (by birth or by training) to see the limits of our language practices, practices purported to bestow great powers of analysis and logic on their users. Perhaps the potential of the paratactic topic-associating style for subtlety and pleasure can serve as a corrective to the purported efficiency of the topic-centered form. According to Jordan, “the presence of life” in the discourse of African-Americans yields both its voice and its clarity (367). The absence of these two features in academic writing at all levels has been long decried by composition teachers, professional writers, and cultural critics of various persuasions.

It isn’t enough, then, just to recognize Deena’s topic-associative style in sharing time, nor is it enough to offer affirmation for her stories. As Patricia Bizzell has put it, “One would have to . . . push for the valuation by white people of the kind of meaning black discourse makes—precisely because the meanings of black discourse challenge and correct the meaning of white discourse” (15). Ideally, Deena’s audience would recognize the topic-associating narrative form as a way to celebrate their own lives and the activities which give meaning to them and would then use such a style to tell their own stories. But to make a narrative style associated (in the minds of those with power) with the reduced status of the Other acceptable for use by the children of the dominant would entail not merely pedagogical change, but in fact deep social change.

The Dangers

So far, I have used oppositions which contrast one set of discourse practices with another in order to demonstrate the advantages of the devalorized alternate discourse method as well as to point to the limits of the valorized forms of the “standard” language. Such a stance assumes the stability of categories like female/male, Black/White, oral/literate, paratactic/hypotactic, and topic-associating/topic-centered. This is not, however, an assumption that I am comfortable perpetuating; on the contrary, I would like us to be skeptical of such socially constructed oppositions.

Recognizing the traditionally subordinate side of the dichotomous pair is an important first step in initiating social change and that therefore any progressive project in composition must be both inclusive and affirmative. Further, critique of the traditionally unmarked or normative side can help diminish the awe in which its forms are often held. But in affirming one side and critiquing the other, we need to be careful. Ann Berthoff calls such pairs of terms “Killer Dichotomies” (96, 108). First, we must be aware of the dangers of romanticizing the discourse practices of the Other. Such romanticizing leads us to believe that certain language forms are somehow inherently better or more natural than others, allowing us to forget that all language forms and practices, including Deena’s associative narrative, are social, cultural constructs. This is the danger of essentialism.

Romanticizing the linguistic patterns on one side of the opposition can lead to a second danger. Katha Pollitt has recently argued that “difference” feminists often idealize women as nurturers while ignoring the fact that the qualities they approve of in women are “inseparable from the parts they don’t like (economic dependence and the subordination of women within the family)” (808). Without this sort of awareness, genuine social change is impossible because the material conditions which maintain and stigmatize difference are not recognized. Thus when we talk about the language forms of the Other in America—women, African-Americans, and other ethnic groups, for example, native Hawaiians—we need to be aware that those forms have been, from the perspective of the dominant culture, associated with the powerlessness of poverty and restricted education. When I say restricted education, I am talking about nineteenth century North Carolina statutes forbidding literacy to slaves; schools called separate but equal that were never equal; untold generations of women, even women of privilege, deprived of rhetorical education. If we do not remember that discourse is rooted in material, historical conditions, we cannot effect real change. Another danger of dichotomies is, then, that they let us too easily ignore issues of power.

And a corollary: Those who seek change have learned that affirming the qualities of the subordinate Other does not eliminate the problems of privilege and power, which apparently always seek to assert themselves, proclaiming this practice valid but not that one, this group prestigious but not that one, this language acceptable but not that one. The urge to power is not limited to White men, and reversing the hierarchy leaves us with hierarchy, not with equality and respect for diversity.

Third, we need to be aware that what is said about the Other almost invariably describes what the powerful wish to deny in themselves. Lucid and eminently readable, Barbara Ehrenreich’s *Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class* reports that sociological descriptions of the poor have typically included comments on their “inarticulate speech,” a deficiency which supposedly stems from their “insensitivity” to differences among their own perspectives and those of other persons (28). Ehrenreich links this perceived weakness in language with a whole series of stereotypes projected by sociologists upon the Other to argue that “These [weaknesses] were the very opposite of the traits the middle class liked to ascribe to itself—self-discipline, an ability to plan ahead, to meet self-imposed goals, and so forth” (50-51). I find it useful to remember, as well, that this projection includes the traditional comparison of the Other—African-Americans, women, the poor, the “oral,” non-industrialized peoples everywhere—to children. The danger here is the delusion of superiority.

What emerges from this discussion is a core question: If the oppositions which are used to describe Deena’s story rest on essentialist perspectives that allow some to delude themselves about their superiority and others to ignore the material realities of power in a hierarchically structured society, then is the description itself valid? Perhaps the labels merely reflect the biases of middle

class academics whose world is, according to Ehrenreich, “almost wholly insular, self-referential, and in its own way, parochial” (257). Ehrenreich goes on to say that middle class professionals “seldom see the ‘others’ except as projections of our own anxieties or instruments of our ambitions, and even when seeing them—as victims, ‘cases,’ or exemplars of some archaic virtue—seldom hear” (257). (Task, am I doing this to Deena?) We need to be cautious in applying such terms as hypotactic and paratactic to isolated instances of the language of individuals who are purported to represent social groups. We need to be careful in generalizing explanations of such samples to whole groups. Deena could be anyone at six living in a working-class neighborhood going to a multi-ethnic school in Berkeley, California.

Post-secondary contexts

Deena’s story is emblematic, I believe, of a number of issues which face college English teachers and has much to say to instructors of the official language, guardians of the dialect of prestige and power, much to say to researchers into rhetoric and literature. Thinking about Deena’s story over time has contributed to my teaching of college writing.

First, it has helped me hear the stories my students tell. Like Deena’s teacher after she learned about the topic-associating style, I now assume that what my students write makes sense, that there is a reason for what appears to be an abrupt shift in topic (“Narrative” 117). I am ready to understand that my admonition for, say, “more detail” is a class-bound need of mine rather than a transcendent principle. Second, analysis of Deena’s story has provided validation for a practice that has long been part of my pedagogy—freewriting: just writing any way you feel like, ignoring all the “rules” if you want to. It seems to me that if students are to “come to voice”—to use bell hooks’ phrase—they should feel free to write their “own” languages and their own ideas without censoring. Later, they may need to contrast that language with what students call “formal” writing. Thinking about Deena’s story has helped me point out those contrasts so that students become aware of them, not to see one register as wrong and one as right, but to claim both as part of their larger language repertoire.

Third, thinking about Deena’s story has helped me see that it is important for students to read discourses that violate the rules of essayist, topic-centered, hypotactic literacy and to experiment with inventing their own forms. Last fall in my first-year, first-semester composition class, I had an African-American man whose clearly structured essays contained few violations of the conventions of “standard” White English but lacked that quality that composition teachers call voice. Taking almost no chances, he wrote papers that were safe, exhibiting little of what Jordan calls the “presence of life” (367). My pleas for him to push his ideas, to think about why he wanted to say this or tell that, to connect the assigned reading and the writing with his own experience did little good. But then near the end of the semester he read Jordan’s essay about Black English, which includes a protest written to the police by Jordan’s students in

Black English. My student's response paper, still in standard English, had the clarity and voice that indicated personal involvement and a sense of conviction. It seemed to me that June Jordan had given this young man permission to put himself on paper in a way that I was unable to do. Jordan's essay had spoken to conflicts, hopes, and fears and invited him to speak back in a way that I—a White professor at an overwhelmingly White university—could not do at that moment in his life. Reading the Jordan essay did not, however, mean a dramatic revolution in style or content in his papers: The final essay seemed to me to exhibit more confidence in addressing complex and controversial issues, but it was far more like his previous essays than like his Jordan response paper.

Fourth, meditating on Deena's story has helped me to look at what essayist literacy forbids and to acknowledge that with my students. This happened explicitly in a conference with Nimu, a student in a recent advanced composition class. Nimu's assignment was to use Adrienne Rich's essay "When We Dead Awaken" to discuss the kind of writing taught in school. She was trying to argue that writers have to break tradition, but she was having difficulty getting her ideas sorted out. As we discussed such terms as thesis and support to see whether they might prove useful, Nimu said that one reason writers have to break tradition is that "the tradition leaves things out." When I pushed for evidence, she responded by saying that following male rules of poetry had meant that Rich had left herself out of her early poetry. And, I asked, has the tradition ever caused you to leave something out? Yes, she said, the Roman numeral outlines she had been taught in middle school had never let her say what she wanted to say. Was it possible, I asked, that writing the essay in the form we were discussing would mean that she would have to leave things out? (The look on her face has kept me teaching one more year.) Then we went on to name the things that she had written in earlier drafts that could not be included in the essay she was now planning—such things as the abstract discussion of the ill fit between tradition and contemporary life and at least some of the historical references to new ideas as breaks with established formats. Thinking about Deena's story, then, has helped me realize that it is important to make clear in college composition classes that we are teaching specific cultural forms and language-use practices, not universal truths about how things should be said.

Deena's story has helped me understand the personal costs of traditional proclamations about language, at best half-truths, at worst lies: As Swearingen explains, "Being talk"—which she defines as the comprehensive, conclusive, totalizing statements of the treatise—"deceives when it places itself in opposition to, outside of, and superior to the manifoldness and simultaneities of phenomena and thought alike" (223). Considering Deena's story has led me to teach that all the resources of language belong—or should belong—to all of us; that people who label their own language as *this* and someone else's as *that* are confusing an intellectual tool—the binary opposite—with reality, which includes not only this and that but also "the manifoldness and simultaneity of phenomena and thought alike" (Swearingen 223); that people who imply

pejorative judgments about the linguistic forms of social groups to which they themselves do not belong could be projecting their fears onto these groups. To teach, I continue wrestling with the relationships of language, identity, and power.

When Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, Otto Jespersen, Jack Goody, David Olson, Walter Ong, and E. D. Hirsch talk about their language with terms like philosophic, scientific, rational, abstract, analytic, context-free, autonomous, subordinative, and literate, they impose their literary and social fantasy not only on the Other but also on themselves, and the language they require becomes caricature. Their "being talk" with its labels and dichotomies deceives, blinding them to the limitations of their own discourse and to the rhetorical possibilities of all human language, including the linguistic and narrative practices of the Other. In innocence and joy, Deena's story reminds us of the possibilities of human discourse: "blah, blah, blah, blah, blah."

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Notes

¹ A very early version of this paper was part of a 1989 CCCC panel on "Alternative Discourse as Resistance" that included presentations by Susan Jarratt, Patricia Bizzell, and Lynn Worsham. Without revision those papers were published in *Discurrendo: A Quarterly Newsletter of the New Society for Language and Rhetoric* 3 (Winter 1990). I have drawn not only on that discussion but also on valuable suggestions by Dennis Allen, Elisa Sparks, Art Young, Keith Walters, and David Bleich as I have expanded and revised that paper. A recent oral version was presented in 1995 at the Georgia-South Carolina College English Association Conference.

² See, for example, such standard works as Trudgill; Haugen, esp. Chapter 11, "Dialect, Language, Nation" (pp. 237-254); and Labov, esp. Chapter 5, "The Logic of Non-Standard English" (pp. 201-240), and Chapter 6, "The Relations of Reading Failure to Peer-Group Status" (pp. 241-253). Coates' book takes into account gender as well as social class, race, and ethnicity. Separately and together, Keith Walters and I have argued this point in our work on literacy.

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